



**MERTON LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**  
**A response by Wandle Valley Forum to London Borough of Merton**  
**March 2019**

1. Wandle Valley Forum provides support and an independent voice for over 120 community groups, voluntary organisations and local businesses and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. We have considered the objectives and investment priorities for Merton's local transport in the context of the Wandle Valley Forum Charter (<http://bit.ly/27Yal2m>).
2. We welcome the commitment to achieving modal shift away from motorised vehicles and reducing air pollution. The Wandle offers particular opportunities for this and provides a number of off-road routes and connections for pedestrians and cyclists. In particular we urge the addition of the Wandle Trail to Transport for London's *Walk London* routes.
3. We welcome recognition of the priority to close the gap in the Wandle Trail under the railway bridge at Earlsfield and acknowledgment of our efforts to raise awareness of the issue. This is an area where cross-boundary co-operation with neighbouring boroughs is essential. The proposed objective LO2 to "*to develop solutions to fill the Wandle Trail missing link, including new bridge across the River Wandle to Trewith [sic] Road [sic]*" is unclear. The need is for a route along (not across) the west bank of the Wandle linking Trewint Street bridge and the new development off Haslemere Avenue. There is additionally a need for a new bridge just downstream between Ravensbury Terrace and Groton Road. The value of the Capital Ring and the opportunity for improved connections should also be recognised at this point.
4. There is also a need for a similar approach cross-boundary approach to connecting Mitcham Common to Beddington Farmlands and the strategic opportunity of the vast area of open space at the heart of the Wandle Valley Regional Park. This should include securing access across the land west of the railway line through to BedZed, enhancing access along the permissive footpath between Beddington Park and Mitcham Common and securing better access along Beddington Lane. There are also opportunities to develop circular routes around Watermeads and Willow Lane Industrial Estate, including a new link across the Wandle between Watermeads and Bennett's Hole nature reserve. We support the proposed measures to improve conditions for pedestrians at the crossroads on Mitcham Common but do not support the proposal for a shared use path on the protected Three Kings Piece in Mitcham. This is unnecessarily damaging to important green space.
5. We have significant concerns about the "*potential cycle path*" along the Wandle Trail between Merantun Way and Morden Road (Figure 10) which is now being viewed as a potential standalone project separate from the earlier Quietway proposals. The Wandle Valley Forum Charter identifies a priority to "*provide public access for all along the river without urbanising the landscape or putting wildlife at risk*". We support investment which

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will improve the experience of using the Wandle Trail for all users and both manage and reduce conflict between different users. This requires sensitivity to the different character of the Wandle along its length and a rounded approach which does not bias the enjoyment or use of the Wandle Trail to people using any particular mode of transport.

6. To achieve this would require a very different approach to the Quietway scheme developed south of Trewint Street bridge. This investment serves to demonstrate the limitations of imposing a single design solution for the Quietway network as a whole on a sensitive and distinct landscape such as the Wandle not least as a result of the visual impact of the very large number of new columns and bollards during the day and then additionally at night as a result of them being illuminated when people and bikes pass by. There is also a significant impact from the increased average speed of bikes using the Wandle Trail and the growth in commuter over recreational use of the Wandle Trail by cyclists. The intrusive labelling of the new posts is also a major cause of visual pollution.

7. Any infrastructure along this stretch of the Wandle Trail needs to be developed with the needs of all users in mind. The Plan is internally confused on whether the focus is for cycle use (as evidenced by the title of Figure 10 in the body of the Plan) or for providing a more general route through green space (as evidenced by the legend in the alternative Figure 10 at the end of the Plan). Any investment needs to be designed in context, avoid illumination and clutter and use a tar spray and chip or other appropriate surface that makes a noise to alert other users.