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Sent: 28 June 2023 16:07
To: Richmond Local Plan
Subject: Comments on the 10 Year Local Plan

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I am commenting specifically on what stands out for my local area:

Richmond: there is a theme around increasing coffee shops/restaurants/other food outlets, but surely Richmond already has more than enough of these already – how many coffee shops/eateries do we need? The plan is unimaginative and represents a lack of imagination. Richmond is supposed to be our premier shopping centre but there is actually very limited shopping available in Richmond, since the closure of House of Fraser, TopShop, H&M. It should be a priority to attract this type of shop back to Richmond, especially with the closure of the Kew Retail Park. Surely, this would better fit your “20 minute neighbourhood” plan better?

I also see that you are keen to increase the night time economy in Richmond. I certainly don't support this, and I suspect many other local residents don't either. Richmond has already lost its charm in the evenings, with large gatherings on The Green and by the river, and an increase in antisocial behaviour. Do we really want to promote this? We visit the cinema and theatres in Richmond regularly, but don't hang around afterwards for a bite to eat or a drink; it's just not the pleasant place it used to be. Looking to increase Richmond's night time economy can only increase this and should not be done without first securing a commitment to increased policing with a zero tolerance of anti social behaviour, and the return of our Police Station.

The plan for the redevelopment of the station area is welcome; the open space outside the front entrance is a pretty unpleasant place at the moment, and not at all welcoming. However, do we really need a high rise build there? That is completely out of character to the surrounding area. Also, I think you should more fully explain what is meant by “vibrant active uses” which would contribute to the night time economy – this suggests further opportunities for anti social behaviour around the new station area.

Kew: there is a massive increase in the population planned for Kew/North Sheen, far out of proportion to its current population, but there is no commitment for increased, visible, policing which has got to be an absolute necessity.

Overall, the whole plan is rather depressing, concentrating as it does on building on every scrap of available space within the borough, all in an unimaginative way cramming in as many housing “units” as possible, usually with building heights in excess of their current surrounding areas, with a small nod to “public realm” which is usually a small square with a couple of benches that soon gather discarded rubbish and fall into disrepair – a space for anti social behaviour and most like drug dealing. This will turn our lovely borough into an urban, rather than suburban, area. This intensity of building should not be considered without first securing commitment to an increase in policing across the borough and a reinstatement of the police station in Richmond.

20 minute neighbourhood: if you are committed to this policy/vision and increasing the number of trips made by bicycle you need to considerably increase safe cycle routes across the whole borough and, most importantly, create safe cycle parking – I am sure residents would be happy to pay a small fee for parking their cycles somewhere where they know they will still be there when they come back. I could cycle to Richmond, but choose not to as I don't believe my cycle would be safe whilst I did my shopping/got a coffee. Based on the current guidance, I would have to carry very heavy locks with me and probably more than one, although that would not stop someone from stealing my saddle or handlebars!

My last comment is how your proposals fit in with the actual planning process, and how much control you actually have to deliver these plans. The redevelopment of both the Homebase and the Watney Brewery sites show that you actually have no power to deliver your building proposals for the larger sites. Until you can recover your local

planning powers I would question the point of your plans for the larger sites – nice to have, but likely to be overthrown by the Mayor of London.

The above is all very cynical so maybe it's time for me to move 😞

Julie

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