

I would like to provide input to the consultation on the Wimbledon Local Plan.

I am a long term resident of Wimbledon, having lived in different parts of Wimbledon over at least 45 years.

I have read the documents made available on the Masterplan and Local Plan website and I commend the Council on the efforts made to capture ideas and issues through workshops. There is some helpful material here, and the Palns do pick up on some of it. However the Local Plan also strongly introduces concepts for which there was little or no support in the workshops and for which little evidence is provided. There also appear to me to be contradictions, or at least severe tensions in some of the statements made. Specifically:

1. **Metropolitan Centre:** this is a declared objective of the Masterplan and seems to involve twice the scale and density of a Major Centre. I can see no support for this in the workshop material, nor any evidential basis for why this is to our advantage as residents. The people attracted to Wimbledon are here because of its sense of community, its green spaces, its existing excellent transport links and its low-rise buildings. The town centre is bounded by residential streets so that large scale redevelopment will be undesirable and unsightly, overpowering and undermining the character of Wimbledon. The Metropolitan Centre may be an aspiration for the scope it gives Councillors but is not one that I can see improving Wimbledon's character, attraction or vibrancy. I am concerned about the scale and volume implied.
2. **Growth in terms of increased office space:** an argument is made that Wimbledon needs to have more people here during the working day (ie not commuting to London centre) in order to support the quality of life of residents. However no facts are provided in support of this. What is the gap? What assumptions are being made about working habits and families? How will the increase in work from home affect the calculations? It appears to be simply an assertion, and one which might be undermined by new technology and trends to flexible working.
3. **Tall buildings:** the document refers to only 'mid-rise' buildings being appropriate, and the Local Plan states that taller buildings will be 'set back from the historical centre'. From what I can see of the Building Height Guidance in the Masterplan this will include buildings up to 18 storeys high and some of the tallest buildings (8-16 storeys high) will be over the station area which I consider close to the historic centre and which I assume (unless the tracks are to be buried) will start at a height already 2 or 3 storeys above the surrounding (mostly residential) buildings. In any case the ground rises south to north across the railway tracks so viewed from the Conservation area to the south, these buildings will be veritable monstrosities. This will create an ugly US-style 'downtown' lump of overbearing high rises which will dominate the views from all directions, not only into and out of the Conservation area which includes Queens Road, and will dwarf and overlook the backs of the houses on Queens Road North side, spoiling the character of the conservation area which the Masterplan states it wishes to preserve. I would favour a cap on building height in keeping with existing architecture, and certainly no higher over the station.

4. **Traffic:** this is a difficult subject as everyone would like less through traffic, however if it does not pass through the centre of town it is not obvious where it should go. Certainly it should not be re-routed through residential areas such as Trinity Road and Queens Road, Trinity Road has had traffic calming measures put in place and opens onto South Park Gardens with schools nearby; Queens Road has been made one-way and has had traffic calming measures along half its length (where there is a school). It would be more appropriate to extend those measures to the part nearer the town centre, where there are two nurseries and two old people's homes, than undermine them by creating vehicular access from Alexandra Road. Neither of these roads is suitable for increased traffic. It is not altogether clear what is intended for Queens Road – the text refers to vehicular access from Alexandra Road; the Masterplan boundary falls short of the area onto Queens Road where a new through road appears to have been added at the point of the Chadwick Avenue cul-de-sac. In some plans this looks like a cycle/pedestrian path and on others a vehicle access road. For the reasons given I would not support increased traffic being channelled onto Queens Road. I think we should look at ways to limit HGVs in the town centre.

In summary, there is merit in the 'greening' ideas, in cleaner buildings and less litter. I would welcome planning guidelines which limited building height to low-rise buildings in keeping with their surroundings, constructed in quality materials using yellow stocks and red brick or Portland stone. I would not support a re-routing of traffic through residential and conservation areas; I would encourage a study of the potential for limiting HGV traffic. Finally I would prefer to see more emphasis in the Local Plan and Masterplan vision on building on the cultural initiatives and the lawn tennis brand, and less on the building of large new office blocks.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide views.