

Whitton and Heathfield Village Plan Review



Consultation Document

Whitton and Heathfield Village Plan Review

Over the past few months residents in Kew have been helping shape future of the area through an update to the Village Plan and the development of local planning guidance.

The Council would like to hear your views on the key issues identified and the proposals the Village Plan Review covers. What is not covered are some of the more detailed suggestions and ideas that have already been put forward. These are being looked at as part of the Council's on-going work on Village Plans.

The Village Plan reflects wider community needs, aspirations and activities that the community, Council and partners will work together on to shape and deliver. This could include tackling isolated elderly issues, strengthening opportunities to get involved, improving green spaces or planning school places.

Key issues

Shopping Centres

What you said:

- You are concerned about the number of vacant shops in Whitton High Street.
- The mix of shops should include fewer charity shops, coffee shops and betting shops, with more restaurants and independent traders.
- You would like to see shop fronts improved. You felt some High Street landlords did not maintain their properties adequately.
- It is important to encourage the smaller shopping parades.
- You would like to see a public square created in Whitton, perhaps using the car park behind Iceland. This could then host events, such as a Farmers Market.
- We should introduce some public toilets and in particular use portaloos on match days between Whitton Station and the Rugby Stadium.
- The whole area including Heathfield should be re-branded as Whitton:
 - Signage to promote gateway to Whitton High Street.
 - Railings by the Nelson should be painted green in keeping with bollards.
 - Concern about the shop variety of High Street – increasing number of betting shops.
 - Maintain shop rears – fly tipping – particularly on east side.

What we have done/ will do:

- The Council aims to maintain a good quality business environment in town centres in order to attract investment by a range of retailers. Vacant shops are always a concern and Whitton has a slightly higher level of empty shops compared to other shopping areas in the borough. Compared with other neighbouring boroughs we have lower levels of vacant shops generally.
- In 2011/12 Whitton High Street received £376k from the Mayor of London's' Outer London Fund and the Council's Uplift programme towards a series of regeneration improvements. In 2013/14 the Council is investing a further £2m to improve the High Street even more. This has included:
 - Replacing all 32 lamp columns with 1930's-style columns.
 - Fifteen shop front improvements.
 - New high street signage.
 - The Whitton Town Centre website was redesigned and relaunched to promote the businesses and services available locally.
 - New pavements with high quality York Stone.
 - 16 shops will receive improvements or 'facelifts' – including new lighting, signage or restoration to architectural features.
 - Resurfacing the road.
 - Reduction in street furniture.
 - Replanting of trees
- We will maintain support for Whitton Business Association through our Town Centre Opportunities Fund and encourage initiatives to improve footfall and use of the High Street.
- The creation of a public square has been considered but is dependent upon there being a suitable site and funding. The Council will continue to keep opportunities under review and any proposals will be subject to consultation.
- The Council has a Community Toilet Scheme which can be used on non-match days. A review is planned of the Community Toilet Scheme and additional publicity about the scheme can be provided. The Council has arrangements with the RFU to provide temporary toilets on match days and will work with them to improve facilities in Whitton.
- The Outer London Fund has provided resources for significant marketing and branding of Whitton (e.g. use of street banners).

Parks and Open Spaces

What you said:

- That our open space should be protected.
- Crane Park is an asset and should continue to be improved, with more historic walks and trails.
- The fence at Crane Park Road needs replacing. You would like to see the formation of local “Friends” groups to encourage use of the green space, such as the Friends of Murray Park.
- You would like to see more flowers generally and more community planting encouraged, in particular at Hospital Bridge Road.

What we have done/ will do:

- The majority of our open space is already protected under planning regulations.
- We have replaced the chain link fencing at Meadway with bollards and planted a community orchard with local schools, allotment holders, The Conservation Volunteers, Friends of Kneller Gardens and Friends of River Crane Environment. The area will now be managed as part of Crane Park.
- The replacement of the fence at Crane Park will be one of the improvements considered if the Council’s “mini Holland” bid to Transport for London is successful.
- We have invested £400k to provide links to Hounslow via Crane Park. We are investing as planned under the Park Improvement Programme to open up 5 previously inaccessible areas in Crane Park.
- We continually promote and encourage users into parks, including walking leaflets for Crane Park which are available to download on our web page.
- Using Community Links and expertise of existing groups in the borough, we will work with the South West London Environment Network (SWLEN) to facilitate the establishment of a Friends Group in Whitton and Heathfield.
- We are increasing the number of areas planted in the borough generally as part of our aim to be a flowered borough. There are already a number of wild flowers areas across the Village; no further planting is planned at present. However, using Community Links we will promote more engagement locally with Richmond in Bloom.

Rivers

What you said:

- The Duke of Northumberland's River could be improved by widening the paths and making them suitable for cyclists.
- You would like to see a bridge over the Crane linking Butts Farm and Whitton.

What we have done/ will do:

- The path along the Duke of Northumberland's River is not currently a cycle path, but is maintained under Highways as pedestrian access. This path is too narrow to be designated a cycle path. This will be reviewed under the Cycle Strategy 2014-15.
- The bridge over the Crane was a potential project as part of the Mayor of London's Priority Park Scheme in 2011/12, but was rejected as a result of the public consultation. The Council has limited funding for this kind of work but has applied to Transport for London for additional funding. If successful we will consider how the whole of the Crane River corridor, including bridge work, could be improved. However this is a longer term project and would be subject to consultation.

Schools

What you said:

- You are disappointed that the new school is called Twickenham Academy

What we have done/ will do:

- The Council has no control in the naming of independent schools. The school Governing Body involved students when agreeing the name.

Community Facilities

What you said:

- You would like to see Whitton Community Centre re-located and or refurbished.
- You would like to see Murray Park Hall refurbished.
- The Corner Café between Kneller Road and Whitton Dene is falling into disrepair.

- The Community Centre at Hounslow Heath could be better used.
- There are no community facilities for the over 50s.
- You would like to see the elderly persons centre re-provided
- We need to identify the needs of more diverse communities.
- The Gunpowder Works need remedial repair.
- You would like to see the development of a local Whitton website that provides news and information weekly.

What we have done/ will do:

- The Whitton Community Association is a not for profit organisation run by volunteers. You can find out more about them [here](#).
- A partnership between the Council and St Augustine's Church has resulted in proposals to build a new Homelink Day Respite Centre on land donated by St Augustine' Church.
- The Shot Tower is under the Management of the London Wildlife Trust.
- There is already a Whitton Town Centre website which has a wide range of information about what is happening in Whitton [here](#). The Council's Community Links Officers also use a wide range of social media to provide information about Whitton including Whitton Ning, Facebook and Twitter.

Sports Facilities

What you said:

- Heathfield Recreation Ground needs a proper pavilion with public toilets and changing facilities.
- You would like a public swimming pool in Whitton or close by.
- There is no local gym for residents to use.

What we have done/ will do:

- The facilities at Heathfield Recreation Ground are currently available for hire. There are no plans to re-build them.
- Capital funds for a new swimming pool are not available.
- Whitton Sports and Fitness Centre is based at Twickenham Academy. The facilities are being redeveloped to include a new Sports Hall and Fitness

Suite which will reopen in spring 2014. The current course and session programme transfers to [Orleans Park Sports Centre](#) for the duration of this refurbishment. For further information see here the [Whitton Sports and Fitness Centre refurbishment](#) page.

- We have provided a gym at Whitton Youth Space for young people.

Children and Young People

What you said:

- You would like to see Powder Mill Lane Children's Centre transformed into a community hub
- You would like to see more children's play areas in Whitton and Heathfield

What we have done/ will do:

- The Council sought comments on a proposal to create a children's play space in a currently unused space in Cypress Avenue off Whitton High Street during September 2013. The play area is currently being installed and will be open by early March.
- The project to improve the Whitton area has included the provision of a brand new Youth Centre called Whitton Youth Zone. You can see more information [here](#).

Traffic congestion

What you said:

- We should consider speed controls (including Nelson Road and Railway bridge / entrance to Whitton High Street) and whether a safety island should be installed on Hanworth Road.
- There is a queuing issue for traffic turning right in Powder Mill Lane at the junction of Hospital Bridge Road / Percy Road / Powder Mill Lane –
- The High Street is now too narrow and causes congestion.
- The road surfaces are finished to a very high standard.
- A 20mph speed limit should be implemented.
- Air quality is an issue in the High Street.

What we have done/ will do:

- We will undertake an investigation of the safety issues at the zebra crossing in Nelson Road and carry out speed checks to establish whether this is a perception or a real issue.
- The intention is to go out to consultation in March 2014 on the possibility of the 20pmh zones which will include Whitton. The Council will liaise with the Police on speed enforcement including working alongside them to assist with operations when needed.
- The improvements to the High street are currently in their final stages and have been designed to allow free passage of existing traffic and to reduce speed.
- Schemes funded from the Council's Local Implementation Plan (LIP) are aimed at tackling air quality issues in the Borough, often where emissions are affecting the quality of the environment of high streets. The LIP for 2014/15 includes Whitton based schemes.
- All the traffic signals across London are controlled by TfL. We can lobby them on signals in our Borough including the ones raised here.

Public Transport

What you said:

- Whitton station is in need of improvement including:
 - Toilets installed
 - Drop off parking needs addressing.
- Improve transport links between Whitton and Heathfield (notably 110 bus) particularly from Powder Mill Lane area towards High Street. Lack of a direct connection is an issue especially for the elderly.
- We should review the bus stop location on the High Street to avoid traffic coming to a standstill. A layby for buses to stop would ease congestion.
- The 110 bus should go through the High Street.
- You would like to see extended hours for the 481 bus and more buses generally, especially for match days.
- You would like rerouting of the bus in Heathfield.

What we have done/ will do:

- There is a proposed Network Rail scheme to improve Whitton station. The Council is in negotiations with Network Rail with a view to implementing this in summer 2014.
- The Council will liaise with bus providers and Transport for London on the issues raised in Whitton and Heathfield.

Planning and Development

What you said:

- There should be tougher regulations of back garden/garage dwellings and drop curb violations.
- There was concern over the number of houses which are being converted to provide for multiple occupation rather than for use by a single family.
- There was also concern over the number of betting shops opening in Whitton High Street.

What we have done/ will do:

- The Council will investigate when regulations are not followed and take appropriate [planning enforcement](#) action.
- Although in most instances establishment of houses in multiple occupation and betting shops do not require planning permission, the Council will keep the matter under review.

Cycling

What you said:

- You would like better signage on local cycle routes - including Bridge Way.
- We should improve the accessibility of Duke of Northumberland river paths – they are currently too narrow and not suitable for cyclists. Has strong potential as a green route.
- The High Street is not suitable for cyclists and we should consider improvements or an alternate through route.
- You would like more cycle infrastructure to make it easy to cycle, for instance cycle parking.

- There is an opportunity to connect the three schools with the High Street by better use of cycle lanes.
- Clearer sign posting of alternate cycle routes would encourage cycling and make Whitton and Heathfield seem less cut off from the rest of the borough.

What we have done/ will do:

- We have made a bid for capital funding from Transport for London to improve cycle facilities, including cycle routes, storage and parking. We have now received a partial response to this application and will be allocating funding soon. We are currently looking at cycle parking at RHP and South West Trains properties and will know more about available funding in early March 2014.

What we are going to do:

- Provide more and better cycle direction signing and parking at key places around the Borough, including new secure cycle parking facilities at Whitton Station and cycle direction signs as part of the Whitton Uplift scheme.
- There is a proposed Network Rail scheme to improve Whitton station. The Council is in negotiations with Network Rail with a view to implementing this in the summer 2014.

Parking

What you said:

- It can be difficult to park in the High Street and the availability of more flexible parking and improvements to the car park behind the High Street would help.
- Store deliveries to Tesco and parking by parents dropping off and picking up children from school causes congestion at peak times.
- Residential parking can be difficult.

What we have done/ will do:

- We will keep parking restrictions under review
- We will work with the police to ensure that illegal parking is dealt with


- We will include the Nelson Road car park in the Council's work programme for investigation for possible future improvement.
- We will work with local schools to ensure that their travel planning is robust.

Maintenance of roads and pavements

What you said:

- The following pavements are in need of repair:
 - Woodland Estate
 - Bryanstone Avenue
 - Percy Road (pavements / parking arrangement)
 - Milner Road
- Some pavements are broken and poor quality.
- The new pavement in Whitton High Street is too wide, making the road too narrow for buses and lorries to pass easily.
- Some roads are in need of repair.
- The recent improvements to the High Street are excellent.
- The road behind the Library could be pedestrianized.
- The bridge over Rodney Road should be improved.
- The shops at Whitton Station require ramped access following improvements to the rest of the High Street.
- That we should consider pedestrianizing Whitton High Street
- There are instances of people removing their front garden walls without a drop kerb, then driving across the pavement, causing damage.

What we have done/ will do:

- All roads are inspected on a regular basis and any defect that meets our criteria is repaired on a priority basis. You can find out more about [road and pathway maintenance](#), and how to report a fault.
- An [annual programme of work](#)  (pdf, 12KB) planned for footways and roads is available. The Community Roads and Pavements Scheme will be continued this year. The budget will be increased from £35,000 to £50,000.

- We will investigate the need for ramped access to the shops at Whitton Station. As Whitton High Street is an important bus route, there are no plans to pedestrianise it.
- Crossing a footway without an authorised dropped kerb is illegal and can result in fines and payment for any damage caused. You can report breaches of planning control [here](#). Your details will not be disclosed to any other party.

Recycling and streetscene

What you said:

- Some street trees have been removed and not replaced (e.g. when lowering kerbs), whilst others are too big and are damaging pavements.
- There are too many skips and too much litter as a result of development.
- Dog mess can still be an issue and the pigeon droppings in the High Street are unsightly.
- There is some fly posting which needs to be addressed.
- Benches in the High Street would be welcome.

What we have done/ will do:

- Council Policy is not to remove trees unless they are dead, dying or dangerous, unless they are part of an improvement scheme that has wider benefits. Any trees removed are replaced, and if not possible in the same location then another suitable location is found.
- Planning officers address the removal of trees when giving planning consent. Any lowered kerbs need permission from the Council and trees are considered as part of this process.
- Issues with the misuse of skips can be reported to [Planning enforcement](#).
- Existing seating in the High Street has been upgraded.

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

What you said:

- The rear access to the shops in Whitton High Street is unlit and can encourage unlawful activity.
- You would like to see more alley gating to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

- There are some issues of anti-social behaviour.
- There were comments put forward by the Over 55s about ASB on Hounslow Heath

What we have done/ will do:

- New lighting has recently been installed along the High Street. However, the Council has an on-going programme of upgrades called “Brighter and Safer Streets” and we will investigate whether the rear access is eligible for this.
- We will work with the police to provide crime prevention advice to shop keepers.
- We would need to identify possible sites for alley gating by working with the police on the impact it would have in particular locations to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Anti-social behaviour is generally low. However, it is important to report it when it occurs and you can do this [here](#).