

Richmond upon Thames 2026 MANIFESTO



**A fairer, healthier borough.
A greener, more resilient future.
A safe and thriving place to live,
with caring communities,
vibrant culture & opportunity for all.**

INTRODUCTION

After eight years of Liberal Democrat leadership, Richmond upon Thames is a place to be proud of – fairer, greener, safer and more confident.

We have built back from the pandemic, supported residents with the cost-of-living crisis, improved outcomes across children’s and adults’ services, invested in our neighbourhoods and town centres, and shown national and international leadership on climate and nature.

Now, Richmond borough faces a defining moment.

The Labour government is cutting £29 million a year – a 58% cut – from the council by 2028/29, and diverting it to other, often less well-run, local authorities.

Having managed our finances responsibly, finding £60 million a year in back-office savings whilst investing in our borough without borrowing, Richmond upon Thames is now being unfairly penalised, despite high demand for services, and without regard for the impact this could have on those in need.

This challenge demands clear leadership, strong values and sensible decisions.

Our commitment to you is this: we will protect what matters most – by transforming how the council works, focusing on early help and prevention, and using every pound wisely to reinvest in a fairer, greener and more resilient Richmond upon Thames, for now and the future.

In the face of these challenges, we have set out five clear priorities for the next four years – focusing our efforts on what matters most for residents and the future of our borough.

Cllr Gareth Roberts
Leader, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames



OUR FIVE PRIORITIES FOR 2026-30

STAND UP FOR RICHMOND

We'll fight to protect vital services from government cuts

We will fight unfair government cuts and manage public money responsibly, while transforming how the council works, protecting services and improving outcomes

TACKLE THE COST OF LIVING

For a fairer borough with security and opportunity for all

We will tackle poverty, increase our pipeline of over 1,000 social and affordable homes with an ambitious borough-wide housing strategy, support social and private renters and prevent homelessness

LEAD ON CLIMATE & NATURE ACTION

For a healthier, greener and more resilient borough

We will protect our environment, expand our Mega Skips service, help lower bills by fast-tracking retrofit and local renewable energy, make our council carbon neutral by 2030, and take further action on air quality, climate resilience and nature recovery

BACK HEALTHY & CARING COMMUNITIES

For the best start in life and lifelong support

We will invest in early help for children and adults and in accessible, inclusive communities – helping everyone to stay safe, healthy & active, and supported at every stage of life

DELIVER THRIVING PLACES, CULTURE & LOCAL ECONOMY

For safe, vibrant neighbourhoods we're proud to call home

We will deliver thriving town centres and vibrant cultural life, with safer streets and well-maintained roads and pavements, working in partnership with local businesses and communities to grow our local economy

DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

OUR CORE COMMITMENT:

We will continue to run the council efficiently, responsibly and transparently, maintaining a clear focus on long-term financial resilience and sustainability. We will ensure every pound of public money works as hard as possible for residents, carefully consider all available options, and take difficult decisions where necessary to ensure the council remains able to meet its responsibilities to residents. At the centre of this will be a wide-reaching transformation programme – aimed at saving around £30 million a year by 2029 – focused on delivering even better outcomes for residents while keeping the council financially resilient.

Our transformation programme will –

- Redesign access to services around residents' needs – to make interacting with the council simpler, faster and more reliable, saving money and improving service delivery.
- Use digital tools, data and AI to improve productivity – modernising our technology and reducing duplication across departments, so staff can focus more time on supporting residents and delivering help more effectively.
- Strengthen our focus on early intervention for those in need – because early support improves people's lives and prevents more costly interventions later.
- Optimise the use of land and buildings – supporting housing and community facilities, delivering more services where they are needed, and unlocking long-term value for residents.
- Drive inclusive economic growth – supporting local businesses and employers and strengthening the borough's long-term financial sustainability.

This approach underpins our manifesto. The following pledges set out how we will deliver our priorities in practice – working with residents, communities, businesses and partners across the borough.

OUR MANIFESTO COMMITMENTS TO YOU

STANDING UP FOR RICHMOND

Fighting to protect vital services from government cuts



WE'LL STAND UP FOR OUR BOROUGH

We will always challenge decisions that risk harming our borough and its quality of life. We will stand up for our community's safety, environment, health and finances, and refuse to accept unfair treatment.

We will:

- Oppose Thames Water's Teddington Direct River Abstraction scheme, which threatens our rivers and green spaces.
- Continue to resist Heathrow expansion that would damage air quality and overall quality of life.
- Campaign for stronger local policing and oppose any reductions in face-to-face police presence in our borough

- Press the Government to reverse unfair funding cuts and lobby for a fairer, more sustainable funding settlement, including proper transitional protection that reflects demand for services and allows the council to plan responsibly.
- Oppose Government proposals which risk stripping millions in developer contributions away from Richmond, which would reduce investment in local infrastructure and community projects and risk fewer genuinely affordable homes being built.
- Fight cancellations and lobby TFL and train service providers to improve bus and train services and deliver projects that boost public transport provision, including improved services, reduced journey times, enhanced access to train stations, and upgrading bus shelter provision, particularly in areas with high potential demand but limited options, like Hampton, Ham, and Heathfield.

WE'LL PROVIDE BETTER SERVICES, AND MAKE THEM EASIER TO USE

We will simplify the way services work and make it easier to get things done – so residents get quicker responses, clearer information and better outcomes.

By modernising systems while maintaining strong personal support, we will deliver services that are efficient, reliable and focused on what matters to residents.

We will:

- Simplify access to services in a way that reflects how people actually use the Council – we'll bring services together in a clear, user-friendly way, with one simple login to raise service requests and access personalised services, updates and transaction history, all in one place.
- Unlock the power of automation, data and AI to work more efficiently and intervene earlier, reducing duplication, freeing up staff time for complex cases and helping services respond faster and more effectively to residents' needs.
- Involve residents: build on our programme of Community Conversations and partner engagement across the borough to work with residents to help co-design our services and their delivery.
- Drive up standards in cleaning and waste services, maintain the new spillage crew to keep streets tidy after collections, further expand the food recycling service, introduce collection of soft plastics, and give residents clear information about waste, recycling and reuse services, using data and digital technology to support and improve services.
- Enhance our popular Mega Skips programme, with two Mega Skip events per ward each year and additional support for recycling and re-use, helping residents to dispose of unwanted items responsibly.
- Make it easier for residents to repair and reuse items, growing the borough's re-use economy via our new hub – *'The Fixery'*, repair cafes, the re-use drop-off station at Townmead Road recycling centre, and working with other organisations in this sector.

- Sustain major investment in road re-surfacing and pavement improvements
- Ensure new contracts deliver not only value for money but also social value for residents, through local jobs, skills, fair employment and stronger communities.
- Expand and improve the Community Toilet Scheme, where the Council supports local businesses and community organisations to offer free public access to toilet facilities across the borough.
- Explore partnerships to support the provision of 'Changing Places' toilets in key locations.
- Make better use of council buildings to deliver more services where they are needed, investing in community centres, including a new community centre in Whitton, family hubs and leisure facilities across the borough, while using our estate more efficiently than ever – continuing our successful approach of renting out or releasing surplus or under-used building space – to unlock long-term value for residents.



TACKLING THE COST OF LIVING

For a fairer borough with security and opportunity for all



WE'LL BUILD AN EVEN FAIRER BOROUGH

We believe Richmond upon Thames should work for everyone. Over the last four years, we've delivered a £4.5m cost-of-living support package, helping thousands of residents through difficult times. We will now build on what proved to be most effective by providing earlier, more structured support – preventing more problems from escalating and helping more people stay secure and independent.

We will:

- Launch a comprehensive Anti-Poverty Strategy, to tackle the causes of hardship, shaped with residents who have lived experience.
- Target support early and more effectively, using what we have learned from cost-of-living support to help people sooner and reduce the risk of crisis.
- Strengthen advice and support services so people get the help they are entitled to, earlier and more easily.
- Maintain council tax reductions, help with heating costs in winter and emergency help for those under financial pressure.
- Use council contracts to deliver even more for local people – driving social value from contractors and suppliers – backing local jobs and skills, fair pay, apprenticeships, volunteering and environmental benefits.

- Open up effective routes into work and skills for people facing the biggest barriers to jobs, including SEND and care-experienced residents, so they can get training, experience and good careers.
- Tackle digital exclusion so access to services and opportunities is not determined by income or ability.
- Extend the Richmond Food Partnership to work with both local and regional charities and organisations, coordinating activities such as food growing and community food action, addressing food poverty (including food for children over school holidays), healthier food environments and a more sustainable food economy.

WE'LL LEAD THE DELIVERY OF THE GENUINELY AFFORDABLE HOMES RICHMOND NEEDS

The Liberal Democrats have driven a major increase in the delivery of genuinely affordable homes in Richmond over the last eight years, building Foundations for a Fairer Borough with over 500 starts on site planned by 2027.



Growing Need

With growing local need, the borough must find ways to continue expanding the pipeline of affordable homes able to meet the needs of all our residents, including keyworkers, younger people and those retiring and downsizing, despite the constraints of our beautiful, rightly protected green spaces and heritage.

A New Approach: 'Small Scale at Scale'

That's why we'll pioneer an additional new approach – unlocking small scale development at scale, making the best of unexpected and overlooked smaller sites to deliver social and affordable homes that fit our neighbourhoods and meet real local need.

We will:

- Develop a new, additional, borough-wide housing delivery strategy for aggregated small-scale development at scale — assembling small and overlooked sites across Richmond which, together, can provide significant additional levels of genuinely affordable homes.
- Work with innovative architects to create attractive, good value and sustainable homes for these sites that fit sensitively into existing neighbourhoods.
- Package multiple small sites together to provide the scale needed to attract investment and deliver more homes efficiently.
- Hold a community summit on housing to showcase and co-design this approach, setting out the challenges clearly and giving residents a meaningful role in discussing and shaping how Richmond meets its housing challenges fairly and responsibly.

Additional policies to increase affordable homes

- Work with developers and providers via the planning process and with the application of Richmond Housing Grant to continue ensuring the maximum amount of genuinely affordable housing in new developments.
- Continue actively buying back former Council homes sold under Right to Buy where this represents good value, using them to meet local housing need.
- Build on the success of our empty homes pilot to bring more empty homes back into use, including through grants to support use as temporary accommodation.
- Boost almshouse provision, building on the success of our Modern Almshouse Strategy, working with our excellent local providers to expand housing options for older people looking to retire or downsize.

WE'LL SUPPORT THOSE RENTING IN THE BOROUGH, TACKLE HOMELESSNESS AND WORK TO END ROUGH SLEEPING

Rising housing costs, the cost-of-living crisis and changes in the private rented sector are pushing more households into temporary accommodation – driving higher costs for the council and worse outcomes for families. We'll invest wisely in provision that is local, more affordable and better quality, and focus on early prevention, stability and standards to reduce homelessness, improve lives and make better use of public money.

We will:

- Invest in early homelessness prevention, reducing costs and providing better outcomes.
- Look at all options for direct delivery of good-quality temporary accommodation, including working with owners of under-utilised commercial and office space for conversion, utilising council land and buildings and continuing to buy back homes formerly sold under Right to Buy.
- Work to end rough sleeping – making it rare, brief and non-recurring with targeted support via our new rough sleeper hub and working with partners such as SPEAR, in-borough and at a sub-regional level.
- Continue our pioneering Social Housing Improvement Plan and Community Ambassador Project – giving a real voice to those living in social housing, helping them scrutinise their landlords and drive change where it’s needed, building stronger, more resilient communities.
- Strengthen support for people renting in the private sector – working with responsible landlords to raise standards, while cracking down on rogue landlords: driving improved conditions and reducing homelessness.

LEADING ON CLIMATE & NATURE ACTION

For a healthier, greener and more resilient borough



WE'LL LEAD THE WAY TO A GREENER, MORE RESILIENT RICHMOND

Building on our internationally recognised leadership in tackling the twin challenges of climate and nature emergencies – with a Cities A-List rating from CDP – we will continue to deliver against the Richmond upon Thames Climate & Nature Strategy 2025-2030.

We'll be a carbon-neutral Council by 2030, reducing Council energy bills, making Council buildings more welcoming and comfortable for residents to use, and further reducing carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.

We'll help lower bills and emissions, leading a step-change in community retrofit, energy generation, and energy resilience, and we'll work with partners to improve and protect wildlife habitats and nature connectivity across the borough, and support all our communities to prepare for and cope better with the impacts of climate change.

To support retrofit and clean, resilient, locally generated energy, we will:

- Pioneer a new approach to fast-track local renewable energy, launching the *Richmond Community Energy Co-Operative* so residents can invest in and benefit from clean local power, while cutting locally driven emissions.

- Establish the Richmond *Community Energy Accelerator Fund* to enable this, producing feasibility studies for projects including solar energy generation on public buildings, schools, community centres and places of worship.
- Support retrofit action by residents, local businesses, and community and voluntary groups who want to lower costs and increase the energy efficiency of their property by providing clear, practical advice at our new online Richmond *Smarter Homes Hub*.
- Explore participation in Regional Strategic Energy Partnerships to enable the planning and delivery of energy projects more efficiently across the region.
- Work with partners to explore and, where appropriate, implement local Heat Networks and Heat Zoning, initiatives that can support the provision of cleaner, more efficient, more reliable and more affordable heating for whole neighbourhoods.
- Support sustainable development through clear and updated Supplementary Planning Documents and free pre-application planning advice for homeowners proposing sustainability projects on their property.
- Use carbon offset contributions from developers to implement schemes to cut carbon emissions from Council buildings and make them more environmentally and financially sustainable.

To tackle the impacts of climate change and support nature, we will:

- Protect and enhance our rivers, working with partners to strengthen flood resilience, nature recovery, biodiversity, river-related recreation, and the accessibility of our riversides.
- Undertake a comprehensive survey of the borough's extensive towpath network to inform maintenance and enhancement proposals, and implement appropriate ecological management plans to support wildlife and recreation along the riverside.
- Reduce surface water flood risk through Sustainable Drainage schemes such as innovative paving and rain gardens. Promote permeable surfacing in front gardens, as well as garden biodiversity and water management on private and social housing properties.
- Work with social housing partners to align biodiversity and resilience aims.
- Use data and mapping to ensure that climate interventions to protect the most vulnerable are prioritised.
- Implement nature-based solutions to support communities in becoming more resilient to climate impacts such as heat and flooding.
- Care for and grow the borough's tree canopy, celebrating and protecting veteran trees, and supporting Friends of Street Trees in promoting the value of trees in our communities.

- Maintain current record levels of tree planting, selecting appropriate species to establish well and thrive in a changing climate, for both new and replacement trees.
- Continue to support Richmond Biodiversity Partnership's work on locally important habitats and species; promote the importance of nature connectivity on land and along waterways.
- Reduce reliance on chemicals for weed control, investigating alternative methods, supporting residents who want to initiate community weeding schemes, and trialling biological controls of invasive species.
- Develop and implement a long-term Cemetery Strategy for the borough, informed by the Law Commission's findings, national best practice, and local circumstances.
- Retain and achieve additional Green Flag awards for excellence in our parks and cemeteries; support community-led growing and greening in partnership with Friends of Parks and other local groups.

WE'LL MAKE IT EASIER TO GET AROUND, IMPROVING THE BOROUGH'S HEALTH AND AIR QUALITY

We will build on our achievements since 2018, having achieved some of the biggest improvements in air quality anywhere in the UK, reversed years of underinvestment in roads and pavements, led London in provision of on-street charging for electric vehicles and installed over 100 bike hangars locally, expanding transport options for residents. Now we will go even further.

We will:

- Consolidate Richmond's role as a national leader in improving air quality – delivering our award-winning Air Quality Action Plan 2025-2030, setting standards above national requirements and working towards World Health Organisation targets.
- Use air quality monitoring strategically to help identify areas of exceedance and develop cost-effective interventions.
- Enforce the new anti-idling PSPO to help protect our most vulnerable residents in locations like schools, town centres and level crossings.
- Continue to reverse the decades of under-investment in our roads and pavements, by sustained investment in resurfacing and preventative maintenance at a level that raises the condition of our borough's roads and pavements.
- Reduce disruption from utility company roadworks by fining those that overrun and exploring the adoption of "Lane Rental" and other powers that will incentivise a reduction in disruption to our residents.
- Make our roads safer. We will continue to work with the police and partners to prevent deaths and injuries, tackling illegal e-bikes, dangerous speeding, unsafe parking and reckless driving.

- Enhance key walking routes to make it easier for people to get to public transport, schools, shops and workplaces. These “Pedestrian Super-Routes” will be prioritised for improvements to surfaces, safe crossings, accessibility, seating, shade and shelter.
- Make it more convenient to use a bicycle, by continuing the roll-out of bike hangars, installing new Sheffield stands in key locations (including the use of kerbside space to limit the loss of pedestrian space), providing more parking areas for rental e-bikes, and creating and improving safe cycle routes throughout the borough.
- Continue to lead London in supporting cargo bike adoption by expanding rental services, providing additional cargo bike parking close to libraries, leisure centres, high streets and schools, encouraging use for local commercial deliveries and waste consolidation, and continuing to ensure that cargo bike incentives are a key part of the borough’s offering to residents exploring alternatives to car use.
- Build on our success as the outer London borough with the highest per-resident provision of EV charge points. We will continue to roll-out on-street charging facilities, with particular focus on more fast chargers, promoting cable gullies that enable residents without off-street parking to charge via domestic energy supplies, and exploring greater diversity of infrastructure, providers and technology.



BACK HEALTHY & CARING **COMMUNITIES**

For the best start in life and lifelong support



WE'LL SUPPORT HEALTHIER, MORE ACTIVE LIVES

Under the Liberal Democrats, Richmond has built a strong foundation of inclusive sport and physical activity, with recent notable progress in women's sport, community participation, and leisure partnerships. We will take this further by expanding opportunities for all ages and abilities, supporting active travel and investing in facilities so more residents can stay active in ways that work for them.

We will:

- Invest in sport, leisure and outdoor activity, including investment in Teddington Pool & Fitness Centre, Pools on the Park, Active Hampton, our sports centres at East Sheen, Hampton, Whitton and Teddington, and playgrounds and pitches across the borough to ensure they can be used productively throughout the year.
- Improve walking and cycling routes, and the accessibility of green spaces and the towpath.
- Champion parks as spaces for recreational, cultural and wellbeing opportunities, in balance with protection of wildlife and nature conservation.

- Improve sports opportunities for young people by increasing basketball court, football and hockey pitch provision, and ensuring maximum possible use of our existing pitches by supporting the installation of sports lighting where most appropriate.
- Encourage additional participation in sport by women and girls, improving access to facilities, and working with sports clubs to encourage people of all ages and abilities to become more active.
- Expand our Fairer Access Pricing Policy and promote a borough-wide Buddy Scheme to support and encourage participation in sport and leisure activities.
- Support residents with physical and mental health challenges into employment through programmes such as *Connect to Work*, helping people build confidence, independence and long-term resilience.

WE'LL GIVE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE THE BEST POSSIBLE START

Building on our strong record in children's services – rated outstanding by Ofsted – we will invest in opportunity from the very start, making sure every child gets the support they need as early as possible, thrives at school and is ready for the future. We'll protect and support improvements to ensure every borough school continues to be good or outstanding, helping young people fulfil their potential to lead happy, healthy, and productive lives.

We will:

- Invest in early help and intervention to meet children's needs at the earliest opportunity and improve outcomes for them and their families.
- Further implement predictive analytics to identify those families in need and target early help effectively.
- Strengthen intensive support services that reduce the risk of family breakdown and a need to move into further intervention.
- Expand the provision of Family Hubs as one-stop centres for advice, help navigating services, joined-up health support, youth services and parenting help.
- Deliver the actions in our Child Poverty and Best Start in Life Strategies, working with Health and community partners to provide joined-up help as soon as needs emerge.
- Help young people build the skills and experience they need for future careers, including stronger links with schools, employers and colleges, and targeted support for young people with SEND and care-experienced backgrounds.
- Expand skills partnerships with borough schools and local universities, focusing on the skills young people need for the future – including creative, digital, coding, AI and environmental skills.
- Identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and productivity of services by building collaborative approaches and shared services locally, sub-regionally and pan-London, where this delivers better outcomes for residents.

- Protect and invest in youth services and outreach work, giving young people safe spaces and trusted support.
- Support emotional health and wellbeing by developing Mental Health in Schools initiatives and strengthening outreach to ensure help is available within communities.
- Improve access to sport and opportunities for physical activity for young people, especially those who face barriers, have additional needs or protected characteristics, through the continued development of our Community Sports and Physical Activity Network with partners including local sports clubs.
- Support an active Youth Council and Children in Care Council, where young people listen to each other and make their voices heard, collaborating with decision makers to shape the changes they want to see.
- Protect and invest in SEND services and strengthen early support and transitions, delivering an increase in places at specialist schools.
- Expand and support our vital foster care, kinship care and adoption services, understanding that looked-after children and young people deserve the best opportunities to thrive and grow up in stable loving homes.
- Strengthen inclusion in education and at the heart of all our schools and special needs provision, with a focus on improvements proposed within the Government's SEND White Paper.

WE'LL BUILD CARING COMMUNITIES

We will protect and build on the success of our services, recognised as among the best in London, to make Richmond borough a place where people get support earlier, closer to home and in ways that work even better for them, their families and communities.

A place that is welcoming and accessible, proud of its role as a Borough of Sanctuary, and with opportunities for all to progress well through every stage of life.

We will:

- Prioritise early intervention for those who need support, helping to manage problems before they escalate.
- Work more closely with NHS partners to improve outcomes and value for money.
- Further join up health and social care services, working with our partners to deliver Neighbourhood Health, making best use of our spaces to ensure people get the right support in their community and that health inequalities are reduced.
- Support carers and families under pressure, with clear commitments set out in our *Richmond Adult and Young Unpaid Carers' Charter* to deliver better outcomes for unpaid and family carers and those they support, reviewed every year to ensure it delivers real change.

- Deliver sustainable costs of care by working collaboratively with providers and partners.
- Support people to live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives, thereby preventing, reducing and delaying the need for care and support, where possible.
- Support age-friendly communities by incorporating age-friendly and dementia-friendly design into our town centres and Council buildings, helping residents live healthy, active and flourishing lives regardless of age.
- Implement a joint dementia strategy so that those living with dementia and their family carers have early access to community services and support, with seamless, joined-up care between hospital, community and social care throughout the dementia journey.
- Deliver person-centred care services that are simpler, fairer and easier to access, making better use of digital tools and modern ways of working to improve delivery.
- Drive accessible policy-making – work closely with our partner organisations to ensure that the voices of disability groups and those with protected characteristics are included in policy-making.
- Extend our involvement of residents, carers and the voluntary sector in designing how we deliver social care, in line with the Council’s social care Co-Production Charter.
- Reaffirm Richmond’s status as a Borough of Sanctuary, a welcoming and inclusive borough, offering support to those fleeing conflict or persecution.
- Strengthen the Borough of Sanctuary Partnership, working together with local voluntary organisations to provide support and fellowship to sanctuary seekers.
- Promote access to leisure and sport for people with disabilities, expanding our Fairer Access Pricing Policy and developing a borough-wide Buddy Scheme, to support sports clubs to encourage all-ability participation.
- Promote and expand the Richmond Inclusive Sports and Exercise (RISE) programme to ensure our Richmond Moves Strategy applies to all residents.

DELIVER THRIVING PLACES, CULTURE & LOCAL ECONOMY

For safe, vibrant neighbourhoods we're proud to call home



WE'LL CREATE THRIVING PLACES AND GROW OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

High streets are the beating heart of our community, places that give a sense of local pride and serve our local economic, social and environmental needs.

But the way people shop and use town centres is changing fast. There is greater focus on experience, leisure and spending time in places rather than short, transactional shopping trips.

Building on our successes through our Night-Time Strategy, town centre events and festivals, and investment in public spaces – including major projects like the transformation of Twickenham's Riverside – we will take the next step in strengthening Richmond's places and economy.

We will support vibrant town centres where people want to stay longer, we will champion Richmond's neighbourhoods and independent businesses and infrastructure in ways that work for residents and respect our environment, and we will support the borough's long-term financial sustainability, helping our local economy thrive for years to come.

To support thriving high streets and town centres, we will:

- Complete the regeneration of Twickenham's Riverside, delivering new homes – including 50% affordable – as well as outdoor leisure space, shops and services, better connecting the river to the town and providing a new heart for Twickenham.
- Create a vibrant, welcoming Richmond Town Centre with new public spaces, activities and events, children's play, and tranquil areas. As part of this, we will explore options for greater pedestrianisation, ensuring any changes are evidence-led and maintain accessibility.
- Stand up for our town centres and high streets, by lobbying the government for fairer business rates and greater local retention and reinvestment, while supporting independent and existing businesses to adapt to Government changes and thrive in a changing retail and hospitality landscape.
- Work to bring empty shops back into use, including the consideration of High Street Rental Auctions where appropriate, supporting small businesses, studios, performance spaces, exhibitions, pop-ups and start-ups.
- Invest in infrastructure to ensure town centres remain flexible and are inclusive, safe and vibrant for everyone, enhancing accessibility, seating, quality of roads and pavements, services and spaces for the elderly and young people and supporting community use. Improvements will be delivered in phases and in partnership with local communities.
- Further improve the look, feel and day-to-day management of our town centres:
 - Explore approaches to reduce congestion and emissions such as freight consolidation and last-mile delivery solutions, limiting large vehicle intrusion.
 - Take action on clutter such as over-proliferation of estate-agent boards.
 - Increase greenery and shade, improving resilience to extreme weather.
 - Work with businesses to improve waste collection, town centre recycling options, street cleaning and additional event bins in busy areas.
 - Improve lighting, sightlines and wayfinding.
- Support a strong evening and night-time economy, building on our Night-Time Strategy to boost footfall and support workers while protecting residents' quality of life.
- Develop a place-based partnerships model (High Street Improvement District), bringing together businesses, cultural organisations, landlords, community groups and residents to shape the future of our town centres, and pilot this approach in Richmond town centre.
- Work with partners to deliver local festivals, performances, markets and cultural events, from farmers' markets to craft and community events, creating flexible event space where appropriate and feasible.

To grow a strong and sustainable local economy, we will:

- Develop and implement our Growth Strategy to attract investment and encourage sustainable growth across the creative, cultural, sports, science and technology sectors.
- Engage early and strategically with major employers and institutions, working in partnership to help shape long-term plans around skills, transport, growth and development – supporting investment that benefits employers, residents and the wider economy.
- Help local people into skilled work in local town centres, including support for Connect To Work, SEND internships and apprenticeships and meaningful jobs for young residents.
- Support small and medium enterprises through access to advice, guidance on navigating Government changes and resources, continuing to develop the Richmond Business Hub and Re:Create and partnering with local organisations.
- Promote the visitor economy, supporting local businesses, cultural venues and events while increasing footfall and spend in our town centres and neighbourhoods

WE'LL KEEP RICHMOND WELCOMING AND SAFE

Richmond remains the safest borough in London, with less crime than the national average, reflecting strong partnership working and sustained action to tackle ASB and crime, although there is always more to do. We will continue to prioritise actions to stop Violence Against Women and Girls and work hard to keep Richmond safe for all residents, including young people, women, and LGBTQ+ people, as well as those that work in the night-time economy.

We will:

- Tackle anti-social behaviour and crime hotspots, working closely with the Police and Community Safety partners.
- Build on our investment in modern, high-definition CCTV, ensuring it is used intelligently, effectively and responsibly, with close partnership working between the Council, Police and Community Safety partners.
- Maintain investment in prevention of violence and abuse against women and girls, retaining our White Ribbon accreditation, and building partnerships with schools, sports clubs, and community groups. Through education, youth engagement, and bystander training, we will challenge harmful behaviours and promote respectful inclusive attitudes across the borough.
- Ensure survivors of violence and abuse receive the care, protection and support they need, creating a borough where everyone can live free from fear.
- Improve safety and trust in borough-managed parks, through a community-focused parks and events police service.

- Promote safe enjoyment of our rivers, working with partners including the Police, Fire Brigade, RNLI and local schools.

WE WILL SUPPORT CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND LOCAL PRIDE

Culture plays a vital role in shaping thriving places and a strong local economy. With libraries, arts partnerships and creative industries already at the heart of borough life, we will further support culture as a driver of growth, strong communities and local pride.

We will:

- Facilitate arts, culture, sport, events and festivals, celebrating all the diverse communities which contribute to the cultural richness of our borough.
- Celebrate the borough's rich cultural heritage, including events to highlight significant milestones, such as the 250th anniversary of Richmond Bridge, the oldest surviving river crossing of the Thames in London.
- Encourage new creativity and expression, particularly for young people – working with local artists, venues, schools, community organisations, and major institutions to support participation, develop talent, attract audiences and ensure culture plays a central role in place-making, wellbeing and the local economy.
- Explore the use of Council-owned buildings to create community hubs, combining cultural, educational, leisure and small-scale commercial activity, to meet local needs in the heart of our communities.
- Encourage public art, creative interventions and storytelling that celebrate local identity, attracting visitors, increasing footfall and boosting the local economy.
- Reduce red tape for community-led events – making it easier for local groups to organise safe, inclusive activities that bring people together and animate our public spaces.
- Become the first Borough of Music – recognising our rich musical legacy, inspiring and encouraging new and emerging musicians.

CONCLUSION

With Liberal Democrat leadership, Richmond will:

- protect what matters,
- improve how the Council works,
- and invest confidently in the borough's future.

A fairer, healthier borough. A greener, more resilient future. A safe and thriving place to live.

