

THE BAREFOOT CONSULTATION: RESULTS

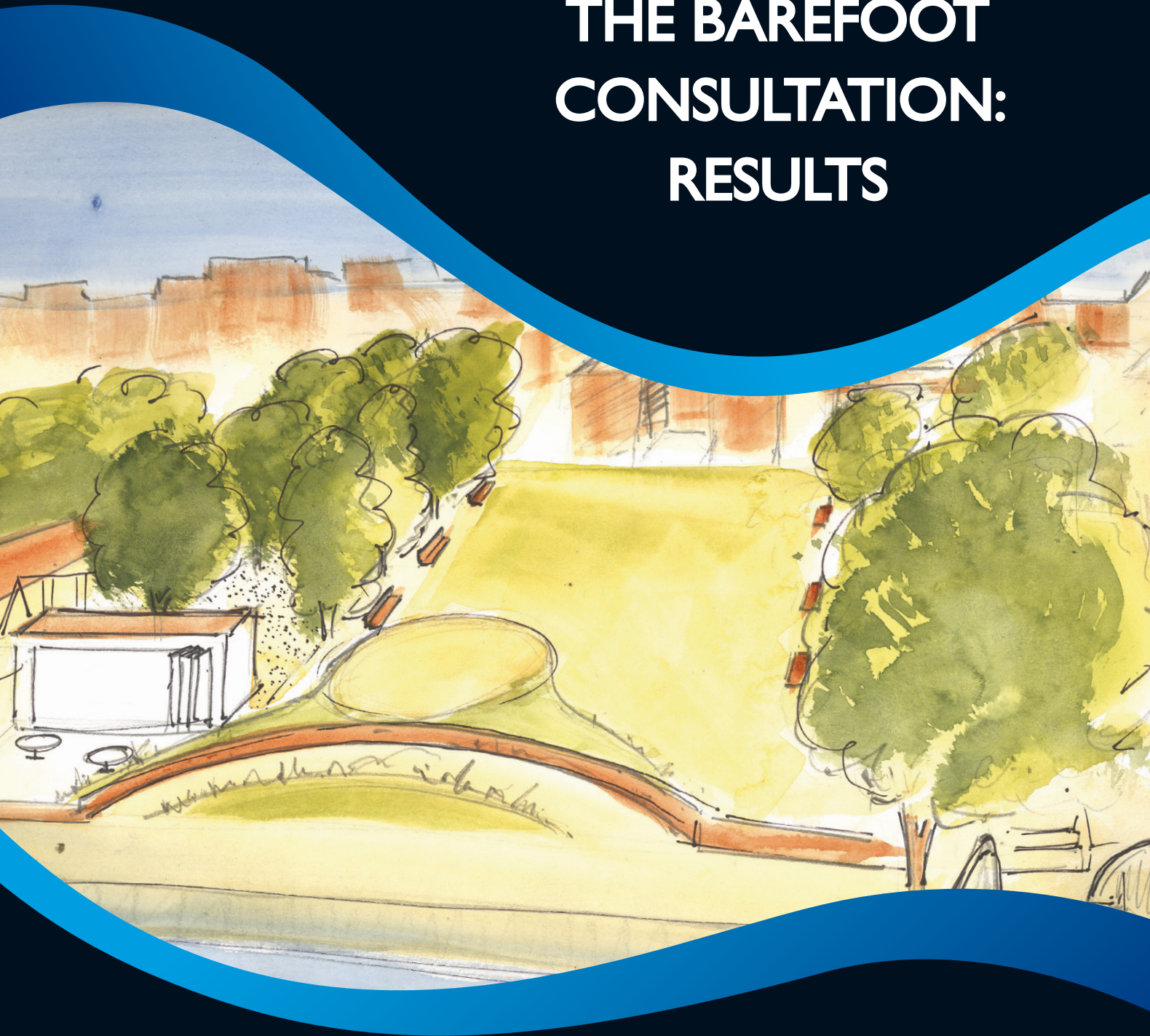


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Introduction

Twickenham is one of the largest town centres in Richmond upon Thames and there are a number of large development opportunities in the area which aim to improve its economic standing and built environment.

These opportunities include: the regeneration of the Riverside area, the possible redevelopment of the Post Office Sorting site and planned improvements at Twickenham Station. In addition the soon to open hotel at Regal House will no doubt impact the local economy, parking and employment.

With this in mind, and given the new administrations commitment to listen to the views of all residents regarding their local community, Richmond Council has committed to carry out a three-stage consultation involving residents and businesses in Twickenham.

The first stage of the consultation – the Barefoot Consultation was an informal event giving all residents and businesses in Twickenham the opportunity to share their ideas about how Twickenham should be developed. This report concentrates on the findings from this event. The event was hosted in the Clarendon Hall and then moved to the Civic Centre Atrium from Thursday 22 – Saturday 24 July.

It was made up of several different areas.

Exhibition

Inviting local residents and community groups to display their ideas and proposals for the local area.

Ideas Wall

All visitors to the exhibition were invited to write down their ideas and thoughts about Twickenham. These large 'post it' notes were displayed on a wall for others to read.

Survey

All visitors to the exhibition were asked to complete a short survey upon leaving. This survey asked them questions about Twickenham, their thoughts on the exhibitions and if they would like to sign up for a Twickenham data base to receive information about future events/opportunities regarding the area.

Online feedback

For residents who were unable to attend the core event, there was also the opportunity for them to submit their ideas online.

Presentations/Soap Box

All exhibitors were given the opportunity to carry out a short five minute presentation outlining their proposals and thoughts for the area. Other visitors were also invited to take the 'soap box' stage and have their say.

Video diary room

All visitors were invited to go into the diary room and record their messages for the Council as to how they think Twickenham should be developed.

Artist impression

An artist was in attendance at the core event for residents to describe their vision for Twickenham. These visualisations were then displayed in the Civic Centre.

Executive Summary

There were several common themes that came out of the Barefoot consultation.

It is felt that Twickenham town centre is in desperate need of improvement and needs to be more welcoming and enticing for residents and visitors alike. However, people feel that any redevelopment should be shaped by the local community and not by a profit making developer. New development must reflect the needs of the local community.

All ideas for the area had a community theme. Concerning the riverside, the main ideas were for the development of a town square as well as potentially building a centre which could be used for multiple purposes (e.g. café, clubs and societies etc.).

A number of people are concerned about the lack of leisure facilities in the town centre and would like plans to include leisure sites such as a swimming pool, ice rink and a cinema. This would cater to the needs of teenagers who, many feel, have nothing to do in Twickenham. The post office site was suggested as a good place to build leisure facilities.

There was unanimous agreement that Twickenham should stay low rise. There was concern over plans to build a 10 storey housing block. It is generally felt any new development must be a maximum of three to four storeys high.

People want increased access to the riverside from the surrounding streets and many think cars should be removed from the riverside. An underground car park at the rear of the riverside site was proposed as a potential solution to this. The idea of increased pedestrianisation was advocated by many residents. The idea of a foot and cycle bridge linking Radnor Gardens and Ham is a popular idea.

Soap Box and Video Diary Themes

At the main consultation event, there was a soap box giving members of the public the chance to voice their ideas and concerns about Twickenham and the proposed redevelopment plans. This was video recorded. There was also a video diary which gave members of the public the opportunity to discuss their views in private.

The key themes to come out of these two exercises are discussed below.

Community led, not given to the hands of developers

A common theme running throughout was that any redevelopment plans should be shaped through the involvement of local people, and led by the community, rather than placed in the hands of a profit making developer.

Criticism was made of redevelopment proposals over the last 29 years in that they were previously funded by Enabling Development – essentially where a developer would carry out a project which would involve the development of the entire site over a period of six or so years. At the end of a project the developer would be able to sell at profit on the condition that some development is allocated to public amenities.

In theory Enabling Development should result in relatively quick redevelopment at no cost to the tax payer. However, it was argued that in reality this had not been the case.

Several action groups in Twickenham lobby for the well planned and community led development of the riverside area. These include the Twickenham Riverside Terrace Group, and the Friend's of Twickenham Riverside. These groups advocate community lead development of the riverside area that adopts a step by step process to redevelopment. Further, they support the notion of community participation to achieve what is most popular for the community.

Development that reflects the needs of the community

If new development does take place in Twickenham, residents want to feel that it reflects the needs of the local community. If a new housing block is built at the site of the station, it is hoped that a good proportion of the new development will be allocated as social housing, therefore supporting diversity in Twickenham and allowing access for key workers. Further, mixed usage was supported, for example, having a mixture of housing and retail in a new development.

Residents want new development to have value for the community as a whole. This argument was particularly strong regarding suggestions for development of the riverside area.

Have infrastructure in place

For any new developments that take place, it was argued that appropriate infrastructure needs to be created at the same time. Several residents were against the proposals by Solus for the creation of a new 10 storey residential tower block as the plans did not include provision for extra parking spaces.

Several residents were concerned that the current infrastructure in Twickenham would not be able to cope with any population rises occurring as a result of development. Providing significant infrastructure (schools, healthcare etc.) was seen as a key part of any development that takes place.

To ensure that development takes into account the needs to the resident and visitor population, it was suggested that there needs to be a system in place to ensure that nothing is done ad-hoc, and that progress is brought about through cooperation amongst local residents.

No to high rise

Most of those who spoke were against the idea of any high rise development (e.g. the proposed 10 storey tower blocks proposed by Solus at the station). The general consensus was that any new development should be around the four to five storey level and residents were weary of repeating perceived problems over the Travel Lodge development. One mentioned that they hoped the newly elected council would stick to its promise of keeping any new development low.

The riverside – potential to be the most popular space in Twickenham

The riverside area was seen by many residents as having potential to be a catalyst for change in Twickenham and various ideas were given for how it could be developed.

All ideas for the area had a community theme. The main ideas were for the development of a town square as well as potentially building a centre which could be used for multiple purposes (e.g. café, clubs and societies etc.)

One resident suggested that three of the shops at the end of the south side of King Street should be compulsory purchased by the council and demolished. It was argued that this would open up the line of site to the river from the railway station and create a real heart for the town.

Removing cars from the riverside was seen as a good idea by many residents, and it was argued that this would increase the potential for the riverside site. An underground car park at the rear of the riverside site was proposed as a potential solution to this. It was suggested that removing cars from the riverside would double to amount of space available which could be developed into a community site.

One speaker advocated that Twickenham traffic should be for local vehicles only, and passing traffic should be diverted from the centre.

Increasing walking and cycling

Several speakers suggested the creation of a walkway which would span from the railway station, through to the rugby stadium, incorporating the post office and college sites en route.

It was argued that this would help to ease congestion on match days. One speaker who represented the Heathen House youth centre supported this idea, though stated that it should not encroach Heathen House land.

Another speaker representing an architect firm suggested building a new foot and cycle bridge across the river from Radner Gardens to Ham Lands. It was argued that this would have a big impact on Twickenham town centre by bringing shoppers across who would have otherwise gone to Kingston. This would also create access to the national cycle network and link Twickenham to Putney and Hampton.

The idea of increased pedestrianisation was advocated by several residents and the idea of making King Street a pedestrian only area was also suggested.

Welcome for consultation and the need for more of it

Many residents praised the approach the council had taken to conduct consultation with residents. One speaker commented on the fact that three days of consultation was still not enough and that a permanent display was needed to showcase ideas to the public.

Survey Questionnaire

Topline results

Residents were asked to complete the following questionnaire after attending the Barefoot consultation event. Around 300 people answered the questionnaire.

Q1: Looking at the following local areas please tick those that the council should look to improve. If you do not think an area needs improvement please do not mark it. Please use the space at the right to indicate what specific things you believe would most improve that site

	%
Twickenham Riverside	86
Post Office Depot	72
Twickenham Railway Station	71
King Street/High Street/London Rd	61
Heath Road/Green	20
Church Street	7
Other	8
No improvements needed at all	1
Don't know	1
Not stated	2

The sites most commonly felt to be in need of improve are the riverside, post office depot, railway station and King Street. Fewer residents feel Heath Road/Green and Church Street should be improved. The comments on how each site could be improved are supplied separately.

Q2: Looking at the following local facilities, services and amenities please rank, in order of priority, which the council should look to improve first. Please circle the ranking you have chosen on each line. If you do not think a local facility, service or amenity needs improvement please do not give it a ranking.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	Doesn't need improvement/not ranked
Recreation and entertainment	12	9	12	10	10	8	3	4	3	3	27
Safety (from crime and anti social behaviour)	13	9	6	8	9	7	6	5	4	4	30
Parking (make more available, including Park and Ride)	12	5	5	4	5	4	8	6	9	10	31
More pedestrianisation	13	10	11	8	8	3	4	5	5	5	28
Parks/public open space	20	10	12	9	6	4	5	3	2	2	26
Shops	13	12	8	12	6	6	4	4	3	5	27
Street Cleaning / Graffiti	8	8	6	5	5	7	5	10	4	6	37
Youth facilities	11	8	7	7	9	6	7	4	4	6	30
Market/Town Square	23	15	11	6	7	7	4	2	2	2	23
More River links and transport	9	8	8	10	8	5	6	4	7	7	30
Other	73	13	7	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0

The local facilities most commonly mentioned as a top three priority are

- Market/Town Square (49%)
- Parks/public open space (42%)
- More pedestrianisation (34%)
- Shops (33%)
- Recreation and entertainment (33%)

Q3: What would be the main improvement you would make to Twickenham as a place to live and work?

The majority of comments received focus a small number of improvements. These include:

- Developing the riverside (making it easier to access), King Street, rail station and post office site.
 - Changes to parking, such as making it cheaper and removing it from the riverside.
 - Residents are concerned that only low rise developments should be constructed in Twickenham.
 - Traffic congestion and flow was mentioned as a problem in need of attention.
 - Improve the shops in the area, have more high end and individual shops
 - Increase availability of leisure facilities and open public spaces
-

Q4: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Barefoot Consultation has enabled me to get my views across about what needs to be done to improve Twickenham	30	45	75	15	2	*	2	2
The Barefoot Consultation focused on the correct issues in order to improve Twickenham	30	43	73	12	6	2	8	4
The council will act on my concerns as a result of the Barefoot Consultation	9	17	26	24	16	5	21	24

Three quarters of those who attended the Barefoot consultation felt it gave them the opportunity to put their views across about what needs improving in Twickenham. A similar proportion also felt the consultation focussed on the correct issues to improve Twickenham. However, only a quarter believe the council will act on their concerns raised at the consultation and one in five do not think the council will act on their concerns.

ABOUT YOU

Q5: Do you?

	%
Live in Twickenham	88
Work in Twickenham	18
Visit Twickenham Regularly	20
Not stated	2

The vast majority of those who attended the consultation live in Twickenham. Around one in five work in Twickenham and a similar proportion visit it regularly.

Q6: What was your age at your last birthday?

	%
Under 18	3
19-24	1
25-34	7
35-44	16
45-54	16
55-64	27
65-74	21
75+	8

Few younger people took part in the Barefoot consultation, just one in ten (11%) were under 35. A third (32%) who took part were aged 35 to 54 and around half were aged 55 to 74 (48%).

Q7: Are you?

	%
Male	48
Female	50
Not stated	2

Q8: Contact details – supplied in separate excel sheet.

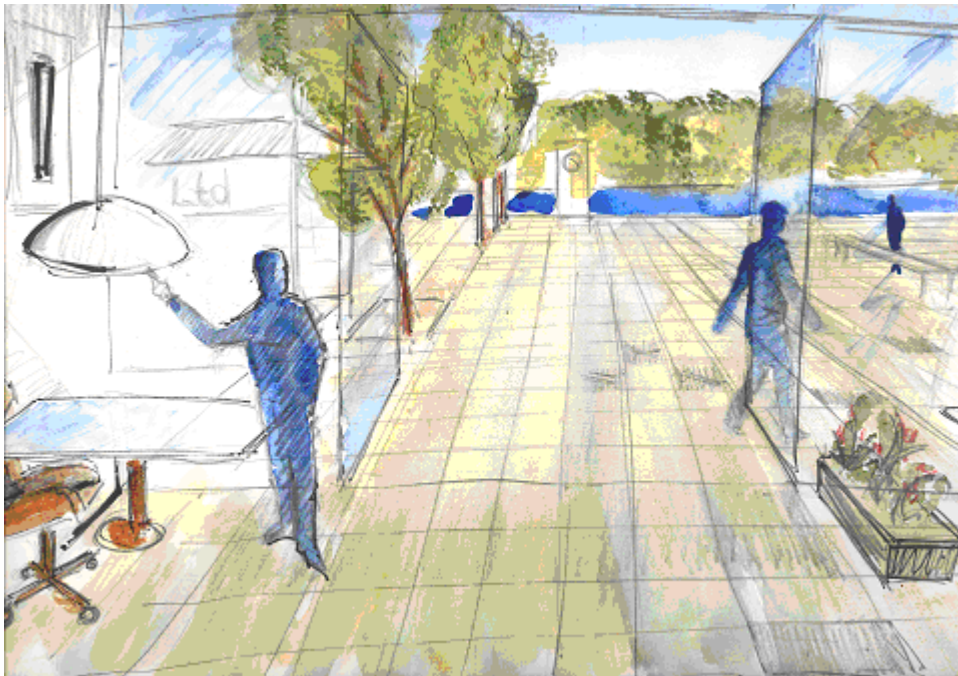
Q9: Do you have any other comments?

Other comments left by residents reiterate many of the issues raised at question 3. The comments are generally concerned with the following:

- Concern that green spaces be kept.
- Reiterate point about development of King Street, riverside and station
- Reiterate the point about low rise development
- General agreement that the town centre needs updating
- Poor shopping facilities
- Parking mentioned as an issues in need of improvement
- More recreational facilities needed such as a cinema, ice rink, swimming pool
- Increased use and development of rugby stadium concern
- Regal Hose deemed an eye sore and many feel it should be demolished
- Concern that residents are listened to and view acted upon

Artist impressions

An artist was present at the consultation and assisted residents in sketching out their vision for parts of Twickenham. 24 sketches were displayed and below are two examples.



The visions for Twickenham riverside include green space, cafes, small shops, underground parking, leisure facilities and are pedestrian friendly. Along King Street access to the riverside is pictured and some included a shopping arcade with access to the river.

Ideas wall

Ideas cards were available at the Barefoot consultation to enable residents to have their say about the proposed plans for Twickenham. 336 people filled in an ideas card. A summary of the main themes running through the comments follows.

The theme of the comments centred on improving the town centre to make it more appealing for both residents and visitors. Residents want to give Twickenham a vibrant beating heart.

Twickenham as a whole

Some feel Twickenham lost its identity and is only known for having a rugby stadium. The town needs to offer more than just a sporting venue. The vision for Twickenham needs to be viewed as a whole, not just parts of the town. A key concern is that all buildings be kept low rise.

“Create a reason for people to come into the centre of Twickenham - give it an identity”

“Use a holistic approach that looks at the whole town, not a piecemeal approach”

“Keep Twickenham low rise.”

“Low rise NOT High rise”

Riverside

Residents would like access to riverside opened up from the surrounding streets. There is general support for pedestrianisation of the riverside. Many also suggested moving the farmers market to riverside. The idea of a bridge linking Radnor Gardens and Ham is popular.

“Improve access to riverside from town centre”

“Make the riverside pedestrianised and take traffic away from the riverside.”

“The bridge at Radnor Gardens idea is great.”

There is consensus that there should be some public open spaces developed and residents would like greenery and trees planted. Public toilets should also be installed.

“green open spaces with places for people to relax and enjoy a beautiful part of Twickenham”

“Plenty of grass, seating, trees, plant”

“Open space at riverside for regular market/event”

“Open space, plenty of seating”

“Public toilets in Twickenham are essential”

A number of residents want to see the riverside developed to include restaurants, cafes, small shops and space for markets.

“Open up area, cafes/restaurants, encourage evening use.”

“small bijou shops, cafes and bars”

“Riverside needs a proper commercially viable development with opening to King Street, riverside cafes/restaurants”

There are mixed views about building of new homes on the riverside, slightly more residents seem opposed to this idea. Those who feel there should be housing generally feel this should be on a small scale.

“Some modest housing but no high rise.”

“no riverside housing.”

“No housing developments on the riverside.”

Train station

The main concern about the train station was that any redevelopment be low rise. Most residents want the train station to be improved but some mention the station has been redeveloped recently. Some would like a taxi rank and drop off point at the station.

“Train station is an ugly area - needs to be revamped”

“The station needs escalators and proper toilet facilities, but any building here should be not more than 3 storeys.”

“No high rise at Twickenham station.”

“Twickenham Station does not need redeveloping again - it has already been done”

King Street

Improvements suggested for King Street generally focus on improving access to riverside for pedestrians. There are empty shops on the street which need to be put to use. New and higher quality retailers should be encouraged.

“Open views to Thames from King Street.”

“Open up King Street to provide river view and access.”

“King Street needs to attract higher-rent retailers and lose its tatty image.”

Retail and leisure facilities

Many are concerned about the lack of leisure facilities and would like to see a swimming pool, ice rink and a cinema built. Many feel teenagers are poorly catered for and would like activities to be available aimed at this age group. Many suggest building leisure facilities on the post office site.

“Possibly use a new leisure centre with swimming pool, bowling alley, cinema or some of this sports centre could be sited on the Post Office sorting office.”

“Post office site facility - leisure for 13-17 years old. Including a night club, £3 entry.”

“Cinema/leisure facilities on post office site.”

Shopping is deemed to be poor in the town centre. Residents would like to be able to shop in Twickenham rather than travelling to Richmond or Kingston.

“There's far too much shabby retail which would be better off being refurbished for residential use.”

“develop high quality individual shops to attract people who want something different from Richmond and Kingston.”

Traffic and parking

Residents feel too much traffic runs through the town centre and would like measurements put in place to divert traffic away from the centre.

“Try to stop Twickenham being a through route to somewhere else.”

“Re-route traffic to go outside the Twickenham centre.”

Residents generally want more parking and some suggest having underground parking. There is consensus however that parking be removed from the riverside.

“Need extra parking in town.”

“Twickenham riverside developed with underground parking”

“Remove road and parking from riverside”

“Moving car parking from river walk would be a nice idea.”

Schooling

A number of resident suggest there are not enough schools in Twickenham and the post office site is mentioned as a good site for a new school.

“A decent new primary school site”

“Build a school on old post office site.”

“Use Post Office area to build news school as there is a shortage of both primary and secondary places in Twickenham.”

Online Survey

The online survey was advertised as an option for residents to complete if they were unable to attend the Barefoot consultation or didn't want to fill in the paper survey on the day. The survey ran from 21 July to 6 August 2010. 94 people responded to the online survey.

The online survey covered the same questions as asked in the paper survey which was handed out during the Barefoot consultation (and results reported earlier in this report).

Q1: Looking at the following local areas please tick those that the council should look to improve. If you do not think an area needs improvement please do not mark it. Please use the space at the right to indicate what specific things you believe would most improve that site

	%
Twickenham Riverside	82
King Street/York Street/London Rd	72
Twickenham Railway Station	54
Post Office Depot	47
Heath Road Green	26
Church Street	11
Other	13
Not stated	5

The sites most commonly felt to be in need of improve are the riverside, King Steet, the railway station, and the post office depot. The comments on how each site could be improved are supplied separately.

Q2: Looking at the following local facilities, services and amenities please rank, in order of priority, which the council should look to improve first. Please circle the ranking you have chosen on each line. If you do not think a local facility, service or amenity needs improvement please do not give it a ranking.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	Doesn't need improvement/not ranked
Recreation and entertainment	2	8	10	5	16	14	7	9	6	7	10
Safety (from crime and anti social behaviour)	5	7	8	11	7	2	9	13	8	11	13
Parking (make more available, including Park and Ride)	13	12	7	1	7	5	5	6	8	12	18
More pedestrianisation	12	8	9	7	5	7	3	8	9	11	15
Parks/public open space	8	7	8	13	9	7	14	13	6	3	6
Shops	6	6	7	5	11	10	10	4	7	18	10
Street Cleaning / Graffiti	2	7	7	8	7	11	7	17	8	5	15
Youth facilities	6	6	10	11	11	8	16	3	6	8	9
Market/Town Square	10	10	7	8	2	7	11	9	10	11	9
More River links and transport	14	5	6	7	8	6	6	8	10	11	13

The local facilities most commonly mentioned as a top three priority are

- Parking (34%)
- More pedestrianisation (31%)
- Market / Town Square (29%)
- More river links and transport (27%)
- Parks / public open space (24%)

These results differ slightly to the paper version of the survey as those who completed the paper survey could have circled more than one improvement as a priority whereas on the online survey this would not have been possible.

Q3: What would be the main improvement you would make to Twickenham as a place to live and work?

The most common themes to emerge from this question were as follows:

- The riverside – many respondents (approximately 43% in total) said they would like to see the riverside improved and made into a public space, with the aim of it being a focal point for the town. Several also suggested opening up the riverside with Kings Street
 - The next biggest theme to emerge was that of improved retail and improving the condition of the town centre in general. Several respondents commented how many people go to Richmond or Kingston to shop and thought Twickenham should have a better range of shops.
 - Several residents were concerned about the amount of traffic in Twickenham and would like to see more pedestrian areas
 - Increase availability of leisure facilities and open public spaces
-

Q4: To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Barefoot Consultation has enabled me to get my views across about what needs to be done to improve Twickenham	24%	44%	68%	16%	9%	1%	10%	7%
The Barefoot Consultation focused on the correct issues in order to improve Twickenham	20%	47%	67%	21%	1%	2%	3%	8%
The council will act on my concerns as a result of the Barefoot Consultation	6%	13%	19%	35%	16%	4%	20%	27%

Over two thirds of those who took part in the Barefoot consultation felt it gave them the opportunity to put their views across about what needs improving in Twickenham. The same proportion also felt the consultation focussed on the correct issues to improve Twickenham. However, only a fifth feel that the council will actually act on the concerns raised, while the same proportion feel that the council will not act on their concerns.

ABOUT YOU

Q5: Do you?

	%
Live in Twickenham	83
Work in Twickenham	19
Visit Twickenham Regularly	19
Not stated	7

The vast majority of those who took part in the online survey live in Twickenham. Around one in five work in Twickenham and a similar proportion visit the town on a regular basis.

Q6: What was your age at your last birthday?

	%
Under 18	0%
19-24	0%
25-34	14%
35-44	29%
45-54	27%
55-64	16%
65-74	10%
75+	3%
Not stated	2%

Residents aged between 35 and 54 were most likely to have completed the online survey, with no residents aged under 24 years old taking part.

Q7: Are you?

	%
Female	47%
Male	28%
Not stated	26%

Q8: Do you have any other comments?

Other comments left by residents reiterate many of the issues raised at question 3. The comments are generally concerned with the following:

- Residents were pleased to be consulted, however, some felt that the consultation was not enough, and not enough notice had been given. Others wanted to receive feedback on the consultation process to show that their views had been taken into consideration.
- There was some concern that there would be a shortage of vital infrastructure (schools and hospitals etc.) as a result of any development.
- Several residents were keen for redevelopment to go ahead as quickly as possible but were sceptical about if any changes would actually take effect.
- There was a call for better cycling facilities, including more places to lock up bikes as well as improved road surfaces