

# Richmond Local Plan

## Engagement event report

# 01 Project overview

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- Conclusions & next steps

### Facilitating officers:

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# 01 Introduction

In January 2022, the Richmond Planning policy designed and delivered a series of workshops and Q&A events to support the Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation.

The purpose of the events was to introduce the Draft Local Plan and some key policies and the wider role of Planning Policy to those who may not be familiar. The intention was also to sign-post people towards the statutory consultation.

As well as recording the details and outputs of the events that took place as part of the Local Plan consultation in 2022, this report is intended to illustrate the experience for officers delivering these events in-house; outline the opportunities for sharing knowledge with other Council teams; and reflecting on what we learned for future engagement opportunities.

Prior to the digital events, the planning policy team held two workshops with secondary schools in the borough in late 2021. These sessions were mainly focussed on education about the role of planning and balancing priorities in public spaces. At the end of the session, participants shared their views about what was important for Richmond in the future.

## 02 Event Summary

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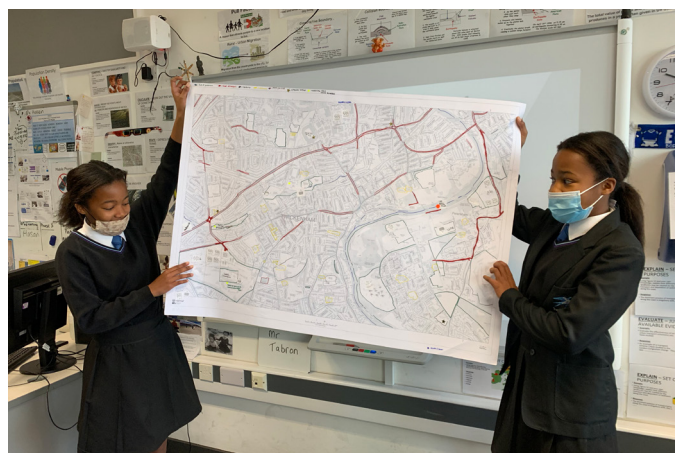
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### Lunchtime Q&As

These events took place in the daytime and were a lighter touch version of the themed workshops. Each included a summary presentation of some key policies in the Draft Plan before opening the floor to questions.



Mapping workshop with Twickenham Secondary School



Walking workshop with Malden Oaks Pupil Referral Unit

## Themed workshops

These events were held in the evening and took place on Zoom. An overview presentation was followed by guided discussion in breakout rooms where notes were taken using Miro. Facilitating officers shared their screen and led participants through the questions whilst collecting feedback. They were finished with a short Q&A.

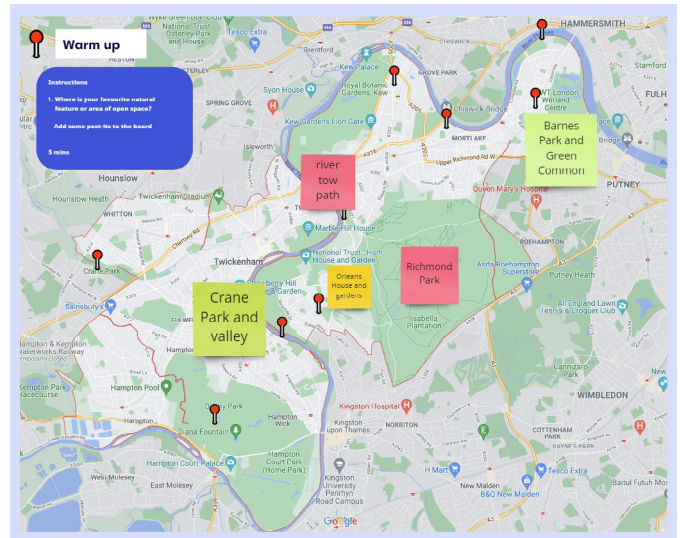
These workshop style events are particularly resource intensive and require many officers in order to run the breakout discussions.

### 01 Environment & Greenspace

Tuesday 18 January 2022 | 18:30 – 19:40

We know that addressing the climate emergency is a shared priority. Our challenge is balancing the demand for housing and the focus of the Local Plan (which can only address new development) with policies that support our environment and greenspace.

The event for environment and greenspace was also attended by the Richmond Climate Change team who were able to introduce and respond to questions about the wider corporate objectives.



Mapping green and open spaces as part of the workshop warm up

#### Themes for the event:

- How we as planners are responding to the climate emergency and balancing the remit of the local plan with protecting our environment.
- Supporting our green & open spaces
- Urban greening & the public realm, and how this can link with active travel.
- Circular economy & the role of small sites in intensification and gentle density.

#### What questions did we ask?

##### 1. How can we encourage urban greening & public realm improvement?

We can't implement schemes as part of the local plan but would like some ideas to strengthen and vary the policy.

##### 2. What are your priorities for our public and open spaces?

It's a challenge to balance demands for competing uses and protecting the environment. How can we help get the right balance, and make people feel like custodians of their open spaces?

##### 3. Do you have any place-based recommendations to share?

Are there any challenges or opportunities in your local areas in terms of open space or public realm?



### Step 1: look at some of the tools set out by policy 44...

#### Design & Access statement

A report analysing the site constraints & context

Developers must show design is in keeping with conservation area appraisals & the Urban Design Study

#### Pre-application (before submitting to planning)

Demonstrate 'meaningful & consistent community engagement'

Design codes encouraged for larger sites

Richmond Design Review Panel (DRP)

3D digital massing models

#### Planning application

Buildings must be delivering to London Plan standard

Outline proposals not accepted in conservation areas.

Maximum detail for design stage to keep quality - eg specifying smoke vents, grilles & signage.

**Note:** a design code is a set of simple and clear design requirements that are visual and numerical to give specific, detailed guidelines for a site or area.

Outlining tools to control design quality as set out by policy 44.

## 02 Housing & Design Quality

Wednesday 19 January 2022 | 18:30 – 19:40

High quality design is a key priority for making sure our places are accessible and continue to thrive. We also know how important it is to maximise delivery on our available sites to addressing demand for affordable housing.

### Themes for the event:

- How well-designed places and new development can bring benefits for communities.
- Design quality & the role of conservation areas.
- Our need to respond to housing targets set by central government.
- Use and gradual intensification and gentle density for small sites that bring wider benefits and energy efficiency.
- An overview of our place-based strategies and incorporating the results of the Urban Design Study.
- Creating high quality & inclusive public space – with an emphasis on placemaking.

### What questions did we ask?

#### 1. What does good design mean to you?

We know design is subjective, and people have different tastes and style preferences. Think about buildings, benches, public spaces and open spaces. What works well and less well?

#### 2. How can we deliver design quality in Richmond?

We have a set of tools (outlined in policy 44) to make sure developers deliver high quality buildings & places. Do you think these tools go far enough and are there any design quality challenges you are concerned about?

#### 3. What do you think about our approach to small sites development?

What might some of the challenges and opportunities for delivering small sites be in your area?

## 03 Culture & Connection

Tuesday 25 January 2022 | 18:30 – 19:40

We know Richmond is rich in arts, culture and history and features the strong presence of the river. The 20-minute neighbourhood concept and new cultural quarters will be key to supporting growth of culture, creativity and tourism for the borough.

### Themes for the event:

- The role of cultural quarters/clusters in the new draft plan.
- How we can support arts, culture and heritage.
- Supporting tourism and visitor accommodation after Covid-19.
- The 20-minute neighbourhood concept and encouraging sustainable travel.
- How we protect existing land uses in policy whilst responding to needs of the community and adapting to change.

### What questions did we ask?

#### 1. Ideas for Richmond's cultural quarters?

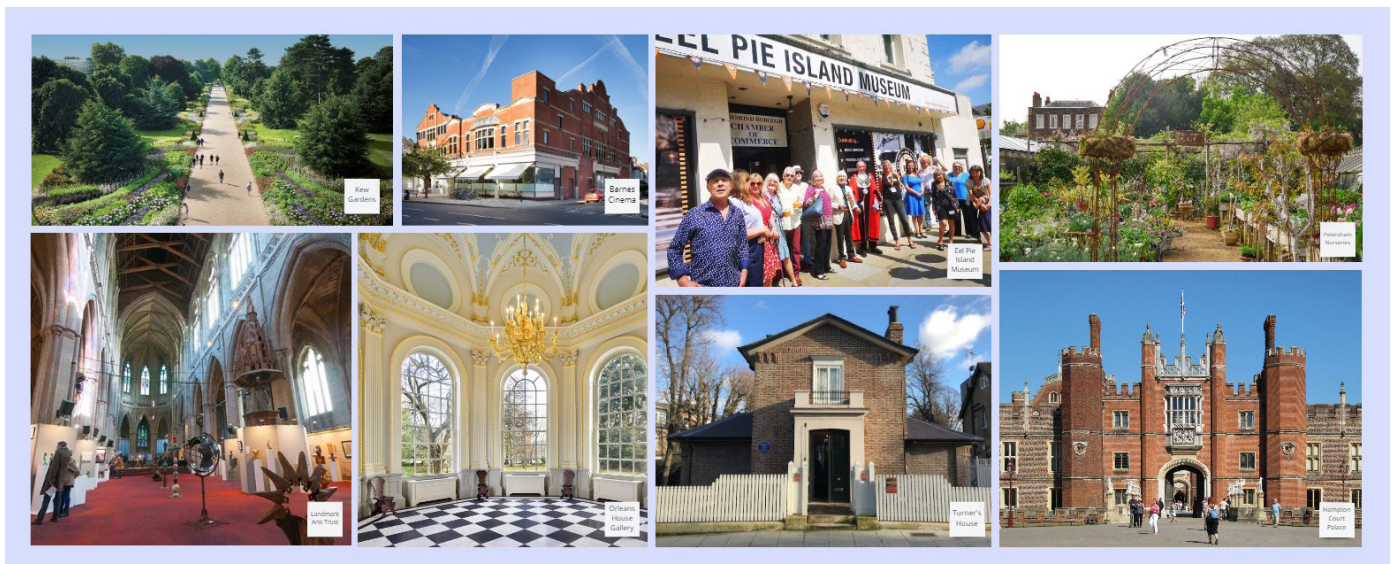
How can we define, enhance and celebrate culture and creativity in Richmond's main centres?

#### 2. How can we also highlight our local assets?

We know Richmond is more than its main centres. How can we support and promote smaller cultural uses across the borough?

#### 3. What might living locally mean for your area?

What might some of the challenges and opportunities for delivering 20-minute neighbourhoods be in your area?



Export from the Miroboard showing cultural venues across the borough.

## 03 Attendees

Events were promoted via the usual Council communications channels, including newsletters and social media. The Local Plan database were also informed. Events were well attended by a mix of predominantly residents as well as those visiting Richmond for work or leisure.

Most participants attended in a personal capacity, however some were representing local cultural or sports organisations, history societies, trusts, charities and professional bodies.

The events were well attended, and there was particular interest in the themed workshop for environment and greenspace, which had a sizable wait list (places had to be limited due to the workshop element requiring small groups with resources to facilitate).

### Summary of registrations

How much knowledge would you say you have about the Local Plan?

Completely new to it	63
Have some knowledge	90
Have a good amount of knowledge	33
Expert	2
Total	188

### Age of participants who registered

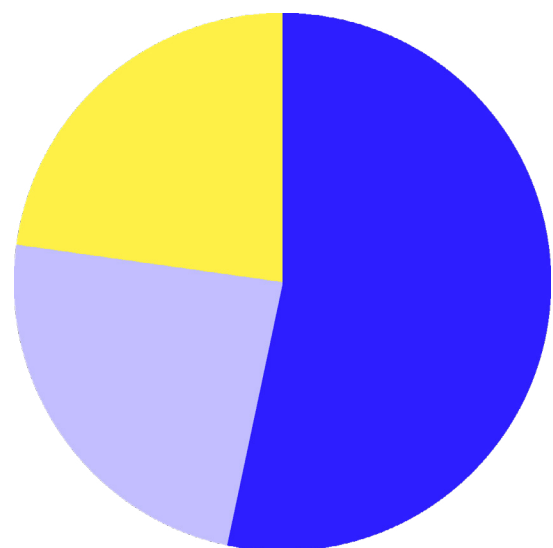
Under 18	0
19-30	12
31-65	122
66-84	57
85 or over	1
Prefer not to say	6
Total	188

### Ethnic identity of participants who registered

White	151
Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	0
Other ethnic group	2
Asian or Asian British	8
Mixed / multiple ethnic groups	9
Prefer not to say	18
Total	188

58% of registrations identified as women, 41% as men, and 7% preferred not to say.

### What connection do you have with Richmond?



Pie chart showing the breakdown of participants who live, work and play, or visit the borough in a social capacity.



# 04 What did we learn?



Chiswick Quay



Ham Close

## 01 Environment and Greenspace

There were many suggestions to support our urban greening policy:

- An interest in integrating policy requirements for items like bee bricks and bat and bird boxes.
- Proper maintenance and consideration of trees - not just numbers.
- Pop up allotments and food growing spaces, using as educational tools.
- Desire for sensory planting and areas of wildflowers.

Concerns were raised about biodiversity in Twickenham Riverside and the need to protect greenspace from infill development. There were also concerns about tree removal and the level of protection given to trees in policy.

Other ideas included better connections between the 'Green' and the 'Blue', for example in Radnor Gardens to improve the park to river access for things like paddleboarding and jetties to flow into park. There was also support for more covered outdoor spaces that can be used in all weathers.

Participants also expressed desire that new homes had very high energy efficiency standards, and those developers were held to account on this.

## 02 Housing and Design Quality

Some responses to the meaning of 'good design':

- Materiality – detailed proposals at ground floor where live or interact.
- Contemporary better than pastiche.
- Should ideally promote a sense of connection with surroundings and the area.
- Bring people together in communal spaces and encourage a sense of community.
- Ideas to improve design quality focused on function, longevity, connection and sustainability.

A requirement to consider the lifespan of material choices during planning, for example timber cladding, was also suggested. Concerns were raised about implementation and monitoring as being a barrier to design quality. There were also caution about expecting the planning process to do too much.

In terms of small sites feedback, there was agreement with the principle of encouraging development where there already is development. Given the range of styles and site types with small sites development, it was felt that designs should be judged by individual merit and that conservation area status may prove a challenge.

There was also a wish to see a more joined up approach in terms of small sites development.

### 03 Culture and connection

In terms of ideas for Richmond's cultural quarters, there was demand for pop-up and season use of spaces, as well as emphasising 'hidden gems' and heritage, culture and art trails.

There were many comments in support of improved wayfinding and sign-posting, as well as noting the lack of public toilets and bins that became particularly apparent during lockdown.

Clarity over what is considered 'culture' in planning terms would be appreciated, as there was support for the concept of cultural quarters but concern of activities or certain uses being excluded.

It was also recognised that the Council should not always be organising, but encouraging and supporting residents to organise their own arts and culture events.

Ideas for highlighting our local assets included:

- Breakdown barriers to ensure people feel able to attend.
- Links and connections to other cultural places.
- Transport links between more local areas and key stations.
- Increased use of the river as a third is greenspace.
- More murals and public art.

There was also general support for the 20 minute neighbourhood policy.



Features of a 20-minute neighbourhood



Responses to question 3: what might living locally mean for your neighbourhood?

## 05 Feedback & next steps

Any outstanding questions that were not answered during events or topics that were raised across multiple sessions were added to an FAQ page on the website with an officer response. Key areas of interest included:

- How the Council and planning team are addressing climate change issues.
- How the Council allocates and spends the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) fund.
- Understanding priorities with housing supply.
- Plans to improve road & cycling safety and pedestrianisation.
- Safe spaces at night.
- Controlling design quality through planning.
- Conflict between energy efficiency improvements to homes with heritage status.
- Provision of community services and population numbers.

### What did participants say?

Feedback from attendees was generally positive, although it is worth noting that a small proportion of attendees completed the form.

"I had a better appreciation of the LP's [local plan's] areas of focus and also what it does not consider."

"I thought the questions in the breakout session were not geared towards the key concerns of most participants surrounding the issue of large-scale development next to or on existing green spaces and safeguarding these for public enjoyment."

"All Council employees presented well and were very clear."

"It would have been productive for attendees to have been given sight of the questions they were being asked to respond to ahead of time, to allow for both broader and more meaningful participation from attendees."

"I learned about lots - about the scope of the plan, the relationship of the plan with the GLA and central Government - and a sense that consultation could be widened to help create relevance to the local population."

"I didn't learn anything new, but I was reminded again how complex the issues are."

### Next steps

The Policy team will now reflect on the comments that were raised during the engagement events and the formal consultation process. A separate overarching consultation report, including summaries of issues raised across the whole consultation, and the Council's responses to the comments raised will be published later in 2022.

The Local Plan will be redrafted for the next phase of the process, known as the 'Publication' or 'Regulation 19' which is due to be consulted upon late in 2022.

The timetable is set out at [www.richmond.gov.uk/draft-local-plan](https://www.richmond.gov.uk/draft-local-plan)