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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 January 2019 11:15
To: Future Merton
Subject: Wimbledon Masterplan response

N [REDACTED] Thompson
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Masterplan response

I largely agree with the response submitted by LoveWimbledon, but would add the following points:

Plans to improve Wimbledon centre should not be dependent on Crossrail 2, which is looking increasingly unlikely and at best remote. Phasing in any changes on a project basis will help minimize interim negative impacts on the business and residential community.

A largely high-rise town centre would be out of character and is not what Wimbledon is all about. The occasional higher building is OK, but with a max height of 15 floors. Having a largely high-rise town centre would destroy the quality of SW19: differentiate rather than imitate is key.

Vision for the town centre should be driven by sustainability and climate change imperatives. Every change, proposal and alteration should be analysed on this basis as a top priority to ensure the town centre remains relevant and workable in the coming years.

Incorporating greenery is compatible with business growth: just look at Singapore, Vancouver etc for examples.

Holistic impact of any change to town centre on surrounding areas eg Gap Road/Plough Lane must be taken into account when decisions are made: motorised traffic, air quality, cycle and pedestrian safety, as well as quality of life for residents.

Wimbledon is referred to in proposals as a “desirable neighbourhood”; any changes must ensure this is retained and enhanced.

Connectivity page makes no more than a passing mention to “cycle connections”. I would like to see a stronger commitment to improving bikeability and acknowledgement that making Wimbledon a cycle-friendly / cycle-first town centre will attract more businesses and workers to the town. The rise in cycle commuting (and decline in public transport reliability in the capital) is evidence that increasing numbers of employees see accessibility by bike as a key element in where they are prepared to work.

In a related comment, the annual Ride London event is referred to on p 136 as a “cycle race”. This is untrue for the vast majority of participants and helps perpetuate the myth that cycling is an occupation only for the super-fit. Merton Council needs to update its attitude to cycling as being for ‘other people’. Cycling is for all, provided the infrastructure is right. Getting this infrastructure right is the duty of Merton Council with TfL. For example, why are new bridges over the railway line automatically assumed to be open to vehicular traffic? Could/should they be cycle and pedestrian only? I would like to see every planning application that contains a reference to cycle parking referred to Merton Cycling Campaign for input/advice.

The over-railway line development would be the perfect spot to build mixed-use residential blocks. Wimbledon is home to many older people who enjoy having their own gardens, being within easy walking/cycling/bus journeys of shopping and leisure facilities. However, there is a distinct shortage of ‘later life’ -friendly accommodation. Blocks that allow independence and privacy along with the opportunity to socialise and feel part of the community in an attractive manageable way would be a very good use of this area.

Summary:

- maintain Wimbledon feel and quality
- phase in changes piecemeal
- put sustainability and climate change first
- think cycle-first for transport
- develop mixed-age appropriate accommodation offerings