



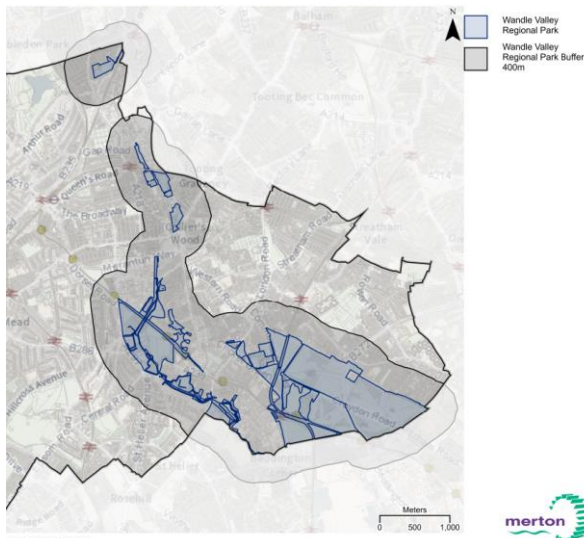
MERTON LOCAL PLAN – Examination – Stage 2
A submission by Wandle Valley Forum on Matter 11 – Green and Blue Infrastructure

September 2022

1. Wandle Valley Forum provides support and an independent voice for over 140 community groups, voluntary organisations and local businesses and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. Many of our supporters are based in Merton. We have made representations throughout the consultation on Merton's new Local Plan and contributed to the Stage 1 hearings.
2. We wish to speak at the hearing on Matter 11.
3. We do not consider the Local Plan's spatial strategy is *"positively prepared in terms of the Borough's green spaces and biodiversity assets"*. The Sustainability Appraisal shows the Wandle Valley Regional Park policy impacts more sustainability objectives than any other policy in the Plan and it should be much more central to the Plan's spatial strategy, including by recognising the Wandle Valley in the Spatial Strategy (Figure 1) and the Strategic Objectives and Spatial Vision.

Boundary

4. The boundary of the Wandle Valley Regional Park should be consistent with the continuous hatched area in the All London Green Grid, although we believe this should also include the whole of Wimbledon Park. The map included with the Local Plan (*Green Infrastructure – WVRP LR*, below left) showing its location and that of the 400m buffer is not consistent with the All London Green Grid definition contrary to the assertion in paragraph 15.6.2. It erroneously limits definition of the Wandle Valley Regional Park largely to its adjacent green spaces rather than the continuous hatched area in the All London Green Grid Supplementary Planning Guidance (below right). As the Plan notes, the Wandle Valley is viewed *"not just as a collection of green spaces, but as an interconnected system that can benefit communities living and working in the Wandle Valley"* (paragraph 15.6.3) and so is more than the combination of the individual green spaces.



*Boundary of Wandle Valley Regional Park
In draft Local Plan*



*Boundary of Wandle Valley Regional Park
in All London Green Grid*

5. This boundary comprising both green spaces and the land along the river is more clearly shown by the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust:



6. The Local Plan should also be clear that the Wandle Valley includes the catchment of Norbury Brook/River Graveney.

Wandle Trail

7. We welcome recognition of the Wandle Trail and identification of the need to address the “missing link” under the railway at Earlsfield as a priority project (Policy TN11, TN12). This contributes to the ambition to “complete” the Wandle Trail but further measures are

required and can be included in a revised Policy O15.6d and elsewhere in the plan. These include:

- recognising the value of the existing Wandle Trail and the need to protect and improve it and provide for new stretches as part of new development, as well as the opportunities for completing the Wandle Trail in key locations and providing additional access along and across the river
- identifying the route of the Wandle Trail (including the variations) on the Policies Map
- safeguarding and creating public access and a buffer along the Wandle, including requiring development immediately adjacent to the river to provide appropriate public access, including specifying the provision of minimum 3m wide access along the river front (and supporting this in relevant site allocations)
- recognising the historic significance of the Wandle itself and its related weirs and other structures in the river whose heritage value should be considered when determining planning applications for their alteration or removal – a number have been removed without effective consideration of their heritage value