

London Borough of Wandsworth Opening Statement

Wandsworth Local Plan – Examination in Public

Opening Statement by the London Borough of Wandsworth

15 November 2022

Welcome and introductions

My name is Mrs Jenifer Jackson, and I am the Assistant Director of Environment & Community Services for Richmond and Wandsworth Borough Councils. On behalf of Wandsworth Council, I would like to welcome the Inspectors, Mr Jameson Bridgwater, and Mr Graham Wyatt, as well as all those attending these hearing sessions. The Council would like to thank at the outset all of those who have participated in the examination by submitting their views on the Local Plan.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Charlotte Glancy, the Programme Officer from Banks Solutions, for her management of the examination process so far.

Sirs, Mr Adam Hutchings will be the lead officer for the Council for these hearing sessions, if you would direct your questions to him in the first instance and he will call for assistance from his colleagues, supported by specialist consultants as and when you [the Inspectors] invite the Council to respond or to assist in your exploration of matters and issues through these sessions.

Local Plan Journey

To introduce the plan to these hearing sessions I'd like to provide some context, this Local Plan has been prepared in response to several changes and challenges that are taking place in Wandsworth and more widely in the London area.

The Council has the ambition to tackle climate change for a more **Sustainable Wandsworth**, the plan seeks to address the impacts of climate change to support the [Wandsworth Environmental and Sustainability Strategy \(WESS\)](#) in response to the climate crisis; and to influence and increase the opportunity and uptake of active travel.

To work towards a **Fairer Wandsworth** the plan addresses local priorities, needs and opportunities, a strengthened economic focus to support businesses whilst at the same time providing for new housing, particularly affordable housing which is a priority for local people. The Local Plan includes key opportunities to accommodate inclusive growth, renewal, and regeneration to secure the creation of safer, connected and community focused neighbourhoods within the borough, including its Opportunity Areas, town centres and other key development areas.

The Council is a compassionate one, which is looking – through this Local Plan - to address the increasing health inequalities and wider determinants of health and well-being; to ensure the Spatial Strategy and the Plan's policies strike an appropriate balance with providing school places, health care, transport facilities and other key community facilities to support a growing population and achieve sustainable communities.

More broadly this Local Plan will:

- ensure policies are in accordance with national policies and in 'general conformity' with the London Plan, including taking account of the London Plan's minimum housing target of 1950 homes per annum, and

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- reflect and take account of updated evidence base and the demand for housing and employment land; and provide certainty for developers and landowners by clearly setting out the Council's expectations, requirements and opportunities for development in the borough which continues to create a coherent and high quality built environment with a focus on being design led.

The Local Plan has been shaped by actively listening to and engaging with local people, businesses, community groups and external stakeholders, including Duty to Co-operate bodies and statutory consultees. Three extensive rounds of public consultation, in 2018, 2021 and 2022, have informed the approach to key issues and evolution of policies. We have gathered a wealth of evidence to underpin and feed into the Local Plan.

The matters raised in both the up-to-date evidence and from the various public consultations, have been carefully considered prior to advancing them in the Local Plan. The Plan has also been subject to comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal to assess reasonable alternatives and consider the Plan's environmental, social, and economic impacts.

The Plan is structured into three main parts:

1. Part one sets out the Vision, Objectives and the Spatial Strategy which sets out the ambitions for the borough.
2. Part two sets out the Placemaking Area Strategy policies and Site Allocations,
3. and Part three sets out the detailed policies for managing development.

Part Two, the Placemaking section, contains nine Area Strategies: seven relate to the borough's town centres and regeneration areas, and two cover the Wandsworth Riverside and the Wandle Valley areas. Part Two contains the Site Allocations central to the delivery of the Plan set out under each corresponding Area Strategy or at the end of the section where sites are located outside these areas, which will likely experience an element of change, but not to the same extent as areas covered by the specific place strategies. The Policies have been grouped into related policy areas such as Housing, Economy and Climate Change and are in accordance with the Vision, Objectives and Spatial Strategy. The Local Plan identifies where development will take place and how places within the borough will evolve through the application of the placemaking policies. Together, this will guide change and support growth over a 15-year period from 2023 to 2038.

Like all boroughs, we are facing challenges including helping residents through the cost-of-living crisis and the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. We are committed to addressing these through the implementation of this Plan alongside other Council and partner plans and strategies.

The Local Plan will tackle these challenges and support our ambitions by putting placemaking at the heart of what we do. This will allow Wandsworth Council to deliver a fairer, compassionate, and more sustainable Wandsworth where people can live healthy, fulfilled and independent lives in distinctive but connected communities, and where businesses and services can thrive.

The Local Plan provides a sound and positive strategy for achieving sustainable development in the borough. The Plan is ambitious but realistic and takes a balanced approach to promoting sustainable growth, recognising what is valued in the borough, as well as striking the right balance to create flexibility and certainty.

All the statutory procedures and legislation, including for public consultation, have been adhered to and the Council is confident that the Plan is 'sound'. I would acknowledge that, since the Regulation

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19 consultation, the Council has produced a schedule of our proposed Main Modifications and Additional Modifications which are supplemented by agreed Statements of Common Ground. To clarify this is intended to be helpful and in response to representors comments at Regulation 19 and those of consultees. I hope, Sir, it assists in the examination process. Further to that, you [the Inspectors] have identified those matters you consider require closer scrutiny through these hearing sessions and engaging with representors. The Council welcomes the opportunity to actively engage in positive discussions with you [the Inspectors] and participants. I confirm that the Council has formally asked the Inspectors to recommend Main Modifications to the plan where necessary to make the Plan sound and legally compliant.

Jenifer Jackson
Assistant Director of Environment & Community Services (Planning & Transport Strategy)
London Borough of Wandsworth