

## Response by PlanWimbledon to Merton Council Stage 3 Draft Local Plan Consultation

We will not repeat most of the comments that we made at the previous stage of the consultation. We called particularly for the local plan to be more specific about how development should achieve the council's planning goals, and to avoid vague generalities. We are disappointed that the new draft is still so weak in this regard. We will just repeat our call for the local plan to stress the potential of neighbourhood planning, and for it to explain how the council will encourage and facilitate it.

The council's current draft says:

### ***Neighbourhood Plans***

*1.1.14. Neighbourhood Plans are plans prepared by the community which set out the detailed planning policies and proposals for their specific area. Policies and proposals within Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the local plan.*

*1.1.15. At the time of writing (July 2021) the council has just taken a decision on PlanWimbledon's proposal to form a neighbourhood forum for their proposed neighbourhood area of Wimbledon. More information can be found on Merton's website: Neighbourhood plans ([merton.gov.uk](http://merton.gov.uk))*

We repeat what we said in response to the previous draft. The local plan should clearly acknowledge the potential importance of neighbourhood planning. A neighbourhood plan that has been passed by an examiner and ratified by the community becomes part of the 'total multi-layered development plan'. It sits side by side with the local plan. The neighbourhood plan must conform to the local plan, but it can influence how development is undertaken within the designated area. The neighbourhood plan sets out policies that help to shape, design and guide development to meet a shared vision. It complements the local plan by providing additional detail. This might be, for example, on the quality of development expected for the area and a distinct neighbourhood approach to a strategy set out in the local plan, but without undermining it. The neighbourhood plan and the local plan each have a role to play and go hand in hand.

The local plan should explain what practical action the council will take to support neighbourhood planning in the borough. The council should clearly acknowledge the neighbourhood planning process and commit to supporting groups working on neighbourhood plans, recognising that they are an important part of the overall development plan (indeed, more so than any SPD, as a neighbourhood plan carries more weight). The council could also commit to spending the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy in the area in which the payable development took place, and it should confirm that spending this portion could be informed by projects and aspirations identified through the neighbourhood planning process.

In Chapter 01B, Good Growth, page 9, where the draft identifies stakeholders and partner organisations responsible for the successful implementation of the policies and delivering growth in Merton, it should be amended to reflect and aspiration to work with any neighbourhood forums.

**PlanWimbledon**

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