

RE:IMAGINED KINGSTON

KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE



ARUP

CONTENTS

	Contents.....	2
E.	Executive Summary	
	Re:Imagined Kingston.....	7
C.	COVID-19 Response	
	Effects of COVID-19.....	12
1.	Baseline Analysis and Vision	
1.	Existing Information Review	
	Introduction.....	18
	Documents Map.....	26
	Documents Timeline.....	28
	Our Key Findings.....	30
2.	Baseline Analysis	
	Kingston's History.....	34
	Kingston Today.....	35
	Strengths.....	44
	Weaknesses.....	46
	Opportunities.....	48
	Threats.....	50
3.	So What? Understanding the Trends	
	7 Trends for Kingston Town Centre.....	54
	Economy.....	56
	Diversity.....	60
	Place.....	64
	Education.....	68
	Resilience.....	70
	Moving.....	72
	Digital.....	76

4.	Vision and Objectives	
	Vision	82
	Objectives.....	84
5.	Current State	
	Town Centre Analysis	96
	Current TC Land Use.....	100
	Current TC Building Heights	102
	Current TC View Corridors	104
	Perception of Place.....	106
	Critical Physical Constraints	108
	Analysis	110
6.	Framework	
	Linking Trends and Opportunities.....	114
	Framework.....	116
	Framework Sections	118
	Key Moves	120
	Small interventions as catalysts.....	130
7.	Deployment of the 4 Key Moves	
	Big projects	136
	Key Move 1: Concentrate.....	144
	Key Move 2: Connect	146
	Key Move 3: Create	152
	Key Move 4: Curate	156
	Next Steps.....	160
	Conclusion	161
A1.	Appendix 1	
A2.	Appendix 2	





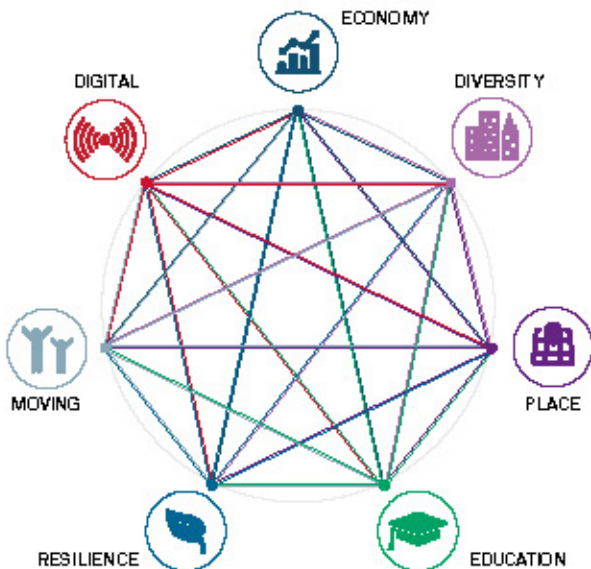
Executive Summary



RE:IMAGINED KINGSTON

Kingston Town Centre is facing a critical moment with the changing nature of retail, climate change and employment trends, which has only been amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. But just as with the many other challenges faced in the town's long history, this whilst a critical moment, Kingston is resilient, proactive and abundant with opportunity to provide new opportunities and outcomes for the people and businesses who call it home.

A successful vision for the town centre's future must rest on a strong understanding of its strengths and challenges. The first half of the phase one report focusses on this. It contextualises the COVID-19 pandemic as an accelerant of pre-pandemic trends and provides key baseline information on the population, economy, and physical characteristics of the town centre.



These can be understood as a set of **seven trends** affecting Kingston Town Centre.

- There has been a shift in retail patterns which is impacting high streets and their ongoing **resilience**.
- The role of the town centre is changing and suggests a need to **diversify** its use and ensure it can better serve residents, workers and visitors.
- Particular care is needed for **public space** ensuring there are moments of green oases and dwell space in what is a thriving urban environment.
- There is a need to focus on the town centres relationship with **higher education** and the place where they are located.
- **Climate change** needs to urgently be addressed with projects to drive and nurture environmental resilience.
- **Movement** whether walking, cycling or through improved public transport needs to be a focus especially with changes to work and retail and to deliver better air quality and climate resilience.
- Kingston Town Centre needs to respond to and support the **digital** agenda to remain a competitive place to invest and to use technology to support new uses and innovation

The report examines each of these trends in detail, with national and global reach, then explaining what it means specifically for Kingston Town Centre. There are case study examples that demonstrate how different places are responding to change.

THE FRAMEWORK

The framework is further guided by seven objectives which correspond to the seven trends and are designed to deliver change for Kingston Town Centre. The report identifies specific strategies to achieve each of the objectives. For example, the strategy 'Capture Potential' responds to the education trend, and the objective calls for Kingston Town Centre to provide high quality workspaces and offices to retain graduates and encourage students to spend time in the town centre.

The baseline analysis, identification of seven trends, and the creation of a vision and objectives for the town centre all ultimately combine to create the main purpose of this document: a framework for the town centre's growth and a strategy to guide development.

THE FOUR KEY MOVES

The framework is comprised of four key moves which build on existing initiatives to improve the town centre and proposals from earlier studies such as Reimagining Kingston Town Centre.

The four key moves are:

- **Concentrate** the town centre
- **Connect** to the river and wider area
- **Create** hubs of activities
- **Curate** activities along the routes

Taken together, these four key moves represent a high-level strategy for the physical transformation of the town centre in support of realising the vision and objectives.

The **concentrate** key move proposes to concentrate activities into the core of the town centre. In particular, it seeks to redirect development, energy and footfall from the creeping growth along eastern edge back towards the town centre and the river. This will free up sites on the edges of the activity centre for development and unlock new opportunities for focussed public realm improvements.



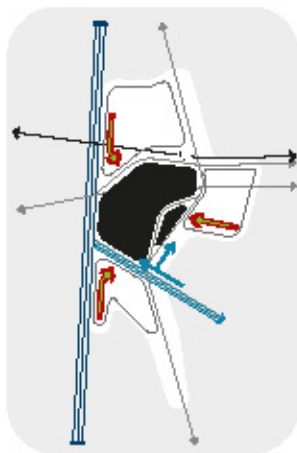
The **connect** key move proposes to make dramatic improvements to promote walking and cycling and to reduce the prevalence of private cars in the town centre. To do this, it proposes to create a stronger sense of gateways into the town centre, to mitigate the physical and mental boundaries created by the railway along the northside of the town centre and the gyratory encircling and penning in the town centre.

Within the consolidated town centre, the **create** key move recommends creation of character areas which build on existing educational, cultural and natural assets. The town centre becomes a locus of retail, food and beverage and night-time activities and other areas become areas for a retreat into nature or a mixing point between the civic spaces of the town centre and the anchors created by institutions of higher education.

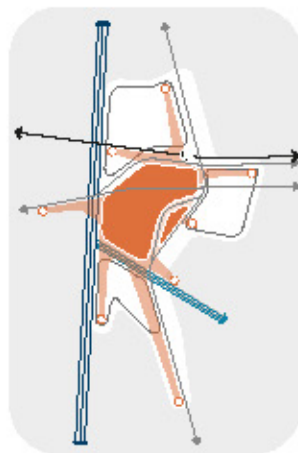
Lastly, the **curate** key move focusses on delivering a sense of place and activities along six key routes into and through Kingston. This includes revitalising the Hogsmill River corridor and strengthening the connections between the town centres and the areas to the north and south. Curating involves supporting a mixture of uses conducive to a 24-hour economy which can support the full range of lifestyles.

In summary, the vision, objectives and framework seek to prepare Kingston Town Centre for the future, ensuring that it can thrive in the decades to come and continue its preeminent role as a focal point of activity along the River Thames.

This Vision would allow the already strong partnership the Council has with key stakeholders in the community, business and educational sectors to work to strengthen and diversify the town centre over the next 15 years.



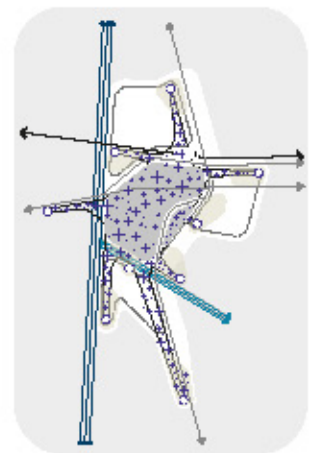
CONCENTRATE
the Town Centre



CONNECT
to the river and wider area



CREATE
hubs of activities



CURATE
activities along the routes

COVID-19

Response

2. /

EFFECTS OF COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

This work was commissioned before the COVID-19 pandemic had reached the UK. The Arup team had started research and prepared findings, identifying the key trends and key moves to be included in the framework just as COVID-19 saw the country move into lock down.

Therefore, there has been adjustment to the evidence base and trends to reflect on the impacts that the pandemic could place on the town centre in the short term. The intention for the Kingston Town Centre Vision and the Framework is to place a number of flexible key moves to allow the Council to take confident decisions about the future uses and shape of the town centre. COVID-19 will clearly impact how decisions can be taken in the short term but it is the intention for this study to show leadership, progress and confidence in the ability for the town centre to continue on an upward trajectory with regards to economic performance, resilience and quality placemaking for its businesses and residents.

This study will set out a clear vision and set of objectives to ensure that the economy can recover quickly and move into a period of strong growth. The impact of COVID-19 is changing daily and the available of data is such that the picture is likely to evolve. A series of scenarios will start to emerge over the coming months – led by Government – which should start to set out what the impact will be on the economy and how long lasting the downturn will be.

In light of the changing situation and the need for the Town Centre work to progress to achieve long term objectives linked to place

and productivity, a number of observations and ideas are described below, with the caveat that the richness and availability of long term data is missing.

SECTOR PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH

The retail sector will be and already has been impacted by COVID-19 with a lot of commentary on what the wider implications might be. As discussed in the baseline section and key trends, retail has been adapting and transforming over the past decade as the internet and user experience has evolved. The focus on retail and proposals to contract and condense retail uses in the town centre has been thought about for some time and is included in this work. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to accelerate this process rather than change its direction. The framework was already addressing how the town centre will need to respond to the changing nature of retail and therefore the current situation is simply polarising this need. Something that will need wider consideration is the ability to respond quickly to vacant units and the impact this could have on civic pride and place making. In planning policy terms, this may mean considering a flexible approach to change of use or interim and meanwhile use strategies to create opportunities to activate 'empty or dead space'. There will be wider impacts on the retail sector if the economy falls into a deep recession because local economic activity, confidence and disposable income will also be impacted, placing even further and harder pressure on retailers and food and beverage retailers. Unemployment figures and GVA figures will be published and should be tracked and monitored over the coming months.



MOVING FORWARD

EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Sector performance across different industries could also see a downturn in performance although there are some sectors where there might not be a marked shift in the way they perform. Digital and high-tech industries by way of example have previously been resilient to economic downturn and recession (notably in 2008 – 2009) and with automation and job creation in the digital and high-tech sectors being prevalent over recent years, thinking about where these sectors might want to be based and grow could be an important line of enquiry as new uses are proposed in the town centre.

Working closely with the University and FE colleges in the borough will also be an important touchpoint on where economic activity might be focused both in terms of graduate employment and start-ups, and also given the education sector is a large employer in its own right.

INVESTING IN PLACE AND PUBLIC REALM

Past recessions and shock events in the capital have seen the recovery guided by the public sector. In Kingston Town Centre, the Leader and officers are committed to ensuring that short term recovery is supported by its long-term plan to deliver quality public realm and healthy and active streets to ensure that the businesses and residents experience good health and well-being and investment continues to flow. The major occupiers, landlords and developers in the town centre are principally focused on ensuring a good town centre experience which means that investment in place and public realm needs to remain high up the agenda.

Short term investment in external spaces and re-purposing vacant units for food and beverage businesses – Hawker spaces that enable local businesses to trade and drive footfall in a sustainable socially distanced way. This may mean closer working with Licencing Authorities to enable these activities to take place.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Kingston has a strong reputation for working in partnership with businesses and organisations in the borough and Kingston First is a very proactive organisation with an active membership and clear plan to deliver the best outcomes possible for the Town Centre. The impact of COVID-19 is likely to mean that partners will need to work together to leverage as much value as possible to fund and finance projects in the future. The Town Centre needs investment and the work in this study will allow the Council to place a package of investment with the GLA, TfL or central Government to demonstrate it is ready to deliver and accelerate development and growth.

TRAVEL AND MOVEMENT

Kingston relies on car customers, as well as local walk and public transport trips to help support the range of retail within the town centre and post Covid there will be a risk that the public use the car more to travel and avoid public transport. There are however key links within the town where pavement and cycle lane widths would not facilitate social distancing and moves such as lane reallocation on Kingston Bridge to help the public access the river and parks

as well as visit the town centre by foot and cycle. Helping to change travel demand is important longer term, but getting that balance right requires constant monitoring to ensure Kingston's customers can access the town and drive retail sales.

Commuting patterns into London will change in the short term, largely constrained by the public transport network capacity and this may have longer term ramifications. Residents may choose to work from home more in the future or businesses may look to establish local collaboration hubs to facilitate face to face engagement. This could be in the form of satellite offices or drop-in collaborative office spaces. This could offer resilience and drive new footfall within the town retaining skilled employment and offer greater opportunities for collaboration.

Whilst many residents will have had to rely upon online ecommerce to satisfy demand for products during lockdown, this increases local delivery trips and is often impersonal. Many residents have also developed a newfound sense of local community with local help groups developed and support initiatives being developed. This has also led to the discovery of local businesses through recommendations, and a sense that these businesses should be supported in the future. Supporting local businesses and retailers to have online presence and supporting and promoting local businesses could lead to greater degree of 'localism' that may help to counter the move to online retail.



Baseline Analysis and Vision

INTRODUCTION



Arup were appointed by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Kingston First to develop a Vision and Framework for the Town Centre. The need for a strong vision and clear set of priorities is in response to the changing nature of retail and a moment to define an identity for Kingston which can celebrate its rich and historic cultural heritage whilst bringing the town centre into the era of innovation and successful economies hinging on mixed use environments.

The town centre is undoubtedly rich with latent potential to do more for the existing local businesses and communities whilst forging a path to attract new employers and residents. Kingston has long been a success story for south London and the wider region and now, more than ever, is the time to have a clear, ambitious and deliverable plan to ensure it remains resilient and can thrive.

The town centre has a strong business base including commercial businesses, excellent retail and leisure with many restaurants and local amenities. There has, however, been churn in the town centre with both the closure and departure of well-known high street brands and smaller independent retailers reported to be struggling.

This work is now set against the backdrop of COVID-19 which is likely to have a short-term and potentially enduring impact on local economic productivity, retail and the town centre's performance. Part of a fast recovery will hinge on seeing businesses back in

action quickly and effectively and celebrating community and civic pride. Kingston has so much to celebrate but it strives to do even better.

Its proximity to central London, the river and open spaces including Richmond Park, mean that it is one of the best places to live and work in the capital. Health and wellbeing, healthy streets, active travel and the curation of a new town centre experience will all be core components in this work.

This report is the first stage of work, setting out a baseline and interrogation of policy and place, with an emphasis on trends that will see long term growth and opportunity. The work also has a programme of local engagement, ensuring the voices of local businesses, people, investors and developers are heard. Through this baseline research, consultation and ideas, a vision and objectives have been produced to lead to a final framework document in the summer of 2020.

The baseline section of the framework report is intended to be a 'live document'. This will allow further research and thoughts to be added throughout the entirety of the programme. With the backdrop of COVID-19, there is a sense of urgency to progress this work to ensure that when we see recovery take hold, the town centre will have a purposeful and clear action plan to ensure that Kingston is still one of the most celebrated destinations in London to live, work, visit and enjoy.



SETTING THE SCENE

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is one of the only four royal boroughs in England and Wales and has been part of Greater London since 1965. It is situated on the banks of the River Thames, approximately 11 miles from central London.

The river travels through the borough for almost three miles, connecting Kingston to Hampton Court and Richmond, forming part of the historically significant Arcadian Thames. Kingston was built at the first crossing point of the Thames upstream from London Bridge and a bridge still exists at the same site. It is surrounded by the boroughs of Richmond upon Thames, Wandsworth, Merton and Sutton, and borders the county of Surrey to the South-West.

To understand what makes Kingston's location so precious it is important to go back to a 1930s theory by the German geographer Walter Christaller, called '*The Central Place Theory*'. This theory argues that cities and towns serve primarily to provide goods and services to surrounding areas.

The more specialized goods a settlement has, the larger its sphere of influence. It is also called the '*10 Mile Rule*'¹ - the same distance between London and Kingston - when before the advent of cars, people in rural settings could only walk a maximum of five miles to the nearest town in a single day for work and supplies. As a result, towns developed a five-mile sphere of influence, creating a common 10-15-mile distance between each medium-sized settlement.

¹ Braudel, F. and Reynold, S., *The Wheels of Commerce: Civilization and Capitalism, 15th to 18th Century*, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1992

In the case of Kingston, the navigable River Thames has been at the heart of Kingston's commercial and social life for centuries; Kingston's busy inland port exchanged goods between central London and via road to Sussex and central Surrey. Industries such as brewing and malting flourishing due to Kingston's strategic location; whilst trading of produce took place in the market square.

A Royal charter, granted by Charles I in 1628 recognised Kingston's strategic importance stating no other town within 7 miles was to hold a market, is still in force today. The introduction of a rail link to London in 1863 led to the suburban expansion of Kingston; with the increased population leading to a thriving local brewing industry and many pubs. By the 20th century Kingston was a major regional shopping centre; forming a hub of services, leisure and entertainment which developed alongside significant highway infrastructure.

The borough has excellent road and public transport links to all parts of the UK. Kingston's transport network provides connection at international, national and regional scales; reinforcing Kingston as a commercial, cultural and educational centre. It is one of six London Boroughs which have no London Underground stations but has ten South Western Railway stations and two centrally located bus stations. Heathrow airport, only 5 miles away, and St Pancras International are accessible via bus link and rail respectively. The rail link to Waterloo Station serves as a busy commuter route to Central London whilst the A3 and M25 provide links to the national highway network.



THE BOROUGH

Kingston Town Centre is identified as a Metropolitan Centre in the London Plan and is today a major retail centre, one of the biggest in the UK, receiving approximately 18 million visitors a year. It is consistently rated one of the safest London boroughs (according to the Metropolitan Police) as well as the second happiest place to live in London (rated by Rightmove users). Kingston is an affluent borough with pockets of deprivation that feel even more stark against the wealthier parts of the borough.

Kingston has four unique neighbourhoods: Kingston Town, Malden and Coombe, South of the Borough and Surbiton. The respective district centres of New Malden, Tolworth and Surbiton are connected to the Metropolitan Centre of Kingston via road cycle and bus routes, with a rail link between Surbiton and Kingston.

Kingston Town is at the heart of the borough. The town centre is internationally renowned for its extensive range of shops and services and homes several cultural facilities as well as Kingston University. It is accessible through Kingston Railway Station. Extensive bus coverage also link the town centre to Surbiton and Norbiton rail stations.

The main district centre in **Malden and Coombe** is New Malden, which remarkably has the largest Korean population in Europe. It is accessible through New Malden, Malden Manor and Worcester Park railway stations. The Council is bring forward proposals for the New Malden District Centre, including a new Leisure centre, new homes and community hub.

South of the Borough is home to Tolworth Court Farm (the largest open space in the borough) and Chessington World of Adventures, one of the country's premier

leisure attractions. It is also close to the countryside and the Green Belt area of the borough, benefiting from the Local Nature Reserves as well as sports centres and several recreation grounds.

Roads from Transport for London main road network run through the neighbourhood, and there are three mainline train stations - Tolworth, Chessington North and Chessington South. The area is also served very well by buses.

Tolworth District Centre will see significant change with Lidl's new Head Quarter, currently under construction. Also in this district centre a local Community Interest Company, The Community Brain, have been delivering the SHEDx project in Tolworth (www.shedx.org) for the past two years. This community-led regeneration project funded by the GLA and RBK.

Surbiton is a highly regarded residential area located on the River Thames. Bar and café culture is a growing feature of the centre, and it has a thriving shopping centre, providing a real mix of individually owned shops coexisting alongside smaller chain store outlets.

Surbiton has a number of attractive open spaces and Hampton Court Palace is only a short distance further along on the other side of the Thames. The picturesque walk to the Palace takes you close to the gorgeous Bushy Park, which is home to some red and fallow deer families.

It has good transport connections, with fast trains to London Waterloo taking around 20 minutes from Surbiton station and excellent road links nearby at Tolworth and Hook.

1.

Existing

Information Review

1./

DOCUMENTS MAP

A WEALTH OF EXISTING WORK

This first section describes the wealth of information and policy documents that have already been produced about Kingston Town Centre. Understanding the scale and breadth of this work is an important first step in interrogating the town centre.

The reports mapped here are presented to show the variety and richness of existing work and knowledge in the borough. These will be used as stepping stones towards the Vision and Framework being developed.

The following pages of this section maps the documents in four ways: by geography, type, subject area and time. Then, there is a summary of some key documents. Appendix A provides a more comprehensive summary of documents.

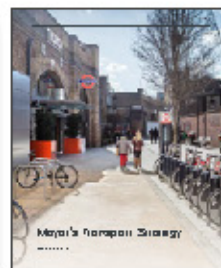
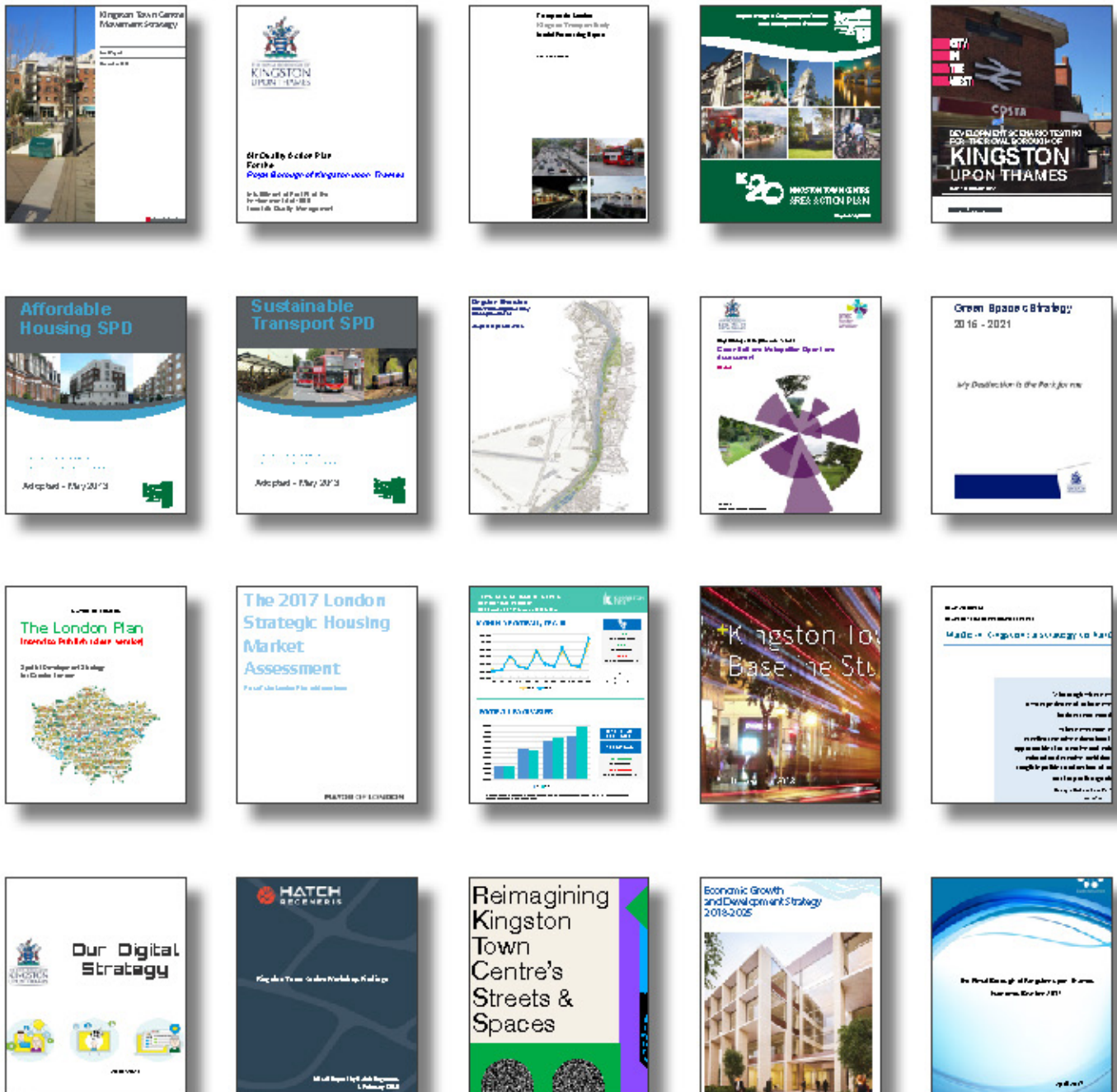


FIGURE 1: A SAMPLE OF THE EXISTING BASELINE DOCUMENTS



2. /

DOCUMENTS TIMELINE



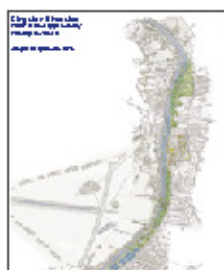
Econ. Growth and Dev. Strategy



Mayor's Transport Strategy



Kingston Riverside SPD



KTC Economic Baseline



The New London Plan



2018

2019

2019



RBK Corporate Plan



Local Plan Site Assessments



Local Plan Early Engagement



Reimagining KTC's Streets & Spaces

FIGURE 2: THIS TIMELINE SHOWS THE CHRONOLOGICAL ARC FOR A SAMPLE OF KEY DOCUMENTS

3./

OUR KEY FINDINGS

THIS IS WHAT WE KNOW FROM ANALYSING THE DOCUMENTS

PROXIMITY TO CENTRAL LONDON AND PRESSURE ON TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS

- Kingston is generally an affluent borough with proximity and access to the central London job market;
- Commuting out of Kingston puts pressure on transport infrastructure, particularly the rail link between Kingston and Waterloo;
- Kingston has a low level of specialisation in professional, information and creative services, which have seen growth in recent years. However, productivity levels are generally below neighbouring boroughs.

A SHIFTING FOCUS FROM RETAIL

- Kingston Town Centre has historically been a successful retail centre, with retail occupying 70% of all commercial space. In recent years retail vacancy rates have increased.
- Retail and associated sectors employ those from outside the borough, adding pressure to the transport network;
- Previous planning policy and applications to drive forward town centre growth have focused on retail; current changes in retail have subsequently limited their application.

A NEED TO GROW, DIVERSIFY AND REMAIN COMPETITIVE

- Kingston is currently gaining work age residents, but losing graduates; despite a successful University within the town;
- Kingston needs more homes to meet housing delivery targets and affordable housing provision;
- To achieve sustainable growth, the town needs to attract new businesses to the town centre, retain talent and engage its existing communities;

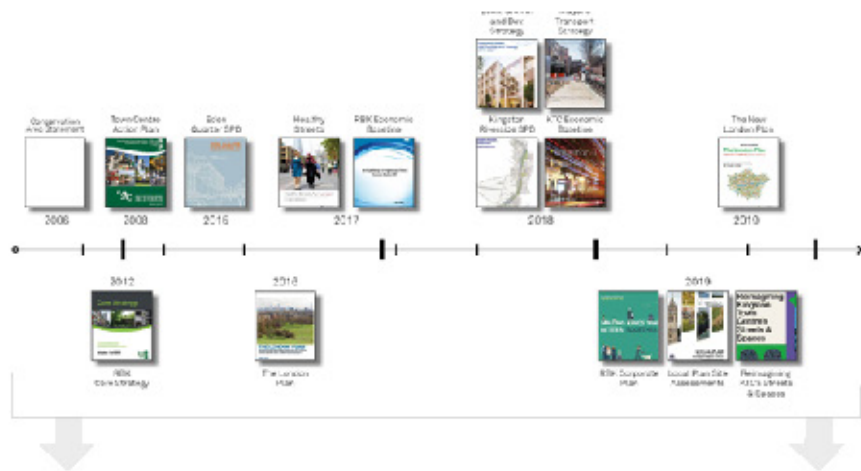
- To diversify sectorial composition; high quality office space is needed to allow business to experiment and grow.
- To remain competitive, Kingston town centre must focus on activities beyond retail; night-time activities, a food and drink offer, and spontaneous social space, inclusive of a range of ages;
- Development in Kingston should respond to the high value historic context and existing culture;
- The riverside and waterways have potential to be a key asset for Kingston an attractive place to live, work and visit – however are currently underperforming.

SHAPING SUSTAINBLE GROWTH

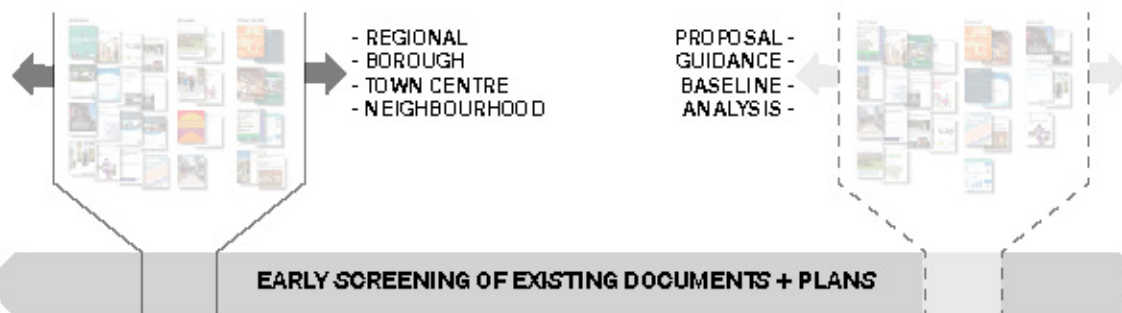
- Improved and sustainable public transport connections, with a modal shift to walking and cycling are needed to support existing and new business.
- Social integration, well-being, environmental sustainability, civic and cultural life, and smart cities are high on the political agenda, with high streets and town centres well placed to drive change;
- There are currently unaddressed issues of severance, visibility and accessibility in the town centre;
- Development, population expansion and infrastructure improvement could further exacerbate town centre air quality issues.

A COORDINATED APPROACH

- Joining up of previous plans and initiatives is needed, recognising previously overlooked spaces;
- Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levies provide an opportunity for public realm improvement and sustainable transport to support growth.



DOCUMENTS PROVIDED BY KTC COUNCIL



DISCIPLINE FILTER ANALYSIS



KEY FINDINGS SCOPED PER DISCIPLINE

2.

Baseline

Analysis

1./

KINGSTON'S HISTORY

HISTORY AND HERITAGE

Kingston is a long-established town in South-West London, 30 minutes by train from London Waterloo station. It is located on the banks of the Thames, south of Richmond and west of Merton, just at the border of London with Surrey. Kingston is known as the oldest of four royal boroughs in England. Its name is derived from 'Cyninges tun' meaning 'King's estate'.

Following the twelfth century when it was a market place adjacent to the All Saints Church, it became an important trading artery port and staging post on the river Thames; Kingston Bridge was the first crossing upstream from London Bridge for six centuries.

In the 16th century Hampton Court Palace was bought and redeveloped by Cardinal Wolsey, one of the most powerful and prominent politicians of his time. Kingston became the closest market for the Court substantial staff and during the reign of Henry VIII Kingston became 'the best market town of in Surrey'.

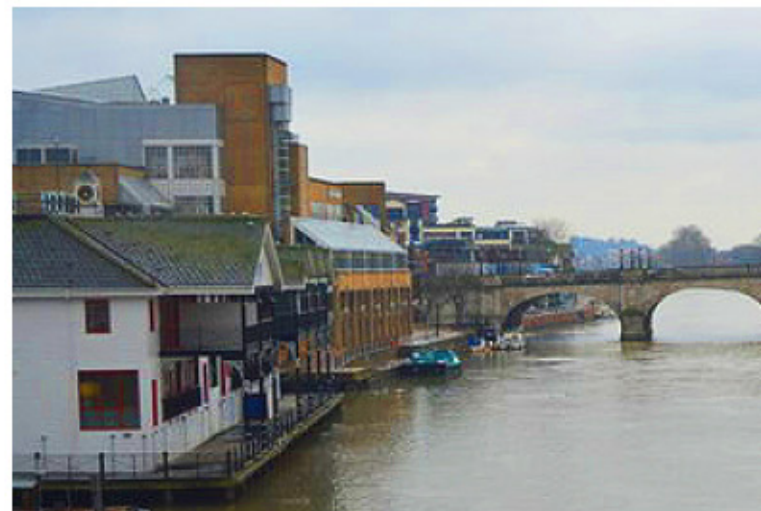
In 1838 the railway came to Surbiton and Queen Victoria opened the Hampton Court Palace to public, which quickly became a very popular attraction. A station in Kingston opened in 1863 and led to a rapid growth of the area. By 1841 Kingston Upon Thames had a population of over 8,000 people. Sixty years later in 1901 it was almost five times bigger.

For most of the 20th century, Kingston would be a major military aircraft manufacturing centre specialising in fighter planes. It would be also known as having one of the largest wineries in Europe, which at the time

produced 20% of all wine sold annually in the United Kingdom. At the same time the higher education sector has been developing in Kingston with new colleges being added across the century and Kingston University officially established in 1992. Alongside a growing retail sector, with new shops and department stores, gaining a reputation for one of best shopping destinations in London.

Kingston is also known as a peaceful town for affluent families looking for good schools, green surroundings and suburban life with good transport connections to Central London. While Kingston is still one of the least densely populated area, the population is increasing rapidly – the town centre has seen in the past years a 17% increase compared to 9% in the whole borough and in London on average.

Kingston Town Centre is now one of the 13 Metropolitan Centres in London and an emerging Opportunity Area.



2./

KINGSTON TODAY

PEOPLE: POPULATION AND AGE

The borough of Kingston Upon Thames is made up of 16 wards, of which four - Tudor, Canbury, Norbiton and Grove – combine to form the neighbourhood of Kingston Town. The borough is adjacent to four other London Boroughs – Merton, Sutton, Wandsworth and Richmond UponThames.

The population density of Kingston Town is almost two thirds higher than that of the rest of the borough, re-enforcing the idea of Kingston town as the urban centre. Canbury, a residential area just north of the retail and commercial district, has the highest population density, more than double the borough average.

Kingston Borough, and Kingston Town in particular, have been experiencing high population growth in recent years. The four wards that combine to form Kingston town - Tudor, Canbury, Norbiton and Grove – had a combined population of 50,054 in 2018, up 15.9% from

2011.¹ Over the same period the whole borough experienced an increase of 9.4%, reaching 175,470 in 2018.

The high population growth in the borough is driven by two key age-demographics – children aged 0 to 19 and adults aged 40 to 59 - groups which experiences population increases of 23.6% and 26.2% respectively. The growth amongst young adults was significantly lower, with an increase of 4.2% for those aged 20 to 39. This fits the narrative of Kingston as an increasingly family friendly neighbourhood.

In 2018, 23.4% of the population of Kingston Borough were aged 0 to19, 38.3% were aged 20 to 39, and 24.4% were aged 40 to 59. This compares to London shares of 24.7%, 33.5%, and 25.7% respectively, which indicates a 'hollowing out' of the young adult demographic.

These demographic shifts are repeated in similar towns in the neighbouring boroughs. Wimbledon, in the neighbouring borough of Merton has seen a 31.2% increase in 0 to 19 year olds (a proportion of 21.9%), a 14.4% decrease in those aged 20 to 39 (a proportion of 35.4%) and a 20.5 % increase in those from 40 to 59 (a proportion of 26.2%). Richmond, made up of Richmond North and Richmond South, has experienced a similar yet more extreme demographic shift. There has been a 30.7% increase in those aged 0 to 19 and a 23.6% increase in those aged 40 to 59, whilst the population between ages 20 to 39 decreased by 9.6%. It appears that this area of South-west London is quickly losing favour with young adults. This reduction also suggests few Kingston university Graduates choose to stay in the area after graduation. With a total of 16,785 students it could ensure a steady stream of young adults moving to the area.

¹ ONS population estimates



KINGSTON TODAY

PROSPERITY

Kingston Upon Thames is a wealthy area of the country, even by London's standards. The median weekly earnings of residents of the borough are £737.90 compared to the London average of £699.20 and the UK average of £584.90.¹ It is slightly better off than neighbouring Merton (£710) which contains Wimbledon but falls well short of the wealthy borough of Richmond Upon Thames whose median earner takes home £820.20 a week. However, wages in this area of South West London have not grown as fast as the rest of the city over the past 17 years. The city overall saw a growth of 45.7% from 2002 to 2019, whilst Kingston on Thames experienced the lesser increase of 42%. And this London growth was lower still than the UK as a whole, which enjoyed a 49.6% increase.

Many of the high wages enjoyed by residents in Kingston will belong to those commuting into central London. The median weekly salary of people who work in Kingston Upon Thames was just £640,² significantly lower than the £737.90 that residents of the borough earn. This figure is also significantly lower than the London average of £699.20. This points

to a borough containing low paying jobs but wealthy residents.

Further evidence this wealth contradiction is due to the high value of property in Kingston. The median price in the borough was £487,250 in 2017.³ Although not significantly higher than the average London price of £465,000, for an area so far from central London, this is significantly higher than other boroughs on the edge of London. A picture emerges of high property prices owned by commuters combined with much lower wages for those working locally.

As well as the commuter effect, this may be due to the high number of retail jobs in the borough. Just 4.1% of residents work in sales and customer services, significantly lower than the London average of 5.8%. However, 17.3% of jobs in Kingston Upon Thames are in 'wholesale and Retail trade; Repair of motor vehicles and motorcycle', compared with a London average of 12%. Although there are large numbers of retail jobs in Kingston, local residents do not tend to work in them.

1 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

2 Ibid.

3 HM Land registry



SECTORS AND INDUSTRIES

The sectoral profile of the area shows that there are six sectors which contribute around 70% of GVA to the Kingston upon Thames economy (in 2018). These are:

- Real estate activities (21%)
- Administrative and support services (14%)
- Wholesale and retail trade (11%)
- Human health and social work activities (9%)
- Information and communication (9%)
- Professional, scientific and technical activities (7%)

Of the six sectors outlined above, the sectors real estate activities (+57%), administrative and support service activities (41%) and professional, scientific and technical activities (52%) have experienced the largest growth between 2006 and 2018. In contrast, wholesale and retail trade activities experienced a relatively insignificant growth of 2% between the same time period.⁴ These trends are not surprising, reflecting the growing sectoral shift towards the services sector in the UK economy. Despite the marginal economic growth, in 2018 the retail sector employs one of the largest share of workers in Kingston upon Thames (19%), another reminder of the critical role the retail sector plays in the local economy.

In 2019, the employment rate in Kingston upon Thames stood at 78.2% (16-64 age group), outperforming both London and England.

⁴ Office for National Statistics

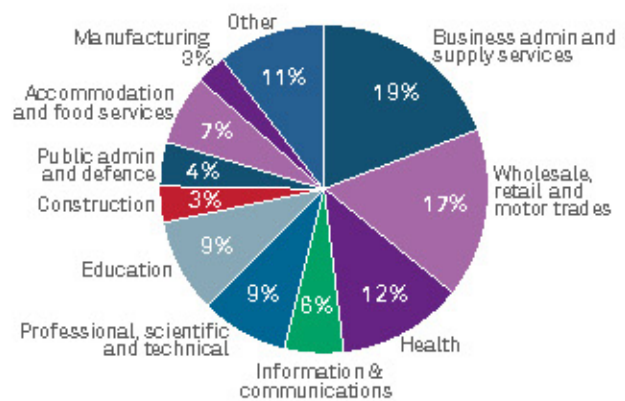


FIGURE 3: KINGSTON UPON THAMES - 2018 EMPLOYMENT BREAKDOWN BY SECTOR

Source: NOMIS/Office for National Statistics

However, a noticeable disparity in employment rate is observed between males (83.5%) and females (73.0%), consistent with the employment rate disparity in London as a whole. The economic shock posed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic creates high level of uncertainty on the short-term outlook on local economic activity as businesses such as bars, restaurants and shops are forced to close temporarily.

According to a recent CBI monthly report, UK retail sales recorded their largest fall on record (-5.1%), with 39% of retailers reported a total shutdown of UK activity, 44% of retailers reported furloughing staff and 8% of staff made redundant.⁵

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/apr/28/cbi-report-reveals-uk-retailers-hit-by-covid-19-consumers-pending-collapse>

KINGSTON TODAY

PRODUCTIVITY

As productivity growth continues to flourish in Outer London, Kingston upon Thames struggles to follow the trend

Local productivity in Kingston upon Thames has consistently lagged behind neighbours Richmond upon Thames, Merton and other boroughs since 2011. In 2016, average productivity per worker in Kingston upon Thames (£61,159 per worker) trailed behind the average in Richmond upon Thames by up to 31%, and 17% behind the Outer London average. Whilst Kingston upon Thames economy remains the reliant on retail, Richmond upon Thames has seen a thriving business district grow, becoming the top-choice location for IT and digital business in particular, ranging from new start-ups to larger, more established firms such as eBay.

Between 2011 and 2016, GVA contribution in Richmond upon Thames has surged by 33% compared to a 11% increase in jobs. Conversely, GVA contribution in Kingston upon Thames has also seen a similar rise in jobs (11%), yet only experienced an 18% increase in GVA contribution. This suggests that despite the increase in employment in Kingston upon Thames, the growth in jobs are not experienced in the highly productive sectors.

Future growth will depend on a further diversification of the Kingston business base towards a high-value, high-productivity sectors, as well as adequate provision of top-quality offices and reliable public transport connectivity.

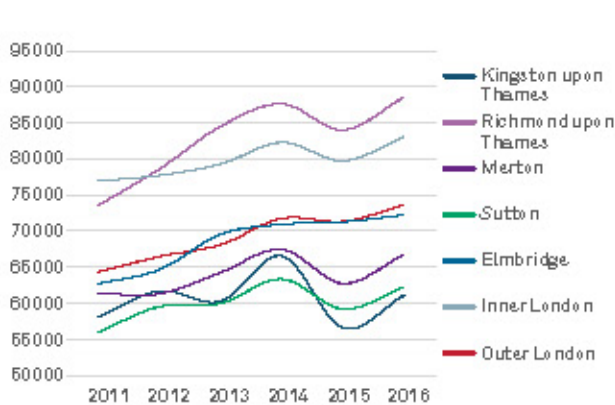


FIGURE 4: GVA PER WORKER (£/WORKER, NOMINAL PRICES)

Source: Office for National Statistics

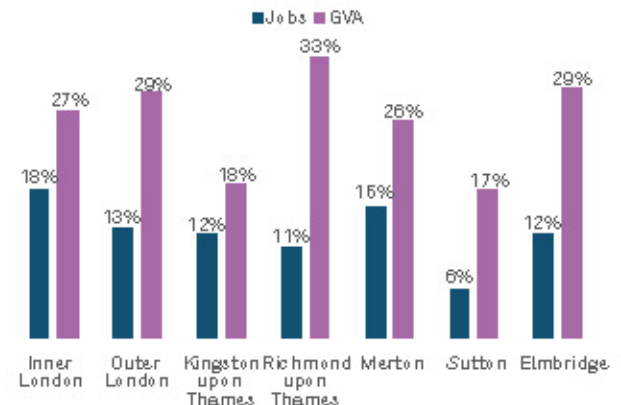


FIGURE 5: GVA GROWTH VS JOB GROWTH BETWEEN 2011 AND 2016

Source: Office for National Statistics, Business Register and Employment Survey

CHANGING ROLE OF KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE

Kingston Town Centre is dominated by retail and hospitality space, taking up around 70% of all commercial space in the area.¹ Kingston Town Centre has historically relied on high street shopping to attract visitors to the area and was once a booming retail destination.

In 2011, Kingston Town Centre generated the fourth highest retail turnover of £432 million, only trailing behind Stratford (opening of Westfield shopping centre in 2011), Shepherds Bush (Westfield shopping centre) and the West End (Oxford Street, Regent Street).² However, with the emergence of online shopping and shifting spending patterns towards leisure and social activities (such as bars, community spaces), the role of town centres is evolving, seeing an overall UK decline in demand for retail floorspace. Retail vacancy rate currently stands at 12% for Kingston Town Centre, faring

slightly better than the UK average vacancy rate of 25%, however since July 2019 Kingston Town Centre experienced a net loss of 9 businesses. This suggests the struggles of the area to fill up vacant units in a quick, timely manner.

As Kingston Town Centre saw more restaurants, bars and entertainment spaces open, this coincides with a significant decline in the more traditional clothing and jewellery stores. As the economic resilience of the town centre has heavily relied on the health of the retail industry, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic poses as the most significant threat to the local economy since the 08/09 financial recession, bringing economic activity within the town centre almost to a standstill. As we emerge out of the nationwide lockdown, we anticipate retail stores in Kingston Town Centre to recover at a much slower pace than other sectors as more people

1 Costar
2 Greater London Authority, 2013, '2013 London Town Centre Health Check Analysis Report'

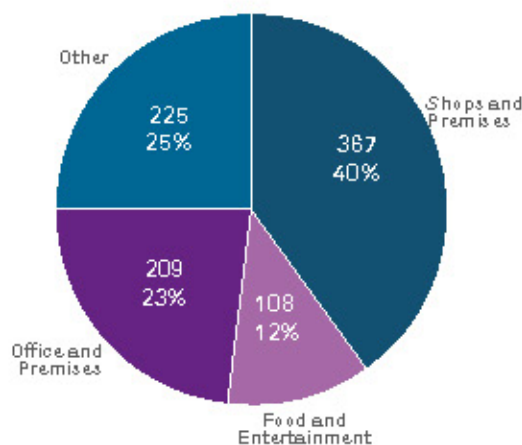


FIGURE 6: KINGSTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) – NUMBER AND SHARES OF PROPERTIES BY TYPE OF USE

Source: Costar

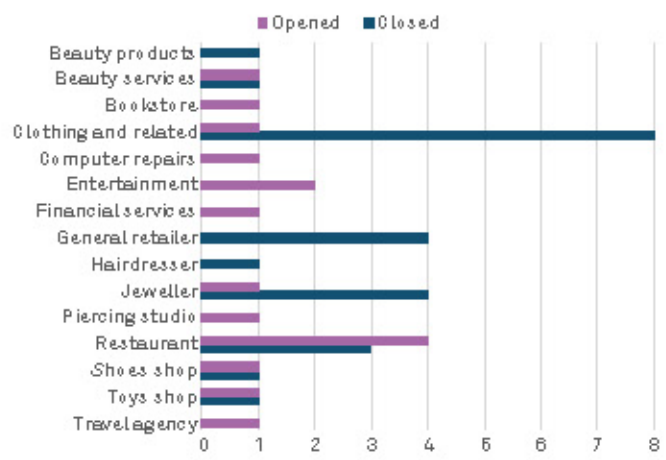


FIGURE 7: NUMBER OF RETAIL BUSINESSES OPENING VS CLOSURE IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE SINCE JULY 2019 BY RETAIL TYPE

Source: Costar

KINGSTON TODAY

EDUCATION

shift to online shopping and operational challenges caused by the implementation of social distance measures.

As Kingston Town Centre continues to attract high street shoppers despite the decline in in-store retail shopping, the area struggles to attract businesses to their office spaces, which make up 23% of all commercial properties. Unfortunately, approximately 34% of the office spaces currently lie vacant, and the amount of office space has even reduced by 10% between 2010 and 2015. This may be partly explained by the sub-standard quality of the office properties currently on offer; according to the Hatch analysis of Costar data, the majority of office properties in the local area are designated a rating of 3-4 stars, the average star rating given for properties with older structures or in need of refurbishment.

Kingston Borough is well-educated. In 2011 41.4% of residents aged 16 and over have a level 4 qualification or above (equivalent to a bachelors degree).¹ This compares with a London average of 37.7% and an average over the whole of England of 27.3%. However, the advantage that Kingston has over the rest of London is markedly different depending on the age group we observe. The proportion of 35 to 49 year olds with level 4 qualifications or above is 23.3% higher than the London average. However, when we look at only the younger adults, those age 25 to 34, this advantage is reduced to just 6.7%, it almost vanishes. This would indicate an unwillingness for recent graduates to move to the area.

Kingston University is home to over 16,000 students, and is ranked within the top 50 Universities in England.²

¹ Census 2011

² <https://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/>



CONNECTIVITY: CAR-DOMINATED TOWN CENTRE

Kingston Town Centre is served by a number of transport infrastructure, benefitting from the local connections to the wider borough, neighbouring towns and the rest of London.

Kingston railway station connects the town centre directly to Central London (London Waterloo) within 30 minutes, as well to the neighbouring boroughs Wimbledon (13 minutes), Richmond (21 minutes) and Twickenham (13 minutes). Served by the South West Main Line, Kingston sits on one of the busiest and congested routes in the country, faced by capacity constraints and growing population.

Kingston roads are dominated by radial routes (A308/A307 routes) which facilitates further access to Central London. Despite local efforts to curb road usage in Greater London, notably by the introduction of the ULEZ and the existing

congestion charge, Kingston still experiences high level of car use (up to 50% of trips), seeing an average 1% increase per annum since 2012. Road congestion is particularly prevalent in and around the town centre itself. The borough has high levels of car ownership, one of the highest rates in London, which can be mainly attributed to the poor orbital rail based links, no tube or tram network in Kingston, as well as poor public transport links and accessibility to areas of Surrey and elsewhere.³

Due to the lack of tube or tram services and low train frequencies, access to and from the town centre relies heavily on the local bus network (in addition to car usage and rail). The majority of the bus services are self-contained within the Greater London boundary, with some services

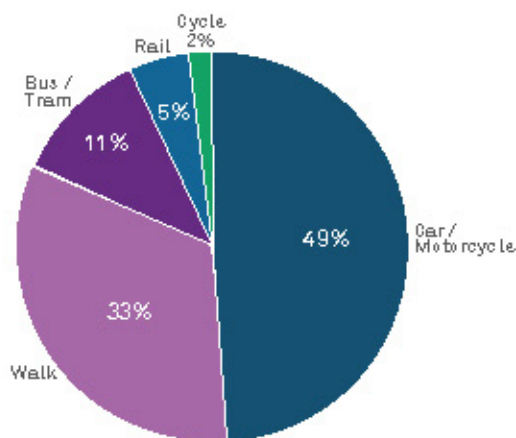


FIGURE 8: MODE SHARE - TRIPS ORIGINATING IN KINGSTON BY MAIN MODE OF TRAVEL

Source: Royal Borough of Kingston

3 Royal Borough of Kingston, July 2019, "Third Local Implementation Plan (LIP3)"

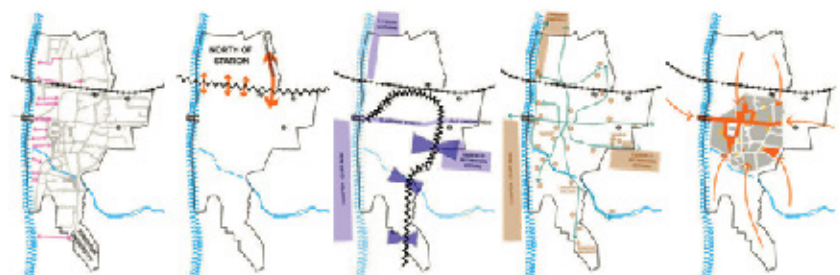


FIGURE 9: KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE - SEVERAN GE AND KEY LINKS (SOURCE: ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES)

Source: Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Kingston First, Kingston University and the Mayor of London, "Reimagining Kingston Town Centre's Streets & Spaces"

KINGSTON TODAY

provided by Surrey County Council that enter into the Kingston borough, as well as nine night buses currently in operation.

The relatively flat topography of Kingston provides a readily accessible and desirable environment for cycling. A network of cycling routes across the town centre and the wider borough has been implemented, Go Cycle, forming part of the wider London Cycle Network and link to the county of Surrey in a bid to encourage more mode shifts from road to cycling and accommodate the growing population. Local residents and visitors can also benefit from the National Cycle Network Route 4 which also runs through the borough alongside the River Thames, as well as leisure routes in the South of the Borough and the nearby parks, most notably to Richmond Park. Notwithstanding this, there is room for improvement as cycling only accounts for 2% of all trips originating in Kingston, compared to neighbouring borough Richmond upon Thames which saw 5% of trips attributed to cycling.¹

Kingston Town Centre suffers from severances imposed by the existing transport infrastructure, heavily congested roads as well as natural amenities (rivers), proving difficult for local residents to access the town centre. Many residents and visitors find the congested roads weaving through the area particularly difficult to navigate. Furthermore, the town centre is attractively situated next to the River Thames, yet the local residents and visitors do not reap the benefits of its close proximity due to the lack of visibility to the river.

¹ Transport for London, 2018/19, Travel in London report 12 (figure 4.10)

MOVING TOWARDS A DIGITAL, 'SMARTER' TOWN

Businesses across the UK are increasingly becoming more reliant on staying connected and mobile, with top quality digital connectivity proving vital for both the economy and communities. In 2019, Kingston upon Thames ranked 13th out of the London boroughs based on internet connectivity, where nearly 90% of the borough receives 4G coverage.

According to the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' Digital Strategy, a review of the current digital infrastructure is underway, which has led to the realisation of an inclusive broadband provision and enabling a Town Centre WiFi solution across all main centres in the borough, including free WiFi in Kingston Town Centre.²

² The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Sutton Council, "Our Digital Strategy 2018-2021"



SWOT ANALYSIS

This evidence base paints a clear picture of the opportunities and challenges in Kingston. Clearly a borough with many assets including its highly educated population with good disposable incomes and a very good quality of life. The productivity in the borough and its lag compared to other parts of the capital is an area where there needs to be some concerted effort to ensure that as the borough progresses it is tackling this issues. With global trends emerging in the way people want to live and work and an ever climate conscious society where health is going to play another vital role, ensuring that there is good and equitable growth is core to this framework.

The next section sets out, clearly, the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats which have shaped the following section on UK and global trends and how Kingston Town Centre might respond.



3./ STRENGTHS

VALUE AND ECONOMICS

- Largest town in the borough, attracting visitors from across borough and London
- Highly skilled, economically active population
- Increasing share of working-age residents
- Affluent residents benefiting from London salaries – economic capacity to support local leisure and food offer



PLACEMAKING

- Successful recent investment in the town centre's public realm, including Go Cycle and MarketSquare
- Wider landscape and heritage setting potentially befitting a World Heritage Site designation
- University and college presence in town centre and young, creative population
- High potential for building social value in town centre streets and spaces
- Concentrated presence of landmarks contributes to strong local character and residents identifying with their town centre
- Concentrated presence and demand for cultural activities such as live music and performances
- Identified network of key stakeholders, landowners (ambitions & sites) and institutions which could support or collaborate on the first phase of project



SWOT

Kingston is a successful town centre with a multitude of existing assets including historic structures, pleasant public realm, strong institutions and a regional identity



MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- Accessible by public transport connections including trains and buses, and therefore has the structure to enable multi-modal mobility at the town centre, borough, and regional scales
- Close proximity to a wider green network; including London Loop, Thames Path, MOL and Green Belt, and is connected to a borough-wide cycle network currently being implemented
- The medieval street layout and proximity to the River Thames forms a strong sense of place and town centre character and is generally inviting and enjoyable to walk within.

POLICY AND PLANNING

- Successful town centre, hub of employment, regional draw
- Strong sense of place and identity derived from history, architecture and mix of uses
- Growth, energy, desire to live in Kingston
- Local base of creative and entrepreneurial people, many attracted to the universities
- Analyses and studies have already laid a solid groundwork for any future endeavours – e.g. extensive evidence base for the new local plan

4. /

WEAKNESSES

VALUE AND ECONOMICS

- Retaining graduates and young adults in Kingston
- Traffic congestion
- Local economy heavily dependent on low-productivity sectors like trade, restaurants, public administration (including health and education services), offering predominantly A-Level and equivalent jobs
- Shortage of quality commercial floorspace for small businesses to start and for existing smaller businesses to scale up, with various types of tenures



PLACEMAKING

- Gaps in legibility and quality of public realm
- Access to and vitality of some major landscape, historic and cultural assets is limited, including the riverside
- Limited active dwell space and green space in the town centre
- Lack of a unified and clear proposal for climate change resilience – such as flooding, sustainable urban drainage systems, global warming, automated transportation, clean energy production, etc.
- Many studies address individual and 'silo' sites in the borough. However, there is a need for them to be cohesively integrated into a wider strategy
- Activity on the high street is constrained to primarily to daytime. A strategy to develop local life after sundown is needed
- High rents for empty shop fronts and a lack of partnership working with landlords to help animate the town centre



SWOT

The town centre's mix of activities and uses is not diverse enough, and there is not a unified and coordinated strategy to refresh and revitalise the town centre.



MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- Air quality levels are poor across the town centre, particularly core roads
- Poor wayfinding and connectivity between key points of interest, including signage at the station and disjointed graphic language. The medieval street layout poses challenges for wayfinding
- Vehicle dominance fuelled by car parking contributes to severance of cycle and pedestrian movements across core roads, particularly the gyratory system incorporating Wood Street and Wheatfield Way, and reduces accessibility to public transport connections

POLICY AND PLANNING

- Some of the background work – including the planning documents – are out of date
- Affordable housing, cost of living, and overall housing delivery are a persistent challenge in the town centre and London more generally
- Lack of diversity of uses in town centre. Conspicuous lack of nightlife, programming. Reliance on retail, not much reason to dwell
- Existing public realm and planned (planning applications) improvements are primarily designed to support retail uses

5./ OPPORTUNITIES

VALUE AND ECONOMICS

- Harness the skills and enthusiasm of the young population, supporting opportunities for apprentices, students and interns and encouraging them to remain in the borough
- Art galleries, innovation labs, and collaborative spaces with night time schedules are an opportunity towards providing a more attractive offer after daylight hours
- Economic diversification



PLACEMAKING

- Utilise digital technology to encourage people to linger in public spaces
- Upgrade and adapt public realm to celebrate underrepresented groups, including children, and local culture
- Programme public space for a 24-hour Kingston, including temporary and permanent measures. Meanwhile uses to attract footfall
- Maximise the multiple benefits of small urban spaces within a network of green spaces and interventions (green infrastructure)
- Realise the riverside and connections to it as a public space of significance
- Hogsmill River revitalisation has the potential to offer a more attractive space that links up student accommodation spaces, the Guildhall, the Rose Theatre, and the River Thames. It could also support east-west connectivity



SWOT

By leveraging its existing strengths and creating a targeted plan of interventions for the town centre, Kingston can move into its next phase of life stronger than before



MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- Downgrading the dominance and severance created by the core road network and maximising opportunities for more people using active travel to access the town centre particularly from the north and north east, improving health and wellbeing
- Creating north-south connectivity over the rail lines and east-west over Wheatfield Way could improve pedestrian links and break down the severance caused by physical barriers such as the rail station itself, rail tracks and the gyratory traffic system
- Building on to the Go Cycle network to better connect the town centre to the wider region by bicycle
- Improving wayfinding to help welcome, orient, and guide visitors throughout the town centre. This could include creating a sense of arrival at the major transport nodes, and a guided strategy for visitors to follow
- Rethinking how deliveries and logistics can be handled more efficiently within the town centre.
- Reassessing the need for significant levels of private car parking could unlock land for repurposing for public space or future development

POLICY AND PLANNING

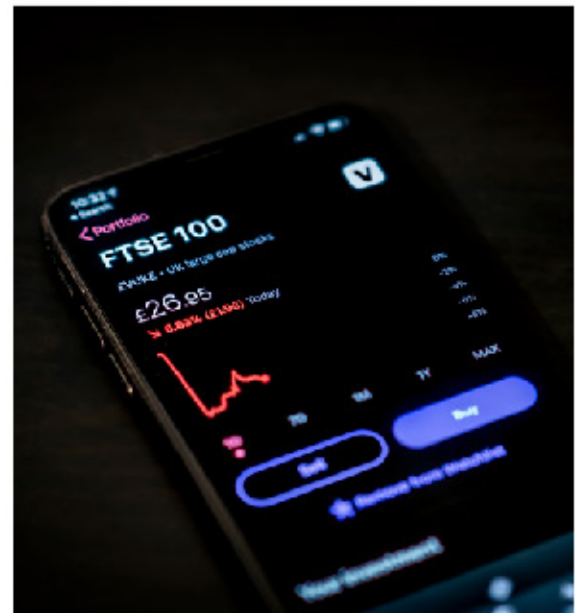
- Leverage existing public and private anchor institutions by creating partnerships to implement a strategic vision
- Crafting a coordinated and shared vision, creating an 'all-hands-on-deck' mentality for implementation
- Crafting of new local plan is underway and can lay out a strong vision for the town centre
- The New London Plan will likely bring the designation of an opportunity area and increased attention to the town centre

6./

THREATS

VALUE AND ECONOMICS

- Repercussions of a global economic downturn on local residents, business and council revenues
- Not successfully adapting to commercial changes, precipitating a weakening of the town centre
- Impact on low value jobs as brick and mortar retail declines, particularly on local people employed in these jobs
- Change perception of the town centre to attractive external funders
- Kingston town centre needs to keep pace with competitors as they reposition their centre
- Effect of COVID-19 on local economic productivity, retail and the town centre's performance



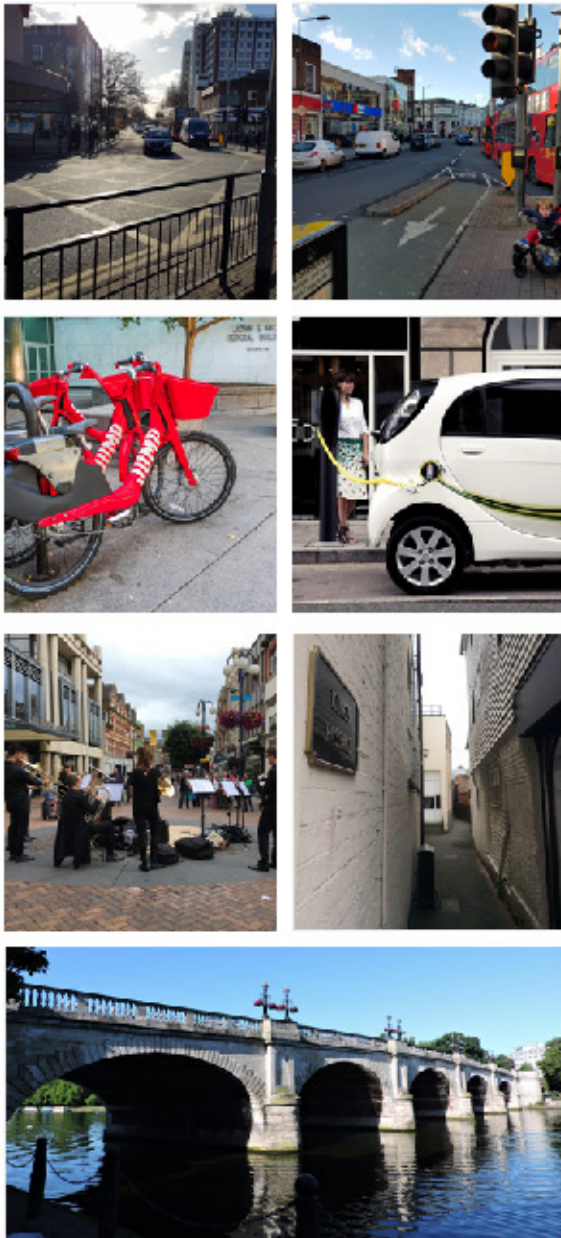
PLACEMAKING

- The majority of the town centre faces potential surface and fluvial flood risk
- Failing to adapt to climate change and increasing an frequency of significant weather events, including a need to adapt shade, shelter and water management
- Deteriorating quality of existing streets and spaces if they are not maintained and renewed
- Lack of flexibility in the streetscape and the retail floor space offer can augment vacancy rates
- Lower rates of public and accessible greenspace areas at the centre of Kingston is a threat to local residential growth and can pose a threat for future developments
- Large floorplate structures with no plan of conversion to a more flexible and collaborative space are a threat to full revitalisation of specific areas



SWOT

Trends on the horizon – such as a weakening retail sector, stalled development, climate change, or the loss of local talent – could disrupt this success



MOVEMENT AND TRANSPORT

- Maintaining the status quo is not feasible - vehicular traffic issues and local severance are unlikely to improve without significant intervention
- Interventions that change or restrict access by certain modes (e.g. private vehicles) may have an impact on potential visitors to the centre and potentially influence the centre's catchment area
- Worsening air quality resulting from busy core roads and exacerbated by a lack of open and green space in the town centre will be detrimental to the attractiveness of the town centre
- Not capitalising on opportunities to begin the transition towards future urban mobility

POLICY AND PLANNING

- A feeling of planning fatigue in the public participants and stakeholders, leading to lacklustre buy-in for a town centre vision
- Unabated and continued rise in unaffordability and cost of living

3.

So What?

Understanding the Trends

7 TRENDS FOR KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE

ORGANISATION

This section contextualises the baseline findings, fitting them into the wider, global context of change. These trends are not specific to Kingston. They can be observed in Greater London, England, and places around the globe, and how these different places have responded can provide helpful guidance for Kingston Town Centre's future.

This section goes trend-by-trend, explaining what the trend is, how it is manifesting in Kingston Town Centre and sharing examples of how places around the globe are responding to these changes.

The seven trends are:



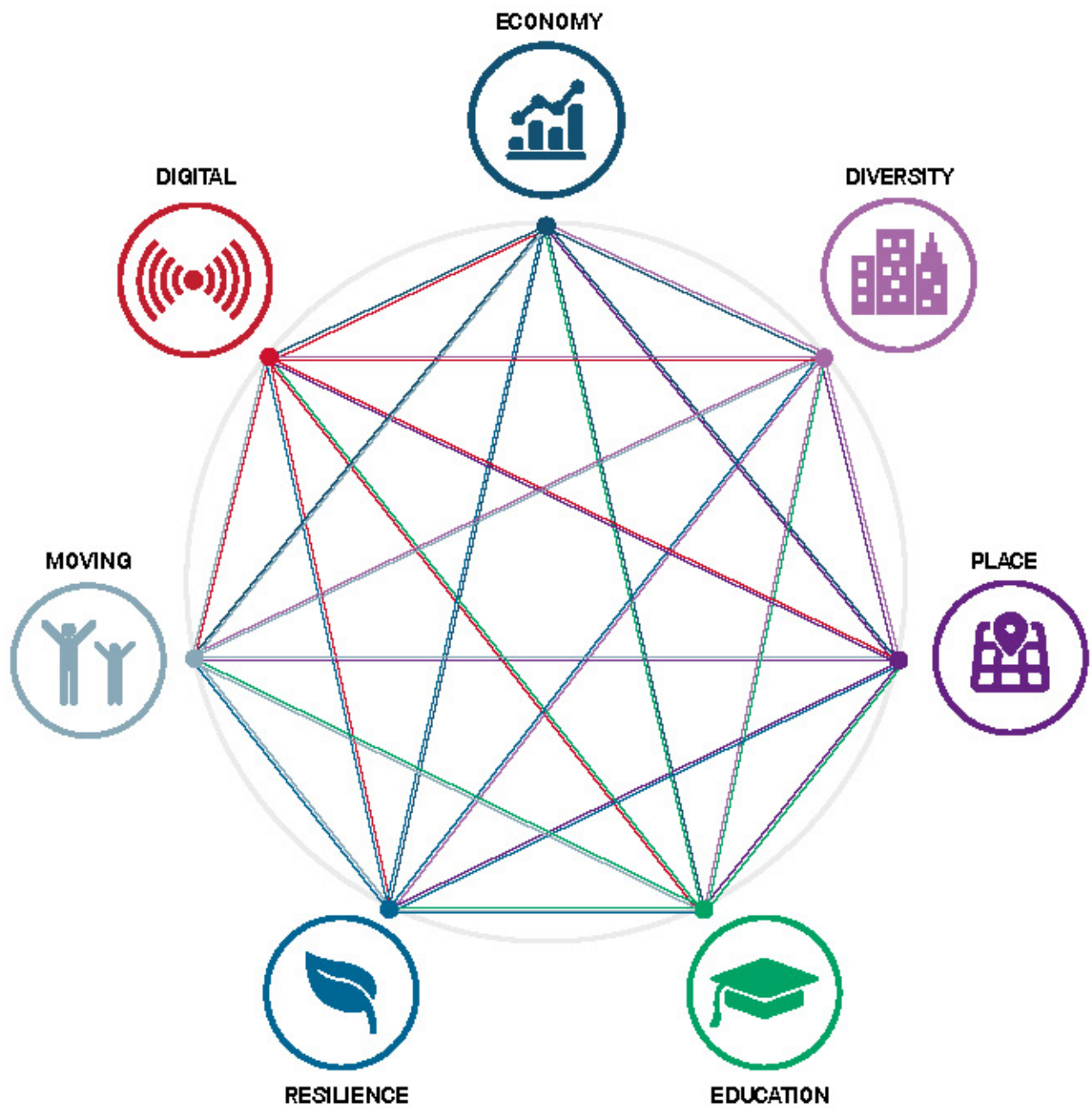


FIGURE 10: A WEB OF INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE 7 TRENDS IN THIS SECTION

1./

ECONOMY

THE CHANGING FACE OF HIGH STREETS AND THE PERFORMANCE OF RETAIL

There has been a noticeable shift in the retail industry, globally and at a UK level, with both small and big retailers affected by remarkable change. For example, online retail spending in the UK now accounts for over 20 percent of all retail spending, up from 12 percent in 2012.¹

The demand for floorplates is shifting, with e-commerce, smarter mobile technology and user experience creating new consumer patterns. With consumers moving from buying larger items (like white goods) to online, the offer and experience on successful high streets and in town centres is changing half of all consumer spending occurred on high streets in 2000. By 2018, the rate of spend on high streets declined to 40 percent.²

These changes are not just happening in retail, but other sectors such as hospitality and food services are following suit. Restaurants are placing more emphasis on local flavours and brands leveraging partnerships with local providers.

This drive towards an experience economy requires retailers to rethink the way they use space and their mix of offer, which is reflected in the engagement to date with retailers (both large and small) in Kingston who emphasise the need for contracting the town centre and consolidating space. In summary, retailers are looking to optimise their floorplate and reduce cost with fierce competition from online retailers and many now do both. Landlords are looking for flexibility and agility to keep their premises occupied and secure income and therefore the relationship with landlords, landowners and the Council need to be proactive and engaged to allow for curating new opportunities, which is

especially pronounced as the country recovers from COVID-19. This pattern is being observed in both London, the UK and around the world in major international cities.

Whilst the face of retail is impacting how high streets and towns centres function and perform, ultimately and for many they are about community, a sense of place and civic pride. The pattern of occupiers might have shifted, but in the UK, town centres are still the beating heart of activity and provide a hub for amenity, leisure and meeting. The need to think differently and curate town centres to provide 'something for everyone' suggests that town centres need to think carefully about retail, not rest on their laurels and consider what mix of use and activity will complement retail so it is not necessarily the dominant feature. Testing ideas and opportunities through new practices such as pop-up high street experiences has become a good means towards understanding footfall and the market.



1 GLA, High Streets for All, 18.
2 Ibid.



WHAT THIS MEANS FOR KINGSTON

In Kingston 40 percent of premises in the Kingston First BID area are retail units, with around 12 percent currently vacant. This snapshot was taken before COVID-19 and therefore the impact on vacancy rates could increase further. The average vacancy rate in the UK is 25 percent which means that Kingston sits in the middle of the rankings.³ The vacant units are scattered around the town centre and suggest that there is not a pattern or trend in clustered empty spaces. As larger stores have joined the town centre, retailers have reported a change in movement patterns by pedestrians which might have impacted on some areas and sightlines. However, one third of the shops which have closed in Kingston since July 2019 were the large fashion brands and is consistent with a pattern of these retailers closing their stores around the UK. Small independent retailers in Kingston seem to fare better with a slower rate of closures and account for half of all openings in 2019.⁴ This trend aligns with a recent GLA publication – High Streets and Town Centres: Adaptive Strategies – that comments on the success of smaller retailers performing in line with the global retail trends as described above.

One of the challenges this study is looking to unlock is the changing nature of retail and understanding how Kingston can shift an identity which, historically, has hinged on the retail offer. Kingston still wants to celebrate its retail prowess and retailers themselves are foremost in their awareness of the need to be agile and adapt to changing macro and micro trends. The strength of retail in Kingston still needs to address persistent vacancies and some of the performance of F&B. The future is likely to suggest smaller floor plates and consolidation of the offer with the ability to create new types of uses and leisure opportunities.

³ Data from Kingston First

⁴ Anup analysis of Kingston First data

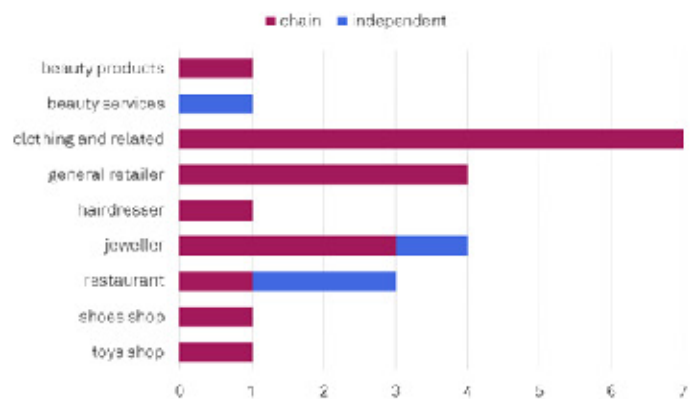
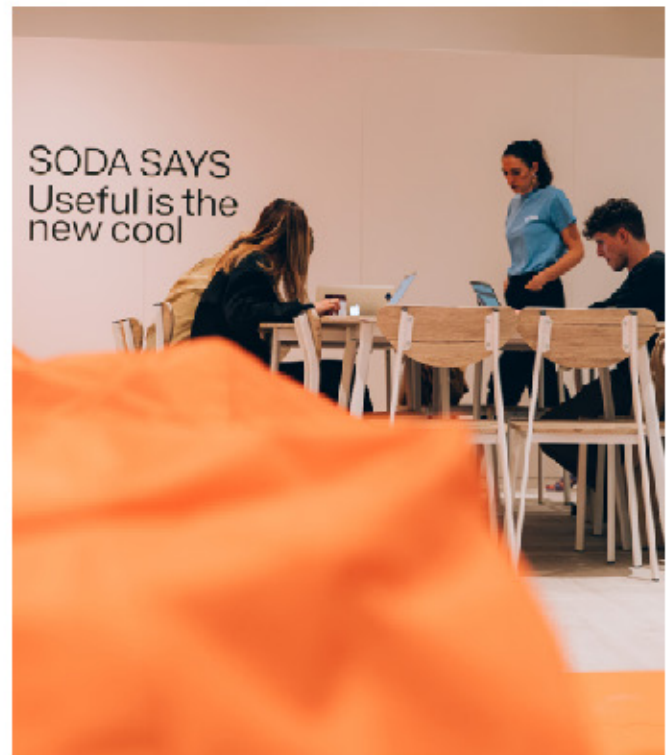


FIGURE 11: NUMBER OF BUSINESSES CLOSED IN KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE SINCE JULY 2019 BY BUSINESS CATEGORY



ECONOMY

There will also need to be diversification (described in the next trend) towards a different mix of use and activity. Centre for Cities found that higher performing high streets and town centres have a higher percentage of food and leisure which indicates that the council need to think about policy and regulation to allow for more food and leisure and a strengthening of the night time economy.





CASE STUDIES

1.



1. London Pop Brixton

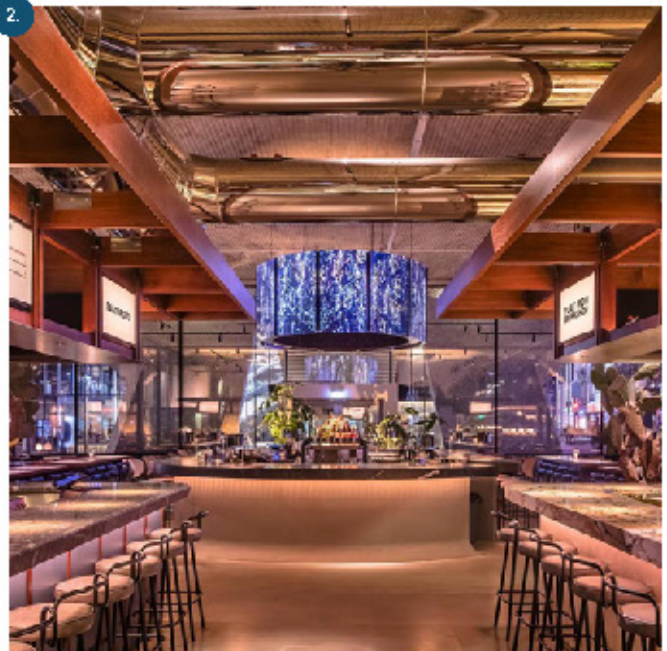
A temporary project initiated by Lambeth Council in 2014, making positive use of the land whilst the Council establish its plans for the long-term future of the former ice rink site.

Fifty recycled shipping containers are let out to local businesses on short-term leases, mainly food and drink vendors. At least several of them have been since able to grow and set up full time establishments in central London. Pop Brixton is also home to Impact Hub Brixton, which was set up with grant from the Council and provides affordable co-working space and a programme of events and support with a focus towards social entrepreneurs. Pop Brixton is currently planned to remain in place until 2020.

2. London Oxford Street BHS

The West, the former BHS building at Oxford Street has been transformed into the largest food hall in the UK. The Market Halls Group's space houses eleven independent food traders and four bars and provides seats for 800 people. In addition the three-storey building now invites to three dedicated events spaces, a children's play area, a covered and heated winter roof terrace with Sipsmith and a first-of-its-kind internet TV studio, including a demo kitchen.

2.



2. /

DIVERSITY

GROWING KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE WITH A MIX OF USES

The role of the town centre is changing. As described in the previous pages, town centres and the pre-eminence of retail is, in many places, shifting. The GLA's recent strategy looking at high streets and town centres suggests that "it's time to remember that town centres have always been about social gathering and interaction". To ensure that major town centres are still economically thriving and have a focus on social interaction, introducing homes that are affordable and more commercial space could prove successful. Kingston, a suburban neighbourhood, has a particular edge of city quality and will see a rejuvenation by intentionally placing residents and workers alongside quality public space and amenity.

This is not unique to London and the UK but is how many edge of city neighbourhoods are recasting their offer and attracting new types of development which includes both a mix of residential and commercial offices to

ensure these places are destinations in their own right. Salford in Manchester and Leeds Southbank have all led with a commercial or mixed use offer which has seen a step change in identity.

To create stronger sense of place and vibrancy in Kingston, the right type and mix of residential accommodation, cafes, restaurants, events and animation are important components of what occupiers want. Occupier choice is now influenced by many factors, including flexible easy come/easy go leases and collaboration spaces, location and accessibility, quality amenities and managed/serviced arrangements with new breed of modern Landlords. More organisations are seeking non-corporate workspace and Kingston has the potential to cater to a wide range of occupiers seeking this type of space, creating the conditions for a vibrant, sustainable town centre. This would be a differentiator for the town centre.





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON?

Kingston has many assets in its favour which will enable it to attract new types of employment and residents. Employers look to cluster in places where they have immediate or easy access to a highly skilled workforce, Kingston has some of the best educated residents in London. The proximity to a good road and rail network is also an attraction and Kingston has rail access into London and out to Surrey and is served by a good road network linking to national highways. It does however face competition from neighbouring boroughs who have a stronger reputation in particular sectoral mixes and specialisms – Medtech in Sutton and media and comms in Hammersmith.

The town centre would benefit from a stronger relationship with its University and the ability to provide smaller and more flexible work units for new or growing firms. However, the amount of office in the town centre space fell by 10 percent between 2000 and 2015, and the quality of existing stock also presents a challenge. Start-up activity in Kingston performs below most of London's other Metropolitan centres and affordable and quality space is lacking, yet the university have the highest percentage of graduates creating start-ups in London (see the education trend).

Introducing affordable and quality space with different size units could give small businesses in the area the ability to expand and grow and stay in Kingston, including spaces for creative industries'. This might be about looking for different office operators rather than larger developers who often look for long leases and certainty in income from secure occupiers.

A new commercial mix must be propped up by the inclusion of additional residential development. The provision of new homes is not just essential in meeting the wider borough's housing need (the draft London Plan, when adopted will double the Royal Borough of Kingston-Upon-Thames' housing target from 643 to 1,364 homes per year), but, to the town centre itself, would contribute a further layer of vitality. It would ensure a 24/7 footfall across the town centre environment which, in turn, would encourage the establishment of services and leisure activities that are not there to serve the sole needs of the transient working population. Rather, they would also provide the everyday social needs of the people who call the town centre their home – a genuine universality to the neighbourhood.

The importance of providing new residential development in key areas of the borough and the benefits such uses can bring is highlighted by the draft London Plan's recognition of four key areas in the borough that have the potential to be designated as Opportunity Areas – of which the Kingston Town Centre is one. By curating the commercial offer to the needs of university-related functions such as research or to the needs of innovative small or medium enterprises which emerge naturally from creative institutions, Kingston would strongly advance towards a diverse housing offer with attention paid particularly to students and recent graduates. By encouraging people affiliated with the university to live in Kingston's town centre the residential population in the town centre would grow bringing a liveliness to the area. Finally, the innovative ecosystem created by thriving universities would help to support technological and digital innovation throughout.

DIVERSITY

The exact boundaries of this Opportunity Area (and any others in the borough) are to be devised and fixed at a local level, though combined they are envisaged to provide circa 9,000 new homes and circa 5,000 new jobs. The principle of this designation underpinning focussed and high-density development on areas of accessible brownfield land has been established with much success across London and have often been fundamental in securing long term positive change. In Kingston Town Centre specifically, it is acknowledged that the very nature of the townscape is more suited to high density apartments which may not necessarily be suited to larger families. However, an injection of new leisure facilities, workspace and amenity areas into the town centre combined with its current and future levels of accessibility (Crossrail 2 will deliver more Crossrail stations into the borough than any other) will generate a substantial demand for new, affordable living spaces. This increased population will reinforce the town centre's 24/7 streetscape and maximise its attractiveness to investors, businesses and operators.

Finally, a good balance between commercial and residential uses in the town centre also ensure that the ability to raise local revenues through business rate income and the BIDs ability to maintain the quality of public space and assets will also provide the right balance for the Council moving forwards.

CASE STUDIES

1. Sutton: Civic Centre as an anchor

In 2016 Sutton Council prepared a comprehensive town centre masterplan aimed to bring business back to the high street and create a more diverse urban environment. The masterplan includes new homes and densification of the area. Part of the plan is for the Council to use and grow their property portfolio to facilitate local opportunities in the high street and help improve the area's cultural, evening and workspace offer. The council is also relocating their offices to the high street serve as an anchor to re-establish the centre as a place for work supported by a rich day and evening offer.





2.



2. Invest in Hackney: Area Regeneration Service

London Borough of Hackney supports businesses to relocate to the area. The council team assists with finding appropriate commercial premises, including meanwhile or short-term opportunities. They help with planning arrangements and networking with local business representatives in technology, culture, retail, hospitality and manufacture sectors.

3. Waltham Forest: Night Time Enterprise Zone

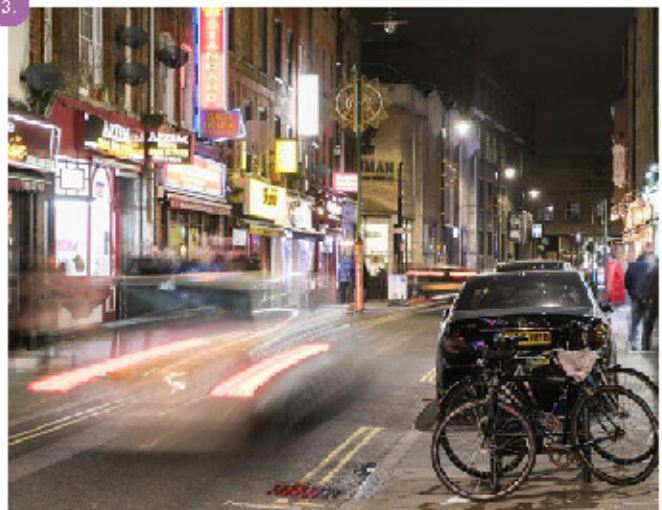
In 2019 Walthamstow High Street was announced the capital's first-ever Night Time Enterprise Zone. The high street has been selected by the GLA to obtain £75,000 funding to trial ideas to boost the town centre performance and vibrancy after 6pm, such as:

- Offering low-cost and flexible business spaces to hire in the evenings,
- Creating a guide for businesses to help them apply for planning and night-time licensing approval,
- Encouraging late shopping with a new evening map and events listings.

3.



3.



3./ PLACE

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY, CULTURE AND SENSE OF PLACE

Town centres need to cater for all in people at all stages of life, from infants and small children through to older residents and visitors. Successful town centres invite and support everyone, no matter the size of their family or stage of life. Kingston is abundant with heritage, with access to the River Thames and a great location for open space, parks and cultural destinations including Hampton Court Palace a stone's throw away.

Public space, public art and celebrating local people, local talent and local history has seen some inventive uses introduced to local centres that delight local people and provide a sense of rediscover. Curating events to celebrate culture and activating spaces with meanwhile uses has provided a great success in many cities with pop up or trials with public space and pocket parks and oases to dwell creating civic pride, as the case studies demonstrate. High quality public realm, public space and 'healthy streets' should not

be a tag on or after thought but rather can shape new routes, wayfinding and uses for public and green space. These measures can impact health and wellbeing and introduce bio-diversity and local economic spend. Celebrating community, heritage, culture and public space can all be woven together comprehensively to deliver a series of much wider benefits.

Well designed and curated public spaces and public realm can also see a commercial return on investment with a segment of investors, developers and employers looking for locations that offer a thriving and vibrant environment for their worker. The design of places like Chiswick Park contributes to their commercial success, and improvements to public spaces have been found to bring new private investment and increase trade by up to 40 percent.¹

¹ DoE and The Association of Town Centre Management (1997) Managing urban spaces in town centres: good practice guide.





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON

Reimagining Kingston Town Centre Streets and Spaces sets a clear trajectory for a public realm driven by local stakeholders and organisations; accommodating future growth; connecting local assets and green spaces; with the programming of events during the day and evening.

The Riverside SPD recognises how spaces on the riverside, and connections to it are currently underperforming - setting a vision for a significant public space by the River Thames.

Since K20+ and the Eden Quarter SPD, the economic, social and environmental climate has shifted, and the town centre offer must diversify beyond retail, as described earlier in this section. The challenge is to maximise the benefits of this shift; realising a thriving town centre, building social value and responding to environmental priorities.

Meanwhile use and temporary events and celebrating public space needs to form part of a strategy to strengthen the identity for Kingston Town Centre.

Making the most of underutilised local assets including the river and the University should be a core component in the short to medium term. Kingston Universities reputation in the arts and the ability to showcase the institution and inspire younger people in the Borough for pathways into higher education. Public space and council assets could serve as options to activate and curate spaces and empty units or underutilised space to enforce the idea that Kingston is open for business and responding to global and local trends.

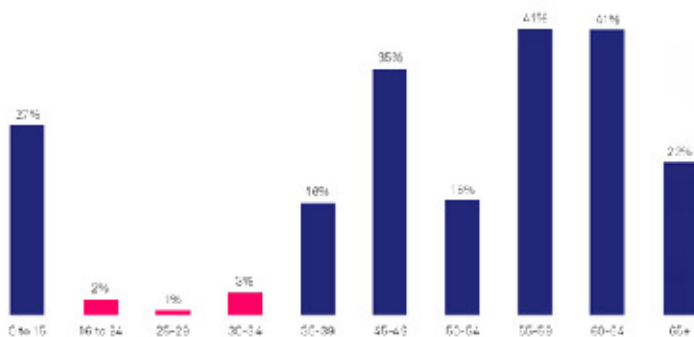


FIGURE 12: POPULATION GROWTH RATE BETWEEN 2000 AND 2018 BY AGE GROUP (ONS POPULATION ESTIMATES)

PLACE

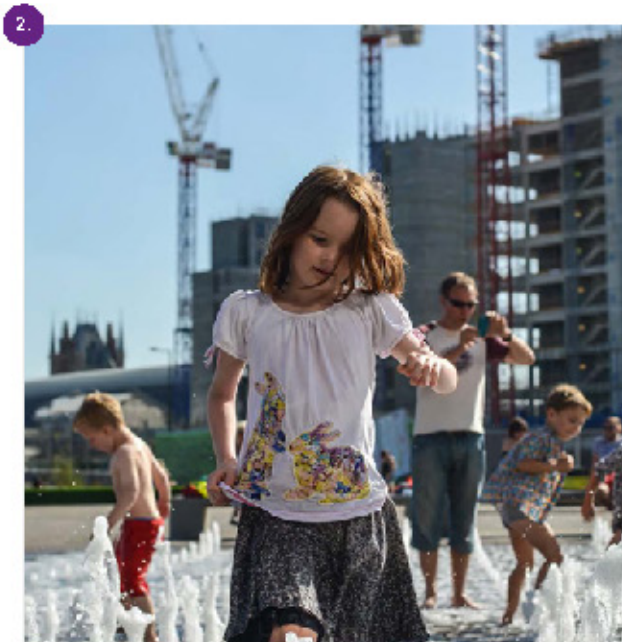
CASE STUDIES

1. Inclusive city: London's Quietways

London has designated routes throughout the city as Quietways. These routes use signage, pavement markings and maps to give cyclists and pedestrians ways to move around and enjoy the city whilst avoiding the busiest or most dangerous roadways. The routes often follow waterways, tree-lined streets, and other pleasant places.

2. Playspace for childhood (Bogotá)

The City of Bogotá is piloting a children's priority zone to test traffic calming, wayfinding, play-streets programming, pop-up parks, improved crossings, enhanced landscaping, and behavioural prompts indicating a child-friendly area, with lessons to be integrated into future masterplanning.





CASE STUDIES

3.



3. King's Crescent Play Street (Making London Child Friendly)

Pedestrianised and pedestrian priority streets with play and socialising opportunities have placed children and young people at the centre of a mixed-tenure development in LB Hackney.

4.



4. Vauxhall Walk Rain Gardens (Better Streets Delivered TFL)

Vauxhall's creative quarter comprises many new galleries and creatives spaces with the 'missing link' forming a green connection to the South Bank. The Missing Link Rain Garden utilises sustainable drainage technology, supports biodiversity and enhances the walking and cycling experience. The garden is maintained by a social enterprise training horticultural apprentices.

4. /

EDUCATION

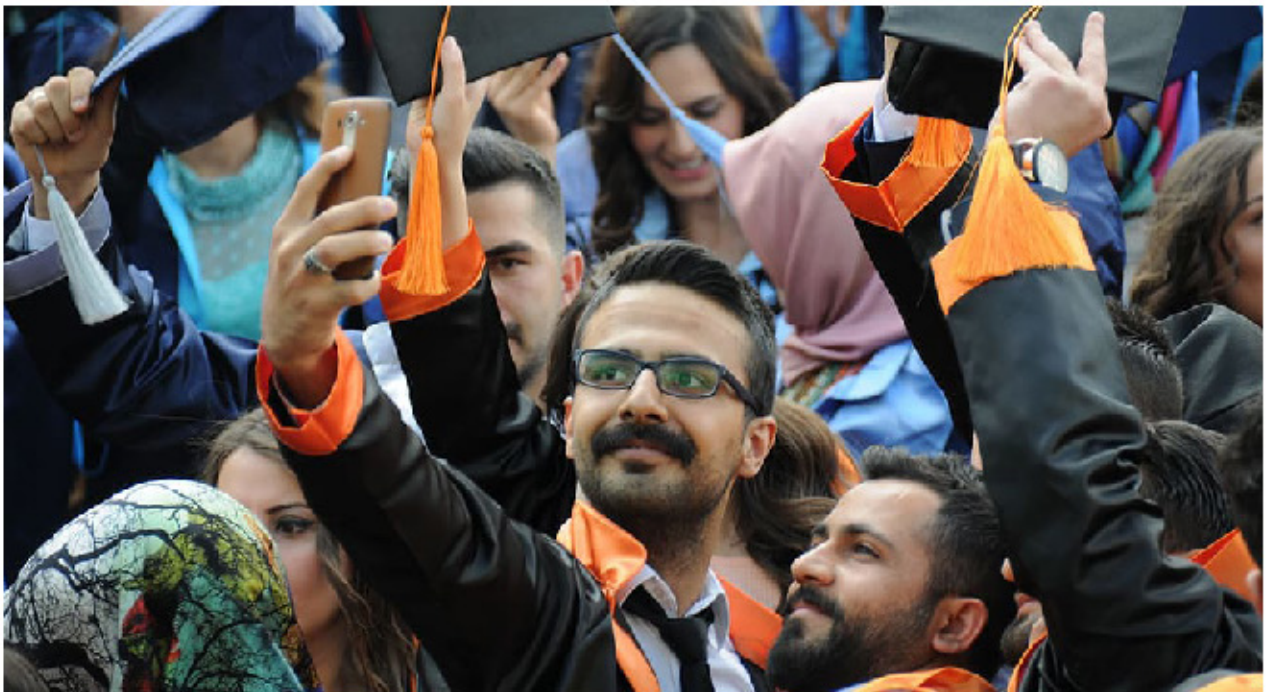
HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education is regularly seen as a significant and important anchor in town and city centres. Some places identities hinge on the status of their University and are a central component in a town or cities economic activity.

Higher Education institutions also have the ability to attract investment. They can create business clusters with the associated agglomeration benefits especially those who partner with major or local employers. Higher and Further Education institutions are also large employers in their own right, with staff often living locally and being a central part of the local community.

These institutions can also be symbols of creativity and culture and their status can help to embed a brand and place making identity. Higher and Further Education is also a place of convergence of residents and businesses and are also important for young people in terms of creating aspiration and educational achievement whether through apprenticeships or degree programmes.

The other benefit delivered by higher and further education are the graduate population who will form an important part of the workforce, especially if they are retained locally and start contributing to the local economy. Higher and Further Education therefore can be both a physical asset and an economic asset.





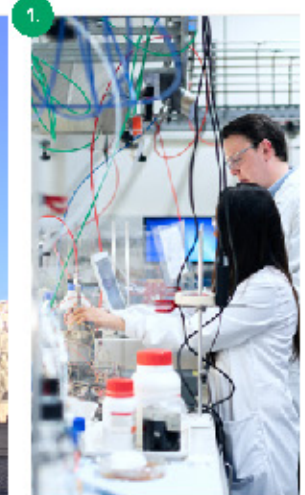
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON

Kingston has both higher education and further education campuses near the town centre with a large population of students from apprentice through to post graduate. Kingston University is an important employer with a strong reputation in the courses it provides and a renowned arts school.

The University is a real asset for the Town Centre and its students, graduates and the courses it teaches could be celebrated in the town centre and promoted through curating vacant and public spaces in the town centre with art and project work created by the students linking key sites and the campus. Working with the University and Kingston College on activating their campuses to link to key festivals and events in the town centre would also see businesses and residents celebrating education and opening up the campuses to residents, and potential future students. The town centre could also place more emphasis on attracting students into the town centre creating vibrancy and a night time economy and investment in leisure facilities.

Kingston suffers from not being able to retain its graduates, some of this is related to the lack of employment in key sectors in the area and some is linked to housing affordability. There is also a lack of office space and particularly incubator space for graduates to start businesses locally. There is an opportunity to work with the university on providing incubator space to capitalise on Kingston University's high number of graduates involved in start-ups and patents.

CASE STUDY



1. The Helix, Newcastle

Developed in partnership with Newcastle University, the Newcastle Helix masterplan reuses brownfield sites in the town centre along one of the main transit lines, providing a diverse set of land uses.

Developed in partnership with Newcastle University, who will be a key tenant, the commercial offer includes labs, research facilities, and flexible office spaces to accommodate start-up, growing, and mature companies.

The masterplan will deliver about 400 housing units - a mixture of differently sized flats and homes. Of this, 66 units of different sizes will be affordable through social rent or Rent to Buy programmes.

The scheme also includes upgraded digital infrastructure, new public spaces, smart homes, and a cutting edge district energy system.

5./ RESILIENCE

A HOLISTIC APPROACH TOWARDS RESILIENCE

Health and wellbeing coupled with environmental resilience are becoming a core foundation of good place making and an outcome led approach to development. The pandemic has also placed particular emphasis on community resilience with a focus on human health, wellbeing and economic resilience which is likely to have an enduring impact on communities for many years to come.

The environment and the impact of the climate change is also placing particular emphasis on green and blue infrastructure. Placing landscape design, public space, active travel and enhancing bio-diversity sits at the heart of good place making principles.

There are a series of long term and wider benefits that can be felt as a result of 'resilience' which includes indicators linked to mental health and isolation, social inclusion, civic pride, 'happiness', productivity and physical health.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON

Kingston has some amazing green and blue assets and an active local community. It should use these assets to enhance the town centre. Celebrating and curating the spaces to be green and welcoming and encouraging walking and cycling will all increase the town centres environmental and social resilience. These moves will also provide a platform for Kingston Town Centre to attract more - and different - inward investment, supporting the strategy to diversify the uses in the town centre and secure more development and a mix of uses. Kingston can also best serve its older population and families through well planned networked spaces that encourage community use and social interaction, improving health and well-being and tackling social isolation.

A holistic approach to town centre planning that ensures community and environmental resilience can be achieved in some small but heroic moves, and ensure that Kingston has a thriving town centre with a variety of people, uses and activities.





CASE STUDIES



1. La Citta Vita (Hammarby Stockholm) waterfront resilient strategy

A diverse network of green and blue infrastructure and natural environments will be key to support walking and cycling connections, but also to create a resilient framework future proofed for climate change challenges

2. Bristol Resilience Strategy

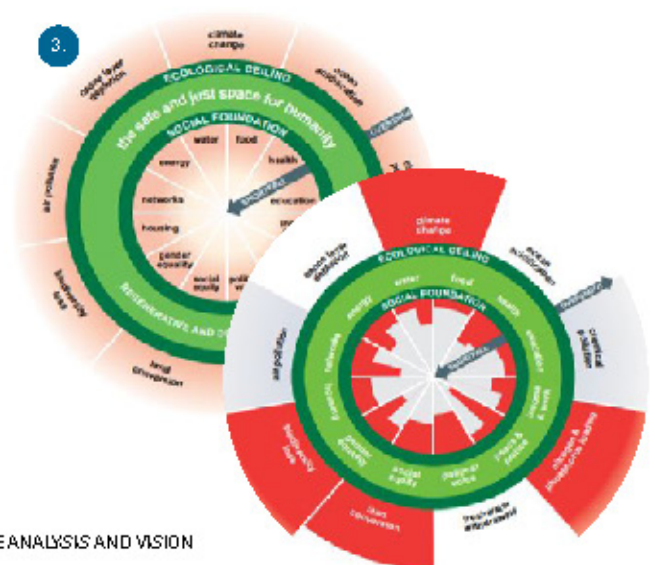
The strategy research has identified five key challenges that Bristol needs to tackle at different city scales – from the individual/ community to the regional and global context.

The strategy identifies 42 short, medium and long-term actions and their delivery partners designed to respond to those challenges and increase the city's resilience. These include a variety of propositions, from tackling street homelessness, through providing free bus transport for children under 16 years old to improving accessibility and citizen engagement with city open data platform.



3. The Amsterdam City Doughnut

In April 2020 Amsterdam as the first city in the world to commit to follow the doughnut economics framework in shaping the city public policy in a post-COVID-19 world. Doughnut economics has been called by many a "breakthrough alternative to growth economics", calling for meeting all core needs of societies but within the means of the planet. It aims to highlight trade-offs between economic activities and its environmental impacts, forcing policy makers to design sustainable long-term solutions to current crisis.



6./ MOVING

MOVING TOWN CENTRE

The role of transport in cities is evolving. The past challenge of facilitating trips from point A to B as quickly as possible is now one of developing a transport system that maximises the environmental, social and economic benefits for all.

From this point onward, an overarching recognition of climate change impacts is expected in any kind of planning for the future. This is particularly the case for the transport sector, which is the UK's highest emitter of carbon emissions (excluding air), and is the only sector where emissions are still rising. No longer the responsibility of central governments or climate scientists, responding to the climate emergency is a responsibility for all.

At a more local scale, the Healthy Streets Approach clearly sets out the priorities for how streets in London are to be considered and planned. By placing the accessibility, safety and experience of people at its core, there is a clear shift away from private vehicles towards the safety and needs of vulnerable road users. In London in particular, planning guidance clearly demands a mode shift towards walking, cycling and public transport, with these modes having priority above all others. In doing so, it is projected that this will help create a vibrant and successful city where people can live active and healthy lives, while reducing impacts on the environment.





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON

In Kingston Town Centre, streets can play a multi-purpose role depending on time of day (including servicing and deliveries) and increased evening activity. Its street network therefore must become connected, flexible and adaptive to serve different activities and priorities depending on the time of day and day of the week.

In response to and in recognition of the UK government's decarbonisation goals and the Royal Borough of Kingston's declaration of a climate emergency, movement must seek to positively contribute to decarbonising the Town Centre. The focus should be people-centric in response to the Healthy Streets Approach. In order to ensure the Town Centre remains highly accessible to a large catchment area of residents, shoppers, employees and visitors, it must strive to offer seamless connectivity by various transport modes and digital tools (as described in the digital section).

Recognising that accessibility to any town centre is an important component of its overall attractiveness, the key outcome of achieving a shift away from private vehicle use towards active and public transport modes must be supported by the availability of suitable alternative modes. A recent visitor survey revealed that some 23% of visitors currently travel by car, around half the level of bus (43%), and similar to walking (20%), indicating that access by private vehicle still represents a sizeable share of the Town Centre's catchment area. People interviewed in other towns cited improved accessibility as the highest response to encourage them to visit more frequently.

The movement strategy and transport offer must therefore facilitate a mode shift from within its existing catchment area and ideally reach new catchments, otherwise the attractiveness and success of the Town Centre may come under challenge from competing metropolitan centres.



MOVING

CASE STUDIES

1. Walk [Your City]

Encourages walking and cycling by enabling local people to create wayfinding signs and link to QR codes for directions.



2. FlexKerb, Arup Research

Arup has undertaken research and developed a flexible type of infrastructure called FlexKerb. The aim of FlexKerb is to equip streets to accommodate varying movement needs throughout a given day without sacrificing the transport environment for other users.

As an example, a single FlexKerb segment could function as a cycle path at peak times, a pedestrian plaza at lunchtime, a CAV rank in the evening and a loading zone overnight. FlexKerb could be operated remotely and form part of a connected network of places and streets within the Town Centre which can change and adapt depending on varying priorities.





3. Oslo car-free city - Norway

Oslo's city government have gradually been removing street parking from its city centre since 2015. By 2019, some 700 spaces had been removed, with most being repurposed for public space which can be used by local business and organisations for "everything from outside dining, culture activities, art, bicycle stands or playgrounds".

Some of the spaces have been converted to EV charge spots and disabled parking and streets are accessible for servicing and deliveries at certain times, otherwise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport have priority. From initial concerns from local businesses about the impact from the loss of parking, the programme has seen a 10% increase in pedestrian activity in the city. It has also had a significant beneficial impact on safety, with zero pedestrian or cycle fatalities recorded in 2019.

4. Lewisham Gateway - Lewisham

Lewisham Gateway is a significant redevelopment of a major town centre located in south-east London. Once completed, the scheme will deliver around 900 new homes, as well as new retail, restaurant and commercial space and much improved bus, taxi and cycling facilities.

The site itself was previously dominated by a large roundabout which bisected the Town Centre and severed connectivity to the Lewisham DLR and railway stations.

The scheme removes this severance, reallocates road space to pedestrians and cyclists, and creates a new bus interchange facility.



FIGURE 13: [PHOTO: ÅSMUND HOLIEN MO/URBAN.SHARING]



7. / DIGITAL

THE DIGITAL SHIFT AND ITS IMPACT ON TOWN CENTRES

The rise of the digital economy has been attributed to the struggles experienced by retail dominated town centres. The UK has one of the highest e-commerce rates in Europe, with internet sales accounting for almost 20% of all retail sales in 2019. Whilst the role of digital has played its part, it is also a key enabler of revitalisation efforts in town centres and future proofing town centres with a robust digital strategy should possess:

Convenience: how can digital bring convenience to a busy town centre experience? Digital services such as smart parking applications, ride sharing services and dynamic wayfinding and information services, with click and collect kiosks.

Engagement: A 'one size fits all' offering to community engagement, the use of public space and social activity is no longer enough. Personalisation and customisation are now key to driving interest, engagement and satisfaction. The availability of data allows for events and engagement to be responsive and personalised.

Adaptability: Demand for space in towns is Changing. Digital technologies can enable spaces to be 're-programmed' to allow them to shift between uses, while minimising the overall urban footprint.

This era will be known as one of deep digital progress and technology is going to keep having a significant impact. Those towns that do not embrace the possibilities introduced by digital are unlikely to achieve their short-term objectives, let along their longer-term aspirations.





WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR KINGSTON

Kingston is already making significant progress in embracing digital technologies to deliver real value to its citizens with a borough wide digital strategy. The town centre has good wifi connectivity and has embraced using digital. The town is also home to Kingston University's Digital Information Research Centre (DRIC) which is dedicated to delivering internationally-leading work in the field of informatics, addressing the needs of society in the thematic areas of health, communications, security and data.

In order to further revitalise the town centre, digital connectivity and services could be used in the following ways:

Data from the **IoT platform** could be used to streamline the provision of public transport services and enable smart parking applications to reduce private vehicle dominance and congestion, while improving air quality. The IoT programme has the potential to build relationship between the town centre businesses and visitors/ shoppers.



A **Digital Innovation Hub** for local residents and businesses to improve their digital skills and progress their ideas, thereby reducing digital exclusion, attracting people to the town centre and giving small businesses the digital skills required to succeed in an increasingly online world.

Digital re-programming and space-as-a service platforms could be introduced to provide places for start-up businesses and enable a more diverse and vibrant night-time economy. Data from the IoT platform could be used to inform the configuration of public spaces at different times of the day, allowing them to transform from a children's play area to a market to a temporary park at different times of the day or week.

Dynamic wayfinding kiosks could be used to improve connectivity and provide realtime information on activities happening across the town centre, encouraging people to explore new areas and helping people avoid heavily polluted routes.

A series of **interactive environments** could be introduced throughout the town centre to enhance engagement.

DIGITAL

CASE STUDIES

1. Digital Vision for Hackney - Dalston Town centre:

Example of inclusive, technologically enabled high street. Using data insight for public decision making, and to support local businesses.



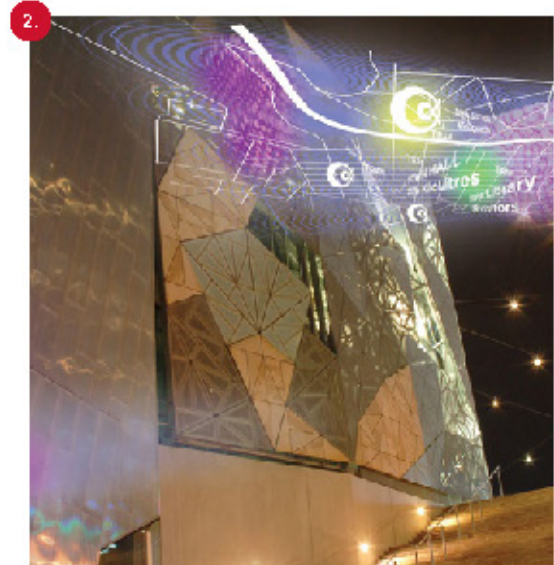
1.

A LAYERED DIGITAL STRATEGY

	Layers of digital infrastructure	Life cycle
1	Physical space Fixed digital devices, equipment and infrastructure. For example, digital street furniture including lamp posts, seating.	Very slow life cycle Baseline requirement.
2	Digital connectivity Enables connectivity between devices and locations. For example, cabling and wireless protocols. Created a platform for different systems integration. For example, data LANs, gateway controllers and servers.	Longer life cycle 10-15yrs, baseline requirement. Dependent on business requirements.
3	Platforms Front and back end platforms that user applications plug into. For example, management platforms, CCTV and baseline data collection/sharing.	Short life cycle Dependent on specific user needs.
4	User applications Services and processes that the end-user digitally interacts with. For example, payment apps, delivery notifications, virtual loading bay, vacant unit and Business matching, just in time cycle deliveries, recycling guidance, council services.	Very short life cycle User dependent, often provided by third parties.
5	End-user devices Any device that the end-user interacts with. For example, smartphone, smartwatch, laptop or street screen.	Very short life cycle Often end-user owned.

2. Melbourne Smart City - Arup Smart Cities workshop

Realtime data displayed over Federation Square in Melbourne. Also, bin - solar powered with sensors to indicate when the bin needs to be emptied, reducing maintenance visits and overall waster services budgets.





3. Beeline

A crowdsourced and demand-driven community bus service, which enables people to request and book onto new bus routes.



4. Fitzpark - London

Arup and the Fitzrovia partnership have transformed a delivery bay on a busy urban street into a parklet containing seating and planters for visitors to enjoy.



5. KettleSpace

A space sharing company that transforms restaurants and hotels into fluid and flexible workspaces for businesses during off-peak hours.



6. Digital Water Pavilion

A digitally controlled water curtain. Through an interface, users can create patterns in the water by drawing shapes and letters.



4.

Vision & Objectives

1. / VISION



RIVER FRONT

TOWN CENTRE

ALLEYWAYS

NIGHT

KINGSTON IS A LOVED AND SURPRISING TOWN CENTRE WITH A VIBRANCY AND POWER THAT WILL BE CAPTURED, ENSURING IT CAN RESPOND TO RAPID ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES.

KINGSTON'S VISION IS TO BE ONE OF THE LEADING TOWN CENTRES IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION. KINGSTON'S EXISTING AND FUTURE COMMUNITIES WILL BE THE BENEFICIARIES. THE VISION WILL ATTRACT NEW INVESTMENT TO DIVERSIFY AND SHAPE THE RETAIL SECTOR THE LEISURE ECONOMY. IT WILL PROVIDE NEW EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS NEW RESIDENTIAL QUARTERS. IT WILL PLACE CULTURAL HERITAGE AT THE HEART OF THE TOWN CENTRE AND WILL DELIVER GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.



NIGHT TIME ACTIVITY

COMMERCIAL AREA

NEW RESIDENTIAL AREA / HOGMILL RIVERSIDE

UNIVERSITY AREA

2. /

OBJECTIVES

To deliver the vision framework and to address the key challenges identified in the baseline, seven key objectives will be crucial

These have been developed in collaboration with the council and incorporate the expectations of land owners and other key stakeholders.

The objectives have been designed to inspire a common approach towards development of Kingston whilst deliberately providing flexibility.

Following these objectives will create a common thread that binds the individual sites and actors together, creating a more coherent and better integrated town centre.

They will also enable individual landowners and promoters to develop their own ideas and concepts in response to specific aspirations, objectives and business needs - identified in this document - whilst contributing to the collaborative development of the town centre and to the overarching vision.

**TRANSITION TO A
COMPETITIVE KINGSTON**



1.

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY

ECONOMY



2.

PROVIDE THE RIGHT MIX OF USES

DIVERSITY



3.

CULTIVATE A 24-HOUR KINGSTON CULTURE

PLACE



4.

CAPTURE POTENTIAL

EDUCATION



5.

EMBED ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE

RESILIENCE



6.

IMPROVE MOBILITY FOR ALL

MOVING



7.

ENHANCE TOWN CENTRE PERFORMANCE

DIGITAL



OBJECTIVES

1.

PROMOTE ECONOMIC DIVERSITY



- Foster comprehensive economic development of retail and business infrastructure for Kingston Town Centre to flourish
- Provide viable commercial proposals which contribute to ensuring the financial viability of the town centre
- Promote economic diversity with a stronger commitment to low carbon and social value sectoral growth
- Redefine the visitor and retail experience. A day out to Kingston can include culture, a long walk along the riverfront and eating out. The provided offer and activities can be updated regularly to encourage repeat visits and experiences
- Build a portfolio of commercial spaces that responds to market needs such as the need for remote working
- Implement meanwhile uses and pilot initiatives to facilitate the transition, providing flexibility and supporting start ups - this will build flexibility into the town centre and allow for real time analysis of projects to assess which qualities contribute to success or failure
- Establish a cultural network to develop a 'Discover Royal Kingston' offer that enables the flexibility to adapt uses to market trends and Kingston's aspirations
- Support the growth of the town centre's residential population and its effects on value and area uplift



2.

PROVIDE THE RIGHT MIX OF USES



- Reenergise Kingston's residential market with developments that include a mix of tenures and interventions to address unaffordability and the rising cost of living
- Implement measures that support people to stay in the long term (avoiding one-off strategies) through a solid set of 'futureproofed' guidelines and policies
- Provide flexibility to adapt uses to market trends and Kingston's aspirations
- Design developments for the future that can be adapted and respond to market trends as the economy evolves
- Collaborate with asset owners on previously consented and emerging development schemes to address accelerated market changes and align shared objectives
- Propose a solution to the town centre's public estate including potential relocation and release of land for alternative uses
- Prioritise projects that will act as a catalyst for future investment and enhance Kingston's assets such as the opportunities at Kingston's riverside



OBJECTIVES

3.

CULTIVATE A 24-HOUR KINGSTON CULTURE



- Cultivate a 24 hour Kingston culture that strengthens and enhances its existing social infrastructure and provides opportunities for night-time activities with flexible spaces that can serve a range of uses (both meanwhile and performance) and can also turn quickly during the day and evening
- Enhance the cultural quarter assets to emphasise Kingston's unique characteristics
- Respect the historic setting of Kingston Town Centre including its proximity to surrounding conservation areas
- Deliver and support projects to celebrate Kingston's heritage, attributes and identity
- Create a healthy and inclusive town centre that support the community and unlocks social value opportunities
- Enhance the public realm, play spaces, active travel routes and connectivity to encourage physical and mental wellbeing
- Create immersive and interactive spaces that encourage exploration through innovative design
- Uncover the waterways and river walks



4.

CAPTURE POTENTIAL FROM GRADUATES AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



- Celebrate Kingston's identity and talent by providing opportunities to recognise and retain local talent
- Build local capacity by nurturing local partnerships with institutions like Kingston University and Kingston College
- Support the growth of the creative sector through innovation, start-ups and enterprises that will help to retain local talent, graduates and young people
- Support initiatives and provide opportunities that celebrate Kingston's identity and sense of place
- Celebrate the highly regarded University and its Arts School, learning from how other 'university towns' have achieved a lot through partnerships, forming clusters and realising economic benefits
- Improve the retention of graduates and capture 'returners' with good work space and office provision and livability opportunity for this group
- Consider forging a stronger partnership with the University and an 'open campus' approach for non-term time



OBJECTIVES

5.

EMBED ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESILIENCE IN GROWTH



- Make Kingston a leader of climate change mitigation, focusing the town centre on energy efficiency and carbon reduction and at the forefront of the Green Deal
- Proactively prepare Kingston for climate readiness in the case of extreme events
- Instil a sustainable and low carbon mindset through sustainable use of materials, circular economy, electric charging and local sourcing
- Implement digital infrastructure and interventions to support greener and smarter initiatives such as low emission policies, and facilitating the shift to electric vehicles
- Champion sustainable design and construction methods and consider how landowners can play their part in climate change mitigation and adaptation while also providing space for biodiversity
- Foster strong relationships and connection with the community to create a legacy for continued engagement such as strategic partnerships and forums
- Provide opportunities for social integration and social value generation, including how the town centre's community and voluntary sector is supported and strengthened by town centre regeneration
- Adopt a collaborative democratic process to decision making that instils trust and ownership in the community
- Develop a unified vision for the future of Kingston Town Centre and build a big tent coalition of the community to deliver these shared goals
- Adopt a resilient and flexible 'delivery focused' approach to planning policy to bring forward developments and meanwhile uses
- Emphasise high quality urban design that enhances historical assets

6.

IMPROVE MOBILITY FOR ALL THROUGH A CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE TOWN CENTRE



- Reconfigure the transport network to allow a total multimodal shift and improved air quality
- Adopt a connect Kingston ethos linking transport wayfinding to Kingston's assets
- Improve active travel routes and identify a network of movement patterns for people moving by foot, cycle (Go Cycle programme), car or public transport, service and refuse vehicles
- Pursue improvements to local and national transport infrastructure that will address connectivity and accessibility issues - capitalise on future transport investments and work closely with TfL on improvements to the road and river network and network of EV points
- Foster connectivity, mitigate severances, and enhance links, especially improving connections between the town centre and river
- Work with neighbouring areas to promote easy movement between them and an 'easy day out' to attract more visitors
- Adopt a longer term strategy which de-emphasises the role of 'heavy road' infrastructure and car and lorry movements



OBJECTIVES

7.

ENHANCE TOWN CENTRE PERFORMANCE THROUGH INTERACTIVE AND CONNECTED ENVIRONMENTS



- Encourage 'rediscovery' of Kingston's heritage, assets and attributes through immersive and interactive experiences that enhance accessibility and connectivity
- Use digital tools to enhance the visitor and business experience such as smart parking and streamlining the provision of public transport to reduce congestion and improve air quality
- Utilise Kingston University's Digital Information Research Centre
- Implement Digital Hubs to educate the community and reduce digital exclusion
- Deploy dynamic wayfinding environments to help people discover Kingston and think about wayfinding differently
- Create interactive environments suitable for all age groups



10:32
Search

Portfolio

FTSE 100

EVUKE - UK large cap stocks

£26.95
↓ 6.83% (£1.98) Today



0%
-2%
-4%
-6%
-8%

1D

1M

1Y

Buy

Sell

Remove from Watchlist

View Fundamentals