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**From:** R [Redacted] Cowan [Redacted]  
**Sent:** 06 January 2019 23:10  
**To:** Future Merton  
**Subject:** Response to masterplan  
**Attachments:** Consultation response to masterplan by R [Redacted] Cowan 6.1.19.pdf

Please find attached my consultation response to the Wimbledon town centre masterplan.

R [Redacted] Cowan  
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## **Response to Future Wimbledon Masterplan Consultation Draft**

from R [REDACTED] Cowan, [REDACTED]

The masterplan's emphasis on improved quality and design of buildings and the aspiration for a greener, more attractive town centre is welcome. But these are compromised and made harder to realise by the rest of what the masterplan seems to propose.

### **Scale and intensity of development**

The proposed scale and intensity of development is wholly inappropriate for Wimbledon town centre, and the masterplan does not show how it can be compatible with making the town centre a pleasant and healthy place to live and work in. The proposed development would adversely impact neighbouring residential areas and would change the essential character of Wimbledon. Traffic congestion and pollution would become even worse than they are now.

### **Evidence base**

The masterplan contains no data to justify the suggested need for a projected extra 8,000 jobs and proposed 50 per cent increase in commercial space in the town centre. The level of economic activity required to sustain a thriving town centre needs to be based on a transparent and proven methodology which keeps in balance the number and type of jobs in Wimbledon with the facilities required by residents and visitors.

Without the necessary analysis, there is a risk of encouraging inappropriate and speculative commercial development, which is out of keeping with the rest of Wimbledon town centre and which places unsustainable pressure on the town's infrastructure and services.

### **Metropolitan or major centre**

In the Mayor of London's draft London Plan, Wimbledon is defined as a 'major centre', with high commercial and residential growth potential. In the draft masterplan, Merton Council states that it would like to see Wimbledon recognised as a 'metropolitan centre'. This is fundamentally undesirable. The town centre is bounded by residential streets, making large-scale redevelopment problematic.

### **Building heights**

The masterplan refers frequently to a need for more 'mid-rise' buildings in the town centre to enable commercial growth. It states: 'The townscape and topography is not suitable for high rise towers

(in comparison to Nine Elms, Croydon and the City) but Wimbledon does need to become more dense and accept a moderate increase in heights to accommodate future growth.' Definitions of 'high-rise' and 'mid-rise' may vary, but the reality is that any new buildings exceeding 7-8 storeys high will tower over the existing townscape and radically alter the skyline for residents.

The building heights proposed in the masterplan – particularly around St George's Road, Worple Road, the station and the area around the current YMCA – are significantly higher than existing buildings and represent much more than 'a moderate increase in heights'.

The masterplan should state unequivocally that new buildings in excess of 7-8 storeys are unlikely to receive planning approval because of their visual impact on the surrounding area, their incongruity with existing historic buildings, and the increase in traffic congestion and pollution to which more intense development would lead.

### **Crossrail 2**

Although the document states that 'this masterplan is not reliant on Crossrail 2', the levels of investment needed to develop Wimbledon in line with the masterplan's vision seem to be heavily dependent on Crossrail 2 going ahead. This is particularly the case in relation to dealing with traffic problems. Either the masterplan should not be adopted by Merton Council until decisions have been taken by government regarding Crossrail 2, or it should be tailored for possible futures that include one in which Crossrail 2 is not built, or not built for many years.

### **Traffic**

The masterplan says far too little about how the flow of traffic through the town centre could be altered to make the town centre safe, pleasant and attractive, and with acceptable air quality.

### **Historic buildings**

Wimbledon's heritage and sense of community are highly valued by residents. While the masterplan acknowledges the town's rich history, it gives insufficient weight to residents' clearly expressed wish to preserve historic buildings wherever possible.

### **Greening**

The masterplan should contain much stronger proposals for how development can contribute to the greening of the town centre.

**Climate change**

Much stronger guidance is needed for how development can contribute to reducing climate change.

**Wimbledon Society's report Vision 2040**

Much of the analysis and many of the recommendations in the Wimbledon Society's report *Vision 2040: proposals for Wimbledon Town Centre* should be drawn on to make the masterplan more robust and with a clearer sense of how changes can be phased through an uncertain future.

**3 January 2018**