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**Sent:** 06 January 2019 22:01  
**To:** Future Merton  
**Subject:** Wimbledon masterplan consultation response

This is a copy of my response to the Wimbledon masterplan surveymonkey form. I'm sending it direct to the email address as I know surveymonkey sometimes has limitations on the length of response forms, and I wanted to ensure my views are heard. Feel free to contact me if any of the specific transport-related points are unclear.

thanks  
S [REDACTED] Colebourne

Consultation response:

Overall, I think the masterplan heads in the right direction. Unlike others, I don't consider the plans to be overdevelopment of Wimbledon providing heights and building quality are controlled. My concern is that both of those will not actually happen. What follows are some specific points on details of the plan.

#### Crossrail 2, Decking

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The concept of decking over the railway has my support provided that the needs of the railway have been fully met. In my opinion, the best option for Crossrail 2 and Wimbledon in general is for there to be a fast line tunnel taking services from beyond Woking direct to London.

By removing these services, enough space would be available on the existing tracks for Crossrail 2 and a dramatically enhanced outer suburban service. The service pattern would be that all outer suburban services would stop at Wimbledon, including many that currently run direct to Surbiton. It is this change that makes Wimbledon more accessible than Kingston. As such, I believe the masterplan, and Merton Council generally, should be much clearer in supporting the fast line tunnel option - it has major accessibility benefits that TfL's plan does not.

The key issue with the masterplan generally is that it can't rely on Crossrail 2 happening. Again, I think the fast line tunnel is key, as it can be developed by Network Rail separately from Crossrail 2. Given the current funding constraints on TfL, Crossrail 2 is likely to slip.

But if rail traffic continues to grow, there is still a need for more capacity through Wimbledon. The fast line tunnel provides a convenient answer to that problem that is appealing to the Treasury: Spend £2bn on a fast line tunnel now, and delay the construction of Crossrail 2 for another 10 years (and thus delay the associated cost). This could potentially allow the upgrade and decking of the station to occur completely independent of the progress of Crossrail 2.

The masterplan should allow for the possibility of a second entrance to the station. By decking over the station, it becomes classified as underground for fire regulations, which requires a second exit.

Sometimes this second exit is only a fire exit, but in other cases (see Crossrail 1) the second exit is fully available to passengers.

Adding a second exit at the east end of the platforms would dramatically change the desirability and access of the new developments along the deck.

Finally, in my opinion, the decking should continue to the Gap Road bridge. This would be a much more coherent location to end the town centre, and provide significant new housing alongside the Dairy Crest site.

#### Tram

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The masterplan proposes a location for the tram terminus at street level opposite the station. At a high level this is fine, however there are two key issues not discussed.

The first issue is the proposed Sutton Link tram scheme. In my opinion, the Sutton Link scheme should be based on option 3, taking over the existing train line to Sutton, but deviating to be road based at the Sutton end. See [https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A\\_\\_ukrail.blogspot.com\\_2018\\_12\\_sutton-2Dlink-2Dtram-2Doption-2D4.html&d=DwIFaQ&c=HmJinpA0me9MkKQ19xEDwK7irBsCvGfF6AWwfMZqono&r=GaCalLn46Twww8MI2jtddr3lN2DfaeiHVhT7U6f3vw&m=fgQEBqJkNMwKfrlYzrjcyziCptgbY3VF7MOAkrwOBPo&s=R0hhrmMOrocyQ5Y7eE\\_xNeqwy29vWMdNIE7OELe\\_qSU&e=](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__ukrail.blogspot.com_2018_12_sutton-2Dlink-2Dtram-2Doption-2D4.html&d=DwIFaQ&c=HmJinpA0me9MkKQ19xEDwK7irBsCvGfF6AWwfMZqono&r=GaCalLn46Twww8MI2jtddr3lN2DfaeiHVhT7U6f3vw&m=fgQEBqJkNMwKfrlYzrjcyziCptgbY3VF7MOAkrwOBPo&s=R0hhrmMOrocyQ5Y7eE_xNeqwy29vWMdNIE7OELe_qSU&e=) noting in particular how it frees up land for development to help pay for the tram. It is disappointing that the masterplan makes no allowance for option 3.

The second tram issue is that the masterplan makes no allowance for the tram to continue further east, such as to take over the existing railway line towards Streatham. While extensions have obviously not been discussed by TfL at this point, it is clear on transport grounds that a tram would be a more effective use of the railway lines towards Streatham, providing a link direct to Tooting St Georges hospital (just as a tram is a better use of the line towards Sutton). With both the tram and Thameslink fully removed from the station itself, there would be plenty of room for Crossrail 2 without the extensive demolition currently proposed.

Thus, I believe the masterplan should be designed such that the tram does not terminate outside the front of the station, but instead runs along the proposed new deck above the railway (not Queens Road). Essentially this would make the tram line the centrepiece of the design of the new deck. Doing this would allow a new Wimbledon East tram stop to be provided near the Dairy Crest site (even if the route to Streatham was not converted to tram). Note also that a tram terminus tends to be less attractive than a normal tram stop as it has to have additional safety features, so this approach would also make the proposed central plaza more attractive.

## Roads

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The road intervention plans lack detail. Whilst this is understandable given the uncertainty from Crossrail 2, there is also little ability for the public to comment or influence the plan. Where I disagree firmly is that "shared space" is a solution to traffic problems. Shared space merely confuses pedestrians and drivers, without changing the fundamental nature of the congestion.

The plan is particularly unclear with regards the removal of the gyratory. The obvious plan is to route all northbound and southbound traffic via Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Road, leaving the central section of The Broadway just for buses and deliveries. This seems achievable now, and the plan should have properly separated what is achievable with and without Crossrail 2.

Some concern is expressed about access to the Queens Road / Centre Court car park if The Broadway is part pedestrianised. This is partly a false concern, as the reason so many cars from the south route to that car park is that the car parking on the south side of the town is inadequate. Were the redeveloped Piazza have a larger car park underground, priced at the same level as Centre Court, there would be less need for traffic to route around the town centre.

In the long term, I am supportive of additional road crossings of the railway between Alexandra Road and Queens Road. These road crossings should be designed to ensure that pedestrians do not have to wait long to cross them when moving east-west.

## Buildings

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The indicative view from the station (p98) is very, very bland, and could be a view of any modern office development. What the plan desperately needs is to advocate for a landmark building, opposite the station. Such a building does not need to be tall, but does need to be highly distinctive. The Gherkin, London City Hall and the Great Court at the British Museum are the kind of buildings I have in mind. Something that tourists will want to see and photograph/instagram, and that will feature on TV when international broadcasters show the tennis championships.

The masterplan proposes a new station building set slightly back. It is important that such a building has at least a double height entrance area to provide a sufficiently impressive entrance to the town, especially given that many visitors will arrive by train. I think the masterplan's desire to put a building outside the station entrance on the western side, blocking sight lines to the station.

The idea of creating mews is a good one, however from experience I can say that a key part of the success of the Lanes in Brighton is that they are through pedestrian routes from one place to another. If Broadway Place and Broadway Court are to become successful mews like the Lanes, they must become through streets. Broadway Place in particular has huge potential as a through route from the new square to the Piazza area redevelopment, but requires an entrance on the north side, not the current one on Hartfield Road.

The plans for the Piazza area with a central square have the potential to turn the town centre in on itself. This could end up creating an unappealing wall for pedestrians walking in from the south west side. It is vital that the main streets into the Piazza area (Graham, Herbert, Hartfield, Gladstone) have clear pedestrian routes into the development, rather than walking into the blank back of large retail units, or car park entrances.

The proposed balance of building heights seems generally reasonable - office-led growth seems reasonable for Wimbledon if Crossrail 2 arrives. I do however have grave doubts about the ability of the council to hold development to the planned heights. It seems to me that targetting a maximum of 15 storeys would be more advisable in case developments and their appeals end up pushing heights higher. In addition, I do not believe that growth on the scale discussed should be permitted unless Crossrail 2 occurs.

#### Dundonald Yard

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If the existing Victorian street pattern is to be continued, then the new buildings added must suitably match the streets they are being added to. This does not require a Victorian style, but does require similar scale and high quality detailing. I would also expect the street extensions to be residential - houses, not flats.

#### Summary

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In summary, there is good work in the document, but it confuses itself by not separating what is feasible without Crossrail 2. In addition, the plan fails to make use of the potential of the tram to take over the Thameslink lines, and of a fast line tunnel, to greatly simplify the works needed in Wimbledon to deliver Crossrail 2.