

# SECURING THE FUTURE OF WANDSWORTH TOWN CENTRE – AN OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN UP THE PIECES

January 2021

*To note: The images that have been included, and the final presentation of the document, are subject to review. The images have been included as 'placeholders' for the purposes of articulating this draft.*

## **Background:**

- 1.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Council has been developing its approach to supporting communities by creating the right environment so that Wandsworth becomes a place where businesses and town centres thrive, where social mobility is high and residents are supported to achieve their potential, where the sense of community and place that has thrived in the past months is embedded and the borough is green and carbon neutral. In doing so the Council has developed five overarching objectives:
- To be the greenest inner London borough;
  - To deliver the best start in life:
  - To promote aspiration for everyone through sustainable, ambitious growth and regeneration;
  - To ensure businesses thrive and town centres are vibrant and culturally rich places to go, shop and enjoy; and
  - Enabling people to get on in life.
- 1.2 At the same time the Council is developing a new Local Plan for the borough with a Vision that *“By 2038 Wandsworth borough will have maintained its special character, connectivity and neighbourhood distinctiveness, and achieved higher levels of growth in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way, bringing benefits and opportunities for all.”* The emerging Local Plan includes a number of Area Strategies including for Wandsworth Town. Recognising the role of Wandsworth Town as a major centre and its many assets, its capacity for delivering new homes and jobs, as well as initiatives such as the changes proposed by Transport for London (TfL) for the Wandsworth Gyratory, the Council has identified the need to develop a way to maximise these opportunities which complements the proposals in the emerging Local Plan and links across to a number of other Council and partner plans and strategies.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to achieve that objective by developing a Framework which identifies positive actions that can be taken to support the Council’s overarching objectives, and emerging Wandsworth Local Plan. There are real opportunities to create the right conditions to secure the long-term vitality and viability of Wandsworth Town Centre. The Council wants to ensure that it builds on, and connects, the opportunities that exist for Wandsworth Town in a coherent way. This Framework provides a way of doing this and we would encourage people to read it alongside the emerging Local Plan as it has been developed, in part, to

support the achievement of its Vision and Objectives. Both the current adopted Local Plan and new Local Plan have, or will have, a key role to play in ensuring that the right type of development comes forward and development proposals will need to demonstrate that they are in accordance with the policies within them. This Framework is intended to act as a guide for focusing resources and, where appropriate, investment by the Council and its partners to bring forward actions that are complementary to, and will help to maximise the benefits of, new development. This includes identifying where a more strategic approach is needed to support the achievement of site-specific requirements which will be of benefit to the Town Centre and surrounding area. A clear spatial framework and plan will also provide clarity for landowners and commercial investors and facilitate investment decisions that can support the Council's vision.

- 1.4 It is critical to ensure that the opportunities created by development are captured to ensure that Wandsworth Town's strengths are maximised to create a place which works for people whether they be residents, workers, business, learners, or visitors. The Council will work proactively to ensure that the key elements of the emerging Local Plan are delivered including by ensuring that development is high-quality, puts people first, provides the homes and workspaces that people and businesses need, delivers key areas of open space and ensuring that landowners work together to deliver the Council's Vision and Objectives for Wandsworth Town as a place.
- 1.5 This Framework is currently in draft form so that we can hear from the community of Wandsworth Town and our partners if we have identified the right actions and initiatives and whether there are other aspects that should be included.

### The Council's Objectives for Wandsworth Town Centre

- 1.6 Whilst much can be achieved through the development of individual sites, understanding, identifying and supporting the delivery of wider opportunities is key to creating a place that builds on Wandsworth Town Centre's existing assets by:
- strengthening links both within Wandsworth Town Centre itself and to the wider borough;
  - setting out how Wandsworth Town Centre and its surrounds will function in the future as a result of transformational change to the street network, pedestrian accessibility and individual site development (including the Town Hall site)
  - identifying the type of uses needed to support a successful Town Centre, which is sufficiently flexible to reflect structural changes in the economy and wider society
  - attracting inward investment and providing confidence to existing and potential new businesses that Wandsworth Town Centre is the place to be;

- securing investment in the public realm to enhance the visual attractiveness and accessibility of both Wandsworth Town Centre and its surrounds;
- securing the infrastructure improvements required to support the development of sites and their future occupiers;
- showcasing Wandsworth Town Centre's assets;
- responding positively to the character of the area and its heritage;
- supporting community integration;
- securing what is needed from development sites to support these wider, more 'public realm' related opportunities;
- improving the wider environment;
- supporting the vitality and viability of the Town Centre; and
- creating a place to be proud of.

### **How does this link with the emerging Local Plan and Wandsworth Town Area Strategy?**

1.7 The Framework is complementary to the emerging Local Plan and the Wandsworth Town Area Strategy within it. The Framework does not involve the allocation of land for development but rather provides a way to 'stitch' the individual sites together in a coherent way. The vision and objectives of the emerging Local Plan have been used to guide the Framework as these are relevant to the achievement of positive place-making. To this end this Framework uses the same three overarching themes within the emerging Local Plan of:

- People First
- Place-making
- Smart Growth

### **Why have a Framework?**

1.8 Developing a Framework such as this provides the opportunity to identify and bring together a number of initiatives and requirements that are key to ensuring the success of Wandsworth Town Centre as a place. The Council's emerging Local Plan can go so far but providing a document which identifies positive actions that can be taken both by the Council, including as landowner, and through its ability to bring partners together to make things happen, is a critical component in giving investors confidence that Wandsworth is the place to come to. This in turn will support the delivery of key development sites and attracting new businesses, jobs and homes. It is also important to make sure that any opportunities to create a connected place, which works for all, are not lost. Taking a coherent and integrated approach to enhancing Wandsworth Town as a place will help to ensure that this does not happen.

- 1.9 Wandsworth Town Centre has seen significant investment over a number of years resulting in the transformation of Southside, regeneration of the Business Village, Ram Brewery and South Thames College sites. There are two further major proposals which will support the next phase in the Town Centre's transformation. These are the proposed regeneration of Wandsworth Town Hall and the removal of the Wandsworth Gyratory one-way system.

### **Wandsworth Town Hall**

- 1.10 The proposals for the Town Hall, which will see the creation of a landmark civic hub, is an important part of the jigsaw, and an exciting opportunity for the area. As well as providing a modern working environment, the site will be opened up to the community, including the business community, through the provision and innovative use of flexible workspace and through the provision of public spaces. The project is now moving to the more detailed design stage. The regeneration proposals encompass the whole of the Town Hall complex (the Town Hall itself, the Town Hall Extension, Fairfield Annexe, and all car parking space within the site). The benefits of the project include:

- wider regeneration benefits to Wandsworth Town Centre through increased employment and housing density, additional retail/leisure space, together with improved public realm and connectivity;
- helping the Council to deliver high quality services by providing modern, accessible facilities for visitors, staff and Members as well as providing reductions in the carbon footprint associated with the provision of Council operations;
- better use of valuable urban land which will make provision of much needed housing and employment space and provide the ability to release the Council's Putney Bridge Road offices, Tadmore House and Reed House;
- securing the future active use of, and improved public access to, the Listed Grade II Town Hall building which is a valuable heritage and civic asset that contributes to the character of the Town Centre and will form the heart of a new civic quarter (in conjunction with the College building opposite); and
- Creating the opportunity for new pedestrian access into, and connections across the site to link with the wider Town Centre.

## Masterplan Landscape Character



Source: Report to LB Wandsworth Finance and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2 July 2020

### Wandsworth Gyratory

- 1.11 Wandsworth Town has for many years been a place for cars rather than people. This has impacted on how people view Wandsworth Town as a place and has affected the quality of the urban fabric, public realm, air quality, and the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to move safely and easily. The proposed removal of the Gyratory therefore presents a real opportunity to transform how the town centre is used and perceived and it is vital that we develop a coherent strategy beyond the Gyratory proposals themselves to realise and optimise the benefits. That is part of the purpose of this Framework.
- 1.12 The Council has worked closely with Transport for London (TfL) on plans for the removal of the Wandsworth one-way system and the Council remains fully committed to its removal at the earliest opportunity. The removal of the Gyratory has long been considered as a key component in securing Wandsworth Town Centre's regeneration. Without which the area would remain fragmented and the Town Centre would not reach its full potential. It therefore forms an important part of the Wandsworth Town Area Strategy contained in the emerging Local Plan.

- 1.13 The proposals would remove through traffic from Wandsworth High Street and East Hill, redirecting it onto a two-way Armoury Way and Swandon Way. Wandsworth High Street would only be used by buses, cycles and a limited amount of local access traffic. This will allow for the creation of wider footways and remove the adverse environmental and economic impacts of a busy strategic through road passing through the heart of the Town Centre. In particular it will improve the linkages between The Ram Quarter and the Southside Shopping Centre. It will also change the nature and use of other non-TfL roads in the town centre.



Source: Wandsworth Town Hall Masterplan.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 1.14 The implementation of the scheme is reliant on financial investment by the Council, with TfL providing the balance of the required funding. TfL will be making a submission to the government’s Major Road Network fund (supported by the Council), to secure funding for the scheme. Whilst the proposals are not dependent on government funding, if successful the costs to TfL and the Council could reduce. One impact of making the Major Road Network submission has been to push back the expected start of the scheme to 2022 in order to allow time for the necessary government scrutiny. With an expected timescale for implementation of two years the revised road layout and public realm works could be completed by late 2024. However, it is currently too early to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on all government and TfL funding programmes.
- 1.15 The Framework also seeks to respond to ‘asks’ that have previously been made by local community and business representatives (such as the Wandsworth Society and Wandsworth Town Business Improvement District (BID) which represents local businesses within Wandsworth Town Centre) as well as partners such as The Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust, the Wandle Trust, and local interest groups such as the local cycling campaign and Living Streets. This reflects strong local interest in the opportunity that the removal of the Gyratory brings to the Town Centre, to strengthen walking and cycling through, for example, the development and

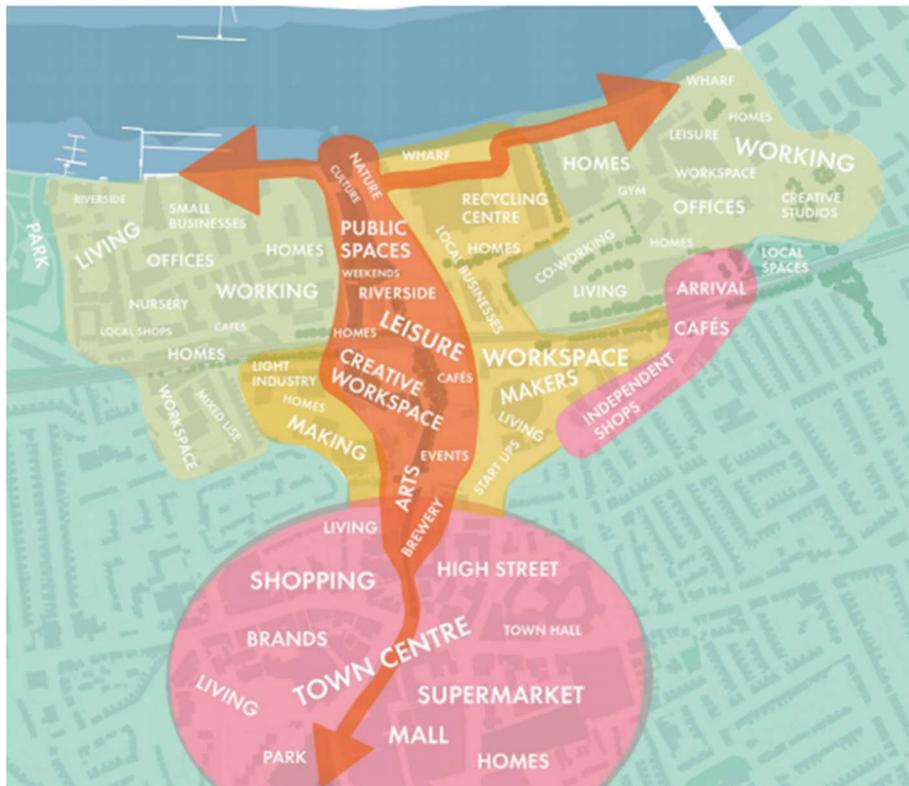
implementation of new wayfinding strategies and creating links to its natural assets such as the River Wandle.

**Why is the Framework being developed ahead of the adoption of the emerging Local Plan or the implementation of changes to the Wandsworth Gyratory system?**

- 1.16 The Framework has been prepared to provide a strategic overview of the area by identifying specific actions and initiatives that can be taken forward now. One of the benefits of developing this Framework is that it can help to demonstrate how some of the site-specific requirements in the emerging Local Plan will be delivered. This will ensure a more integrated and co-ordinated approach to site delivery and ensure that opportunities are not lost. The Framework also identifies opportunities that are not dependent on the immediate delivery of sites or the implementation of the Wandsworth Gyratory proposals.

**Does the Framework have a Vision?**

- 1.17 Not specifically. Rather it is a document which is aimed at supporting the achievement of the Council’s Vision for the future of the borough, and for Wandsworth Town, as articulated in the Council’s overarching objectives and emerging Local Plan as set out in paragraphs 1.1 and 1.2 above. It does however, have an overarching aim of creating a place which puts people first. The following diagram provides some visual sense of the long-term aspirations of Wandsworth Town as a place:



Source: Wandsworth Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan

- 1.15 The Framework also looks to build on the aims and objectives of local businesses and the community. For example, the Wandsworth Town Business Improvement District (BID) has a number of objectives as follows:
- Our Identity  
Build the town's identity and distinctiveness
  - Improve the Experience  
Enhance the town centre experience for shoppers, visitors and workers
  - Awareness  
Raise awareness of the town's offer including an online presence and full events calendar including free training for businesses and staff and networking opportunities
  - Our Community  
Represent business needs with a stronger, shared voice and help Wandsworth businesses improve their performance
- 1.16 The aims of the Wandsworth Society (which is a well-established amenity group covering the central part of the borough, including Wandsworth Town) are to safeguard the character, quality and integrity of the built environment, open spaces and river banks.
- 1.17 The Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust is a charity (of which the Council is a Trustee) with a number of charitable objectives including:
- to provide facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation in the Wandle Valley for the public at large; and
  - to promote, for the benefit of the public, the conservation and improvement of the physical and natural environment within the Wandle Valley
- 1.18 The Wandle Trust (which is part of the South East Rivers Trust, an environmental charity which aims to deliver healthy river ecosystems) has a specific aim for the Wandle to achieve Good Ecological Potential (in line with the aims of the Water Framework Directive), with a view to later attaining Good Ecological Status; and for the Wandle catchment to set international standards for urban community-driven sustainability and environmental excellence in river rehabilitation and restoration.
- 1.19 South Thames College provides a significant education and learning facility for the borough and beyond which brings many learners to the town centre on a daily basis. The changes to the town centre will add to the attractiveness of the college and, combined with changes to the Town Hall, offers the opportunity of creating a new civic and learning quarter.

- 1.20 Closer collaboration with private landowners will also be an important element in achieving the vision and objectives for Wandsworth Town Centre and its environs. This collaboration will need to go beyond ensuring that development comes forward in accordance with the requirements set out in the emerging Local Plan. There is a need for there to be a commitment to ensuring that it does so within the context of wider place-making principles and demonstrates a commitment to the wider area.

**How has the area of focus been identified?**

- 1.21 The area of focus has been identified having looked at how Wandsworth Town Centre works now and how it could work in the future within the context of the wider area identified in the emerging Local Plan's Wandsworth Town Area Strategy. With the significant amount of new development proposed in close proximity to the Town Centre it is important that the Framework relates to these areas in order to maximise the opportunities that new residents and businesses can bring to the success of the Town Centre. This will support its longer-term vitality and viability. Development proposals across the wider Wandsworth Town area will help to support the longer term regeneration of the wider area and considering this area will help to ensure that the new communities and business clusters created are connected with the Town Centre so that they don't become insular and isolated. It has also taken into account the Wandsworth Business Improvement District (BID) area recognising the ambitions of the BID and the role it can play in delivering aspects of this Framework.

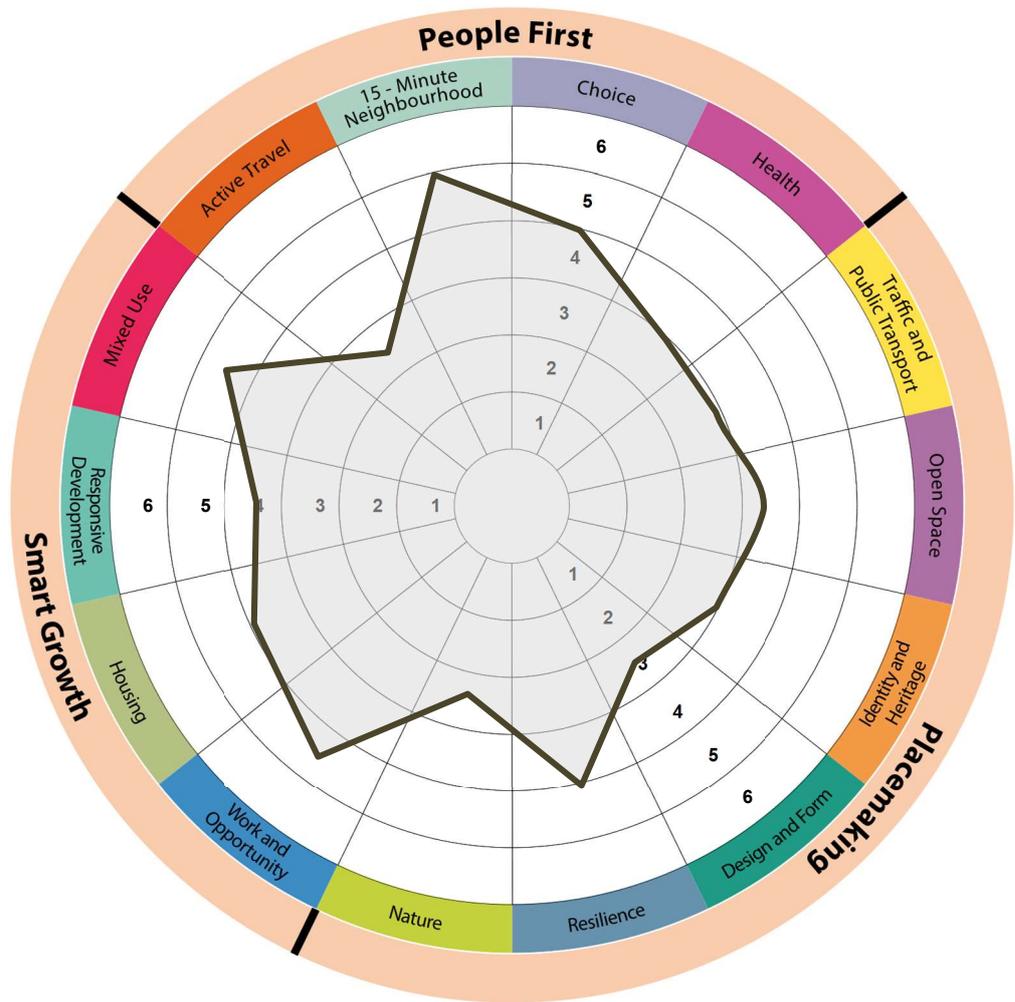
**2. Wandsworth Town Centre Now:**

- 2.1 The emerging Local Plan provides a detailed assessment of Wandsworth Town Centre's context and character and where it is now. This covers a much wider area than the Town Centre but, as set out above, it is important that the analysis covers both the Town Centre and the wider area that it supports. It is not proposed to replicate that information here but rather draws on relevant parts of that analysis. Of particular relevance to this Framework is the Place Assessment that has been undertaken for the emerging Local Plan. A core objective of this Framework is to respond to areas where a greater focus on enhancement would be beneficial and to build on the many strengths and opportunities presented by the area.
- 2.2 To provide an integrated and coherent approach this Framework uses the Place Standard topics and analysis used in the emerging Local Plan. Providing an assessment of the Town Centre as it is now using each of these topics provides an evidenced way of identifying what 'interventions'/'initiatives' should be prioritised to support achieving the highest possible 'scoring' in the future. This then helps to

identify who the key partners are and how initiatives and interventions can potentially be funded or secured. However not all of the topics within the Place Standard are intended to be addressed through this Framework. In some cases they are more appropriately addressed through the policies within the emerging Local Plan and the site specific guidance contained within it.

**Place Assessment for Wandsworth Town Centre and its wider context**

2.3 The Place Assessment for Wandsworth Town in the emerging Local Plan is summarised using a spider diagram which is set out below:



2.4 This section provides a more detailed analysis of Wandsworth Town using the Place Assessment themes and topics which have helped to inform the Actions identified in Section 3 of the Framework.

## People First

### Active Travel

- 2.5 The Council's [Transport Local Investment Plan](#) (LIP) shows that there has been an increase in active travel across the borough since the previous LIP was prepared. It is important that this progress is continued to support a number of objectives, many of which are set out in the Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy. These range from supporting healthy lifestyles, through to reducing traffic levels to improve air quality, reduce carbon emissions from transport, and support economic productivity by reducing traffic delays. In particular the analysis indicates that the largest concentrations of potential walking trips tend to be in and around the town centres, including Wandsworth.
- 2.6 As the LIP sets out encouraging mode shift to active travel and public transport will require action to reduce car and vehicle dependency, which bring problems for other road users. For example, road congestion can act to delay buses, while the speed and volume of traffic can deter active travel modes on perceived road safety grounds. Busy roads also have a severance effect, reducing opportunities for walking and cycling. In recent years the growth of private hire vehicles and smaller delivery vans has further contributed to congestion.
- 2.7 The LIP includes targets for traffic reduction and supporting objectives under Outcome 3 of the [Mayor's Transport Strategy](#) (MTS). Delivering the mode share target will, in part, be dependent on managing the competing demands on our streets. For example, providing more safe space for cycling could, without careful design, conflict with the desire to create a better environment for walking. Giving pedestrians more time at crossings could delay buses, making them less attractive. There are also potential conflicts with other modes, including freight and deliveries which often require access across footpaths or loading at kerbsides that might otherwise offer bus or cycle priority. The removal of the Gyratory provides a significant opportunity to better balance and prioritise active travel as well as local servicing by taking through traffic away from roads within the Town Centre. However, there is a need to look beyond the Gyratory proposals to non-TfL roads across the wider area.
- 2.8 The physical barriers created by the current dominance of the road system and the railway line in Wandsworth Town impact on active travel. There are a range of opportunities to make use of the existing network of roads and paths to provide more direct walking and cycling routes. Some of this network provides the opportunity to improve safety by creating separation between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians and through improved surfacing and lighting. In addition, there are a number of places where conflicts exist between cyclists and pedestrians, and

between 'high speed' cyclists and those who are less confident or wish for a more relaxed recreational cycle ride. These could be reviewed.

- 2.9 There are currently different approaches to signing routes which have different roles and this has resulted in different designs and styles often being located in the same places. For example, in some locations there can be three or four signs giving different information in different ways and of a different design depending on its purpose as can be seen below:



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 2.10 The public realm and general environment can, in places, detract from the ability for people to have a 'quality active travel experience'. Walking within the area is often impeded as a result of the amount of 'pavement based' infrastructure which reduces pavement capacity, which in many places is limited in width. This can have significant impacts for those with visual and mobility impairments, including the elderly, and for families.

**15-Minute Neighbourhood:**

- 2.11 The 15-Minute Neighbourhood approach is aimed at ensuring that day-to-day facilities are accessible. The current range of facilities and services within the Town Centre and the surrounding area, together with the opportunities identified to support active travel in particular, provides a real opportunity to support and enhance its role to act as the focus of the 15-Minute Neighbourhood for local residents.

**Choice:**

- 2.12 A key strength of the Town Centre are the opportunities that its residents have access to including in terms of access to a range transport choices, work and social/community facilities both within the immediate area or as a result of its connectivity to other centres in the borough (such as Putney and Clapham Junction)

and beyond - including north of the River. The proposals in the emerging Local Plan will support increasing residents' choice in relation to housing, employment/workspace, leisure and cultural facilities. The potential longer-term changes to the way people work as a result of the COVID-19 crisis could provide real opportunities to enhance the role of the Town Centre in residents' lives.

### **Health:**

2.13 The [Wandsworth 'Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2017/18'](#) and [2020 Annual Report](#) provide an analysis of the health and well-being of the borough and highlights a number of matters relevant to this Framework. This includes:

- that in common with other inner-city areas, the population and motor vehicle traffic density leads to issues with air quality and noise pollution;
- the importance of safe and welcoming urban realm and green space in promoting active living and providing important physical, psychological and social health benefits for individuals and the community; and
- that active travel (e.g. walking, jogging, cycling) can be a simple way to add physical activity into peoples' daily routine.

2.14 The current availability of open space particularly for quiet places to 'sit and be' away from the busyness of the area, the high density, high rise nature of new build with limited sunlight at street level have the potential to impact on both physical and mental health. The level and dominance of traffic has implications for human health arising from NO<sub>x</sub> emissions primarily from diesel vehicles as well as from Particulate Matter from tyres and brakes. Physical barriers and wayfinding and signage within the area has an impact on maximising active travel as well as encouraging people to explore their local neighbourhood.

## **Placemaking**

### **Traffic and Public Transport:**

2.15 The road network within the area is primarily managed by TfL rather than the Council. In addition the A217 Garratt Lane-Bridgend Road-Wandsworth Bridge has been designated as a Strategic Road by the Secretary of State for Transport. Wandsworth Town is currently dominated by through traffic using the Wandsworth Gyratory, the junction of the A205 South Circular and the A3 radial route from Surrey to Central London, the management of which lies with TfL and is designated as a Red Route. The number of strategic routes crossing the area means that many road trips start and finish outside of Wandsworth Town. In addition key destinations which act as a draw for traffic include the Waste Transfer Station and Civic Amenity Site, both of which are a resource for residents and businesses beyond Wandsworth Town.

Wandsworth Town is well-placed for bus (including Night buses) and rail connectivity although some parts of the area are more distanced from bus stops and the rail network. The Gyratory and general urban form of the Town Centre mean that accessing bus and rail services from the core area can be less than direct and confusing for users.

### **Open Space:**

2.16 Wandsworth Town Centre lies adjacent to King George's Park whilst Wandsworth Common and Wandsworth Park are nearby. These provide a significant asset for both Wandsworth Town and the wider borough. Within the wider area the two largest areas of publically accessible open space are:

- the Garratt Lane Old Burial Ground which provides a green link between Garratt Lane and St Ann's Hill and provides seating along its length as well as an ornamental entrance from Garratt Lane. It therefore provides some respite from the busyness of the area; and
- Bramford Gardens, located to the south-west of Wandsworth Bridge Roundabout, which also includes a children's play area.

Opportunities exist for providing more publically accessible open space which is available for recreation, children's play and 'quiet' spaces.

### **Identity and Heritage:**

2.17 Wandsworth Town acts as the administrative centre for the borough and Wandsworth Town Hall is both a landmark building within the area and a key destination. The redevelopment of the Ram Brewery Site has revealed an important part of the area's heritage. This and other sites, including the potential rejuvenation of The Spread Eagle public house, and public realm improvements that have been implemented in the Old York Road area support the protection and enhancement of the conservation areas which cover a significant part of Wandsworth Town. There is further potential to support the enhancement of the area and its historic core such as encouraging a more sympathetic approach to the design of shop fronts and associated signage, which, if not done sensitively can detract from both their host buildings and the conservation areas themselves. Particular opportunities exist along Wandsworth High Street.

2.18 Several Listed Buildings are identified in the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area Appraisal as gateway features but these are not so discernible 'on the ground'. Creating a sense of identity by taking a consistent approach to the design of street furniture and ensuring that it is of a high quality and appropriately located would help to celebrate the history of the area. The domination of traffic and the visual clutter from direction signs, traffic signals and guard railings can make it difficult to

appreciate the quality of the buildings and townscape. The area's role in supporting refugees in its history, including the Huguenots, are not as clearly celebrated as it could be including as an indication of the area's openness and inclusivity.

#### **Design and Form:**

- 2.19 Parts of the area, and those immediately adjacent, comprise more traditional low rise residential development with their own unique identity, including within the Tonsley area. Development that has been built over the past few decades has tended to occur on an 'ad hoc' basis has resulted in buildings of a varying quality of design. Past major development, such as Southside Shopping Centre, were built as what were considered to be 'state of the art' design sat the time but now appear 'out of kilter' with current place-making and design principles, including in terms of connecting with place and providing articulation to the built form to break up the dominance of such large buildings.
- 2.20 The dominance of the strategic road network has also dictated the nature and form of development. Consequently there has often seemed to be a disconnect between development and the public realm. The public realm itself is impacted not just by large volumes of traffic but also by the amount of infrastructure within pavement/pedestrian areas which are often narrow (this includes signage poles, bus shelters, lampposts, telecommunication boxes, cycle stands). This creates barriers to free movement in places, particularly for those with physical impairments, and for young families, and impacts on the visual quality of the place.

#### **Resilience:**

- 2.21 The Council has developed an [Environment and Sustainability Strategy](#) which outlines the actions it will take to help tackle climate change in the borough. The action plan sets out seven major themes including:
- Sustainable transport
  - Air Quality
  - Energy management
  - Urban Greening and open spaces
  - Waste management
  - Water management and flooding resilience
  - Planning and sustainable development.
- 2.22 The proximity of Wandsworth to the Thames and the Wandle increases the risk of flooding, a risk that is likely to increase with global climate change. The footprint/floorplates of some developments have only small areas which provide permeability for surface water run-off, while existing infrastructure also provides limited permeability. Current constraints, created by the limited extent of public

realm, and the height, scale and massing of some developments, have impacted on the ability to increase tree cover. Increased extreme weather events such as intense rainfall, the large number of impermeable surfaces in the area and a lack of tree cover means that surface water flooding could be an increasing problem. Future development and public realm improvements (including widening of pavements) would provide the opportunity to address such issues.

**Nature:**

- 2.23 Key biodiversity assets within the area include the River Wandle and Bell Lane Creek. However, large parts of the river bank are of an industrial nature or accommodate infrastructure assets with security requirements which have resulted in the creation of a harsh and inaccessible environment in places. Although the Delta area of the river has recently been dredged and the half tine weir removed (which, due to damage, had caused a build-up of silt as well as creating an obstacle and eyesore) the water and ecological status of the watercourses do not meet ‘Good’ Status’ as defined by the Water Framework Directive. Consequently, their biodiversity value is currently relatively low and there is only limited provision of wildlife corridors. The physical railway infrastructure also provides an element of biodiversity value within the area. Much of the area is developed (by both buildings and hard surfaces such as surface level car parks) with little provision currently in the way of sustainable drainage systems which can support biodiversity enhancement. The approach to development proposed through the Council’s adopted and emerging Local Plans as well as the Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy provide a positive framework through which to address these issues.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 2.24 A small nature reserve is located at The Spit – a small promontory lying between Bell Lane Creek and the River Wandle. It contains some public art and it has the potential to provide a pleasant place to sit in peace and quiet but there is currently

no seating provided and natural sunlight is limited due to the extent of the tree canopies on the site.

## **Smart Growth**

### **Work and Opportunity:**

- 2.25 The area currently contains a range of employment opportunities ranging from service/retail through to industrial. The area's accessibility to central London also provides significant employment opportunities. As such residents have access to a wide range of job opportunities. However, as identified in the Council's 'Employment Land and Premises Study', opportunities for Small and Medium Enterprise's (SME's) to access affordable space including 'move-on' space is more limited due to a relative lack of supply. Supporting such enterprises is a priority for the Council, recognising the important role that they play in the borough's economy. Flexible and adaptable space for small and growing firms, including for the creative industries, is also in high demand and is relatively undersupplied. A number of proposed site allocations require the provision of mixed-use schemes, which will help to increase such opportunities. The Wandle Delta area in particular provides a significant opportunity to meet the forecast demand in the borough. There will be a need to ensure that uses can successfully co-exist by ensuring that acceptable living conditions for existing and new residents is provided whilst supporting viable clusters of economic activity with good access to business premises.

### **Housing:**

- 2.26 The mix of housing in the area historically comprised more traditional two storey family homes. In recent years new residential development has been focused on higher density schemes comprising flats. This trend is set to continue through the implementation of further schemes including on the B and Q and Homebase sites, and at Osiers Road in the Wandsworth Riverside Quarter. The trend has also been for a greater provision of homes for private sale. In 2018/19 83% of new homes built were for private sale. However this trend appears to be changing with more provision being made in the Private Rented Sector. For example this is the predominant tenure proposed on the B&Q site.

### **Responsive Development:**

- 2.27 New development has provided for, and site allocations include the need for, the creation of mixed use developments. Based on the current typology of new build this is provided primarily through ground floor uses. As set out above this can impact on the range and nature of economic activity and there are examples of alternative forms of mixed use development that can achieve a more successful balance. Open space provision is provided within some schemes but its use, as with

the majority of open space, is limited to days when the weather is good. There are opportunities to consider the creation of open space which is designed to facilitate greater use regardless of the season. In addition, some of this space is impacted by microclimate issues both in terms of sunlight/daylight and wind. Some areas of open space that has previously been provided has been more focused on more 'manicured' environments rather than being designed to actively encourage community engagement and cohesion.

### **Mixed Use:**

- 2.28 The Town Centre and its environs contain a range of uses but individual sites have, in the past, been occupied primarily by one specific use. Opportunities exist through new development to secure more mixed-use developments with a choice of urban form across the area. This would provide greater activity during the week and at weekends as well as during the evenings, enhancing to the area's vibrancy. This will contribute to both the vitality and viability of the Town Centre as well as supporting the 15 Minute Neighbourhood concept. This provides a significant opportunity for enhancing the role and attractiveness of the Town Centre for residents of the borough.

## **3: Our priorities and actions**

- 3.1 We have reviewed the Place Assessment for Wandsworth Town and listened to what partners have told us through early engagement on the emerging Local Plan and emerging Wandle Delta SPD and our most recent Residents Survey. This has helped us to identify a number of short, medium and longer-term actions that will support the achievement of the objectives of this Framework. In addition we have been mindful of the Vision in our 'Wandsworth Environment and Sustainability Strategy' (see paragraph 2.21 above) to be a community which is living within our environmental limits in an attractive, high quality local environment and to be the greenest council in inner London by 2030. We have also committed ourselves to being carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030 and zero carbon by 2050. The actions in this Section will make a positive contribution to supporting the delivery of both the vision and targets.
- 3.2 In doing so we have looked at where we can have the greatest impact recognising that resources and funding are limited. There are some actions that we can take now which individually can help to address a number of issues identified in the analysis in Section 2 above. Importantly, working with the local community and established partners can maximise the benefits to whatever we can do. In some cases achieving our ambitions will be dependent on development coming forward but there are things that we can do to make it easier and quicker for developers to bring that development forward and ensure that what is delivered is not done in a

piecemeal fashion. By working with partners we can also bring forward ‘meanwhile’ actions so that we don’t have to wait for development to take place. In identifying the specific actions below it is important to ensure that we focus on projects that would not be subsequently affected by future initiatives such as the Wandsworth Gyrotory proposals or by future developments.

## **People First**

### **Active Travel**

- 3.3 The recent and anticipated growth in residents in the area provides a real opportunity to support the vitality and viability of the town centre. Creating direct, safe and attractive routes is critical to achieving this. It is important that, rather than wait for development to come forward, recognising that some sites are a few years off being delivered, the Council begins to make improvements to some routes in the area. A number of links already exist which have the potential to be enhanced in terms of appearance and usability to create safe and attractive routes for pedestrians and cyclists. One potential route we have identified is The Causeway running south under the railway line towards Armoury Way. Enhancements could create a more attractive route for residents including from the Wandsworth Riverside Quarter to access the Town Centre. This links in with the potential opportunity to enhance the open space area located between The Causeway and the River Wandle. There are also a number of areas where there are conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles which we will investigate to look at what local improvements could be made to reduce this. Locations we have identified include the area around Feathers Wharf and Pier Wharf.
- 3.4 Enhancing wayfinding and signage in the area is a relatively simple and cost-effective way of supporting active travel. Helping people to find their way round and realise that destinations may not be as far as they think also supports the desire to encourage people to make more use of local amenities and the Town Centre itself. A consistent approach in the design of information is an important way of making it easier for people to get around by providing clear consistent and simple signage and wayfinding to key destinations. However, because of the different partners involved in providing signage it can often appear confusing and can result in a large amount of infrastructure. As well as being unhelpful to pedestrians and cyclists this can also impact on both the visual appearance of the area and create additional obstacles for people with visual and mobility impairments and for families with pushchairs. We will therefore work with partners including Transport for London, the Wandsworth Town BID, the Wandle Valley Regional Park and local walking and cycling groups to look at how we may be able to resolve this. As part of this we will also look at locations where walking and cycle routes could be better signed to key destinations. Prior to the removal of the Gyrotory, a Wayfinding Strategy can help to attune and

acclimatise town centre users to future new walking and cycle routes through the use of innovative ‘meanwhile’ interventions.

- 3.5 We want to work with the landowners of the land contained in Phase Two of the Ram Quarter redevelopment to explore the opportunities of opening up the riverside connection between Phase One and Armoury Way to provide easier links as to the areas to the north as soon as possible. We recognise that there may be practical impediments to achieving this but we see this as being an important benefit in supporting improved connections to the Town Centre.
- 3.6 We also want to work with TfL to explore the potential of introducing reduced speed limits on the Wandsworth Gyrotory. This would help to reduce peoples’ perceptions of safety and therefore the way that it acts as a barrier to active travel. Such an approach could also provide health benefits by reducing Particulate Matter from brakes and tyres.

**Public Realm Improvements**

- 3.7 The approach that we are proposing to take is to identify areas where we can make what may seem to be small changes but which collectively will make a difference to the appearance of Wandsworth Town. The emerging Local Plan has identified a number of opportunities for improving the public realm within the Wandsworth Town Area Strategy Site Allocations. However, there are things that we can do in areas that are not directly impacted by development proposals or where this may be a number of years away.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 3.8 We want to create more space for people. There are a number of areas which have, or in the future are likely to have, high levels of footfall. We want to enhance the experience and quality of the public realm through carefully considered, well-designed proposals that can create interesting, dynamic, accessible, and inclusive public spaces. These should provide elements that encourage dwell time, such as

seating, which facilitate community and cultural use, and incorporate public art. We have, for example, identified in the emerging Local Plan areas where we want to see an increase in the width of pavements.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 3.9 Some of the proposed changes to the location of bus stops as part of the Wandsworth Gyratory reconfiguration, such as at the southern end of Ram Street, could help to create more space to get around necessary street infrastructure. However, there are other areas where the existing pavement is constrained, reducing the quality of experience for users either because the pavement is narrow or because it has a large amount of street infrastructure or both. We want to focus on reducing the number of obstacles that people face, including those with mobility and disability issues, when walking around Wandsworth Town. In addition a review of road crossing locations will also assist in supporting movement around the wider area and to the Town Centre itself.
- 3.10 We need to know where we should be focusing our attention and we will therefore work with local Accessibility Groups to identify locations of particular concern and identify what actions we can take. This could, for example, include working with bus shelter providers and TfL to look at opportunities to provide bus stop poles and timetable information as part of the shelter rather than having to provide it as a separate pole or at the very least make best use of existing infrastructure. This is a common issue, not just in Wandsworth Town, and could potentially allow for a ‘best practice’ approach. This may be a challenge bearing in mind the various parties involved, and the mechanisms by which bus shelters are provided, but we think this is worth exploring. There are also more focused actions that we can take such as working with developers to ensure that temporary hoardings around sites don’t encroach onto the pavement.

## Placemaking

### **Enhancing the River Wandle**

- 3.11 The River Wandle is an important part of the history and identity of Wandsworth Town and provides the main ‘connecting feature’ running through it (and to the wider Wandle Valley Regional Park), but has become something of an ‘invisible’ asset. Its presence is a significant opportunity to connect and enhance the area and its identity. Its ‘unveiling’ has already started through the completion of Phase One of the Ram Quarter. We need to build on this work to ensure that future opportunities are delivered to create a high quality river environment for people and for nature.
- 3.12 We consider that the way to achieve this ambition is by providing a more detailed framework for the River Wandle through Wandsworth Town so that developers of individual sites know at an early stage what is expected in terms of site specific requirements for enhancing the River Wandle. By providing information and examples of good practice and clear design parameters we can make sure that consideration of the river environment is designed in at an early stage in the development process. We would welcome using arts and culture to weave the heritage of the River Wandle into the public realm, thereby enhancing the experience of being in this open space. Developers will know up-front what they are required to do so that this is factored into their designs from the start and inform their land deals. This will minimise the need to have to negotiate amendments to planning applications and ensure that the river environment is properly respected and new active travel connections secured to achieve a coherent new network. This will benefit both people and nature. The Framework can provide guidance ranging from being clear about minimum widths between the river’s edge and built development, long-term maintenance requirements, and approaches to the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that complement the river environment and ensure that the environmental and ecological status of the water is enhanced in line with the objectives of the River Wandle Catchment Plan. The Council can develop this approach by building on the partnership that was created to develop the River Wandle Catchment Plan (which included The Wandle Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, Thames Water, and the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust).



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 3.13 We also consider that there are opportunities to enhance The Spit as a way of appreciating nature and creating a place for quiet contemplation. Whilst it is a nature reserve the raising of some of the tree canopies to create more light and openness could help to address current issues which appear to be impacting on its attractiveness. This, together with appropriate seating, would enhance its use.

### **Greening**

- 3.14 The Council's LIP already sets out that we will explore opportunities to use green infrastructure such as green walls to reduce people's exposure to harmful pollutants and that SuDS will also be integrated into Healthy Streets proposals, building on previous schemes such as those delivered on street in Earlsfield. In addition new street trees will be planted to help enhance the environment in line with the Healthy Streets approach. We have identified in the emerging Local Plan some specific locations where we will expect development to make provision for street trees and planting, including by securing an increase in the width of pavement areas in key locations.
- 3.15 The removal of the Wandsworth Gyratory will also provide further opportunities for planting as part of the supporting public realm improvements. However, we want to do more. However, one of the challenges we face is that in urban environments such as ours there is often a large amount of important infrastructure lying underneath our pavements and roads. We therefore need to have a more detailed understanding as to where new planting can go and think about the type of trees that would work in terms of their resilience to the changing climate, would not create problems in the future through roots growing up through pavements or impact on sunlight and daylight to residential properties.

- 3.16 There are opportunities for us to work with landowners to provide devices such as ‘green walls’ or other greening opportunities. An example of this is the SSE sites along The Causeway/Smugglers Way where the existing security fencing creates a harsh and hostile environment for people walking and cycling along the Thames Path and it acts as an important ‘Gateway’ into this part of Wandsworth Town. There is also an area of green space which is currently not actively managed but could be enhanced including with seating. The fencing across the concrete bridge over Bell Lane Creek could be moved further back to provide the opportunity to use the concrete ‘bridge’ as informal seating. In doing so we will need to respect the site operators need to maintain the security of these sites.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

### **Open Space**

- 3.17 New development schemes will be required to make provision for public open space as part of their design. However, there is limited opportunity for people to currently be able to sit and ‘dwell’. Recognising that it will take time for those schemes to come to fruition we have identified an area of open space located on the east side of The Causeway opposite the Gasholder site which could be enhanced including through the provision of seating to act as a ‘quiet space’ for both residents and the local workforce in the area. We will also look to make the open space in front of Wandsworth Town Hall along its frontage with the High Street more publically accessible for people to be able to use as a further place to sit and dwell.



Source: Wandsworth Town Hall Masterplan

- 3.18 We will also look at how we can use our open spaces, including at The Causeway, to enhance biodiversity opportunities, such as through the introduction of wildflower planting. In doing so we will need to ensure that this does not result in the opportunity for invasive plant species to take a hold to the detriment of the ecological value of the River Wandle.



Source: External website – may be subject to copyright

### Heritage

- 3.19 Wandsworth Town has a long and important history, contains a number of Listed Buildings and has two conservation areas covering a large part of the Wandsworth Town area. One aspect that can have an impact on conservation areas is the quality of shopfronts and signage. The shops and restaurants along Old York Road are a positive example of how sensitively designed shopfronts and signage can enhance the visual quality of a place and enhance rather than detract from the area. We believe that similar opportunities exist in a number of other locations where this could be achieved including within the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area along Wandsworth High Street. We therefore want to work with partners, including the Wandsworth BID, to help us encourage landowners and lessees to provide more sensitive and appropriately designed shopfronts, signage and lighting.



Source: NJL-Solutions Ltd

- 3.20 We will also look at the potential for developing a lighting strategy for the Town Centre which identifies opportunities for highlighting important historic buildings within the area to identify them as landmarks and showcase their quality. This could include the provision of festive lighting.
- 3.21 Opportunities also exist to review the Council's current Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Wandsworth Town Conservation Area and identify other specific actions for protecting and enhancing the heritage of the area.

### **Culture and Identity**

- 3.22 The implementation of the Ram Quarter's Cultural Strategy will create a real stepping stone for enhancing the cultural offer of Wandsworth Town. The medium term meanwhile spaces made available to Backyard Cinema (an immersive independent cinema), NEKO Trust (a charity that supports the next generation of talent into the music industry) and ACAVA Artists' Studios has developed the site as a creative hub. Sambrooks Brewery will be opening a permanent space which will include a strong heritage offer open to the public celebrating almost 500 years of brewing on the site. We will explore opportunities to build on the cultural and creative vibrancy of the area using funding due to be received from developments such as the Homebase and B and Q sites and through the proposals for the Civic Centre.
- 3.23 We want to celebrate Wandsworth Town as a 'place'. The Wandsworth BID has identified a desire to create a place specific identity. One way this could be achieved is through the creation of 'gateways' together with clearer wayfinding and we will work with the Wandsworth BID and the local community to identify how this might be achieved. The proposition of developing a lighting strategy for the Town Centre could be one way of achieving this. Looking at the potential for holding more events will also be explored as part of our approach. We also want to look at ways of better telling the story of Wandsworth Town.

### **Smart Growth**

#### **'Meanwhile' uses**

- 3.24 The emerging Local Plan has identified opportunities to provide more flexible working and 'touch-down' spaces within Wandsworth Town. However, we are very conscious of the fact that many more people are working from home as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. At the moment there is little opportunity for people to be able to work remotely away from their home environment but in close proximity to it. We therefore want to work with landowners in the Town Centre including, for example, the operators of Southside Shopping Centre, to explore the potential of using retail space which is currently vacant as a 'meanwhile' use as touch-down

workspace. This would provide space for people who are now working from home to have access to business resources and be able to connect with other home-workers in the local community, whilst having access to the other facilities that the Town Centre has to offer which would support its vitality and viability. We will also explore opportunities to re-introduce initiatives which previously supported events such as the Wandsworth Art Fringe and school holiday arts programmes.

#### 4. Summary of Actions:

4.1 The following table summarises the actions identified in Section 3 above and, where appropriate, the partners we need to work with to help us deliver these in the right way. We haven't yet provided a timescale for the delivery of these but, as we have set out, these actions have been identified as ones we can start working on now rather than having to depend on the delivery of development sites or projects such as the changes to the Wandsworth Gyratory. In a number of cases one action can have multiple benefits and these have also been included in the summary table using the Place Assessment themes.

Action	Who	How	Topics supported
<b>People First</b>			
Wayfinding and Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust</li> <li>• TfL</li> </ul>	Develop a wayfinding and signage strategy. Funding potentially available from BID and WVRPA.	Active travel Health Smart Growth 15-Minute Neighbourhood
Rationalise street based infrastructure and review of crossing points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• TfL</li> <li>• Accessibility Groups</li> <li>• Living Streets</li> </ul>	Audit of street-based infrastructure and road crossing points.	Health Smart Growth 15-Minute Neighbourhood Public Realm
<b>Placemaking</b>			
Enhancing the River Wandle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• The Wandle Trust</li> <li>• Environment Agency</li> <li>• Natural England</li> <li>• Thames Water</li> <li>• Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust</li> </ul>	Develop guidance for developers.	Active Travel Greening 15-Minute Neighbourhood Smart Growth Public Realm
Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> </ul>	Enhancements to open space along The Causeway Enhanced access to open space at Wandsworth Town Hall.	Biodiversity Greening Health 15-Minute Neighbourhood
Street Trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> </ul>	Audit of street-based utility infrastructure	Biodiversity Public Realm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TfL</li> </ul>	Identification of locations for, and implementation of, new planting.	Health
Green walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Property owners/site operators</li> </ul>	Provision of green walls and similar initiatives at key locations.	Biodiversity Public Realm Health
Shopfronts, signage and lighting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• Property owners/site operators.</li> </ul>	Work with landowners/site operators to provide sensitive signage and shopfronts to premises.	Heritage Smart Growth Public Realm
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• Ram Quarter</li> </ul>	LBW's Arts and Culture Strategy LBW's Library Strategy Ram Quarter's Cultural Strategy	Heritage Culture and Identity 15-Minute Neighbourhood Smart Growth
Gateways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• Property owners/site operators.</li> </ul>	Development of 'Gateway' proposals for Wandsworth Town Centre	Heritage Culture and Identity Public Realm
Lighting Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• Property owners/site operators.</li> </ul>	Development of lighting strategy to highlight important cultural and heritage buildings.	Heritage Culture and Identity Public Realm
<b>Smart Growth</b>			
'Meanwhile' uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wandsworth BID</li> <li>• LB Wandsworth</li> <li>• Property owners/site operators</li> </ul>	Identification of vacant premises to introduce flexible office space/touchdown space.	15 Minute neighbourhood

## 5. Funding and Resources

5.1 The delivery of the actions we have identified will involve a combination of officer and partner time and money. There are a number of potential sources of funding we have identified that could be used to bring forward these projects. These include:

- Section 106 contributions from developments.
- Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.
- Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.
- LB Wandsworth Capital Programme
- Partnership funding such as through the Wandsworth BID.
- LIP funding

- 5.2 The Framework will also be used as an investment plan and prospectus which can be used to inform applications for external funding from initiatives introduced at the national and mayoral level.