

14 April 2021

VIA EMAIL
FUTURE.MERTON@MERTON.GOV.UK

Planning Policy
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Dear Sir / Madam,

PLANWIMBLEDON FORUM / AREA CONSULTATION

COMMENTS ON BEHALF OF ESKMUIR GROUP

On behalf of our client, Eskmuir Group (“Eskmuir”), Savills is instructed to make representations in response to the ongoing consultation on the proposal by PlanWimbledon to designate a Neighbourhood Forum for Wimbledon.

Eskmuir is the freehold owner of the property at 8-20 Worple Road & 20-26 St George’s Road within Wimbledon Town Centre which comprises a ground floor supermarket with office space and car parking to the upper floors. As the London Borough of Merton will be aware, Eskmuir is considering various options for the redevelopment of their site, as reflected in its mixed use allocation within the Draft Local Plan.

From the “Application to Become a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area in Merton” document prepared by PlanWimbledon it is evident that a great deal of thought has gone into defining the area to be included within the Neighbourhood Forum with the strategy for defining the area initially informed by setting a one mile radius around Wimbledon’s former Town Hall before adjusting these boundaries to reflect physical geography, people’s perceptions of the extent of Wimbledon, and responses from various parties that had been engaged with.

The “Application to Become a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area in Merton” document published by PlanWimbledon identifies four reasons why the Neighbourhood Forum should cover the area identified, these being to encourage community engagement, ensure appropriate growth, deliver a shared vision, and drive socio-economic change. Whilst these aspirations are well understood, Eskmuir is of the view that the existing local and regional planning policy context does this already for Wimbledon Town Centre through policies contained within the New London Plan (which was adopted in March 2021), the Core Strategy and Site and Policies Plan (which are soon to be replaced by the New Local Plan), and the Future Wimbledon Supplementary Planning Document (‘SPD’) (which was adopted in November 2020).

All of these documents have been subject to extensive periods of public consultation, set visions for their specific geography, and strive to deliver growth in the right way. The best example of this is the Future Wimbledon SPD which in many ways has a similar scope to that of a Neighbourhood Plan albeit it is focussed on Wimbledon Town Centre. The Future Wimbledon SPD provides a clear spatial and visual framework for Wimbledon under a series of visions and in many ways identifies broad areas for redevelopment and the design considerations.

With that in mind, it is suggested that PlanWimbledon consider re-defining the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Area so that it excludes the area already covered by the Future Wimbledon SPD given the scope of that

document and to reflect its very recent adoption. Alternatively, if such an approach is not taken by PlanWimbledon and the extent of the neighbourhood area is retained as proposed at present, Eskmuir suggest that a 'light touch' approach is taken for Wimbledon Town Centre to reflect the provisions of the Future Wimbledon SPD.

I trust these comments are helpful. I would be grateful if you could please notify us of any further consultations in respect of the Neighbourhood Forum.

Yours faithfully,