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Dear Tara,

Merton's new Local Plan, call for sites, and infrastructure need – TfL's comments

Thank you for consulting with TfL.

The following comments are made by TfL City Planning officers on a 'without prejudice' basis and are intended to ensure that this policy document is in line with relevant London Plan transport policies and reflects the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy. You should not interpret them as indicating any subsequent Mayoral decision and these comments do not necessarily represent the views of the GLA.

General

TfL Borough Planning's (TfL BP) supports Merton's proposals to produce a new Local Plan to reflect changes to national planning policy, the full review of the London Plan and changes in the borough. The Council's aspirations is to develop a Local Plan to guide how the borough develops and to successfully and responsibly manage growth along with sustained economic success, while ensuring the best interests of the borough, its residents and businesses.

At this stage in the process, the consultation is made up of thirteen surveys which aim to gather ideas that will help to shape the planning policies. The Travel and Movement and Call for Sites surveys are key for TfL, and it is essential that the existing and future public transport networks, accessibility, connectivity and sustainable travel are considered throughout the growth and development of the borough.

TfL supports Merton's priorities to create a better street environment in which to live, by prioritising people's health and quality of life, and promoting sustainable travel and encouraging walking, cycling and the use of public transport. This is in line with the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy which looks to put people's health and quality of life at the very heart of planning the city's

transport with an aim that by 2041, 80 per cent of all Londoners' trips will be made on foot, by cycle or by public transport. Increasing the safety and perception of sustainable travel and London's roads is also vital in meeting these priorities. Reducing traffic volumes, traffic dominance and controlling new car parking provision are also key priorities for TfL and will contribute to improved air quality and healthy streets.

Transport infrastructure is also highlighted as a key priority to support growth and additional demand. In deciding how future housing and employment needs will be met in the Borough, consideration should be given to the opportunities arising from planned transport investment within the Borough. In the draft new London Plan, parts of the Borough are located within the Crossrail 2 Growth Corridor and Wimbledon is identified as a new Opportunity area. The preparation of the Local Plan should consider how future changes in access, capacity and connectivity arising from transport investment could maximise development opportunities, both directly and indirectly as a result of improved services.

The Sutton Tram Extension is another major transport scheme that is supported by the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy and could enable substantial development along its route. This scheme would also support the growth of Merton and more details about the scheme and its impacts are set out later in our response.

It is important that the borough's growth aspirations incorporate Mayoral policy objectives and reflect Healthy Street principles in line with the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy 2017, and the draft new London Plan 2017 and policies are developed within Merton's Local Plan to reflect this.

Call for Sites

In terms of TfL's operational interests we would suggest that land is allocated and/or safeguarded to enable transport improvements to take place in the future to support the growth of homes and jobs in the borough as well as address existing issues. The specific schemes for which we would seek an allocation currently are:

CR2

It is important that through the preparation of the Local Plan, sufficient protection is provided for the delivery of Crossrail 2 through the Borough. This should include clarity on how the Local Plan will help protect the route and worksites required to construct the scheme. It will also be important to engage with the Crossrail 2 team to understand how sites required for the construction of Crossrail 2 can best be brought back into use and appropriately phased in order to maximise the overall benefit of the scheme.

Beyond the route itself, the new London Plan makes clear that planning frameworks for all areas affected by Crossrail 2 should respond positively to the significant development capacity unlocked by Crossrail 2 and in doing so should outline how the additional development capacity could be phased to reflect the transport connectivity and capacity improvements. In preparing future development frameworks, consideration should be given as to how all sites brought forward in the call for sites, those identified in the GLA SHLAA, and any additional sites can respond positively to the Crossrail 2 opportunity, using the Crossrail 2 scenario in the SHLAA as a starting point for assessment. TfL and the Crossrail 2 team are willing to work with LB Merton to explore how the CR2 SHLAA scenario can be tested in preparing future development frameworks.

Sutton Tram Extension

TfL is working closely with the London Boroughs of Merton and Sutton to develop the case for the Sutton Tram Extension. This extension is strongly supported by the Mayor and is identified as a key scheme in the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy. The Mayor has asked TfL to be prepared to submit a Transport & Works Act Order application to seek planning consent for the scheme within the current Mayoral term (by May 2020) subject to the full funding package to deliver the scheme being identified. Merton officers are members of the Stakeholder Working Group and are expected to be members of the Strategic Steering Group, which will help guide the project, when it is instigated shortly.

There are two strategic options for the tram extension currently being considered. The first is an on-street option which would run from Morden Road tram stop to Sutton Town Centre via Morden Road, Morden Hall Road and St Helier Avenue in Merton. A considerable amount of design work on this option has been undertaken in the past. This would predominantly operate in highway but would require small areas or strips of non-highway land along its route through Merton, for example at the junction with the existing network.

A northern spur to either South Wimbledon or Colliers Wood is also planned as part of the Sutton Tram Extension scheme. This would provide a northern terminus for trams from Sutton but also for additional trams from Croydon.

An alternative option could see trams replacing trains on the Sutton Loop rail line between Wimbledon and Sutton, in which case trams would operate within the existing railway boundary only and no new land would be required.

A decision on the preferred strategic option is expected to be made by summer 2018.

It is important that land is safeguarded to deliver the Sutton Tram Extension to ensure its delivery is not hindered. Prior to a preferred strategic option being identified during 2018, all options currently identified should continue to be considered as potential options for delivery with appropriate land safeguarded for the route.

Merton officers already hold the relevant plans but we have provided again a set of plans for the on-street alignment and for the options for the northern spur to South Wimbledon or Colliers Wood. These indicate the potential alignment options for the scheme where we consider it would be inappropriate for development to be proposed that may hinder the delivery of the Sutton Tram Extension.

We would be happy to discuss the scheme further with you should it be necessary.

In addition to the Sutton Tram Extension, TfL also wish to flag the potential need to remodel the junction where the tramway crosses Kingston Road to reduce interaction between traffic and trams.

At this stage we are unable to specify exactly what this scheme is, as it could range of a new road layout through to a new tram bridge across the road. But any development within 100m along the tramway from this junction, and around 20m either side of the tramway, would need some consultation with Merton and TfL to determine a way of protect the ability to increase the capacity of the junction in future.

Wimbledon Bus Station

Wimbledon Bus Station located on Cyril Black Way has been occupied by TfL since 1991. It is important that this land is safeguarded as a transport interchange in order to maintain bus accessibility and reliability with the town centre.

Other

There may be other schemes that emerge over time and the land requirements for the above schemes will be confirmed through the design and consents process. We would therefore welcome continuing dialogue with Merton Council and landowners/developers on emerging proposals.

In addition we would wish to be involved where sites are being considered for redevelopment or allocation on which there is currently a transport use or where such a use is close by. We would expect transport infrastructure/services to be retained if not enhanced as part of these schemes although not necessarily always on the existing site and for developers to take

account of the impacts of transport operations and infrastructure upon their schemes and occupiers.

Summary

It should be noted that TfL Commercial Development will respond separately to the consultation with their comments on TfL's commercial interests. The comments above reflect TfL BP position.

I trust that the above provides you with an understanding of TfL's current position on the policy document and proposals. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need clarification on any of the points raised and we look forward to working with the Council on the document going forwards.

Yours sincerely,

Lucy Simpson

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