

FUTURE WIMBLEDON MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION REPORT

MAY 2019

merton.gov.uk/futurewimbledon



FOREWORD

We'd like to thank everyone who has taken the time to be a part of this consultation. In early 2017 we launched consultation on the future of Wimbledon town centre with workshops in Wimbledon Library. Over three events we gathered feedback from 222 participants, which we used to develop the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan that was consulted on from October 2018 to January 2019.

This report explains the consultation process and shares the findings from the October 2018 to January 2019 round of consultation on the first draft of the plan.

Future Merton are using the feedback received to help inform and guide the next stage of the masterplan. We look forward to continuing conversations during the next stage of the Future Wimbledon Masterplan development.

“We congratulate you on the initiative of creating a town plan, and the strategic approach you are taking. Wimbledon has huge potential and we would be very grateful if you would take care of our precious town as you develop plans for the future.” (Wimbledon resident)

“While Wimbledon is not a beautiful town, it does have many great features and facilities. It would be wonderful to build out from these, with the opportunity of Crossrail 2, to enhance the quality of the structures and quality of life for both workers and Wimbledon residents - while establishing a town fit for the 21st century.” (Wimbledon resident)

“I applaud the work that has gone into the Masterplan; Wimbledon is an international brand with so much potential and has suffered from uncoordinated, piecemeal development in the past. A coherent and well-thought out vision for the town such as this, is much needed, maintaining the historical character, complemented by modern architecture, bringing economic benefits and ensuring that the town has a vibrant commercial and cultural character.” (Wimbledon resident)

“I have read the Masterplan from cover to cover and, if I may, I should like to congratulate the authors on an excellent piece of work, producing a coherent and very largely acceptable - even desirable - series of guidelines for the future of what presently has to be regarded as a somewhat incoherent town.” (Wimbledon resident)

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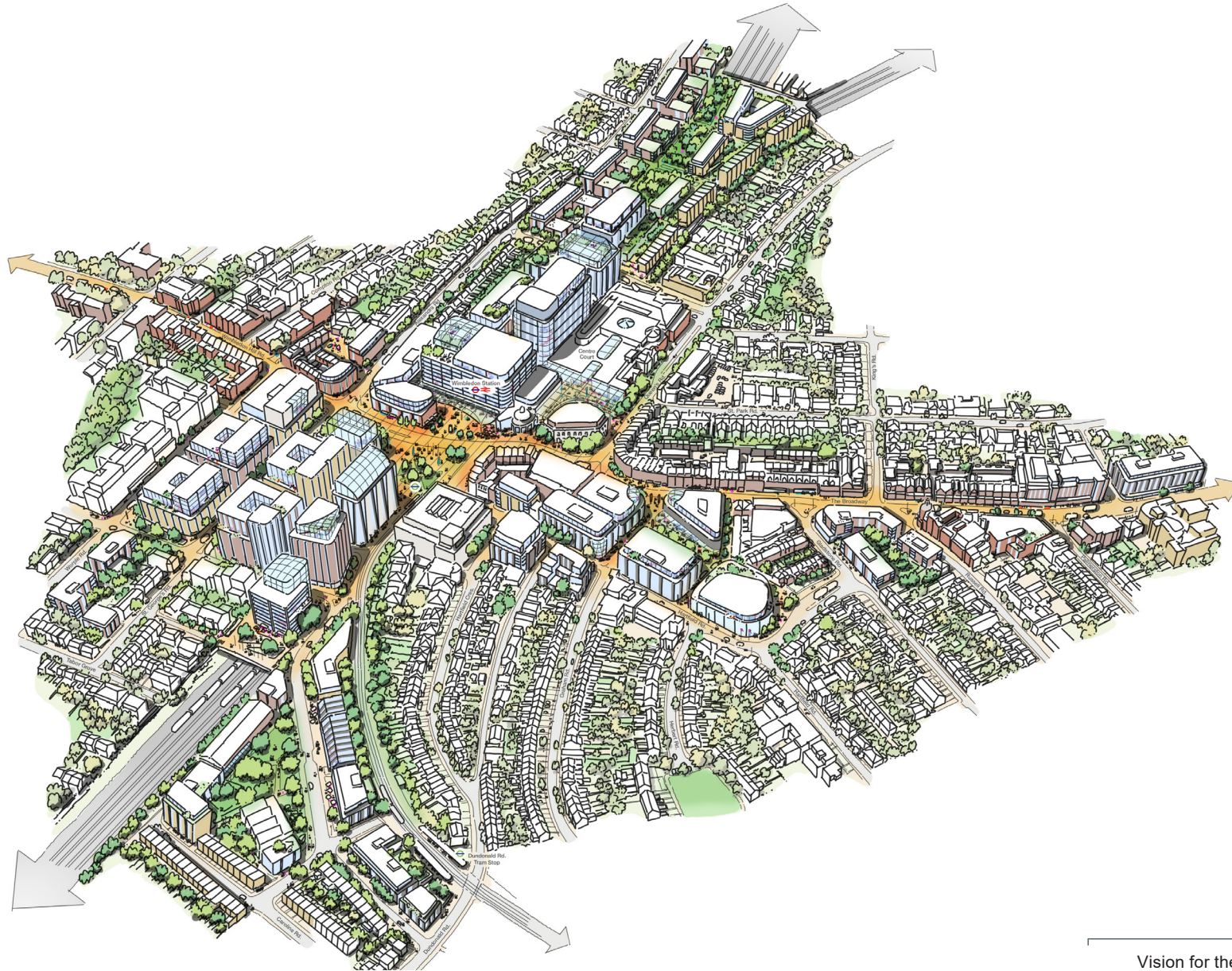
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. This Consultation Report presents the responses received in the Draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan Consultation which ran from 1st October 2018 to 6th January 2019.

1.2. The Future Wimbledon Masterplan was drafted to address the challenges and opportunities for future development in Wimbledon town centre. Once approved, it will be a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that sits alongside Merton's other planning policy documents - Core Strategy (2011) and Sites and Policies Plan (2014).

1.3. Merton's Local Plan is currently under review. The Stage 2 draft was consulted on between October 2018 and January 2019. For more information visit merton.gov.uk/newlocalplan.

1.4. During this period Transport for London also ran a consultation, supported by Merton and Sutton Councils, on proposals for a new rapid transit system for Sutton and Merton, the Sutton Link. The consultation results can be found at consultations.tfl.gov.uk/trams/sutton-link.

1.5. All of the responses to the consultation are available to view online at merton.gov.uk/futurewimbledon. This document provides a summary of the responses received by themes. The response format was in the form of free text either via SurveyMonkey, email or letter. The length of responses received

varied from one line on a particular theme, to a 40 page document closely analysing the masterplan.

1.6. All of this information was collated in Excel format and each response analysed individually. The comments relating to each of the identified themes were summarised and catalogued. There is no specific quantitative analysis of each theme other than the number of respondents who raised the issue. The main points highlighted for each theme are then listed and discussed.

1.7. For most of the themes raw response data was input into software that analysed the number of times a word was used, creating a visual depiction based on frequency. Words that were used more often are larger in the image than words used less. The word clouds take the top 150-200 most used words in the responses by theme.

1.8. This is a useful way of identifying what the general feeling of respondents was towards each issue and any specific matters that they raised.



Wimbledon town centre
extent of the masterplan area

2 CONSULTATION

HOW WE CONSULTED

2.1. The council is required in accordance with planning legislation to hold a public 6 week consultation. However, due to the nature of the subject matter and the significance and importance of the document to our residents and businesses the council extended the consultation to 14 weeks; above the required consultation period.

2.2. Engagement on the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan started on 27th September 2018, where the plan was launched at the Wimbledon Community Forum. Paper copies were made available in Wimbledon Library for the public to view.

2.3. Formal written consultation letters and emails were sent to local residents, businesses, residential groups and organisations, environmental stakeholders (e.g. Environment Agency) and other interested parties on Merton's Local Plan consultation database.

2.4. Every household in Merton was notified via an article in MyMerton, a magazine distributed to all 80,000+ residential properties in Merton. There were also articles in Wimbledon Time and Leisure Magazine and the Wimbledon Times (formerly Wimbledon Guardian) newspaper in online and hard copy formats.

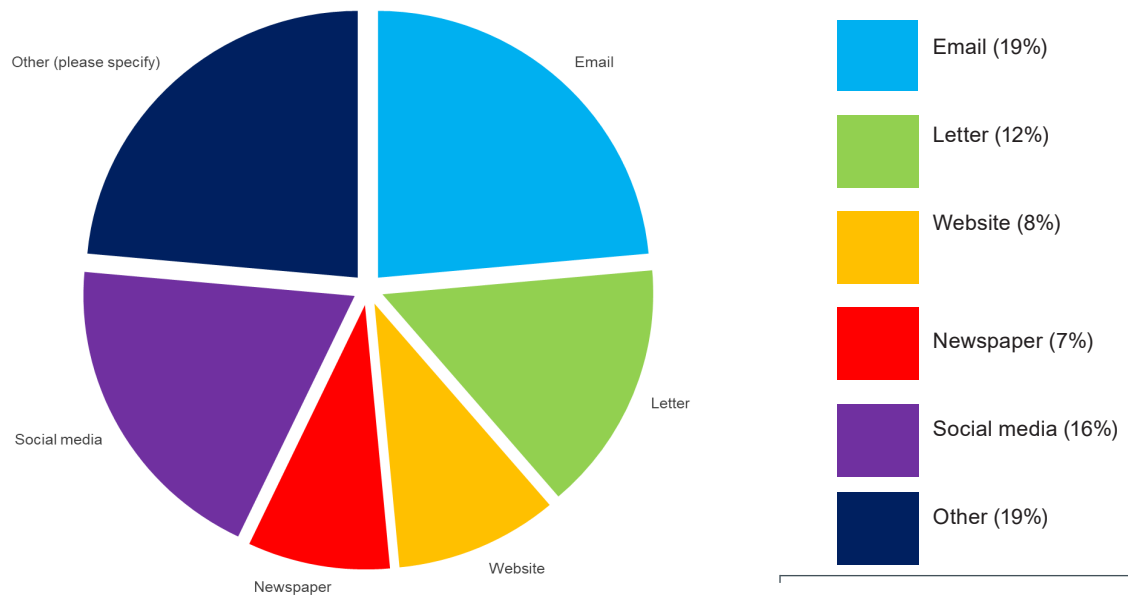
2.5. The consultation was also publicised via social media on the council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. The council's tweets

about the consultation were viewed by over 82,000 people on twitter, not including embedded tweets on third party sites. Of the 82,101 reach 2,625 people also engaged with the tweet (clicked on the link, shared, liked or re-tweeted).

2.6. Peer to peer awareness was strongly encouraged as people are much more likely to engage with a message sent from their peers or a group they are part of, as opposed to official council engagement. Residents associations and community groups

encouraged their members to respond to the consultation via their websites, emails and social media.

2.7. Those respondents who responded to the consultation via Survey Monkey told us that they heard about the draft masterplan by email, post, website, social media and "other", which included correspondence from local residents' groups, Wimbledon Choral Society, Time and Leisure Magazine, meetings where the council was presenting and Nextdoor. This is summarised in the pie chart below.



How Survey Monkey respondents heard about the consultation where information was given

HOW WE CONSULTED

2.8. An extensive engagement programme was carried out from September 2018 until January 2019. The activities are set out below, and were a blend of well attended community forums and public meetings organised by either residents / community groups or the council, sometimes with 50-100 people in attendance. There were also focused discussions with business groups, civil societies, landowners and others.

- Battles Area Residents Association meeting - 14/11/18
- Landowners Forum - 15/11/18 and engagement with individual landowners
- Wimbledon community meeting with Stephen Hammond MP



4

Public space workshop outside Wimbledon Theatre, November 2018



5

Future Wimbledon Workshop in 2017



6

Draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan launch at the Wimbledon Community Forum, 27th September 2018

- Cabinet - 17/09/18
- Wimbledon Community Forum - 27/09/18
- Design Review Panel - 27/09/18
- Wimbledon Society meeting - 01/10/18
- Wimbledon Union of residents Associations meeting- 04/10/18
- Residents Association of West Wimbledon meeting - 16/10/18
- Future Wimbledon public space pop up workshop - 10/11/18, 17/11/18 and follow up focus group.
- Meeting with AECOM (local employer) 29/11/18
- Love Wimbledon Board
- Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre public meeting - 12/11/2018 and follow up meeting with representatives of FOWTC

3 KEY STATISTICS

WHO RESPONDED

3.1. 760 responses were received to the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan consultation, from 702 respondents. The length of responses received ranged from one line to 40 pages of detailed analysis of the masterplan.

3.2. More responses were received via the SurveyMonkey form (493) as opposed to letter or email (267). The questionnaire on SurveyMonkey asked for the participant's views on the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan as well as some demographic characteristics. Responses that were received by email and post did not contain demographic data, however if it was stated that the respondent lived, worked or visited the borough then this was picked up in the analysis. A summary of the demography of respondents to the masterplan is provided in the next few pages.

3.3. With regards to the first question on the relationship of the respondent to Wimbledon town centre, the results were as follows:

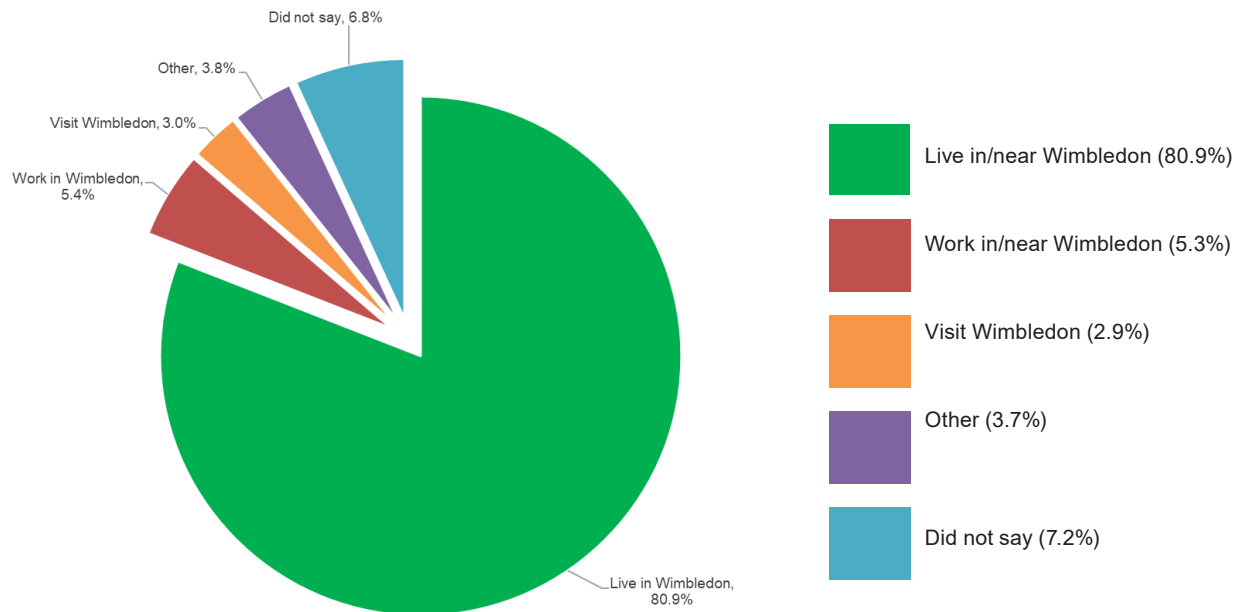
- 617 described themselves as living in/near Wimbledon
- 41 described themselves as working in/near Wimbledon
- 23 said they visit Wimbledon
- 29 said "other", which included landowners,

businesses, residential/ community groups and statutory consultees (for example Historic England, Greater London Authority and Metropolitan Police)

- 50 did not answer this question

3.4. This shows that the vast majority of respondents lived in or near Wimbledon. The postcode analysis shows that responses were

received from households in Abbey, Trinity, Dundonald, Hillside, Wimbledon Park and Village wards, which are all closely connected to Wimbledon town centre. Responses were received from across the London Borough of Merton, which shows the level of interest that the Future Wimbledon Masterplan generated. For many Merton residents Wimbledon is their nearest Major Town centre.

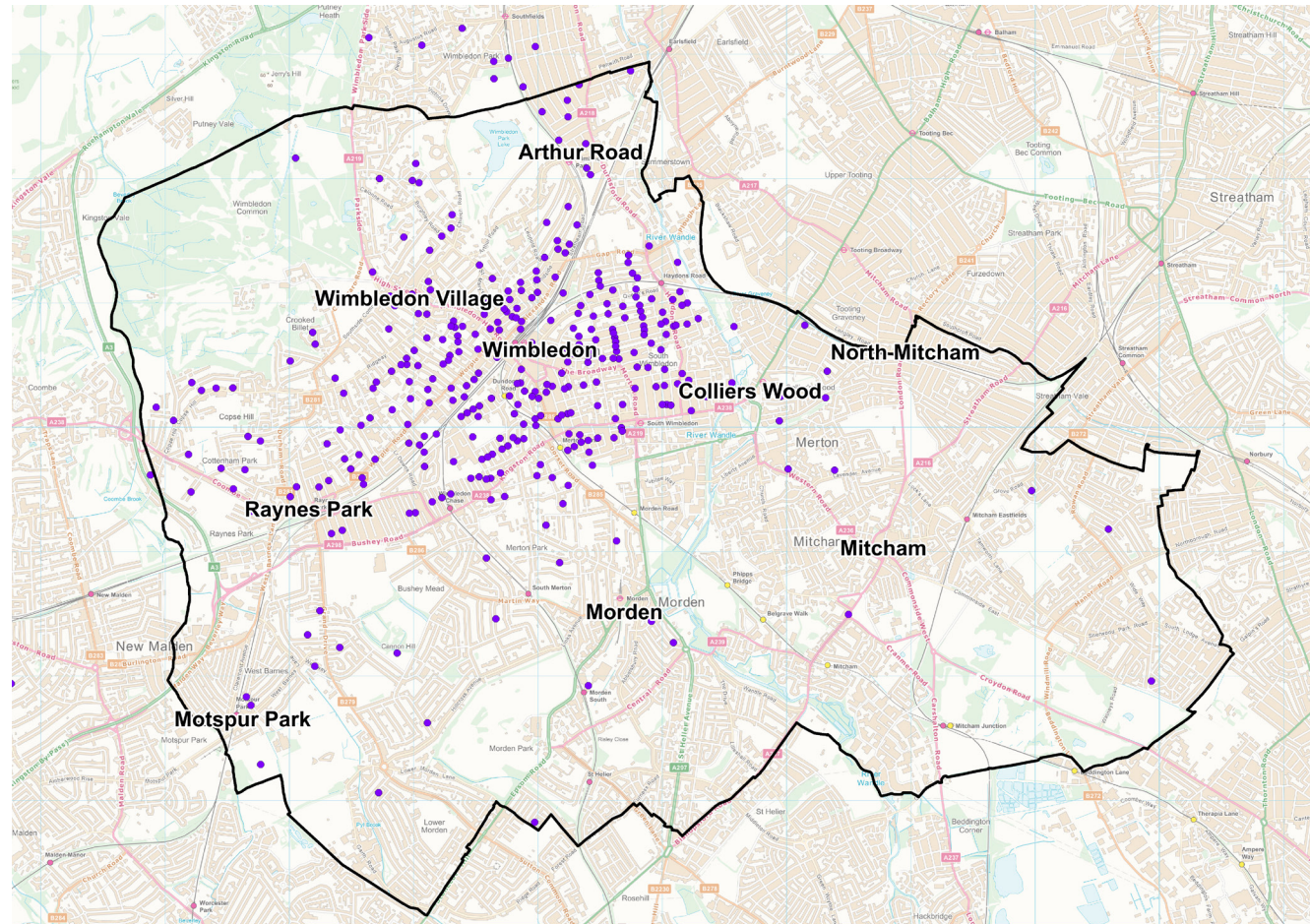


How Survey Monkey respondents described themselves where information was given

WHO RESPONDED

3.5. The map opposite shows the location of respondents to the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan consultation. It shows all individual postcodes provided by respondents, where the full postcode was given. There were responses from 355 unique postcodes, including 16 from outside the borough (not all shown on the map).

3.6. Responses were received from 9 residents' groups/associations, which represent a large population in and around Wimbledon town centre. The residents groups/associations were excellent at publicising the consultation, with many respondents either quoting or referencing their local residents' association's response in their own response. In particular, Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre widely publicised their response to the masterplan consultation, which was very effective at raising awareness amongst residents who may not have otherwise responded.



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OS MasterMap Imagery Layer has been created using OS's own imagery and imagery from other suppliers.

WHO RESPONDED

3.7. The residents' groups that provided a response to the consultation included:

- Battles Area Residents' Association
- Edge Hill Area Residents' Association
- Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre
- North West Wimbledon Residents' Association
- Queen's Road Residents' Group
- Residents' Association of West Wimbledon
- Wimbledon East Hillside Residents' Association
- Wimbledon Society
- Wimbledon Town Centre Neighbourhood Forum

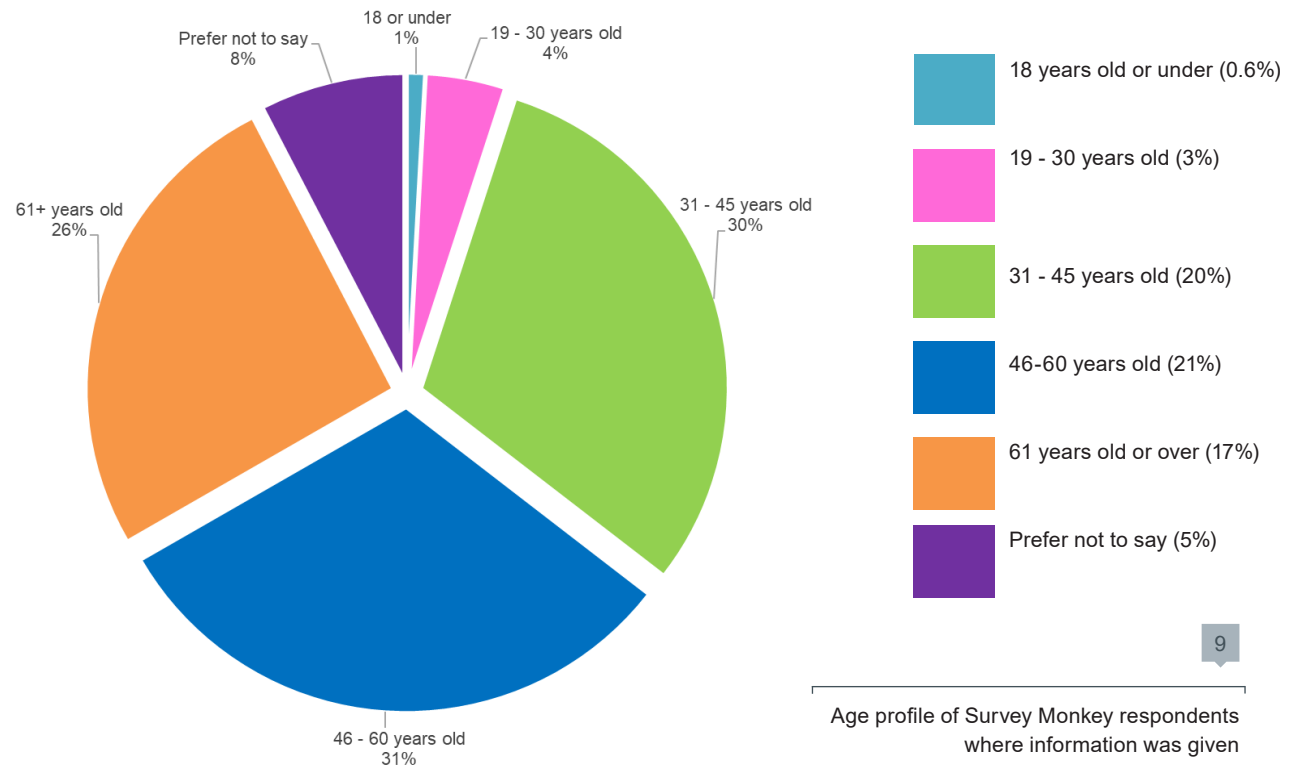
3.8. The Future Wimbledon Masterplan consultation was publicised purposefully in a range of formats to target all age groups. We were keen to broaden the age spectrum of respondents in this round of consultation compared to the attendance of the Future Wimbledon workshops in 2017. It was identified through previous consultations that younger people do not respond to planning issues as often as other age groups. In this consultation we wanted to reach younger people in particular this time around (defined as those aged 45 years old or younger).

3.9. In the Survey Monkey questionnaire 462 respondents answered the question on age profile, of these:

- 4 were aged 18 years old or under
- 19 were aged 19-30 years old
- 141 were aged 31-45 years old

- 144 were aged 46-60 years old
- 119 were aged 61 years old or over
- 35 said they preferred not to say

3.10. We know from reading the responses that there were more from younger people than shown in this graph.



WHO RESPONDED

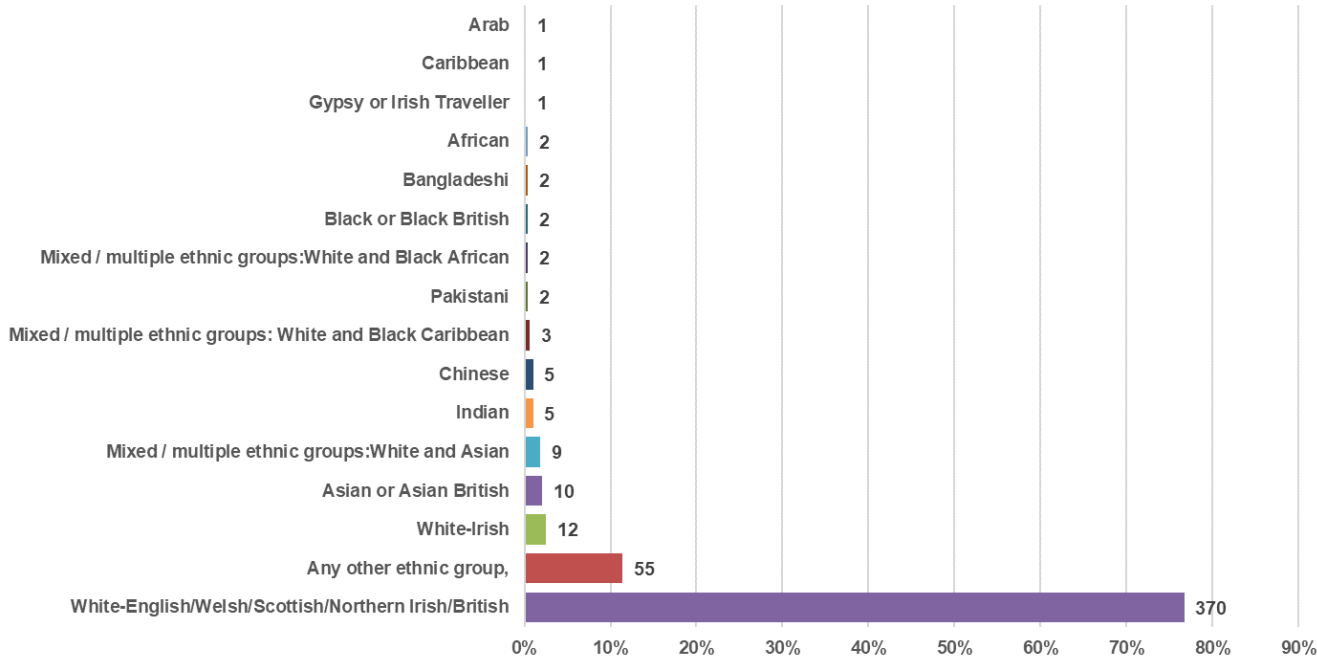
3.11. This data does not include participants in the Future Wimbledon public space workshops in St Mark’s Place and Wimbledon Theatre held in November 2018.

3.12. 453 respondents answered the question on gender identity, of these:

- 189 were male
- 232 were female
- 2 were “other”
- 30 said they preferred not to say

3.13. We also asked respondents to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire to provide details of their ethnicity. 482 respondents provided an answer to this question, which is shown in the graph opposite.

3.14. The majority, almost 80% of respondents identified themselves as White-English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British. The next highest proportion was for Any other ethnic group, followed by White-Irish. Less than 10 responses were received by respondents from all other ethnic groups.



4 PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THE PLAN

3.15. It was apparent from the consultation responses that some respondents were unaware of the exact purpose and status of the plan. For clarification, the draft masterplan is based on the existing adopted planning policies in Merton's Local Plan. The masterplan does not establish any new planning policies or allocate sites; it should be considered as additional guidance on how existing policies will be interpreted and applied to development proposals.

3.16. The purpose of the masterplan is to be clear on the nature of the town centre; the uses that contribute towards a vibrant and successful commercial offer; how this integrates with the existing residential communities and crucially, how the quality of design – public realm and architectural design lie at the heart of successful places and underpin good growth.

3.17. The document is how the planning policies that already exist, will assist in the delivery of good growth; how they are exemplified and how we will hold developers and investors to account in making Wimbledon town centre an even more successful and attractive place.

3.18. The purpose of the Future Wimbledon Masterplan is to establish a common vision for the long-term development of Wimbledon town centre; well into the 2030s.

3.19. The content of the plan builds upon the range of suggestions gathered from the Future Wimbledon Ideas Competition, engagement with key land-owners and the priorities established through community masterplanning workshops held in 2017.

3.20. Where sites are identified in the plan as having development potential; this does not necessarily mean that every site will come forward for development. This will be dependent on the will of land owners, and with commercial interests be dependent upon the expiry time-scale of leases and investor confidence in the market.

3.21. The masterplan helps to guide investment decisions and promote economic growth for the town centre; offering greater clarity to land owners and investors as well as the local community over the type, form and quality of development and public spaces the council would support for the town centre.

3.22. The key planning policies which form the statutory planning basis for the draft masterplan are;

- **Merton's Core Planning Strategy (2011)** (including policy CS.6 Wimbledon Town Centre and CS.7 Town Centres),
- **Merton's Sites and Policies Plan (2014)**

3.23. The masterplan has been prepared as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to Merton's Core Planning Strategy policies CS6 (Wimbledon) CS.7 (Centres) and CS.14 (design).

3.24. As such, the plan is a material consideration in assessing planning applications and, once adopted, should be used to shape proposals at the pre-application stage and to support the determination of planning applications in Wimbledon town centre.

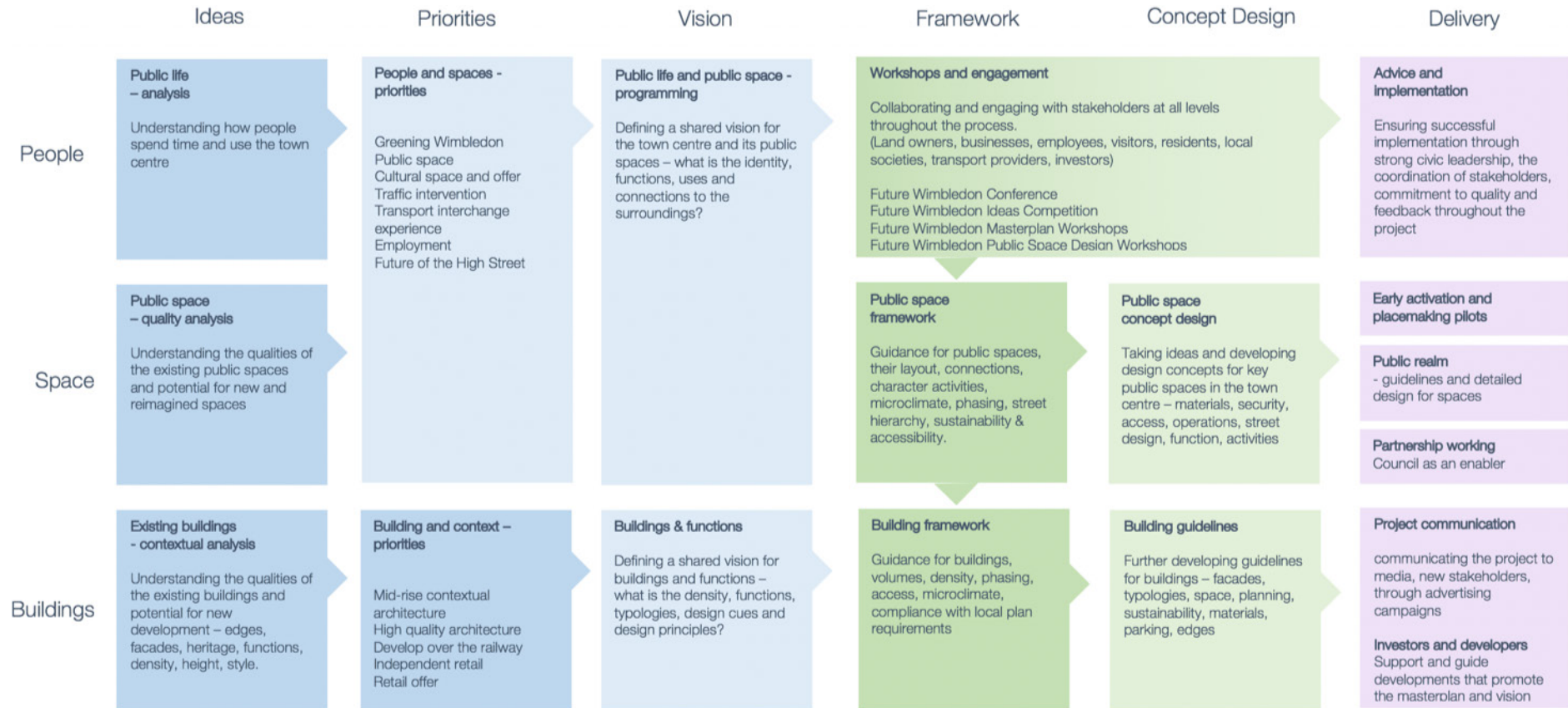
3.25. The final Wimbledon Masterplan (and the consultation that has fed into it) will be used in conjunction with other studies to support the preparation of new planning policies for Wimbledon town centre in Merton's emerging new Local Plan 2020.

3.26. The new Local Plan 2020 will replace Merton's Core Strategy (2011) and Sites and Policies Plan (2014) to create a single set of planning policies for the borough for use in decision making by Development Control and Planning Applications Committee.

3.27. On the next page is a reminder of the masterplan process.

MASTERPLAN PROCESS

Page 15



5 VISION AND THEMES

5.1. The vision of Merton Council for Wimbledon is to maintain and build on its current vitality and viability as one of London's major town centres, improving the transport interchange, with more business and professional services and quality shops balanced with community, leisure, arts, culture and associated facilities including tourism, achieving a noticeable uplift in the quality of the centre. The vision statement in the masterplan reads:

“Wimbledon has the potential to be south west London’s premier location for business, leisure, living and culture. An exemplar for good quality placemaking.”

5.2. This vision was met with some concern by residents in/near Wimbledon town centre, who worried that it was too commercially focused. We recognise that Wimbledon is a place with a strong residential community, as well as having a commercial presence in the town centre itself. The masterplan area relates to the Major town centre designation in Merton’s Core Strategy (2011), and is therefore more centred on commercial activity than residential.

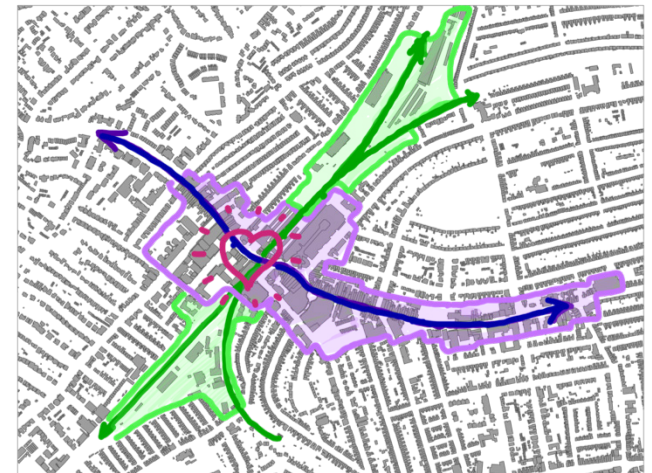
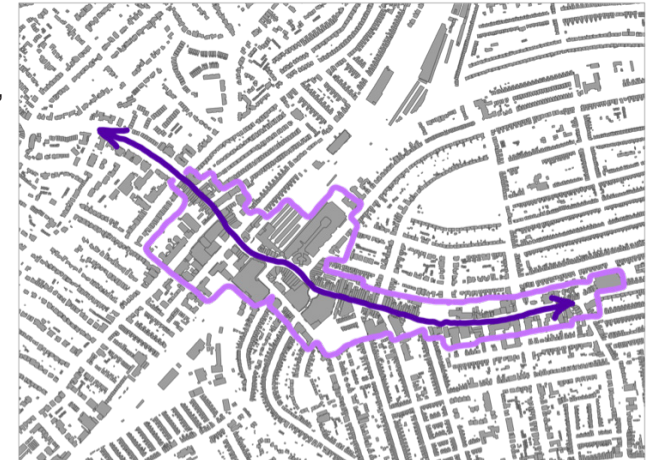
5.3. Merton Council recognises that the relationship between residents and businesses in the town centre is symbiotic. Both local employees and residents frequent the town centre, supporting the shops, cafés, leisure and cultural activities.

5.4. The vision is to maintain and grow the level of commercial activity (shopping, eating and drinking) and cultural offer (theatre, cinema and music) within the town centre for the benefit of Wimbledon’s working and residential communities.

5.5. The long-term spatial strategy of the masterplan is to transform Wimbledon town centre from single road, linear form by adding a north-south axis. This would be achieved through intensifying existing commercial blocks and planning for long-term growth above the railway. It would also ensure that the quality and character of neighbouring residential areas is protected.

5.6. The ambition to extend beyond the linear form of the town centre was generally well received. Developing above the railway line provides the opportunity for the town centre to grow whilst also protecting the quality and character of neighbouring residential areas. Specific comments about over-track development relating also to the spatial vision are detailed in a later section.

“The perpendicular design is a blinding glimpse of obvious and a delightful way to open up the station radials. Overall the strategic approach is positively bright.”
(Wimbledon Residents’ Association)



THEMES

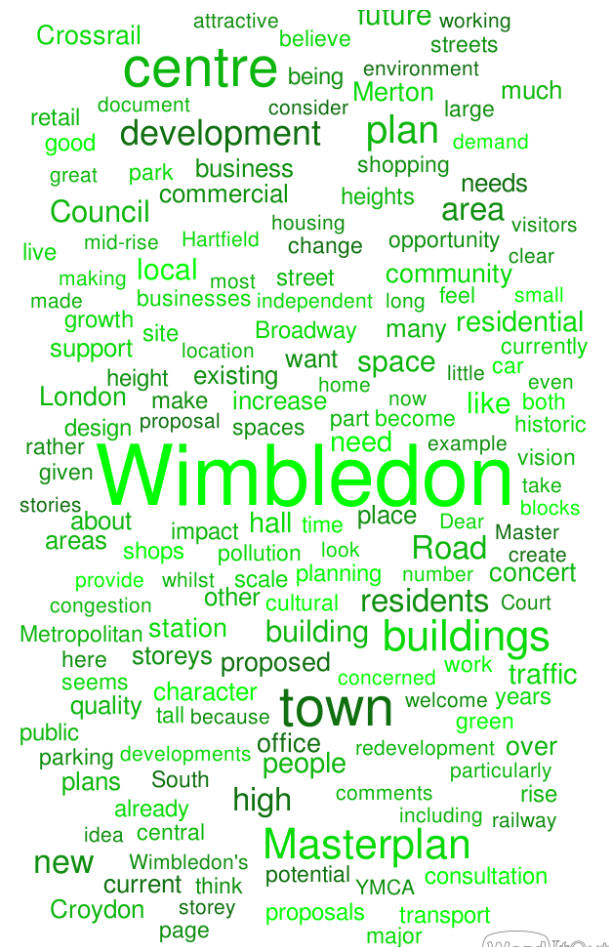
5.7. A number of themes emerged from the workshops in 2017, these were summarised into 10 Masterplan priorities:

- **Greening Wimbledon:** more trees, planting, green walls, new green spaces, sustainable design
- **Mid-rise contextual architecture:** mid-rise growth, contained in one place. Traditional urban blocks and active streets, tight grain (e.g. not podiums and towers)
- **High quality architecture:** higher quality design. Great contemporary design and materials that reflects, respects and enhances the historic buildings
- **Public space:** new town square, more, smaller public spaces to enjoy, relax, have events. Places for people
- **Cultural space:** desire for a concert hall, new performance space
- **Traffic intervention:** improve traffic management. Reduce traffic dominance
- **Transport interchange:** a world class station with integration of all modes of transport
- **Develop over the railway:** develop above the station and over the tracks. Stitch Wimbledon together

- **Independent retail:** more independent retailers, niche destinations
- **Retail offer:** better quality retail offer, more brands that suit Wimbledon

5.8. In the analysis of the responses to the 2018/19 consultation, the issues raised fell broadly into the categories listed on the next page, which provide the structure of this report. The most popular themes were Mid-rise architecture, Economic Development, Roads and congestion and Concert hall.

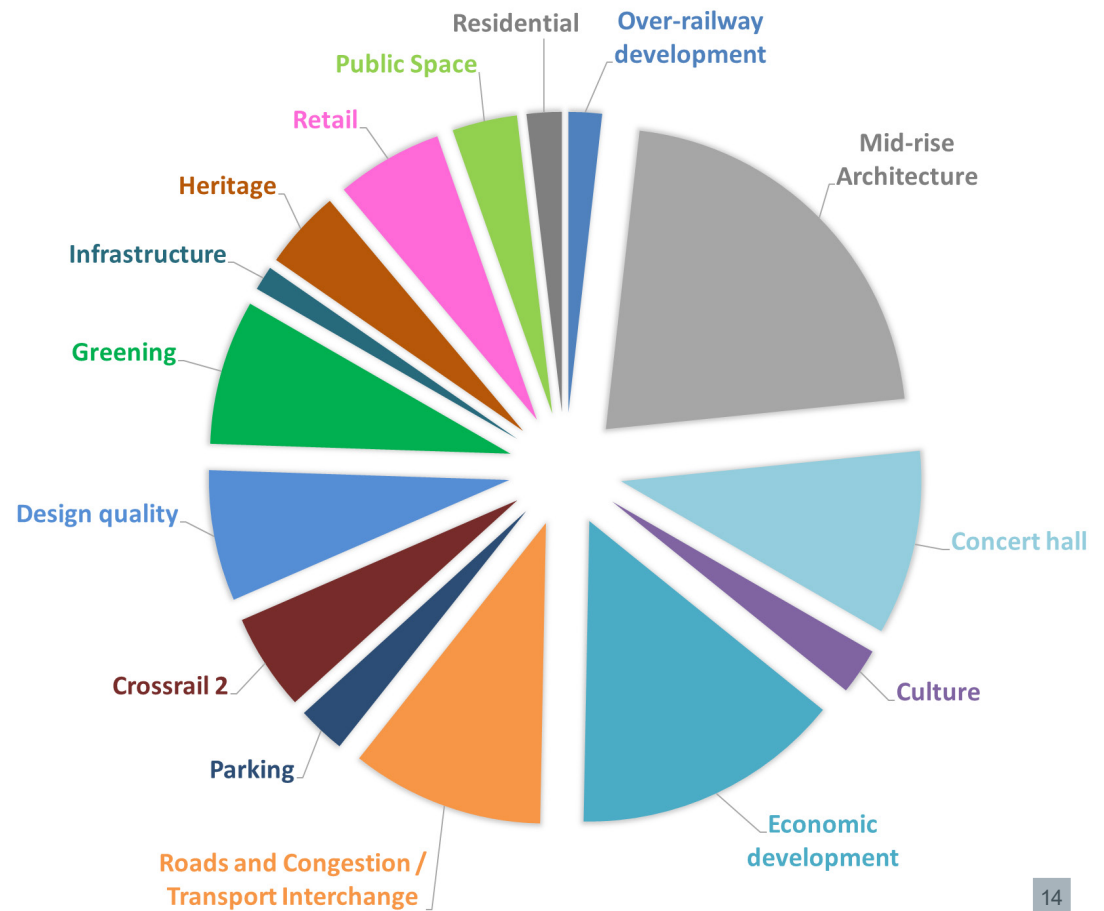
5.9. The word cloud opposite provides a summary of the 200 most used words in all of the masterplan responses.



Depiction of the most frequent words used in responses to the masterplan

THEMES

THEME	MENTIONS	% TOTAL RESPONSES	% RESPONDENTS MENTIONED THIS THEME
Greening	178	8%	23%
Public Space	80	4%	11%
Concert hall	227	10%	30%
Culture	57	2%	8%
Mid-rise architecture	493	22%	65%
Infrastructure	30	1%	4%
Design quality	161	7%	21%
Heritage	97	4%	13%
Roads and congestion / Transport interchange / Crossrail 2	237	10%	31%
Parking	59	3%	8%
Over-railway development	41	2%	5%
Retail	131	6%	17%
Economic development	331	14%	44%
Residential development	43	2%	6%



Percentage of total responses received for each theme

6 GREENING

6.1. 178 responses (23.3% of the total received) specifically mentioned the aspiration for greater greening of Wimbledon town centre. The majority of respondents strongly supported increasing the number of open and green spaces in the town centre for people to dwell, as well as greening up blank façades of buildings and bringing underused spaces back into use.

6.2. The council recognises the value of urban greening and is committed to the aspiration to provide more street trees and planting in Wimbledon town centre. Underground utilities are a significant barrier in some areas of the town centre, but we will work with landowners, for example, to provide new tree pits as part of new developments. We will also encourage existing landowners and businesses to provide more greenery and planting in the public realm.

6.3. Merton Council is also supportive of green walls as a way of softening harsh urban environments and improving air quality. We know, however, that they can be expensive and require irrigation and ongoing maintenance. We will encourage applicants to provide green walls on blank elevations.

6.4. Greening initiatives can also be delivered and funded through planning obligations (S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy). Merton Council will also work with landowners and the Business Improvement District (BID) to secure other funding opportunities.

6.5. Below is a snapshot of what respondents said about greening Wimbledon town centre and sustainability.

*“I love the greening part of the plan”
(Wimbledon resident)*

*“I’m very happy that the Local Plan includes more trees, planting, green walls, new green spaces and sustainable design. I’m also glad that planning is taking place regarding the potential for flooding and how to mitigate this.”
(Wimbledon resident)*

*“Be more ambitious on sustainability. Rather than just complying with regulations, new buildings and retrofits should achieve the highest standards of sustainability.”
(Wimbledon resident)*



15 Rathbone Square, London



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to greening and sustainability in the masterplan

7 PUBLIC SPACE

7.1. 80 respondents, or 10.5% of the total responses received, mentioned public space. The responses referring to public space relate to the creation of new spaces in Wimbledon town centre for people to congregate, interact and dwell. The masterplan proposed a number of new public spaces as well as improvements to existing spaces, for example, at St Mark's Place and outside Wimbledon Theatre.

7.2. Some respondents liked the idea of a new public square opposite the station in the town centre. There were suggestions to use it for markets and street stalls, play areas for children, more of a central park with lots of greenery built into the design of the square, and an open air theatre.

7.3. There was also enthusiasm for smaller-scale spaces dotted around the town centre, whether in the form of pocket parks or areas with seating or space for outdoor dining. The concept of the laneways connecting small open spaces was also well-received, by making the town centre more pedestrian-focussed and people-scaled.

7.4. The comments and suggestions made under this theme also referred to the public realm. De-cluttering the streets was a popular concept, as well as upgrading the paving, bins and improving maintenance of public space. One resident said: *"I like the de-cluttering of the streets, both in removing barriers between the road and pavements, and also excess signage."* (Wimbledon resident)

7.5. The masterplan seeks to achieve more public space or the redesign of existing public space geared towards people and placemaking - streets for people and not cars.

7.6. Merton Council will work positively to promote more markets and street trading to activate public spaces and support economic development in Wimbledon town centre.

7.7. In November 2018 the council held public space workshops to consult local people on the re-design of St Mark's Place and the space outside Wimbledon Theatre. The results of the consultation and concept designs produced by architecture firm Lugadero area available to view on the Future Wimbledon website. The council will work up detailed technical designs for a full public consultation in Summer 2019.

St Mark's Place concept design



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to public space in the masterplan

8 CULTURE

8.1. 56 respondents (7.4% of the total) mentioned culture in their response. In general they supported the recognition of potential for Wimbledon to enhance the cultural offer. Below is a snapshot of what was said:

“My vision for Wimbledon is a cultural destination”. (Wimbledon resident)

“I would welcome more public spaces that support the arts, options for more street music would be good” (Wimbledon resident)

8.2. There was reference to community in connection with culture, as illustrated in the word image opposite. It was said that “cultural” is an important aspect of the Wimbledon community, alongside education, which can be complemented by enhancing the cultural offer of the town centre.

8.3. Merton Arts Space, Bookfest, Wimbledon International Music Festival are all actively supported by Merton Council. The Council is also contributing to the redevelopment of The Polka Theatre and investing in the public realm outside the Theatre and in St Mark’s Place, outside Merton Arts Space.

8.4. Some of the responses that mentioned culture also referred to the aspiration for a new concert/performance venue in Wimbledon town centre. References to such a “concert hall” were monitored separately, and there were 227 in total. This represents 29.9% of responses received on the masterplan.

8.5. We received emails and responses on SurveyMonkey from local choirs and music groups, all expressing their support for a new concert hall in Wimbledon town centre. 25%, or 57 of the responses mentioning support for a concert hall did not refer to any other aspects of the masterplan.

8.6. There was some debate amongst responses as to whether Hartfield Road car park (sometimes referred to as P3), was a suitable location for a concert hall. 23.4% of those who mentioned the concert hall in their response said it should be located on Hartfield Road Car Park. This is shown in the graph on the following page which summarises the responses received on a concert hall.

8.7. 2 responses suggested that an alternative site be considered for the concert hall. One suggested that it be located near/ within the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) site. The other suggested that opportunities would arise through Crossrail 2 development for a concert hall to be built.



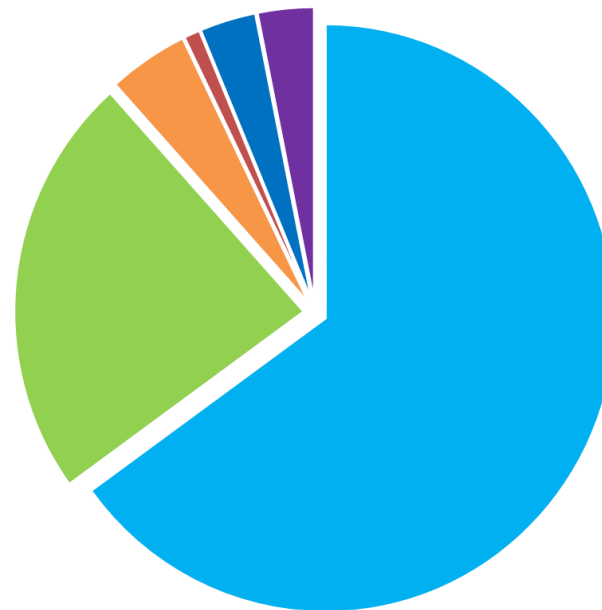
Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to culture in the masterplan



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to a concert hall in Wimbledon

8.8. Another issue of contention was parking (which is outlined in detail in a later section of this document) for the concert hall. If built on the Hartfield Road car park site, some residents were concerned there would be insufficient car parking in the town centre. 4.5% of respondents who mentioned the concert hall said it should provide adequate parking.

8.9. 7 respondents specified wanting a cultural building of some kind, but not necessarily a concert hall. Whether this was a multi-purpose performing arts venue, for example, including art gallery, conference facilities and performance space.



Opinions of the people who mentioned the concert hall in their response

8.10. 7 respondents were against having a concert hall in Wimbledon town centre, either based on its viability, there already being adequate cultural provision with existing theatres in the town centre, or the impact on transport infrastructure and parking.

8.11. The Council recognises the desire for a new performance venue in the town centre and continues to work collaboratively with the Wimbledon Concert Hall trust.

9 MID-RISE ARCHITECTURE

9.1. Building heights was one of the most mentioned topics in the consultation with 493 specific mentions (of the 760 responses, or 64.9%). The main concerns of respondents included:

- The effect of taller buildings on the amenity of nearby residential neighbourhoods
- Incongruity of taller buildings with existing historic buildings
- A fundamental change in the character of the area with the development of taller buildings
- The increase in traffic and congestion resulting from more intense development
- The increase in pollution resulting from development of taller buildings
- Added pressure on social infrastructure resulting from the proposed level of development

9.2. These concerns fit broadly into five categories: Design and heritage, Amenity of existing residents, Congestion and pollution, Infrastructure pressure and Justification for growth.

Design and heritage

9.3. The London Plan recognises that tall buildings have a role to play in helping London accommodate expected growth. To ensure

that tall buildings are sustainably developed in appropriate locations, and are of the required design quality it recommends a plan-led approach is taken. The Future Wimbledon Masterplan provides guidance on building heights and emphasises the importance of high quality design, which can minimise the impact of taller buildings on their surrounding context.

9.4. Increasing density in Wimbledon town centre will involve taller buildings than currently exist. We recognise that storeys is not the best measure of height and will be reviewing how we give building height guidance for the next iteration of the plan.

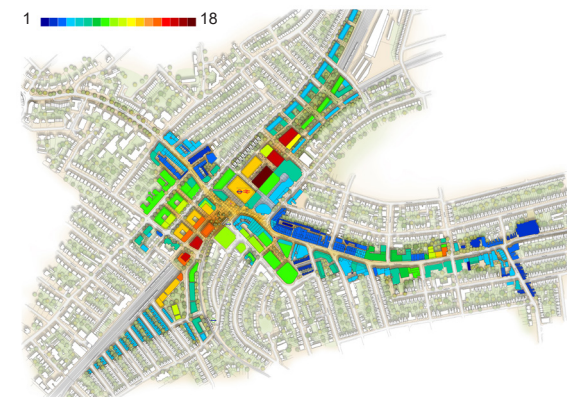
9.5. As a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) the masterplan cannot specifically limit building heights, only provide guidance of what, from an urban design point of view, is most suitable for the area. Each application will be judged on its individual merits in accordance with adopted planning policy, but applicants that propose tall buildings in the town centre will need to demonstrate excellent quality design.

9.6. The masterplan recognises the Victorian and Edwardian buildings in Wimbledon town centre as intrinsic part of its character and heritage. Wimbledon’s heritage is protected under existing planning policy CS 6 Wimbledon Sub-Area (Core Strategy 2011), which says that “Regard will need to be given to the Conservation Areas and the setting of Listed Buildings within and adjoining the

centre where an individual design approach will be required to ensure that large scale development conserves and enhances the historic character of these areas.”



22 Vision for the future of Wimbledon in the masterplan



23 Building height guidance in the masterplan

MID-RISE ARCHITECTURE

Amenity of existing residents

9.7. The position of taller buildings in the masterplan is such that they have been placed in less sensitive locations, away from existing residential neighbourhoods (e.g. over the railway tracks and station, and on St George's and Worple Road). This was picked up in one response: *"The Masterplan is careful to choose areas for the development of taller buildings that do not encroach on the character of the Victorian and Edwardian streets, and have the minimum impact on them. I have no objections to any of the Masterplan's choices of where to permit taller buildings"* (Wimbledon resident)

Congestion and pollution

9.8. Congestion and pollution are covered in further detail in this report under the section Roads and Congestion. The council has an Air Quality Action Plan to reduce air pollution in the borough. The London Plan policy SI1 Improving air quality requires that development proposals should use design solutions to prevent or minimise increased exposure to existing air pollution and make provision to address local problems of air quality. Pollution resulting from construction is dealt with in the planning process through Construction Management Plans and the council's air quality action plan.

9.9. Concerns were raised about future servicing and delivery for new developments. Each of these are assessed at the planning

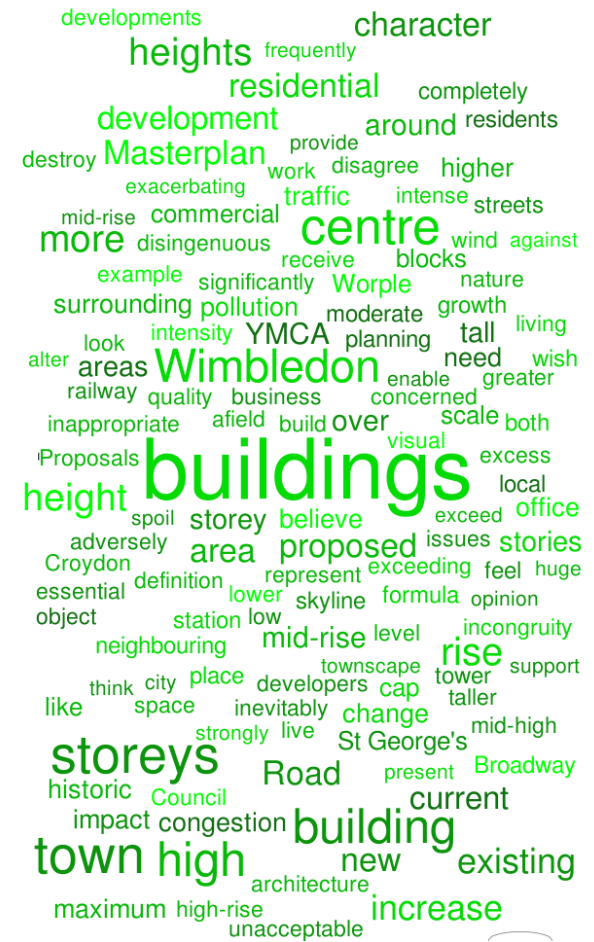
application stage as part of the Transport Assessment. This would always look to reduce the impact on the road network and residential amenity.

Justification for growth

9.10. The National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF) has a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For plan-makers this means that local authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area. To support economic growth planning authorities must aim "to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure."

9.11. To support housing growth planning authorities must aim "to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being."

9.12. The Future Wimbledon Masterplan recognises that Wimbledon's connectivity and international reputation means it has an



MID-RISE ARCHITECTURE

opportunity to attract investment to improve townscape and public spaces, delivering new homes and realising untapped commercial benefits. This is well summarised in one response: *“As the population of London rises those areas that were previously low-density suburbs and have the best transport links should be urbanised with taller buildings”* (Wimbledon resident)

YMCA

9.13. There were specific concerns about the height of the YMCA on The Broadway. It is already a prominent building amongst the existing townscape. The council will work with the developer to ensure that any redevelopment meets the needs of the YMCA and improves the townscape. The exact building height will be determined at the planning application stage by design and viability requirements. As with all planning applications we advise the applicant to engage with the local community at the earliest possible stage.

Building Height Guidance

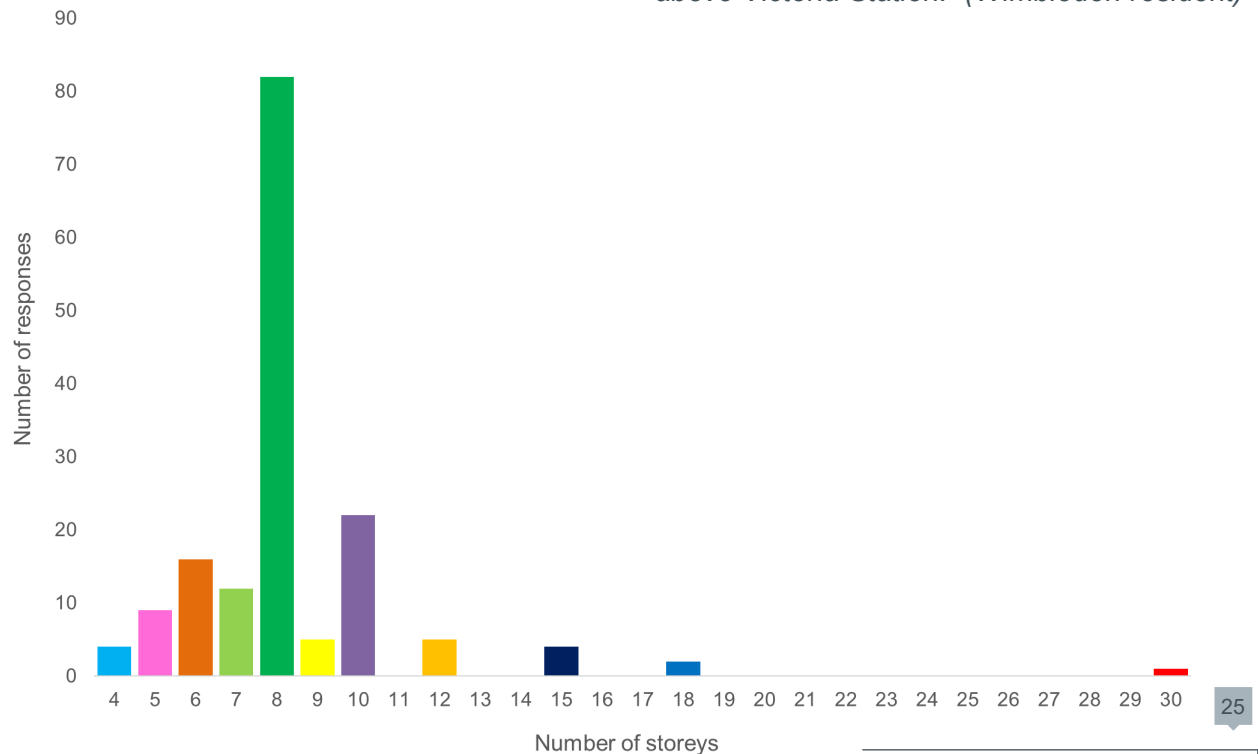
9.14. 162 respondents (of the 760 in total, or 21.3%) provided what they thought should be the maximum number of storeys in Wimbledon town centre. 141 of that 162 described themselves as living in/near Wimbledon and the other 19 did not say whether they lived, worked or visited Wimbledon. None of these

respondents identified themselves as a landowner or business. This data is shown in the graph below.

9.15. Here are a couple of quotes from the responses that summarise their position on building heights:

“I think the precedent of around 8 storeys is the maximum that should be allowed in any neighbourhood area” (Wimbledon resident)

“I feel it’s better to have high-rise, e.g. 30 storey, high-specification offices located just above the tracks on either side of the Wimbledon station, similar to the buildings above Victoria Station.” (Wimbledon resident)



Maximum number of storeys suggested by residents in the consultation

10 INFRASTRUCTURE

10.1. 29 respondents, or 3.8% of the total number of responses received, voiced concern about the effect of residential and commercial growth on existing infrastructure, for example, schools, health facilities, roads and utilities.

“I like it but I don’t see any new school or high school or services for the public, if you increment the number of people living in the area you will need to increment the services too.” (Wimbledon resident)

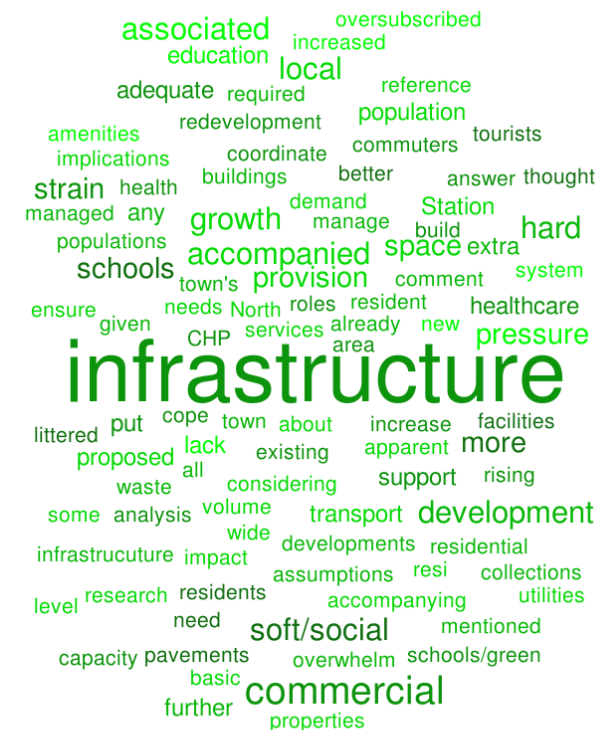
“How will the infrastructure cope with the amount of people whether living or passing through?” (Wimbledon resident)

10.2. Some respondents expected to see specific evidence and research on the future infrastructure need based on the assumed development in the masterplan. It is, however, the council’s Local Plan (currently being refreshed) that will consider future infrastructure needs related to potential increase in population resulting from growth.

10.3. As part of the Local Plan process the council will consult utilities providers (such as Thames Water and UK Power Networks) to ensure that there is adequate infrastructure provision. The council regularly consults with Merton CCG and other NHS bodies (including HUDU - the Healthy Urban Development Unit) on future healthcare provision with regard to proposed new developments and resulting

population increases in Merton.

10.4. Similarly, the council engages with colleagues in Merton Council to ensure there is sufficient childcare and schools provision in response to new developments and population growth.



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to infrastructure in the masterplan

11 DESIGN QUALITY

Page 27

11.1. 162 respondents (21.3% of the total number of responses received) commented specifically on design quality. The majority agreed with the need for higher quality design to be sought from new developments in Wimbledon town centre. In particular the use of Portland stone and London stock brick and red brick in new schemes was popular amongst respondents.

11.2. There was also a call for interesting/innovative design and character, with the potential to mix architecture that complements Wimbledon's heritage with new "statement architecture", for example near the station.

11.3. The preferred outcome of the design quality guidance in the masterplan is a consistent, integrated planning that results in high quality architecture that complements the character of the area. In addition, taller buildings should also create a sense of appeal at street level.

11.4. Alongside encouraging high quality design of new developments it was recognised by respondents that investment in good local buildings would also improve the image of Wimbledon town centre. Some respondents suggested that there was a stronger link needed to sustainability. They proposed encouraging less carbon intensive buildings with an ambition to BREEAM standard "Excellent". We will look favourably on applications that go beyond current

sustainability regulations.

11.5. The consultation has highlighted that the quality and aesthetic of post-war to contemporary buildings in the town centre do not contribute positively to the townscape. The consultation has highlighted a preference for natural materials and acceptance of Wimbledon's architectural DNA. We will seek to develop this further as planning guidance.

11.6. There were also comments received on the quality of shop fronts in the town centre. Merton Council already has a very detailed Shop Front Design Guide (2017) that provides guidance to building owners and applicants.



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Wellington House redevelopment, Wimbledon Hill Road



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to design quality in the masterplan

12 HERITAGE

12.1. 96 of the responses received, accounting for 12.6% of the total referred to heritage - namely historic buildings in Wimbledon town centre. We agree with the respondent who said: *“The workshops which fed into the Masterplan showed that Wimbledon’s heritage and sense of community are highly prized by residents. The preservation of Wimbledon’s remaining historic buildings should be a high priority for the Council.”* (Wimbledon resident)

12.2. There were concerns raised about the level of protection awarded historic buildings in the town centre in the masterplan. Merton Council agrees that the heritage assets in Wimbledon town centre are an intrinsic part of its character that should be preserved and protected. The council is already investing in heritage assets in the town centre, with the recent refurbishment of the facade of Queen’s Road curve in the town centre where Queen’s Road meets The Broadway.

12.3. There is already a strong policy framework in place to preserve and protect heritage assets in Wimbledon town centre, at both local and national policy levels. To make this more clear in the next draft of the masterplan there will be a map of all of the heritage assets in the town centre and surrounding area with their protection status in planning policy terms.

12.4. Another concern of respondents was the affect of new developments on existing historic buildings, in terms of design. Historic England commented that *“it would be helpful if the plan stated that development will be pursued in a way which will conserve and ideally enhance Wimbledon’s valued historic environment.”*

12.5. It was acknowledged in the section on design that heritage assets in Wimbledon town centre should inform new developments in the vicinity. One example is the recently completed refurbishment and extension of Wellington House on Wimbledon Hill Road, which complements the red brick architectural style of the Bank Buildings opposite.



28 Bank Buildings, Wimbledon Hill Road



13 ROADS AND CONGESTION

13.1. The section of the masterplan on traffic and transport was commented on by 237 of respondents (31.2% of responses received). Part of these comments related to public transport, but the majority were in relation to roads and congestion in Wimbledon town centre. Here is a flavour of the comments received on roads and congestion:

“We would welcome further thought on ways of integrating transport smartly (e.g. a hub for train/bus/taxi and cycles) and reducing traffic through the town centre” (Wimbledon resident)

“Merton Council needs to provide usable, safe and connected transport space for cycling - if this was encouraged and seen as a viable alternative the town would be a much more welcoming space” (Wimbledon resident)

“I was disappointed that traffic was not considered within the Master Planning of Wimbledon. This is an opportunity for Merton to provide an inspiring vision for Wimbledon that brings residents along and clarity to developers; yet without solving the central problem of increased traffic, all we have to look forward to is increased congestion.” (Wimbledon resident)

13.2. We recognise that congestion is an issue in Wimbledon town centre. The long term vision would be to secure additional road crossings over the railway, which would enable pedestrianisation or part-pedestrianisation of

Wimbledon Bridge and The Broadway. This is only achievable through significant investment in the station by Network Rail or Crossrail 2. There were also suggestions of how the road layout of the town centre could be changed to prioritise pedestrians, for example by re-routing two-way traffic along Hartfield Road from Wimbledon Bridge so that The Broadway could be traffic-calmed.

13.3. In the shorter to medium term there are several initiatives from the council and the Mayor of London which aim to reduce road traffic by encouraging users to use more sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) and making our town centres more accessible for active travel (walking and cycling).

13.4. In conjunction with the Mayors Transport Strategy, which is produced by Transport for London, a key theme is the ‘The Healthy Streets Approach’. This includes the targets of ensuring that all Londoners get the 20 minutes of exercise needed each day to be considered ‘healthy’ from their transport choice alone and; that 80% of trips are undertaken by walking, cycling or public transport, both by 2041. Achieving these goals will require fundamental changes to the mobility fabric of London.

13.5. The Council plans to invest in better quality public spaces, which will improve the experience for walking and cycling around



Wimbledon. There is a vision for cycle improvements in Wimbledon town centre by re-purposing existing road space to priorities pedestrians and cyclists over motorists. Merton Council is also working towards Vision Zero for road safety in Merton and by 2020, Merton will also be a 20mph borough.

13.6. In their response Transport for London said that *“In accordance with the draft London Plan, all development in the Masterplan area should be car-free, excluding disabled persons parking and operational parking. All development will be expected to meet or exceed draft London Plan long-stay and short-stay cycle parking standards.”*

13.7. Merton has a Local Implementation Plan, which sets out the borough’s transport priorities and Transport for London investment. The Local Implementation Plan is a statutory requirement under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and all London boroughs are required to develop a document setting out how they will deliver the Mayor’s Transport Strategy, its priorities and objectives at a local level. This is how future transport changes will be monitored and planned for alongside the latest guidance available.

13.8. Merton’s Third Local Implementation Plan (LIP3) is the Council’s main transport strategy and sits alongside the Council’s Local Plan and other future strategies. The LIP3 contains an overview of the challenges and opportunities in delivering the Mayors’

Transport Strategy within Merton; a set of borough transport objectives; a short and longer term delivery plan and a series of targets set by Transport for London that we are working towards achieving. For more information visit: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/transport-strategy/lip3>.

13.9. There will be changes to transport in the future, as picked up by one respondent: *“Autonomous vehicles and car sharing schemes have the potential to drastically reduce private car ownership, with consequential benefits for air quality and road safety. Much greater priority should be given to pedestrians, and providing safe cycle routes that include safe routes through junctions. We are likely to see new forms of personal transport, ranging from e-bikes to lightweight portable e-scooters, Segways and similar, reducing dependence on cars, and designed for use in combination with trains, trams, and other forms of public transport. The way these different modes of transport share roads, cycle lanes and pedestrianised areas needs careful thought.”* (Wimbledon resident).

13.10. In the responses concerns around congestion in Wimbledon town centre were associated with Air Quality. This issue was not specifically covered in the masterplan as it is an SPD about how the Council will process planning applications, it is not a plan for dealing with traffic and air quality issues in

Wimbledon town centre. These are dealt with in the Local Plan and Air Quality Action Plan.

13.11. Merton consulted on, and has adopted a new Air Quality Action Plan, this covers a number of important measures to tackle toxic air in the borough. We know that road traffic and private car use is a major contributor to poor air quality. As a borough we need to use all the policy levers available to us to tackle this public health problem.



14 PARKING

14.1. 59 of the responses received, or 7.8% of the total mentioned parking. Roughly a quarter of these responses referred specifically to the potential loss of Hartfield Road car park to a concert hall/venue. Other respondents voiced concern over the loss of any car parks in Wimbledon town centre to development. There was a call by some for all new development to be required to provide adequate parking, for example, in the basement.

14.2. The link between parking and retail was also mooted, with some respondents suggesting that town centre retail would suffer if there was not adequate provision of car parking. In particular, the importance of parking for elderly and/or disabled visitors to the town.

14.3. On the other hand it was highlighted that more should be done to discourage visitors from driving to Wimbledon town centre as part of a shift towards active travel. This topic has been covered already in this document, but in this context, respondents said that no more car parking was needed in the town centre since it is already very well connected and in future habits will change, be that with increased use of active modes of travel or introduction of driverless cars.

14.4. The car park adjacent to Wimbledon Theatre and Hartfield Road car parks have been designated for redevelopment in the

existing Local Plan. The suggestion that they have redevelopment potential in the Future Wimbledon Masterplan is not new.

14.5. For respondents who are concerned about accessibility of the town centre for elderly and disabled visitors, there currently is and will continue to be provision for disabled parking in accordance with the London Plan.

14.6. There is evidence to suggest that pedestrians and cyclists and people working in Wimbledon support the economy more than people driving to shops. Car parking usage in Wimbledon is not at full capacity. Wimbledon is extremely well served by public transport, with most of the town centre being PTAL 6

14.7. The retail satisfies a local catchment of residents and workers. Increasing car parking is not necessarily the right solution for Wimbledon, especially considering the comments elsewhere around traffic and air quality. The council will look to minimise the use of private cars in the town centre and promote more sustainable travel choices.

14.8. The word cloud opposite shows the flavour of responses received that related to parking.



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to parking in the masterplan

15 TRANSPORT INTERCHANGE

15.1. A few respondents mentioned the future of the station in their response. In particular the fact that there are currently issues with overcrowding at Wimbledon station. They were keen to know whether there would be improvements to the station before Crossrail 2, as well as setting out their aspirations for a future station as an integrated transport interchange between rail, bus, tram, cycle and pedestrian users.

15.2. The council will continue to work closely with Network Rail and Crossrail 2 on options to improve Wimbledon Station’s capacity and passenger experience, as well as viable opportunities to grow Wimbledon town centre over the tracks in the future. In the event Crossrail 2 doesn’t go ahead or is delayed, the council will actively work with TfL and National Rail to enhance Wimbledon Station.

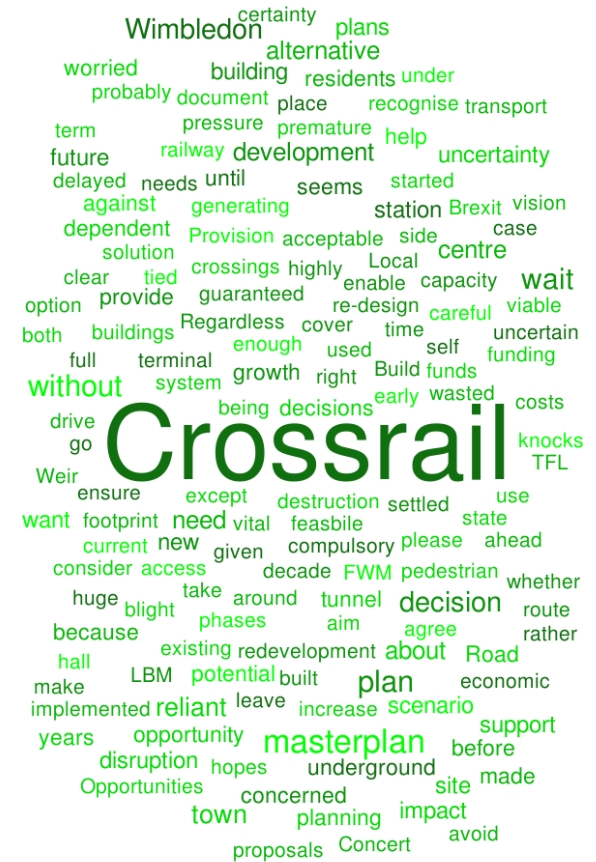
15.3. With regard to Crossrail 2, 119 respondents (15.7% of the total received) specifically referred to it in their response. The most common comment was about the reliance of the masterplan on Crossrail 2.

15.4. There was also concern that Crossrail 2 will shape the future of Wimbledon town centre: *“If anything, the plans for Wimbledon town centre should be shaping Crossrail 2 in Wimbledon, rather than being shaped by Crossrail 2, as I suspect is currently the case.”* (Wimbledon resident).

15.5. There was concern about the continuity of the town centre whilst Crossrail 2 is being constructed: *“The Council must become vocal and assertive in ensuring that the Crossrail proposals provide continuity of life for the town centre and cannot be allowed to proceed without plans to sustain the existing shopping”* (Wimbledon resident).

15.6. However, some respondents recognised the potential that Crossrail 2 brings to Wimbledon: *“We support the aim of ensuring that Crossrail 2 can be a catalyst for the redevelopment of Wimbledon town centre”* (landowner).

15.7. The masterplan seeks to provide additional guidance underscoring Merton’s existing planning policies that are relevant to Wimbledon. There are many opportunities for development and growth outside of the Crossrail 2 area, which this guidance applies to. The next draft of the masterplan will have a “before” and “after” Crossrail 2 scenario to give clarity to what is Crossrail 2 dependent development.



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to transport interchange in the masterplan

17 RETAIL

17.1. 130 responses were received on the theme of retail, making up 17.1% of the total. The main discussion points were around the presence of independent retailers and large, high street retailers in Wimbledon town centre.

17.2. The masterplan proposed to encourage independent shops as well as high street chains in the town centre. There was a mixture in the responses between the desire for more independent shops, a combination of independents and high street brands, but also a focus on quality as the main priority. This is demonstrated in the word cloud opposite, where “more”, “independent”, “shops”, “retail”, and “support” are the most prominent words.

“I’d like to see a town centre that has a mixture of chain and independent shops” (Wimbledon resident)

“The Wimbledon plan should concentrate on making Wimbledon a centre to eat, relax, enjoy culture and to shop” (Wimbledon resident)

17.3. There was aspiration to improve the flexibility of retail spaces to cater for smaller and larger retailers as well as temporary/ pop-up uses in the town centre. There was also a desire for more markets, such as a weekly farmer’s market in Wimbledon: “more places for pop-up stores, affordable rents for independent shops and cafés, as well as creative spaces and a real farmers market

would transform the appeal of Wimbledon as a shopping and leisure destination” (Wimbledon resident)

17.4. There were also reminders from respondents that the role of the high street is changing, and the aim of the masterplan is for Wimbledon town centre to be resilient in the face of changing shopping habits.

17.5. We hear that residents would like higher quality shops in Wimbledon town centre, and this is a great aspiration. However, the council does not have control over who occupies shops, but we can work with applicants to ensure that we get a mix of size of units to accommodate both large retailers as well as smaller, independent shops. The council supports markets, and is promoting increasing the market stall offer in St Mark’s Place as part of the public space re-design.



35 Respondents support more independent shops



36 Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to retail in the masterplan

18 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

18.1. Economic development and the growth in office space in Wimbledon town centre was one of the most mentioned topics with 330, or 43.4% of respondents mentioning it. Connected with this 99 respondents explicitly said that they did not agree with the aspiration for Wimbledon to become a Metropolitan Centre.

18.2. Whilst there were some positive comments, for example: *“There are such incredible opportunities to attract significant corporations and employers to Wimbledon as a result of its location close to London and the highly educated workforce that currently commutes into London”* (Wimbledon resident). Most respondents were concerned about the level of growth required for Wimbledon to become a Metropolitan Centre.

18.3. Some respondents felt that the masterplan was too focused on commercial growth at the expense of existing residential neighbourhoods. The commercial element was stronger in the plan than mention of existing residential neighbourhoods, because it is guidance on an existing town centre policy. That is not to say that the commercial element of the town centre is more important than residential, the two complement one another.

18.4. The masterplan reiterated the current policy position from the Core Strategy and Economic Development Strategy which refer to promoting job growth in Wimbledon. Both of these documents required evidence

to be prepared, which the masterplan, as supplementary planning guidance, is not required. The proposals in the masterplan relate to design-led massing. In the new Local Plan there will be up to date evidence provided to support economic planning policies.

18.5. There was concern amongst respondents that there will be speculative office development that may result in vacant offices in future due to changing technology and flexible ways of working. Merton Council recognises that working patterns will change in the future, but Wimbledon remains a sustainable place for employment growth.

18.6. Wimbledon is part of the Crossrail 2 growth corridor and an Opportunity Area that includes Wimbledon/Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon in the new London Plan, which has been identified to support 5,000 new homes and 6,000 new jobs over the next 10 years. The masterplan demonstrates how we will plan to accommodate this level of growth.

“The masterplan needs to do all it can to improve the look and feel of the town centre whilst enabling growth for current and future businesses in Wimbledon. Several businesses have moved away from Wimbledon as the office portfolio needs more flexibility, be of higher quality whilst also catering for small start-ups.” (Love Wimbledon)



Depiction of the most frequent words used in response to economic development in the masterplan

19 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

19.1. 43 responses, or 5.7% of respondents specifically talked about residential development in their consultation response. Most respondents commented on the housing crisis in London and lack of affordable housing for local people and for their children. Others said they would like future residential development in the town centre to include accommodation for older people and key workers.

19.2. The masterplan recognises the value of a mixed use town centre and that Wimbledon town centre has potential to accommodate residential growth. There is an existing Article 4 direction in the core of the town centre which seeks to protect office developments from conversion to residential via prior approval (without full planning permission required).

19.3. New residential development in Wimbledon town centre will be plan-led as part of the new Local Plan. This masterplan does not stop residential development, but it is a plan for the town centre, which is predominantly commercial. We recognise that Wimbledon is also a residential area with a strong community.

19.4. The plan identified opportunities for new residential areas to the north of the station, over the railway, and to the south of the station at Dundonald Yards.

19.5. Any new housing development will be required to meet the Local Plan housing policies, which include the mix of unit sizes and affordable provision.

20 LANDOWNERS

20.1. Landowners engaged positively with the masterplan, which was intended to offer guidance and certainty to landowners and investors interested in developing in Wimbledon. Developers and landowners were generally supportive of the suggested scale of growth. However, the owners of Wimbledon Bridge House were concerned that the masterplan replaced their asset with a new town square. The council included this in the masterplan as it had already been in the public domain via Crossrail 2's consultations.

20.2. Whilst we understand the view of landowners differs from the views of most respondents, the council in its role as the planning authority must find an appropriate balance between the scale of development and the realities of development economics and viability.

20.3. Responses were received from the following landowners, all of which are available to read online at merton.gov.uk/futurewimbledon.

- Hermes Property Unit Trust - 12 Hartfield Road and 15-21 The Broadway
- Hermes - Wimbledon Bridge House
- Kingston Estates - 1-4 Francis Grove
- Lidl UK GmbH - 19 Worple Road
- Reef Estates - 27-39 Hartfield Road
- Thornsett Group - 196-200 The Broadway
- Wimbledon Offices Ltd - Tuition House, St George's Road, 7 Francis Grove, and Temple Place, 247 The Broadway
- Woodcock Holdings Ltd - 188-194 The Broadway
- YMCA - 200 The Broadway
- Zahawi & Zahawi Ltd - 6-10 St George's Road and 16-18 Wimbledon Hill Road
- Aberdeen Standard Investments - Centre Court Shopping Centre
- BMO Real Estate Partners - Victoria Crescent/Piazza
- Eskmuir Group - 8-20 Worple Road and 20-26 St George's Road

21 NEXT STEPS

21.1. The Wimbledon Masterplan consultation has created a dialogue locally about the future of our town centre. The plan is intended to offer further guidance beyond existing planning policies to help inform and shape new developments in Wimbledon.

21.2. The consultation has raised issues about the nature, function and scale of the town as well as highlighting concerns around development quality and the impact of Crossrail 2.

21.3. The council is grateful for all comments received and these will now guide the editing of the next draft of the plan. Changes that we are now working on include:

- Further clarification of the status of the plan, its purpose and its application
- Revising downward the suggested building heights and refining the suggested massing using 3D modelling. This will also include setting building height guidance in metres rather than storeys.
- Enhancing the design guidance chapter to focus more on the principles of good urban design and how applicants need to respond to this.
- Revising the public realm and open space sections to give more clarity around the public realm improvements we can expect and how they may be delivered.

- Framing the masterplan in a chronological order. Setting out the developments and improvements for the short term, medium term and long term (i.e. before and after Crossrail 2).

21.4. The council will encourage applicants to engage the local community at pre-application stage to ensure that development proposals can be influenced by the public at an early stage.



Contact

future.merton@merton.gov.uk

merton.gov.uk/futurewimbledon

9th Floor Merton Civic Centre
London Road

Morden SM4 5DX



