



Community Conversation

Whitton; Heathfield Community Conversation

DATE: 6:30pm – 9pm, Monday 12th May 2025

VENUE: Whitton Community Centre, Percy Road, Twickenham, UK

CHAIR: John Latham, Representative, United Reform Church in Hampton Hill

AGENDA

6.30pm – 7.00pm:	Refreshments and Council information stands
7.00pm – 7.10pm:	Welcome and Introduction to the Community Conversation
7.10pm – 8.10pm:	Priority themes discussion 1. Traffic and Congestion – Councillor Michael Wilson 2. Whitton Community Centre Redevelopment – Councillor John Coombs 3. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour – Councillor Lesley Pollesche 4. High Street and Shopping Parades – Councillor Kuldev Sehra (Brief introduction of each theme followed by comments, observations, and questions from the audience)
8.10pm – 8.50pm:	Open conversation with the audience
8.50pm - 9.00pm:	Event close



Community Conversation

COUNCILLORS IN ATTENDANCE:

Whitton

- Councillor Jo Humphreys
- Councillor Rob O`Carroll
- Councillor Kuldev Sehra

Heathfield

- Councillor John Coombs – Vice Chair of the Planning Committee
Spokesperson for Arts
- Councillor Lesley Pollesche
- Councillor Michael Wilson

Theme 1	Discussion
Traffic and Congestion	<p>Introduction from Councillor Michael Wilson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congestion in Heathfield – with ongoing issue on Hospital Bridge Road, Powder Mill Lane, and Percy Road. • Significant works on London Road meaning traffic is diverted, increasing traffic flow through Whitton (High Street and Hospital Bridge Road). • Traffic monitoring system was broken on Hospital Bridge Road and now repaired. • Ongoing conversations with Transport for London, including with the Deputy Mayor. • Traffic light phasing dictated by TfL, the Council is lobbying for this to get changed. • Council officers are currently working on producing a report into the traffic scheme that was introduced around the Wykeham estate now that the review has ended. This will shape what the final outcome of these measures will look like. • As part of the Turing House development, Council advocated for improved pedestrian and cyclist safety on Hospital Bridge Road and Percy Road. This is about 12-18 months away from happening but is part of the requirements for the Turing development. • Works happening over summer on A136 roundabout • 21st July – Whitton Road • Working with police speed watch team.



Community Conversation

	<p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pedestrian crossing at top of Hospital Bridge Road hasn't helped situation and is so close to junction that cars speed round corner without stopping. • Roundabout by The Admiral Nelson also very dangerous to cross. • Speeding near Whitton station. • Lots of development in Hounslow and Feltham, which will further increase pressures. • Issues with mopeds and electric bikes. • Issues with backlog of traffic on to smaller roads – including Rodney Road. • Suggestion of survey to see where cars are coming from. • Suggestion of a speed camera to help address speeding on Hospital Bridge Road. • Cllr Humphries: Survey has recently been completed in speeding problem areas (including many roads mentioned), looking at the design of the road and what traffic calming measures might be possible. Will then look at funding to deliver improvements. Speed cameras are within remit of police. • Cllr Sehra: Met Police will only install speed cameras where there has been a fatality. Council wants to do what we can do reduce speeding and would like to invite community to get involved, such as in Community Road Watch initiative. • Cllr Wilson: Consultation on changes to Hanworth Road were met with serious opposition, so officers are looking into alternative proposals. Asking for scheme on Percy Road to improve bus stop area and cycle lanes, but currently no budget allocated.
Theme 2	Discussion



Community Conversation

Whitton Community Centre Redevelopment	<p>Introduction from Councillor John Coombs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2024 - Council's Finance, Policy & Resources Committee approved an initial budget of £510,000 to look at options into centre's future. • Options were refurbishment, rebuild, rebuild with flats above, and do nothing – with costs of refurbishment and rebuilding relatively close. • Choice was to rebuild centre, providing 36 affordable homes, and re-providing a pharmacy onsite. • Whitton Community Association, Council officers, Councillors, and architects working together on plans. • Whitton Community Association working to identify spaces to continue provision while centre is rebuilt. • Will run public consultation in September to give an idea of what the scheme would look like. • Aim to submit planning application by the end of the year, with planning permission in place by early 2026. <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking situation is already difficult and needs to be improved. Suggestion of underground parking. • Request for room for Met Police to be based on site. • Concern raised about costs and how it will be paid for. • Concern raised about loss of distinct features and heritage of the centre, such as high ceilings. • Allianz Arena has space that could be used to run services and activities. • Query about models where community centre and social housing provision has worked. • Centre is often full, and design will need to take population growth into account. • Cllr Pollesche: Working with centre manager to explore all opportunities for people who use centre to continue accessing services in spaces that aren't far away and that are on bus routes, this includes Rugby Stadium among lots of other options. • Cllr Sehra: Community Association appreciate feedback and are listening to it, welcome any views. • Cllr Coombs: Height of rooms will be the same. Budgets include contingency budget. Aim is retaining onsite parking spaces, underground parking likely wouldn't be possible due to costs. • Cllr Humphries: Considering a car-free development where new residents couldn't park onsite, with some accessible bays.
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Community Conversation

Theme 3	Discussion
Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour	<p>Introduction from Councillor Lesley Pollesche</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Police Liaison Groups meet quarterly at St James Church, open to all residents, who are encouraged to attend. More information: https://www.richmond.gov.uk/services/community_safety/safer_neighbourhood_groups/police_liaison_groups and https://www.met.police.uk/a/your-area/. Sits on Safer Neighbourhood Board, also meets quarterly at York House, Twickenham. Details of upcoming meetings can be found via https://www.richmond.gov.uk/safer_neighbourhood_board Aware of issues of shoplifting on high street and vehicle theft. Urges everyone to report all instances of antisocial behaviour or crime. Committed to help with concerns, and providing a communication channel with Met Police. Safer Neighbourhood Team have regular contact sessions at Whitton Community Centre and library. Police have also launched Met Engage, which can be signed up to here: https://www.metengage.co.uk/ <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seen a big increase in antisocial behaviour and crime over the last year, including theft and drug dealing. Concern about police resources in Whitton, compared to places like Twickenham, Richmond & Kingston. Whitton Sainsburys and area around Whitton Library feel unsafe late at night. Crime in Whitton and Heathfield has reduced over last 20 years, and Richmond is the safest borough in London. Community Support Officer in Whitton (Bill Smith) awarded British Empire Medal for making Whitton one of the safest wards in the country. Suggestion to look at Hammersmith & Fulham's model of law enforcement teams who work with police. Cllr Pollesche: Committed to following up on issues raised about Sainsburys, also a licensing issue which the Council can help to address. Cllr Humphries: Police resources are tight, resourcing is done in the same way across the borough, some is being moved out of the borough to other places. Collectively need to push for more police resource.



Community Conversation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Sehra: Increases in crime and ASB is a national issue. Police are working with retailers locally, sharing intelligence, best practice, and CCTV, which has led to some arrests. Staff in shops are trained not to approach shoplifters due to safety risks. Looking into private security for retailers to complement police. • Cllr O'Carroll: Council has very little influence over police, with central government having a lot of say over Met Police resourcing. Need to call on more funding for the police. • Cllr Pollesche: A man has been arrested following stabbing on Elleman Avenue, this is an ongoing police issue. Safer Neighbourhood Team in Heathfield at full strength, recruitment ongoing in Whitton. • Cllr Coombs: Looking at Wandsworth model of Council officers who patrol streets, working alongside police, and may replicate on Richmond high streets if successful.
Theme 4	Discussion
High Street and Shopping Parades	<p>Introduction from Councillor Kuldev Sehra</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitton High Street is unique, with lots of local retailers and local shoppers. • Vacancy rate is the lowest in the borough at 2.5%. • Three current priorities: improving facilities for the community, supporting the businesses, setting initiatives where the community, businesses, and Council work together. • Chairman of Whitton Businesses Association and working on schemes to get more happening on high street - recently ran St George's Day parade, run Walk and Talk sessions, launching Cooking Up scheme. <p>Conversation (Comments, Questions and Observations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'This n That' on Whitton High Street is closing – asking whether the Council will be recognising Tony and his long service to the community. • Need for high street to be welcoming for young people. • Issues with teenagers cycling on pavements. • Issue where utility companies have done works and not made good, including damaging pavements.



Community Conversation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Sehra: Whitton Business Association will definitely do something to honour Tony and his longstanding contribution to the Whitton Community. Holding utility companies to account, to ensure timely repairs and pavements put back to normal. • Cllr Wilson: Supply issue with stone used on high street as it is a specific type of stone and there are global shortages, however it is hoped that where required these should be replaced by end of May. • Cllr Humphries: Schools are taking antisocial behaviour seriously and doing a lot to address it.
Open Questions	Discussion
Local Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question about development targets. • Cllr Coombs: Previous target was 800 homes per year, but under new Government this has been increased to 2,500. Previous target was reached each year but was a struggle. Looking at 5 major high streets, and whether extra stories can be put on existing buildings. • Cllr Sehra: 70% of Richmond is green space, which is protected, so there is limited potential to build housing.
Borough of Sanctuary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community has done lots to make refugees feel welcome.
Lime Bikes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue with bikes being dumped, and bikes being hacked and used without payment. • Cllr Coombs: Positive that people are using Lime Bikes instead of cars. Whitton Station is a major point where bikes are dumped. Traffic engineers looking at options to address issues, including designated points for parking. • Cllr Sehra: Lime Bikes have made a huge positive difference in being a cost effective and environmentally responsible way of getting around. Lime are making changes – and people will get fined and eventually banned if they park in non-compliant spaces. • Cllr Humphries: Lime Bikes also helping to free up public transport for those who need it. • Cllr Wilson: Things are being done to stop dumping, but Lime need to design a bike that can't be hacked.
Boundary Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query of continuity of messaging from Council in context of boundary changes.



Community Conversation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Sehra: Committed to looking into issue, should still be happening. • Cllr Humphries: Boundary changes mean that some parts of Whitton are under parliamentary constituency of Brentford and Isleworth, but still a part of Richmond upon Thames Borough, with Richmond Councillors, and no plans for this to change.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accessible parking locally due to restrictions.
Fly tipping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area on corner of Whitton Way and Nelson Road affected by fly tipping, not addressed by street cleaners. • Cllr Humphries: Aware of issue and taking action, with significant improvements on Council land. Issue where it is on private land, and landlords are not taking responsibility, which Council is addressing.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with grass verges not being cut, asked whether they will be cut over the summer or left until Sept. • Cllr Coombs: Grass being grown into wildflower meadows so won't be cut until Sept.
Close	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair: Thanked everyone for their contribution. • Councillors: Urged residents to email or call Councillors with any requests, issues, or questions. Councillors are also at Whitton Library at 10am-12pm on last Saturday of every month to discuss any issues. Rooms are also available at York House for Councillors to meet with residents.