

Discussions about the future of our high streets and town centres during 2021 which informed the Draft Richmond Local Plan

A [Richmond Partnership Conference](#) was held in May 2021 on Unlocking the Potential: a new vision for our town centres and high streets. There is a [report summarising the outcomes](#) at Appendix A. This was followed by a series of local [Community Conversations](#) over summer/autumn 2021 which discussed the future of our high streets and town centres.

Many of the issues raised were looking for short-term solutions and outside the remit of planning policy, however each Conversation included a [presentation about the Local Plan](#) (See Appendix B). There are notes from each Conversation on the Council's website. The table below sets out some of the main issues that were raised which are most relevant to planning policy, and how this has informed the draft Richmond Local Plan.

Issues have been grouped by the following categories:

Retail and hospitality
Accessibility
Community / socialising
Leisure/arts/culture/events
Transport & Traffic
Sustainability / environment
Look & Feel

Place	Main issues raised most relevant to planning policy	How this aligns with the draft Richmond Local Plan
Richmond North and South	Need to improve pedestrian + cycle experience	The vision in the place-based strategy for Richmond & Richmond Hill is for a diverse mix of retail, employment, service, leisure and arts uses.
	Support for enhancing public realm – trees, greening, places to sit, and wayfinding	

	Provision of public toilets in the town centre / along the river	<p>The place-based strategy expects future development to contribute to a sense of activity and vibrancy. There is emphasis on enhancing the public realm through creating high quality spaces in the town centre.</p> <p>The place-based strategy and Policy 18. Development in centres support a Richmond Cultural Quarter, including bringing the reference and lending libraries together and enhancing the Museum of Richmond to create a cultural hub.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to ensure that any expansion and management of entertainment and leisure facilities is sensitive to amenity. Policy 19. Managing Impacts sets out this approach.</p> <p>The place-based strategy expects future development to maintain and provide new public toilets, supplementing the Richmond Community Toilet Scheme, and including provision at Richmond Station and to serve Richmond Riverside and Richmond Green.</p> <p>Richmond Station (Site Allocation 24) and the former House of Fraser site (Site Allocation 25) on George Street will contribute to bringing changes to the town centre.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
	Improving riverside connections	
	A wider range of shops, leisure and culture uses, more outdoor dining and market uses	
	A role for housing to bring people in and contribute to the local economy	
	Richmond Museum and the library underused cultural assets	
	Support for the night-time economy but also need to manage its impact	
Barnes	An improved retail offer with a wider range of shops for different age groups and types of affordability	<p>The vision in the place-based strategy for Barnes is to maintain and enhance the character of the area as an attractive place for people to live and visit. It seeks to encourage independent shops and ensure day-to-day facilities are accessible, encouraging active travel in accordance with Policy 1 Living Locally. The strategy supports future pedestrianisation to reduce the prominence of traffic, which will also presents an opportunity to create public realm for more seating.</p> <p>The strategy seeks to reanimate Barnes' streets as a local hub for shops, cafés, and small businesses and consider opportunities to enhance Barnes Riverside to maintain a sense of activity and vibrancy, with potential for temporary pedestrianisation of The Terrace to create café/restaurant seating or more width to improve pedestrian experience.</p> <p>Policy 17 sets out that the Council will support shopping, leisure and culture uses, providing spaces for businesses and services and promote community and cultural exchange which contributes to</p>
	Introduce outdoor dining and market uses onto the High Street	
	Shop front strategy needed for consistency in shutters, awnings and disabled access	
	Less street clutter and litter, and more places for people to sit	
	An improved cultural offer, especially events and activities that engage younger audiences	

	<p>Congestion an issue and more sustainable transport should be encouraged</p> <p>Need for a more varied evening and night time offer</p>	<p>the vitality and viability of our centres. The successful function of the smaller centres is considered having special importance as the benefits for residents and local communities are significant.</p> <p>Policy 19. Managing impacts supports proposals which contribute to cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in our centres.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
Kew	<p>Connectivity between the two sides of the centre needed, with improved wayfinding and crossings</p> <p>A wider range of retail, pub and market uses, including independent and affordable options</p> <p>Concerns over any loss of existing town centre uses, lack of bank and post office a concern</p> <p>More of an evening offer needed, including community facilities for residents and younger people</p> <p>Better public transport needed with less parking and congestion</p> <p>Pedestrianisation, seating and greening around station</p>	<p>The vision in the place-based strategy for Kew is to maintain its character as a residential area. Kew Gardens Station will continue to provide a lively shopping centre for residents and visitors, with local shops and services at Kew Green and Sandlycombe Road. There is an opportunity through new development at Kew Retail Park to improve the character at East Kew and improve green links to the River Thames.</p> <p>The place-based policy seeks to conserve the shopping parade by the Station and improve wayfinding across the town centre, as well as improve access to public open space through public realm improvements. Future development is expected to promote active travel and reduce vehicle traffic, and improve parts of East Kew through greening, public realm and legibility.</p> <p>The redevelopment of Kew Retail Park (Site Allocation 30) is to be residential-led but will include a range of commercial uses, improvements to public realm and active travel.</p> <p>Policy 19. Managing impacts supports proposals which contribute to cultural and creative activities during the day and at night-time to stimulate vibrancy and viability and promote diversity in our centres.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
Teddington & Hampton Wick	<p>Hampton Wick Needs to be tidied up, with more green space and an improved identity</p>	<p>The place-based strategy for Teddington sets out that Council will support investigation of opportunities for a market in Teddington and to increase independent grocery stores.</p>

	A wider range of retail needed, including independents, markets and food shops	The vision for Teddington is that it will continue to be a community for residents, visitors and business which enjoys links to open spaces, the historic Royal Parks and the River Thames. The busy and safe district centre will provide a wide range of independent and other shops, employment, leisure, cultural, health and social facilities to support a range of community activities.
	Better use of river and encourage other outdoor activities	
	Encourage more people to Teddington high street, Broad Street and surrounds through art, greening and pedestrianisation	The vision for Hampton Wick is to retain its sense of identity and offer an attractive mix of retail and other facilities, making the most of its location close to the River Thames and expansive open spaces at Bushy and Home Parks.
	More places for community, including older, creative and young people to meet and spend time	Future development is expected to contribute to a sense of activity and vibrancy in the town and neighbourhood centres, retaining the mix of uses including restaurants, cafés, and pubs. It should secure the provision of office floorspace and new flexible workspaces within the town centre and intensification of existing employment sites to provide jobs and support local businesses.
	Reduced traffic and consolidated parking	
	Flexible workspace	Development is also expected to enhance the public realm, support greening, improve and increase open spaces, the connections and access to them. It should consider opportunities to reduce the dominance of cars and promote active travel, improving permeability and creating space for pedestrians.
Hampton & Hampton Hill	A more varied retail offer including independents and art shops	The Telephone Exchange (site allocation 6) and Teddington delivery office (site allocation 7) if developed will introduce increased retail and office space into the town centre. Strathmore Centre (site allocation 8) and Teddington Police Station (site allocation 9) if developed, could introduce social and community infrastructure.
	Vacant units occupied by artists	
		The retail and employment policies also seek to ensure modern workspace needs are met through new development, including Policy 25 Affordable, flexible and managed workspace.
		Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.
		The vision is to bring together the different areas of Hampton as a community with facilities to meet local needs. There will be a more diverse range of shopping, an improved cultural offer and

	More events, cultural and workspace needed	<p>high quality local schools to reinforce Hampton as a vibrant community within the borough. The vision for Hampton Hill is a thriving High Street and community facilities to meet local needs.</p> <p>Future development is expected to enhance existing local centres and parades, encouraging more independent shops and businesses, to generate a sense of activity and vibrancy, and reanimate as local hubs. There is an opportunity to improve the pedestrian experience, to provide space for “spill-out” from restaurants, cafés and pubs in the commercial stretches of streets and on Hampton Hill High Street, including temporary pedestrianisation of roads. Development should contribute to improving the public realm and implement more high-quality street furniture, including in Hampton Village and Hampton Hill.</p> <p>There are to opportunities to establish more green infrastructure, particularly street trees, increasing and improving open spaces, and to contribute to improving connectivity within the area, through wayfinding, signage and legibility, and the links to the riverside, preserving and enhancing public access to the Thames. Development should also consider opportunities to reduce the dominance of cars including the severing effect of Staines Road East/Upper Sunbury Road.</p> <p>Hampton Square (Site Allocation 1) could introduce community, retail and local services, employment and residential uses. Hampton Traffic Unit (Site Allocation 3) and Hampton Delivery Office (Site Allocation 4) could introduce business, employment-generating and other commercial or social and community infrastructure uses.</p> <p>Lighting of the public realm is considered against the safety/security issues and also minimising light pollution and impacts on biodiversity as well as residential amenity, through the general design and biodiversity policies and Policy 43. Floodlighting and other external artificial lighting.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
	Traffic needs to be consolidated, parking, cycling and driving all problematic	
	Better use and more accessible riverside	
	Improved lighting and transport at night	
Twickenham, Strawberry Hill & St Margarets	More diverse shopping offer, including clothing, independents, and flexible uses	<p>The vision for Twickenham is for a connected community with good access to leisure facilities, green spaces and its rivers, community networks and services. The aim is to rejuvenate its business and cultural offer, with a new focus created by the riverfront experience, through development of key sites. The vision for St Margarets and East Twickenham is to maintain the attractive residential character and to ensure that the shopping centres continue to thrive.</p>
	More cultural and night time uses encouraged, coupled with policing	

	More publicity / website needed, especially for Heath Road and Twickenham Green	<p>Future development is expected to contribute to a sense of activity and vibrancy in the town and local centres, to encourage arts, culture and leisure developments to enhance the mixed-use potential of the area and make it more of a destination to spend time. Promote the night-time economy through diversifying the range of cultural venues and offers, encouraging on-street al fresco dining and making a welcoming environment for all night-time economy users and workers. Promote routes for active travel and exercise and support greening through tree-planting.</p> <p>There is potential for new development to contribute to a mix of uses if sites come forward, including at Twickenham Telephone Exchange (Site Allocation 16) and Twickenham Police Station (Site Allocation 17). At Twickenham Riverside and Water Lane/King Street (Site Allocation 18) there is the opportunity for the site to regenerate the town centre and increase footfall, making the Riverside a destination and improving its connectivity.</p> <p>Policy 8. Flood risk and sustainable drainage and Policy 38. Urban Greening will ensure flood risk and urban greening are addressed in new developments.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
	Better use of riverside for events	
	More community and entertainment spaces for all, including for young people	
	Reduced traffic and delivery congestion	
	Better cycle paths, especially on King St	
	Flood management and greening	
Whitton & Heathfield	Cultural and evening offer required, everything closed after 5pm	<p>The vision for Whitton & Heathfield is to retain and reinforce the established character of the area, and ensure the provision of community facilities and transport links. This includes encouraging village events such as markets or regular cultural events in the High Street or in other suitable areas such as parks and open spaces.</p> <p>Development is expected to consider opportunities to reduce the dominance of cars and promote active travel, improving the permeability and creating space for pedestrians. It should embrace the Crane river valley character in adjoining urban spaces by implementing appropriate planting palettes and wayfinding, contribute to opportunities to provide space for dwelling, to encourage village events such as markets or regular cultural events in the High Street or in other suitable areas such as parks and open spaces, including temporary pedestrianisation of roads to space for “spill-out” from restaurants, cafés and pubs, and restoring and maintaining street trees and planters.</p>
	More diverse retail offer, with markets, independents and healthy eating options	
	Inclusive, affordable and family-friendly uses needed	
	Vacant units used as meeting places, arts and pop-ups	
	Parking needs to be consolidated, active travel and pedestrianisation encouraged	

	<p>Better publicity / community noticeboard better used</p> <p>Greening of town centre</p>	<p>At Kneller Hall (Site Allocation 20) there is an opportunity to create a mixed use “quarter” bringing new homes, employment and community uses. At Whitton Community Centre (Site Allocation 21) there is an opportunity to reprovide community facilities (the existing day centre and pharmacy) with affordable housing above, to provide modern facilities for the elderly and the local community.</p> <p>Policy 38. Urban Greening will also ensure urban greening is addressed in new developments.</p> <p>Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.</p>
Mortlake and East Sheen	<p>Better promotion of high street</p> <p>Retain and expand existing independent shopping offer</p> <p>Reuse of vacant units for arts</p> <p>Less congestion and more pedestrianised streets with alfresco dining</p> <p>Street greening and parklets</p> <p>Increased entertainment and arts offer</p>	<p>The vision for Mortlake is to create a new focus to the village by redevelopment of the Stag Brewery site, creating a recreational and living quarter and a link between the village and the riverside. The vision for East Sheen is to retain the established character of the area, to maintain and enhance the district centre, providing shops, services and employment for the local communities.</p> <p>Future development is expected to contribute to a sense of activity and vibrancy in the town and neighbourhood centres, retaining the mix of uses including restaurants, cafes and pubs along Sheen Lane and at the junction of Mortlake High Street and White Hart Lane, to maintain a sense of activity and vibrancy, and encourage independent shops and businesses, emphasising local makers and artisans. Encourage reinstatement of shop fronts’ original design to achieve consistency in appearance in East Sheen Town Centre. Enhance the sense of arrival and quality of the public realm at Mortlake Station, through opportunities for art and wayfinding, and incorporate focal points and establish distinctive landmarks.</p> <p>Development should enhance the public realm and create public areas for dwelling and “spill-out”, rather than just narrow, transient spaces, using high quality street furniture, and increase greening through tree planting and verges. It should consider opportunities to reduce the perceived dominance of vehicles, promoting active travel with space to create café seating areas and improve pedestrian experience in East Sheen Town Centre and at Mortlake Riverside.</p> <p>The Telephone Exchange and 172-176 Upper Richmond Road West, East Sheen (Site Allocation 36) is an opportunity for a mixed use scheme that contributes to the vitality and viability of the centre.</p>

		<p>Towards Mortlake High Street, there is a similar opportunity - if the Mortlake and Barnes Delivery Office, Mortlake (Site Allocation 35) becomes surplus - for employment or other commercial and retail uses. At Stag Brewery (Site Allocation 34) there is a significant opportunity to create a new quarter for living, with recreational and commercial uses to generate vibrancy, local employment, community and leisure opportunities.</p> <p>Policy 38. Urban Greening will also ensure urban greening is addressed in new developments.</p>
Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside	<p>More diverse shopping, dining and services offer, lower rents and later / weekend opening hours</p> <p>Reuse of vacant units</p> <p>Community hub for local businesses and homeworkers</p> <p>More provision for children and young people</p> <p>Events, entertainment and arts provision needed</p> <p>Sports and improved cycle facilities</p> <p>Congestion and parking problematic</p> <p>Improved public realm with seating, greening, water fountains and better serviced bins.</p>	<p>The vision for Ham & Petersham is, based on the adopted Neighbourhood Plan, for residents to have access to education, shopping, working, cultural and other opportunities. The aim is to encourage an increasing proportion of local journeys to be by foot or bicycle by creating a network of cycle/walking routes accessible to a range of ages and good public transport. The Neighbourhood Plan identifies the key opportunity for redevelopment at Ham Close, to provide modern housing and community facilities in keeping with the character of the area.</p> <p>Future development is expected to enhance existing local centres and shopping parades, to improve the appearance and attractiveness through appropriate shopfronts and signage, along with directional signage, lighting, seating, public art, space for community events and soft landscaping including at Ham Parade and St Richard's Square. It should conserve and enhance the network of green spaces and the public realm, and improve legibility to better connect open spaces to the townscape, including around Ham Common/Ham House Estate. Development should also contribute to reducing the dominance of vehicle traffic along main roads and parades, and provide more space for and improving visibility, accessibility and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists. Ham Village Green should be enhanced through the provision of soft landscaping, planting, seating and appropriate play and exercise equipment.</p> <p>Ham Close (Site Allocation 22) and Cassell Hospital (Site Allocation 23) could provide community facilities.</p> <p>The retail and employment policies also seek to ensure modern workspace needs are met through new development, including Policy 25 Affordable, flexible and managed workspace.</p>

		Policy 47. Sustainable travel choices expects a high quality walking and cycling environment in proposed development, to support active travel across the borough.
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Overall, there were some key themes coming out of the conversations:

- Improve the pedestrian and cycle experience
- Reduce traffic congestion and parking
- Enhance public realm through greening, wayfinding and less clutter
- Make better use of, and improve connections to the river
- Introduce a wider range of shops, especially independents
- Support outdoor dining and markets
- Introduce more evening, night time and cultural activities
- Introduce affordable community hubs and workspaces
- Promote the high streets better.

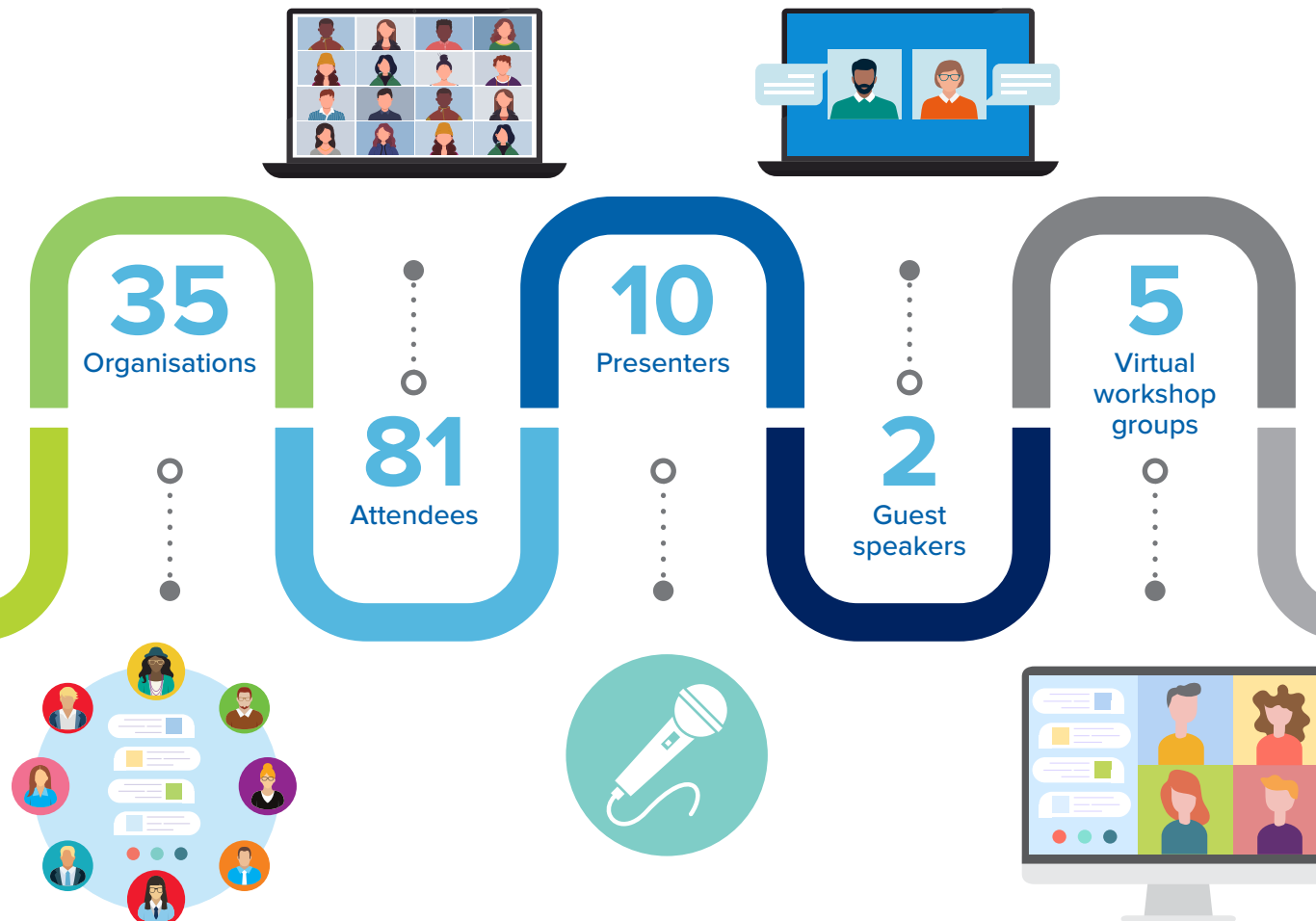
RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE REPORT

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL: A NEW VISION FOR OUR TOWN CENTRES AND HIGH STREETS

25TH MAY 13:00-15:30 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

“Good to meet
with people
from different
backgrounds but
similar thinking!”

“Opportunity to
think creatively
about how we
could adapt
high streets”



“Swift pace, well organised, variety of contributions from different speakers giving an overview of broad areas as well as more in-depth insights.”

CONFERENCE FEEDBACK



An electronic evaluation form was sent to every delegate, and we received 31 responses.

Responses are scored on a scale of 1 to 5.

1. How do you rate the conference for opening a dialogue around new thinking for high streets and town centres?

Score: 4.4

2. How do you rate the content from our two speakers (Ojay and Paul)?

Score: 4.8

3. How do you rate the 5-minute speakers session?

Score: 4.1

4. How do you rate the workshop session?

Score: 3.9

HEADLINE OUTCOMES OF RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE 2021

Town centres as destinations

- The workshop discussions highlighted the need for town centres and high streets to be a 'one-stop-shop' to attract and retain customers and visitors.
- This could include public art, performances, and events as well as traditional retail and services such as banking and health facilities.
- Infrastructure for visitors such as public toilets, wayfinding, and parking must be considered to ensure that town centres and high streets are accessible to all.

People-focused centres

- Several speakers discussed the concept of the 15-minute city, similar to the 'Living Locally' concept, and this was noted in group discussions as a positive and powerful idea.
- Key aspects include walkability and pedestrianisation, ensuring that town centres are appealing for visitors and locals alike. In some areas this brings logistical challenges, but was a popular suggestion noted by all groups.
- Other benefits noted were the environmental and health impacts of reduced traffic, as well as a reduction in noise pollution and increased pedestrian safety.

Balanced footprint

- Another key point to come from the workshop discussions was the need in some larger centres for a mix of residential and commercial lots in town centres, with space also planned for recreational areas.
- This requires active place management, such as filling vacant units with specialist shops that respond to local need. This would ensure that shops are recognised as playing an integral part in the community.

Creative town planning

- The workshops highlighted the need to make creative use of empty spaces through meanwhile and temporary uses. This could include pop-ups, public art, performances, and events as mentioned above.
- In addition, many groups cited the importance of repurposing spaces to serve both the day and night-time economies.

Digitalisation

- As a long-term trend exacerbated by the Pandemic, speakers and groups emphasised that the digital revolution should be seen as an opportunity not just a challenge.
- The workshops recognised that when utilised creatively, technology has the potential to make town centres a more desirable destination for all.

“Fast pace, stimulating, broad ranging, ending on positive note, made me want to engage further.”

NEXT STEPS

The next stage in this process is to bring residents together in Community Conversations to home in on specific town centres and high streets.

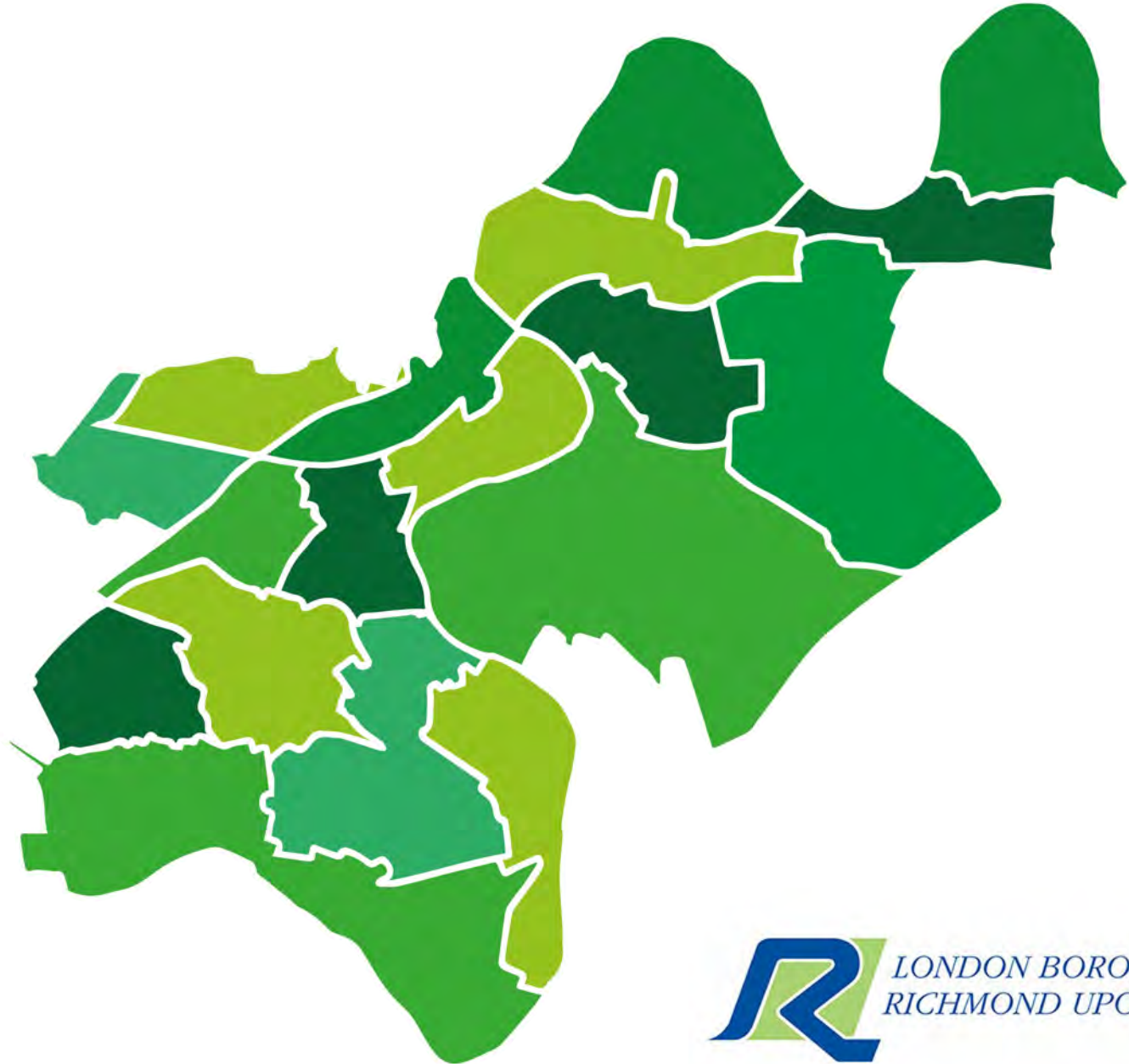
The outcomes of both the Community Conversations and the Richmond Partnership Conference will influence Richmond upon Thames Council, including the Economic Development Office working closely with the business community, and the emerging Local Plan. The outcomes will also be shared with stakeholders to inform initiatives in the public, business, and voluntary sectors.



Community
Conversation

“Challenging external speakers with real pragmatic examples that resonated for our areas.”

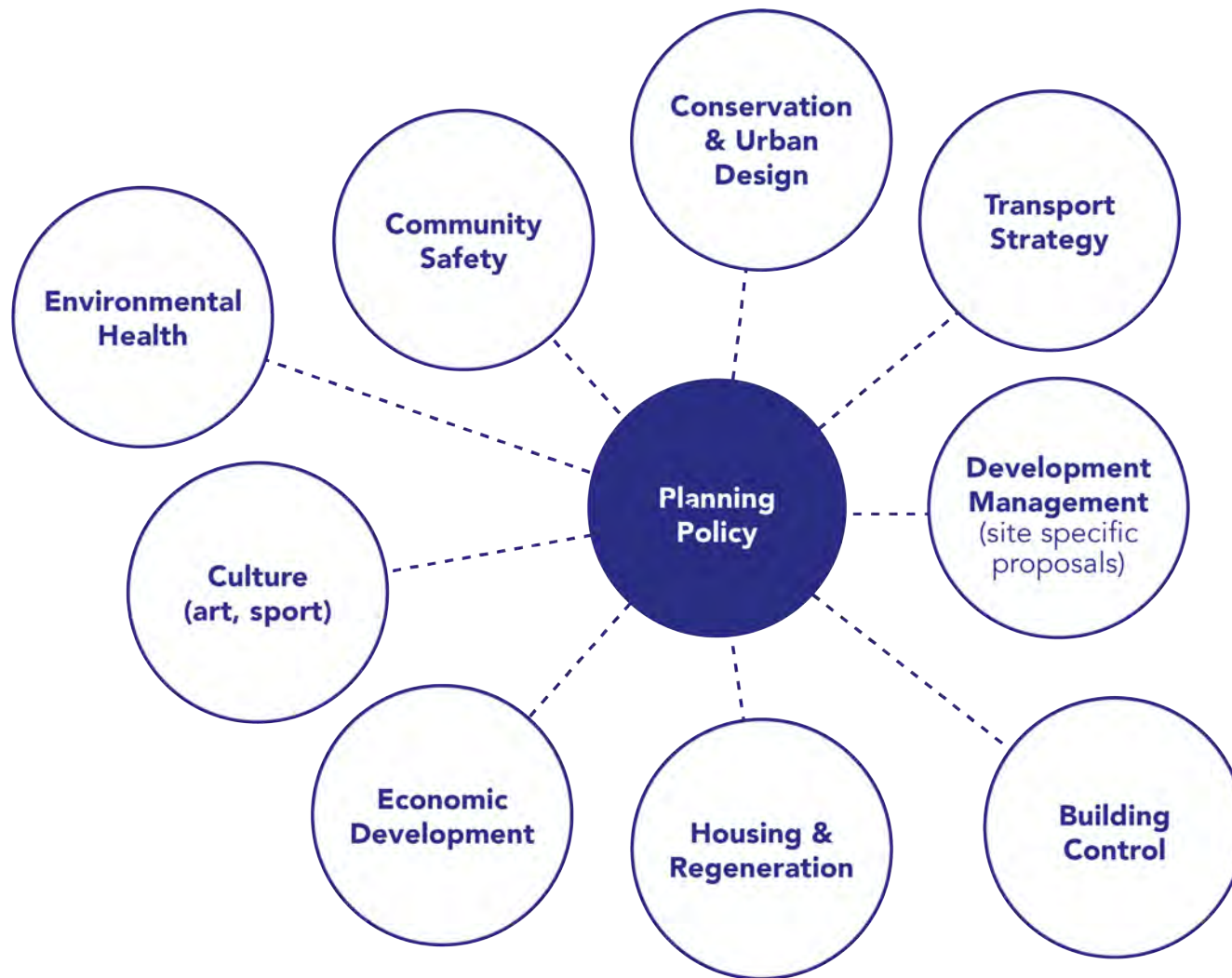
THE LOCAL PLAN



Richmond Planning Policy Team
Community Conversations 2021



HOW WE DEVELOP PLANNING POLICY



Other key work areas:

Involving the community as local experts

Working with landowners / landlords to influence future development

Some external factors that influence plan making:

- Land ownership & value
- High demand for certain uses
- Environment & health priorities
- Flood management
- Climate emergency

WHAT IS THE LOCAL PLAN?



The Local Plan:

- Sets out the vision & objectives for the borough
- Help inform and decide planning applications
- A legal document based on a robust evidence base

Why review?

- The climate emergency
- The borough's changing and growing population
- New London Plan & housing targets
- Changes to planning policy
- Impact of the pandemic

WHAT DOES THE LOCAL PLAN DO?

The Local Plan DOES	The Local Plan DOES NOT
Think long term to anticipate our future needs	Cap property prices or lower rents
Balance the needs of all groups in society	Resist chain shops
Ensure developments are in the most appropriate places and protect land allocations	Operate specific shops, services or community facilities
Support our high streets & local centres	Control the frequency of waste & recycling collection
Shape how places look & feel	Directly provide jobs
Influence how we travel	Control where people park or drive

POLICY IN PRACTICE: LIVING LOCALLY



POLICY IN PRACTICE: SUPPORTING HIGH STREETS



Image: Kew High Street

DEVELOPING THE LOCAL PLAN



OUR VISION

- Work with our communities and local stakeholders to shape our vision for Richmond
- Set out how positive changes from the pandemic may change the way we live, work and connect
- Shape our centres & high streets to provide multifunctional places that respond to local needs
- Highlight & strengthen the strong arts, culture, heritage and leisure opportunities in Richmond

1. A compelling vision, well communicated
2. Strong, inspiring leadership
3. Empowered communities
4. Research, data and analysis
5. Partnership and advocacy
6. Addressing inequalities
7. Adopting policy
8. Investment
9. 'Hard' and 'soft' measures
10. Evaluation and adaptation

Our principles