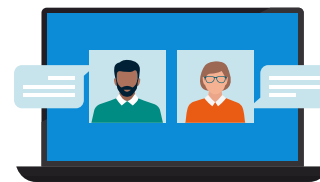


# RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE REPORT

## UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL: A NEW VISION FOR OUR TOWN CENTRES AND HIGH STREETS

25TH MAY 13:00-15:30 VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

“Good to meet with people from different backgrounds but similar thinking!”



“Opportunity to think creatively about how we could adapt high streets”

**35**  
Organisations

**81**  
Attendees

**10**  
Presenters

**2**  
Guest speakers

**5**  
Virtual workshop groups



“Swift pace, well organised, variety of contributions from different speakers giving an overview of broad areas as well as more in-depth insights.”

## CONFERENCE FEEDBACK



An electronic evaluation form was sent to every delegate, and we received 31 responses.

Responses are scored on a scale of 1 to 5.

1. How do you rate the conference for opening a dialogue around new thinking for high streets and town centres?

**Score: 4.4**

2. How do you rate the content from our two speakers (Ojay and Paul)?

**Score: 4.8**

3. How do you rate the 5-minute speakers session?

**Score: 4.1**

4. How do you rate the workshop session?

**Score: 3.9**

## HEADLINE OUTCOMES OF RICHMOND PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE 2021

### Town centres as destinations

- The workshop discussions highlighted the need for town centres and high streets to be a 'one-stop-shop' to attract and retain customers and visitors.
- This could include public art, performances, and events as well as traditional retail and services such as banking and health facilities.
- Infrastructure for visitors such as public toilets, wayfinding, and parking must be considered to ensure that town centres and high streets are accessible to all.

### People-focused centres

- Several speakers discussed the concept of the 15-minute city, similar to the 'Living Locally' concept, and this was noted in group discussions as a positive and powerful idea.
- Key aspects include walkability and pedestrianisation, ensuring that town centres are appealing for visitors and locals alike. In some areas this brings logistical challenges, but was a popular suggestion noted by all groups.
- Other benefits noted were the environmental and health impacts of reduced traffic, as well as a reduction in noise pollution and increased pedestrian safety.

### Balanced footprint

- Another key point to come from the workshop discussions was the need in some larger centres for a mix of residential and commercial lots in town centres, with space also planned for recreational areas.
- This requires active place management, such as filling vacant units with specialist shops that respond to local need. This would ensure that shops are recognised as playing an integral part in the community.

### Creative town planning

- The workshops highlighted the need to make creative use of empty spaces through meanwhile and temporary uses. This could include pop-ups, public art, performances, and events as mentioned above.
- In addition, many groups cited the importance of repurposing spaces to serve both the day and night-time economies.

### Digitalisation

- As a long-term trend exacerbated by the Pandemic, speakers and groups emphasised that the digital revolution should be seen as an opportunity not just a challenge.
- The workshops recognised that when utilised creatively, technology has the potential to make town centres a more desirable destination for all.

“Fast pace, stimulating, broad ranging, ending on positive note, made me want to engage further.”

## NEXT STEPS

The next stage in this process is to bring residents together in Community Conversations to home in on specific town centres and high streets.

The outcomes of both the Community Conversations and the Richmond Partnership Conference will influence Richmond upon Thames Council, including the Economic Development Office working closely with the business community, and the emerging Local Plan. The outcomes will also be shared with stakeholders to inform initiatives in the public, business, and voluntary sectors.



**Community**  
Conversation

“Challenging external speakers with real pragmatic examples that resonated for our areas.”