

RAYNES PARK COMMUNITY FORUM
21 MARCH 2024

(6.30 pm - 8.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Robert Page (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held in Raynes Park Library and chaired by Councillor Robert Page with Chris Edge from the Raynes Park Association (RPA). Around 50 residents and four councillors attended. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 POLICE UPDATE (Agenda Item 2)

PC Manning from Raynes Park Safer Neighbourhood Team gave an update on local policing issues.

The Met has changed the IT system for recording crimes, casework and analysing data to a system called Connect. This should help with planning and analysis but is currently having teething issues which takes up officer time. As a result up to date crime stats not available currently.

Youth anti-social behaviour and retail crime.

The team has been working with local shops including Waitrose, Co-op, and Sainsbury's to support them dealing with shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. A number of individuals have been identified and will be given warnings. There will be a Safer Business Day on 27 March across Merton when there will be crime prevention advice and high visibility enforcement. There is an ongoing investigation following a warrant issued at the end of 2023 as a result of the discovery of a large amount of stolen goods. As a result of this work we have seen a 60% reduction in shoplifting in Raynes Park.

Burglary

Usually there is winter spike in burglary, but this has not happened in Raynes Park with three residential burglaries in the last three months. A warrant was conducted today on a group of burglars, resulting in five arrests and property recovered. There has been an increase in bicycle thefts across the Apostles, but it has been quite sporadic with no clear pattern to follow. The team will be holding a bike marking event at Waitrose, having held successful events recently.

Rough sleepers

The team took part in a walkaround with London Borough of Merton's Rough Sleepers team last week to identify and provide support to rough sleepers. One individual has been given a community protection notice which they have since breached. Another individual has moved out of the area.

Carters Estate

There was two weeks of targeted action by the team in conjunction with London Borough of Merton and Clarion that include crime prevention stall, weapons search and a newsletter.

Events coming up

Cuppa with a Copper at Babylon date to be confirmed.

Speedwatch on Bushey Road being planned with Safer Transport team.

The team holds quarterly Ward Panel meetings to provide updates and decide future priorities. Anyone is welcome to join, and you can [get in touch with the team](#) to find out more.

A Waitrose staff member said the work the team has done has made a hugely positive difference. There was an incident tonight with a two adults being very aggressive.

A resident asked about Lime bikes being stolen and their lock being forced. Officers will stop those using bikes with broken locks when they see them. The resident also asked about enforcing cycling on the pavement, and officers regularly stop those cycling through the underpass.

Cllr Charles asked about vehicles parked in the cycle lane on Kingston Road making dangerous for cyclists. Cllr Page said vehicles can be reported to [London Borough of Merton](#). Cllr Willis said there is going to be a review of the cycling path on Kingston Road and at the station as part of a new cycling and walking strategy and some designated parking bays for dockless e-bikes are going to be marked.

3 RAILWAY EMBANKMENT (Agenda Item 3)

Tony Edwards gave an update on behalf of the Friends of Raynes Park station. The embankment to the left of the station has been cleared of rubbish and planted with bulbs. Volunteers have a license to access the site and a local company has been doing volunteering days. Much of the materials have been donated or provided at a discount. More work is planned on the station including moving soil up to the platforms for more planters and seed planting. More bulb planting is planned for September.

4 OTHER RAILWAY UPDATES (Agenda Item 4)

Chris Larkman gave an update on other station issues. There is a huge amount of rubbish on other side of the embankment, some of which has been cleared by Network Rail. Parking issues at the Kiss and Ride have improved now that restrictions are being enforced but there is an ongoing problem with litter and fly-tipping. New bookshelves have been installed on platform 3 and 4. Spare books are welcome, lightweight fiction and children's books are most popular. The front of station has also been cleared and cleaned so some significant improvement. The land transfer north of the skew arch should be completed soon, after being delayed due to electric cabling being discovered on site.

5 PROPOSED FLOOD ALLEVIATION AND TRAFFIC CHANGES (Agenda Item 5)

Mark Leggate, Merton Active Travel, independent group gave a presentation for a community led approach to changing Raynes Park town centre. Planned work by Thames Water to resolve flooding could create an opportunity to improve the town centre through improving road safety, connectivity for active travel and a focal point like a marketplace. This is not a proposal from London Borough of Merton and there is a lot of work to do to establish the feasibility of the plans.

2021 Your Merton consultation comments on Raynes Park shows concerns from local residents about the town centre include traffic, safety and there not being any communal space. Research has shown that improving the pedestrian environment provides benefits for retailers and creates an environment for people to get together.

The design goals include attractiveness, identity, locality, safety, connectivity, sustainability, and accessibility. The proposal sets out the removal of the one-way system, reinstatement of two-way traffic flow, and closure of the lower portion of Lambton Road (where Thames Water's proposed works are) to motor vehicles. This would enable the space on Lambton Road to be used to create a new "heart" for the town centre, and could be used for a variety of purposes, such as outdoor space, shops / cafes, marketplace, rain gardens, etc. It would also be possible to free up space south of the skew arch by reducing the dual carriageway. The design will need professional input covering issues like bus movements, traffic management, phasing of traffic lights, and turning space for HGVs. The plans will need council support to do the modelling and design work. Mark said he would like to get feedback from community on the ideas for improving the town centre.

A resident asked how will traffic go from Waitrose to Lambton Road and Mark said that it will need to turn left at the Shell garage. This could result in more traffic on Pepys Road.

A resident asked if the two pedestrian areas could be linked by moving the north zone to Coombe Lane and Mark said that the group had looked at the different options but found that the corner at Lambton Road by Costa could be too tight for 2-way buses to turn.

A resident said that the design would remove the bus terminal on Lambton and will create more traffic on Lambton and Pepys Roads. Mark said it was unlikely to result in more traffic on Lambton Road as that route would not take any vehicles to any direction they would need to go.

A resident asked what the likely influence of Thames Water's plans would be. Cllr Willis said that to do what Thames Water want to do they will need to dig up Lambton Road anyway so it would be a case of then putting back something different. London Borough of Merton has already set aside £250,000 for feasibility work, and there are additional funds from the Environment Agency and Thames Water. Thames Water's plans are still at the feasibility stage. Tony Edwards said this represented an opportunity to make significant changes to gain from the pain of essential but extensive construction work.

Cllr Charles asked about emergency vehicle and disabled access to the GP surgery on Lambton Road. Mark said the pedestrian area could be designed so that emergency and goods vehicle could still access the area.

A resident asked about space for the turnaround of 200 buses and Mark said this will still need to be accommodated.

A resident said that current traffic arrangements are already very difficult, and this proposal will at least address many of those issues. They proposed supporting these plans. Attendees were asked if they agreed through a show of hands, and there was overwhelming support for continuing the plans. Cllr Willis said the plans will eliminate two of the most significant traffic safety issues in the town centre.

A resident asked how large tanks under Lambton Road will solve flooding under the railway bridge. Mark explained that his understanding of Thames Water's plans was that the tanks will fill up at peak rainfall and prevent water getting to the bridge and overwhelming the drains. Tanks would then release the water slowly into the drainage system.

A resident said they felt front and rear gardens being paved over also needed to be addressed.

A resident asked how people could get involved and Mark said they could Email him at mertonactivetravel@gmail.com.

6 UPDATE FROM LOCAL COUNCILLORS (Agenda Item 6)

Cllr Page reminded residents that the elections on 2 May would be the first in Merton to require photo ID to vote in person. Residents were reminded to bring ID or apply for a [Voter Authority certificate](#). The deadline for registering to vote is 16 April.

Cllr Willis said that residents could comment on changes recommended by the Planning Inspector to the [draft new Local Plan](#) consultation by Friday 22 March.

Cllr Willis said that pollarding would be taking place in the Apostles and the [Council website has schedule](#). This includes trees on Aston Road. Car parking can cause a problem so if notices are posted on your street, please move any vehicles accordingly.

7 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 7)

There will be an Interfaith Walk on 13 April, beginning at 11am from Wimbledon station and covering 5km to visit local faith site. This is to raise funds for [Faith in Action](#). Any queries can be sent to [Richard Smart](#).

A resident said that they felt London Borough of Merton Planning Application Committee should be based on neighbourhood structure, like Kingston, so that decisions are not made by councillors not in the area. Cllr Willis said the New Local Plan allows for Neighbourhood Forums to agree neighbourhood plans to be put to a referendum.

A resident said that the Tesco development seems to be at a large scale and another resident said there were 480 units in the current development with the potential for more in the future.

A resident asked about the former Wetherspoons site and Cllr Willis said that a fitness gym is taking on the site and graffiti has been removed.

A resident recommended that others may enjoy participating in the [Merton Garden Streets](#) scheme.

There will be a Cannon Hill Common litter pick on Sunday 24 March. Participants should meet at 2pm on Cannon Hill Lane by Cannon Hill Common lake.

The date of the next meeting is yet to be confirmed.

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Raynes Park urban realm

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Raynes Park Community Forum

March 2024

Minute Item 5

Context

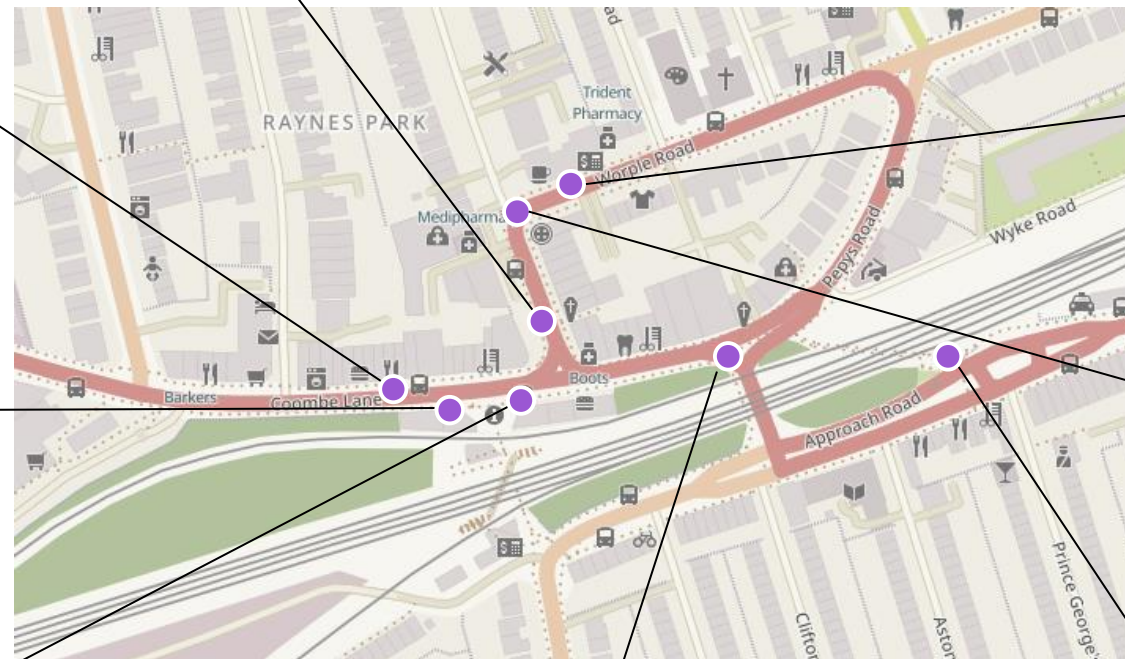


- **Notable progress has been made over recent years** to improve the urban realm in Raynes Park, including the former station forecourt, and areas by Skew Arch
- **There remains significant opportunity** to make further improvements and in doing so:
 - **Support local businesses** by making it a more pleasant place to shop, eat or drink
 - Help to **create a new focal point** for the town centre (e.g. marketplace)
 - **Improve the climate resiliency** of the town centre (e.g. through sustainable drainage)
 - **Reduce road danger**, in particular for more vulnerable people such as children
 - **Improve accessibility and connectedness** of walking and cycling
- **Potential flood alleviation works in the town centre may present a unique opportunity to deliver such improvements**
- **The Raynes Park Association and Merton Active Travel have worked together to develop a proposal** for the Raynes Park town centre
- **This is currently “community led” and not a Merton Council proposal** - any changes to the town centre require multi-party agreement across Merton Council, TfL, Network Rail, Environment Agency, and Thames Water

We would like your initial feedback and reactions to these early stage ideas

2021 “Your Merton” consultation received extensive feedback about Raynes Park town centre

“The centre of Raynes Park needs help. It's noisy, polluted and dirty. It's bad for pedestrians and cyclists and it has no "heart".”



“The atmosphere is unwelcoming, dirty narrow pavements and air pollution”

“More areas for outside cafes, markets etc would bring more shoppers into the area on foot and people would spend more time and money here rather than shooting through in their cars”

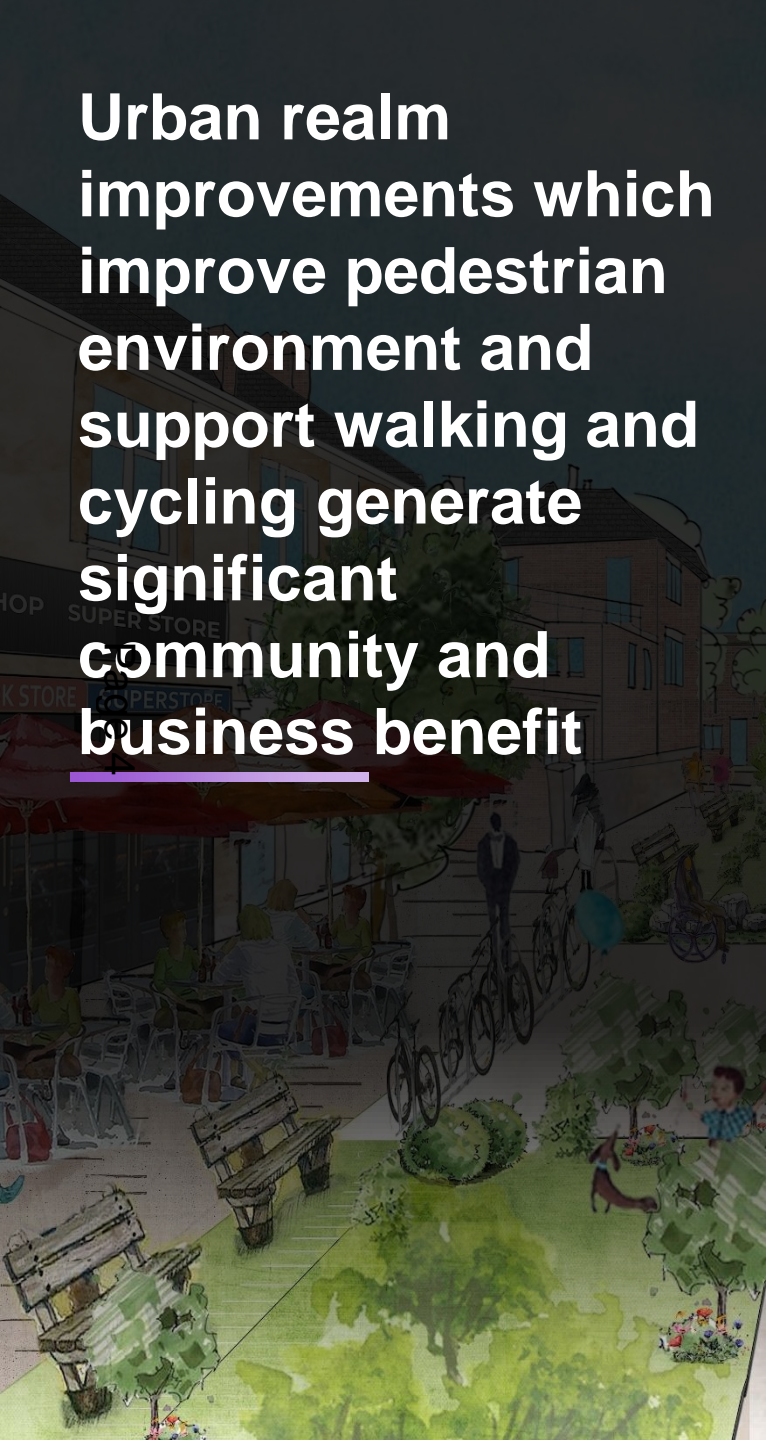
“The cycle lane through Raynes Park 'gives up' at the railway station and one way system”

“This section of the one way system is all about prioritising motor vehicles driving through local shops and amenities. It's horrendous for anyone to cross the road here.”

“Raynes Park is desperate for a town square, community space that doesn't have heavy traffic running through it.”

“It has been a sad, inhospitable place to travel through, and the lack of living plants became more noticeable”

“The unsignalled crossing has poor visibility and is extremely dangerous. The entire Raynes Park gyratory needs removing, but at the very least this crossing needs to be urgently made safer”



Urban realm improvements which improve pedestrian environment and support walking and cycling generate significant community and business benefit

17%

Decrease in retail vacancies

7.5%

Increase in rental values

Up to

30%

Increase in retail sales

Double

The number of visits to a high street each month for those who walk compared to those who drive

216%

Increase in people stopping, sitting and socialising

8 design goals considered as principles used to inform the design of potential improvements to the urban realm in Raynes Park



Attractiveness

Improve attractiveness of Raynes Park as a shopping / dining destination through improvements to the urban realm

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Identity

Create a renewed sense of identity for Raynes Park through the creation of a new focal point (e.g. rain gardens / market square)



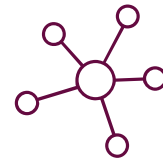
Locality

Create opportunities to support local independent businesses (e.g. market square)



Safety

Reduce road danger faced by pedestrians and cyclists (in particular at crossings)



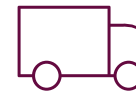
Connectivity

Close the 'missing link' in Merton's cycle network, and make it easier and more attractive to visit Raynes Park shops as a pedestrian or cyclist (e.g. reduce barriers created by the one-way system to pedestrian journeys, improve cycle parking)



Sustainability

Support climate resiliency (e.g. through improved tree cover and SuDS)



Continuity

Ensure loading access and bus turnaround facilities are maintained







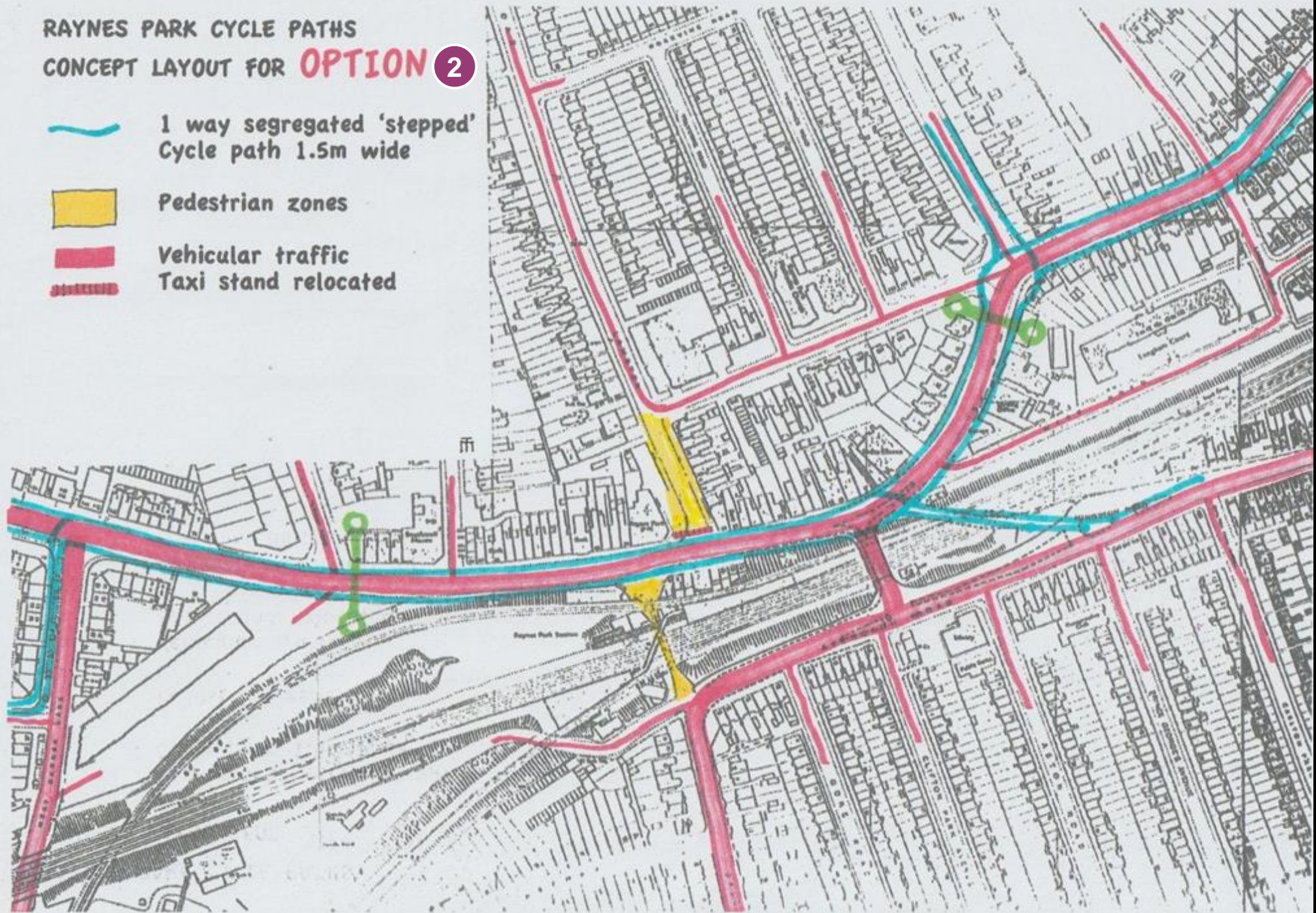
Accessibility

Ensure those with disabilities or other mobility requirements are able to move around Raynes Park safely and easily

RAYNES PARK CYCLE PATHS

CONCEPT LAYOUT FOR **OPTION 2**

-  1 way segregated 'stepped' Cycle path 1.5m wide
-  Pedestrian zones
-  Vehicular traffic
-  Taxi stand relocated





Lambton Road *illustrative concept*

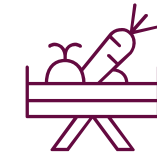
Further options exist to transform area south of Skew Arch as part of any future scheme



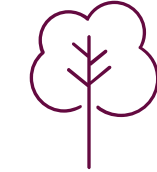
Dual carriageway adjacent to Skew Arch could be converted to single carriageway, creating new public space with a range of potential uses



Public square



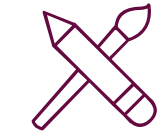
Marketplace



Trees and planting



Coffee kiosk



Artwork

Removal of the one way system creates a range of potential benefits for Raynes Park



Improvements to town centre



More pleasant shopping environment



Improved outdoor trading and dining



Improved accessibility for those with disabilities or other mobility requirements



Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists

Potential new community amenities



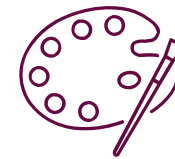
Marketplace



Trees and planting



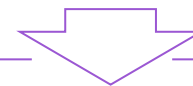
Rain gardens for flood alleviation



Sculpture or other focal point



Cycle parking spaces



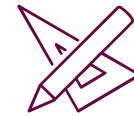
Many options available to transform the town centre
Option also exists to maintain loading access at specified off peak times

These proposals are currently a 'community-led' proposal; significant effort remains for this to become a reality

Several open design questions remain that require professional input

- ❓ Where will buses serving the 200 route terminate?
- ❓ Will phasing of traffic lights by Railway Bridge be able to accommodate all traffic without generating significant tailbacks?
- ❓ Will level and gradient of road under Railway Bridge be able to accommodate turning HGVs?

Council support needed to progress to detailed design and carry this scheme forward



Professional planning, urban design and modelling of traffic impact



Broader community / stakeholder engagement



Multi-party design and funding discussions between Merton Council, TfL, Environment Agency Thames Water and Network Rail



Delivery

Discussion



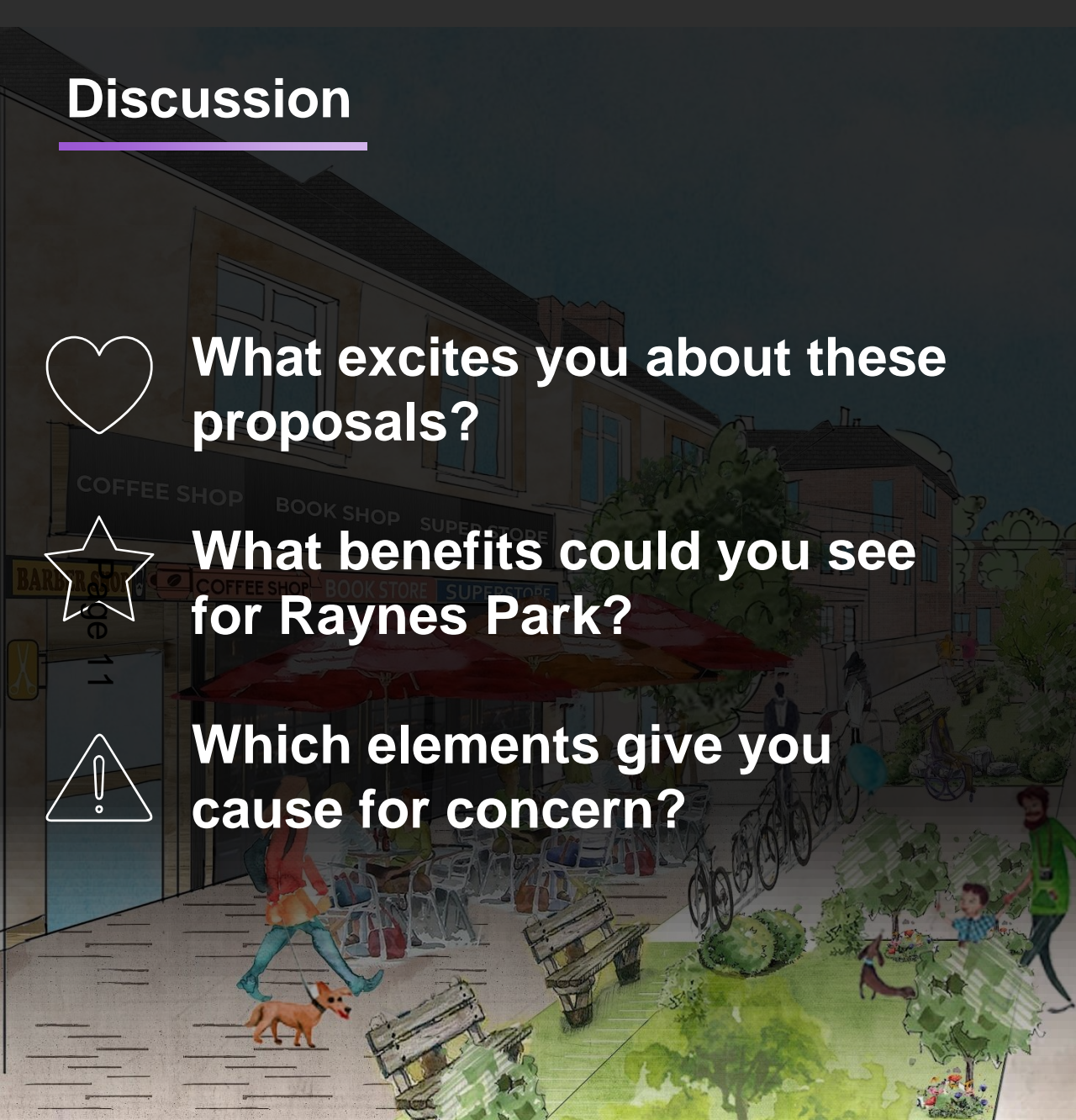
What excites you about these proposals?



What benefits could you see for Raynes Park?

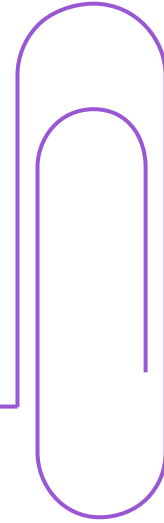


Which elements give you cause for concern?



Appendix

Supporting materials



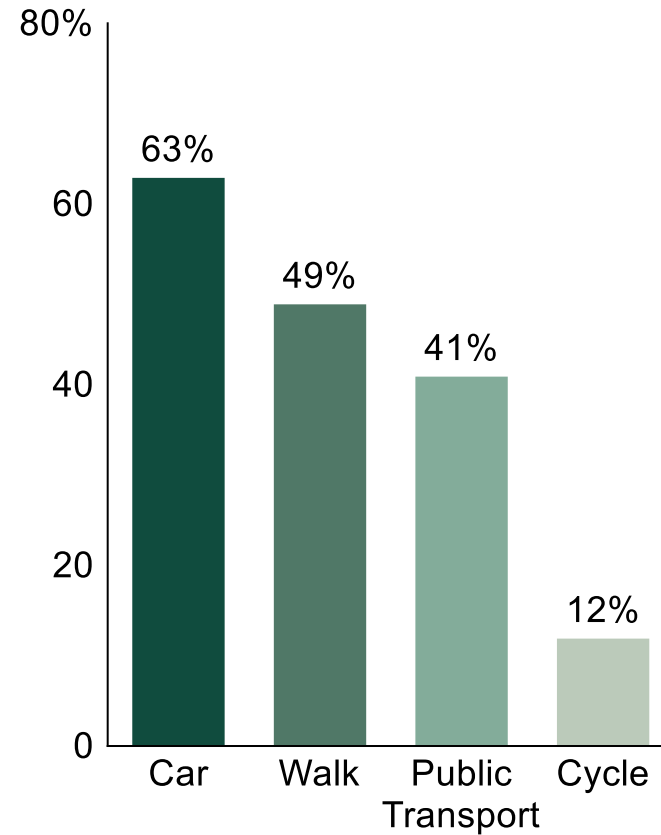
Proposed study area encompasses the town centre on both north and south sides of the railway



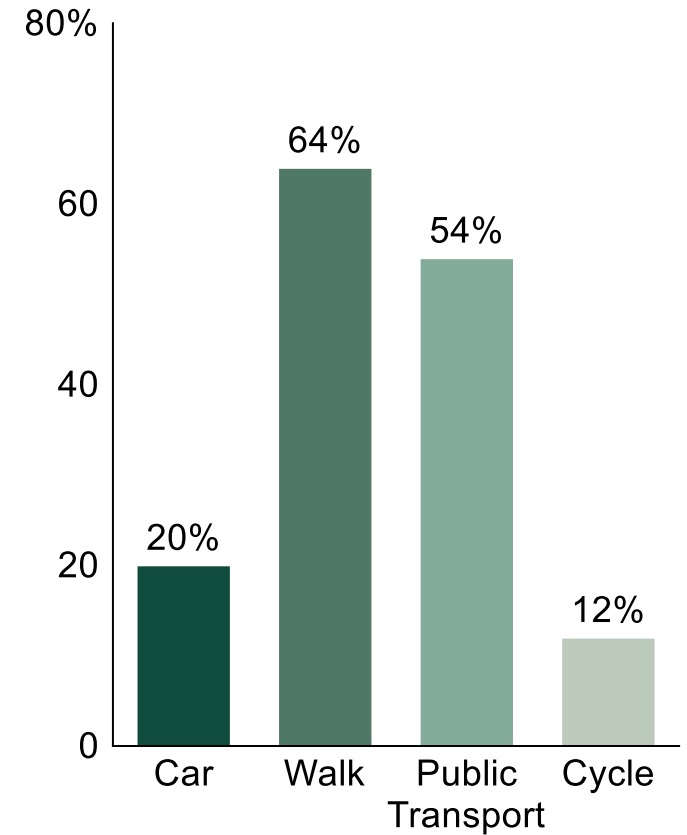
Business owners may overestimate their customers' car use

Example: Lea Bridge Road

How business owners think their customers travel to the area



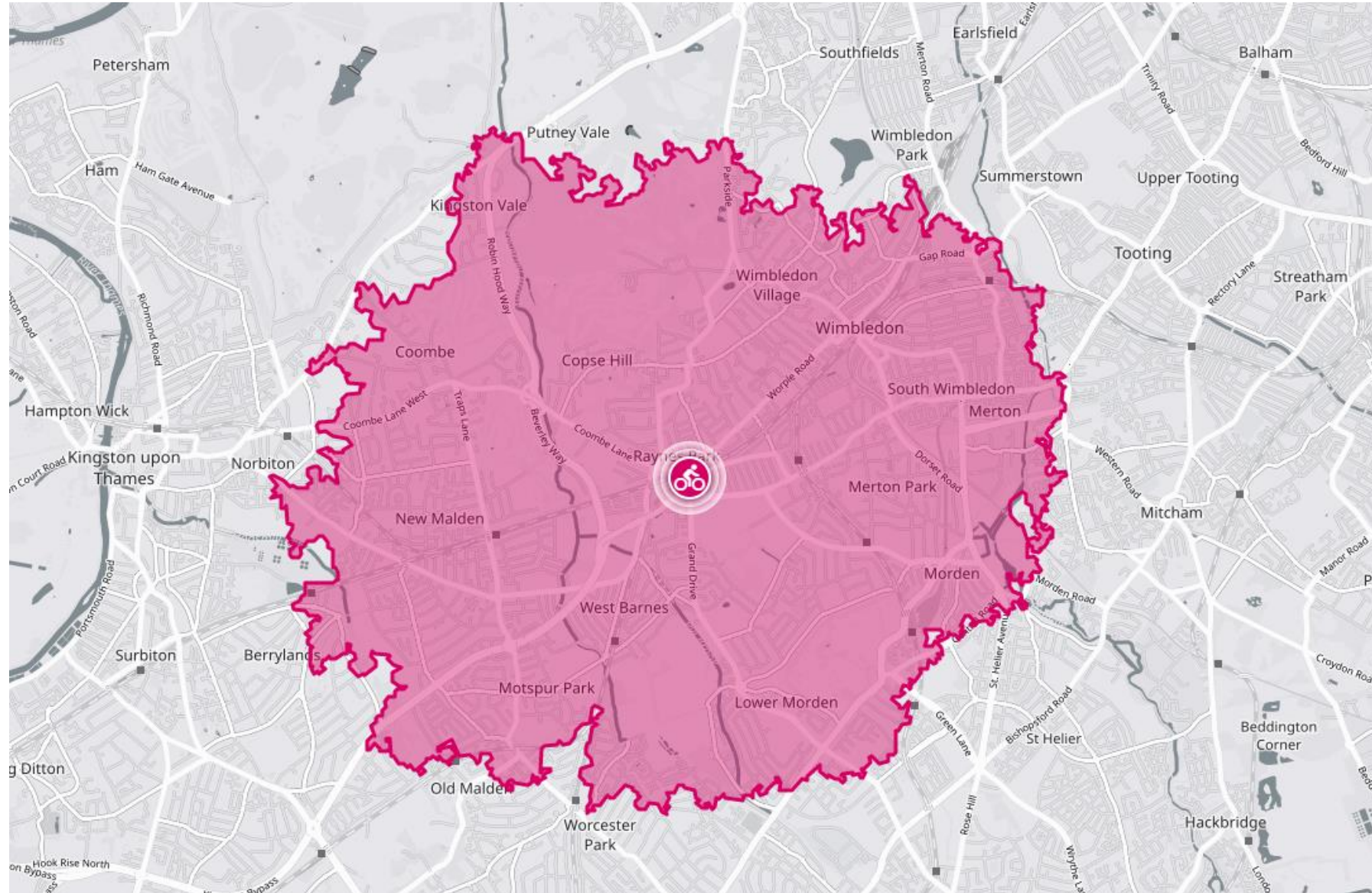
How shoppers say they travel to the area



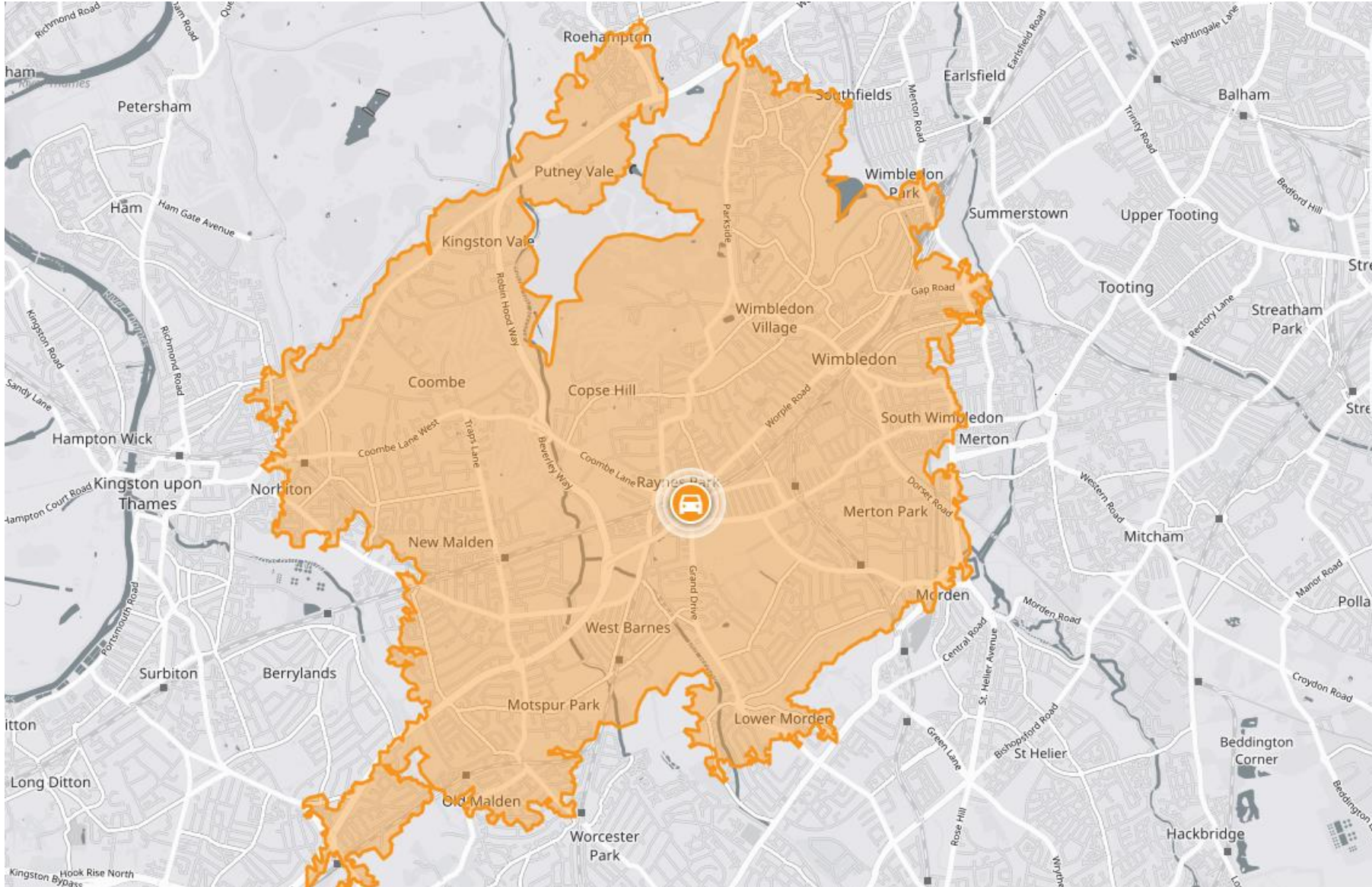
Areas within a 15 minute walking distance of Raynes Park



Areas within a 15 minute cycling distance of Raynes Park

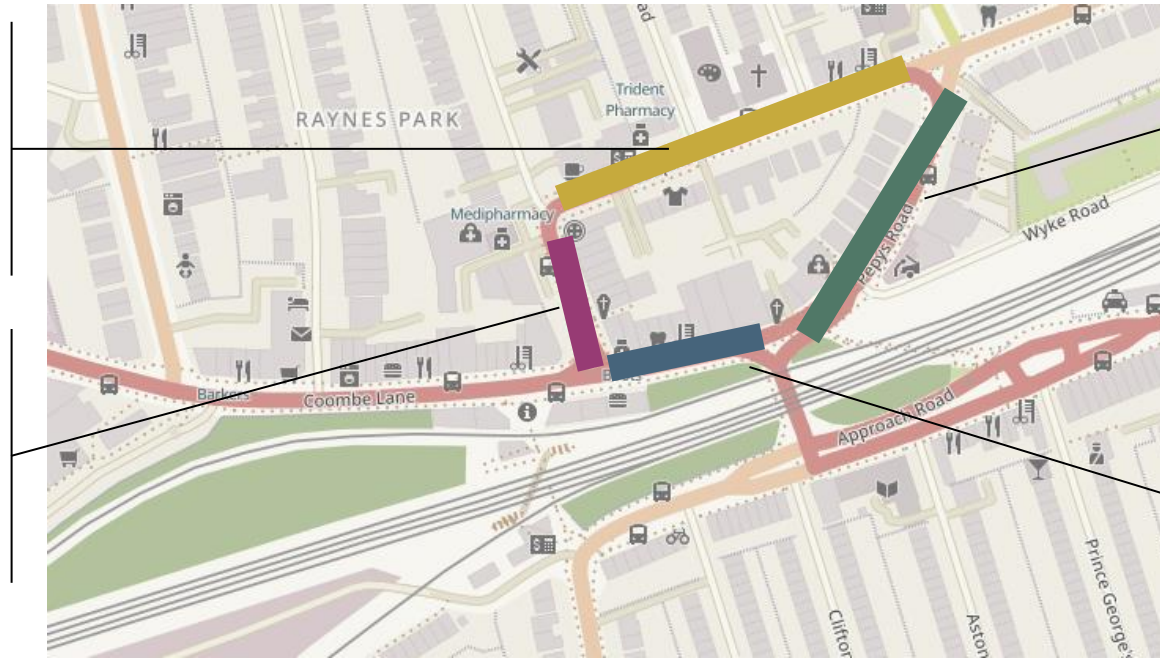


Areas within a 15 minute driving distance of Raynes Park



Four options considered for pedestrianisation of part of one-way system

- 1 Lambton Road Medical Centre to Shell garage
- 2 Lambton Road Medical Centre to Raynes Park Tavern



- 3 Shell garage to railway bridge
- 4 Railway Bridge to Raynes Park Tavern



Four options considered for pedestrianisation of part of one-way system

	1	2	3	4
Point of closure	Lambton Road Medical Centre to Shell	Lambton Road Medical Centre to Raynes Park Tavern	Shell to Railway Bridge	Railway Bridge to Raynes Park Tavern
Size of pedestrian area				
Proximity to shops				
Manageable road network impact				
	High road network impact with two junctions in close proximity and access issues	Option prioritised for further study	No shops and limited ability to create active town centre	Small number of shops and complex routing for trips between Railway Bridge and Coombe Lane

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