

Wandsworth Borough Council**Local Plan Examination – closing statement: 29 November 2022**

I set out in the Council’s Opening Statement, the need for the review of existing strategic spatial and development management policies considering new evidence, updated national and regional policy and guidance as well as other changes and challenges that are taking place in Wandsworth and more widely in the London area.

Wandsworth is one of the largest inner London boroughs, stretching from central London at Nine Elms to the edge of Richmond Park, with one of the longest riparian frontages to the River Thames. The borough includes a diverse range of communities and many distinct neighbourhoods. The five town centres (Balham, Clapham Junction, Putney, Tooting and Wandsworth), the Nine Elms Opportunity Area and nine local centres provide points of focus and identity to the communities that make up the borough. A third of the borough’s land area is occupied by residential properties, many within one of the 46 conservation areas. A quarter of the borough’s land area is open space, much of which is in the form of large heaths and commons. The quality of much of the townscape together with the close proximity to central London, the abundance of green space, range of popular schools and good distribution of high streets, has shaped Wandsworth into one of the most sought-after places to live in London, placing significant pressure on housing availability and land for employment. The Local Plan will tackle these challenges and needs of the borough and support our ambitions by putting placemaking at the heart of what we do.

I would like to thank those that have participated in the hearing sessions. We have had positive and effective discussions, it is inevitable that there are some areas of disagreement, overall the dialogues have been constructive in the pursuit of a sound Local Plan for Wandsworth.

The development of the Wandsworth Local Plan over the past few years would not have been possible without all those that responded to the consultations, attended events, submitted representations, and attended the hearing sessions. I hope that everyone feels they have had the opportunity to have their say on the issues identified through this process.

Summary and conclusions

Over the last three weeks we have discussed the need to provide more housing, employment space, community facilities and transport infrastructure coupled with the need to protect the environment and the character of the borough. The Local Plan includes key development opportunities in the right locations 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. These opportunities, which are guided by the Area Strategies and Site Allocations of the Plan, will positively guide future sustainable development in the borough.

I believe that we have successfully demonstrated a sound and positive strategy for the future, including how the Council has had to balance several needs and priorities, to support inclusive growth and an increase in population. At the same time, the Council must respond to the concerns of our residents and local communities about the scale of growth and the impacts from proposed development, particularly in its ambition to tackle the impacts of climate change.

Overall, the Council has demonstrated that the Local Plan responds positively to seeking opportunities to meet the needs of the borough, including the needs for homes, jobs and other key

community facilities in a way that is compatible with the specific context and constraints of Wandsworth.

The Council considers that the submitted Local Plan, together with the proposed modifications and changes as discussed and agreed during the hearings, provide a sound and positive strategy for achieving sustainable development in the borough. We remain of the view that this Local Plan has been positively prepared, its policies are justified and based on robust and up-to-date evidence, the Plan will be effective and policies allow for flexibility, and overall it is consistent with national policy as well as in general conformity with the London Plan.

Next Steps

We would now like to progress in the most efficient and expedient manner possible to assist the Inspectors in their final report. The finding of a sound Plan will enable the Council to work to facilitate the delivery of key development sites as set out in the Area Strategies, as part of a cohesive placemaking approach, and provide an up-to-date framework for assessing planning applications. In addition, a sound Plan will allow the Council to progress some of the Masterplans that have been discussed during the hearing sessions, which will inform how parts of the Plan will be delivered and implemented.

To our Inspectors we say that we are keen to proceed to a public consultation on the proposed Main Modifications as soon as possible. Several modifications have been offered by the Council following discussions in the hearing sessions. We also asked you [our Inspectors] to assist us with any further Main Modifications where you think these are necessary to make the Plan sound. We will include those in the consultation on the Main Modifications or facilitate any further dialogue to assist the Examination process to a close.

With thanks

On behalf of Wandsworth Council, I would like to thank the Inspectors Mr Jameson Bridgwater and Mr Graham Wyatt, for the way they have conducted the hearing sessions and the guidance they have provided to both the Council as well as the participants.

I would also like to thank Charlotte Glancy, the Programme Officer, for her effective co-ordination of the hearings, and which has ensured the sessions have run smoothly.

And finally, I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the Council's own team of officers and consultants for all their hard work, commitment, and dedication to progressing this plan to date and for the future. Working with them on this plan over the last three years has been a pleasure.

Through this work we continue to put 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.

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