

Eben van der Westhuizen  
Planner  
Strategic Policy & Research  
Future Merton  
Environment & Regeneration  
Department  
Merton Council  
15 June 2013

Dear Eben,

## **London Borough of Merton Core Strategy: Review of the regional park boundary**

Apologies again for the delay in responding to the consultation on the above.

The comments below are made on behalf of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust Board and in relation to Merton's Core Strategy, which states:

*15.9 The map below proposes indicative boundaries for the park. The final boundary will be set following recommendations of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Development Board comprising the local authorities along the Wandle. Once agreed, it will be integrated into the next revision of Merton's Proposals Map.*

The Regional Park Board is in general agreement with the location of the WVRP boundary as shown in the Stage 3 Policies Map consultation document and agree with the officer's recommendations regarding the inclusion and exclusion of the specific portions listed. In relation to general themes, we agree that private residences on the boundary of the park should be excluded unless they are regarded as a heritage asset and/or within a Conservation Area. We also agree that a special exception can be made for residential/commercial properties within the curtilage of Merton Priory where the most significant additions to the park are proposed. The Trust agrees that the iconic nature of the Prior site, including the Chapter House, creates an argument for this whole area to be included within the regional park.

The Trust, however, does not accept the recommendations in the following circumstances and sites below:-

### **1. School sites:**

We would like to retain schools within the boundary of the regional park. Similar to sport and leisure facilities, the Trust believes schools are ancillary to the regional park's cultural/leisure functions and external spaces provide green/grey infrastructure that is enjoyed by young people when in school. Schools also provide a wider socio-educational connection between the new park and future generations.

Trust therefore disagrees with the following proposed exclusions:-

1. Wimbledon Park Primary School.
5. Garfield Primary School playground.

For consistency across the Borough - and should it be agreed by Merton that school campuses are to be included within the regional park - the remainder of the school should also be included within the park.

**Other sites:**

31: Land between the Benedict Wharf waste management site and the tramway.

The Trust believes there is benefit in retaining this narrow strip of vegetation and green infrastructure within the regional park as a wildlife corridor, which (more or less) connects the regional park with London Road playing fields. Retaining the space within the boundary might confer additional protection in the future, and in terms of precedents elsewhere similar belts of trees/scrub within transport corridors are designated as regional park.

One final comment in relation to the wording of the policy. Please note that there is no longer a 'Regional Park Development Board', which ceased to exist in April 2012, and was superseded by the Board of the Regional Park Trust.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Wilkinson*

Chief Executive  
Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust