

Hello everyone,

In our most recent newsletter of 11th February we noted that we were looking forward to hearing from the Council with regard to the public consultation on the Twickenham Riverside development - how many local residents had submitted replies to the Council's questionnaire and what they had said.

Since then, the Council has published a Feedback Report – [see link](#) – noting that it received 829 responses. The first question that arises is how far that is representative? The Report states that 26% only of the respondents live in the Twickenham Riverside ward (with 97% living within Richmond Borough).

If you have had time to read that Feedback Report, please send us your thoughts.

In the meantime, here are our own.

The conclusion, we feel, is that the responses to the public consultation, as reported, raise as many questions as they answer.

The Feedback Report begins, in the short Introduction, by noting that since November 2019, when Hopkins Architects won the design competition for re-development of the site, the focus has been on developing the concept design into a detailed design proposal in preparation for a planning application. Based on that, one would surely have expected the questionnaire to include a simple and direct question to residents asking them whether they considered the concept design had been well worked up into a detailed design proposal.

No such clear question was posed, however. Instead, question 8 refers to a 'high quality open space' which is lumped together into four objectives: 'The re-provision of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens', 'A car free riverside (Embankment)...', 'A widened Water Lane' and an 'Enhanced space for special events'. The Feedback Report records that 78% expressed agreement or strong agreement to such a space. The problem is that this is a mixed bag of things which the scheme supposedly supports but is unlikely to deliver according to the currently-proposed design - as is evident to those who have followed this story closely.

For example, the 're-provision of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens' is as yet unsecured, because the scheme currently proposed by the Council would entail a *loss* of space for the DJG as well as the loss of a 'feel' of a park/green space, due to the extent of paved areas and to the impact of the proposed tall/bulky Water Lane and Wharf Lane buildings abutting the space. Further, what it is not clear is that embankment would be a 'car-free' riverside as described in question 8, given the lack of agreement on how that would work in practice. We have referred in previous newsletters to the important issue of access and servicing for the benefit of the boathouses and businesses of Eel Pie Island. The question remains to be resolved of whether that servicing can be maintained with a completely vehicle-free (lorry-free) road along the embankment.

Contrary to what the Feedback Report wants to pretend, the responses to question 8 do not give a mandate to the Council for the proposed design.

What the Feedback does do, is underline - in the replies to question 6 (Likes) and question 7 (dislikes) - the existence of a number of topics/issues that need to be addressed before going to planning.

What will be the process for that?

We would urge that it not be a further 'consultation' of stakeholders in the tokenistic manner that the Council has adopted to-date, but a real working collaboration to find solutions.

Had the Council made good use of the year and more which has elapsed since the design competition by initiating and facilitating that kind of practical, collaborative solution-finding process, we would have been much more advanced towards the goal of determining how to regenerate this important site.

As a first step, RAG has written to the Council asking for clarification on the following points:

- How many paper versions of the Council's questionnaire were filled in, as opposed to online submissions?

- Could the Council provide disaggregated figures regarding people in Twickenham who took part in the consultation - i.e. for example, Twickenham South, Twickenham Riverside, etc.
- Could the Council also break down the figure in the statement in the Executive Summary that '84% of respondents say they would be more likely or just as likely to visit the riverside after the redevelopment'.
- How does the Council analyse responses to question 8? As we note above, question 8 is a broad wish-list, while questions 6 and 7 have apparently generated detailed replies.
- How does the Council interpret the answers to question 9, regarding what aspects respondents liked as regards the proposed open space: 17% car free – 16% event space/market/events on riverside/community space – 14% gardens/lots of greenery/wildlife areas – 9% openness/space/more space, etc.?

Until the Council answers the above questions relating to the consultation and addresses the aspects of the redevelopment which are outstanding, the Council cannot continue what seems to be its intention to push ahead with its desire to put in a planning application on the basis of a design which has gaps and flaws (including the issue of connectivity to the river, which we mentioned in our last newsletter).

As we say above, we would very much like to hear your thoughts at what is a critical point in this process. Do please be in touch with us if you would like to be more actively involved.

Best wishes as ever,

Peter, Marion and Mark