



# MERTON'S DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Where will future growth  
be focused and how will  
it be distinctive to my  
neighbourhood?

# C MERTON'S DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS

## C.1 NEIGHBOURHOODS AND BOROUGH AREAS

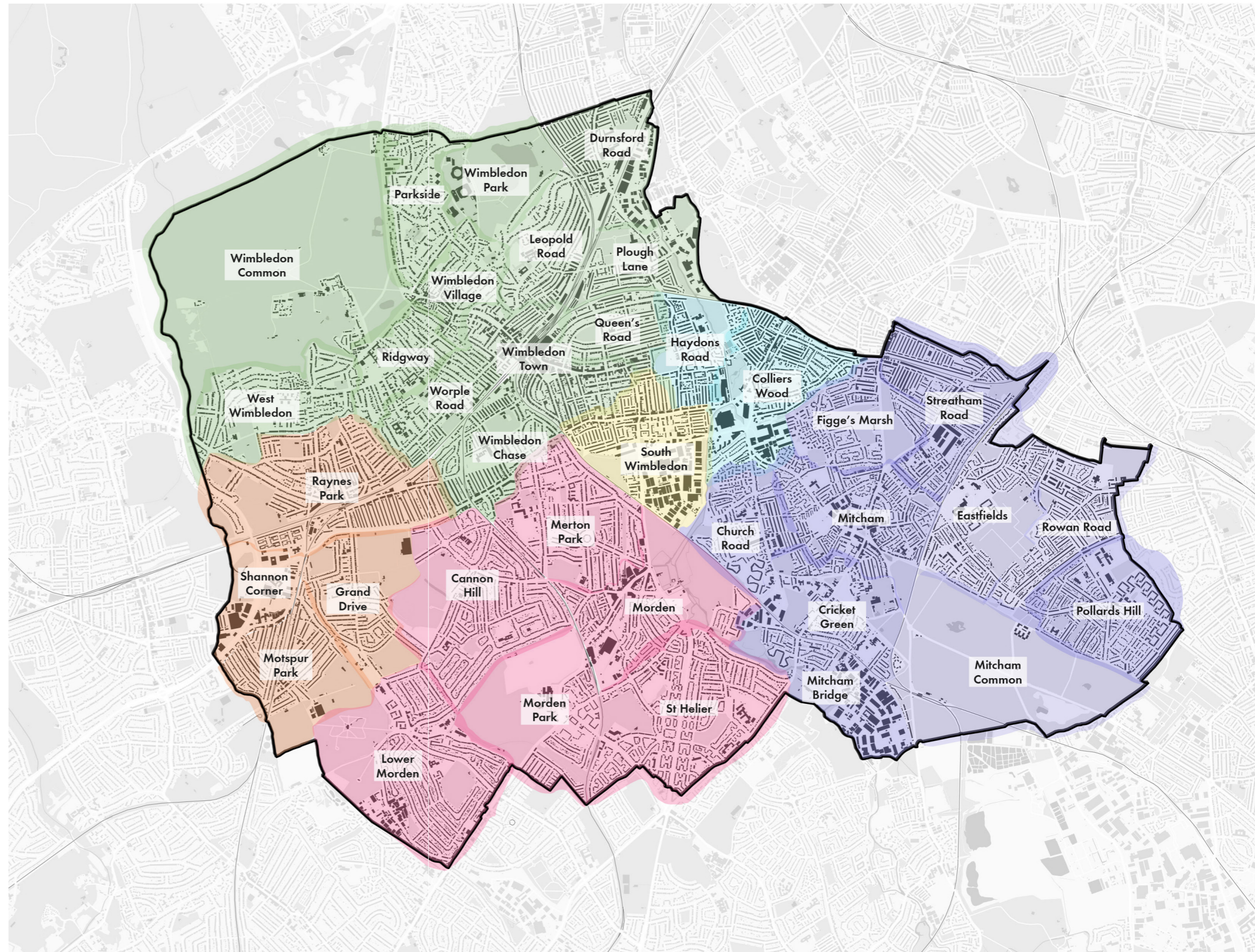
An understanding of local character must operate at a variety of scales. Early pages within this report provide a borough wide picture, with the previous pages offering a more detailed block-level appreciation. Between these two scales, is the geography upon which local people's understanding of character is generally based - one of neighbourhoods and areas.

The adjacent plan illustrates an interpretation of the neighbourhoods in the borough. It has been developed in conjunction with local residents and stakeholders through an online survey and workshops. This is an inherently subjective exercise and it is acknowledged that places in the borough will mean different things to different people.

As set out in the earlier historic analysis, many of Merton's places developed from a series of villages across the borough and along important routes into central London. Later these villages were subsumed by London's expansion with the opening of the railways, but they still have an influence on the sense of place in these neighbourhoods.

Today, the borough comprises a series of places and neighbourhoods which each have a subtle character of their own. Each of the neighbourhoods overlap with each other to acknowledge the blurred edges of some places, whilst some boundaries are stronger as they are defined by a railway line or river. Some places are defined by a historic village, some by a high street and others by a green space or landscape asset. Other influencing factors include the presence of a train station or local parade, or association with more administrative cues such as postcodes.

The 36 neighbourhoods have then been grouped into six sub-areas. The neighbourhoods have been grouped by similarities in character and sense of place informed by: discussions at community workshops; the mapping of physical assets such as topography, landscape and urban morphology; the historic evolution of each area; analysis of land use and housing typologies and their future growth direction.



The purpose of this process is to help shape policies in the emerging Local Plan and ensure that character and the existing identity of neighbourhoods is a key consideration. The Draft Local Plan is place-based and this ensures that policies for each of the neighbourhoods are tailored to the distinctive sense of place and character of different parts of the borough. This Character Study has helped to shape the definition of these neighbourhoods and will ensure that future growth and change are responsive to the varied identity and challenges across the borough.

The following chapters describe the six areas in the borough, drawing out the story of each area and the character of each distinctive neighbourhood. Each chapter has three key sections:

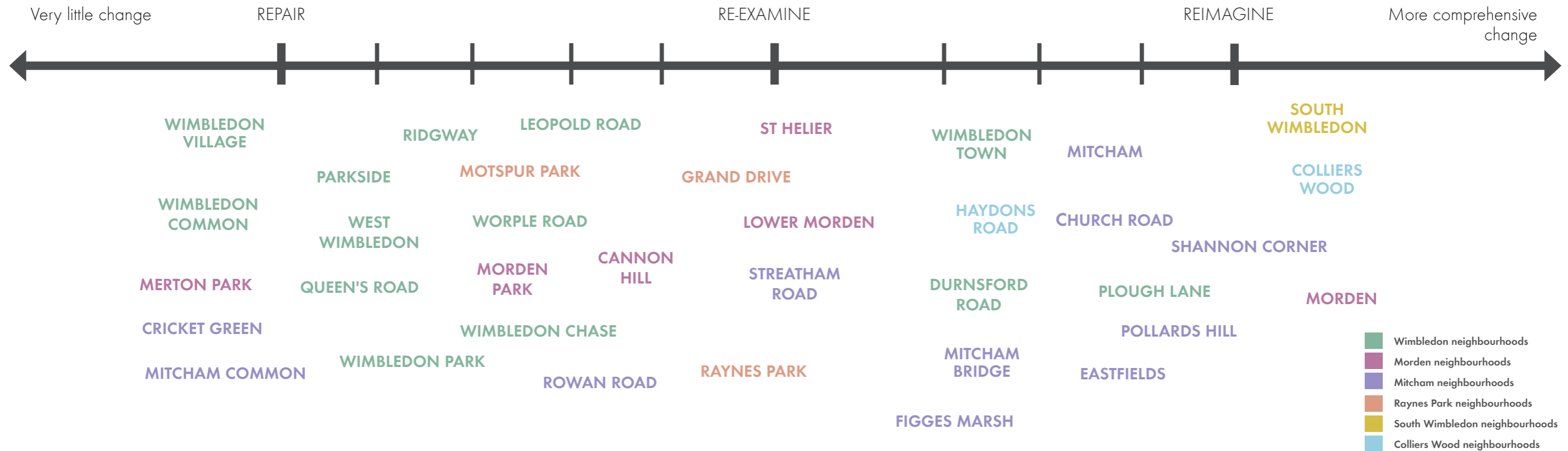
- An introduction to the sub-area

- Information about each of the neighbourhoods within the sub-area, setting out the key features, and identifying any significant issues and opportunities. These are a summary of ideas generated by the team as a result of public engagement and analysis of each area.
- Finally, each chapter concludes by setting out some growth themes for the sub-area - identifying key priorities that describe what should be protected, what could be improved and where growth is considered most appropriate in the context of the character of each area.

The nature of how intensification and interventions should differ across the borough in response to character has also been considered, providing an indication of where key areas of growth sit on the spectrum of repair - re-examine - reimagine. The diagram below illustrates at a diagrammatic level how the nature of intensification should vary across key areas of the borough.

A greater intensity of growth is appropriate in some locations, while the strategy should be focused on re-use and infill in other parts of the borough. More comprehensive reimagining would be appropriate in some areas - such as alongside significant infrastructure investment, estate regeneration or where large big box retail sites present opportunities for more fundamental intervention - where through redevelopment it will be possible to create better continuity with the surrounding neighbourhood. In the borough's key centres, the emphasis should be on re-examining character. Although many of these places are attractive historic centres, some more fundamental interventions could help to repair the existing character through the redevelopment of available sites along and behind the high streets or adjacent to railways to help intensify the most sustainable locations.

For other neighbourhoods, the emphasis should be on repairing and protecting the existing fabric and condition, enhancing the existing character through sensitive infill and re-use of existing building fabric. Throughout the borough, in residential areas, there will be opportunities for sensitive infill development that helps to raise the quality of neighbourhoods and complement the existing character.



Each of the chapters concludes with a key framework plan. The key for these plans is expanded in the adjacent column to explain in a bit more detail the propositions set out within the plans (please see p33, 37, 47, 53, 63 & 67 for the framework for each area):

- **Place intensification - re-imagine**  
More fundamental intervention through the redevelopment of larger sites or centres to be bolder about the level of change, using the prevailing character from surrounding areas to influence re-design
- **Place intensification - re-examine**  
Some interventions possible to reflect the existing character through the redevelopment of available sites, generally along and behind high streets
- **Place intensification - repair**  
Enhance the existing character through infill, re-use of existing building fabric and development that is sensitive and context-led

### Corridor intensification

Opportunities to rethink and improve the environments along key routes through development that sensitively increases the scale, alongside public realm enhancement

- ↔ **Corridor Intensification (major)**
- ↔ **Corridor Intensification (minor)**
- **Enhance parade**

### Enhanced routes

Environmental improvements to green spaces and routes

- ↔ **Strategic greening and improvements**  
A potential future aspiration to raise the quality of this route. This might include changes such as creating better space pocket parks, tree planting and greening
- ↔ **Strategic improvements**  
A potential future aspiration to raise the quality of this already greened route. This might include changes to improve the overall function of the route by improving the space sharing between modes or public realm quality.
- ↔ **Local green route improvements**  
Local improvements to the continuity of routes between green spaces including the quality of public realm, crossings and greening
- ↔ **Active travel**  
A network of future improvements to the active travel routes within the borough. Encouraging use of sustainable modes will help to improve the character of a number of the key vehicular routes and overall environmental quality within the borough
- ↗ **Improving connection to park**  
Improvements to the level of access and visual connections into green spaces



Strategic improvements to key corridors might include continuous cycle routes, tree planting (as at Lea Bridge Road, Waltham Forest) or pocket parks at key intersections of active travel corridors delivered alongside new development (Rodney Road, Southwark)