



PROPOSALS TO DIVERT WANDLE TRAIL AT CORBET CLOSE, SUTTON
Stopping Up Order
A response by Wandle Valley Forum
January 2020

1. Wandle Valley Forum provides support and an independent voice for more than 130 community groups, voluntary organisations and local businesses and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle. Our priorities are set out in the Wandle Valley Forum Charter (<http://bit.ly/27Yal2m>) which emphasises the need to *“provide public access for all along the river.”*
2. The Wandle Trail is one of the principle linear pedestrian and access routes in London. It provides public access and recreational opportunities for thousands of people, enhancing their health and well-being and providing access to nature. It is a focus of intense public interest and has generated numerous guides and walks. The route is waymarked throughout its length and has been a recent focus of investment from the National Lottery funded Living Wandle project. There is a long history of public campaigning to increase public access to the river, including the current opportunities to open up access under the main railway line at Earlsfield. This will obviate the need for those enjoying the Wandle Trail to deviate from the river.
3. It is in this context that we object to the proposals to divert the Wandle Trail away from the river. This would be a remarkably short sighted and retrograde step at a time when every effort is being made to increase public access along the river and the wider benefits for public health and wellbeing of the Wandle Trail are being recognised. We can see no public benefit in the proposals.
4. The route has been narrowed in recent years which has already reduced its public benefit. Given the amount of development going on in the surrounding area we had expected further investment in the existing route of the Wandle Trail and the provision of additional routes nearby. We can see no merit in the stopping up of this route. We are also concerned by the lack of information provided on the width, design, materials and planting associated with the new route, whether any trees are at risk, whether there will be cycle access and what will happen to the banks of the river. No case for the stopping up and diversion is presented.
5. The opportunity for public comment on these plans has been further reduced by the restrictive and limited consultation. We do not understand why the details and map can only be accessed in person and acquired at a cost of 50 pence or why representations must be provided in hard copy and delivered by post or by hand. Sutton Council could simply post the details online and provide an email address.

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Please respond to Chair, Wandle Valley Forum, c/o 43 Bramcote Avenue, Mitcham CR4 4LW