

Autumn / Winter 2021



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES

SAVE

the hedgehogs

NEW LEISURE CENTRE

Award

WINNING

Kingston



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NEW HOMES / SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMUNITY / BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY / CLIMATE CHANGE

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I am very **honoured** and **humbled** to be the **new Leader of Kingston Council** and I look forward to **working together** with you in the **future.**

We have such a rich history and heritage and so many diverse communities, that my vision for our borough is that of inclusivity - a Kingston that works for all residents and communities.

The last 18 months have been a challenge for us all and like many other boroughs, we are now being impacted by HGV driver shortages. As we manage the situation, it may sometimes take longer for us to collect your waste, but please be assured we are working hard to reduce the impact on residents as much as possible.

Another challenge we're all currently facing is climate change. The impact of global warming is getting uncomfortably close to home with more freakish weather and flooding.

While governments discuss the global challenge, we can all play our part in fighting the issue. That's why, as a council, we declared a climate emergency in 2019.

The need to decarbonise is a priority and we have:

- Removed single-use plastic from our facilities
- Planted 1,500 trees and on target to have planted 2,000 by 2022
- Introduced a number of school streets to encourage walking to school
- Built 13 kilometres of cycle lanes with Transport for London funding to make it easier for people to move from four wheels to two
- Installed 130 electric vehicle charging points.

We also aim to reach net carbon zero for council buildings by 2030, but there's much more to do. One of the reasons I am excited about Kingston's new leisure centre and the regeneration of the Cambridge Road Estate is our ambition to make them among the greenest buildings in the country.

We are working with Thames Water on an innovative scheme to turn sewage waste into clean energy which could heat a number of major new developments in Kingston.

We are also in the early stages of planning to deliver green and affordable new homes on the Cattle Market. The Mayor of London's legally-binding housing targets mean we have to build 10,000 new homes over the next decade and the Government planning proposal could see this double. We are challenging these targets, but we need to provide new homes and there's a strong environmental argument for building near public transport and protecting our green belt.

The challenge of global warming is hugely daunting but even as individuals we can help. Whether that's driving less, heating our homes more efficiently, changing our eating habits or repairing things rather than replacing them. Time is running out and future generations will not forgive us if we don't act now.

Councillor Andreas Kirsch
Leader of Kingston Council

Welcome to our printed autumn/winter edition of *Your Kingston*

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New LEISURE CENTRE

Brand new leisure centre with state-of-the-art pool and fantastic new facilities for everyone.

The background

When the roof of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre was deemed unsafe at the end of 2019 we had no choice but to close the building immediately.

As the borough battled through the pandemic, we gave careful consideration to both replacing the roof and to building a brand new leisure centre.

“I’m delighted you are keeping the squash courts! A climbing wall would be amazing.”

Kingston resident



Repairing the roof - estimated to cost at least £5m - didn't make financial sense. The Kingfisher was built in 1984 and an official report back in 2016 had told us that the building was coming to the end of its lifespan.

Given the building's age, this predicted £5m cost might well have risen significantly. It would also have been extremely short-sighted to spend millions of pounds repairing an old building that was likely to require further repair or closure in a few years. For these reasons we decided a new leisure centre on the Kingfisher site is the best option both financially and to offer residents fantastic new facilities. The facilities at the Kingfisher do not reflect what people expect from a leisure centre today – something that was clear in your feedback.

“I am largely supportive of the proposals and very much like the open and bright design of the new building.”

Kingston resident

The future

Kingston's planning committee has now agreed to demolish the existing building and we have given a categorical commitment to replace it with a hugely improved leisure centre.

In more than 4,000 responses, you told us what you'd like.

Here's what we plan to include:

- Two new pools (one competition-standard, one teaching pool)
- A splash deck and a soft play area for children
- A multi-court sports hall for basketball, badminton and netball
- Multiple squash courts
- A modern gym
- Fitness and dance studios
- Clip and climb wall
- Access and sports facilities for disabled people throughout.



A number of specialists have now been recruited to make the new facility a reality. The architects we have brought on board are responsible for the fantastic Britannia Leisure Centre in Hackney and Kingston plans a centre at least as impressive.

“I really like the proposal to encourage sports and leisure. Kingston desperately needs this leisure centre”.

Kingston resident

In addition to providing amazing new facilities and much improved accessibility, building a new leisure centre is the right decision in terms of Kingston's response to the climate emergency. The existing Kingfisher building is old and energy inefficient.



A new 'Kingfisher' will be built to the highest and most advanced environmental standards so Kingston can have a leisure centre that is truly sustainable for many years to come. Beyond providing much better leisure facilities, the proposed new centre will also be a centrepiece in Kingston's heritage-led regeneration of the town centre.

The new development will connect much more effectively to the neighbouring Kingston Museum and library, providing a whole range of leisure and cultural opportunities that everyone can enjoy, making the most of the borough's rich heritage and history.

“The leisure centre should include disabled parking, access and hoists.”

Kingston resident

The sudden closure of the much loved Kingfisher was unfortunate and completely unexpected, but the good news is that no matter where you live in the borough, you can look forward to using a fantastic new leisure centre, with first-class facilities, in 2024.

Images from the Britannia Leisure Centre in Hackney





Sustainable & AFFORDABLE NEW HOMES



We are in the early stages of **planning** to deliver **green, sustainable and affordable new homes** on the Cattle Market car park site.

The Mayor of London's legally-binding housing targets mean Kingston has to build 10,000 homes over the next decade. Government planning proposals could see this double.

We will do this in the most sustainable way, supporting our town centre and creating great places for residents, visitors and businesses through a heritage-led approach to development.

While we are challenging these targets, we need to provide new housing, especially affordable homes. Many young people can't afford to rent or buy in the borough. There are 925 households living in temporary accommodation and 4,068 people on our Housing Register. Many are families and this is an unacceptable way for them to live, without a permanent home.

We also need homes that support an ageing population and those who access social care. We need to offer choice and accessibility, with the right housing in the right place.

The Cattle Market offers an excellent opportunity to build much-needed homes.

It is a Brownfield site, avoiding development on Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land, it is close to public transport, which is good for the environment, enabling people to live sustainably and car-free.

It is vital we make new homes environmentally friendly. We want to deliver on our climate commitments and as part of an innovative scheme with Thames Water we aim to heat these homes with zero carbon energy from the Hogsmill River.

The homes will be built using the most sustainable methods to meet our ambitious green targets.

In order for residents and businesses to feedback on the plans, we will share proposals as they are developed. Should this go ahead, it is proposed to relocate the Monday Market from the Cattle Market site to a nearby road as an open-air street market.



Praise FOR KINGSTON

We were recently among a select group of councils to become a **finalist** at the prestigious national **Municipal Journal (MJ) awards**. We're **delighted** to say we won the **'Senior Leadership Team'** award and were finalists in the **'Local Authority of the Year'** and **'Digital Transformation'** categories.

The annual awards, organised by leading local government magazine The MJ, is a top accolade for councils.

It means we've been judged as one of the best performing councils in the country.

Key to helping us onto the shortlist was the borough's effective response to COVID-19 and the generous endorsement of many of the local organisations we worked with during the pandemic.

The Kingston Strategic Partnership came into its own during the crisis, with all the organisations working together seamlessly with the voluntary sector and community groups to deliver united support to those in need.

The borough quickly formed the Kingston Stronger Together Hub, with around 350 volunteers providing crucial support to 3,100 households.

"The benefits are, without doubt, that we have worked closer together, across organisations, with the patient and public in the centre."

Local GP

The COVID-19 response illustrated the power of groups, organisations and local people working effectively together to serve residents and businesses.

And the benefit of effective partnership working has gone well beyond the immediate support to help people through the pandemic.

For example, the Kingston Safer Partnership has been working to make the whole borough a safer place and we're really pleased that there will now be 25 new police officers in the town centre.

"The council has been an exceptional partner during the most difficult year. This manifests in effective partnership working which has resulted in the lowest crime rate in London."

Elisabeth Chapple
Kingston's Policing Commander

The strength of the borough's partnership working clearly helped Kingston stand out in this coveted award. At the MJ awards ceremony on 17 September, we were also commended for 'Best Social Housing Initiative' and 'Rising Star'.

Kingston Strategic Partnership members:

- Department for Work & Pensions
- GP representative
- Kingston & Richmond Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Kingston Chamber of Commerce
- Kingston College
- Kingston Hospital
- Kingston Race & Equalities Council
- Kingston University
- Kingston Voluntary Action
- Kingston First
- London Fire Brigade
- Metropolitan Police
- Kingston Council
- South Thames Colleges Group
- Staywell
- Your Healthcare CIC



Boost YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

Throughout the **pandemic**, people across our **borough** have **pulled together** in a **remarkable** way to **support** each other.

At the heart of our response has been local GPs, pharmacists and countless volunteers who have worked tirelessly to deliver the vaccination programme.

By doing so you have given yourself the best protection possible against the virus, and played a crucial part in protecting your family, friends and our wider community.

COVID-19 jobs

115,003 of you, that's 75%* of people who live in the borough, have stepped forward to receive both doses of the COVID jab.

As winter sets in, the vaccine remains our first and strongest line of defence against COVID-19.

It is safe and effective, and by getting fully vaccinated, you can help safeguard our local NHS from becoming overwhelmed during the winter.

Everyone over the age of 18 is eligible for two doses of an appropriate COVID jab, while those aged 12-17 are being offered one single dose of the Pfizer vaccine. If you haven't had yours yet, don't worry! This is an 'evergreen' offer - you can come forward now to make sure you are fully protected for the winter months.

Book your vaccine at nhs.uk/CovidVaccination

A targeted COVID booster programme is also being rolled out, to ensure those more at risk from the effects of the virus have maximum protection.

**Correct as of 31/10/2021*

Flu jabs

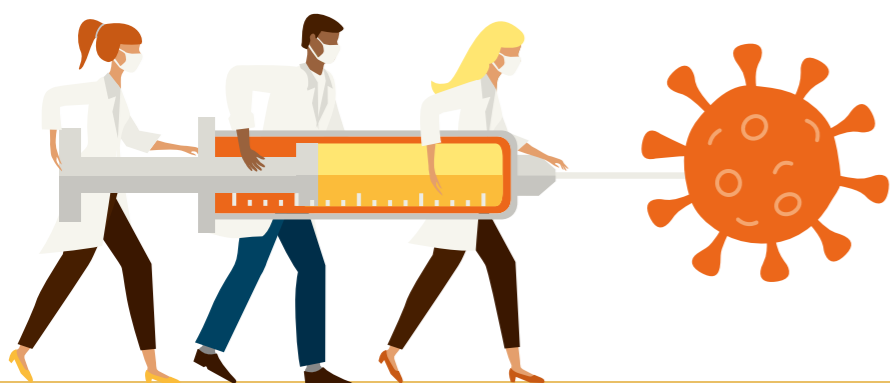
Flu and COVID can both be life threatening and spread more easily in winter when we are all crowded together inside.



Most adults are eligible for a flu jab, while many will be eligible for the COVID-19 booster or both.

This is the most effective way to boost your natural immunity. If you've had COVID-19, it's safe to have the flu vaccine. It will still be effective at helping to prevent flu.

Find out more at nhs.uk



MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

Over **350**

volunteers in the Kingston Stronger Together Hub



About **3100**

households supported with food packages and prescriptions

Over **8k**



calls, texts and letters were sent to council tenants offering support

Over **500**

people became library members as the service moved online

Between March and May 2020 more than

18k gloves

21k masks

35k aprons

were delivered to care workers and other critical staff



Join KINGSTON'S CLIMATE CONVERSATION

We are embracing a greener future across the borough - setting out our plans to fight climate change and improve air quality.

We all need to take action to help tackle climate change. If not, the weather will become more extreme, food will be harder to produce, sea levels will rise, flooding would increase and biodiversity could be damaged forever.

Our draft Climate Action Plan sets out the steps we'll take to play our part in fighting climate change.

Have your say on the draft plan and join Kingston's climate conversation at kingstonletstalk.co.uk/climate-conversation

MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

Kingston held the UK's first **citizens' assembly** on air quality.

Kingston's citizens' assembly on air quality

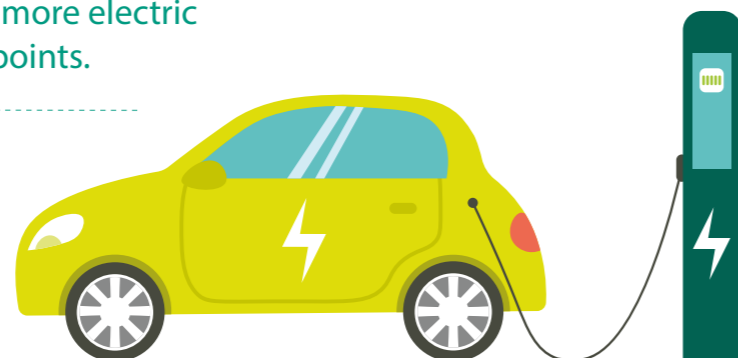
In 2019, we held a citizens' assembly with randomly selected residents from across the borough to shape the ways we can all improve air quality in Kingston.

The recommendations now form part of the borough's Air Quality Action Plan, setting out actions that need to be taken between 2021 and 2026.

These include reducing air pollution around schools, improving walking and cycling facilities and helping us to use electric cars by providing more electric charging points.



You can read the full Air Quality Action Plan on our website at kingston.gov.uk/AQAP



Be the solution to pollution

In August, we launched a campaign to encourage residents and visitors to make fewer journeys by car to help tackle climate change and improve Kingston's air quality.

'#BeTheSolution' is part of London's Low Carbon Transport programme. Residents joined a series of focus groups to discuss their transport habits and what would motivate them to make fewer journeys by car.

Thank you to everyone involved in shaping the ideas for bringing the campaign to life. Keep an eye out around the borough for the designs!

By leaving the car at home, you are helping reduce the amount of fossil fuels being burnt. Fewer vehicles on our roads will improve our air quality and so improve the health of people and wildlife.



Protecting our local hedgehogs

As part of our Community Grants Programme, we awarded The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) funding to help halt hedgehog population decline.

Hedgehogs are one of the fastest declining mammals in the UK. Almost 50 Kingston residents across Surbiton and Tolworth have now become local Hedgehog Champions.

They have set up wildlife cameras in their gardens and local nature reserves to monitor hedgehog activity.

The data collected from the cameras will help to form recommendations from the Zoology Institute and will be incorporated into the council's Biodiversity Action Plan.





Bringing KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE TO LIFE



Sculpture Trail

We've opened a new Sculpture Trail in collaboration with Kingston University, Kingston Council and Canbury Community Trust, with seven new contemporary artworks across the town centre. Residents and visitors have been voting for their favourite and **Party Animal** got 51% of the votes (1,700). This will now become a permanent feature.

To find out more visit kingstonfirst.co.uk/sculpture-trail



Kingston First

Kirsten Henly from Kingston's Business Improvement District - Kingston First, told us about plans for the town centre.

Hello!



In the next issue we will take a look at the exciting things happening in high streets across the borough - from New Malden to Tolworth, Norbiton to Chessington, Hook and Surbiton.

The last 18 months have been challenging for all of us. Many businesses have shown incredible resilience and flexibility and we are starting to see signs of recovery with people returning to Kingston and spending locally.

Kingston has lots to offer residents and visitors - from a great shopping experience to the beautiful riverside. It's also a fantastic place to work.

I think these are key reasons why we've maintained a high number of people using the facilities and seen investment continue to come into the town. Kingston has even featured in Ipsos Mori's recovery index and was named one of the top ten cities bouncing back after the pandemic.

And there are more exciting things to come for Kingston. We've been leading on various projects to enhance the town centre experience to encourage people to visit and spend time in Kingston supporting the local economy.



Winner!



Cleaner greener

We've also been working with the council to create a greener and more welcoming street environment. This includes new planters and seating on Thames Street, Lower Fife Road and the Station Plaza.



We are seeking feedback from the local community on how these are working on the ground and we hope we can make more permanent changes to these spaces in the coming months.

We're also working with Kingston based landscape architects Davies White Ltd and The Edible Bus Stop design studio to transform Eagle Brewery Wharf, on Kingston's riverside, and Memorial Gardens, in the centre of the town, into green spaces that improve the walking experience for pedestrians. This also encourages wellbeing and social and cultural activities, as well as acknowledging their historical significance.

Come and see

I'd like to encourage residents to come into town and enjoy what it has to offer and to spend locally where they can. Kingston is a diverse and vibrant town with a strong community spirit. It's a unique gem on the riverside and if we can encourage people to visit we can help support the local economy and strengthen the town centre experience.

MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

£200,000 secured to transform the riverside



To find out more about Kingston First and the initiatives mentioned visit kingstonfirst.co.uk

Kirsten x

Kingston is a **unique and historic** borough. We have **ambitious plans** to **celebrate** what makes Kingston **special** and shape a future that **helps all residents** make the most of **opportunities**.



Spotlight ON THE COMMUNITY

Our borough has a wide range of **diverse charities and community interest groups** and we really **value** working with them. This time we spoke to **Robin Hutchinson from The Community Brain.**



What does The Community Brain do?

We're a community interest company based in the borough. For over 12 years we've been devising and delivering bespoke projects that celebrate the distinctiveness of communities through the arts, education and local history.

We believe in giving people 'permission' to be brilliant, because everyone can be brilliant if they are given the support and encouragement they need.

MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

Our vision for the future: more local, more mutual, more equitable, more sustainable.

Can you tell us about the communities taskforce?

During COVID we have seen new levels of community activism, mutual support and aid. We are pleased to be part of the communities taskforce, which aims to support people across the borough to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. We've been discussing how we can best sustain this level of positive engagement and activity to help shape a better future for the borough.

What are you most proud of?

Despite this challenging time we've managed to keep working in different ways. The Museum of Today, where people selected an object from their home that has a particular resonance and told its story, has been a fabulous way of working virtually. Our soup kitchen showed the depth of need in our communities and reflected inequalities locally.

What initiatives are you running at the moment?

We're continuing working in Surbiton and Tolworth, in the streets and on the Museum of Futures (a space to play in and a platform to create, share and celebrate), Farm of Futures (a community hub promoting sustainable growth and food production) and Baking Ideas at Tolworth Station (a community kitchen / meeting space).

To learn more about The Community Brain visit thecommunitybrain.org or email contact@thecommunitybrain.org



Education FOR ALL

Following what has been a **very tough 18 months** for our schools, we'd like to thank teachers, school staff, support services, families and friends for their **patience, resilience and determination.**

We're very proud of all our students and their achievements, having had to adapt to lockdowns, remote learning and significant changes to the school day.

Kingston Libraries

Libraries support children to learn online through the pandemic.

Kingston Libraries were first in the country to live stream rhyme time sessions, with up to 500 people attending each week.

MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

Launch: 5692 impressions on Twitter, 5500 people reached on Facebook

One year later: 450+ videos produced, 132,000 views on social media, 140+ interactive events



To support older children, the monthly Chatterbooks reading clubs moved online and we started a teen book group.

The team produced a variety of book reviews, interviews, activity sheets and one off virtual events, as well as encouraging children and teachers to borrow e-books and audiobooks.

A guide to digital literacy was also published to help children safely navigate online learning.

Find out more at kingston.gov.uk/library

New provision

New special educational needs and disability provision.

In September, we introduced 40 new specialist school places for children between four and 19. This includes Key Stage 2 support at Alexandra School in North Kingston for children with moderate learning needs and physical disabilities.

There's another class of Dysart School, for children with complex needs, as well as post-16 provision at Malden Oaks for young people with social, emotional and mental health needs.

MJ AWARD CONTRIBUTION:

Children's Services rated **outstanding**

Free school lunches

Supporting vulnerable families through the school holidays.

Kingston is committed to making sure that children from the borough's lowest income families don't go hungry.

We worked with schools and other local partners to provide supermarket vouchers for families with children who are eligible for free school meals, as well as vulnerable two, three and four year olds. Over 3,500 children benefited from this during the school holidays.



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kingston.gov.uk/flytip



KINGSTON ADULT EDUCATION



Thinking about learning something new?

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DID YOU KNOW ? IT TAKES **LESS THAN 5 MINUTES** TO REGISTER TO VOTE!

gov.uk/register-to-vote

- 1 HAVE YOUR NATIONAL INSURANCE NUMBER HANDY
- 2 GO TO THE GOV.UK WEBSITE
- 3 REGISTER TO VOTE

Christmas IS COMING!

Christmas Market

Kingston's Christmas Market is back and will be **open** until 31 December.

kingstonchristmasmarket.co.uk

Christmas waste collections

There will be **no changes** to the collection schedule this year as Christmas Day and New Year's Day both fall on a Saturday.

kingston.gov.uk/recycling

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