

From: Wimbledon WI [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 December 2018 15:32
To: Councillor Stephen Alambritis
Cc: Future Merton; hammondsp@parliament.uk
Subject: Future Wimbledon Masterplan Consultation



Future Wimbledon Masterplan Consultation

At a recent meeting of Wimbledon WI, the Wimbledon Masterplan was discussed and as many of our members live, work and socialise in Wimbledon, concerns were raised regarding the scale and intensity of this plan.

The proposals would drastically alter the nature of Wimbledon town centre and have a huge impact on the surrounding residential areas. Whilst acknowledging that improvements in the town centre are needed, we are particularly concerned that the proposed mid-rise and high-rise buildings will radically change the look and feel of the town centre, dwarfing existing properties especially those of historic interest which are part of the town's rich history.

Wimbledon is a thriving town with a mix of office buildings, shops, restaurants, cultural and social amenities such as the library and theatre. This mix would be totally unbalanced with such a large increase in office space in particular. Given the growth in flexible working, with more people working remotely, will there be such a need for office space? Also shopping habits are changing with the growth in online purchases and the consequent reduction in the number of large shops. We have Elys, a successful department store, and we want to retain and attract independent, local shops to maintain the character as at present. We have already lost our second hand bookshop and possibly the adjacent café and restaurants due to redevelopment. These businesses have been trading for many years.

The plan refers to the 2017 workshops' feedback where the message that comes out in the "word cloud" is that Wimbledon retains a community feel. There is little evidence that this will be the case with the proposed increase of office space and general development being planned.

Regarding the Council's desire to see Wimbledon become a Metropolitan centre, we believe that this is not the wish of many residents, especially those who live in the town centre, as the ramifications would be enormous. This was also part of the feedback from residents at your workshops. "Looking forward the participants did not want Wimbledon to become like Croydon with tall buildings and lots of concrete."

Wimbledon has always been a hub for cultural and community activities, something which attracts locals and those from further afield into our town. We feel that a new concert hall/cultural arts space would be a welcome addition to the town.

Finally, we would add that the consultation process for this plan has been woefully inadequate. Many of our members and the wider public had no idea that these plans were being made and very little was done to advertise the consultations. The plan is difficult to find on the Merton website unless one knows the council department involved. Every household should have been made aware of the proposals in writing and if further plans and consultations are proposed this should certainly be the case. When the Council introduced wheelie bins, huge amounts of literature were produced for every household in the borough. Surely changes to the whole look and feel of Wimbledon should be considered important enough to consult residents.

We look forward to hearing from you

Wimbledon WI Members
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