
Wandsworth Local Plan Examination

Examination in Public Hearing Statement for Main Matter 1

Hearing Statement prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of
Charities Property Fund

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Statement is prepared by Savills (UK) Limited on behalf of Charities Property Fund c/o Savills Investment Management (**'SIM'**) in respect of the examination of the Wandsworth Local Plan (**'WLP'**). It provides SIM's response to the Main Matters, Issues and Questions (**'MMIQs'**)¹ identified by the Inspectors in respect of Main Matter 1: Legal Requirements and Overarching Issues.
- 1.2. SIM owns the land at 200 York Road in Battersea which is currently occupied by a hotel (Travelodge) (**'Subject Property'**). The land has been actively promoted for development as part of the consultation for the emerging Local Plan. This includes representations submitted to the LP Publication (Regulation 19) Version in February 2022.
- 1.3. The Subject Property is allocated (Site RIV 10) for development of up to 10 storeys which does not represent optimisation of the site nor the best use of land.
- 1.4. It is imperative that Wandsworth has an up-to-date WLP which provides the policy framework to support sustainable development and growth in accordance with the strategic objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (**'NPPF'**). As currently drafted, the WLP does not achieve this and as such it must be found to be unsound.
- 1.5. We conclude that the Plan has not been prepared in a way that makes the best use of land and as such, it fails to promote sustainable forms of development in direct conflict with the NPPF.
- 1.6. This Statement should be read alongside SIM's statements in relation to Main Matters 2 and 10.

¹ ID-02

2. Main Matter 1: Legal Requirement and Overarching Issues

Is the WLP in 'general conformity' with the London Plan as required by the provisions of Section 24 of the 2004 Act?

- 2.1. The WLP does not accord with Policies GG2, D3 and H1 of the London Plan which impose an obligation to make the best use of land by optimising capacity of sites². The policies and allocations within the WLP which seek to restrict the delivery of taller buildings, particularly on sites which have high levels of accessibility, fails to make the best use of land.
- 2.2. Criteria B of Policy D3 explicitly states: '*Where these locations have existing areas of high density buildings, expansion of the areas **should be positively** considered by Boroughs...*' (Savills emphasis). Many of the site allocations within the WLP, including the Subject Property, benefit from high PTAL Ratings³ and sit within established clusters of taller buildings of 20 storeys and above⁴. The Clapham Junction Opportunity Area is immediately to the north east and east of the Site which includes a cluster of tall buildings including a tower extending up to 31 storeys. The general policy approach and site allocations do not adopt a positive approach as required by Policy D3 and the London Plan as whole.
- 2.3. Policy D3 requires a design-led approach on a 'site by site' basis. The WLP adopts a more generic zoning which makes it impossible to optimise the true capacity of individual sites. The supporting text for Policy D4⁵ provides further, explicit guidance on the required approach to development:

'...the outcome of this process must ensure the most efficient use of land is made so that the development on all sites is optimised.'
- 2.4. Policy H1(2) is again explicit that the potential for housing delivery on all suitable and available brownfield sites should be optimised and places an obligation upon authorities to achieve that through their Development Plans. The same objective of optimisation is restated at Policy H10.
- 2.5. The Subject Property is a low density, commercial use (hotel) and the emerging concept which seeks to redevelopment and co-locate residential alongside enhanced commercial provision accords directly with the objectives of Policy H1.

² This stems from the requirement to ensure an effective use of land – see Section 11 of the NPPF.

³ As an example the Subject Property has a PTAL Rating of 6b.

⁴ As an example see existing prevailing heights (20 storey +) for Tall Building Zone TB-B2-06 which has a proposed height limit of just 10 storeys.

⁵ See Paragraph 3.4.1 of the London Plan.

2.6. As drafted, the LPA imposes an ceiling on development potential within the Borough which is not justified by sufficiently robust townscape evidence⁶. As drafted the WLP would established a framework which is direct contrary to the London Plan's strategic targets to deliver homes (Policy GG2 and GG4).

Does WLP contribute to the achievement of the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social, and environmental?

2.7. The conflict with the strategic objectives of optimisation and making the best use of land as set out in respect of the policies of the London Plan means that the WLP cannot be found to achieve sustainable development as required by the NPPF.

2.8. The emerging WLP unnecessarily imposes lower density development across a series of allocations. This approach has two key impacts:

- i. Depresses the availability of housing and other land supply within the Borough by acting as a constrain to the capacity of previously developed land; and
- ii. Increases the pressure on Greenbelt, Metropolitan Open Land and other sites within the Borough which are less suitable for development.

2.9. The impacts stated above conflict directly with the social and environmental objectives set out at Paragraph 8 of the NPPF. The 'social' objective includes ensuring a sufficient number of homes are delivered and the 'environmental' objective requires an effective use of land.

2.10. In terms of the 'economic' objective, the proposal to impose unreasonable and unjustified limitations on the height of proposed development will have prevent investment and the associated physical and economic regeneration.

2.11. It is a legal requirement⁷ for planning authorities when preparing a local plan to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. For the reasons set out above, the WLP fails to achieve that and as such cannot be found to be sound as currently drafted.

Has it been positively prepared 'in a way that is aspirational but deliverable? (paragraph 16 of the NPPF)

2.12. The WLP as drafted is not aspirational. It has adopted the base level housing targets from the London Plan and has sought to restrict the scale of development; contrary to the requirements of the NPPF and the London Plan which to seek to optimise the potential of all land.

⁶ See SIM's response to the Reg 19 Consultation and the detailed commentary and analysis in the response to RIV10 in MM10.

⁷ Section 39(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2.13. The WLP identifies at Appendix 2 a series of Tall and Mid-rise Building Zones which have been informed by the Urban Design Study 2021⁸. Whilst the adoption of Zones is not in itself unsound, they must be supported by particularly robust evidence which demonstrates a cluster or collection of sites share almost identical characteristics (which is unlikely).
- 2.14. The London Plan has disposed of the ‘bluntness’ of the density matrix in favour of a design-led approach to establish the true capacity and individual sites. A ‘one size fits all’ approach is not sufficiently nuanced to ensure that development capacity is optimised across all sites. Imposing strict development limitations across such large areas of the Borough and areas which contain a significant quantum of previously developed land and allocated for development unduly constrains potential capacity.
- 2.15. The impact of the proposed restriction to cap development height to 10 storeys across a number of zones (irrespective of their prevailing heights or accessibility) will untenably impact the viability and thus deliverability of allocated sites⁹. As set out above, that creates a direct conflict with the potential to facilitate private sector investment required to enact physical and economic regeneration across the Borough.

⁸ Document SD-054.

⁹ See in particular SIM's representations to MM10 and the deliverability of Site Allocation RIV 10 as a direct result of the policy approach.