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To whom it may concern,

Please find below my response to the Merton Local Plan consultation.

First and foremost this is a very difficult document to respond to. As a resident I neither have the time nor the technical knowledge to process this and respond in depth and I can only imagine this is the same for all, so as such its not really a plan for all stakeholders and the respondents will not be representative of all.

The Introduction to the Plan states that: "The plan is designed to help guide how the borough develops over time and create a vision that enables the council to successfully and responsibly manage growth, while always ensuring the best interests of the borough, its residents and businesses." I don't believe this is able to do that for the point I have stated above.

The Plan is a long document, covering all parts of the borough, I found the Supplementary Planning Document (formerly Masterplan) a much easier read and more digestible as well as being sensible in the main. It is a pity not to see it imbedded within the Local plan.

Overall, the main themes of challenge from me are:

- Height - there remains an ambition from the council to grow Wimbledon skywards which is completely against the wishes of its residents and community. We should have no buildings exceed the heights of those already in place and this should be a max not an aspiration.
- Usage - you constitute to want to grow Hotels, commercial premises and Retail. Pre-Covid there were many empty stores in Wimbledon and Centrecourt and office work has changed forever....as for hotel surely going from zero to two massive hotels in a couple of years is enough. There is no case for all this development.
- Architecture - Wimbledon has some great historic buildings and more time should be spend ensuring the architecture of new building enhances this and doesn't destroy it.

In terms of specifics, I have lifted the views of Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre below which I fully support/endorse.

Section 3: Urban Development Objectives and Good Growth Strategy

Question 1: More needs to be done for this policy to support the aims; we suggest that, over the plan period, addressing climate change is more important than growth. A new policy on neighbour protection (for example in the case of development of a nearby or adjacent site) would help to protect local character.

Question 2: We would suggest including clear targets, to be strictly monitored so that shortfalls and contraventions can be addressed.

Section 4: Neighbourhoods

Wimbledon: Policy N3.6

Question 13: More needs to be done if Wimbledon is to continue to be a thriving destination for businesses, local residents and visitors. We suggest including an objective relating to incremental change towards a zero-energy local economy. Conserving local character is also a priority, as well as 'greening' the town centre.

Question 14: Additional Comments

- **'Masterplans' for major sites:** Merton should create a policy whereby masterplans should be prepared (with public consultation and perhaps funded by the landowner or developer) for each major site in the town centre at the appropriate time. The masterplan would be required to gain approval before any planning application is submitted for the site in question.
- **Pandemic and post-pandemic planning.** Merton needs to think about the implications of the Covid pandemic and to plan for the post-pandemic town centre. Now is the time to review and challenge the assumptions relating to the commercial development of Wimbledon town centre. For example, we suggest that with the increase in home working there is less need for office employment floorspace (and associated height of buildings).
- We question the need for any further **hotel development** in Wimbledon.
- **Building height:** in certain locations, buildings 44 metres high are proposed. Local people have repeatedly said they wish **buildings to be limited in height to 22m maximum** to respect local character and heritage.
- **Concert Hall:** We think there should be a positive statement and commitment to a new concert hall or centre for the performing and creative arts.
- **Promoting a vibrant day/night economy** is only acceptable to an extent which protects, as a matter of policy, the quality of life of the residents nearby and a character in Wimbledon that is attractive to all users.
- **Future location of tram stop:** The tram stop terminus should continue to be located inside the station and not moved to street level.

Question 14 continued: Specific SITE ALLOCATIONS in Wimbledon Town Centre:

The following comments relate to the Local Plan proposals for use of specific Wimbledon town centre sites [Stage2a 9 Wimbledon FINAL.pdf \(merton.gov.uk\)](#) - pages 20-62.

The proposals for all the sites are somewhat vague and therefore an opportunity is missed to create some exciting new places and uses that will benefit the community.

In the case of all the sites identified below, we consider that buildings should not be as high as 44 metres, but significantly lower, for example a maximum of 6/7 storeys or 22 metres high.

Wi 2 Broadway car park, adjoining the theatre: The Council owns this site and could enhance the area and its character by developing the site primarily for community use.

Wi 5 Hartfield Road Car Park (Council owned): The proposal says development could include taller buildings with a wide variety of uses. As owner, the Council can take the opportunity to create a concert hall or centre for the performing and creative arts that would be of great significance to the local area and the whole of London.

Wi 6 Highlands House, 165 The Broadway and Wi 10 Prospect House, St George's Road: Heights should be restricted to a maximum of 22m or 6/7 storeys.

Wi 9 8 St Georges Road (Community Centre site): Council ownership means community interests can and should be prioritised. Here again, building height should be limited to 22m.

Wi 11 Victoria Crescent, including Piazza: The Plan should protect the Broadway frontage Conservation Area and the public highway through the piazza.

Wi 16 Centre Court Shopping Centre: It is essential that the Council protects conservation areas along Queens Road & The Broadway, two listed buildings and the South Park Gardens Conservation Area. Building height should be limited to 22m as the public has repeatedly said, not 44m. Centre Court would benefit from some renovation/refurbishment without demolition or any increase in scale.