

Richmond: Activating Our Vision

May 2026

Foreword

Richmond town centre is one of the borough's most special places, a unique mix of historic charm, lively streets, beautiful riverside and green spaces. With its rich offer of established and independent shops, cafés, restaurants, pubs and cultural venues, Richmond is a place that attracts people from all over the world – an iconic destination in London that combines the calm and openness of the countryside with the energy and diversity of a global city.

Our town centre is rightly a source of local pride, but high streets everywhere are changing, and Richmond is no exception. The way people shop, work, spend time and connect with each other has evolved, bringing challenges but also opportunities. We need to be ambitious and proactive to respond to these changes, celebrate our distinctiveness and strengths and ensure that Richmond town centre continues to thrive.

This Activation Plan has been shaped through conversations with local people, businesses, community groups and our cultural institutions, and developed with the support of expert partners. It sets out a clear way forward for bringing our town centre vision to life, to create a vibrant, inclusive and welcoming town centre that appeals to residents and visitors of all ages.

The plan champions the culture, creativity and community spirit that are at the heart of the town. It supports new opportunities for businesses and proposes improvements to the public spaces that bring people together.

From enhancing streets and public spaces to creating opportunities to play, rest and have fun, it sets out ways to strengthen connections between the high street, green spaces and the river.

By activating our shared vision – through a place-led plan shaped by local residents, businesses, and community groups – we can continue to work together and shape a town centre that reflects Richmond at its best. A town centre that embraces the changes it faces, that flourishes for years to come and remains the beating heart of our borough.



Cllr Katie Mansfield

Lead Member for
Richmond Town Centre

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Introduction

01

Bringing the Richmond Town Centre Vision to Life

Richmond Town Centre is the main gateway to the borough and a national and global tourist attraction. Its role as a destination depends on a high-quality public realm that meets the needs of both local residents and visitors. As flood levels rise along the riverside, we must also ensure this beloved asset in the Arcadian Thames, remains safe, accessible, and well-managed for everyone.

This document responds to these challenges and opportunities, and sets out a clear and deliverable response to the Richmond Town Centre Vision.

Where the Vision defines long-term ambition, anchored in local ambition, identity, and opportunity, the Activation Plan focuses on what can be done now and next to bring that ambition to life. Its purpose is to translate strategy into action, identifying projects and initiatives that can begin addressing known challenges and enhancing everyday experience in Richmond town centre. These actions are designed to:

- Support more inclusive and welcoming public spaces;
- Improve access and connectivity across the town centre, green spaces and riverside;
- Diversify how high street and riverside spaces are used;
- Better serve younger people, and attract broader audiences;
- Strengthen Richmond's identity as both a local town and a wider destination.

The Activation Plan brings together a mix of short, medium, and longer-term projects. Some are relatively low-cost and can be delivered quickly, such as improvements to wayfinding, temporary use of public space, and supporting cultural programming. Others are more medium to long-term in nature, such as rethinking movement strategies, delivering public realm improvements, and re-imagining civic buildings.

While the Council is supportive of these ideas, we recognise that we cannot hold, deliver, or fund everything alone. This plan is designed to be useful to local partners and organisations, and we will work closely with them to support sustainable delivery. For example, initiatives like markets or events programmes may be better suited to organisations like the Business Improvement District (Be *Richmond* BID) to take the lead on, ensuring they thrive in the long term.

Across all of the proposed projects, the focus is on practical steps that build momentum, demonstrate value, and align with Richmond's Place-shaping Pillars:

- **Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm** – by enhancing the town's cultural offer, supporting independent business, and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors.
- **Space to Breathe** – by reclaiming streets and public spaces for people, wellbeing, and connection.
- **Natural Leaders** – by embedding environmental leadership and long-term value into how space is designed, activated and shared.

This Activation Plan isn't about sweeping transformation. It's a practical, place-led action plan shaped by the voices of the community and local stakeholders, focused on what matters most to them.

In developing these projects, Richmond has the chance to shift from ideas to impact – putting its values into action.

Context, Opportunities & Focus Areas

02

Context & Opportunities

Richmond faces challenges, but unlike many places, it doesn't struggle with a negative image. Known for its beautiful river, green spaces, and rich history, Richmond has a strong identity that attracts residents and visitors. There is now an opportunity (and a need) to broaden this perception, by showcasing more diverse offerings and creating a vibrant, inclusive town centre that appeals to new audiences and future generations.

Richmond town centre's future success depends on nurturing and connecting four key assets:

- **Nature:** The river and riverside, parks and green spaces, fresh air, and wildlife that contribute to wellbeing and a high quality of life.
- **Heritage:** An architectural, cultural and historical legacy that shapes Richmond's character and draws visitors.
- **Leisure and Business:** Opportunities for work, leisure, and recreation that support a thriving local economy.
- **People:** A diverse and dynamic community whose skills, perspectives, and ambitions drive the town forward.

These assets provide a solid foundation, and by addressing some current challenges, Richmond can unlock its full potential:

Engaging Young People

Many young people currently feel disconnected from Richmond town centre, often because they don't see enough opportunities for social and leisure activity, or work that resonate with them. This sense of detachment is compounded by a lack of intergenerational relationships, which contributes to a divide between younger and older residents. Affordability challenges for housing and workspaces further limit young people's ability to live and work locally. Additionally, the absence of dedicated spaces where young people can gather, study, or socialise without feeling out of place intensifies this disconnect.

This situation presents a clear opportunity to create welcoming, 'purpose-built' spaces that support young people's needs and help bridge generational gaps. By doing so, Richmond can foster stronger connections with its younger population, encouraging them to contribute to and shape the town's future.

Young people want places where they can study, meet, relax, and enjoy without feeling out of place

Workshop with young people, October 2025



Centre Stage Richmond

Revitalising the Town Centre

Richmond's town centre and high street have significant potential for improvement. Currently, the absence of a central civic space means there is no obvious focal point for community life, which limits the town centre's vibrancy. The existing offer primarily serves older, more affluent residents, narrowing its appeal to younger and lower-income groups. An over-reliance on traditional retail, without sufficient cultural, community, or leisure activities, has led to a decline in footfall as visitors and residents seek more diverse experiences elsewhere.

Traffic domination further reduces pedestrian-friendly areas, contributes to poor air quality, and restricts the development of a lively café culture – except in some laneways. Poor connectivity to the river and Richmond Green, particularly from transport hubs like Richmond Station, also makes it harder for visitors to fully engage with these important natural and recreational assets.

Addressing these issues offers a strong opportunity to transform the town centre into a more inclusive, accessible, and dynamic place that serves a wider range of people and activities.

“There is a lot going on in Richmond, but it's not vibrancy - it's happening behind closed doors in cinemas, theatres and restaurants.”

Stakeholder comment, July 2025

Heritage & Progress

Richmond's identity is deeply rooted in its location on the River Thames, its historic architecture, and its natural landscape. Heritage is a defining strength, shaping the town's character and attracting visitors. However, experiencing this heritage can sometimes feel exclusive or static, which risks alienating younger and more diverse audiences.

There is a real opportunity to make Richmond's heritage more relevant and engaging today by using it as a platform for contemporary storytelling and cultural experiences. This means moving beyond the idea of Richmond as simply “a lovely historic place” to embracing a more lively, inclusive cultural scene that reflects the town's diversity and future aspirations.

Richmond can lead by example in balancing respect for its past with openness to change, welcoming new activities and ideas that bring fresh energy to the town centre and appeal across generations and backgrounds.



Richmond Town Centre
©Robert Hills



Richmond Green
©Robert Hills



Richmond Riverside
©Robert Hills

Focus Areas

Building on these opportunities and the town's unique strengths, the Activation Plan focuses on five key areas. These are designed to deliver meaningful actions that align with Richmond's strategic objectives and respond to the challenges and insights identified through engagement.

- 1. Streets & Public Space:**
Address traffic and improve public spaces to enhance movement, accessibility, and vibrancy.
- 2. Retail & Leisure:**
Diversify the retail and leisure offerings, creating a lively and inclusive town centre.
- 3. River & Riverside:**
Expand riverside activation with varied and engaging uses.
- 4. Young People:**
Enhance provisions for children, teenagers, and young adults.
- 5. Night-Time Economy:**
Activate and stimulate the evening economy by transforming policy into experience.

Ongoing Engagement

Building upon the engagement that has been ongoing since 2023, further collaborative workshops and focused discussions have been held to deepen understanding and shape the projects within the Activation Plan.

Stakeholder Workshops

Stakeholder Workshops have brought together representatives from local organisations and interest groups, including St Mary's University, Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College, Achieving For Children, Be *Richmond* (BID), Museum of Richmond, High Tide Festival, Living Streets, Richmond Cycling Campaign, Thames Landscape Strategy, Richmond Society, and Friends of Richmond Green. Participants contributed insights from education, business, culture, youth provision/opportunity, environmental advocacy, and heritage to inform the projects.

Young People

Engagement with young people conducted through a drop-in session at Ham Youth Club, a workshop at Heatham House, and a workshop with Kingston and Richmond Youth Council.

Focused Stakeholder Discussions

A series of one-on-one meetings with cultural, community, and business groups, plus targeted conversations on issues like flood risk and mitigation, to ensure proposals address key challenges directly.



Workshop with young people at Heatham House

Projects & Initiatives

03

Quick Wins, Short, Medium & Long-term Projects

The projects outlined in this report are guided by Richmond's "Place Shaping Pillars" and represent a clear commitment to turning vision into action. They form a practical framework for addressing key challenges and opportunities while staying true to the town's core values. Together, they set a high standard, driving Richmond's transformation forward and bringing the Vision's key themes to life.

Place-shaping Pillar 01 (PP_01):

Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm

Richmond is a town of striking contrasts, where the charm of a market town meets the vibrancy of a global city. It offers the serenity of the countryside within the bustling energy of London. Richmond's distinctive blend of green spaces, historic architecture, and the Lanes converge with a thriving technology scene to create a sense of cultural vitality. A hub for arts, independent retail, and creative spaces, Richmond fosters talent, celebrates its heritage, and inspires all who visit. Through dynamic cultural programming, partnerships, and a strong support for local businesses, Richmond promises a balanced, engaging experience for all.

Place-shaping Pillar 02 (PP_02):

Space To Breathe: Escapism, Exploration & Enrichment

Richmond is a welcoming escape from the fast pace London, offering relaxation, exploration, and enrichment through its blend of riverside views, green spaces, and cultural activities that merge leisure, nature, and heritage. Richmond balances an inviting, high-quality charm with inclusivity, fostering spaces for all ages and backgrounds. From parks to entrepreneurial ventures, it creates opportunities for youth, encourages wellness, and promotes community through arts, sports, and cultural experiences, leaving visitors inspired and connected. Richmond's atmosphere encourages new adventures, learning, and lasting memories in a peaceful yet vibrant setting.

Place-shaping Pillar 03 (PP_03):

Natural Leaders: Champions of Environmental Action & Social Value

Richmond upon Thames is committed to being London's greenest borough, inspired by its natural surroundings, from Royal parks to the Thames. As a "natural leader," it embodies bold, proactive environmental stewardship, promoting biodiversity, health, and sustainable living. The town is dedicated to prioritising people over traffic and sustainability over convenience, setting ambitious goals to address climate action, traffic, and air quality. Richmond seeks to lead by example with innovative, people-centred solutions, strong community engagement, and partnerships. It embraces change and pushes boundaries, positioning itself as a model for environmental action and social value, both locally and across London.

Project Index

£	< £150,000
££	£150,000 – £500,000
£££	£500,000 - £1.5m
££££	£1.5m +

Project Name	Page No.	Project Description/Summary	Timeframe	Cost	Place-Shaping Pillar Alignment		
					PP1: Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm	PP2: Space To Breathe: Escapism, Exploration & Enrichment	PP3: Natural Leaders: Champions of Environmental Action & Social Value
1. Streets & Public Space							
Reclaim The Road Events and Temporary Interventions Programme	22	Embrace regular pedestrianisation of the high street and other town centre streets for events and temporary interventions, diverting cars from key areas for people to gather, connect, and engage in community and cultural experiences.	Quick win	£	*	*	*
Lanes Activation / Build the Lanes Brand	26	Take a strategic approach to enhance Richmond's lanes as key aspects of its urban pattern.	Short-term	££	*	*	*
Duke Street Public Realm Improvements	32	Reducing Duke Street to a single lane for vehicles to create a more pedestrian-friendly and sociable environment.	Medium-term	££	*	*	*
King Street Public Realm Improvement	32	Removing parking from King Street to create space for greenery, enabling businesses spill-out and improving pedestrian connectivity between Richmond Green and George Street.	Medium-term	££	*	*	*
Hill Rise Public Realm Improvements	32	Redesign Hill Rise as a pedestrian-friendly area by diverting traffic, expanding pavements, adding seating and greenery, enhancing support for local businesses, and celebrating the independent character.	Medium-term	££	*	*	*
Whittaker Avenue & Square Public Realm Improvements	38	Transforming this key link between the town centre and riverside into an accessible civic space that supports daily use and event programming through improved surfacing, planting, seating, and event infrastructure.	Medium-term	£££	*	*	*
Richmond Rail Station Public Realm Improvements	42	Improve public realm outside Richmond Station as a more welcoming gateway to the town.	Medium-term	££	*	*	*
Lower George Street Public Realm Improvements	42	Enhance Lower George Street through de cluttering street furniture, and improving the layout for better pedestrian flow, while adding greenery to create a more attractive and functional public space.	Medium-term	££	*	*	*
George Street Greater Pedestrianisation	44	Exploring options for greater pedestrianisation, ensuring any changes are evidenced and maintain accessibility.	Long-term	££££+	*	*	*
2. Retail Diversification & Branding							
Pop-up Markets & Cultural Events	54	Animating streets and public spaces by hosting regular events, festivals, creative markets, and pop-ups to support emerging local businesses and creatives with affordable, flexible retail opportunities that lower barriers to entry.	Quick win	£	*	*	*
Wayfinding & Branding Initiative	48	Enhance routes and connections between zones of the high street, green spaces, and riverside to boost visibility of businesses, cultural and community hubs, and to enrich storytelling around culture, heritage, and ecology.	Short-term	££	*	*	*
Mixed-Use High Street Initiative	52	Re-imagine underused high street spaces, such as the Town Hall, vacant retail and spaces above shops as hubs for independent retail, workspace, leisure, culture and community, working with landlords for short and long-term use of space.	Medium-term	££££	*	*	*

Project Name	Page No.	Project Description/Summary	Timeframe	Cost	Place-Shaping Pillar Alignment		
					PP1: Global City Energy Meets Market Town Charm	PP2: Space To Breathe: Escapism, Exploration & Enrichment	PP3: Natural Leaders: Champions of Environmental Action & Social Value
3. River and Riverside Activation							
Twickenham Bridge / Old Deer Park	60	Transform this flood-prone site into a compact urban nature reserve with raised boardwalks, wildlife observation areas, natural play features, and educational elements, enhancing biodiversity, environmental awareness, and pedestrian connections to Old Deer Park.	Medium to Long-term	££££	*	*	*
Old Palace Lane	62	Re-imagine the underused parking area as a pocket park, creating a welcoming green gateway to the riverside that enhances pedestrian connectivity, frames protected views, and supports casual social use.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
Cholmondeley Walk	64	Enhance this riverside route with integrated riverbank seating, flood-tolerant tree planting, and refuge for those caught in a high-tide.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
Riverside Gardens (Riverside Terraces)	65	Enhance Riverside Gardens by replacing areas of worn grass beneath trees with shade-tolerant native and pollinator-friendly planting to enhance biodiversity & visual appeal, along with discreet stepping stones to manage foot traffic.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
Mears Walk	66	Transform Mears Walk with a continuous integrated bench along the existing brick wall, flood tolerant spring-flowering trees and wetland planting, to offer a more inviting, active, and scenic riverside path.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
Rotary Gardens	68	Enhance Rotary Gardens by introducing natural play features that use the existing topography, improving access and arrival points with planting and surfacing, and adding shade-tolerant meadow planting to boost biodiversity and visual appeal.	Medium to Long-term	££££	*	*	*
Gothic Gardens	70	Transform Gothic Gardens into an inclusive, sensory-rich hub for families and groups by adding picnic areas with shaded seating, edible and a discovery garden supporting social interaction and responsible use. Utilise the existing tow-path wall for integrating seating, and enhance the upper tow-path with informal exercise equipment.	Medium to Long-term	££££	*	*	*
Riverdale Gardens	74	Position Riverdale Gardens as a youth-oriented space - creating areas for socialising and small-scale performances, with the possibility of using the existing levels to form an informal amphitheatre.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
Terrace Gardens	78	Shift this area toward a contemporary, sustainable landscape by replacing formal bedding with rewilded meadows, pollinator-friendly plants.	Medium to Long-term	£££	*	*	*
"Things that Float" Programme	79	Introduce innovative floating features on the river, such as gardens, wellbeing, cultural & arts spaces, and distinctive riverside experiences that engage both local residents and visitors.	Long-term	£££££	*	*	*
4. Spaces and Activities for Young People							
Inclusive Event at Richmond Green	84	Reinforce Richmond Green as a space for everyone, by developing a programme of inclusive and appropriately sized, events featuring activities that blend arts, culture, nature, sports and wellbeing.	Short-term	£	*	*	*
Richmond Green Public Realm Improvements	84	Make Richmond Green a more inclusive space through biodiversity enhancements, and light-touch play, exercise and social seating to encourage multi generational use multi-generational use.	Medium-term	£££	*	*	*
Re-imagining the Lending Library	82	Re-imagine Richmond Green Lending Library as a day to evening youth hub offering study and workspaces, skills development, performance and exhibition areas, cultural programming, and social spaces empowering young people to connect and express themselves.	Medium to Long-term	£££££	*	*	*
5. Night-Time Economy							
Evening Initiatives and Interventions	88	Building on afore listed project and initiatives, this section highlights other complementary projects that can contribute to a more diverse night-time economy and inclusive social environment.	Sort to Medium-term	£-£££	*	*	*

1. Streets & Public Space

Transport and Movement Challenges in Richmond

When it comes to transport, movement, streets, and public space; Richmond is already well aware of the challenges it faces and the significant changes needed to address them. A 2016 perception survey of local businesses by Be *Richmond* BID found that 70% of respondents identified congestion as an issue, a situation that still persists.

As a historic town with narrow streets and limited public spaces, there is an ongoing tension between the demands of motorised traffic (both strategic and local), servicing and loading, bus journey times and stop environments, cycling conditions, and the pedestrian experience. Vehicles currently dominate, often at the expense of vulnerable road users and those who want to spend time in the town centre rather than just pass through.

The 2024 Council study¹, found that around 75% of vehicular traffic in the town centre is through-traffic, with neither origin nor destination in Richmond.

The Be *Richmond* BID's 2021 Future Vision for Richmond² report also highlighted heavy traffic and complex circulation creating a polluted and noisy environment. It noted that Richmond's spatial constraints limit the potential for major street space reallocation in favour of pedestrians, making small-scale changes, such as creating opportunities to pause, even more important.

Cycle connectivity is poor, and opportunities for children's play are limited. There is a need to encourage more footfall on secondary streets and to create space for businesses to introduce outdoor seating. Poor connections between the town and the river reflect a wider need to improve pedestrian routes, including links to surrounding residential areas. Key junctions and decision points often lack clear legibility and accessibility

1. Richmond Town Centre Study – Baseline Report, 2024 by Steer
2. Future Vision for Richmond – Project Portfolio, April 2021 by Steer (Client: BID)



Richmond Town Centre
©Robert Hills

Richmond's Potential and Proposed Interventions

To be clear, Richmond town centre is a success in spite of its traffic problems, attracting retailers, restaurateurs and footfall that most other towns in London would dearly like to have. But, despite this relative success, Richmond town centre has the potential to offer residents and visitors so much more.

This section sets out a series of practical, place-specific interventions aimed at rebalancing the town's streets and public spaces in favour of walking/wheeling, cycling, and everyday social use. Building on the success of event-led street closures and drawing from tested examples elsewhere, the proposals focus on improving access, supporting local business activity, and creating more opportunities for people to dwell and enjoy.

Short & Medium-Term Actionable Ideas

This Activation Plan centres on achievable short- and medium-term steps that lay the groundwork for transformative, long-term change. It outlines a series of interconnected projects that progressively build momentum, showcasing what is possible while helping to dispel fears about potential downsides, and crucially, provide a taste of the benefits that long-term pedestrian-focused improvements could bring.

Building Upon Existing Experience

Starting with temporary, short-term closures, these moves can help build the case for change. However, they must be backed by a high-quality programme of events, business engagement, and temporary public realm interventions to clearly demonstrate the benefits of more permanent closures.

Richmond town centre already has experience with temporary street closures, including Clarence Street, Hill Rise, and George Street during the annual Christmas light switch-on, and more recently Centre Stage.

Getting the Basics Right

Richmond needs to maximise the public space it already has, ensuring every square metre in the town centre works as hard as possible. At present, this is not always the case. For example, Whittaker Avenue, in a town centre that lacks a significant public square and has poor connections to the River Thames, fails to realise its potential.

Long-Term Movement Solutions

While this Activation Plan focuses on smaller, short- and medium-term projects, Richmond Council is building on previous work and exploring options for greater pedestrianisation, ensuring any changes are evidence-led and maintain accessibility.

These options concentrate on two key approaches: first, further investigating a ban on through-traffic enforced by ANPR cameras to reduce general traffic volumes and create new opportunities for public realm improvements; and second, exploring traffic management measures to re-route remaining general traffic away from the retail core, thereby enhancing the pedestrian environment and supporting the town centre's vitality.



Reclaim The Road Events and Temporary Interventions Programme

The Reclaim the Road Programme aims to create a vibrant, people-focused town centre that supports local businesses and strengthens community life. It focuses on making streets more welcoming, and lively places where people want to spend time.

To achieve this, the programme proposes regular pedestrianisation of George Street and other town centre streets to host high-quality event programming and cultural activations that foster social interaction, arts, creativity, and support pop-up enterprises, helping to increase footfall, encourage longer visits, and boost business revenue.

Additionally, the programme seeks to use short-term measures, such as parklets with seating, greenery, and opportunities for pop-up traders. These initiatives will help build momentum and demonstrate the art of the possible ahead of medium- to long-term improvements.

A key priority is reducing traffic to allow people to fully experience and enjoy the town centre, free from congestion, noise, and pollution. This will create a safer, more inclusive environment for walking, wheeling, and cycling, while giving residents and visitors a tangible sense of what a traffic-free or reduced town centre could feel like.

All activations should be carefully managed to minimise impacts on surrounding streets, maintaining traffic flow and preventing displacement to residential areas.



'Skate the street', Strand Aldwych
©LDA



Croydon Parklets
©The Decorators



Meanwhile seating & planting, RCA
©Hufton + Crow



Pop-up wellness class
©Thomas Schlijper



Pop-up curated markets
©HemingwayDesign



Museum on Wheels
©Cyrille Weiner



Temporary public realm activation, Ilford
©Jan Kattein Architects

Event Programming: Centre Stage Richmond

The inaugural Centre Stage Richmond, September 2025, transformed George Street and Whittaker Square into a stage, canvas and playground for creativity, community and culture. The festival filled the town centre with live music, theatre, performance, art, workshops, and markets.

The musical programming celebrated Richmond's rich – and often untold – musical heritage, inspired legendary Belvedere Arms parties. Audiences enjoyed genre-spanning sets from Femi Koleoso (Ezra Collective), Joe Davis (Far Out Recordings), and Hillarynx. A Youth Music Showcase curated by BandIt (Richmond Music Trust) and Basement Door gave a platform to emerging local talent, culminating in a homecoming finale from local indie band Gingerella.

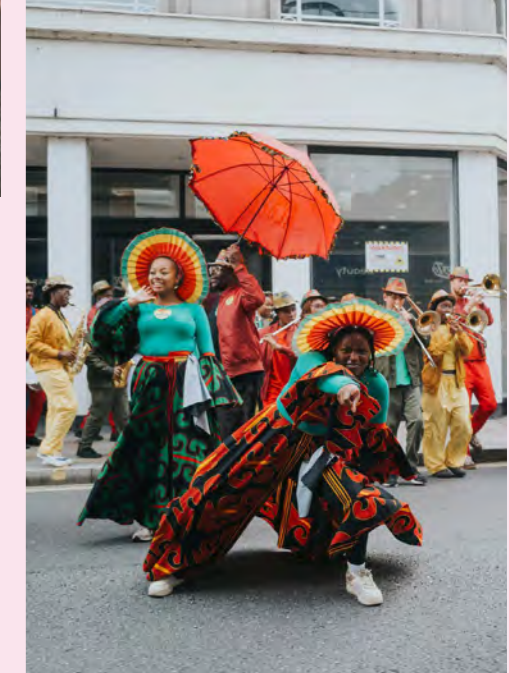
Richmond's streets hosted theatre, performance, and skate culture. Orange Tree Theatre presented a promenade-style Alice's Adventures in Wonderland unfolding across George Street, while Kinetika Bloco and Combination Dance led processions and interactive workshops. Skateable sculptures invited play and performance, supported by drop-in skate workshops.

Creative workshops encouraged hands-on participation for all ages, from banner-making and crafting giant puppets to seed-bombing. Collaborative painting and print-making helped transform the streets, embodying the Vision's spirit of inclusivity and co-creation.

Curated markets featured local independent designers and makers, while Charity Super.Mkt added a sustainable element with pre-loved garments supporting social and environmental causes.

As the first major activation of the Richmond Town Centre Vision, Centre Stage showed how public spaces can foster community and connection. The festival attracted 22,000 attendees, increased footfall by 30%, and boosted local businesses, with hospitality up 20-45%, retail up 10-30%, and the Museum of Richmond seeing its highest visitor numbers.

Recognising Centre Stage Richmond as a success, Richmond Council are actively exploring ongoing partnerships and sustainable funding models to ensure its continued growth and lasting impact.



Lanes Activation / Build the Lanes Brand

Richmond's Lanes are bustling with small independent businesses and form a key part of the town's character. Building on the valuable efforts of Be *Richmond* BID and local businesses to enhance these spaces, there is a real opportunity to take a strategic approach to strengthen their unique identity and improve their visibility.

Water Lane:

This cobbled lane leads down to the riverside and is home to several pubs, restaurants, and Richmond's independent Curzon Cinema, which is somewhat tucked away and not easily found. Opportunities include improved signage to better guide visitors between the river and town centre, with a focus on highlighting the cinema. Additionally, improved lighting, and small-scale-greening, particularly around venues and hospitality businesses.

Church Walk / Church Court:

Another distinctive lane, Church Court is home to numerous independent businesses, many of which have already enhanced the area through small-scale greening. There is potential to build on this with additional planting. Enhanced high-level wayfinding and at George Street would further increase the visibility of these businesses. Additionally, the blank façade of the Tesco building presents an opportunity for greening and/or public art installations, such as murals or vertical gardens.

The area around St Mary Magdalene Church also offers scope for public realm improvements; the creation of a pocket park as a calm, reflective, and sensory space within the town centre.

Paved Court:

Opportunities here include installing small-scale planters outside shops, where space allows, and improved wayfinding from King's Street to guide visitors into this intimate lane and onward to the Green.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03

Golden Court:

There is potential to extend festoon lighting toward George Street or to introduce high-level artwork suspended between buildings to add visual interest. Enhanced wayfinding, both at eye level and in elevated positions on George Street, would better promote the lane, its independent businesses, and its function as a route to Richmond Green. Additionally, small-scale greening could help carry the greenery of Richmond Green further into the town centre.

Brewers Lane:

Brewers Lane offers an opportunity for high-level artwork and improved wayfinding on George Street, raising its profile and celebrating its character.

Victoria Place:

Small-scale greening especially near George Street would significantly enhance the area's appearance, while building façades provide a canvas for public art. This project aligns with suggestions to re-purpose the vacant Ashley House as a hub for independent retail, creative and cultural activities, and community use.

Waterloo Place / Princess Street:

Strategic small-scale greening, improved lighting and wayfinding can help create a more attractive environment that supports the local businesses and enriches the visitor experience in this area.

Quadrant Road & Old Station Passage:

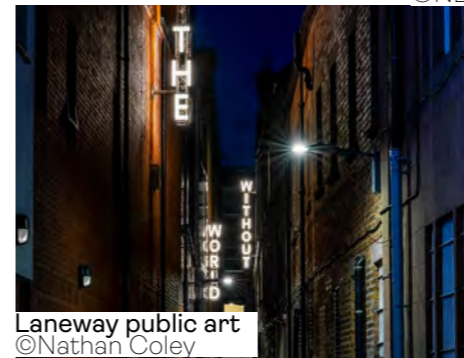
Although these lanes differ from Richmond's historic lanes in character, they are vital pedestrian routes linking George Street and Richmond Rail Station to Richmond Green, the Lending Library, Theatre, and Richmond and Hillcroft Adult College. Enhancements such as upgraded lighting, improved wayfinding, and public art installations would strengthen their role as key connections within the town, while boosting safety and accessibility for all users.



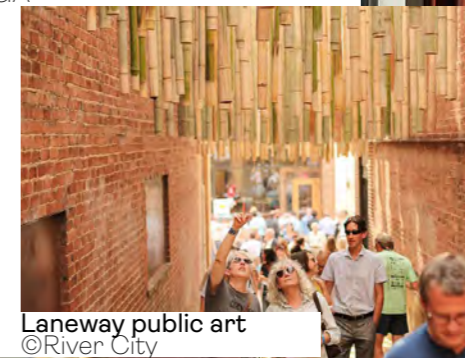
Laneway branding & wayfinding
©NDGA



Laneway public greening
©Florian Croehn



Laneway public art
©Nathan Coley



Laneway public art
©River City



Laneway branding/wayfinding & lighting
©McWhinney



Pocket park
©Rich Landscapes



Pocket park / Memorial garden
©Amy Kupec Larue



Waterloo Pl. / Princess St.

Brewers Lane

Church Court

Paved Court

Golden Court

Victoria Place

Church Walk

Water Lane

- Small-scale greening
- Creation of a pocket park –
Church Walk /St Mary Magdalene Church.
- ✱ Wayfinding improvements to increase
lane visibility and reinforce connections
to Richmond Green and the Riverside.
- Opportunity for artwork –
transforming blank façades or
installing artwork at elevated levels
between buildings.

Public Realm Improvement Projects

These projects aim to enhance streets and key public spaces by reducing car dominance, supporting local businesses and café culture, and reinforcing links between the town centre, green spaces, and riverside. The focus is on making these areas more accessible, welcoming, and better connected, with special attention to arrival points and gateways.

Across all initiatives, proposals prioritise the addition of greenery to improve both visual appeal and environmental quality. They also seek to create comfortable, adaptable spaces that encourage community use and reflect Richmond's character.

Key Projects

- Duke Street
- King Street
- Hill Rise
- Whittaker Avenue & Square
- Richmond Rail Station
- Lower George Street

Shared Goals Across Projects:

Creating impactful first impressions: Enhancing major arrival points and gateways to set a welcoming and distinctive tone.

Enhancing accessibility: Ensuring all streets are inclusive and usable for people of all ages and mobility levels.

Supporting wellbeing: Creating comfortable, attractive streets where people can walk/wheel, sit, meet and enjoy being outside.

Greening: Bringing nature into the town centre, improving air quality, biodiversity, climate resilience, and add a sense of joy to public spaces.

Supporting the local economy: Supporting town centre businesses through improved visibility, outdoor space, and footfall.

Showcasing local identity and culture: Incorporating thoughtful wayfinding, public art, and storytelling.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03



Duke Street



King Street



Hill Rise



Whittaker Avenue & Square



Richmond Rail Station



Lower George Street



Duke Street

Duke Street is a key route to Richmond Green, with potential to become a more pedestrian-friendly and sociable space. The proposal focuses on reducing vehicle lanes down to a single carriageway, creating a safer, more comfortable environment for people.

Possible enhancements include widened footpaths, new street planting, seating areas that support casual rest and social interaction, and designated spill-out zones for cafés, shops, and restaurants to help animate the street and strengthen its character.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Widen footpaths to improve comfort and safety for pedestrians.
- Introduce street planting and trees to soften the space and enhance biodiversity.
- Provide outdoor seating areas to support casual rest and social use, including designated spill-out areas for cafés, shops and restaurants.

King Street

King Street serves as an important connection between Richmond Green and George Street and is home to a mix of bars and restaurants. Recommendations are to remove on-street parking to free up space for planting, seating, and improved walking/wheeling routes. These changes can enhance the street's appeal, support outdoor dining, and contribute to a greener, healthier environment.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Remove on-street parking to increase pedestrian space.
- Create space for café tables/outdoor dining.
- Add planting to improve air quality and urban biodiversity.
- Improve wayfinding to lanes (Paved Court) and Richmond Green.

Hill Rise

Hill Rise is home to a number of independent businesses but is currently overshadowed by vehicle traffic and parking, which limits its potential. Recommendations here focus on shifting through-traffic via Compass Hill to prioritise people over cars, support small local businesses, and enhance the street's character.

Alongside these changes, improved wayfinding can better connect Hill Rise to the riverside, Richmond Hill, and Richmond Park, strengthening its role as a key link within the town centre.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Explore restrictions to vehicular access by diverting through-traffic, while maintaining essential access for emergency vehicles and loading/deliveries.
- Expand space for pedestrians, including widened footpaths and improved surfaces.
- Support independent businesses with areas for outdoor seating, dining and displays.
- Introduce greening with planters, street trees and low-maintenance greenery.
- Reinforce the area's character through materials and lighting that align with the historic setting & independent feel.
- Improvements to the Triangle green space to create a welcoming pocket park.
- Enhance wayfinding to the riverside and Richmond Hill / Richmond Park.

Short-term improvements are already underway to enhance the pedestrian experience on Hill Rise, working towards these medium-long term recommendations.



Enabling business spill-out, Walthamstow
©Alex Christie



Improving setting for businesses
©Urban Movement



Incidental play
©Urban Movement



Re-greening
©George King Architects



Parklet
©Vestre



Enabling cafe/restaurant spill-out



Parklet
©WMB Studio

King Street

Opportunities for Improvement ~ Illustrative Visual



1. Remove on-street parking to expand pedestrian space and create areas for business spill-out.
2. Create dedicated areas for outdoor dining to support cafés, restaurants, and bars.
3. Introduce planting and street trees to enhance the streetscape, improve air quality, and support urban biodiversity.
4. Improve wayfinding to the lanes; Paved Court, and to Richmond Green, as part of a cohesive town centre-wide wayfinding strategy.
5. Opportunity to add canopy awnings to ground-floor businesses on the north side of the road, providing shade and enhancing visual character.

Hill Rise

Opportunities for Improvement ~ Illustrative Visual



1. Explore restrictions to vehicular access, diverting through-traffic via Compass Hill while maintaining essential access for emergency vehicles and loading/deliveries.
2. Enhance pedestrian space with widened footpaths and improved surfaces to create areas for business spill-out, including outdoor seating and dining.
3. Introduce greening elements such as planters and street trees (e.g., cherry trees) to provide seasonal interest.
4. Enhance the 'Triangle' green space to create a welcoming pocket park.
5. Implement wayfinding improvements to better promote the independent shopping street and strengthen connections to the riverside, Richmond Hill, and Richmond Park.

Whittaker Avenue & Square

The project aims to improve the definition, greening and purpose of Whittaker Square and Avenue, unlocking potential as a key link between the town centre and riverside, transforming the area into a well-used public space that can support both everyday activities and programmed events.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Improved surfacing and accessibility to ensure the space works for all users.
- Introduction of green infrastructure, such as rain gardens, pocket planting, and planters to soften the environment and enhance biodiversity, ensuring flexibility for event programming.
- Providing space for spill-out from the Town Hall and nearby restaurants to support outdoor dining and socialising.
- Flexible infrastructure to accommodate events, small markets, and cultural activations, including services such as power and water.

Quick Wins & Short-term Activations

A regular programme of events and meanwhile uses to help test ideas and engage the community in shaping its future e.g.:

- Introducing mobile planters or green parklets to test greening strategies, soften the square, and encourage people to linger and socialise.
- Trailing interactive family-focused features like playful water elements and informal play.
- Exploring skateable furniture or features that allow active use without overwhelming the space.
- Hosting pop-up events, markets, workshops, and performances to animate the space.



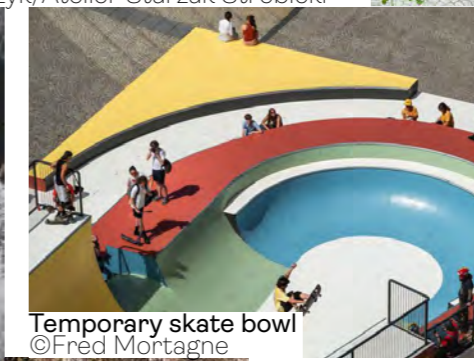
Mobile seating / tree planters
©Mateusz Bieniaszczyk/Atelier Starzak Strebicki



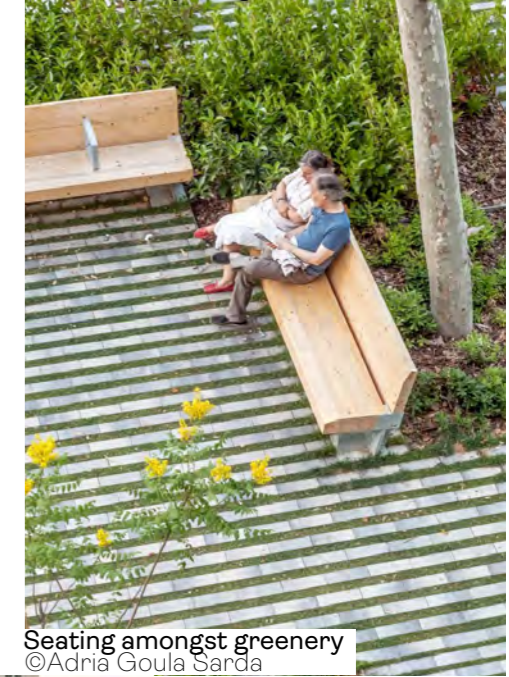
Pop-up market/event
©HemingwayDesign



"Appearing Rooms"
Temporary fountains, Southbank
©Jeppe Hein



Temporary skate bowl
©Fred Mortagne



Seating amongst greenery
©Adria Goula Sarda



Communal seating, Strand Aldwych
©LDA



Mobile greening & seating
©Rita Engl / DnD GmbH

Whittaker Avenue & Square

Opportunities for Improvement ~ Illustrative Visual



1. Improved surfacing and accessibility to ensure the space works for all users.
2. Pavements widened to create space for spill-out from the Town Hall and restaurants to support outdoor dining and socialising.
3. Introduction of rain gardens, street trees, and climbing plants to enhance climate resilience and bring greenery into the town centre.
4. Flexible public realm with built-in infrastructure to accommodate events, small markets, and cultural activities.
5. Raised planters that can be moved or repositioned as needed for events.
6. Town Hall branding/wayfinding.
7. NCP parking and delivery access retained.

Rail Station

Richmond Station is a site allocation in the Richmond Local Plan 2024–2039. As the town's busiest arrival point and a key gateway, it shapes visitors' first impressions of Richmond. The proposal focuses on enhancements to wayfinding and strengthening connections to key destinations within the town.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Explore public art and engaging wayfinding elements that reflect Richmond's character and identity.
- Integrate wayfinding improvements as part of a wider town centre and riverside strategy to ensure clear, consistent navigation and strengthen connections to key destinations.
- Use lighting to enhance the station building and create a more inviting, cohesive sense of arrival building on the recent station refurbishment project.

Lower George Street

Lower George Street currently suffers from physical and visual congestion, which limits pedestrian comfort and restricts space for outdoor dining and business spill-out.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Streamline and rationalise street furniture, reducing visual and physical clutter.
- Increase space for café tables/outdoor dining, introduce low-level planting or green buffers to soften the street and enhance the setting.



Uncluttered public space for rest and shade
©Simon Vine



Subtle building lighting
©Hufton+Crow



Flexible informal seating with planters for greening
©Butler Wiltshire



Distinctive wayfinding
©Jim Stephenson



Raised planters define café spill-out
©Alexandra Nobel

George Street Greater Pedestrianisation

The ambition is to transform George Street into a standout pedestrian-friendly leisure and retail destination and a leading piece of public realm for the borough.

This vision aligns with the Air Quality Action Plan and the Growth Plan. Data shows that around 75% of traffic entering Richmond Town Centre is through-traffic, passing without stopping for goods or services (Steer Report 2024). Additionally, George Street is an Air Quality Exceedance site, where pollution levels exceed safety limits. Reducing vehicular traffic would significantly improve air quality. Adjusting bus routes would reduce delays and congestion, improving bus speeds and journey times. Expanding public realm features, such as seating and greening, would reclaim space for a pedestrian-only zone, boost business revenue by increasing dwell time, spill-out, and repeat trips to the town centre.

Richmond Council will undertake initial traffic modelling and options analysis to ensure any future decisions on implementation are based on evidence and maintain accessibility.

Options will be explored in collaboration with key partners such as TfL and a future paper will set out the options available, associated costs and funding requirement and will be subject to detailed consultation with key stakeholders including business and residents.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 **PP_02** **PP_03**



Green and accessible high street
©Bureau B+B



Creating opportunity for business spill-out.
©Mikkel Eye



Playful experiences
©Mikkel Eye



Sensory experiences
Mikkel Eye



Providing a generous and joyful public realm
©LDA



Seating amongst greenery offering shade and shelter
©SLA



Business spill-out and cafe culture
©Bureau B+B

2. Retail Diversification & Branding

High streets today must offer more than just retail, they need to respond to social shifts where people seek cultural, leisure, and social experiences alongside shopping. This section outlines projects and initiatives aimed at evolving the high street and town centre offer, creating space and opportunities for creativity, culture, enterprise, and community activity. Building a more diverse, and inclusive high street that better serves residents, visitors, and both established and emerging businesses.

While Richmond's retail is varied and valued by many, there is dissatisfaction among local residents about the loss of key stores and independent shops, and a sense that the town centre lacks a clear, defined offer. As one participant said;

“It would be good if there were a good mix of businesses in Richmond Town Centre... Much better to encourage small businesses and not so many chains.”

Visibility and wayfinding for cultural and community venues were also raised as concerns. Business owners noted the lack of signage directing visitors to their locations. One local organisation commented;

“We need a sign directing people to us from the station, Richmond Theatre has a sign, but we have more daily visitors.”

A complementary Wayfinding and Branding Initiative should strengthen physical and perceptual links between the high street, green spaces, and the riverside – improving accessibility and highlighting Richmond's cultural, heritage and ecological assets.

This could include artistic and engaging signage, playful installations, and storytelling elements designed to bring Richmond's identity to life, particularly for young people and new visitors.

Working with town centre landlords, there are opportunities to make better use of underutilised buildings through flexible, mixed-use approaches. In particular, vacant upper floors above shops and buildings could be better utilised for office or creative workspaces for freelancers, start-ups, small businesses and creatives. Prominent buildings such as Ashley House, as well as the Town Hall, which already houses library services and Richmond Museum, could be further developed as community and cultural hubs supporting independent retail, community-focused spaces, creative workspaces, and cultural activities.

These spaces could also support circular economy models, affordable studios, and spaces for play and learning.

Additionally, Richmond town centre can be enlivened through a broader and more frequent programme of high-quality markets and cultural events. These would provide accessible platforms for local talent and animate public spaces, transforming the high street into a destination for diverse experiences beyond shopping. This reflects community interest in youth-focused and creative spaces, flexible pop-ups, and events that encourage social connection and cultural engagement.



Richmond's Lanes - Paved Court
©Robert Hills

Wayfinding and Branding Strategy

Richmond town centre requires better wayfinding as a 'branding tool' to help people move easily around the town and discover its many attractions. There is a clear need to improve routes connecting the town centre to the riverside and green spaces like Richmond Green, Richmond Park, and Old Deer Park. These improved links should also highlight independent shops and businesses such as those in the Lanes and Hill Rise, which are key to Richmond's charm.

The wayfinding strategy/project should focus on making key cultural and community assets, such as the Town Hall, Richmond Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre and Lending Library, easier to find and more visible. It should celebrate Richmond's history and heritage, including stories about heritage such as Richmond Palace, using interpretation and artwork that engages people of all ages, especially younger visitors.

Interpretation should also cover Richmond's natural environment, particularly the Arcadian Thames Landscape and its ecology. This includes raising awareness of the local ecosystem and the challenges posed by climate change, such as rising flood levels. The project should highlight how Richmond's riverside spaces need to adapt to these changes, promoting understanding of environmental resilience and sustainability.

A key priority should be developing wayfinding that is accessible to all, with particular attention to visual accessibility for people with disabilities, ensuring everyone can navigate the town with confidence.

Proposals should include eye-catching and engaging signage, artistic installations, and unique visual markers as part of a longer-term strategy to enhance connectivity and strengthen place identity.

Importantly, there is significant potential to co-design certain public art elements with local creatives and the community, with a strong focus on involving young people. This collaborative approach will help ensure the artworks resonate locally, and foster a sense of ownership and pride.

Interactive displays, such as QR codes linking to online resources, could also be explored to make Richmond's heritage and environment more engaging and accessible to new audiences.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03



Distinctive wayfinding typologies ©Jim Stephenson



Habitat marker ©Isthmus Group



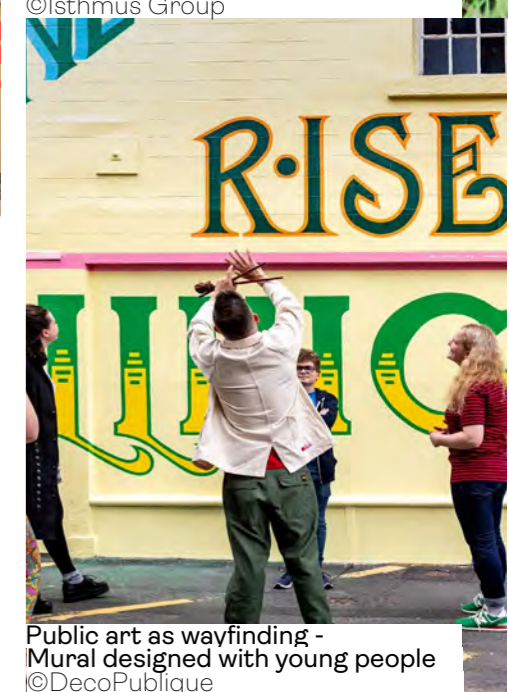
Raising environmental awareness ©Field Work Facility



Play: 'wayfinding that isn't wayfinding' ©Jeppe Hein



Storytelling and interpretation ©Vivian Marie Doering





Public art as wayfinding - Mural designed with young people ©DecoPublique





Storytelling and interpretation ©Stephen Barrett




 Enhancing Richmond's busiest arrival point to shape visitors' first impressions and showcase what the town offers, strengthening connections to key destinations.

 Enhancing the connectivity between the town centre, riverside, and green spaces including Richmond Green and Old Deer Park. These wayfinding features should also showcase Richmond's unique character by highlighting independent shops and businesses, such as those on Hill Rise.

 Building the Lanes Brand: Enhancing visibility of small, independent businesses, and improving routes between the town centre, green spaces and riverside.

 Enhancing the Visibility of Cultural, Community, Educational, and Sports/Recreation Anchors

1. Town Hall - Library & Museum
2. Richmond Lending Library
3. Richmond Theatre
4. Orange Tree Theatre
5. Cinema
6. Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College
7. St Mary Magdalene Church
8. Pools on the Park / Old Deer Park Sports Facilities
9. Richmond Canoe Club

 Heritage Interpretation: Celebrating Richmond's heritage including Richmond Hill, protected views, Richmond Palace, and Richmond's boat building history using interpretation and artwork that engages people of all ages, especially younger visitors.

Mixed-Use High Street Initiative

This initiative proposes to reimagine underutilised and vacant town centre spaces, as hubs for independent retail, creative enterprise, culture, and youth engagement.

While the Town Hall is an established cultural venue housing the library and Richmond Museum, its internal layout is complex, and its full potential as a community hub remains underutilised and not clearly visible. The Town Hall's strategic position between Hill Street and Whittaker Square – particularly its role as an anchor for Whittaker Square – is generally underplayed. Currently, the building and its surrounding spaces function more as a barrier to movement rather than a welcoming gateway that enhances access and connectivity.

There is significant opportunity to enhance the Town Hall's role by improving its visibility and flexible use of space to better support creative, cultural, and social activities. This could include measures to strengthen the relationship between the building and the adjacent public spaces. Although the building's poor internal organisation presents challenges, interventions such as better lighting to create a positive night-time presence, and thoughtful enhancements to entrances and windows, could begin to celebrate and improve its connectivity with the surrounding area.

Separately, there is significant potential to work with landlords to utilise vacant retail spaces, and floors above retail units across the town centre to support local entrepreneurs and creatives, and contribute to a more dynamic high street.

Opportunities include:

- Retail platforms for independent and start-up businesses.
- Family and youth-focused facilities, including dedicated areas for study, work, socialising, and indoor recreation, alongside play spaces that nurture creativity and connection.
- Affordable studios and creative workspaces for artists, designers, and entrepreneurs, encouraging Richmond's creative talent to base their practice locally.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03

- Leisure and cultural spaces, including street food and dining venues, flexible spaces for exhibitions, live music, and performance, creating opportunities for community celebration and cultural activity.

This should be complemented by a strong retail strategy aimed at attracting niche, experiential independents that reinforce the high street's distinctive character, working closely with landlords, agents, and Be Richmond BID to deliver practical, sustainable outcomes.

Flexible, shared retail models could also be encouraged to reduce costs for independents while enhancing the town centre experience for residents and visitors alike.



Town Hall (Whittaker Avenue)



Ashley House (George Street)



Creative community space
©Jan Kattein Architects



Pop-up retail
©Market Peckham



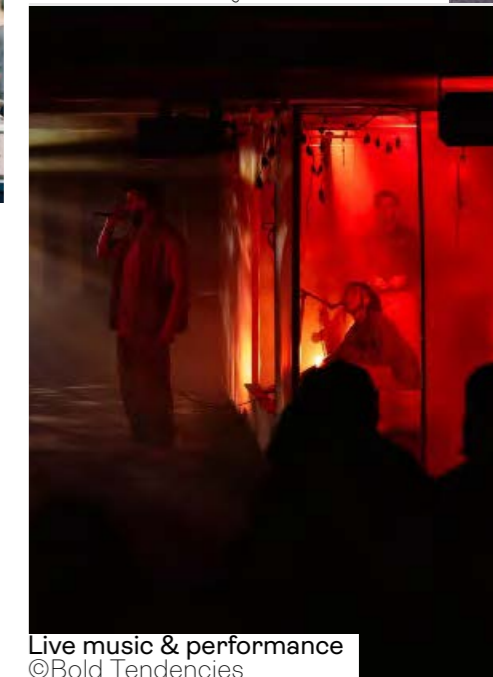
Creative workspaces
©Julia Kubisty



Co-working space
©Market Peckham



Arts & Culture on the High-Street
©Dallas-Pierce-Quintero



Live music & performance
©Bold Tendencies



Arts & Culture on the High-Street
©Dallas-Pierce-Quintero

Pop-up Markets and Cultural Event Programming

This initiative aims to activate streets and public spaces through a regular, high-quality, programme of events, curated markets, and pop-ups that provide platforms for local talent and support emerging entrepreneurs, small businesses and creatives by offering affordable, flexible retail opportunities that lower barriers to entry.

Pop-up events should be coordinated as part of a wider programme of festivals and cultural activities. Partnerships with local schools, colleges, artists, and cultural organisations can help ensure these events are inclusive and accessible.

A key opportunity is to link this initiative with proposed projects like Whittaker Square and Whittaker Avenue, where improvements aim to create a more attractive and accessible space, supporting event programming, including the potential expansion of the weekly Duck Pond Market into the area, to boost its visibility, draw more visitors, and add vibrancy to the town centre.

Youth Engagement/Priorities

Engagement with young people highlighted key barriers and opportunities for making the high street and local markets more accessible and appealing to them:

- **Affordability barriers:** The High Street and markets like Duck Pond were seen as expensive and not youth-oriented. Young people felt there are few traders or products that appeal to them, and prices make participation difficult.
- **Participation barriers:** High stall rental costs were noted as a barrier for new or youth-led traders. Participants suggested that Richmond Council or market operators could offer supported or temporary stalls to help young people test ideas and get involved.

Young people also expressed a strong desire for more informal and creative ways to use and shape public spaces, including:

- Youth-focused markets and events, such as “Youthquake” style markets or swap-shop initiatives inspired by platforms like Depop and Vinted, providing affordable spaces to showcase or exchange items.
- Pop-up and flexible spaces for markets, workshops, performances, and small-scale events that foster social activity and a sense of ownership.

Incorporating these, and other, ideas from young people into the wider programme of pop-up markets and cultural events will help ensure that Richmond’s public spaces and markets are more inclusive and relevant to younger residents, supporting their creativity and participation.



Duck Pond Market



Designer-maker market @HemingwayDesign



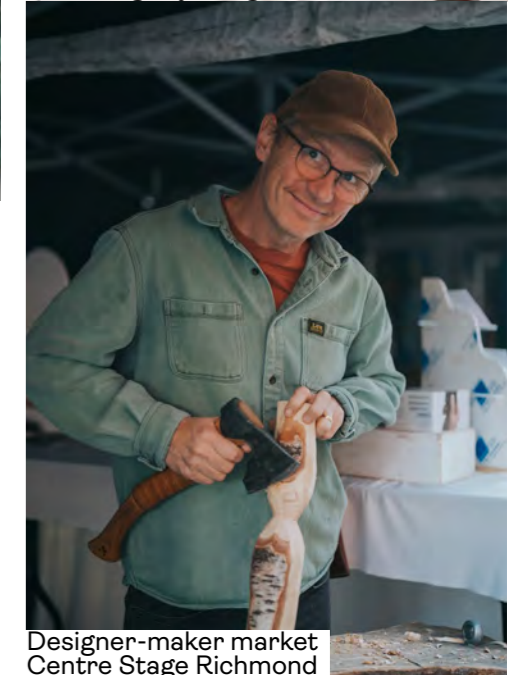
Seasonal market @HemingwayDesign



Designer-maker market Centre Stage Richmond



Petersham Nursery pop-up Centre Stage Richmond



Designer-maker market Centre Stage Richmond



Basement Door - Young Musicians Centre Stage Richmond

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03

3. River & Riverside Activation

Richmond's riverside is one of its most iconic and cherished features, yet its full potential remains unrealised. This focus area presents a series of projects aimed at enhancing the Thames-side landscape as a sequence of linear, engaging public spaces that support wellbeing, biodiversity, play, and social exchange. The proposals are carefully considered to suit the character of the riverside, respecting and working with the natural environment, while celebrating the riverside as a series of distinct landscape characters, from the wild, natural areas at Old Deer Park, through the urban heart of Richmond, to the rural, pastoral spaces near Petersham.

These proposals align closely with the updated Thames Landscape Strategy (TLS), developed in partnership with the Environment Agency and informed by extensive engagement with over 200 local community groups. The TLS emphasises the need to respond to changing environmental conditions, including flood levels predicted to rise by 1 metre by 2035, due to rising sea levels caused by global heating and planned changes to how the Thames Barrier is operated.

Engagement has also highlighted the need for more intergenerational activities and family-friendly amenities along the riverside. Residents expressed a strong desire for additional play equipment, noting that current playground provision is limited, with the nearest options requiring a significant walk or difficult access from the town centre.

Key projects along Richmond Riverside include natural play areas, pocket parks, and sensory gardens designed to create welcoming spaces for people of all ages to relax, explore, and connect with nature and each-other.

These interventions also support biodiversity and ecological resilience, incorporating climate-adaptive planting and materials in-line with TLS priorities.



Riverside flooding
©Robert Hills

Enhancing Riverside Spaces

These projects seek to unlock the full potential of the riverside by creating a sequence of spaces that offer opportunities for reflection, wellbeing, social activity, play, and exercise – while respecting and enhancing the natural environment, adapting to climate change and flood risks, and educating visitors about the local ecology and heritage.

Key Projects:

- Twickenham Bridge / Old Deer Park
- Old Palace Lane
- Cholmondeley Walk
- Riverside Gardens (Terraces)
- Mears Walk
- Rotary Gardens
- Gothic Gardens
- Riverdale Gardens
- Terrace Gardens



Twickenham Bridge / Old Deer Park



Riverside Gardens (Terraces)



Gothic Gardens



Old Palace Lane



Mears Walk



Riverdale Gardens



Cholmondeley Walk



Rotary Gardens



Terrace Gardens

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 **PP_02** **PP_03**



Twickenham Bridge / Old Deer Park

This site, despite challenges such as flood risk, offers significant potential to develop a low-impact, engaging urban nature reserve that supports biodiversity, wellbeing, and environmental education.

Key interventions could include pond-dipping platforms, informal wildlife observation decks, and natural play elements, providing opportunities for hands-on learning and quiet reflection.

Environmental interpretation can highlight the site's ecological value and history, supported by a strong landscape and ecological management plan to guide long-term care and educate residents and visitors about rising flood levels.

This project will also connect and enhance efforts to improve pedestrian access between the nature reserve and Old Deer Park, promoting walking and stronger connections during periods of flooding, and has potential to extend towards Kew Gardens and foster collaboration on environmental and educational programmes.

There are opportunities to involve children and community members in co-design and citizen science activities, with potential partners including the Zoological Society of London.

Overall, recommendations for an urban nature reserve aims to boost local biodiversity, create tranquil spaces for reflection and connection to nature, and serve as an accessible gateway to urban ecology.



Camley Street Natural Park
©Arnhel De Serra



Interpretation and storytelling
©Ben Wrigley/Will Salter



Wellbeing & reflection
©L'Aterlier LUN



Den building
©Esteban La Tessa



Pond Dipping - Camley Street Natural Park



Natural play - Kew Gardens
©Jeff Eden



Natural play - Kew Gardens

Old Palace Lane

Old Palace Lane, is a highly sensitive location. Asgill House is a Grade I listed building, and the view to Richmond Bridge – also Grade I listed – marks the termination of a key view line. Any interventions here must be subtle and sensitive.

Currently underused as a parking area, this space has potential to be re-imagined as a pocket park; a green threshold to the riverside that offers a place for respite.

While a turning circle for vehicles must be retained, existing parking spaces could be transformed to include integrated seating and possibly small play elements or public art referencing the historic Richmond Palace.

The area could also serve as an accessible refuge for those caught during high tides, with opportunities for environmental and heritage interpretation and storytelling.

Additionally, two protected views are located here, offering a chance for the design to emphasise and frame these important sightlines.

There is further potential to introduce a licence for a single pop-up coffee bicycle or truck, adding vibrancy and supporting small local businesses.

1. Incidental play feature or public art opportunity.
2. Accessible refuge with environmental interpretation.
3. Flood tolerant / wetland planting.
4. Enhanced wayfinding.
5. Opportunity for pop-up F&B offer.



Cholmondeley Walk

Cholmondeley Walk presents a significant opportunity to draw people along the riverside.

Potential enhancements include integrating riverbank seating into the landscape creating inviting rest spots, enhanced by environmental and heritage interpretation and storytelling.

Seating could be designed to maximise river views while also serving as accessible (floating) refuges during high tides, accommodating wheelchairs and prams.

There is also opportunity to build on the existing riverside planting, which provides valuable habitat, including the thriving Swamp Cypress trees, planted by the Thames Landscape Strategy and volunteers, that frame the iconic Richmond Bridge to Asgill House view.



Sympathetic informal seating
©Clement Guillaume



Sympathetic riverbank seating
©Studio Vulkan



Riverside Interpretation
©Untitled Practice

Riverside Gardens (Terraces)

In Riverside Gardens, areas where grass struggles to grow beneath mature trees present an opportunity to shift towards understory planting that both beautifies the space and restores ecological function.

This approach could combine native shade-tolerant species such as ferns and woodland perennials with insect-friendly groundcovers and selected non-native mixed perennials to extend the nectar season for pollinators.

Carefully placed stepping stones within the planting zones could help prevent soil erosion caused by foot traffic. Additionally, exploring the use of geotextiles could support increased wear-resilience to lawn (and meadow) areas improving their functionality and reducing maintenance/replacement costs.

Opportunities also exist to incorporate drought-tolerant planting and shaded areas that provide respite during hot weather. These measures aim to enhance biodiversity, reduce maintenance, and create a more visually rich and joyful public space.



Shade tolerant planting
©Untitled Practice



Spring bulbs in intermingled planting
©Untitled Practice



Perennial planting
©Christopher Swann



Perennial planting
©Christopher Swann

Mears Walk

Along Mears Walk, there is an opportunity to enhance the riverside routes by incorporating play, rest, and socialising spaces. A continuous bench integrated into the existing wall would provide additional seating, complemented by incidental play features and areas for social activities such as chess tables.

Re-routing the internal path behind the towpath wall offers the chance to introduce new tree planting focused on flood-tolerant species, including extending the thriving cherry trees, planted by the Thames Landscape Strategy, paired with complementary flood tolerant planting.

Together, these elements have the potential to create a highly photogenic, stand-out landscape moment that attracts visitors and encourages engagement with the riverside.

1. Utilise the existing brick wall to provide seating, encourage incidental 'play on the way', and foster social interaction through features such as integrated chess tables.
2. Reroute the path to accommodate additional planting, thereby enhancing and improving the setting around the seating.
3. Introduce flood-tolerant planting including additional cherry trees to strengthen the landscape's resilience and aesthetic appeal.
4. Introduce wayfinding and interpretation features that educate visitors on the Arcadian Thames heritage and local ecology, while highlighting rising flood levels to foster environmental awareness and stewardship.
5. Improved lighting supporting better accessibility and safety for all users, and better ambience.
6. Improved surfacing for better accessibility, appearance, and consistency with Riverside towpath upgrades.



Rotary Gardens

The gentle level changes at Rotary Gardens provide a natural opportunity for playful interventions that are currently lacking along the riverside. Recommended key interventions here include natural play elements such as slides, rolling lawns, and climbing features that creatively use the existing topography.

Improving the entrance and sense of arrival at Cambourne Path access from Petersham Road is also a priority, with refreshed planting, simple surface upgrades, and enhanced wayfinding to welcome visitors. There is also a significant opportunity to introduce better wayfinding signage to increase connectivity with Hill Rise, encouraging exploration and strengthening links within the local landscape. This improved signage would also highlight the enjoyment of views across the river from the higher levels, enhancing visitor experience.

Localised planting improvements, such as shade-tolerant, species-rich meadow planting beneath tree canopies, would further enhance the area's ecological value.

Additionally, improved seating along this steep route would support better accessibility needs, providing comfortable resting places that make the journey more enjoyable for all visitors, including those with mobility challenges.



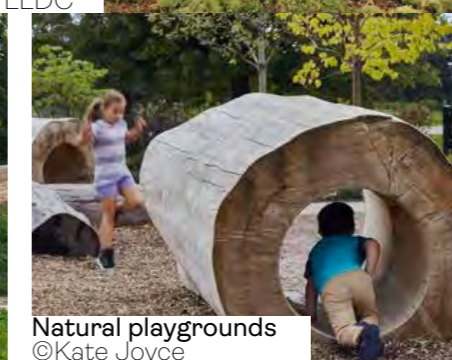
Natural playgrounds
©David Poultney for LLDC



Natural playgrounds
©Gosford Forest Park



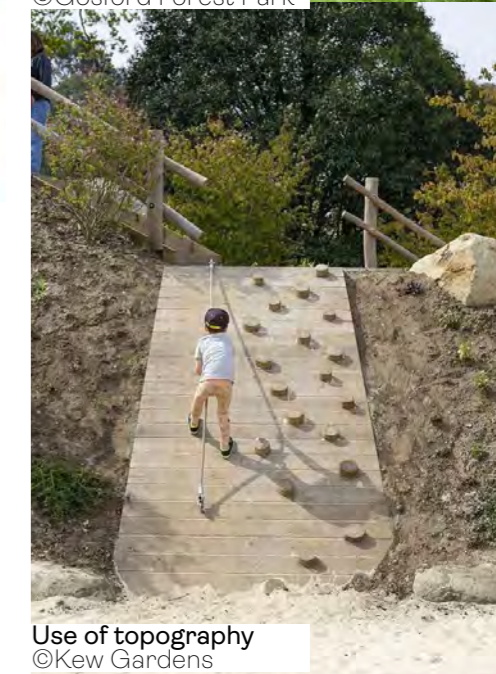
Natural playgrounds
©Earchscapeplay



Natural playgrounds
©Kate Joyce



Use of topography
©Jordi Surroca



Use of topography
©Kew Gardens



Play within meadow planting
©Gardencity

Gothic Gardens

Building on the existing planting efforts, this space could become a more welcoming space for family and group activities, focused on sensory experiences and inclusive design. It would support outdoor dining, social gathering, and use by all ages.

Suggested interventions include communal picnic areas with fixed BBQ hotplates, shaded benches, wildflower and edible borders, and a sensory discovery garden.

There is also an opportunity to improve the upper towpath, above the flood-risk zone. This area could be used for incidental play and gym or trim trail equipment.

Like at Mears Walk, the towpath wall could be used for integrated seating, providing more places to rest and enjoy the riverside.

There may also be opportunity to explore access or from Petersham Road, further supporting connectivity between the town centre and riverside.



Social seating & picnicking opportunity
©Jack Hobhouse / B D Landscape



Gym / trim trail equipment
©Sam Noonan



Sensory / Discovery garden
©Isthmus



Discovery / Interpretation
©Brooklyn Botanic Gardens



Sensory / Discovery garden
©Isthmus



Play on the way
©Michael Van Valkenburgh



Community growing - edible garden
©Brooklyn Botanic Gardens

Gothic Gardens

Opportunities for Improvement ~ Illustrative Visual



1. Utilise the existing wall to provide seating and opportunity to stop, rest and enjoy being on the riverside.
2. Utilise the upper towpath, above the flood risk area for 'play on the way' exercise and trim trail equipment.
3. Transform Gothic Gardens into a multi-generational space that supports picnicking, outdoor dining, social gatherings, and activities for all ages. Incorporate sensory and wildflower planting, including edible borders and a sensory discovery garden, to foster connection with nature through inclusive, sensory experiences.
4. Improved lighting supporting better accessibility and safety for all users, and better ambience.

Riverdale Gardens

Riverdale Gardens has been identified as a potential site for youth-oriented features, providing a destination for families and teenagers and addressing a current gap in youth infrastructure.

Recommendations focus is on creating areas for socialising and small-scale performances, with the possibility of using the existing levels to form an informal amphitheatre, set within an environment of enhanced biodiversity through meadow and/or perennial planting.

Youth Engagement & Priorities:

Young people imagine a Richmond that is more inclusive, sociable, and youth-friendly, achieved through small but thoughtful improvements.

Engagement participants expressed a strong desire for welcoming, comfortable social spaces along the riverside, places where they can gather, relax, and enjoy time with friends without feeling unwelcome or out of place.



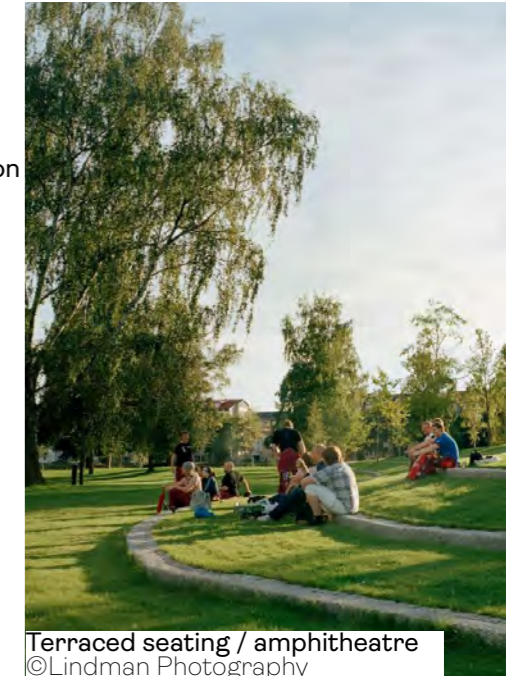
Wildflower Meadow, London Fields
©Red Darter



Youth-focused public realm intervention
©Earthscape



'Make Space for Girls' public realm intervention
©Bradford Council



Terraced seating / amphitheatre
©Lindman Photography



Terraced seating / amphitheatre
©Civiliti Landscape Architects

Riverdale Gardens

Opportunities for Improvement ~ Illustrative Visual



1. Working with the existing topography to create areas for socialising and small scale performance.
2. Enhance biodiversity and visual interest through meadow and perennial planting particularly beneath tree canopies using suitable plant varieties.
3. Enhanced wayfinding and branding.

Terrace Gardens

Moving away from formal bedding schemes, this area could adopt a more contemporary and sustainable approach to planting and land management.

Proposals include rewilded meadows planted with pollinator-friendly species that provide habitats for birds and insects, along with native flowering plants to ensure seasonal interest.

Partnerships with Kew Gardens and local conservation groups could support the delivery of educational content and the development of planting schemes.

With Royal Palaces transitioning away from annual bedding, there may also be opportunities to explore partnerships and funding for the ongoing planting and management of Terrace Gardens.

These interventions align with climate resilience goals, support pollinator populations, and foster environmental awareness.

Considerations should also respond to the iconic view from Richmond Hill, linking with the wider wayfinding and branding strategy.



Superbloom wildflower meadow
©Historic Royal Palaces



Superbloom wildflower meadow
©Martin Elvery Historic Royal Palaces



Planting for pollinators
©Kew Gardens



Child-friendly interpretation

“Things That Float” Programme

The “Things that Float” programme aims to activate the riverside with small-scale, sympathetic floating structures that provide opportunities for education, culture, and wellness – reconnecting people with the river, promoting environmental stewardship, and celebrating local culture and heritage.

This initiative seeks to foster community engagement, boost tourism, and enhance climate resilience, reinforcing the river’s role as a vital social and ecological asset. By offering accessible and inspiring venues on the water, the programme encourages active participation and a deeper appreciation of the river’s significance in urban life.

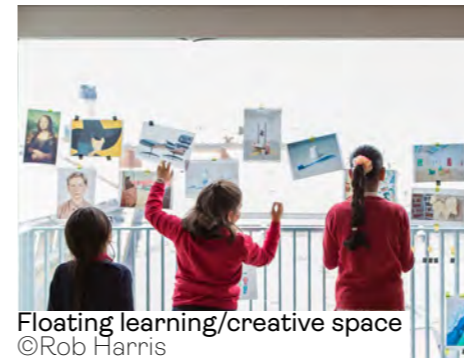
Floating Garden:

A floating garden could serve as a multifunctional educational hub focused on sustainable planting, aquatic ecology, and climate resilience. It could offer hands-on learning about river ecosystems and biodiversity, helping people connect directly with nature.

Collaborations with local arts groups and environmental organisations could keep the programme vibrant and inclusive, featuring rotating exhibitions, workshops, and performances that blend nature and culture in a unique setting.

Learning & Arts Spaces:

Flexible floating platforms could be dedicated to learning and creative activities, supporting environmental education programmes, community art projects, and cultural events. These spaces could foster creativity and ecological awareness, offering a dynamic venue for people to engage with both the arts and the environment.



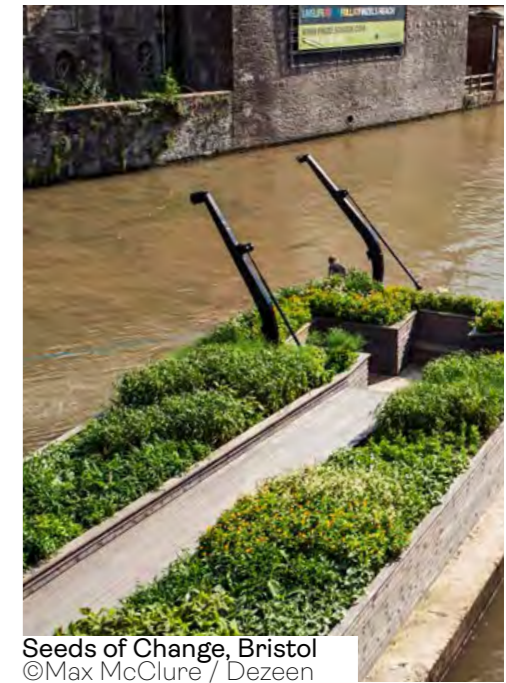
Floating learning/creative space
©Rob Harris



Floating garden/education space
©Global Generation



Floating Gardens, Paris



Seeds of Change, Bristol
©Max McClure / Dezeen

4. Spaces and Activities for Young People

Young people in Richmond have made it clear that they need more inclusive, engaging, and safe spaces where they can gather, express themselves, and thrive. The projects and initiatives in this section seek to respond to this need by focusing on transforming and enhancing existing spaces and assets into welcoming spaces for recreation, learning, and social connection.

Current Youth Provision and Gaps Identified Through Phase 1 Engagement

Richmond Borough offers a wide range of youth services and activities across the area. Facilities like Ham Youth Centre, Heatham House, the ETNA Centre, and PowerStation Youth Centre provide important social and recreational spaces. However, these venues are mostly located outside the town centre, making access difficult for some young people, especially those reliant on public transport or active travel.

Within Richmond town centre itself, there is a notable shortage of youth-oriented facilities such as sports courts, multi-use games areas, and community centres offering free or low-cost activities. This lack contributes to a strong feeling among young people that “there’s nothing to do”.

90% of survey respondents aged 15-25 rating the variety of things to do in the town centre as poor or very poor.

Many also reported feeling unwelcome or out of place, sharing experiences of being asked to leave shops or facing negative interactions when socialising in groups.

The limited retail and leisure options in the town centre further deepen this disconnect. Young people and parents highlighted the absence of affordable and appealing shops and community spaces, leading many to spend time and money in neighbouring areas like Kingston, where a broader range of options are available.

Youth Priorities and Aspirations

Young people have clearly prioritised addressing the climate crisis, with strong support for reducing pollution and promoting sustainable transport such as walking and cycling. Additionally, 63% of young respondents identified expanding and diversifying retail and leisure options as a top priority, while 56% emphasised the importance of preserving green spaces for relaxation and socialising.

Accessibility and safety in public spaces were also key concerns, with calls for more seating, quality outdoor areas, and welcoming streets.

Further Insights - Youth Workshop (October 2025)

Participants described many public spaces in Richmond as feeling exclusive or unwelcoming, with places like Richmond Green seen as “not for us.”

Affordability was a significant barrier, with the high street and local markets viewed as expensive and lacking youth-oriented traders. High stall rental costs were identified as obstacles for youth led participation, prompting suggestions for Council-supported or temporary stalls to encourage young entrepreneurs.

Participants expressed a strong desire for informal, creative ways to activate public spaces. Their ideas included youth-focused markets and swap-shop events, pop-up and flexible spaces for workshops and performances, and opportunities for co-design and stewardship of green areas to foster social activity and ownership.

Comfort and safety were emphasised, with calls for sociable seating, natural enhancements that respect the town’s character, and improved lighting to make the riverside safer and more welcoming after dark.

The riverside and green spaces are seen as vital social and recreational assets, with requests for comfortable seating areas, water-based activities like paddleboarding and kayaking, and youth-focused events in spaces such as Old Deer Park and Richmond Green.

Recreation and wellbeing priorities included informal, fun activities such as outdoor games and multi-purpose green spaces for sports, relaxation, and socialising.

There was also strong support for public art, and increased planting through out the town centre and public spaces to enhance the environment.

The workshop also highlighted strong support for re-imagining the Lending Library as a creative hub that balances quiet study areas with social and cultural activities, with young people envisioning a modern, flexible space that caters to a wide range of youth needs.

Moving forward projects must be co-created with young people, ensuring Richmond becomes a place where all generations feel they belong and can contribute.

Dedicated Hangout Spaces & Youth-Centric Initiatives

These projects and initiatives aim to create dedicated, welcoming spaces where young people can study, work, socialise, and engage in creative, cultural, and social activity.

The projects build on, and complement, other youth-focused projects within this report, including the Mixed-Use High Street Initiative, Pop-up Markets and Cultural Event Programming, and riverside public realm projects such as Riverdale Gardens.

Re-imagining the Lending Library

Transform the Richmond Green Lending Library into a youth-centric social, leisure and cultural hub, designed to encourage creativity, connection and expression among young people. The space could serve as a base for animating Richmond Green with vibrant, youth-led activity and programming. Potential uses could include:

Creative Studio Spaces – for music production, digital media, art, and design, giving young people tools and space to explore and showcase their creative interests.

Performance & Exhibition Venue – hosting youth theatre, open mic nights, spoken word, visual art exhibitions and film screenings.

Workshops & Skills Programmes – focusing on creative industries, skills and career pathways.

Youth-led Programming & Events – enabling young people to co-design and deliver events and festivals that reflect their interests and identities.

Chill-out & Social Spaces – informal, welcoming areas where young people can gather and socialise in a relaxed, welcoming environment.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03

The development of these projects should be led in partnership with young people, working closely with Richmond's Youth Council, through wider co-design workshops, and by establishing platforms that amplify the voices of young people, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Youth Engagement/Priorities

Participants of the October 2025 youth workshop supported the idea of transforming Richmond's Lending Library into a vibrant, creative, and multifunctional hub that still retains its core role as a place for study and learning. They emphasised that libraries are among the few quiet, safe, and free spaces available to them, stating cafés are often too noisy or expensive, so retaining study areas within the Library would be essential.

Alongside this, they imagined the library as a social and cultural destination: a place to hang out and express creativity. Their ideas included dedicated creative spaces such as art and exhibition space, performance and rehearsal areas, podcasting and recording studios, and a small performance or cinema space.

They also wished for a mix of quiet and social area, spaces for making and digital media, and areas that support wellbeing, such as a youth gym or multi-faith space. Overall, they envisioned a modern, flexible library that blends study, creativity, culture, and social activity.



Music & performance space
©Jan Kattein



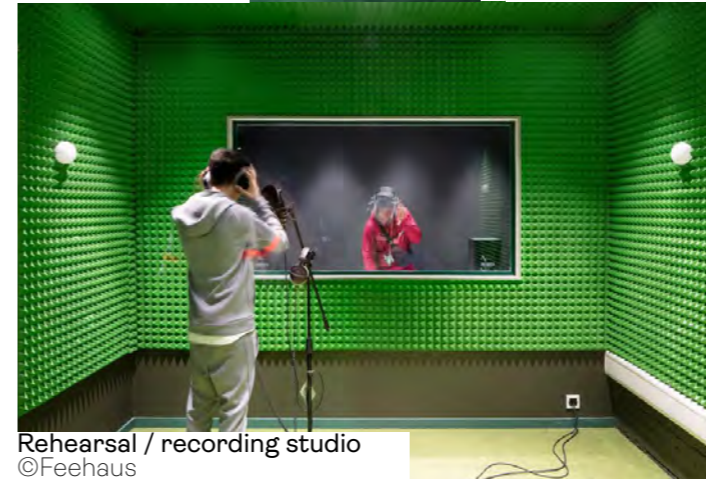
Study space
©Gatis Rozenfelds



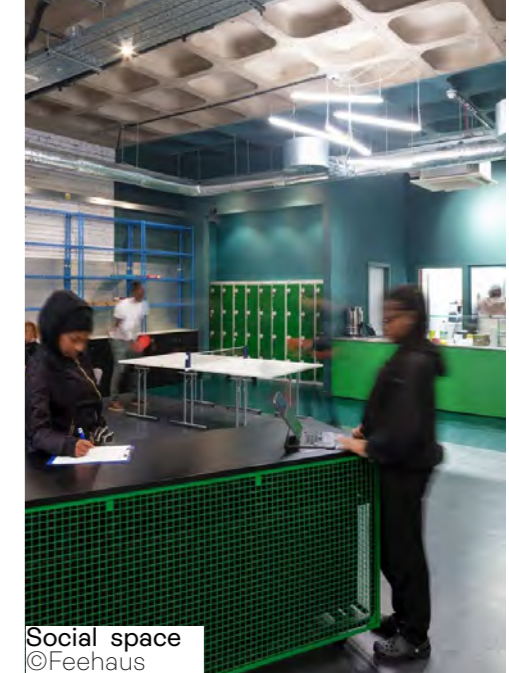
Social study space
©Min Wendt



Hang-out / Chill-out space
©Jan Kattein



Rehearsal / recording studio
©Feehaus



Social space
©Feehaus



Learning and event space
©Will Scott

Richmond Green Public Realm Enhancements

Phase 1 engagement revealed that, in the absence of dedicated youth spaces within the town centre, many young people naturally gravitate towards Richmond Green, appreciated for its location near the town centre and train station, the presence of foot traffic that enhances a feeling of safety, and the green, open space that offer opportunities for relaxation and socialising.

While Richmond Green is well-loved, there have been occasions where large gatherings have led to behaviours that have raised concerns among residents and local businesses.

Unfortunately, many young people have expressed that the space can feel uninviting or that they are sometimes discouraged from spending time there.

Building on this feedback, the activation plan seeks to evolve Richmond Green into a multi-generational space that truly belongs to all members of the community.

There is significant opportunity to enhance the edges of Richmond Green – particularly the areas beneath mature trees where informal paths have worn the grass – by introducing simple planting schemes that boost biodiversity alongside natural play elements, exercise or trim trails, and additional seating. Within the green itself, areas of wildflower and meadow planting can further enrich the ecological value and visual appeal.

To diversify use and attract a broader range of visitors, including families, temporary installations and playable elements could be introduced. These interventions could be developed in partnership with local artists and designers and linked to existing festivals or community events, bringing fresh energy and creativity to the space.

On Little Green, there is potential to connect with youth-focused proposals for the Lending Library by exploring opportunities for cultural programming. This could include co-designing a bandstand or performance area with and for young people.

Inclusive Events at Richmond Green

To reinforce Richmond Green as a space for everyone, it is recommended to develop a programme of appropriately sized, inclusive events featuring activities that blend arts, culture, nature, sports and wellbeing. Events should be designed to engage diverse audiences, foster community connection, and celebrate the green as a welcoming place for all ages.

Youth Engagement/Priorities

Youth workshop participants expressed a strong desire for improved seating and rest areas, favouring sociable benches and comfortable spots throughout the town centre and green spaces that encourage socialising and relaxation.

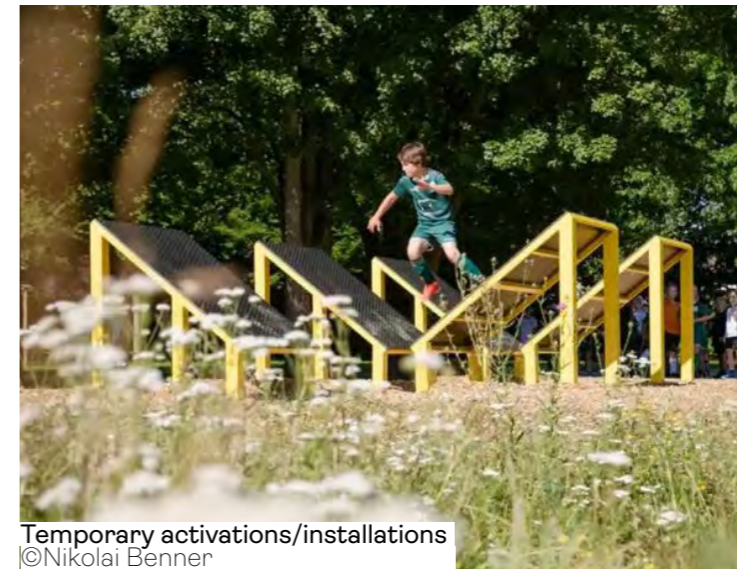
They also favoured light-touch, natural interventions to green spaces that enhance the existing setting without altering its charm.

There was enthusiasm for informal, fun activities that foster social connection and wellbeing, such as outdoor games like table tennis, giant seesaws, and chess, as well as flexible green spaces that support sports, relaxation, and socialising.

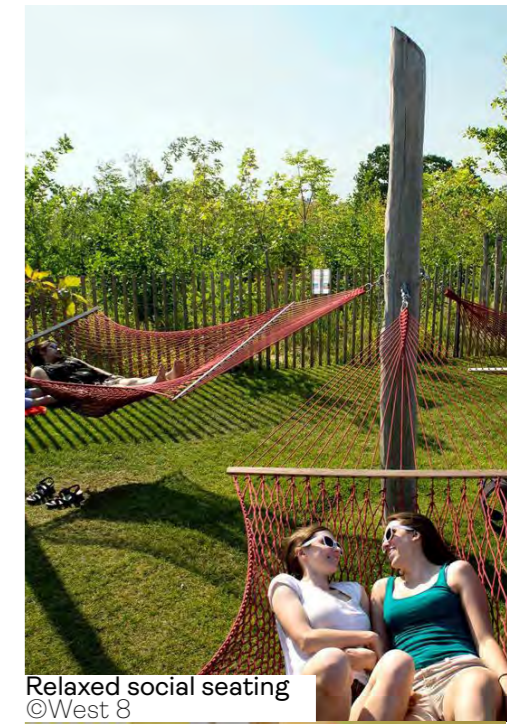
For events and programming, young people expressed a strong desire for larger youth-focused events, such as music festivals, to be held in green spaces like Old Deer Park. At Richmond Green, they wished to see and take part in smaller, regular gatherings, including acoustic sessions and Basement Door events.

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03



Temporary activations/installations
©Nikolai Benner



Relaxed social seating
©West 8



Social games



Pop-up outdoor library/study space
©AKB



Wildflower planting, London Fields
©Hackney Council



Bandstand / performance space
©Lorenzo Zandri



Bandstand / performance space
©Lorenzo Zandri

5. Night-Time Economy

Richmond has a proud cultural legacy as a vibrant centre for music and nightlife, historically drawing crowds and creative talent from across London.

While today's evening offer is more subdued, with many venues closing early and limited options beyond dining and retail, there is significant potential to revitalise Richmond's night-time economy in ways that complement and enhance the town's broader placemaking efforts.

This Activation Plan supports Richmond Council's recent [Night Time Strategy](#), which aims to transform the borough's nightlife into a safer, more vibrant, and inclusive experience for residents, workers, and visitors alike. The strategy, shaping life in Richmond upon Thames between 6pm and 6am, focuses on expanding opportunities for young people, building on the borough's rich musical heritage, and ensuring a diverse range of affordable activities. It also prioritises improving the safety and working conditions of night-time employees.

Key priorities identified through extensive consultation with young people, businesses, night workers, and residents include broadening activities for young people beyond pubs and restaurants; revitalising the live music scene to celebrate Richmond's heritage; enhancing support and safety for night workers; improving street safety and accessibility; and promoting a diverse, affordable night-time economy that keeps the high street vibrant and inclusive.

Several outlined in this report respond directly to these priorities and community feedback, working towards a safer, livelier, and more inclusive night-time economy in Richmond:

Mixed-Use High Street Initiative:

This initiative aims to activate the town centre by creating cultural and leisure hubs that extend beyond traditional hospitality. It focuses on making the best use of underutilised assets such as the Old Town Hall and Richmond Libraries — spaces valued by the community but currently underused. These venues hold potential host evening activities and provide essential facilities like toilets, addressing safety concerns after 9pm. The initiative also supports the flexible use of vacant shops for pop-up music, community events, and creative activities, offering affordable, welcoming spaces, particularly for young people who feel underserved by the current night-time offer.

Pop-up Markets and Cultural Event Programming:

To enrich Richmond's cultural diversity and support emerging local talent, this initiative proposes regular pop-up markets and cultural events, including evening markets at Whittaker Avenue and the Square, linked to public realm improvements. It also aims to provide family-friendly, affordable, and

creative evening activities, responding to calls for more arts, crafts, music, and cultural venues.

Re-Imagining the Lending Library:

Addressing the need for dedicated youth spaces, this project proposes an extended-hours venue offering meaningful opportunities for young people through creative and cultural programming and social activities. The space can prioritise affordability and inclusivity, broadening night-time options for young people and helping to reduce concerns about youth congregating in the evening due to a lack of alternatives.

Public Realm Improvement Projects:

These projects focus on enhancing safety, comfort, and accessibility in key areas. Interventions include improving the pedestrian environment, increasing greening and tree planting, upgrading lighting, providing seating, and enabling cafés and restaurants to spill out and animate streets and public spaces. The ambition is ensure public spaces feel safe and animated after dark, directly addressing community concerns about night-time safety.

Wayfinding and Branding Project:

To improve navigation and confidence after dark, this project will introduce clear signage and branding throughout the town centre. Enhanced wayfinding will support safer movement, helping residents and visitors locate cultural venues, safe routes, and night-time services.

Lanes Activation – Build the Lanes Brand:

This project aims to enhance the lanes' character and safety through greening, improved lighting, wayfinding, and public art. With a particular focus on Church Lane and the area around St Mary Magdalene Church, it seeks to make these spaces more welcoming and active, reducing safety concerns after dark.

Riverside Public Realm Projects:

These projects seek to extend the use of riverside spaces into the evening by promoting diverse, positive activities suitable for all ages. It is recommended that lighting improvements are be carefully designed to enhance safety while protecting local ecology.

Building on these initiatives, this section also highlights other complementary projects that can further contribute to a vibrant night-time economy and an inclusive social environment.

Additional Night-Time Initiatives

Public Art & Lighting Trails

Develop an evening trail featuring projection art and creative lighting installations, showcasing local artists where possible, to invite exploration of Richmond's public spaces and architecture after dark.

Evening Markets

Establish a programme of evening markets, include food and maker markets, linking to public realm improvements such as Whittaker Avenue and Square, with curated live music, and small-scale performances to provide accessible cultural experiences and enliven streets and public spaces.

Live Performance, Culture & Micro-Festivals

Develop an evening cultural programme that showcases local talent and fosters a vibrant night-time culture, encouraging visitors to engage with Richmond's arts scene. This can be further enriched by hosting small-scale, neighbourhood micro-festivals on a rotating basis, featuring themes such as jazz, world music, or eco-arts (artistic events that celebrate environmental awareness and sustainability). These festivals could activate different areas of Richmond, and connect with existing venues like the Orange Tree Theatre supporting broader cultural programming.

Inclusive Social Spaces

Support safe spaces for younger people and under-represented groups to gather and socialise in the evening, including alcohol-free venues, and Open Mic spaces.

Night-Time Creative Workshops

Establish pop-up studios or maker spaces in vacant shops, where residents and visitors can join workshops in crafts, art, music production, or DIY projects during evenings. This also provides opportunity to support local creatives and attract a diverse range of ages through hands-on activities.

Night-Time Wellness Classes

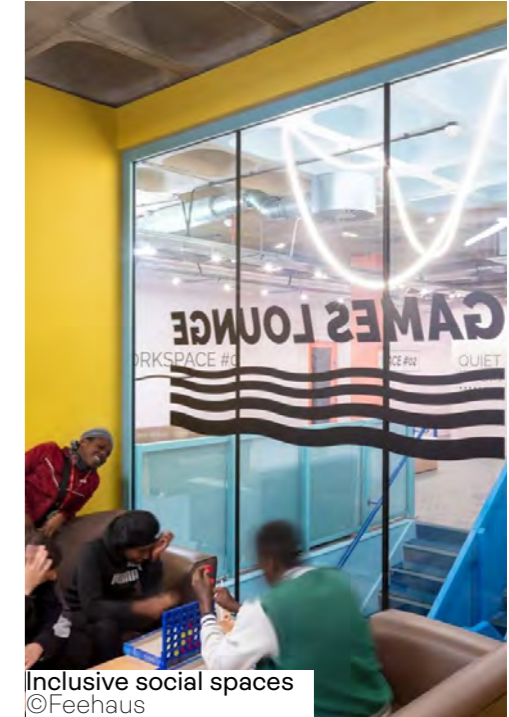
Programme evening wellness activities in public spaces, connected to town centre and riverside public realm improvement projects. This could include guided night walks centred on mindfulness and connection to the natural environment, providing wellbeing-focused alternatives to conventional nightlife.



Light installation / artwork
©Stéphane Bourgeois



Evening market programming
©HemingwayDesign



Inclusive social spaces
©Feehaus



Performance and cultural programming
©Department Brixton

Place-shaping Pillar Alignment:

PP_01 PP_02 PP_03

Next Steps

The Richmond of the future provides an accessible pedestrian environment with improved air quality; is easy to navigate; and feels welcoming for people of all ages and backgrounds.

There will be better links between the town centre and our green and blue infrastructure, and enhanced public spaces that offer moments for play, reflection and social activity.

The riverside will be resilient and adapted to increased flooding. We will also integrate engaging storytelling elements throughout the town centre and riverside to celebrate Richmond's heritage, and identity.

These project ideas are grounded in the daily experience of the people who have a connection to the town, including residents and businesses. They want to see an improved public spaces with greater focus on young people and families; a more culturally diverse and affordable evening offer; a reduction in car and traffic dominance in the town centre; and action taken on improving safety during the evening and night along Richmond Riverside and the towpath.

A clear vision, combined with a grounded action plan for incremental change, is needed to ensure the Richmond town centre continues to thrive and can support the demand for change. Richmond Council, along with partners, will work to fund packages of improvement works to kick-start this transformation and allow more of the project ideas presented in this document to come to life.

04

Richmond: Activating Our Vision

May 2026