

Wandsworth Local Plan Partial Review – Examination in Public

Opening Statement by the London Borough of Wandsworth

4 November 2025

Welcome and introductions

Good morning. My name is Christine Cook, and I am the Head of Spatial Planning for Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. On behalf of Wandsworth Council, I would like to welcome the Inspector, Mr Graham Wyatt, as well as all those attending these hearing sessions at the Town Hall. The Council would like to thank, at the outset, all those who have participated in the examination by submitting their views on the Local Plan Partial Review.

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

Sir, I would like to introduce to you our Principal Policy and Information Officer, Daniel Goodman and our Principal Development Viability Officer, Debbie Turner. Mr Goodman and Ms Turner will be the lead officers for the Council during these hearing sessions, please direct your questions to them in the first instance. They will call on colleagues and specialist consultants as needed, when you invite the Council to respond or assist in exploring matters and issues through these sessions.

Local Plan Journey

To introduce the plan to these hearing sessions, I would like to provide some context. The Wandsworth Local Plan Partial Review has been prepared in response to several changes and challenges affecting the Borough and the wider London area.

The Partial Review proposes changes to six policies in the Local Plan 2023–2038, which was adopted by the Council in July 2023. These policy amendments focus on affordable housing provision in the Borough, with the aim of alleviating the housing crisis which many residents in Wandsworth are experiencing.

The focus on these policies emerged from the Wandsworth Corporate Plan 2022–2026, which sets out three main objectives: to make Wandsworth a fairer borough, a more compassionate borough, and a more sustainable borough.

Within this context, ensuring local people have a genuinely affordable place to call home is a key priority for the Council in making Wandsworth a fairer borough. The Council has itself spearheaded a step change in affordable housing delivery, through the Homes for Wandsworth Programme, and progression of significant regeneration projects at both the Alton and Winstanley York Road estates.

The residents of Wandsworth face an extremely high long-term need for genuinely affordable housing, particularly social rented housing, which is by far the most affordable and accessible tenure for the majority of those in need. As of March 2025, around 11,000 households were on one of the Council's housing waiting lists. The Council's evidence identifies that in order to meet both existing and long-term needs, up to 23,600 new affordable homes are needed in the Borough before 2038, which would be around 90% of all new homes currently expected to be built in the Borough over this period of time.

In light of this significant and urgent need, the Council has undertaken a Partial Review of its adopted Local Plan aimed at strengthening affordable housing policy requirements, with a focus on the provision of homes for social rent for local people. The Partial Review also includes updates to a small number of other housing policies which each contribute to ensuring that the types, size and tenure of housing built in the Borough best reflects local needs, is of a high quality, and is ultimately deliverable.

To ensure that Wandsworth is a fairer borough, the Council aims to ensure that different housing development typologies, including smaller sites of fewer than 10 dwellings, student housing and other forms of specialist or shared housing, contribute fairly towards meeting conventional affordable housing needs. This will support additional delivery throughout the Borough and provide a mix of housing to meet the needs of Wandsworth residents.

Maximising the delivery of social rented housing is critical to improving life opportunities and outcomes for those most in need. It will unlock a wide range of public, social, and economic benefits for local residents. It is also crucial to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and limiting the negative impacts this has on families, as well as reducing the financial burden on the Council – resources that could otherwise be invested in delivering permanent affordable housing or other essential services.

Overall, in proposing updates to the six policies that form the Local Plan Partial Review, the Council has given weight to a range of considerations to ensure the proposed changes strike the right balance between ambition and deliverability. The policies have been drafted to provide clear mechanisms for managing development in a way that meets local needs, while allowing flexibility to account for site-specific circumstances.

More broadly, this Local Plan Partial Review will:

- Ensure policies are in accordance with national policy and in general conformity with the London Plan.
- Reflect and take account of updated evidence on housing need.
- Provide certainty for developers and landowners by clearly setting out the Council's expectations, requirements, and opportunities for development, while continuing to create a coherent and high-quality built environment.

The Local Plan Partial Review has been shaped by actively listening to and engaging with local people, community groups, and external stakeholders, including Duty to Cooperate bodies and statutory consultees. Two extensive rounds of public consultation, in 2023 and 2025, have informed the approach to key issues and the evolution of policies. We have gathered a wealth of evidence to underpin the Local Plan.

The matters raised during public consultations have been carefully considered in the context of the up-to-date evidence base, prior to advancing policies in the Local Plan Partial Review. 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 Council is aware of recent publications by the Secretary of State and Mayor of London concerning housebuilding in London. Broadly, the Council's view is that the pre-consultation and non-statutory nature of these publications means they should carry limited weight. Across the

evidence base and hearing statements, the Council has demonstrated the strength and resilience of its local housing market which is well-positioned to deliver ambitious policies.

As such, it is our view that these publications further highlight the need for local policies which provide an ambitious and deliverable strategy for meeting local needs. The direction of travel indicated by these announcements, being additional to existing adopted London Plan policy, whilst also conditional and time-limited, is not considered to be directly inconsistent with the Local Plan Partial Review as submitted. The Council will respond to forthcoming consultations in due course.

The Local Plan Partial Review provides a sound and positive strategy for achieving sustainable development in the Borough. The updated policies are ambitious whilst also viable and realistic, taking a balanced approach to promoting sustainable growth, strengthening the provision of affordable housing beyond what is likely to be achieved by the policies contained within the recently adopted Local Plan.

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 19 consultation, the Council has produced a Schedule of our proposed Main 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 statutory consultees. I hope, Sir, it assists in the examination process. Further to that, you [the Inspector] 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 Inspector] and participants. I confirm that the Council has formally asked the Inspector to recommend Main Modifications to the plan where necessary to make the Plan sound and legally compliant.

Christine Cook BSc MA MRTPI
Head of Spatial Planning
London Borough of Wandsworth