

APPENDIX A

Summary Report on External consultation and communication 2006/07 for Richmond Town Centre Enhancement proposals

The initial concept Richmond town centre enhancement proposals were presented to Council officers from various departments, Ward Councillors, and Cabinet for input in summer 2006. This paper addresses external consultation and communication which took place at the end of 2006 and early 2007.

Key Audiences in the consultation

Professional partners

Professional partners such as the public transport operators and emergency services have been consulted on an ongoing basis from 2005 onwards. Their input has been essential to the technical development of the scheme.

Representative groups

A series of meetings were held with the key stakeholder groups in late 2006 and early 2007, prior to the general public consultation in March. These pre-meetings were with the Richmond Society, Friends of Richmond Green, Visor (representative of the visually impaired) and Richmond Advice and Information on Disability (RAID). All comments made in these meetings have been considered by the project team in developing the proposals and some changes were made prior the formal public consultation. A public meeting was set up by the Friends of Richmond Green to discuss specific areas of concern. The issues raised have been considered in the public consultation.

Businesses

A survey to assess the loading patterns of businesses, including retailers/restaurants and cafes/pubs in the town centre was carried out in November 2006. Businesses were also included in the public consultation. A meeting with the businesses was held on April 23rd to discuss loading and other issues.

The General Public

This is a large, very high profile and important scheme which will impact on Richmond residents, businesses, workers as well as users of the area from across the borough and beyond. The proposals extend from Richmond Circus on A316 through the town to Richmond Bridge. This translates into 19 general proposals and 23 site specific proposals. The consultation and communication approach was to use all of the key communication methods to make as many borough residents/users of the area aware of the scheme, and to provide the opportunity for clear explanation and feedback.

The Public consultation methods used

The consultation period was from Monday February 26th – Friday March 23rd 2007. A combination of advertising and editorial was used in the first week to create awareness and interest in the scheme and encourage attendance of the exhibition, including posters on community notice-boards and details on the Council website)

A colour leaflet was developed to help explain the scheme and this was distributed with a questionnaire and a proposals plan.

A key part of the consultation was a manned exhibition in the middle of Richmond town centre from Saturday March 3rd until Sunday March 11th. The scheme was on display and officers where in attendance to explain the proposals and answer questions. The exhibition was open until 7pm in the evenings and covered two weekends to attract a good cross-section of the public. Attendees were encouraged to sign the comments sheet and take away the information pack of (freepost envelope were provided to assist the return of the questionnaire) The leaflet /questionnaire/plans were also distributed to 5,000 properties (residents/businesses) in the South Richmond Ward. The information was also available at all local libraries and on the Council website. The exhibition was transferred to Richmond reference library and Civic centre on March 12th for display until March 23rd.

Public Consultation results

The Exhibition

Exhibition attendance	Actual numbers	Percentage %
Number of people (approx)	4,000	
Sign in/Comments	713	
Where came from:		
Richmond		48
Elsewhere in the Borough		48
Out of the Borough		4

An estimated 4,000 people attended the exhibition between March 3rd -11th, with 750 attending on the first day. This reflects a high degree of interest but also a good choice of venue. Officers reported that they were kept very busy explaining the proposals to an extremely interested audience. The exhibition comments sheets captured 713 responses. The reaction to the exhibition was overwhelmingly positive with many spontaneous quotes of 'good idea' 'informative' 'helpful' 'interesting'. Other comments which related to the scheme have been considered in the formal public consultation.

Survey Responses

Questionnaires completed	Validated returns - numbers	Percentage %
Numbers of which:	1033	100
Postal	934	90
Web	99	10
Where came from:		100
Richmond		79
Elsewhere in the Borough		18
Out of the Borough		3
How often use Richmond Town centre:		100
Daily		79
Weekly		19
Less than weekly		2

Tables of the results of the survey are also in this Appendix. (A copy of the questionnaire is available on request). As was expected there were proportionately more residents from Richmond responding to the survey :-

- 79% from Richmond
- 12% from Twickenham
- 6% from elsewhere in the Borough

The sample of respondents was very familiar with the town centre, with nearly 80% using the area daily (79%) and 19% up to weekly. There was a good cross section of the public in terms of age, sex, ethnic group and disabilities.

To help assess the level of support for the proposals the results were considered to have strong support if above 60% of responses were positive and weaker if there were above 20% negatives. 'No opinion' or 'no answer' are also included in the tables. The open ended section at the back of the 1033 questionnaires returned were analysed to find out if there are any specific reasons for negative responses to the proposals as well as other ideas which could help in the scheme development. The datasheet of the 1033 respondent comments, along with officer comments and recommendations will be available at a later date.

The General proposals – Section A of the questionnaire

Of the 19 general proposals presented 17 achieved above 60% positive 'yes' responses.

- Resurfacing the road 89%
- Removing old signage 86%
- Improving lighting 82%

- Defined loading facilities 80%
- Widening footways 78%
- More cycle parking 75%
- Upgrading the lanes 75%
- Yorkstone footways 75%
- CCTV 74%
- Raised tables at crossings 69%

There were three road traffic measures which although they had above 60% levels of support also had above 20% of the sample responding negatively, with many negative comments in the open ended section at the back of the questionnaire. These were :-

- the 'raised gateway entry points', 65%
- '20mph in the town centre', 68%
- '20mph in Richmond Green'. 61%

The proposal of 'paving shared use loading bays with natural stone cubes' achieved just under 60% positive support at 58.0% but 20.4 % negative responses. The comments related to the concern about the safety of shared loading bays, particularly for people with visual impairments.

Charging points for electric cars had a 57% 'yes' response with 23% 'do not know' which is not surprising as it is a new concept and would need further explanation.

The site specific proposals – section B of the questionnaire

There were good levels of support at over 60% for 17 of the 23 site specific proposals. These were:-

- 'secure cycle parking at the station' 79%
- improvements to three lanes
(the one from Parkshot to Kew Road,
Waterloo place and Victoria Place). 75% to 84%
- 'new zebra crossing on Bridge Street' 79%
- 'widening the pavement at Hill Rise' 76%

Kew Road/Church Road right turn removal and Clarence Street junction closure

There was little positive public support for alterations to the current traffic signal arrangements at Kew Rd/Clarence St and further modelling undertaken shows that the closure of Clarence Street is not the preferred option. A petition was received from the taxi drivers wanting the right turn into Church Road to remain, there is a small number of vehicles that carry out this manoeuvre and with the introduction of the SCOOT signal programme for the town centre this turn can be accommodated.

Richmond Station

Of the nine proposals for the Richmond Station area, six had above 60% positive support. These include:-

- secure cycle parking around the station 79%
- repave/relight the route to the station
from Kew Rd to Parkshot 75%
- replace/relocate zebra crossing with pelican 68%
- pedestrianise the forecourt 65%
- provide ramped accesses 65%
- relocate the bus stops 60%

The Square / Eton Street

The reaction to the changes at the junction and island was broadly positive with 65.6% in favour vs 19.5% against. However there were a lot of comments made both in the

questionnaire and at the exhibition about the dangers of crossing Eton Street to and from Lower George Street.

George Street

Just less than half of the respondents approved of restricting the width of the road in George Street (49.3%) and about one third (32.8%) disapproved. The key concerns with the road narrowing were with congestion, in particular bus congestion due to lack of bus stop space and potential problems for emergency vehicles when congested.

Loading and unloading

The public was broadly in favour of the proposals of designated loading bays for use during daytime hours at 64.8% for and 16.7% against. However concern has been expressed by the businesses on the position of bays and the hours of control. This was taken forward in the first meeting with Richmond town centre businesses on April 23rd which will be followed up with site specific meetings.

Hill Street/Bridge Street junction

There was a positive reaction to the three traffic measures in this area with respondents in favour:-

- 79% in favour of the new zebra crossing on Bridge Street,
- 74% in favour of widening the pavement at the Hill Rise zebra crossing.
- Conversion of the pelican crossing into a raised table 'gateway', with 63% in favour,

Some general points which came up at the exhibition and in the survey which should be noted are; concern about the likely disruption, the length of time to implement and possible overrunning of the schedules as well as the cost of the project.

Overall it can be concluded that there is strong support for the aims of this large scheme and most of the proposals being put forward.

Next steps

The findings from this consultation are being considered in the development of the proposals. The first stage of feeding back on the consultation will be at the Area Consultation Meeting for Richmond. This will be followed by a presentation to the Transport Consultative Group on May 16th. Further consultation work will be undertaken as required.