Chertsey Riverside Local Street Improvements

Early Engagement Report – June 2024



Table of Contents

1. Executive summary 2
2. Introduction 4
3. Engagement methodology 4
3.1 LSIs: The three stages of engagement 4
3.2 Early engagement methodology 5
4. Who responded? 8
4.1 Survey responses 8
5. General issues and suggested improvements raised by respondents 10
5.1 General feelings towards the area 10
5.2 Most commonly raised issues 11
5.3 How could we make it better 12
6. Issues raised by area 12
6.1 Roakes Avenue and Wheatash Road 13
6.2 Chertsey Road and underpass 13
6.3 Other comments across the zone 14
7. Outside of the scope of the scheme 14
8. Summary and next steps 16

1. Executive summary

This report describes the engagement process and provides the analysis of responses received during the first stage of engagement (early engagement) for the Chertsey Riverside Local Street Improvements (LSI) scheme.

This scheme aims to plan, design and deliver safer, healthier and more attractive local streets that encourage more walking, wheeling and riding. LSI schemes also aim to create more attractive local environments and more welcoming neighbourhoods that people want to spend time in, and residents take pride in. This scheme is part of the wider LSI programme being progressed by Surrey County Council. The LSI programme is committed to a community focused approach towards design development, with three opportunities for stakeholders to influence the design process and be involved in shaping the final designs that will include local street interventions to encourage more walking, wheeling and riding.

This first stage of engagement set out to gather comments from local stakeholders about local transport issues in the area and to gather suggestions for improvements. Early engagement with local stakeholders was carried out between 26 February and 5 April 2024. 104 individuals and organisations responded via the Commonplace online survey and a further 3 responded via email or letter. All responses have been considered.

Responses to the engagement exercise have provided the project team with a list of comments for different locations across the Chertsey Riverside zone. These will be considered by the project team during the first stage of design work (feasibility design), subject to funding.

Many comments received covered similar transport issues including high traffic speeds, lack of greening, and issues associated with parking. Within the report, issues and comments that have been commonly raised have also been summarised across different areas across the zone (see section 6).



Figure 1. Poster displayed across the Chertsey Riverside area to raise awareness and invite local stakeholders to participate in the early engagement exercise.

2. Introduction

Local Street Improvements (LSI) are important to help deliver on the objectives of Surrey's current Local Transport Plan, particularly the active travel, personal mobility and planning for place policy areas, as well as contributing to reducing carbon emissions and the associated negative impacts. LSI schemes aim to make streets in communities safer, healthier and more attractive, with appropriate vehicle speed limits and improved facilities for walking, wheeling and riding.

As part of the first tranche of LSI schemes from the LSI programme, a zone has been identified in the Chertsey Riverside area, as shown in Figure 2 below.

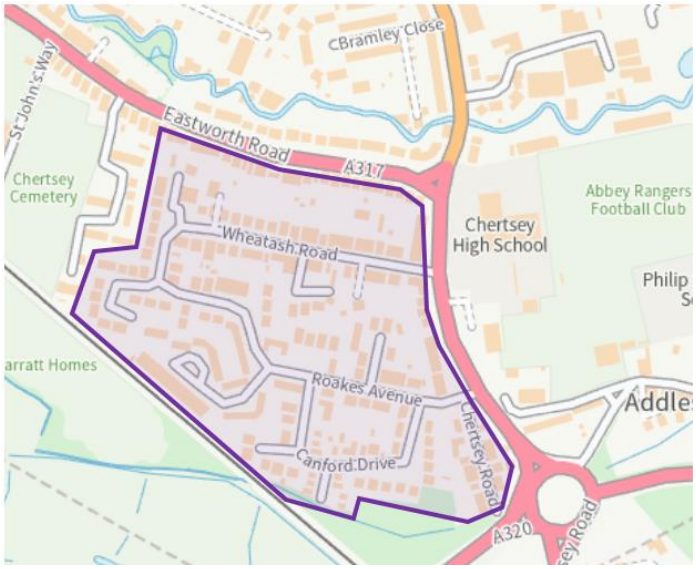


Figure 2. Map of Chertsey Riverside LSI zone.

A first round of engagement has been undertaken for the Chertsey Riverside LSI, using the Commonplace online platform to collect views from local stakeholders, including people who live, work, travel through, and spend time in the Chertsey Riverside area. This engagement was important to gather views on local transport issues in the area and to gather suggestions for potential improvements. The findings of this engagement stage will be used to inform the development of our initial design proposals (feasibility design proposals), subject to funding. Further rounds of engagement will also be undertaken as the scheme develops, so there will be further opportunities for local stakeholders to provide their views.

3. Engagement methodology

3.1 LSIs: The three stages of engagement

The LSI programme is committed to a community focused approach towards design development, with multiple opportunities for stakeholders to influence the design process and be involved in

shaping the final designs that will include local street interventions to encourage more walking, wheeling and riding. The potential three stages of engagement are:

1. Early engagement: building awareness and collecting views and information from local stakeholders to influence the development of feasibility designs.
2. Engagement stage 2: seeking views on the feasibility designs leading to a design review and informing the development of preliminary designs.
3. Formal public consultation: at this stage the preliminary designs are consulted on formally. Stakeholders should be fully informed of the design proposals and a realistic expectation for the project will have been set. Following public consultation, detailed construction ready designs will be refined taking into account of the feedback, costs and priorities.

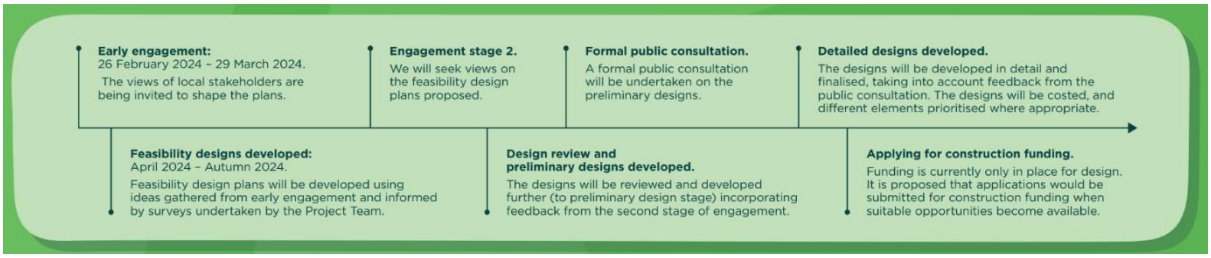


Figure 3. Provisional Chertsey Riverside LSI project timeline as shown on the display boards used at the early engagement events.

3.2 Early engagement methodology

A stakeholder engagement plan has been developed for the Chertsey Riverside LSI scheme identifying local stakeholders which include schools, businesses, emergency services, other local organisations and interest groups, as well as local residents and the wider public more generally.

Prior to carrying out early engagement publicly to cover all external stakeholders, a series of meetings and briefings were held to engage with:

- SCC officers across the Highways Directorate;
- SCC Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth;
- SCC Divisional Member for Chertsey;
- Officers at Runnymede Borough Council (RBC); and
- RBC Chertsey Riverside ward Members.

Following the engagement activities with those listed above, the project team commenced activities to reach out to and engage with the public and all external stakeholders. Early public engagement was carried out between 26 February and 5 April 2024. A website utilising the Commonplace platform was used to collect views from people who live, work, travel through and spend time in Chertsey Riverside.

The Commonplace website included a map of the potential zone boundary, background on the LSI programme in Surrey, information on the potential types of interventions being considered to improve local streets through the programme, the scheme's provisional timeline, and a survey which enabled respondents to pin a location on an interactive map and answer survey questions. The survey was active for five weeks until 5 April 2024 and received 104 responses. A further 3 responses were received via email or letter.

Two in-person exhibition events were held as part of the early engagement. Both were held at Chertsey Hall with the first on Thursday 7 March between 14.00 and 19.00 and the second on Saturday 9 March between 10.00 and 13.00. This venue is located in Chertsey town centre which is a 20-minute walk from the zone but was chosen as the most suitable location to carry out the engagement. Display boards were on show for attendees to view and consider (see Figure 4 below) and three Surrey County Council (SCC) members of staff were present to discuss the scheme objectives and to help gather feedback from attendees using the Commonplace survey. The Commonplace survey was used to capture the feedback from events to ensure all engagement responses were recorded via this same platform as far as practical. Staff members were available to run through and help attendees fill out the Commonplace survey. The divisional member for Chertsey and ward members also attended the engagement event to discuss the scheme and other issues in the area with attendees.



Figure 4. Display boards set up at one of the engagement events prior to attendees arriving.

To advertise the engagement, letters were sent to all residents and businesses in the proposed zone (608 letters delivered in total). Posters were also displayed at various points in the zone. Notification of the engagement was sent via email to stakeholders identified in the engagement plan. For several key groups and organisations, the project team offered a meeting to discuss the scheme.

To further raise awareness of the engagement, it was also promoted on social media on various platforms including Twitter and Facebook at several points during the engagement period. Residents who live in the area were targeted via Facebook advertising which directed them to the Commonplace online site.

Figure 5 shows how respondents found out about the engagement, with 49% receiving a letter and 21% seeing adverts on social media.

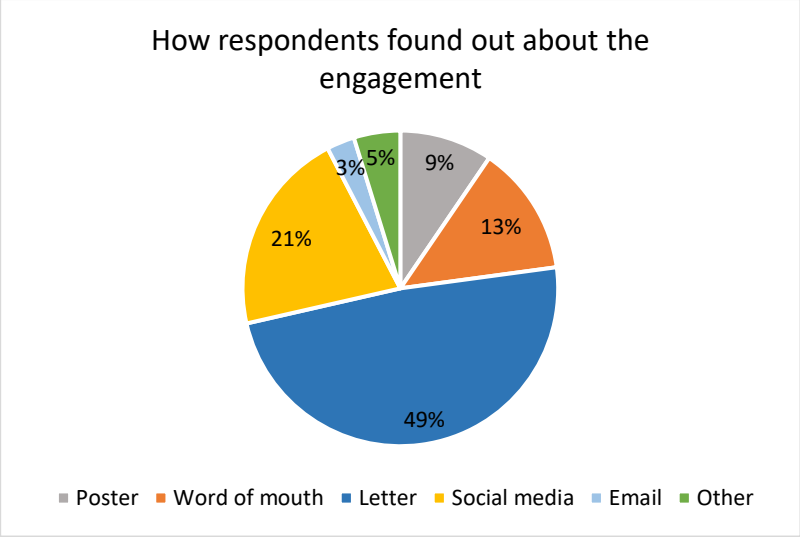


Figure 5. How respondents found out about the engagement



Figure 6. Double sided flyers handed out to advertise the early engagement exercise.

4. Who responded?

4.1 Survey responses

There were 104 responses to the survey on Commonplace. An additional 2 responses were received via email and 1 as a letter and these comments are analysed in the latter sections of the report. To understand the degree to which the respondents are representative of the wider population that would be impacted by the scheme, certain key characteristics of respondents can be considered and compared with Census data 2021 for Runnymede Borough, where the majority of the local stakeholders reside.

Regarding the age of respondents, of those that disclosed this information (33% did not), the most common age categories were 55-64 (42%), 45-54 (23%) and 75+ (12%). Considered against Census 2021 data for Runnymede, there was some overrepresentation in these age groups. In contrast, of those that disclosed their age, no responses were received from respondents under the age of 24. It is therefore likely that this age group is under-represented amongst the respondents and emphasises the need for further methodologies to be explored and used in further stages of engagement to try to reach out to and enable those from all age groups to have their say.

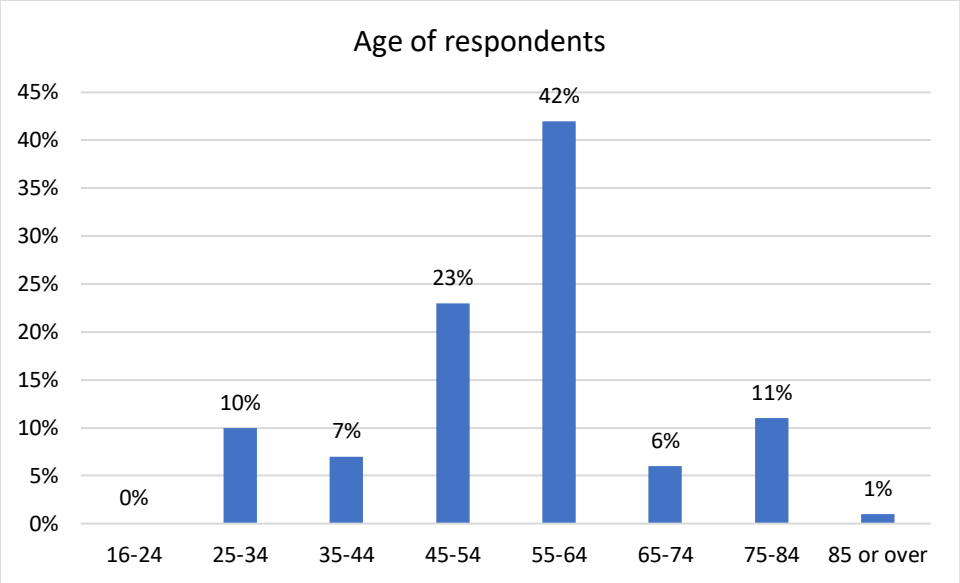


Figure 7. Age of respondents

Regarding gender, 64% of respondents did not disclose their gender through the survey. Consequently, based on those that did, there was a higher proportion of responses from those identifying as male (59%) compared to female (41%), with 0% identifying as non-binary. Census 2021 data shows that in Runnymede there are slightly more females (52%) than males (48%).

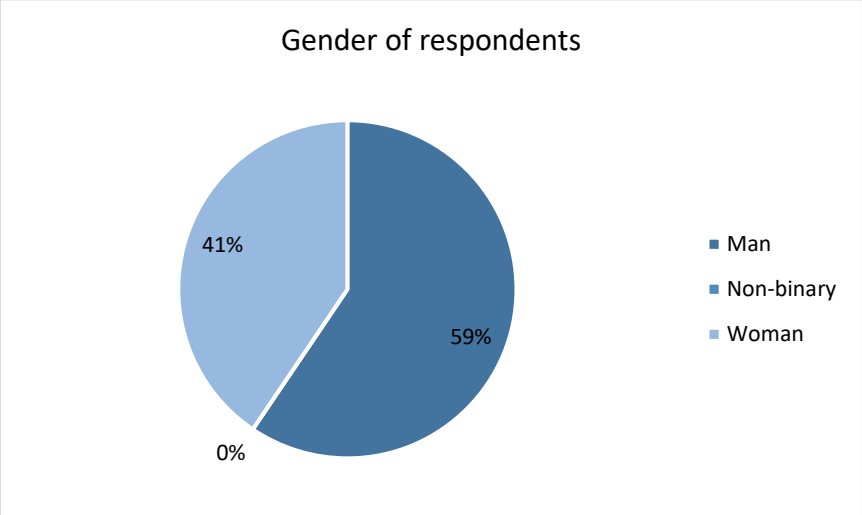


Figure 8. Gender of respondents

Whilst it must be highlighted that there are some limitations regarding the representativeness of the sample of respondents, most notably with younger residents likely to be more under-represented, the sample has still provided a useful range of views about the key transport issues in the area.

Figure 9 (below) further indicates that the survey reached those that would be impacted by this scheme, with the majority of respondents living in the area (74%). There was also a good representation of those who work in the area, likely to be those working from home. Respondents were able to select multiple options for this question in the survey.

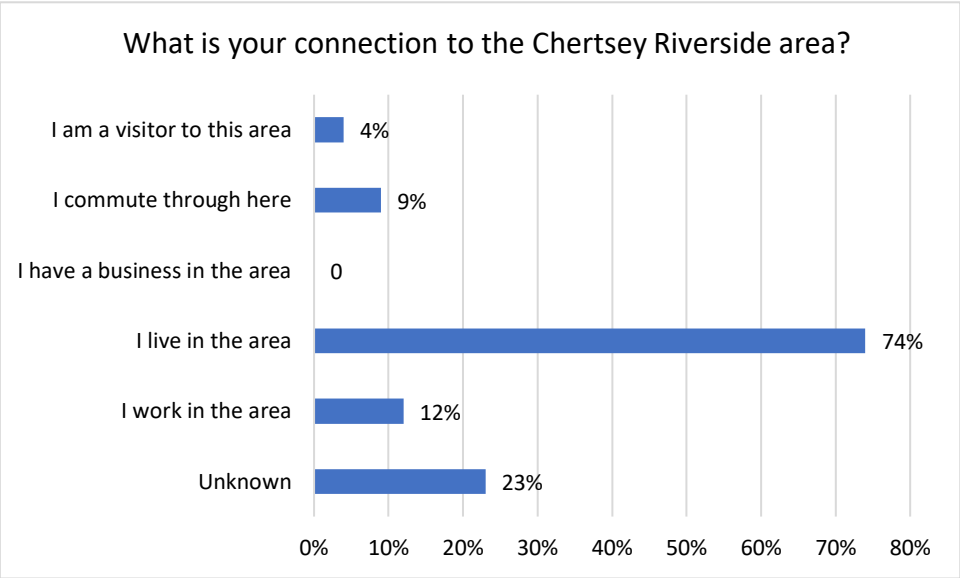


Figure 9. Respondents' connection to the Chertsey Riverside area.

The survey also included a question to understand the modes of transport that respondents rely on (see Figure 10) to travel in the area. Respondents were able to select multiple modes of travel for this question in the survey. There were 71 responses to the question.

The responses show that the car is the most popular mode of transport followed closely by walking, with over a quarter of respondents stating that they cycle in the area.

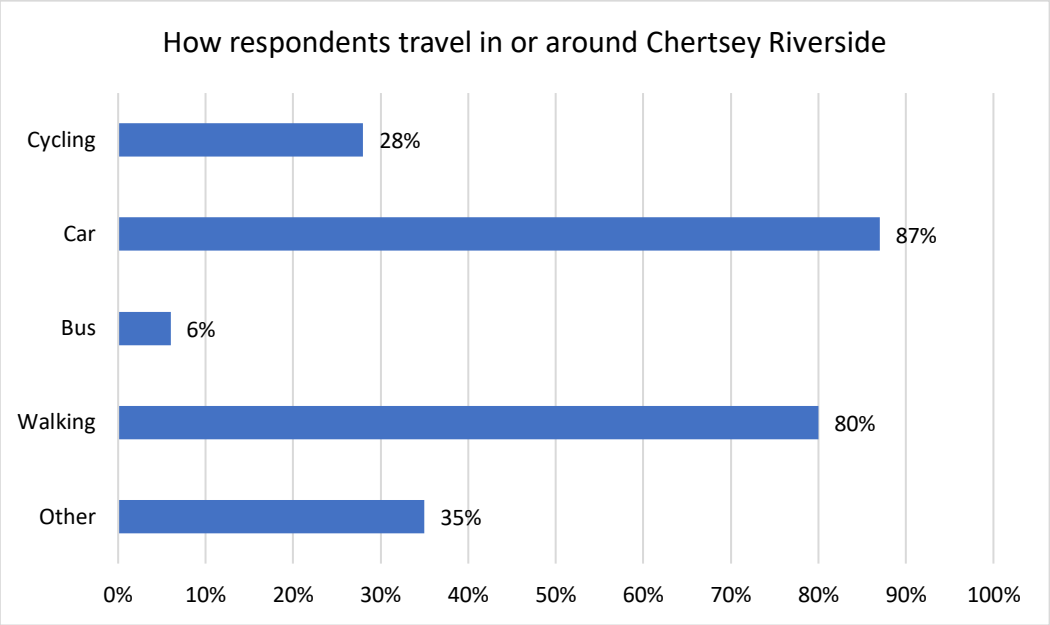


Figure 10. How do you usually travel in or around the area?

5. General issues and suggested improvements raised by respondents

5.1 General feelings towards the area

The survey asked respondents to 'pin' a location on the interactive map where they have identified key local transport issues and/or ideas for improvements to the streets in Chertsey Riverside. The survey also then asked how respondents currently feel about the location that they chose.

As may be expected given that respondents were requested to identify issues for improvements, there was predominantly a negative sentiment towards the locations chosen across the whole zone. As shown in Figure 11, the most common response to the question was 'negative' (56%), followed by 'mostly negative' (25%) with only 1% stating that they felt 'positive' and 1% stating that they felt 'mostly positive' about their selected location. The results show that respondents were identifying street locations in the Chertsey Riverside area where there is generally high dissatisfaction, and they feel that there is need for improvements.

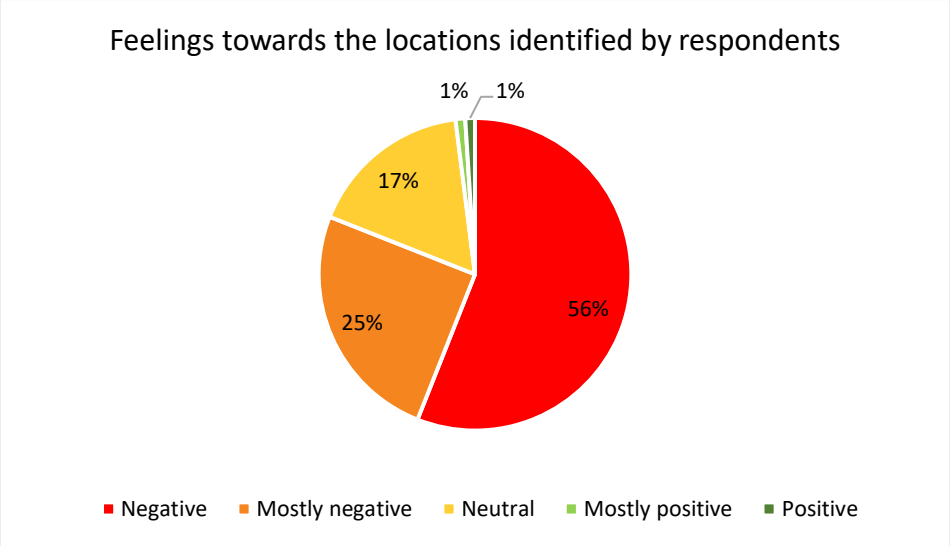


Figure 11. Feelings towards the locations identified by respondents in the Chertsey Riverside area

5.2 Most commonly raised issues

After selecting a location, the survey asked respondents to choose what they feel are the most important issues in this location currently. A list of options was provided, although respondents could provide another response if preferred.

By collating the responses to this question, it is possible to gain a general representation of the most common types of issues raised across the whole zone (section 6 covers analysis by specific locations/areas).

The results, as shown below in Figure 12, concluded that 'high traffic speeds' and 'problems associated with parking' were raised the most, accumulating 36 and 35 responses respectively. The next popular were 'busy road traffic (33 responses) and 'litter problem' (18 responses).

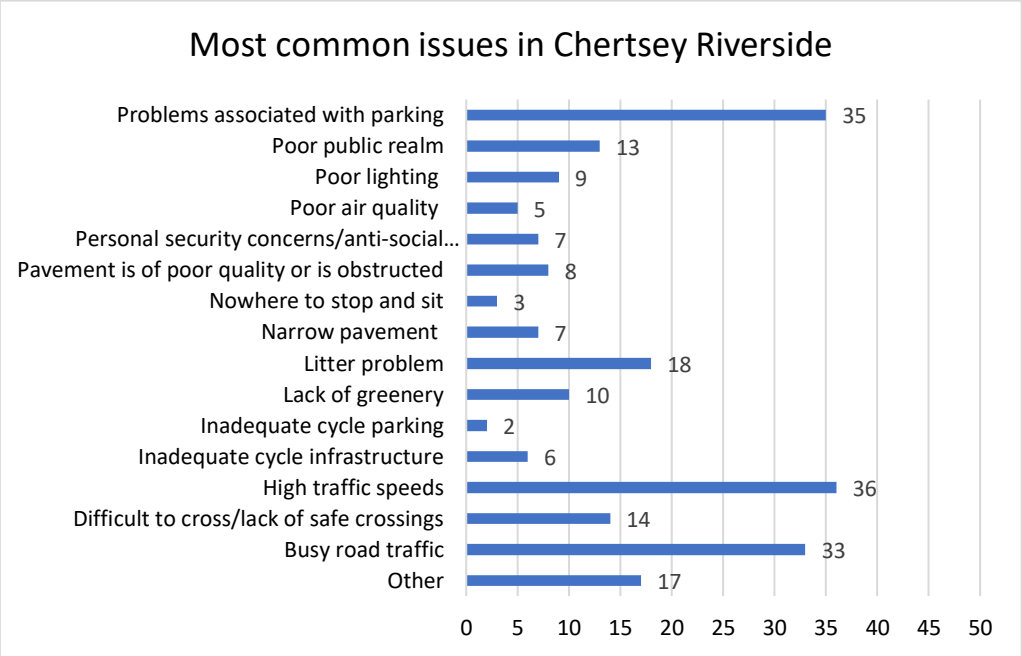


Figure 12. Most commonly raised issues by respondents in the Chertsey Riverside engagement

5.3 How could we make it better

In the Commonplace survey, respondents were asked 'How could we make it better?'. This allowed them to make suggestions regarding how the location could be improved through delivery of the LSI scheme. The responses are summarised by the word cloud in Figure 13 with the larger phrases reflecting the more commonly raised types of improvements suggested. The suggested improvements generally correlate with the issues identified in Section 5.2. Examples include:

- Associated with the problems of high traffic speeds, respondents suggested traffic calming measures such as speed bumps and a reduction of the speed limit.
- Suggestions associated with parking issues included enforcing parking restrictions where there are existing double yellow lines (particularly at school pick up and drop off times), adding more double yellow lines at bends in the road and preventing pavement parking. Others suggested creating more formalised parking spaces using existing verge space.
- Associated with improving walking, wheeling and cycling experiences, respondents suggested the widening and resurfacing of pavements, installing lighting (particularly in the underpass) and improving the public realm by adding trees and greening where possible.



Figure 13. Word cloud with key themes raised by respondents (the larger the phrase, the more times it was raised)

6. Issues raised by area

Responses to the survey as well as via all other methods (including email and letter) have provided the project team with a list of comments for different locations across the Chertsey Riverside area. These will considered by the project team during the first stage of design work (feasibility design), subject to funding. There is expected to be a need for prioritisation when defining the scope of the scheme, considering locations which will provide stronger benefits and value for money, and ensuring that proposals have alignment with the scheme's aims and objectives.

Please note that some of the issues raised will be considered out of scope for reasons including the location (some comments were raised outside of the zone) and lack of alignment with the aims and

objectives of the LSI scheme. Some examples of issues considered out of scope are provided in section 7.

Below, some of the issues and comments that were commonly raised have been grouped together by location and summarised. Please note, the summary below does not cover every comment made and being considered by the project team.

6.1 Roakes Avenue and Wheatash Road

- Parking was a key issue raised along both Roakes Avenue and Wheatash Road. Comments on this topic included:
    - High volumes of cars parked on the existing double yellow lines, particularly close to the entrance/exit of the zone. At school drop off and pick up time, the congestion with parked vehicles is a particular problem and reduces visibility for those walking and driving. Some respondents requested greater enforcement of the double yellow lines and others suggested a designated drop off and pick up zone near to the school.
    - Cars parked on verges which ruins the grass. Some respondents suggested changing the verges to designated parking spaces to help alleviate this problem and others requested the installation of bollards.
    - Parking on the bend of Wheatash Road was raised as a key safety concern for those driving and trying to cross here. This issue is already being managed by the SCC parking team and was part of the Runnymede parking review. Double yellow lines were proposed here and have been consulted on. For more information, please see the following webpage: Runnymede parking review 2023 to 2024 - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk).
- Several respondents raised concerns about high vehicle speeds along both Roakes Avenue and Wheatash Road. Multiple respondents suggested a 20mph speed limit, with traffic calming measures where appropriate. A few comments raised that speed bumps would be noisy for residents and requested that a different solution is explored during the design work.
- Respondents noted issues with exiting and entering the zone due to high traffic speeds on the A317, poorly parked vehicles at the junction and vehicles not abiding by the keep clear markings. A speed reduction on this stretch of the A317 was suggested alongside more frequent speed signs and enforcement.
- More lighting on Wheatash Road was requested to improve personal safety and visibility for those walking and wheeling.

6.2 Chertsey Road and underpass

- The underpass was raised by several respondents as a location that would benefit from some focused improvement including better lighting for visibility and personal safety reasons and further consideration of how the environment is shared between cyclists and pedestrians with the existing tarmac colour having worn away and user behaviours often unsafe.
- The green space in the corner of Chertsey Road was noted as a location that could be better used with suggestions including a play area, allotments or public realm space.

- Improved lighting on the corner between the A317 and entrance to Chertsey Road was also raised as a suggestion.

6.3 Other comments across the zone

- Respondents raised that the zone lacks places to stop and sit and requested some new benches, more trees for shade and shelter and any other measures improve the overall feel of the area. Others proposed adding wildflowers to the verges. These are all in line with the aims of the LSI programme.
- Several comments discussed that narrow pavements and uneven pavement surfaces are detrimental to those walking and wheeling. A lack of dropped kerbs was also raised, notably in Canford Drive which reduces accessibility for all users,.

7. Outside of the scope of the scheme

Some responses were received which raised issues that are generally considered outside of the scope of the scheme, either due to the associated location, the type of issue and/or lack of alignment with the aims and objectives of the LSI scheme. Where appropriate, information provided within the survey responses will be passed on to relevant stakeholders for their consideration which may include other teams at Surrey County Council, or Runnymede Borough Council. Commonly raised issues that are generally considered out of scope of the Chertsey Riverside LSI scheme are discussed below:

- Issues with the grass verge at the entrance to the zone caused as a result of the Esso pipeline works was raised by multiple respondents.
  - The project team has been in contact with the SCC Street Works team following the LSI engagement and can confirm that a team has completed remedial works here. This included adding new topsoil and planting three new trees to replace those that were removed during the works.

- The need for maintenance activities to improve roads (including addressing potholes), drainage maintenance and also cut back of vegetation was a common theme in the responses in locations such as Clifton Close, Roakes Avenue and Chertsey Road as well as outside the zone boundary.
  - Consistent with the aims and objectives set, LSI schemes are primarily seeking to upgrade infrastructure on local streets to make them safer, healthier and more attractive to use by sustainable transport modes including walking and cycling. Consequently, the scheme designs may include the upgrade of infrastructure in locations where it is currently in poor condition.
  - However, LSI schemes are not schemes to deal with all the maintenance problems in the area. These types of activities are subject to SCC's maintenance programme. SCC is committing large investments to address maintenance problems on roads within Surrey over the next five years as part of the maintenance programme. For more information on which roads are in the current programme and to report a pothole that hasn't already been flagged, please visit the following webpage: How we're managing pothole repairs - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk). To report a blocked drain or broken drain cover, please visit the following webpage: Drainage - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk).

- Parking availability as well as enforcement issues were commonly raised in responses.
  - This LSI scheme will consider parking issues only where there is strong alignment with the aims and objectives of the LSI scheme. Addressing all the parking issues and challenges in the area is not within the scope of this scheme.

- Some respondents called for improved bus services including a Sunday bus service to the zone.
  - Bus services are run by external bus operators in the area. Improvements to bus services are outside the scope of the Chertsey Riverside LSI.

- The scheme will be focusing on improvements to the streets in the Chertsey Riverside zone, and more specifically areas identified as public highway spaces which fall under the remit of SCC as the highway authority. A number of issues were raised at locations that fall outside of public highway spaces or related to activities that are not within the control of SCC. These include:
  - Issues associated with parks and open spaces in the area that are managed by Runnymede Borough Council.
  - A number of issues associated with street cleansing and waste/recycling collection including litter problems, fly tipping and a lack of bins which are functions undertaken by Runnymede Borough Council.
    - The project team has collated responses that fit into this category and will be engaging with Runnymede Borough Council to discuss the issues raised and how both authorities can work in partnership to address key issues to deliver better outcomes as the LSI scheme is progressed.

- Issues were raised at locations outside of the zone boundary of the scheme. These include (not a full list):
  - A request for a traffic mirror opposite the St John's Way junction onto Eastworth Road to improve visibility.
  - Issues with the Addlestone Moor roundabout including high vehicle speeds (particularly at night), confusing traffic signals and poor lighting.
  - Issues along Eastworth Road including high traffic speeds, sections of narrow pavement that respondents would like to see widened and noise disturbance due to HGVs.
  - Maintenance needed on the new bridge in Free Prae Park.
  - Parking issues on Laburnam Road and in other locations across Chertsey town centre.
  - These locations (and others also raised) are considered out of scope due to their location, however, information will be passed on to relevant teams at SCC to be reviewed in line with their existing programme and priorities. Regarding other issues associated with walking and cycling Chertsey Town Centre and between the zone and Addlestone, a number of these locations have been identified as priority in the Runnymede Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and will be considered through that programme. Feasibility work is now underway to develop designs for these areas to improve the environment for walking and cycling. This stage of work will involve full public consultation. Please see the webpage for more information: Runnymede Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk).

8. Summary and next steps

104 responses were received via the Commonplace survey in relation to this engagement with a further 3 individual responses via email and letter. This sample has provided a useful range of views about the key transport issues in the area to influence the initial design proposals.

Responses to the engagement exercise have provided the project team with a list of comments for different locations across the Chertsey Riverside area. These will now be considered by the project team during the first stage of design work (feasibility design).

Through the development of the stakeholder engagement plan, local stakeholder organisations and groups have been identified. At this stage in the scheme's development, the project team has been able to build awareness of the scheme and invite feedback to shape the design work. As shown in the screenshot of the dashboard below, taken from the engagement plan, at this stage no opposition has been raised by these stakeholders to the principles of the scheme. This will be monitored as the project progresses further.

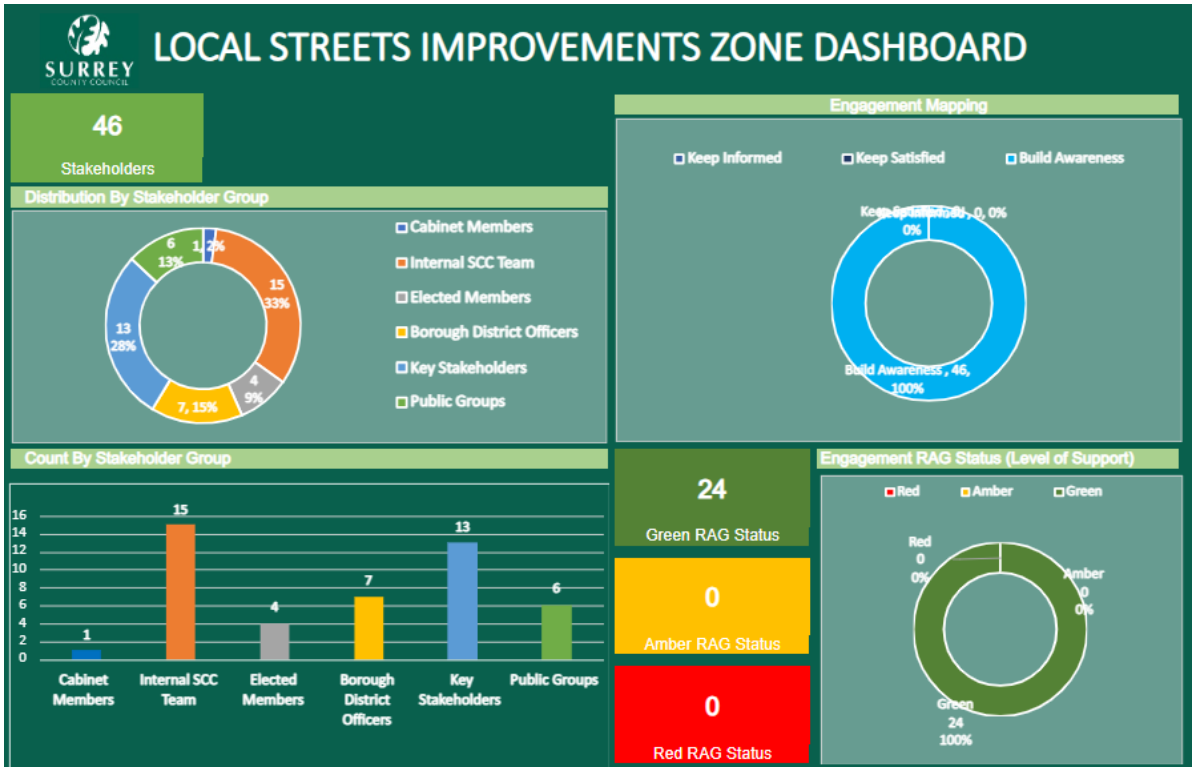


Figure 14. Stakeholder engagement plan dashboard.

Alongside the feedback received from this early engagement exercise, the project team will be using other data collected in the area, including from traffic surveys, to influence the initial feasibility design proposals. Following the development of these designs, a second stage of engagement with local stakeholders will be undertaken to seek views on the design plans proposed. This will lead into a further stage of design work to develop the designs further. These steps will ensure that there are further opportunities for local stakeholders to have their say during the development of the Chertsey Riverside LSI scheme and shape the final designs.