

**Osman, Louis**

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**From:** [REDACTED] on behalf of Wandsworth Cyclists  
**Sent:** 23 February 2022 21:57  
**To:** PlanningPolicy Wandsworth  
**Subject:** WCC response to the 2nd draft of the Local Plan ('Publication Version') via email to: planningpolicy@wandsworth.gov.uk

FAO Christine Cook  
Head of Spatial and Transport Planning

Dear Ms Cook,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the second draft of the Local Plan ('Publication Version'). We understand that Wandsworth's Local Plan sets out a vision and spatial strategy to guide the development of the borough from 2023, when the Plan is anticipated to be adopted, to 2038. Collectively, the Borough's planning policies, strategies and guidance will set out how the borough's neighbourhoods and places will change over the next 15 years. They therefore form a crucial element of whether (or not) the Borough of Wandsworth is able to deliver on Climate-Safe Streets, as a key part of Wandsworth's commitments to sustainability and tackling the Climate Emergency.

With this in mind, I'm writing to you on behalf of Wandsworth Cycling Campaign to outline our concerns about the extent to which we observe developers being allowed to ignore democratically agreed Wandsworth policies. Our worry is that these are already prejudicing the delivery of existing Wandsworth policies (such as the Cycling Strategy and the Active Wandsworth Strategy, as well as Wandsworth Council's commitment to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency as outlined in WESS) - and if allowed to go unchecked will seriously undermine the emerging Walking and Cycling Strategy.

We are keen to see a robust and transformative Walking and Cycling Strategy, one that will truly enable more Wandsworth residents and visitors to the borough to walk and cycle in comfort and safety, in and through Wandsworth, to the benefit of all and our environment. This requires the active support of the Council's Planning Department.

We cite two examples of current concern by way of illustration.

#### Battersea Power Station Development

We note the earlier (2018) announcement by the developers of a new cycling and walking route from Nine Elms to the River Thames, creating a family-friendly cycling connection to Battersea Park. This was very welcome and of course was linked to the planning permission for this major strategic riverside development in Battersea. However, as you may be aware, recently the developer has taken it upon themselves to ban cycling on the signed cycle route to Battersea Park via the river, enforced by security guards. It is very concerning to see a developer not complying with their planning permission, and extraordinary at this time, of all times, to see them seeking to restrict family-friendly cycling to one of the few green spaces in Battersea, and one which forms a vital refuge from motor traffic. As you will know, it is longstanding Wandsworth Council policy to enable walking and cycling access along the Thames riverside, and is incumbent on professionally qualified Council officers to ensure that this is enabled, both via design and enforcement.

#### Atheldene Development, Earlsfield

As you know, there were concerns during the planning permission process at the planned loss of permeability of this site, contrary to agreed Wandsworth Council policy. Maximising permeability of our streets for active travel, and enhancing permeability, are key - but no clear rationale has been given for the failure to achieve this in this instance.

Most recently, the north end of Oakshaw Road at its junction with Swaffield Road has been closed off by the developers for walking and cycling. No prior warning for local people or indeed key stakeholders was given. This measure forms part of the last phase of redevelopment of the Atheldene scheme, does Wandsworth Council seemingly consider it acceptable to have this loss of amenity at such an early stage? No cycling diversion has been signposted, and the alternative walking route is poorly signposted and lit, as well as being made narrower by developer hoardings. One obvious consequence is that cyclists, including people attempting to cycle with children, are now expected to turn right northbound from Garratt Lane via the busy and dangerous crossroads into Swaffield Road. We suggest that walking/cycling access could have been maintained while enabling access to the developers, and that discussion with stakeholders such as WCC could have enabled a better outcome at this stage.

We note that the cycling 'mode filter' at the junction with Swaffield Road, which was very welcome, was one of the very few cycling permeability measures installed in the borough during the period 2014-2019. (Streeview image at <https://goo.gl/maps/HrKJ4SmfbJyECuNB8> ). It feels symbolic that even this small, low-cost, useful facility, has been removed, without consultation.

## Conclusion

It is our impression that the relevant officers in the planning department in Wandsworth, for whatever reason, do not consistently ensure that Council policy is enacted in relation to active travel/healthy streets and that proper enforcement is in place. We do not know whether this is a result of a lack of awareness of the effects on active travel of disrupting existing networks and routes - or simply that officers are too overloaded to address what they may see as minor details in a scheme. As you can see, both the schemes themselves and the construction process - which can take many years - can generate concerns as a result of their introducing practical barriers to cycling (and walking).

We would love to see Wandsworth Council to show leadership on this issue. For example, in relation to Battersea Power Station development, for development control officers to make clear to the developers that it is longstanding Council policy to enable cycling along the River Thames as part of the Thames Path in London.

We are sorry to have to spend scarce volunteer time and energy on these matters. It is very dispiriting to have to fight over many years for gains, only to see them whittled away in planning-led schemes. At this time, of all times, we should not be going backwards on active travel provision.

In general terms, we observe patchy adherence during construction works and street works in the Borough of Wandsworth to existing TfL guidance [ See 'Temporary Traffic Management handbook- Keeping people safe at roadworks' available from: <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/suppliers-and-contractors/traffic-management> ]. We would like the Local Plan to ensure that this guidance, which represents best practice, is followed, since this forms a useful tool in enabling active travel to continue during works. We need to move away from a situation where the amenity and safety of people cycling and walking is often overlooked during works to one where people cycling and walking are treated as VIPs as a matter of course.

We stand ready to work with Wandsworth Council to do what we can as local residents with a commitment to enabling active travel and healthy streets to be introduced across our borough. We would emphasise that any Strategy or Plan stands or falls on the capacity of professional officers to implement it; and we have highlighted instances where we think this needs to be addressed by the Council. We look forward to seeing a final version of the Local Plan which ensures that Wandsworth Council plays its part to the maximum extent possible in delivering neighbourhoods and places which enable people to travel sustainably in and through the borough of Wandsworth.

Yours sincerely,

Toby Hopkins

Coordinator, Wandsworth Cycling Campaign