

NEWS: Ham close improvements get one step closer

Four options for consulting residents on improvements to the Ham Close residential estate are outlined in a report for approval at next week's Cabinet

As part of its Uplift Programme, Richmond Council, in partnership with RHP, commissioned the Prince's Foundation, to work with local residents and stakeholders to hear their views on what improvements they would like to see. They wanted to consider a potential vision for Ham Close.

Following a consultation, the Prince's Foundation produced a full report of their findings including a series of recommendations. One of the recommendations was that residents should be given the opportunity to have their say on possible options for the future. These options include: total redevelopment of the whole estate, partial redevelopment and remodelling of existing buildings, remodelling of all existing buildings and a refurbishment only. In addition, the report highlights five key principles on which any future vision of Ham should be based.

1. **Remaining in the Community:** Any resident of Ham Close wishing to remain in the community, should be able to do so.
2. **Retain and enhance green space:** Green space is a key asset to the area, and improvements should be made to enhance its setting and character, and to reduce the perception of anti-social behaviour.
3. **Create a heart to Ham Close and Ham, retain and support a village feel:** Community Members value the village setting of Ham Close, but many feel it lacks a centre or 'heart'. Redevelopment could provide a centre for Ham Close and Ham, as well as help retain and improve its village feel.
4. **Better integrate Ham Close:** The buildings in Ham Close are seen as disconnected from Ham's village setting. An improved layout could better integrate the estate into the wider community.

5. **Improve community facilities:** Community facilities could be improved, for instance by co-locating the youth centre, clinic and library.

Following approval of this report by both the RHP Board and Richmond Council's Cabinet, it is hoped to commission consultants to carry out the design work by June. It is proposed to have full public consultation on the possible options in July / August 2015.

Geoff Fox, Director of Development for RHP, said:

"This is an exciting opportunity to improve Ham Close and will benefit RHP customers positively. Any proposal will either result in significant improvements to the existing housing or the provision of brand new high quality homes."

Cllr Pamela Fleming, Richmond Council Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, said:

"Ham Close is an integral part of the local area and home to over 190 households. We know from our previous consultations, such as the All in One, that residents on the estate and in the nearby area want to see improvements."

"It is imperative that residents are invited to have their say on the scale of the redevelopment and establishing a Community Forum will ensure the community is actively involved at all stages of the process. We now have a timetable for the option appraisal work, with a consultation in the summer and a decision in November."