

From: Neil Fraser <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 17 March 2025 12:07
To: Richmond Local Plan
Subject: Objection to Proposed Floodplain Boundary Redefinition Affecting Eel Pie Island

Categories: Consultation Response

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Sirs,

As a resident of [REDACTED], I formally object to the Council's proposal to redefine the island's floodplain boundary under the Draft Local Plan.

Eel Pie Island sustains a thriving mixed-use community comprising artists, boatbuilders, rowing clubs, small enterprises, and family residences. Its distinctive integration of commercial, recreational, and residential uses creates substantial community cohesion and significantly contributes to the local economy. The activities of Twickenham Rowing Club and Richmond Yacht Club provide essential economic support to local hospitality and service industries through regular events.

The island also hosts strategically important industries, including specialist architecture studios and boatyards that are among the few remaining facilities on the Thames capable of maintaining London's commercial and leisure boating fleet. These unique industrial assets underscore the broader economic and strategic importance of the island.

The proposed floodplain reclassification would severely undermine both economic stability and residential sustainability. Reclassification would render properties effectively uninsurable, prevent essential improvements or refurbishments, and eliminate resale viability. Consequently, residents would become immobilised, unable to relocate or undertake necessary property enhancements.

Critically, Eel Pie Island has remained unaffected by flooding incidents for over 15 years, demonstrating the effectiveness of current flood mitigation infrastructure, including the Thames Barrier and associated defences, and highlighting the inappropriateness of the proposed boundary changes. Unlike other islands within the borough's jurisdiction, Eel Pie Island uniquely lies within the actively managed tidal Thames section. Inclusion of this island, therefore, lacks justification when compared to non-tidal islands facing materially different flood risk scenarios. Recent decisions by the Local Planning Authority to refuse permitted development rights, notably office-to-residential conversions and modest residential developments previously considered acceptable, highlight an emerging pattern already detrimental to the island's sustainability. Should these proposed boundary changes proceed, Eel Pie Island risks becoming effectively immobilised, unable to legally improve or adapt properties. In conclusion, the proposed redefinition is unjustified, disproportionate, and threatens the future viability and cultural heritage of Eel Pie Island. I respectfully urge the Council to withdraw the proposed modification and retain the current floodplain definition.

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