

WHAT

IS



PLANNING?

WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

Anyone who wants to learn more about planning and the built environment should read this to learn about how we produce planning policy and why.

Designed by Maddison Graphic for Richmond Council's Spatial Planning and Design Team in 2024.

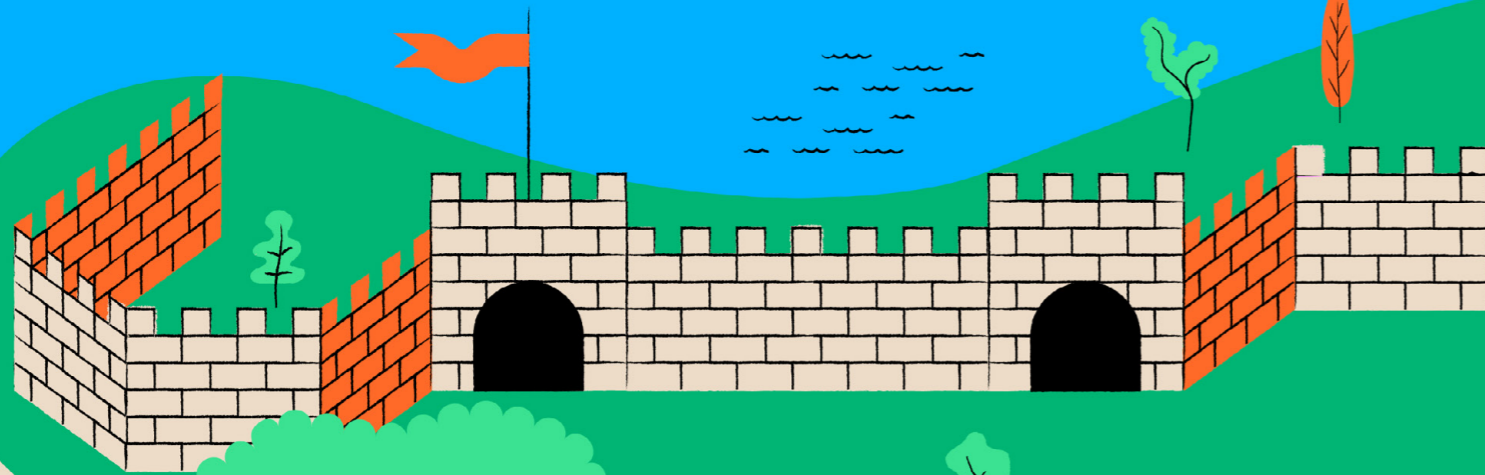


WHAT'S IN THE BOOKLET?

- | | | | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|-------------------------------------|
| 2 | <i>WHAT IS PLANNING?</i> | 20 | <i>WHAT IS PLANNING POLICY?</i> | 34 | <i>WHAT CAN YOU DO?</i> |
| 6 | <i>WHY DO WE NEED PLANNING?</i> | 22 | <i>HOW DOES POLICY WORK?</i> | 36 | <i>WHY EARLY ENGAGEMENT IS KEY!</i> |
| 10 | <i>PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE</i> | 24 | <i>OUR PRIORITIES</i> | 38 | <i>GET INVOLVED!</i> |
| 12 | <i>HOW DOES DESIGN SHAPE PLACES?</i> | 26 | <i>WHO IS INVOLVED?</i> | | |
| 14 | <i>DENSITY AND HEIGHT</i> | 28 | <i>WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE POLICY?</i> | | |
| 16 | <i>SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY</i> | 30 | <i>WEIGHING THE OPTIONS</i> | | |
| 18 | <i>PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE</i> | 32 | <i>WHAT POLICY CAN AND CAN'T DO</i> | | |

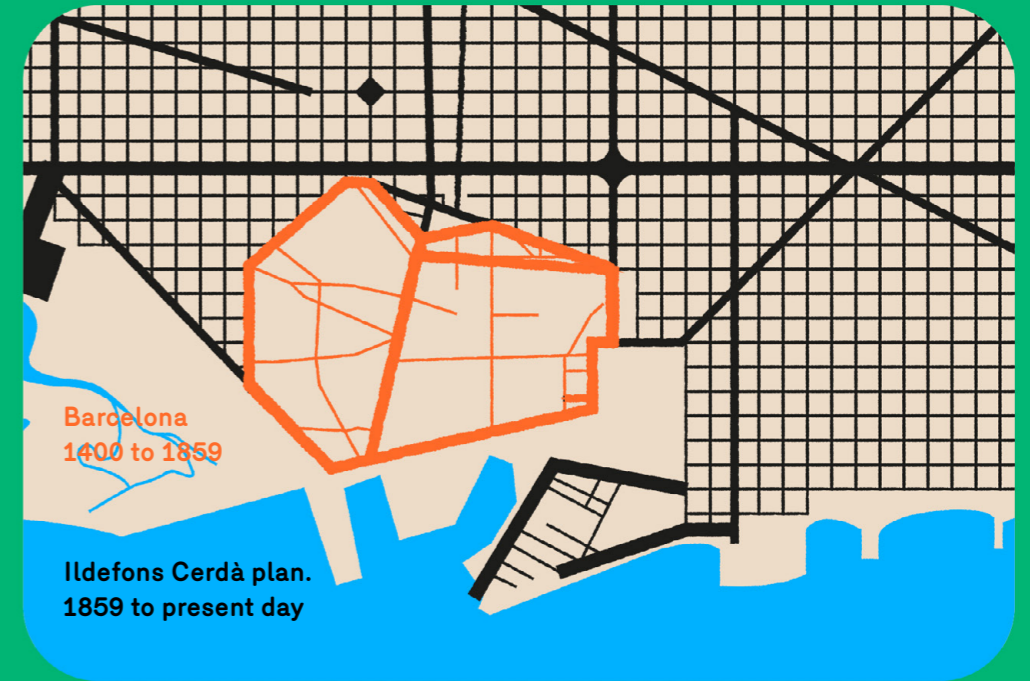
WHAT IS PLANNING?

People have been organising and managing the places we live in since early human history.



Geographical features like water or mountains have an obvious impact on the layout (sometimes known as a plan) of a place, as does the need for defences like city walls.

Sometimes places grow organically over centuries and are reshaped by growing populations or natural disasters.



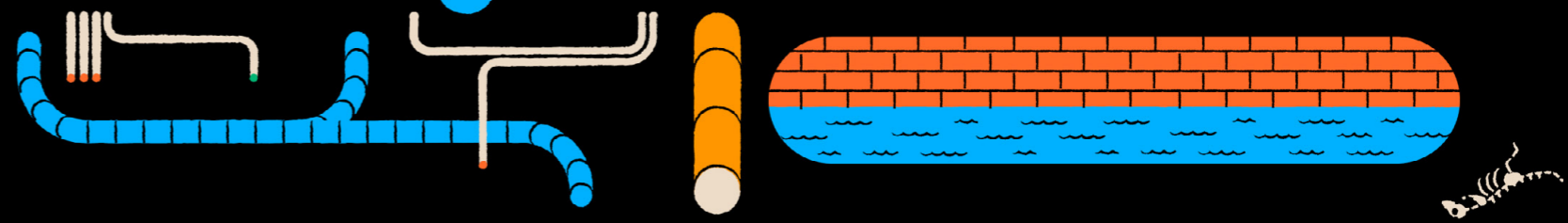
Some urban areas are designed to a logical order or grid system influenced by cultural, religious, political

or practical ideas. Usually, historic cities contain a mix of both.

Think about your city or local area. How many things flow in and out? How would you manage them all?



In denser urban areas, the need for sanitation, infrastructure and the efficient transport of goods, services and people can become a complex jigsaw puzzle.



WHY DO WE NEED PLANNING?

The places where we live, work and play are always changing.

In very simple terms, the job of a planner is to decide:

1. What we need and why
2. How much of it we need
3. Where it should go

Planners need to make sure that the land available for development is used strategically and for everyone's best interests.



Planning policy documents, set out this vision and help to guide the process of change.

The goal of planning is to make sure development is fair and meets the needs of many communities, who might all have different priorities and opinions.



"There should be more things for young people to do."

"I love this area because of the parks and open space. We need to protect wildlife and biodiversity"



"It would be great to have more local, affordable workspace to support my growing business."



"My house is not well insulated - I want to make improvements to my home to lower the energy bills."



"We should be retrofitting existing buildings rather than demolishing old ones - we are in a climate emergency!"

"I'm getting older and thinking about the future. I don't want to move house or have to rely on a car to access the services I need."



"I want to be able to afford to rent a home near to where I work that is secure - I've had to move around a lot"



COMMUNITY HUB



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Part of the job for planners and designers is to think about what we might need in 10, 20, or 50 years' time.

and technological trends and extreme weather caused by climate change.

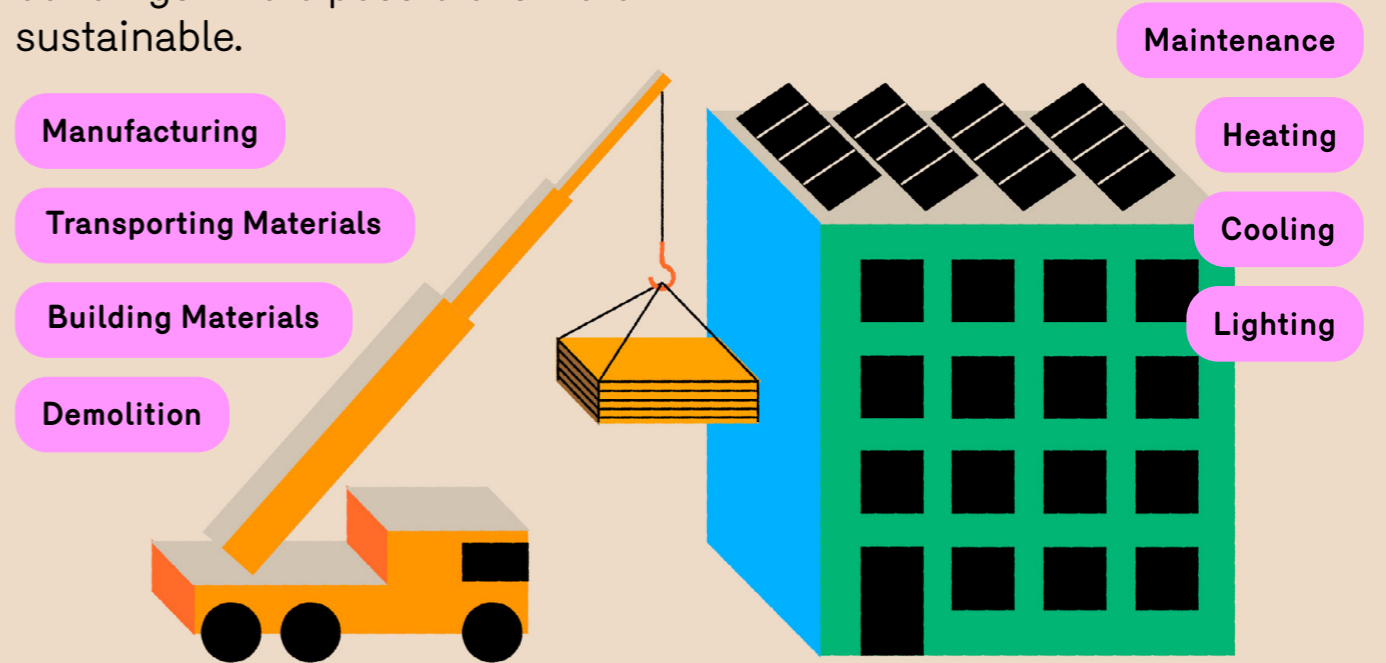
This means adapting for changing populations, social

New developments should include the things we need to live more sustainably, like safe cycle infrastructure, walking routes and access to public transport.



The construction industry is responsible for high levels of carbon emissions, known as **embodied carbon**. Reusing buildings where possible is more sustainable.

Energy efficiency improvements reduce the **operational carbon** needed to keep buildings running.



HOW DOES DESIGN SHAPE PLACES?

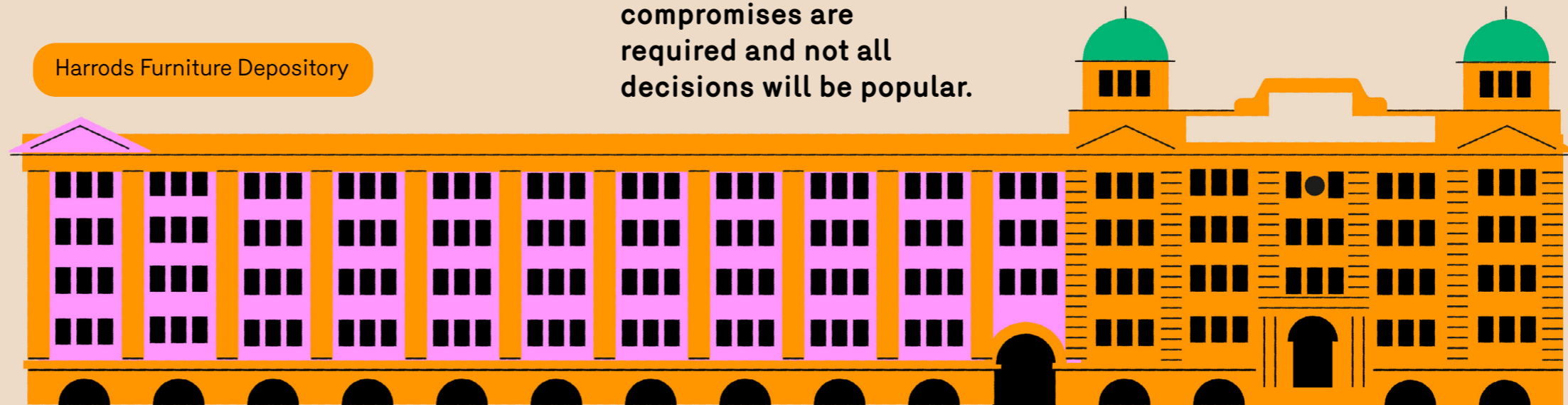
There are many qualities of buildings and public places that shape our experience.

Location and layout; light and shade; noise; design of private, shared and public spaces; use of materials; access to nature; and maintenance are some examples.

Designing quality places that are inclusive and enjoyable for

people takes time and should be a collaborative process.

Harrods Furniture Depository



Involving users of places is important and leads to better outcomes, but compromises are required and not all decisions will be popular.

Design trends, technology and construction methods evolve over time. So do the way we use our buildings. Planners and designers don't always get it right and sometimes changes are needed in the future.



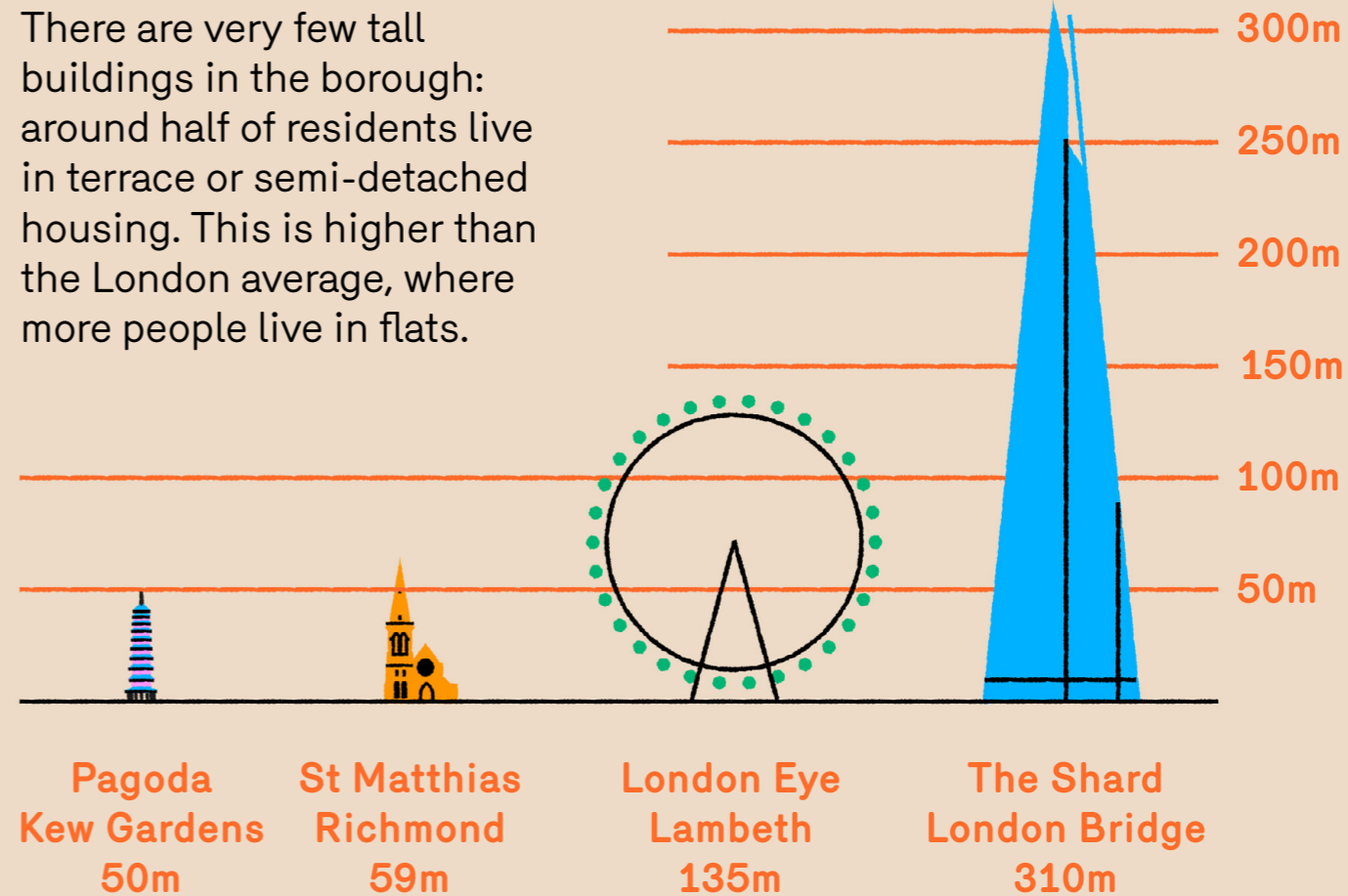
DENSITY AND HEIGHT

Richmond upon Thames has high demand for affordable housing and limited land supply.

One solution is to make the most of smaller plots of land and build higher than a typical terrace house. This approach is called gentle or medium density and means more people can live in the same area than in a lower density place.

Taller buildings are usually best located in town or local centres, which have better access to transport and public services.

There are very few tall buildings in the borough: around half of residents live in terrace or semi-detached housing. This is higher than the London average, where more people live in flats.



SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY

A biodiverse place contains many different types of natural habitats and plants that provide a home for animals, insects and plants.

Blue spaces = rivers and water

For an urban area, Richmond upon Thames has a high proportion of protected habitats for UK priority species like bats, stag beetles, song thrushes and water voles.

It is important that new developments do not harm biodiversity but enhance it by creating new habitats or planting schemes.

Richmond is the only London borough that spans both sides of the River Thames.

About 1/3 of the borough is covered by protected open space and parkland.

Barnes Common is home to one of the most important populations of the rare Native Black Poplar tree in the UK.



PROTECTING OUR HERITAGE

Planners are also responsible for protecting and enhancing our history, heritage and culture.

About 56% of the borough is in a conservation area. Additional planning permission is needed to make alterations to buildings.

This is to preserve the special historic character of the area.

Protecting heritage is about managing change. Historic buildings can have a second life and be enhanced by modern design.

Hampton Court Palace



There are 836 protected (or listed) buildings, world heritage sites and parks and gardens in Richmond upon Thames.

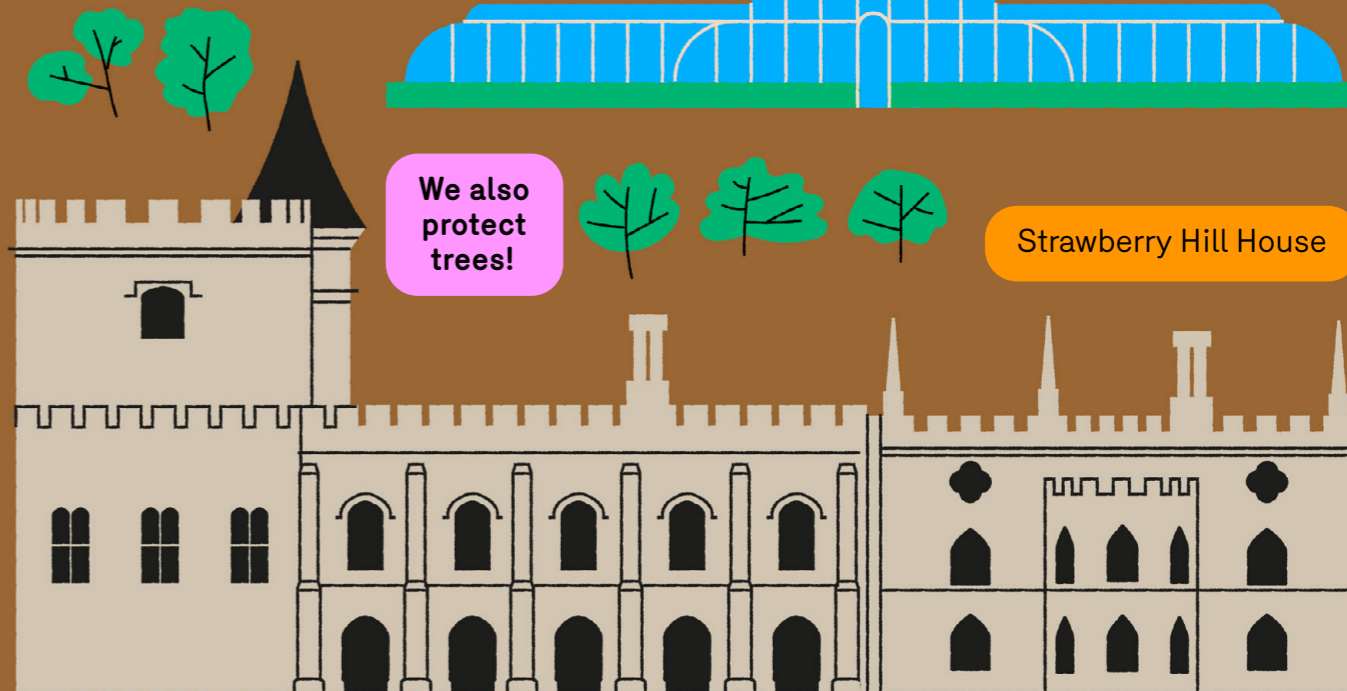
The Royal Botanic Gardens Kew is a World Heritage Site



We also protect trees!



Strawberry Hill House



WHAT IS PLANNING POLICY?

Policies are used to guide new development and to help decision-makers decide whether a planning application should be approved.

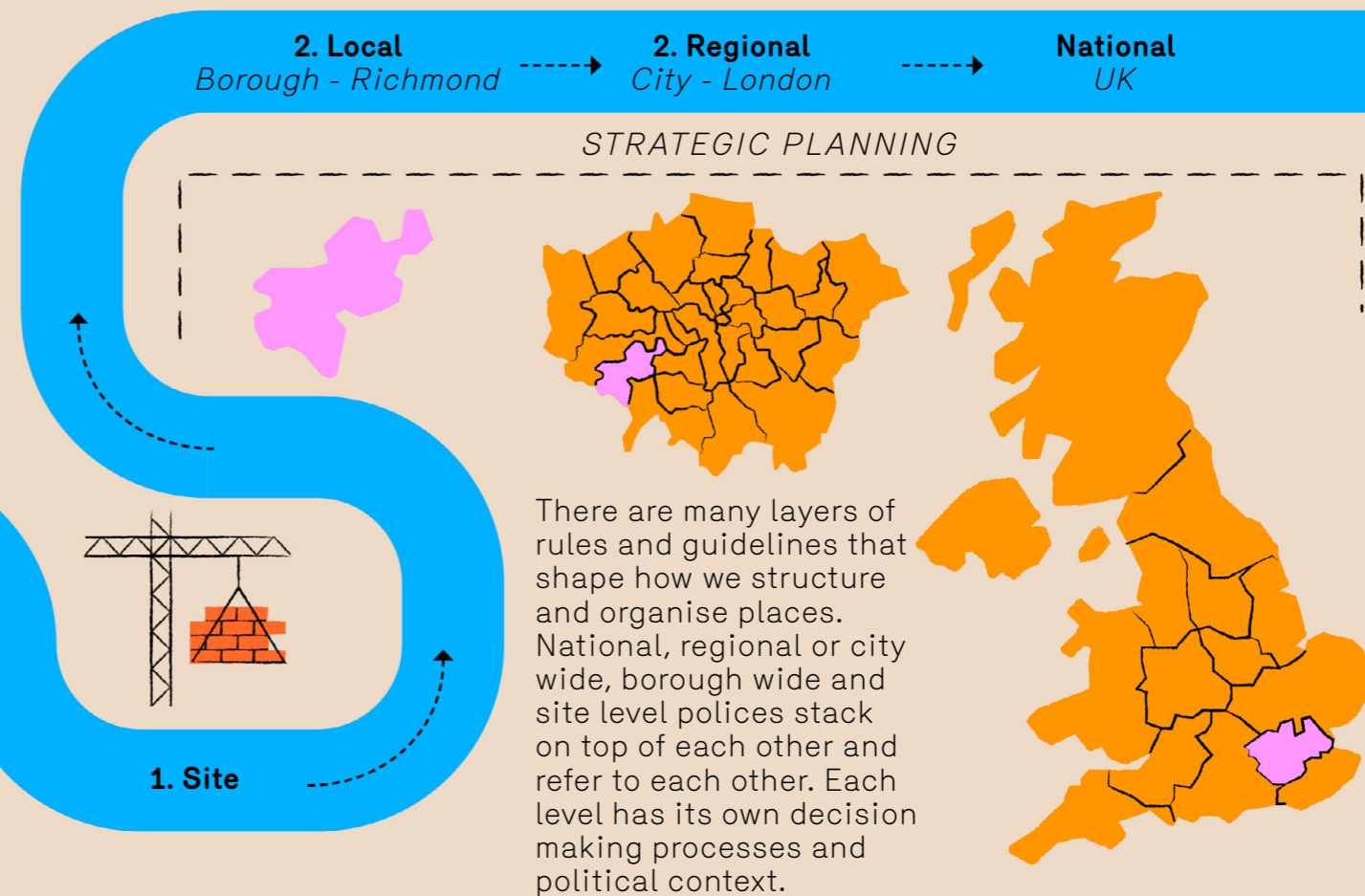
The council is responsible for producing planning policy. This is a collaborative process, and many people are involved.



HOW DOES POLICY WORK?

In the UK, planning must be evidence-led, so lots of research and data is gathered and commissioned by the council to support our policies.

Councils have a legal responsibility to consult local people, neighbouring councils, and local and national organisations. Once a policy has been approved (or adopted), it is used to decide the outcome of planning applications.



There are many layers of rules and guidelines that shape how we structure and organise places. National, regional or city wide, borough wide and site level policies stack on top of each other and refer to each other. Each level has its own decision making processes and political context.

OUR PRIORITIES

1. Making Richmond green

Taking action on the climate emergency and enhancing our natural environment to protect against flooding.



Based on feedback from local people, these are the overarching themes for our Local Plan policies:



2. Making Richmond safe

Be the safest London borough by confronting crime and anti-social behaviour.

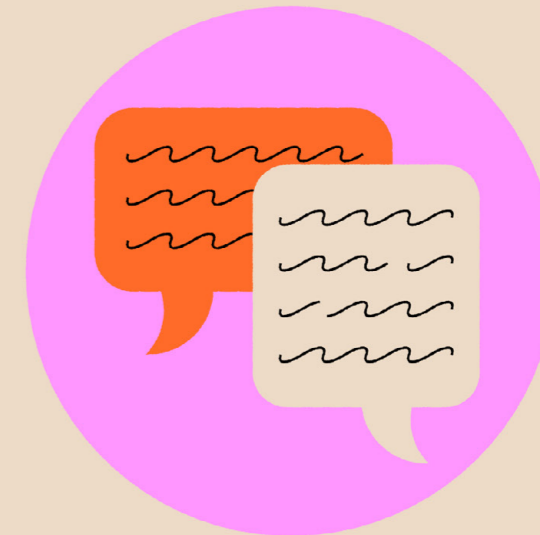


3. Making Richmond fair

A fairer, more accessible and more inclusive Richmond that helps people get a great start in life and looks after those who need our help.

4. How we work

Making it easier to communicate with the council and have your say.



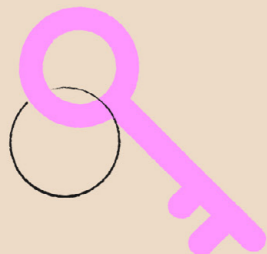
WHO IS INVOLVED?

A diverse range of individuals, community groups, service providers and local or national organisations are part of the plan making process.

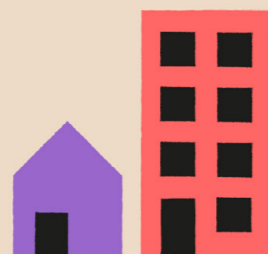
They are often referred to as stakeholders, or people with a shared interest in a place or project. Stakeholders have different levels of input and decision-making power. It's important to remember that there are challenges and planning is not a perfect system.

Applicants: This group is proposing to change the built environment, usually by submitting a planning application.

Landowners: land can be owned publicly, privately or by companies. Sites can also be sold to developers.



Developers & investors: funded by investors, developers are responsible for delivery of the final design on a site



Designers & consultants: many people are often part of the applicant's design team – including architects, designers, engineers and other specialists.



Decision makers: This group creates the policies and requirements that applicants have to comply with and responds to their proposals.

Richmond Council: each area will have unique circumstances, need and priorities. This may compete with local interests.



Planners: planners work for the Council to produce policy and respond to applications by approving, suggesting changes, or rejecting them if they do not meet our requirements.



Specialist organisations: planners have a duty to engage with neighbouring boroughs, organisations like Transport for London, utility providers and local societies or interest groups.



Politicians: local councillors are elected by the public. They help shape priorities for the Council and make planning decisions through the committee process.

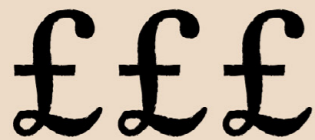


Local people: the people that live, work, play or visit an area are a vital part of the process. They are invited to give feedback on draft policies or sometimes work more collaboratively.



WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE POLICY?

Here is a selection – there are many other considerations.



Land value



Health and wellbeing



Political priorities



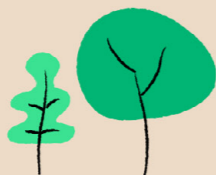
Works and industry



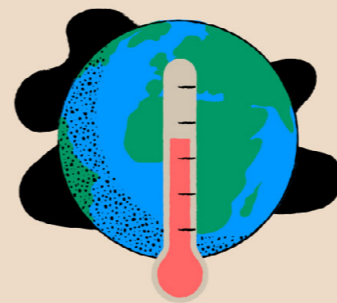
Durability and long term thinking



Housing demand and local need



Green and open spaces



Climate emergency



Education



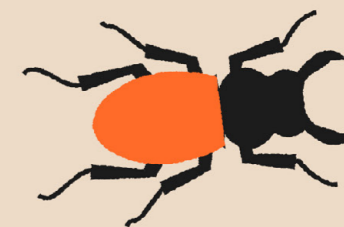
Spaces for the community



Heritage & design



Travel and connection



Protecting and enhancing biodiversity

Community demographics



Flooding risk

WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

Not every new development that is proposed will meet every policy requirement.

Decision-making is a balancing act that depends on the unique conditions and context for each site.

Schemes that provide public benefits or address local need may be approved, even if they do not comply with every requirement. These things are considered when a planning application is submitted to the council.

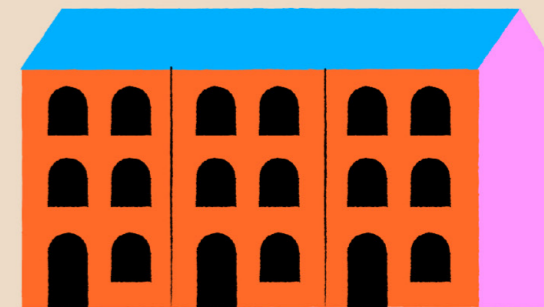


Not every decision will personally benefit everyone - compromise is required.

People who own homes or live in secure housing may feel differently about a taller building than someone who can't afford to live in the place they grew up in.

Tactile paving in the street is needed by many people (including those with visual impairments) but it's not always great for wheelchair users.

Poor air quality can be improved by reducing car use and creating car free public spaces, but some people rely on cars for convenience or are less able to take public transport



WHAT POLICY CAN AND CAN'T DO

Influence how we travel

Think long term to anticipate our future needs

Make sure we have enough of what we need locally

THE LOCAL PLAN DOES

Balance the needs of all groups in society

Ensure developments are located in the most appropriate places

Shape how places look & feel

Operate specific shops, services or community facilities

Control the frequency of waste & recycling collection

Directly control where people park or drive

THE LOCAL PLAN DOES NOT

Cap property prices or lower rents

Control high street shops

Directly provide jobs

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

We all have different values and priorities, which is why it is important to hear from many people when policies are being written that shape the future of our area.

Local Plans and other kinds of policy or guidance do not solve everything, but they do shape our vision for the borough.

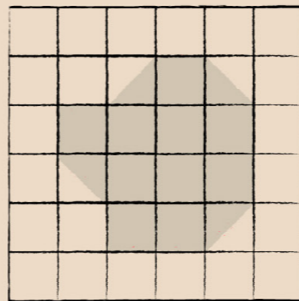
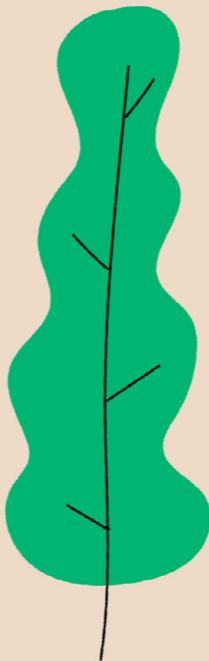
The decisions we make now will be used to decide the outcome of planning applications long into the future, so getting involved at an early stage is very important.

WHY EARLY ENGAGEMENT IS KEY!

Many people notice the role of planning when there's an issue or change is proposed in their area.

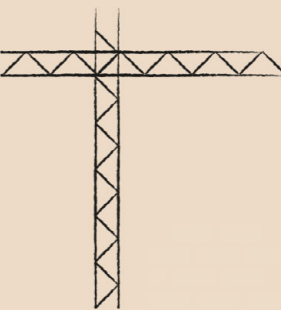
Being involved in the development of planning policy is an early opportunity to shape places by 'writing the rules of development'.

By that stage in the process, lots of decisions have already been made and there is more limited opportunity to change things. That's why it's so important to be involved in shaping policy from the beginning by taking part in consultations like the Local Plan.



The Local Plan highlights a large site on a retail park that is suitable for development.

A scheme is shaped by design, consultation & discussion with planning officers. An application is submitted by the landowner.



Retail tenants vacate the site and construction work begins.

New residents move in to the completed scheme.



Now

+/- 5 years

+/- 8 years

+/- 10 years

GET INVOLVED!

We want to create planning policies that reflect you. Not everyone uses shared space in the same way. That's why we need feedback from a diverse group of people.

Spread the word - tell friends, family and neighbours to get involved too

Speak to your local councillor

Follow the council on social media: Instagram, Twitter/X, Facebook

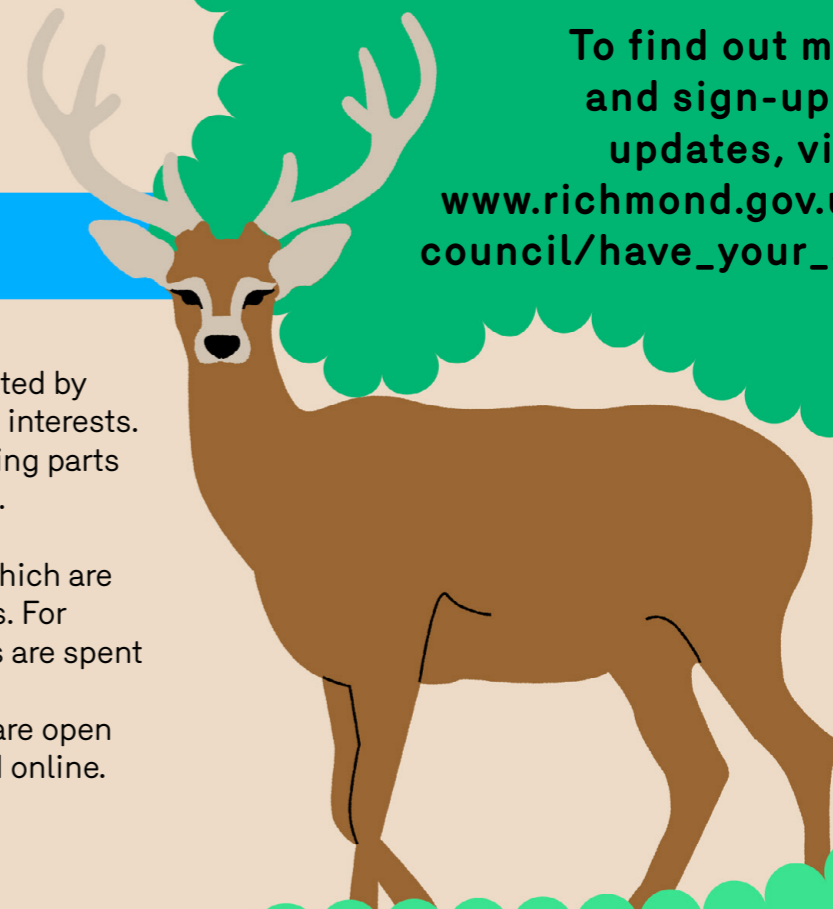
Search upcoming planning applications: www.richmond.gov.uk/services/planning

Transparency and decision-making

Local councillors are people elected by the community to represent their interests. There are 54 in Richmond, covering parts of the borough known as wards.

Councillors sit on committees, which are meetings used to make decisions. For example on how Council budgets are spent and whether to grant or refuse planning permission. Meetings are open to the public and can be watched online.

To find out more and sign-up for updates, visit: www.richmond.gov.uk/council/have_your_say



NOTES

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

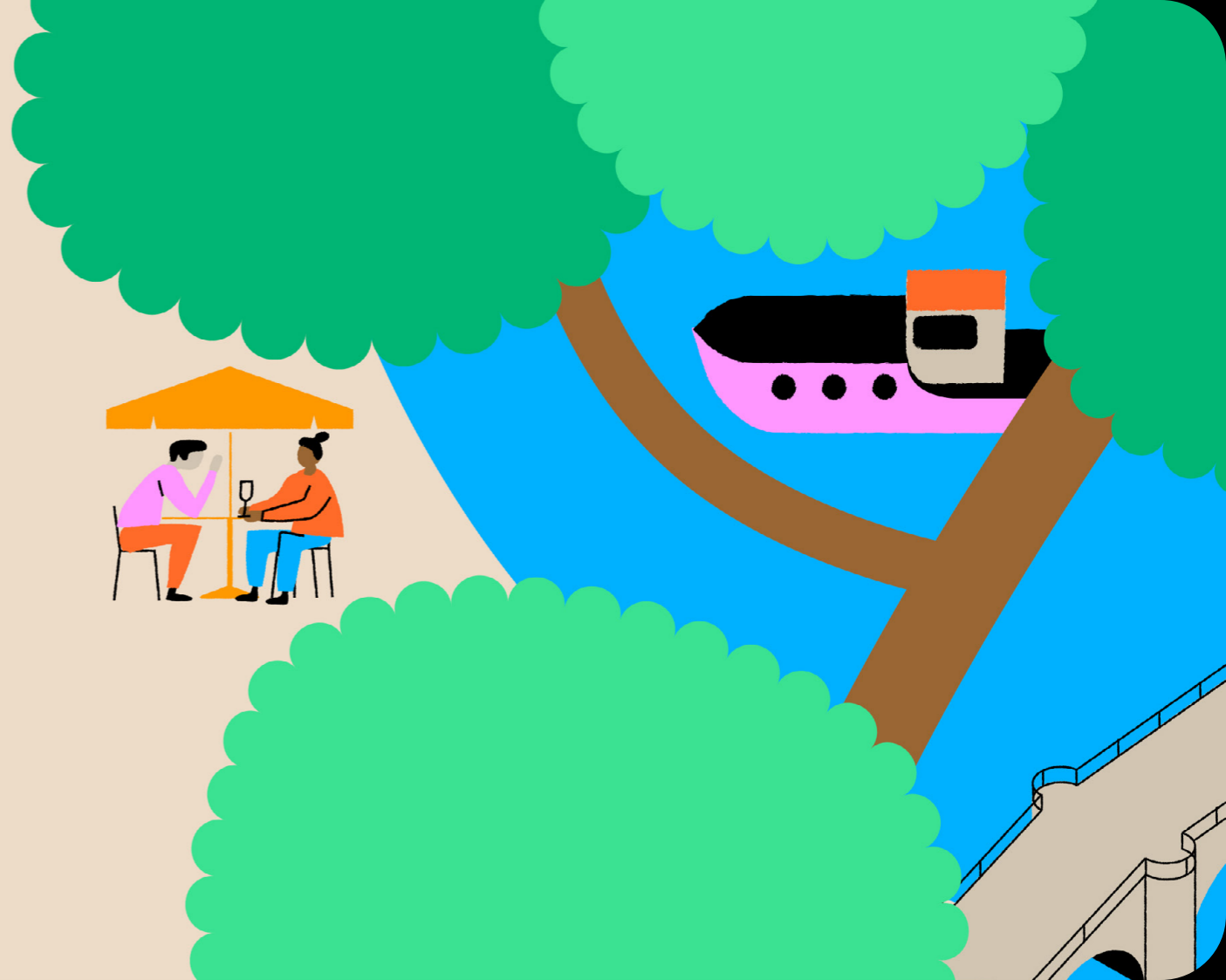
.....

.....

.....

.....

.....





LONDON BOROUGH OF
RICHMOND UPON THAMES



WHAT

IS

PLANNING?

