

Welcome and introductions.

My name is Adam Hutchings and I am the interim Planning Policy and Design Team Manager for both Wandsworth and Richmond Councils. On behalf of Wandsworth Council, I would like to welcome the Inspector Mr Kenneth Stone, as well as all those attending this examination in public.

My colleagues Catriona Ramsay, Sarah Dixey, Pdraig Collins, and Patrick Clearwater are also present and here to contribute and assist in the examination proceedings. We have also commissioned Jon Howells from Aecom consultants to advise as the Councils experts regarding the Employment Land and Premises Study background evidence base document to the Local Plan.

Employment land policies were not subject to review as part of the adopted Local Plan and it was the Council's intention to commence the review as identified in the 2015 Local Development Scheme and as highlighted in the Planning Inspector's report of the adopted Local Plan. We made a commitment to updating the evidence base that supports the policies and site allocations for employment and industry and to use this to carry out a partial review of the Local Plan. Work commenced on the Employment and Industry Local Plan Document in late 2015 and we have undertaken three main rounds of consultation which meet and exceed the requirements set out in the Local Planning Regulations.

The new document will form part of the Local Plan for Wandsworth, replacing the employment and industrial land policies in the existing Local Plan documents. The Plan has been prepared in response to a number of changes and challenges that are taking place in Wandsworth and more widely in the London area. The purpose of the local plan review is to address local priorities, needs and opportunities, in particular to strengthen the economic focus and to support business. It is considered to reflect and take account of updated evidence base and the demand for employment land.

In recent years there has been increasing pressure on sites allocated for industrial uses to be released for housing development due to the high demand for housing and the difference in land values between these uses. As well as providing the housing that the Borough needs, the Council also needs to ensure that the future requirements for industrial sites and employment uses are met. It was therefore necessary to carry out a review of Local Plan Policies and site allocations relating to industry and employment in order to ensure that our approach is up-to-date and based on the latest evidence, and that the Local Plan as a whole strikes the right balance between housing and employment uses.

The Plan encourages sustainable economic growth in Wandsworth by taking a balanced approach which seeks to protect established and thriving economic areas as well as promoting redevelopment of sites and premises that have the potential to intensify in order to better meet the needs of a changing local economy, provide housing, improve the quality and enjoyment of public realm and support a thriving cultural and natural character for the area. The Plan is considered by the Council to provide a sustainable formula for encouraging economic growth in the borough, taking into account the future needs of the local and London economy, the spatial characteristics of

Wandsworth's economic geography, the opportunities presented by intensification of under-utilised sites and the spatial vision and strategic objectives of the adopted Local Plan and London Plan.

To meet the evidenced demand for new employment floorspace the Plan seeks to accommodate the right type of employment floorspace in the right locations. The NPPF, the London Plan and the spatial strategy of the adopted Local Plan all recognise the importance of town centres as the primary location for business. The plan follows this approach seeking to focus new office development within town centres including the emerging centre at Battersea Power Station and where there is limited capacity, on edge of centre sites. The Economic Land Availability Assessment process undertaken by the Council has identified a reasonable supply of land for offices in town centres, however the capacity falls short of the projected demand for new office floorspace and therefore it is appropriate to seek new office floorspace in focal points of activity as long as the amount of development is not to the detriment of the town centres. To supplement the potential for new office development in town centres, other appropriate sites in good locations, particularly on the edge of town centres have also been allocated for the planned intensification of economic uses, including Economic Use Intensification Areas.

The arrival of the Northern line to the Nine Elms area will significantly improve links to central London and will create opportunities for a step change in provision of employment premises in the wider Battersea area. The extension of the Industrial Business Park designation aims to capture these opportunities to serve the industrial and business needs of the borough and continues the crucial contribution of the Strategic Industrial Locations.

A strategic reservoir of land for industry and waste made up of Strategic Industrial Locations and Locally Significant Industrial Areas will be retained and protected. For Wandsworth, the majority of its planned release of industrial land set by the London Plan benchmark over the period 2011 to 2031 has already been lost to non-industrial uses and it is this situation which is what the Plan seeks to address by seeking to intensify industrial floorspace where the opportunities exist on suitable sites. The strategic approach set out in the Plan continues to protect the more successful industrial areas and re-designates some sites that are under-utilised for a mix of uses. These re-designated sites, the former Gala Bingo Hall/Riverside business centre in Bendon Valley and the former gas holder and neighbouring sites in the Wandle Delta have the potential to provide significant investment in modern industrial premises and to consolidate industrial uses into smaller footprints while increasing the overall stock of industrial floorspace in the borough. This approach seeks to balance the planned release of under-utilised industrial land with intensification that supports the sustainable economic growth of the borough.

To conclude, the Council considers that this Local Plan provides a sound and positive strategy for achieving sustainable development in the borough. All the statutory procedures and legislation, including public consultation, have been adhered to and the Council is confident that the plan is sound and robust as it has been positively prepared, it is justified, it is effective and it is consistent with national policy as well as in general conformity with the London Plan.

The Local Plan has been shaped by on-going and continuous consultation and engagement with our Duty to Co-operate bodies, statutory consultees, key stakeholders and landowners as well as local communities, including residents and businesses. The results from the consultations, together with the robust and proportionate evidence base, including the outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal,

have informed what we consider to be a sound plan that sets a clear economic vision and strategy for the area which positively and proactively encourages sustainable economic growth.

We consider that the Plan strikes the right balance between achieving sustainable development and growth within the borough with the need to provide for land essential for employment and industry uses.

The Council welcomes the opportunity to pro-actively discuss the outstanding matters raised during the preparation of the plan during the course of the hearing sessions. We look forward to actively engage in positive discussions with the Inspector and participants, and are willing to consider modifications where the Inspector thinks these are necessary to make the Plan sound.