

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEMANDS A TOTALLY NEW APPROACH TO TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE

93.9% of local residents want a totally new, transparent and collaborative approach from the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' Council to the Riverside site in Twickenham, a referendum conducted by the Electoral Reform Society revealed today.

The referendum, which was circulated randomly to more than 4,000 voters on the published electoral role in Twickenham and throughout the wider Richmond borough returned **1,015** in favour with only **66 votes (6.1%)** against. A parallel electronic survey attracted **213** further respondents and also produced a similar degree of support for starting afresh, with **98.11%** in favour.

The Riverside Action Group (RAG), which commissioned the referendum – has called for a new start by Richmond Council both to the choice of architect and the design of the site, developing the views expressed by the local community at a series of public meetings and an exhibition of different options organised by RAG as well as 'workshops' organised by the Council.

The key features of these were summarised by RAG following a public open meeting held on 24th September and have been sent to the Council and posted on the RAG website. They call for a design which fits in with the historical, cultural, riverine, artistic, musical and other heritage which makes up the unique character of Twickenham.

RAG's outgoing Chairman Susan Burningham welcomed the result: **"This makes it crystal clear that local residents and the wider Borough have overwhelmingly rejected the Council's original concept. Residents and stakeholders want a new design from a new architect and landscaper who will connect with this wonderful stretch of the river and create public open space at the heart of Twickenham. The Council must now throw open the future of this central site to other designers and architects on the basis of a new and properly constructed Brief which reflects the wishes of the community."**

Mark Brownrigg commented: **"What is needed is a coalition which brings together all parties and local interest groups to guide the development of and decision on new designs for this critical opportunity and oversee the implementation of the chosen option."**

A new development which increases the opportunities for the area is the coming onto the market of the entire row of buildings on King Street which run across the Riverside plot and currently make up a significant portion of Twickenham's high street.

"This emphasises the importance of taking a holistic view of the whole Riverside site; planning piecemeal with special interest groups is unacceptable," Dr Burningham commented.