

KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY

Report by the Acting Director of Environmental Services
Executive Member for Transportation and Sustainable Development

Purpose

To seek Executive approval of the Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy which has been updated following consultation.

Action proposed by the Executive Member for Transportation & Sustainable Development

The Executive is requested to adopt the RBK parking strategy for Kingston Town Centre.

Reason for action proposed

To finalise one of the key components of the K+20 town centre strategy and ensure that an adopted parking strategy serving the future needs of the town and consistent with the objectives of the Mayor's Transport Strategy can be cited in the Local Implementation Plan.

BACKGROUND

1. Parking strategy is one of the key components of the K+20 Kingston town centre Area Action Plan. Clarity on objectives will help the Council and private developers plan for the town centre's future development. Because Kingston town centre is such an important hub of the Borough's transport networks and travel patterns the strategy is also an important element of the Integrated Transport Strategy. The consultation draft of the Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was issued at the start of September and all responses have now been analysed. The draft strategy has been updated and is contained in full in annex 1. Although the draft strategy and a feedback form were available on the Council web site there was minimal response by individual members of the public. However a good spread of responses from organisations was received, including two residents associations, three large employers, two business organisations, two heritage or cultural organisations, two church organisations and an adjoining Council (Richmond). The 16 organisations are listed in Annex 2.
2. The responses provide a wide spread of opinions on the 11 questions posed in the feedback form. Annex 3 provides the form's questions and the response totals. On the big picture questions of whether growth in trips to the town centre should as far as possible be met by non-car means and whether off-street capacity should be held at 7,000 +/- 500 spaces, the level of disagreement slightly exceeded agreement. That also applied to the proposal that when permanent park and ride sites come into operation a broadly matching reduction in town centre spaces

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should occur. On most of the questions about measures to make better use of existing capacity, agreement predominated, and was sometimes complete.

POLICY ON FUTURE PARKING CAPACITY

3. Responses largely reflected the interests and concerns of the organisation concerned. The strategy is frequently seeking to reconcile or resolve competing interests so a level of disagreement is inevitable. The most significant challenge to the draft strategy has come from Kingston Town Centre Management on behalf of the large retail interests in the town. They disagree with the strategy's philosophy that, in future, growth in trips to the town centre should as far as possible be met by non-car means. That philosophy runs counter to long held assumptions that retail turnover and town centre prosperity is dependent on maximising access by car. Visitors by non-car modes are assumed to spend less. Retailers also fear that other shopping centres, such as Bluewater that provide free parking, will be seen as more attractive by drivers if parking supply in Kingston becomes less generous.
4. These concerns led Kingston Town Centre Management to commission consultants JMP to examine the Parking Study report and strategy proposed by Steer Davies Gleave. JMP's subsequent report was made available to Environmental Services and helped influence the content of the Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy. Despite this, KTCM and JMP maintained reservations about the Strategy and expressed these at a Transport and Infrastructure Overview Panel meeting on the 8th September 2004 when the draft Strategy was debated. Although there remain minor differences of opinion between JMP and SDG about the level of average demand that can be deduced from usage surveys in May 2003, the fundamental difference concerns future provision.
5. JMP representations call for the parking space requirements necessary to retain the existing ratio of retail floor space to parking stock. That approach directly contradicts the Mayor's Transport Strategy and the Borough's UDP strategic policies STR13 and STR16. It also runs counter to the approach of Hammersons, the main potential developer of retail floor space in the town. They accept the need to alter both ratios of retail floor space to parking stock and mode shares for access to the town centre. They consider that flexibility to increase capacity by 10% i.e. up to 700 spaces would be consistent with the scale of retail development proposed.
6. The Council has a responsibility to follow a sustainable strategy in terms of parking and wider transport issues. This strategy is clearly set out in the Council's Policy Programme. To depart significantly from the approach of the draft parking strategy would be unsustainable in the sense that traffic levels would rise within and approaching Kingston town centre. Congestion would rise more rapidly still, efforts to speed bus journey speeds and improve reliability would be hampered and the environment of the town centre would deteriorate.
7. The proposed strategy is squarely in line with the Mayor's Transport Strategy (Policy 4G.6 and Proposal 4G.16) that requires Boroughs to use planning powers to limit the amount of parking provided through public off-street car parks and ensure charges give priority to short term users. The strategy will help resolve a problem Kingston and many other towns have encountered, namely that while ample parking initially made them more attractive to shoppers and visitors it has become increasingly clear that the traffic generated is strangling their road networks and

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degrading their environment. In addition, town centre land dedicated to parking is often now required for other uses.

8. Despite KTCM's reservations about the impact on retailers it is considered that the proposed strategy will enable the town centre to prosper based on its appeal as an attractive environment and a centre easily accessed by a full range of transport modes. Recent research has shown that in London's town centres bus passengers and pedestrians spend as much money as do car drivers. Transport for London commissioned Accent Marketing and Research to study London bus passenger spending characteristics. They found that buses are the most popular form of transport into town centres and that half the users had access to a car. Bus users spend matched that of car users and they considered that the quality of townscape was as important as diversity of retail outlets in attracting them. Pedestrians also spend as much per year in their local town centres as car drivers do. A report for TfL on 'The benefits of town centre pedestrian and public realm schemes' shows that pedestrians visit more often and are more loyal to the centre than car drivers.
9. For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 4 to 8, the Executive is recommended to endorse the strategy's philosophy that, in future, growth in trips to the town centre should as far as possible be met by non-car means. The consultation responses have led to some reconsideration of the degree of flexibility on parking capacity. In line with the K+20 vision for the town it is anticipated that there will be more multi-purpose visits, for instance shopping plus leisure. Where the visitors have come by car they will need to park for longer and this alone will impact on the supply demand balance. Consequently the Executive is recommended to move to a plus or minus 700 range around public off-street capacity remaining at 7,000 spaces. The key recommendation follows, slightly modified from the plus or minus 500 which appeared in the consultation version of the Strategy:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The main elements of SDG's recommended strategy are endorsed as the basis of Kingston's parking strategy over the next 20 years. Central to this strategy is the recognition that more efficient use of current capacity can and should be made. While SDG considered that no increase in off-street parking capacity from 7,000 was required, the Council opts for a central figure of 7,000 with flexibility to vary by 700 spaces (plus or minus) to leave scope for responding to different development scenarios. The strategy will be subject to periodic review through the Local Development Framework process and, potentially, through the Local Implementation Plan the Council submits in response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

10. A discussion of the main consultation findings on remaining issues and the Strategy's key recommendations are highlighted in the following section. The first block of issues relates to naming and signing of car parks and use of the VMS system.

POLICY ON CAR PARK NAMING, SIGNING AND VMS

11. There is virtually unanimous agreement that naming and signing is unsatisfactory and should be improved at the first opportunity. There is also widespread agreement that a reliable VMS system would influence motorists as they make parking decisions. These matters are described in one response as being among

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“entirely resolvable immediate problems” and that, without a comprehensive approach to dealing with them, “Kingston’s ongoing attractiveness to both shoppers and retailers alike will continue to diminish.” Another response urged measures to increase public awareness of the car park locations etc by “improving the signage around the town, adverts and leaflets in shops and stores in the town centre and even perhaps via Radio Jackie.” It is widely agreed that naming and signing improvement will result in a more balanced utilisation of existing capacity.

12. The main potential developer of retail floor space in the town installed an effective VMS system for the Birmingham Bullring car parks and has indicated that they intend to propose a similar but improved system for Kingston town centre. It is widely agreed that naming and signing improvement will result in a more balanced utilisation of existing capacity. The appropriate recommendation from the Strategy follows:

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Council will develop with its partners a programme of measures to publicise the convenience of the under-used car parks. This will include a signing and naming strategy. Priority will be given to delivering a reliable and influential VMS system.

POLICY ON PARKING TARIFFS

13. The issue of relative parking tariffs between car parks and the merits of a co-ordinated approach by car park operators was addressed in question 10. Some fear of a cartel keeping prices high was apparent from responses but a small majority agreed with the principle. The purpose of a co-ordinated approach is to achieve more even utilisation of existing capacity by making under-subscribed ‘interceptor’ car parks more attractive and reducing or eliminating the price attraction of the oversubscribed car parks. The practical outcome could see a rise in tariffs at oversubscribed car parks and a freeze or fall in tariffs at some interceptor car parks. There is no desire to set a uniform tariff in the town centre, nor to bring about a net increase in price levels.
14. Making use of price signals is a common strategic aim in many areas of transport. The Council needs to develop its ability to identify common ground with other car park operators for the overall benefit of the town centre. The potential is apparent from one of the key retailer responses that said “We consider that the co-ordination of car park tariffs is essential to secure the effective management of provision and would be pleased to assist with this. The tariffs must place an emphasis on attracting short stay visitors and deterring long stay parking in order to underpin Kingston’s role as a major shopping destination.” The following recommendation is a modification from that which appeared in the consultation version of the Strategy:

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Council will initiate liaison with other operators to identify optimum car park pricing arrangements for the town as a whole. It will review opening and charging hours and tariffs in RBK car parks, and the necessary signs explaining the regime that applies. It will encourage other operators to adopt similar reviews.

POLICY ON CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE PERMITS

15. The issue of making more CPZ permits available to business users in zones with spare capacity led to a precisely even spread of agreement and disagreement. This was also reflected in written comments where various respondents argued that this policy and the strategy as a whole were skewed in favour of the large retailers. However the large retailers themselves object to some aspects of the strategy so it is certainly not one sided. On balance the recommendation to establish the facts on CPZ capacity seems reasonable and remains unchanged:

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Council will establish whether there is enough unused capacity in some CPZ zones to justify modifying the rules on business parking permits. If there is, proposals along these lines will be put to Kingston and Surbiton Neighbourhood Committees for decision.

POLICY ON USER PRIORITY FOR ON-STREET SPACES

16. All responses recognised the need to give priority to the needs of blue badge holders and ensure that parking policy in Kingston town centre meets the spirit as well as the letter of the Disability Discrimination Act. There was full agreement with the following recommendation and it remains unchanged:

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Council's Parking and Enforcement Plan¹ will include a clearly stated hierarchy of user priority for on-street spaces and ensure generous parking capacity in the town centre for blue badge holders at the locations where they wish to park.

POLICY ON ALL DAY PARKING AND SEASON TICKETS

17. Questions 8 and 9 on the feedback form concerned the balance between all-day and shorter stay parking. There was widespread agreement with the principle of reducing all day provision but a mixed response to the idea of short year season tickets. Some responses questioned whether a 'shoppers parking strategy' was being presented. Even within the business organisations there were contrary views. However there are several reasons why systematic all-day parking should be discouraged including the congestion impact of commuter traffic, concentrated in the peak hours. Policy guidance is unambiguous about the need to discourage all day parking and, through travel awareness, green travel plans and better public transport, encourage more commuters to use means other than the car.
18. The strategy endorses the principle of reducing all day provision and will initiate a process of finding the most effective mechanisms to achieve that. A step change in pricing beyond a five-hour stay is known to be a useful tool without the drawback of discouraging linked retail and leisure stays in the town. Season tickets are more complex. For most of the year the operators of less popular car parks (from the retail perspective) would have difficulty raising as much income from a short stay

¹ The Borough's Parking Plan was adopted by the Highways and Transportation Committee in November 1993. It will be superseded in 2005 by a Parking and Enforcement Plan required by the Mayor of London as part of the Local Implementation Plan (for the Mayor's Transport Strategy) which each Borough must submit.

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space as from a season ticket space. This means that, at least in the short term, changes will occur within constraints such as the revenue implications. The short year season ticket concept may be the first viable measure and is worth assessing so the recommendation includes reference to it and remains:

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Council will assess the practical and financial implications of short year RBK season tickets and bring conclusions and, if appropriate, recommendations to the appropriate committee. Work will be carried out with other car park operators to influence their policies on season tickets and to rationalise all-day parking charges.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

19. Enabling commercial and cultural activity to increase without any substantial increase in parking capacity or associated traffic levels will support the Air Quality Action Plan and contribute to environmental objectives on noise, safety and ambience. The parking strategy is an important component of the wider transport strategy to reduce overall traffic levels, which in turn is perhaps the single most important contribution the Council can make to tackling climate change.

NETWORK IMPLICATIONS

20. The Kingston Town Centre Parking Strategy will have positive strategic network implications since one of its objectives is to ensure that traffic seeking parking spaces in the town centre does not exceed the capacity of the road network. The emphasis on a more rational balance between supply of and demand for spaces at individual car parks will tend to reduce congestion. Improved car park entry and exit arrangements should have the same effect.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

21. During the period covered by the strategy it is expected that all the temporary RBK car parks will be developed for other uses. The combined parks at Ashdown Road and Lady Booth Road and that at Sopwith Way currently contribute £767,000, about 18% of RBK's off-street car park revenue. Their net contribution to the parking surplus, after deducting maintenance and operating costs, is in the region of £590,000. Loss of this annual surplus will be offset by a multi-million capital inflow if the sites are sold. The annual interest on this sum, which the Council can use as it wishes, is estimated at £250,000.
22. Decisions such as offering short year season tickets and restraining the cost of parking in RBK's less popular car parks could have financial implications. However the latter approach is already routine with charges ranging from £1.20 per hour to £1.80 per hour dependent on location. Assessment of the effect of the Autumn 2003 10% rise in tariffs suggests that RBK is nearing the point where net revenue will not increase after a tariff rise. RBK may therefore in future have to restrain increases in the cost of parking for financial reasons. Short year season tickets could imply pricing at say 90% of the current rate. The estimated out turn for RBK 2004/05 season ticket revenue is £727,000 from commercial sales and £783,000 from staff permits billed to Directorates. A 10% cut from the total would reduce

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income by about £150,000 but the staff permits are nominal income so it is more accurate to estimate a £73,000 cash reduction.

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SDG Final Report February 2004

Roger Tym and Partners RBK Retail Study January 2003

Roger Tym and Partners RBK Retail Capacity Study July 2003

Consultation version of Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy Sept 2004

The Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy



February 2005

The Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy

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1. Introduction

1.1 Town centre parking policies attract considerable public attention and play an important role in a local authority's overall transport strategy. Parking strategy forms one of the key building blocks of K+20, the 20-year area action plan for Kingston town centre which is in preparation. Getting parking right will enable commercial and cultural activity to flourish and contribute to environmental objectives on air quality, noise, safety and the ambience of the town.

1.2 A firm of specialist consultants, Steer Davies Gleave, was commissioned to conduct a parking study of Kingston town centre and to make recommendations on an appropriate strategy for the future. This work has been satisfactorily completed and the findings, analysis and recommendations form a valuable resource for the Council. They help underpin the proposed strategy. Other sources of information, including work commissioned by Kingston Town Centre Management, contribute to the strategy.

1.3 The strategy which has guided town centre parking provision in the last two decades has been one of providing interceptor car parks related to the main approach roads to the town centre. Capacity has taken account of major planned developments and the traffic capacity of the relief road. Within the ring of car parks is an area of pedestrian priority from which traffic has gradually been excluded. The process continues in 2005/6 with Castle Street pedestrianisation. Eden Walk car park is poorly located in this context, requiring traffic to penetrate the core area.

1.4 The strategy starts with a description of where we are now and what problems and opportunities exist in Kingston. The section details the policy objectives prevailing at the national and London level that need to be taken into account. It is essentially concerned with publicly available car parking but includes some discussion of private spaces and the contribution they make to overall supply.

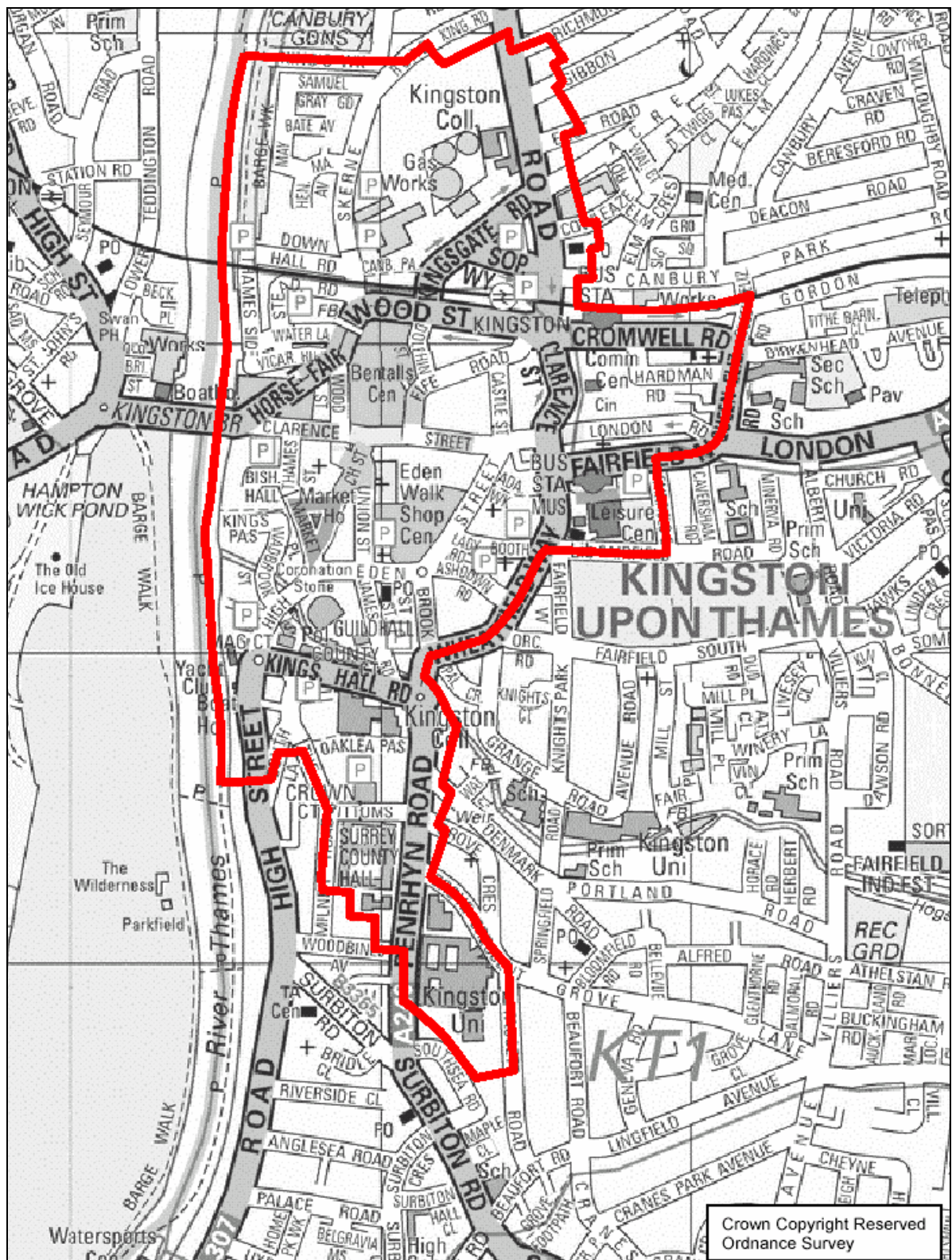
1.5 The next section considers policy on future parking capacity and makes a decision on the appropriate level. The main section moves on to consider strategic approaches which will enable better use to be made of existing spaces and to respond to changes such as development within the town, including development of existing temporary surface car parks. These approaches are grouped as short term, medium term and long term and dealt with in that order. Motor cycle and cycle parking are important, and are touched on here, but will be dealt with under a separate cycling strategy. The final section anticipates problems that are likely to emerge during the period to 2020 and proposes ways to resolve them. An appendix records consultation and meetings with stakeholders and the linkages between this strategy and other Council strategies and initiatives.

Section 2. Current situation, problems and opportunities

Parking Supply

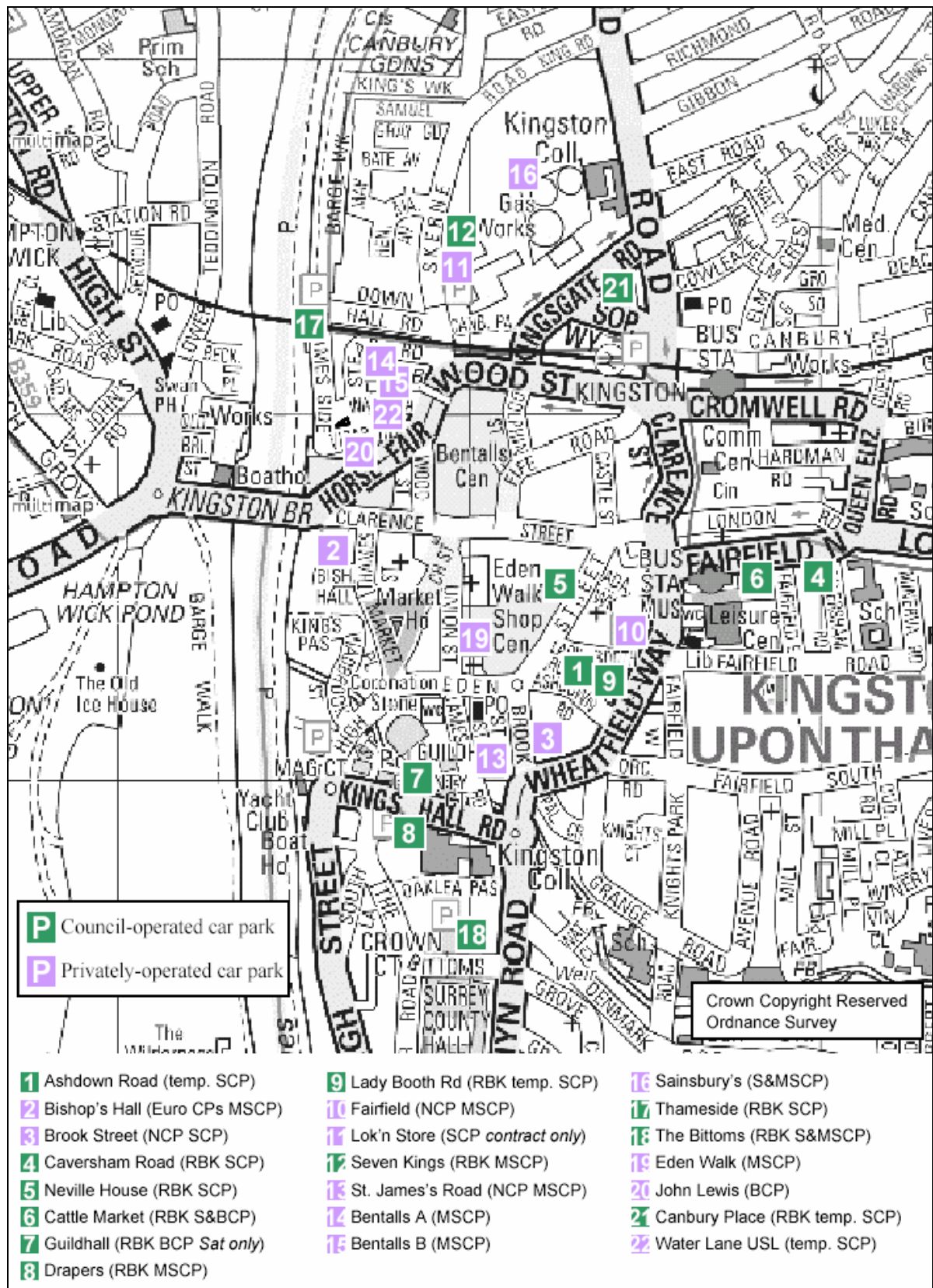
2.1 Kingston town centre covers a substantial area from Sainsburys in the north to Kingston University's Penryhn Road sites in the south. The town centre boundaries are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1: Town centre boundaries



Within this area several forms of parking exist ranging from the adjoining Bentall's multi-storey parks with a combined capacity of 1,185 down to single off-street spaces. The location of all public off-street car parks is shown in figure 2. Sites 1 and 9 have recently been united and are now considered a single Ashdown Road site.

Figure 2: Location of all public off-street car parks



2.2 The total parking capacity is variable but the following table provides a snapshot at April 2004. The only substantial variation in the near future is that for about 15 months the Bentalls B car park is to be closed for reconstruction. This removes nearly 600 spaces during those 15 months. The closure starts early in 2005 and the reconstructed car park will open in 2006.

Table 1: Current parking supply (April 2004) – Number of spaces available for all uses

Type	Mon – Fri	Saturday	Sunday
Council off-street car parks	2,974	2,974	2,090
Privately operated off-street car parks	1,044	1,044	1,044
Retailer off –street car parks (e.g. Bentalls)	3,051	3,051	3,051
Total off-street spaces	7069	7069	6185
On-street bays (Council controlled)	314	314	314
Publicly-available spaces ¹	7,383	7,383	6,499
Private car parks ²	1,395	1,194	1,197
Total spaces	8,778	8,577	7,696

Notes: 1 Available for short or long stay uses including season tickets bought by the public or employers

2. Private car parks are mainly used by employers for staff parking. The figure includes some estimated values.

2.3 The total number of spaces should be seen as a minimum because it does not attempt to take account of householders parking on or under their own property. In practice these existing spaces cannot be influenced by the parking strategy. Creation of spaces in future can be influenced and the strategy includes policies on private residential parking at paragraph 4.24. Within the stock shown (8,778 spaces during weekdays) the spaces of greatest importance are the publicly available ones numbering 7,383. These are used by shoppers, visitors etc who pay by the hour and by season ticket holders who may purchase on a monthly, quarterly or annual basis. The Council has limited scope to influence use of the 1,400 or so spaces in existing private car parks, a few of which close at weekends. Most are used by employees or visitors parking in an employer’s car park; a few by students or other categories parking on reserved spaces in private off street car parks. The Kingston Travel Plan Network works to encourage mode shift towards non-car methods of commuting and so reduce the need for all these spaces. Creation of private non-residential parking will be tightly controlled in future, as outlined in paragraph 4.24.

2.4 Returning to the publicly available off-street spaces there are several points to note. The largest proportion is operated by retailers, principally for use by their customers. The Bentall Centre, John Lewis, Eden Walk and Sainsburys between them provide 3,051 spaces. The Council operates the next largest proportion, nearly 3,000 off-street spaces. The balance of 1,044 are provided by specialist car park operators such as NCP. The Council as Highway Authority is the sole provider of on-street spaces that number 314. These are split between 76 residents spaces in Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), 39 shared use spaces in CPZs, 150 pay and display spaces, 22 blue badge holder spaces, 20 metered spaces and a handful of free spaces. The rest of the highway in the town centre has single or double yellow lines so parking opportunities are restricted to certain off-peak times on the single yellow lines. Total availability for all uses is the same from Monday to Saturday but drops on Sunday mainly because, outside a 10-week period around Christmas, the Bittoms car park is closed on Sunday.

2.5 The capacity of each of the 22 car parks shown in figure 2 is provided in table 2 below. The spaces are wholly or partly open to the public for short stay or contract parking.

Table 2: Total Capacity of Off-Street Car Parks

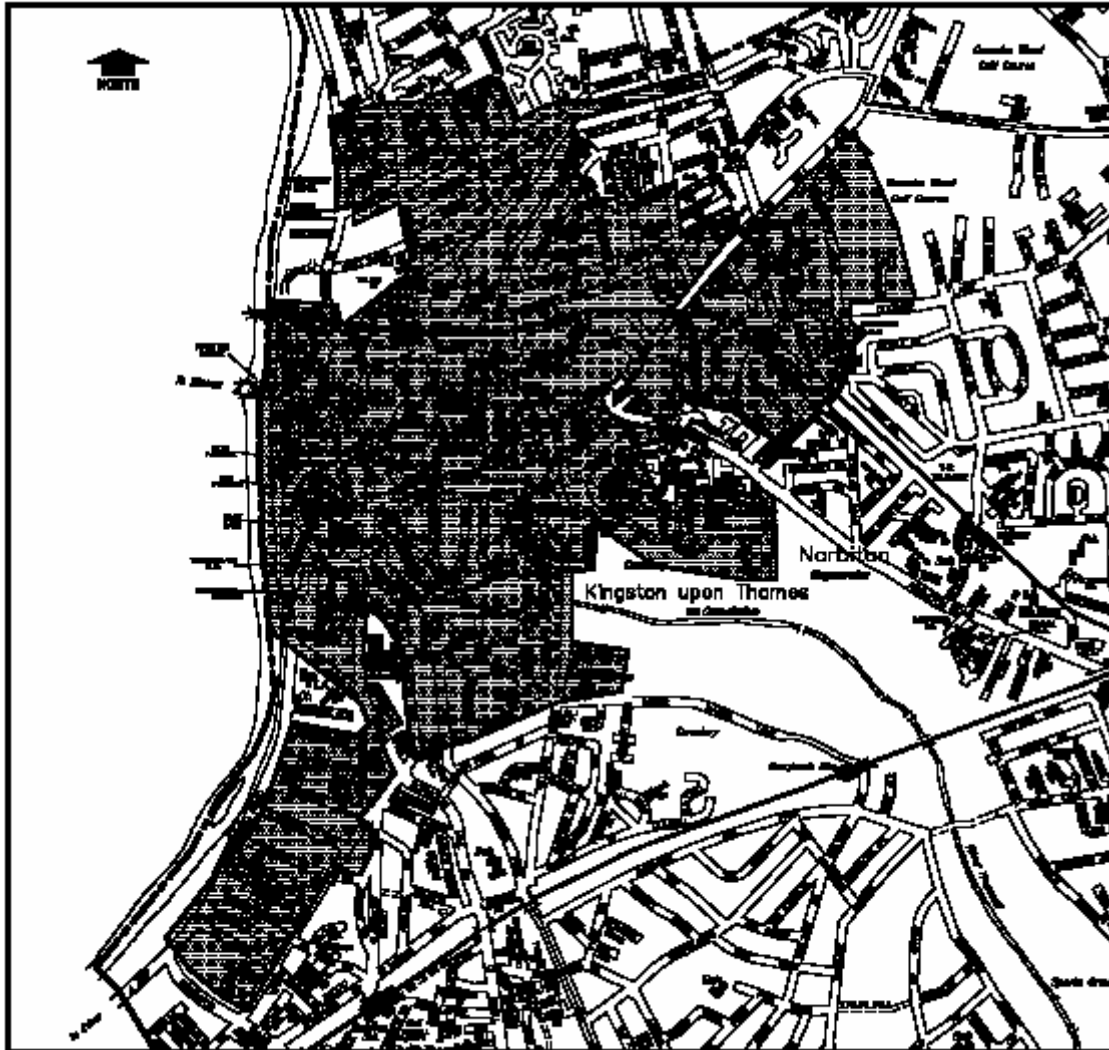
(Note: A single asterisk indicated those parks where all or most spaces are currently used for contract parking)

Map Ref.	Car Park	Mon – Fri	Saturday	Sunday
1 + 9	Ashdown Road + LadyBooth Road	173	173	173
	New Ashdown Road (from October 2003)	92	92	92
2	Bishop’s Hall	70	70	70
3	Brook Street	100 *	100	100
4	Caversham Road	10 *	10 *	10
5	Neville House	30 *	30	30
6	Cattle Market	610 (497 on Monday)	610	610
7	Guildhall	Reserved	71	Closed
8	Drapers	432 *	432	432
10	Fairfield	301	301	301
11	Lok ‘n’ Store Note: Likely to cease in 2005	50 *	50 *	50 *
12	Seven Kings	703	703	703
13	St James’s Road	381 *	381	381
14	Bentall A) 1185)1185) 1185
15	Bentall B)))
16	Sainsbury’s Sury Basin	431	431	431
17	Thameside	32	32	32
18	The Bittoms	813 *	813	Surface spaces
19	Eden Walk	725	725	725
20	John Lewis	710	710	710
21	Canbury Place	100	100	100
22	Water Lane	50	50	50
	Total	6998 **	7069	6185

** Total is 71 below 7,069 because 71 spaces in RBK’s Guildhall 2 car park are only available to staff permit holders.

2.6 While the focus of the strategy is on parking within the town centre it is also necessary to consider how spaces beyond the boundary are used. Nearby on-street parking has been regarded as a free source of supply by town centre workers or shoppers. However an extensive circle of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) now surround the town. Over the last five years or so these have resolved conflicts over parking in residential streets. They have established a new balance between residents and shoppers or commuters, reducing the scope for free parking within easy walking distance of the town centre. A further round of Controlled Parking Zones was introduced in parts of Kingston, Surbiton and Norbiton in late 2003 and early 2004. This has been effective in diminishing non-residential parking in the new zones. Figure 3 shows zones in force in Kingston and surrounding areas.

Figure 3: Controlled Parking Zones



2.7 Another effect of CPZs is to encourage people to switch from car to another form of transport for journeys to the town centre, helping to reduce congestion. This is a desirable by-product of a policy driven by the need to reduce parking stress in residential streets. Despite the £60 annual charge for a permit the majority of residents within the zones now see this as the best way to resolve on-street parking pressures. In some central and inner London Boroughs all residential streets are now covered by CPZs. It is unlikely this Borough will reach that point but it is probable that within the strategy period new areas around district centres like New Malden and Tolworth will eventually have CPZs. There has been some controversy about the CPZ extensions as Kingston town centre businesses feared a negative impact on their ability to retain (and recruit) staff who were used to parking on street for free. The issue is registered within the strategy though, from the Kingston town centre perspective, further extensions will have a diminishing impact since they are too distant to walk in from. They address other problems such as commuter and student parking in the Surbiton area. Short-term measures to address staff retention are discussed at paragraphs 4.11 and 4.12.

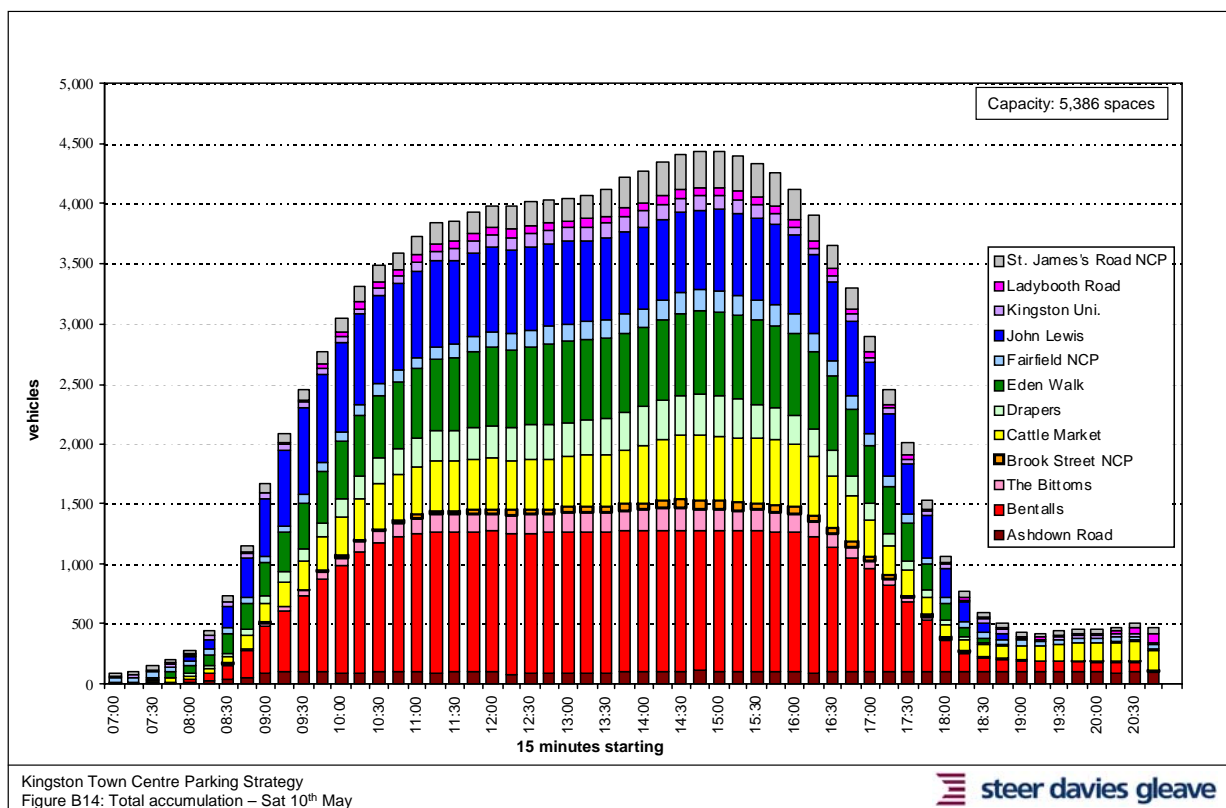
Parking Demand

2.8 Survey work by SDG in May 2003 provides the main source of information, though this is supplemented by data on the Christmas demand pattern in 2001 when Colin

Buchanan and Partners conducted surveys. Because Kingston is such an important destination for Christmas shoppers the demand levels differ greatly, but the two surveys are not inconsistent. The SDG surveys have established that, for most of the year, off-street capacity is adequate or more than adequate for demand as a whole, though the most popular car parks are often full for parts of the day and experience queues during peak shopping hours of busy weekends. At the same time other car parks have many unused spaces. Of the 5,154 weekday spaces in the car parks SDG surveyed, a typical Wednesday would see about 920 spaces unused in the busiest quarter hour of the day. The choice of Wednesday was the best approximation of an average weekday but it is important to recognise that shopping and leisure related demand rises through the week and that Thursday and Friday will show percentages of unused space somewhere between the Wednesday and Saturday observed results. A typical Saturday would see about 500 of the 5,386 spaces unused in the busiest quarter hour. The figures for demand include an uplift of 10% added to the numbers parking in May to account for the fact that May 2003 was unusually quiet in shopping terms. This was agreed following discussion with Kingston Town Centre Management and the consultant they employed to avoid any risk of understating demand during average periods of the day.

2.9 Translated into percentages these represent about 18% and 9% respectively unused at the busiest time of the day, with the percentage rising either side of the peak. Since those surveys, the opening of Seven Kings car park in July 2003 added 703 spaces to supply. It is not heavily used at present so the percentage of unused spaces in the town as a whole will have risen considerably. Figure 4 illustrates the pattern of demand observed on Saturday 10th May over the course of the day.

Figure 4: Pattern of demand for parking on Saturday May 10th 2003



The vehicle numbers are the ones recorded on that day so do not reflect the uplift of 10% subsequently added to the totals (as described in paragraph 2.8).

2.10 The situation is reversed at Christmas and New Year when demand exceeds overall supply and queuing around the most favoured car parks causes congestion on the town centre road network, including the relief road. The transition from average demand generally begins in November and builds to a peak in the week before the 25th December and the start of the January sales. The same pattern will be seen in all large shopping centres. Queuing around the most favoured car parks can also be seen during the peak shopping hours of busy weekends at other times of year, but the cause is related to the distribution of demand rather than the totality of demand.

Imbalance between motorists' preferences and available spaces

2.11 The most important factor contributing to a parking 'problem' in Kingston (outside of the Christmas period) is the desire of motorists to park in the Bentall's and John Lewis car parks almost irrespective of the direction they approach the town from. SDG found that one third of motorists parking in the town centre approach over Kingston Bridge. However 52% of motorists parked in Bentall's and John Lewis. The perceived attraction of these car parks led many motorists approaching from the north, east and south to drive past their natural interceptor car park. The proportions range from about 18% to 28%; all leading to inessential traffic on the relief road. The top three factors that influence parking location are proximity to destination, habit and price. The popularity of Bentall's and John Lewis parks is related to their clear naming association with popular destinations plus the ease and comfort of direct access to the shops, their below average charges and the established habits that many motorists have now formed. If the strategy can successfully influence motorists, so that they recognise that their natural 'interceptor' car parks will serve them as well if not better, then town centre related traffic on the relief road will decline, congestion will decline even more and potential users of the town centre will not be deterred. Section 4 of the strategy details many interventions intended to achieve this.

How the Public Spaces are Used

2.12 The balance between long and short stay use of spaces is an important issue. The main form of long stay use is by employees holding season tickets or permits. They occupy a space all day which, at busy times of year, might have been used by three or four separate shoppers or other visitors. They also tend to drive into and out of the town during rush hour periods, contributing to peak hours traffic congestion. For both these reasons there is policy guidance at national and London level that the proportion of long stay parking in town centres should be reduced. Clearly employers may find this prospect worrying, though retail employers already do their best to limit long stay parking. The current proportion of spaces occupied all day on weekdays is about 21%. Weekend occupation is insignificant. Full details are provided in paragraph 4.16.

Public Perception of Parking

2.13 During 12th to 24th May 2003 the Council's consultants interviewed over 1,100 people who had parked in the town centre. This provided a wealth of data about where people had driven from, which main road they came in on, where they parked, why they parked there, what time they arrived, how long they stayed and what their journey purpose was. It also revealed how easy they found it to park, average queuing time and how bad they felt traffic congestion was. Willingness to use Park and Ride was also established. In response to the question "Is it easy, average or difficult to park in Kingston?" 43% thought it easy, 39% average and 17% difficult. This suggests that over 80% found parking easy or average, but some caution is required since responses might have been less favourable in an average week with 10% more demand assumed.

2.14 A question about search and queue times provided the following information.

Table 3: Search and / or queue time by car parking location

Parking location	0 mins	1 to 5 mins	6 to 10 mins	11 to 15 mins	15+ mins
Bentalls A&B	51%	30%	9%	5%	5%
Cattle Market CP	74%	24%	2%	0%	0%
Drapers CP	42%	52%	6%	0%	0%
Eden Walk CP	44%	46%	7%	2%	1%
Fairfield NCP	75%	19%	3%	0%	3%
John Lewis CP	52%	39%	5%	2%	2%
St James's Road NCP	79%	16%	3%	1%	1%
The Bittoms	72%	22%	6%	0%	0%
Other	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%
All parking locations	57%	32%	6%	2%	2%

The table shows that, in May 2003, 89% of drivers were able to park within 5 minutes of reaching the town centre. Obviously the situation is reversed in the Christmas peak where interviews in 2001 found that the average time to find a parking space was 10 minutes and 15% of drivers actually spent over 30 minutes. Perhaps surprisingly 80% of the Christmas survey respondents said that finding somewhere to park in Kingston town centre was not problematic. Another source of public attitudes can be found in the Retail Study by Roger Tym¹ which surveyed 600 Kingston shoppers during the 4th to 10th March 2002. When asked whether they had any problems getting to Kingston, 2% cited a problem locating a parking space. On balance the four indicators of public attitude discussed in this section lead to the conclusion that, even allowing for May 2003 being quiet on the retail front, most of the public do not find parking in Kingston a significant problem.

How Parking and Traffic Congestion Compare in Kingston

2.15 The May 2003 survey asked whether congestion was a problem. Responses by arrival corridor are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Perception of congestion by arrival corridor

Arrival corridor	No. Arriving	Light	Average	Heavy	No view
Kingston Rd/Sandy La/King Bridge	187	8%	46%	43%	3%
Hampton Crt. Rd/Kingston Bridge	186	9%	45%	44%	2%
Penrhyn Road	147	5%	53%	41%	1%
Portsmouth Road / High Street	182	6%	54%	38%	2%
London Road	146	7%	47%	45%	2%
Richmond Road	106	5%	56%	39%	0%
Fairfield South	74	5%	47%	45%	3%
Thameside/ Skerne Road	41	5%	43%	48%	5%
All corridors	1,069	7%	49%	42%	2%

¹ Royal Borough of Kingston Retail Study, Roger Tym and Partners, January 2003, Table 12 from Appendix 3.

2.16 There is a fairly consistent view, held by 90% and regardless of arrival corridor, that congestion is average or heavy. Drivers who park in Kingston town centre rate congestion as a greater problem than finding a parking space. At times of peak demand, it is likely that those attempting to park will still drive around the town centre to find car parks and queue back from car park entrances thus contributing to worsening congestion. A dilemma ensues – would it be sensible to provide more car parks to cater for peak demand or would that simply tempt more people to try driving to the town centre, causing even worse congestion on the road network approaching the town? The strategy tackles this issue at paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4.

Development Opportunities

2.17 Retail property developers Hammersons are exploring the possibility of a major redevelopment of part of the town centre. This offers opportunities to rebalance the location of public parking and move to more efficient car park designs. If they or other developers proceed with major proposals there is potential for the Ashdown plus Lady Booth temporary surface car park to be removed and some multi-storey capacity such as Eden Walk to be demolished. New multi-storey or underground park(s) could be built, making better use of valuable town centre land and allowing some relocation of capacity. There is always uncertainty about what development will occur but the parking strategy needs to ensure that whatever transpires supports rather than detracts from the long term parking objectives, which in turn aims to ensure the Community plan vision of an attractive environment within a thriving town centre. The existing Shopmobility scheme operated from Eden Walk car park would need to be recreated at a new site if Eden Walk is demolished, and opportunity taken to enhance the scheme.

Parking Policy at the National and London Level

2.18 The Government issues planning policy guidance to local authorities which has to be taken due account of as they formulate their planning policies. The situation in London has an extra dimension in that the Mayor has parking policy objectives which are more restrictive than the national guidance. The London Plan contains policies with which Borough planning policies must now be in general conformity. Policy 3C.22 on Parking Strategy begins with the statement “The Mayor, in conjunction with Boroughs, will seek to ensure that on-site car parking at new developments is the minimum necessary and that there is no over-provision that could undermine the use of more sustainable non-car modes. The only exception to this approach will be to ensure that developments are accessible for disabled people.” A second policy relates specifically to town centres and says that Boroughs should set out parking standards for town centres that enhance their attractiveness and reduce congestion. Standards which should be taken into account are listed, along with five other factors:

- the current vitality and viability of their town centres
- regeneration and town centre management objectives
- existing on-and off-street parking provision and control
- public transport provision and the need to reduce travel by car
- pedestrian and cycle access.

2.19 The parking standards depend on the public transport accessibility of the centre concerned. The better the accessibility the more restrictive the parking standard. Table 5 shows the guideline for town centres/ shopping malls of differing accessibility ranges, and shows Kingston’s current provision for comparison. A low figure for square metres of

floorspace per parking space means parking is 'generous'; a high figure means it is more restricted.

Table 5: London Plan Indicative Maximum Car Parking Guidelines²

Public Transport Accessibility Index (1 is least accessible)	Square metres of gross retail floor space per parking space
PTAL 1	30
PTAL 2 to 4	35-50
PTAL 5 to 6	50-75
Kingston at present	32

Kingston town centre has a high PTAL index of 6 while its current parking provision is nearly as generous as the standard for a PTAL 1 town centre or shopping mall. The Council has worked hard in the last decade to improve bus accessibility to the town centre and hence the high PTAL index is a tribute to this. Kingston's parking ratio is close to average among outer London town centres as table 6 shows. It is also close to the provision in some large out of London centres.

Table 6: Comparative Parking Provision Ratios in South London Town Centres³

Town Centre	Square metres of gross retail floor space	Square metres of gross retail floor space per parking space
Kingston	233,000	32
Croydon	302,000	41
Bromley	185,000	21
Guildford	162,000	29
Reading	245,000	34

2.20 The Mayor of London has the final say on development decisions involving new provision above 200 parking spaces. Tables 5 and 6 suggest that Kingston would need to demonstrate a special case to the Mayor should further large-scale additions to parking provision be sought. The most substantial argument is that, despite the high PTAL level overall, accessibility is poorer from the south and west which is an especially important part of Kingston's retail catchment. Further improvements to public transport in coming years are an objective of the Council's transport strategy, with an emphasis on the south and west quadrant. These should raise the town's PTAL score within level 6 and strengthen the argument that the town can become less car dependent for its access needs. Improvements to walking and cycling facilities are also planned and while these are not explicitly included in the justification for indicative maximum car parking guidelines, they should be seen as very relevant to the overall position.

Section 3: Strategic Decision on Future Parking Capacity

3.1 Kingston's off-street public car park capacity is now just above the 7,000 space 'preferred' figure of the strategy formulated in the early 1990s. In an earlier K+20 Retail Study (January 2003) Roger Tym and Partners said "In our view the supply of car parking

² Drawn from Table A4.3 located on page A23 of annex 4 of the London Plan

³ Assembled from Council web sites, Town Centre Boundaries and Statistics for England and Wales (ODPM 2000) and town centre managers.

spaces (numbering some 7,000) is perfectly adequate for a centre the size of Kingston town centre (230,000 sqm of retail floorspace).⁴ Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) have considered whether that holds good assuming growth over the K+20 period. They believe so, in part because supplementary work by Roger Tym and Partners (July 2003) suggests that the growth in retail turnover will largely be driven by higher spend per customer rather than more customers. In the comparison goods catchment area population will rise 5% to 1.334m while total expenditure will rise 42% to £4.63 billion.⁵ Kingston is projected to lose a little of its market share but there will still be, at worst, enough additional spending demand to support an extra 50,000 square metres gross of comparison goods floorspace.

3.2 Under the scenario of 5% population growth offset by a slight decline in market share it is expected that the number of shoppers coming to Kingston will change relatively little between 2001 and 2011. Scenarios involving a larger increase in retail floorspace than Roger Tym and SDG assumed may also be among options considered through the K + 20 process. Under all scenarios shopping visitors will spend longer in the town because it offers a better mix of retail and leisure/cultural opportunities. For the visitors who arrive by car, these longer stays will in turn tie up parking spaces longer, effectively increasing demand. Leisure and education attractions are likely to generate extra trips but these trips are more frequently made by means other than car. In the light of this it has been judged that, at most, an additional 700 parking spaces in the town centre would be sufficient to meet the resulting need.

3.3 Additional parking will normally generate more traffic since it becomes more attractive to drive to Kingston rather than another town, or drive rather than use a different form of transport. The capacity of the road network can rarely be increased in any part of London now. SDG's report concluded that more parking capacity could worsen overall town centre congestion. It is worth quoting their explanation of this, provided in paragraph 4.26 of their report. *"Given that congestion is a much more significant deterrent to travelling to Kingston than parking, the provision of more parking spaces could be counterproductive as it would worsen the congestion problem. As noted in section 4.1, for the vast majority of the year, the observed level of demand is lower than the available capacity. Therefore, adding more capacity would also lead to a lower average utilisation of spaces over the course of the year, meaning that both land and capital assets would not be used to their full potential."* This raises the question of whether an additional 700 parking spaces could in fact be used without an unacceptable impact on congestion in the town. The Council believes that it is possible since the main driver of additional demand would be longer stays rather than additional trips by car. Aiding this would be other measures in the strategy used in full to help reduce unnecessary circulation on the relief road and queuing back from car park entrances.

3.4 Another concern is that extra traffic would create more congestion at bottlenecks approaching the town such as the roundabout at the western end of Kingston Bridge. At current traffic levels, resolving these bottlenecks would require either a reduction of through traffic which at least matched the increased traffic terminating at KTC car parks, or schemes at the bottlenecks to increase capacity. The former is preferable and is, for other reasons, a transport aspiration of the K+20 strategy. If in future there is a specific proposal to increase overall public car park capacity then it will need to be considered in the light of recorded traffic levels at the time. There has been a helpful downward trend in 12 hour weekday traffic levels recorded at counters on approach roads to the town centre. 2003 figures are 14% below 1996 levels. The Borough Local Implementation Plan for the

⁴ Paragraph 7.19 of January 2003 report

⁵ Paragraphs 4.18 and 4.26 of July 2003 report

Mayor's Transport Strategy has a target to cut traffic levels further by 2011. However success cannot be assumed and the peak hour levels may also show different patterns. For these reasons it is not possible to say at this time whether complementary measures would be essential to make extra car park capacity workable in congestion terms. That would also depend on the extent to which additional car park capacity was occupied by longer stays rather than more trips.

3.5 To summarise the capacity argument, in any long-term strategy there will be some uncertainty about how much growth Kingston town centre will experience. It would therefore be prudent to retain some flexibility rather than rely on the assumption that all additional demand can be accommodated by modal shift, and by fuller use of existing parking capacity. The way to do so is to state an indicative central figure for parking capacity with some flexibility around the figure in order to respond to the supply demand balance as it evolves. That approach will then be reflected in the Borough's emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) which will provide the strategic and local planning framework for guiding future developments in the Borough. Bearing in mind the policy context of reducing reliance on the car for access to town centres, the retail projections work by Roger Tym and Partners and the analysis of use of car park capacity by SDG the following recommendation is made:

RECOMMENDATION 1

The main elements of SDG's recommended strategy are endorsed as the basis of Kingston's parking strategy over the next 20 years. Central to this strategy is the recognition that more efficient use of current capacity can and should be made. While SDG considered that no increase in off-street parking capacity from 7,000 was required, the Council opts for a central figure of 7,000 with flexibility to vary by 700 spaces (plus or minus) to leave scope for responding to different development scenarios. The strategy will be subject to periodic review through the Local Development Framework process and, potentially, through the Local Implementation Plan the Council submits in response to the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Section 4: Strategy elements and timescale for adoption of policies

Short Term: Information and Marketing

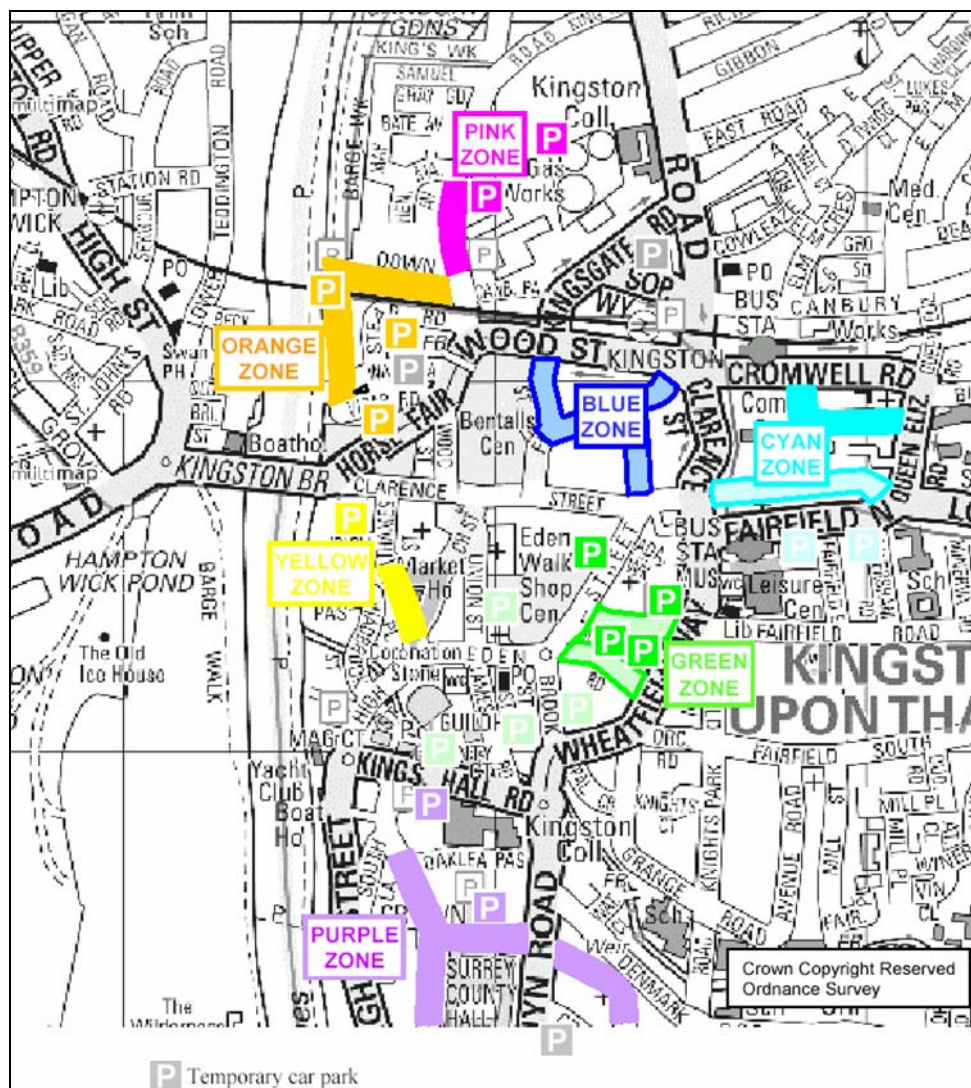
4.1 Some policies need to be phased in as changes such as permanent Park and Ride come on stream, but others can be set in motion immediately. In several cases these involve better dissemination of parking information to achieve greater use of interceptor car parks on the northern, eastern and southern approaches to the town. This can be tied into the RBK Communications Strategy that offers several ways to provide information to residents of the Borough. SDG's recommendations on information and marketing range from provision of leaflets at car parks through to a modernised Variable Message Signs (VMS) system. The security and cleanliness of car parks is another important factor and the Council will aim to ensure its car parks match standards at the popular retail car parks. All the Council's multi-storey sites in the town centre have already achieved 'Safer by Design' accreditation.

4.2 One reason some motorists habitually use an oversubscribed car park is lack of knowledge about the walking time from other car parks. Navigating the relief road can give the impression that Kingston town centre is quite large but in fact it is very compact and no interceptor car park is more than a few minutes walk from a central point like

Clarence Street. This point is well made by the Bentall Centre's most recent parking leaflet, pointing out that it takes only five minutes to walk from the Bittoms car park to the Bentall Centre. The Council can design appropriate leaflets, collaborating with the private and retail car park operators over wording and methods of distribution that avoid the danger of creating litter. The information can also be posted on relevant web sites, placed in Council magazines such as Livin'Kingston and provided to adjoining authorities, notably Richmond and the district Councils in Surrey who may be prepared to treat it as a service to their residents.

4.3 The Council will study whether any RBK car parks should be re-named to make their location clearer. At present names like Bittoms, Drapers, Cattle Market and Seven Kings do not clearly correspond with either the relevant approach road/corridor or the trip attractors nearest the car park. Whatever the outcome it will be beneficial to assemble zones of on plus off-street parking that can be referred to on directional signs (for drivers and pedestrians). The consultant has suggested seven colour-coded zones, as shown in figure 5. Four of these zones function as interceptor parking, outside the relief road and serving corridors from the four points of the compass. Three zones are within the relief road but most easily accessed from the south and the east. Static signing should be reviewed in line with the zones and integrated with any VMS system employed.

Figure 5: Colour-coded parking zones



Short Term: Variable Message Signs

4.4 Variable Message Signs (VMS) carrying accurate real time information can be very effective in directing motorists away from full car parks in good time, so averting queues. The new Bullring in Birmingham with three car parks totalling 3,100 spaces has demonstrated the value of such a system. It employs five signs on main approach roads and cost £130,000 to install. As soon as a car park is down to 60 free spaces the VMS signs, which are updated every two minutes, register it as full and motorists are directed to other car parks. Our consultant stresses the fact that VMS is a very powerful tool but has correctly stated that in Kingston “the existing VMS information system has fallen into disrepute.” In the SDG surveys less than one person in a hundred said VMS influenced their choice of parking location. Resolving this is a real priority on parking and congestion grounds.

4.5 Although it would be satisfying to swiftly upgrade the VMS system, the prospect that redevelopment will secure a consolidation of parking in the southern sector of the town needs to be considered. It is felt that a robust new system should be seen as a short to medium term priority. In the short term RBK will seek TfL funding and assistance with a feasibility study into renewing the VMS system and will seek subsequent implementation as a planning gain linked to redevelopment in the town centre.

RECOMMENDATION 2

The Council will develop with its partners a programme of measures to publicise the convenience of the under-used car parks. This will include a signing and naming strategy. Priority will be given to delivering a reliable and influential VMS system.

Short Term: Peak spreading using marketing campaigns

4.6 Achieving a more even pattern of parking demand across the day and week is a ‘quick win’ within the strategy. KTCM and the large retailers can promote spreading of shopping hours through more Sunday and evening opening and marketing promotions. The ‘Kingston First’ initiative is an ideal way to co-ordinate this. The Council will also promote the merits of more flexible working hours through its leadership of the Kingston Travel Plan Network.

Short Term: Use of Parking Charges to Influence Motorist’s Location and Timing Choices

4.7 The consultants have noted the “growing imbalance between higher charges at Council car parks and lower charges at other public car parks” and the need to “redress the imbalance between the lower costs of the retail car parks, where pressure is greatest, and other car parks.” This will require liaison between the different car park operators to agree a coherent pricing strategy subject to the constraints of competition law. The pricing strategy could entail a rise in tariffs at oversubscribed car parks and a freeze or fall in tariffs at some interceptor car parks. There is no desire to set a uniform tariff in the town centre, nor to bring about a net increase in price levels. One possibility would be to consider increasing prices at the oversubscribed car parks at times of peak demand, such as Christmas, subject to considering the economic impact on the town centre.

4.8 Pay on foot or on exit is rapidly becoming the preferred method of charging in the town’s car parks. Bentalls, John Lewis, Eden Walk and the Fairfield from the private sector all use this system. It gives greater flexibility to vary charges by time of day and day of week, which can make some contribution to peak spreading. The effects of the recent conversion from Pay & Display to Pay on Foot at RBK’s Drapers and Cattle Market car parks suggests that the Bittoms can similarly convert. The system is preferred by users as

they pay for what they use and do not need to gamble on the length of time they will actually spend in the town. Lower off peak charges, as used in Croydon town centre, have the potential to encourage shoppers to take advantage of late opening and thus smooth out demand peaks. This option merits consideration by the Council; however it will be important to ensure that it does not lead to an unintended consequence by creating a sharp peak at the time of day when charges drop.

Short Term: Car Park Opening and Charging Hours

4.9 The consultants said that “the current situation is somewhat confusing and tends to result in motorists ‘hedging their bets’ and using car parks they know will definitely be open for the duration of their visit.” They also noted the need to increase evening supply, and some of the associated problems. Policy on evening and night-time parking supply needs to be co-ordinated with other K+20 policies on the evening economy and with the ‘After Dark Strategy’. It may in future be necessary to make greater use of double yellow lines to ease traffic flows in the evening. If that occurs, opening hours and charges in car parks will be co-ordinated with any changes in yellow line or Controlled Parking Zone hours of operation.

4.10 The strategy envisages a phased approach in which opening hours and charges alter in line with changes in the availability of both on and off-street parking and demand for it. Resources devoted to on-street parking enforcement in the evening should vary in line with these phases to ensure that there is no increase in illegal parking as a result of motorists trying to avoid car park charges.

The Council has made use of this approach, using developer contributions, to provide free parking at the Cattle Market car park after 6.30 p.m. so that the Rotunda could be constructed without anything but blue badge and cycle parking provision. A similar approach at Drapers car park will help cater for patrons of the new theatre and other attractions in the Charter Quay area.

RECOMMENDATION 3

The Council will initiate liaison with other operators to identify optimum car park pricing arrangements for the town as a whole. It will review opening and charging hours and tariffs in RBK car parks, and the necessary signs explaining the regime that applies. It will encourage other operators to adopt similar reviews.

Short Term: Use of parking capacity in Controlled Parking Zones

4.11 In the short term, commuters have four choices when a Controlled Parking Zone comes into force where they previously parked:

- to pay for parking in Kingston car parks;
- to park in unrestricted streets and walk (or cycle) further;
- to park in unrestricted streets near a more distant rail station or bus stop and complete their journey by public transport;
- to stop driving to work and switch to another form of transport.

In the longer term a fifth option is to find a new job where driving to work and parking is easier. This fifth option could reduce the pool of labour available unless replaced by workers from more accessible areas. Shoppers have the same four short-term options and can also opt in the short term to drive to a different centre. There is a lack of firm data

on the distribution of choices motorists have made though there is evidence that few have chosen to begin paying for parking in town centre car parks or on-street pay and display bays.

4.12 CPZ monitoring should aim in future to provide soundly based estimates of impacts on parking demand beyond the zone. There is also a concern that in some zones a significant proportion of CPZ capacity is unused, leading to discussion about making more business/commuter related permits available. Doing so would reduce the traffic reduction effect of CPZs, but this is not the main reason for their existence so it might be acceptable to make a carefully regulated number of permits or long stay pay and display bays available to employers. This would offer parking opportunities to motorists who may have few realistic alternatives to car travel but do not earn a salary that can cope with a £1,500 annual season ticket charge (the cheapest currently available in Kingston town centre). Employers would decide which staff should benefit if demand exceeded the firm's allocation of permits. Views were evenly divided on this issue in the consultation process but the Council considers the potential benefits merit further examination.

RECOMMENDATION 4

The Council will establish whether there is enough unused capacity in some CPZ zones to justify modifying the rules on business parking permits. If there is, proposals along these lines will be put to Kingston and Surbiton Neighbourhood Committees for decision.

Short/Medium Term: Blue Badge Holder Parking and Hierarchy of User Priority

4.13 Development of the town centre will reduce the amount of on-street and surface level parking. Such spaces will be at a premium and a hierarchy of user priority will be clearly stated in the Parking and Enforcement Plan. For on-street spaces local authorities already have a duty to facilitate access for delivery drivers (where no off-street rear access to premises exists). Other than this drivers displaying blue badges and drivers of community transport vehicles should head the list, followed by motorcyclists and cyclists. Blue badge drivers who cannot find reserved parking have the right to park on yellow lines, which is potentially obstructive to traffic, so there is a strong case on transport grounds alone for providing generous reserved parking capacity for them. In hand with this goes the need for an adequate enforcement policy to prevent fraudulent use of blue badges. More capacity is justified for motorcyclists as they are efficient users of road and parking space. Bicycle parking is normally placed off the carriageway but if there is no suitable location then the street should be used for cycle racks. Once the needs of all these priority users have been accommodated remaining space can be used for short-term pay and display parking.

4.14 At off-street surface car parks, Blue Badge and community transport vehicle spaces should be provided for those requiring good headroom to deal with a wheelchair stored on top of a vehicle, and with enough width to enable sideways transfer from car to wheelchair. Levels of provision will be based on the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and on consultation with voluntary sector organisations. Less generous provision is generally needed at multi-storey car parks as these are not popular with blue badge holders unless their design and pedestrian access arrangements are unusually good. Where the DDA standards result in underused reserved spaces in multi-storeys the Council will consider dual use so that a proportion of the spaces are available to other motorists if the rest of the car park is full. For non-wheelchair applicants the eligibility criteria for a blue badge is being unable to walk more than 50 or 100 metres. This emphasises the need to provide space near the destination. Within off-street car parks the most convenient location for access will be selected for both blue badge spaces and the Shopmobility facility.

RECOMMENDATION 5

The Council's Parking and Enforcement Plan⁶ will include a clearly stated hierarchy of user priority for on-street spaces and ensure generous parking capacity in the town centre for blue badge holders at the locations where they wish to park.

Medium Term: Reducing All-Day Parking

4.15 In principle the strategy proposes a policy to replace some all-day parking with shorter stay provision. This is consistent with policy T21a in the first alteration Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which has accompanying text as follows. "As the Council makes progress with achieving improved access by sustainable modes, particularly in Kingston Town Centre and the district centres, it may be appropriate to revise parking targets and management of car parking to achieve, in particular, a reduction in long-stay commuter parking in accordance with the RBK parking strategy." The economic rationale for removing all day parking from retail car parks has led to a decision by the operators of Eden Walk car park to stop selling season tickets. The policy of reducing all-day parking already applies on-street through the application of Controlled Parking Zones which have freed up roadspace for short-stay free spaces for local shops and medium-stay pay and display spaces (maximum stay 4 hours). There is a further stock of private non-residential all-day parking that RBK has little control over. This amounts to around 1,400 spaces on weekdays and 1,200 at weekends. The Council can advance its UDP policy of reduction in long-stay commuter parking by encouraging a reduction in this category of parking. Working with employers, through the Kingston Travel Plan Network, to establish Green Travel Plans can encourage employers to consider whether to retain all these spaces. Often the land could be valuable to them, permitting expansion of their business without the need to relocate.

4.16 SDG concluded for the town centre as a whole that "In the short-term, season ticket holders do not have a significant impact on the amount of available parking at peak periods, especially weekends. However it may be appropriate to consider how the spaces occupied by season ticket holders could be best utilised during the Christmas period." The split of publicly available spaces between long stay and short stay use is illustrated in the following table.

Table 7: Proportion of public spaces occupied by season ticket holders

	Off-street spaces occupied by season ticket holders	Balance of off-street spaces	Total
Weekday	1,485 (21%)	5,584 (79%)	7,069 (100%)
Saturday	113 (2%)	6,956 (98%)	7,069 (100%)

Note : Segregated spaces treated as 100% occupied while unsegregated are taken to be occupied 80% of the time.

4.17 There is a good fit in that the lowest demand for season ticket use on a Saturday coincides with the highest demand from shoppers. The fact that around a fifth of weekday spaces are occupied all day simply reflects the current balance between different types of public use. In transport policy terms reducing the number of spaces available to commuters would encourage travel to work by sustainable modes but for most of the year

⁶ The Borough's Parking Plan was adopted by the Highways and Transportation Committee in November 1993. It will be superseded in 2005 by a Parking and Enforcement Plan required by the Mayor of London as part of the Local Implementation Plan (for the Mayor's Transport Strategy) which each Borough must submit.

short stay demand does not currently exist to use the vacated spaces. There is minimal season ticket use on Sundays and short stay demand has not, to date, justified opening of the multi-story sections of the 813 space Bittoms car park outside of a 10 week period from November to early January. That capacity could be brought into use if Sunday demand grew at other times of year. [A small amount of surface parking is currently available at the Bittoms all year round on Sundays.]

4.18 The most effective way to alter the balance in the Christmas period is to modify the validity of a season ticket, excluding the last four to six weeks of the year. RBK could offer season tickets on this basis for its own car parks and could aim to convince private car park operators such as NCP to take a similar approach. With Eden Walk dropping season tickets none of the retail car parks will in future offer any form of season ticket. The Council would in effect opt to abolish annual season tickets and merely offer January to November tickets, also ensuring that quarterly and monthly tickets were not available during December and the first week in January. The Council could also review its Staff Travel Plan and consider the validity of staff parking permits during this period.

4.19 The effect of developing RBK sites used as temporary car parks, and the objective of introducing park and ride services must also be considered in the medium term i.e. up to the end of the decade. As some short-stay parking is removed by development (e.g. Ashdown/Lady Booth Road) there will be a drop in short stay capacity until replacement car parks are completed. To bridge the gap it would be logical to reallocate spaces throughout the year in remaining RBK car parks from all-day capacity in order to make good that loss. That will require a decline in the number of RBK staff season tickets and working with other employers to reduce their take up of season tickets. A second tool available to the Council is to reduce the ceiling on season tickets sold to the public. All-day parking capacity in KTC should also be reduced if and when park and ride spaces come on line. Such a commitment would be needed to help justify Transport for London funding of Park and Ride proposals. In each case the reduction of all-day parking would be clearly linked to other events, and justified by these.

4.20 Paying for all-day parking by the day is advantageous to some part time or sporadic commuters. Charges are not consistently set to escalate for long stays; for instance until quite recently it was possible to park for up to eight hours in Bentalls A&B for £6.80. That was less expensive than a five day per week monthly or quarterly season ticket at an RBK car park. One result is that, despite Bentalls being run in principle as a 'retail car park', SDG surveys showed 8% of respondents had parked there for work. A few long stayers will pay high charges but analysis of the John Lewis car park, where it costs £13 to remain beyond seven hours, has shown that only 3% of spaces are occupied for the working day. Price signals are clearly effective and there is a need to raise all-day parking charges, especially at the most popular car parks. Progress on this is already apparent from the Bentall Centre's decision to raise charges to £11.00 beyond 7 hours and £14 beyond 8 hours at Bentalls A and B.

RECOMMENDATION 6

The Council will assess the practical and financial implications of short year RBK season tickets and bring conclusions and, if appropriate, recommendations to the appropriate committee. Work will be carried out with other car park operators to influence their policies on season tickets and to rationalise all-day parking charges.

Medium Term: Consolidation of Car Parks and Control of Total Supply

4.21 Development of the town centre offers a means of regulating parking capacity in line with the range defined in recommendation 1. In addition the town centre has several small car parks that detract from efficiency because larger car parks can operate closer to capacity than smaller ones offering the same number of spaces. In the coming years, planning decisions should offer good opportunities to regulate overall capacity and create a better match between the main retail attractions and the location of car parks. It will be necessary to consolidate car parks and ensure appropriate entry and exit capacity. It is crucial that no disruption to the road network occurs simply as a result of inadequate car park entry or exit capacity. This objective will be stated in the K+20 town centre area action plan that will form part of the Local Development Framework.

Medium Term: Traffic Management

4.22 Weekend and pre-Christmas congestion is linked to the high proportion of motorists driving to the town centre and circling or queuing for parking in the town. Any changes that reduce circuitous journeys would be helpful. The consultants said "The operation of the relief road has a significant effect on parking choice:

- Some drivers are unwilling to travel to alternative, less busy, car parks as they are unsure of how to get there or are concerned over delays on the relief road;
- The operation of the relief road means that, whilst a car park may be convenient to get to from a particular corridor, returning to that corridor may require a lengthy journey around the network."

4.23 The opening in March 2004 of a new link road (Seven Kings Way) associated with developments to the north of Kingsgate Road improved access to Seven Kings car park from the west and south. The new car park and link road require good publicity and signing, notably during the closure for reconstruction of Bentalls B car park and this offers an opportunity to illustrate to motorists that high quality alternatives do exist close to the town centre. The K+20 town centre area action plan also offers opportunities for a more thorough review of the operation of the entire relief road system and this will incorporate parking considerations.

Medium/Long Term: Restrictions on new private residential and non-residential parking

4.24 All councils now apply maximum parking standards when considering development applications. Standards applying to Kingston town centre for each category of development are laid out in appendix 1 of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). These are complex but residential development is broadly set at one parking space per one bedroom dwelling, 1.5 spaces per two bedroom dwelling and two spaces per three or more bedroom dwelling. These are the maximum allowable and where possible the Council and developer will agree lower provision or even a car-free development. For non-residential developments a variety of standards apply. B1 business uses are limited to one space per 300 square metres. For retail uses the standards are relatively generous if the maximum is permitted (e.g. ranging from 1 space per 20 square metres to 1 space per 35 square metres) but the Council's planning department will seek to persuade developers to stay below these maximum standards. Maximum parking standards will be reviewed as part of the Kingston Town Centre Area Action Plan ('K+20'), prepared as part of the 'Local Development Framework'. [The Kingston Town Centre Area Action Plan will supersede policies in the Unitary Development Plan that relate to Kingston Town Centre.]

Long Term: Integration of Parking and Wider Transport / Land Use Strategy

4.25 A fully developed Park and Ride system and other public transport rapid transit possibilities can and should contribute to the parking strategy in the sense that they encourage modal shift. 29% of survey respondents who had parked in the town centre expressed willingness to use Park and Ride. The Council, in partnership with London Buses, CWOA and Kingston Town Centre Management, has made a success of the Christmas period Park and Ride initiative that began in 1992. It now carries over 50,000 return trips over the course of 9/10 weeks and removes about 30,000 cars from the A243 through Chessington. Most of these cars would have parked or attempted to park in and around Kingston. Equally important in the long term is travel awareness work, individual travel planning with households or employees, improved cycling, walking, bus and rail facilities. All these objectives are being pursued and, to the extent that they succeed, will have substantial long-term impacts on the way people choose to travel to Kingston.

4.26 The wider transport strategy for the Borough is detailed in the Council's Local Implementation Plan for the Mayor's Transport Strategy. It includes a wide range of policies that will help restrain car use by making other modes more attractive. The Council also works with and lobbies other organisations whose decisions impact on travel and parking in the Borough. It recently achieved improved evening rail frequencies on the Kingston line and will continue working with South West Trains and Transport for London to improve Kingston Station and other aspects of train services. Through working with London Buses and potential town centre developers the Council aims to obtain a new bus station suited to the growth of bus services into and out of the town. It lobbies the Mayor on policies of significance, for instance encouraging him not to jeopardise growing bus patronage by reversing his low fares policy. Under the transport strategy progress on initiatives like Park and Ride, and measured outcomes for town centre traffic levels, will be tied in to decisions on parking within KTC.

Section 5: Preparing for Problems that are Likely to Emerge

5.1 The town centre parking strategy needs to be capable of responding to incremental changes in on-street demand. Over the coming 20 years the intensity of land use will increase and more people will live within the UDP town centre boundary. The road network is largely fixed and off-street parking within developments will be restricted by maximum standards. For policy reasons there is a desire to agree off-street provision at below the maximum, or even car-free where the developer is willing and this would not adversely affect traffic flows, bus movement, road safety etc. We can therefore expect that residential development will generate demand for on-street parking, manifested in KTC in the form of demand for resident's CPZ permits. If unrestricted that could erode the benefits CPZs have delivered for current residents.

5.2 It is therefore necessary to develop a system of classifying CPZs based on their capacity to absorb more permits. For those classified at full capacity the development control process can be used to attach a section 106 legal agreement that occupants of new developments are not entitled to CPZ residential permits. Such conditions would be revealed, via solicitors' searches, to potential new residents buying property within the zone. The UDP refers in appendix 1, C3 to the fact that, within Kingston town centre and the district centres, "Legal agreements can control eligibility for parking permits" and there are nine 'active' Legal Agreements within Kingston Neighbourhood that impose a restriction on the ability to purchase residents parking permits. A further 13 agreements

await implementation. The issue is not confined to Kingston town centre so policy is stated in the Parking and Enforcement Plan (PEP) and can be applied as and when necessary to any CPZ in the Borough.

Appendix 1: Consultation and meetings with stakeholders

1. The SDG parking study was commissioned primarily to feed into the K+20 process. The study was intended to complement an earlier Park and Ride report, concentrating on the existing and planned parking provision in Kingston in the context of developing more sustainable land use and transport policies. Objectives stated in the brief were:

- Reassess current parking in the town centre and examine how the spaces are used i.e. by retailers, season tickets, short or long terms stay; public/private; how many private non-residential parking (PRN); on street car parking spaces.
- Reassess the parking figures and make recommendations on how many car parking spaces are required for Kingston Town Centre.
- Evaluate the impact of the proposed CPZs and the loss of parking spaces
- Consult with major stakeholders

2. A Councillor working group was involved throughout the study and helped agree the brief. The Group received presentations from the consultants in January, July and September 2003. There were general stakeholder meetings at the start and end of the study and 53 different organisations participated in some fashion. Since the final SDG Report was received in February 2004 there was further discussion with Kingston Town Centre Management (KTCM) because of a concern from Kingston's large retailers that parking survey work had corresponded with an unusually quiet month for shopping turnover. KTCM commissioned their own consultant to examine the SDG report, to assess whether the true balance of existing and future supply and demand might be understated. A round table meeting between consultants and Council officers examined the issues in May 2004. A report on the Kingston Town Centre Parking Strategy was then put to the Council's Executive on 20 July 2004, resulting in approval to issue a draft strategy for consultation that would include the recommendations in the report.

3. The Council is grateful to all those who have contributed their views and expertise during preparation of the strategy. The draft Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was considered by the Council's Transport and Infrastructure Overview Panel on 8th September prior to going out to wider consultation during September to November 2004. The responses from all public, stakeholder and committee sources have been taken into account in order to finalise the strategy and present that to the Council's Executive in early 2005 for adoption.

Kingston Town Centre Parking Strategy Report

Residents associations

Charter Quay
CARA

Large employers

Morley Fund Management (for JLP and Bentalls)
Kingston University
Kingston Hospital

Business organisations

Kingston Town Centre Management
Kingston Chamber of Commerce

Heritage or cultural organisations

Kingston upon Thames Society
Kingston Decorative and Fine Arts Society

Church organisations

Central Kingston Partnership of Churches
United Reform Church

Voluntary Sector

Kingston Centre for Independent Living

Developers

Hammersons & Buro Happold

Adjoining councils

LB of Richmond

Two individuals

Kingston Town Centre Parking Strategy ReportCollation of responses to the Kingston town centre car parking strategy feedback form

NB. Responses will not always total 16 since some questions were left unanswered or the reply was “neutral”.

Q1 Do you agree that growth in trips to the town centre should as far as possible be met by non-car means and that the parking strategy should be consistent with this aim?

STRONGLY AGREE	2
AGREE	3
DISAGREE	5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4

Q2 Does holding public off street capacity at around 7,000 spaces, with flexibility to vary up or down by 500, sound reasonable? Section 2 and recommendation 1 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	1
AGREE	4
DISAGREE	2
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6

Q3 If NO to question 2 would you favour:

MORE	6
LESS	1

(Please indicate numbers if you wish to.) The only response to suggest specific numbers was KTCM citing work by their consultant JMP. The range suggested was 930 to 1,330 spaces above the existing 7,000.

Q4 Do you support the proposals in the strategy for clearer naming and signing of car parks? Paragraph 4.3 and recommendation 2 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	12
AGREE	2
DISAGREE	0
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0

F35

Q5 If a reliable system showing car park occupancy on Variable Message Signs existed do you believe this would influence motorists? Paragraphs 4.4-4.5 and recommendation 2 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	6
AGREE	6
DISAGREE	2
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0

Q6 If specific Controlled Parking Zones have spare capacity would it be acceptable to issue more business parking permits in such zones to employers? Paragraphs 4.9-4.10 and recommendation 4 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	3
AGREE	3
DISAGREE	3
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3

Q7 Do you agree with the proposed hierarchy for use of on-street parking spaces, headed by disability blue badge holders? Paragraphs 4.11-4.12 and recommendation 5 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	1
AGREE	12
DISAGREE	0
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0

Q8 Do you agree in principle that all day parking provision should be reduced in the town centre, freeing spaces for shorter stay use? Paragraphs 4.13-4.18 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	2
AGREE	7.5
DISAGREE	2.5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0

Q9 Do you favour the concept of short year season ticket as an effective way to improve parking conditions in the Christmas period? Paragraphs 4.16-4.17 and recommendation 6 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	3
AGREE	3.5
DISAGREE	5.5
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1

F36

Q10 Do you agree that, acting within the constraints of Competition law, the Council should take the lead in co-ordinating car park tariffs with other car park operators? Paragraph 4.20-4.21 and recommendation 7 cover this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	2
AGREE	5
DISAGREE	2
STRONGLY DISAGREE	3

Q11 Do you agree that when permanent park and ride sites come into operation a broadly matching reduction in town centre spaces should occur? Paragraph 4.25 covers this issue.

STRONGLY AGREE	0
AGREE	3
DISAGREE	3
STRONGLY DISAGREE	6

Councillor Rolson Davies – Health and Community

A Coffee Morning which took place at Hook and Chessington Community Centre was a great success, raising £800 for the victims of the Tsunami. This event was organised by The Community Activity Project, which aims to help older people keep active.

Councillor Tricia Bamford

Crossrail

Transport Minister Tony McNulty who attended the ALG Leaders' Committee today, was asked about the possibility of Crossrail coming to Kingston, thereby supporting the development of sustainable communities. His response was reasonably positive, in that he thought parts of the East London scheme may not proceed so in the longer term, it may be reasonable to look again at Crossrail coming to Kingston sometime in the future.

Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The Government Office for London has advised that the Council cannot adopt the UDP as it stands, and that it must modify policies on affordable housing and car parking standards for employment-generating uses.

On affordable housing the Council must reduce the site size threshold from 15 units or 0.5 hectares to 10 units or 0.3 hectares. This is the same threshold as the Council originally sought, and was overturned by the UDP Inquiry Inspector on the grounds that it conflicted with national policy. Although the UDP Inspector supported the Council's position on car parking, Government Office for London now states that the Council standards must be brought into line with the London Plan, which was published after the inquiry.

The policies and standards outlined above need to be modified and the statutory processes followed. The delay for adoption of the UDP is likely to be several months.

Government Consultation – Planning for Gypsy and Travellers Sites

There has been a recent consultation on this issue.

South London Sub-Regional Development Framework

Greater London Authority Officers are drafting the South London Sub-Regional Development framework, in consultation with the South London Boroughs, South London Partnership and others. Early drafts have been commented on by Officers as well as the underpinning studies. The Frameworks are advisory and will not have statutory weight but they are likely to inform the future review of the London Plan and so will be influential and affect the emerging Local Development Frameworks.

In view of this it is proposed to respond formally to the consultation draft in April with a report to the Transport and Infrastructure Overview Panel and to the Executive for decision. The

consultation is likely to be in the period mid February to mid May, with the Framework being finalised by early Summer.

122. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 18 January 2005 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

123. TACKLING SOCIAL DEPRIVATION IN KINGSTON: SUMMARY OF REVIEW

Appendix A

At the request of the Council in January 2003, the Community Leadership and Resources Overview Panel has reviewed the measures to promote social inclusion and to combat social and economic disadvantage in the Borough.

This review will have helped to raise awareness of the issues of social and economic disadvantage across the Council, and in Kingston more generally and have added weight to both day-to-day delivery of services and higher level strategic planning. It also highlights the importance of working in partnership and the achievements which can be gained through working with Partners. In order to monitor progress on concrete action, the Community Leadership and Resources Overview Panel has requested a report back on progress on initiatives within the Overview Panel's four key action areas in 12 months' time. Views from the Chair of the Health Overview Panel on how the review connected with a number of pieces of work the Panel was carrying out was circulated. The report is to be referred to the Council and to Neighbourhood Committees.

RESOLVED that

1. the report be referred to the Council for information in accordance with the Council's request at its meeting on 28 January 2003; and
2. the report be referred to Neighbourhood Committees which may wish to consider some of the conclusions as part of their Community Leadership role.

Reason for decision

In order to provide the requested report back to the Council summarising the findings of the review undertaken on its behalf, and to give Neighbourhood Committees the opportunity to consider the conclusions as part of their Community Leadership role.

124. DEVELOPMENT OF DAY SERVICES IN THE SOUTH OF THE BOROUGH

Appendix B

The Executive asked for a feasibility study on utilising the Hook Youth Centre for Day Services for Older People. This proposal was in line with the Executive's long term objective to establish Day Service provision in the South of the Borough. Site visits have taken place and consultants are in the process of drawing up costed plans to

allow dual use of the building, but with separate entrances for each of the centres. There will be some separate meeting areas and some dual use areas. The facility for Older People will offer a range of activities with the emphasis on enabling people to remain independent and healthy and reducing social isolation. During February there will be a consultation exercise in conjunction with Age Concern with Older People in the South of the Borough and other agencies to ensure the services provided reflect current needs.

It is proposed to call the Centre the Devon Way Centre. Consultations are taking place on the proposals, the South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee welcomed the proposal.

RESOLVED that the progress to date and the views of the South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee be noted.

Reason for decision

To note the current progress and views from the South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee on this project.

125. RICHMOND PARK – ROBIN HOOD GATE CLOSURE

Appendix C

Traffic surveys were carried out on the roads surrounding the park before and after the closure of Robin Hood Gate to determine how traffic had re-routed. Peter Brett Associates (PBA) the consultants working for the Royal Parks Agency (RPA) have used these figures to establish how traffic volumes have changed and their impact. PBA's final report on the effects of the closure has been presented to the Secretary of State who will make the final decision on whether the Robin Hood Gate is to remain closed. A copy of this report was included in the exempt part of the agenda for information, but was not referred to in the meeting.

PBA claims that their estimate of 22% to 23% traffic reduction entering the park is significant, even allowing for an accepted 10% variation. This target meets RPA objectives of less traffic in the park. Traffic between Kingston and Richmond gates has increased in the morning peak by 5% but reduced by 9% in the afternoon peak. The report appears to suggest that increased traffic entering the park at Kingston Gate was predicted and is therefore acceptable.

There is no significant dispute with the Royal Parks Agency and its traffic consultants on the data on traffic flows and how they have changed since the closure of Robin Hood Gate. However there is complete opposition to their conclusion that the changes on Kingston's roads are acceptable. Lord Andrew McIntosh, Minister for Culture, Media and Sport along with representative of the Royal Park Agency met borough representatives on 1 February. He is hoping to have overall agreement to the final proposals and has agreed to look at the feasibility of opening the Robin Hood gate at off-peak times. He also accepted the comment that the Government should look at more sustainable options for transport overall.

RESOLVED that

1. the following views previously expressed by the Executive be reaffirmed:
 - the closure of Robin Hood Gate has increased traffic volume using Kingston Gate to an unreasonable extent and that Robin Hood Gate should be reopened immediately;
 - the aims and intentions of limiting traffic has been to the detriment of residents living and using the roads in the vicinity; and
2. the Royal Parks Agency be advised of these views, together with the views of Kingston Town and Maldens & Coombe Neighbourhood Committees.

Reasons for decision

To enable members to express their views on the recommended permanent closure of Robin Hood Gate.

126. SUPPORTING LONDON'S 2012 OLYMPIC BID**Appendix D**

London 2012 is seeking the support of London Boroughs and residents in its bid for London to host the Olympic Games and has asked that each Borough adopt a motion developed by the ALG, to show formally, their support for London's bid. The ALG is also asking Boroughs to appoint an Olympic Champion/s, who can be a Member, officer or both, with whom the Olympics and Paralympics Programme Bid Manager would liaise to keep Boroughs informed and involved.

The South London Partnership is working to support the Olympics bid and has developed a programme of activities in this respect. The Partnership is asking London Boroughs for a contribution towards the cost of this support.

RESOLVED that

1. the following motion supporting the bid for London to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games set out below, be adopted;

This Council notes:

The London bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games.

This Council believes:

1. That these games would be a sporting celebration for the whole country and would bring a lasting sporting, economic, social, health and cultural legacy to the whole of Greater London;
2. That a successful bid has the potential to benefit this Borough through:
 - Encouraging sports development and healthy lifestyles.
 - The use of local training venues for pre-games acclimatisation for visiting athletes.

- Participation in the cultural festival that would take place before and during the games.
 - Opportunities for members of our communities to take part as volunteers in the run-up and during the games.
 - The promotion of all of London as a business and tourist destination for UK and international visitors.
 - Opportunities for local businesses that operate in sectors relevant to the games.
 - The development of infrastructure across London.
3. That the UK as a whole will reap the benefits of a London Olympic and Paralympic Games and therefore that the costs should, so far as possible, be shared by the entire country.

This Council therefore resolves:

1. To give its full support to London's bid to stage the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games and agrees to work to maximise the opportunities afforded to this Borough and to London through a successful bid;
 2. To support the ALG in seeking a clear limit on the amount of funding that will be raised through the GLA precept on the council tax to support the bid and the holding of the games.
2. a contribution of £4,000 be made towards the costs of promotion of the bid by the South London Partnership which should be met in the current financial year; and
3. Councillor Barry O'Mahony, Executive Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, and Caroline Fraser, Sports & Recreation Manager be appointed as Olympic Champions.

Reason for decision

To support the London 2012 bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

127. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - DISCOUNT SCHEME FOR GOODS AND FACILITIES Appendix E

The pilot Leisure Discount Scheme enables Looked After Children to have discounted swimming at the Malden Centre and Kingfisher Leisure Centre during the summer holidays. The Children, Youth & Culture Overview Panel asked the Executive to look at extending this scheme. Looked After Children would particularly value discounts for use in shops, food outlets, cinema, bowling and other local leisure facilities including gyms to increase fitness and health. There may be opportunities to negotiate for concessions at four of the Council's leisure centres as part of negotiating new contracts from May 2006. Other local shops and facilities will need to be approached to secure discounts and also asked to consider subsidising such a scheme.

RESOLVED that

1. the discounts currently available for Looked After Children through the discount leisure card scheme be noted;
2. officers be asked to investigate whether discounts for Looked After Children can be obtained at a range of local shops and leisure facilities, of the type of interest to Looked After Children, along the lines of student or staff discounts;
3. the member/officer working group on management of leisure facilities be asked to investigate whether any concessions for Looked After Children can be negotiated as part of all future contractual agreements between the Council and private Leisure Companies; and
4. Officers be requested to report progress on any expansion of the scheme and its operation to the Children Youth & Culture Overview Panel in 12 months' time.

Reason for decision

To note the current scheme and investigate whether other benefits can be added to it.

128. KINGSTON TOWN CENTRE PARKING STRATEGY**Appendix F**

A parking strategy is one of the key components of the K+20 Kingston town centre Area Action Plan. Clarity on objectives will help the Council and private developers plan for the town centre's future development. Because Kingston town centre is such an important hub of the Borough's transport networks and travel patterns the strategy is also an important element of the Integrated Transport Strategy. The consultation draft of the Kingston Town Centre Car Parking Strategy was issued at the start of September and all responses have now been analysed. The strategy covers current and future capacity, tariffs, controlled parking zone permits, user priority for on-street spaces, season tickets and all day parking, and signage, together with timescales for implementation and financial implications. The responses to the consultation provided a wide spread of opinions which were summarised for consideration. An implementation plan for the strategy will be prepared for the Executive to consider within the next few months

RESOLVED that

1. the comments from the Town Centre Manager about the content of the strategy be noted;
2. the recommendations set out in the report and strategy be endorsed and the RBK parking strategy for Kingston Town Centre, set out in Annex 1 to Appendix F of the agenda be adopted; and
3. an implementation plan for the strategy be submitted to the Executive for approval.

Reason for decision

To finalise one of the key components of the K+20 town centre strategy and ensure that an adopted parking strategy serving the future needs of the town and consistent with the objectives of the Mayor's Transport Strategy can be cited in the Local Implementation Plan.

129. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Appendix G

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a public statement of the Council's programme for preparing 'Local Development Documents'. These documents (which together form the Local Development Framework) will eventually replace the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). In the meantime the UDP is automatically 'saved' for three years from adoption. The effect of the GOL's announcement, mentioned earlier in the Members' Update, which requires Kingston to modify its affordable housing and car parking standards in the UDP, will be to delay the adoption of the UDP by several months. This may have some minor knock-on effects for some of the timetables in the Local Development Scheme. These will be agreed in consultation with the Executive Member for Transportation and Sustainable Development prior to submission of the document.

The LDS should set out a clear programme of work for the first three years from September 2004, and must be submitted to GOL by the end of March. Failure to meet key 'milestones' may result in reduced 'planning delivery grant' so realistic timetables need to be set, and GOL has urged all London Boroughs to 'reality check' their work programmes and prioritise. The Environment and Neighbourhood Overview Panel, Neighbourhood Committees and the Executive considered an early draft of the LDS, since then some revisions have been made to take account of GOL advice on the Scheme.

RESOLVED that the Local Development Scheme attached at Annex 1 to Appendix G of the agenda, be submitted to the Secretary of State, and that, prior to submission, any further updating, correcting or amending necessary which does not substantially alter the Scheme be delegated to the Head of Planning and Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Transportation & Sustainable Development.

Reason for decision

In order to submit the Council's Local Development Scheme as required by Section 15(3)(b) of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004.

130. PETITION REQUESTING WOMEN ONLY SWIMMING SESSIONS

Appendix H

A petition to Council on 14 December 2004, from the Islamic Resource Centre (IRC) requested that the Council provide women only swimming sessions. The Kingfisher is not suitable because swimmers can be viewed from outside. Whilst the Malden Centre has women only sessions, using only women lifeguards cannot be guaranteed because staff rostering and maintenance arrangements which DC Leisure's, the Contractor, have in place. The IRC has offered to provide women lifeguards, on a

voluntary basis, but DC Leisure's initial response is concern at meeting their Health and Safety and staff training requirements. Officers will work with the IRC to explore further any practical means of providing women life-guarded, women only sessions at the Malden Centre and will also investigate best practice examples of provision of women only swimming sessions in other areas. Whilst this petition has been submitted from the IRC, there may be other women who, for cultural or other reasons, would also prefer to use women only sessions.

RESOLVED that the needs of the women from the Islamic Resource Centre (IRC) be recognised, and the proposals by officers to assist the IRC in identifying a suitable venue for women only swimming sessions, supervised by suitably qualified female staff, where feasible and practical be approved.

Reason for decision

To provide women-only swimming sessions to meet the needs of women who wish, for cultural or social reasons, to swim at a venue which is supervised by female lifeguards.

**131. POLICY BUDGET 2005/06: HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT
DETAILED ESTIMATES**

Appendix I

The Council is required to maintain a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which is separate from the Council's other budgets and is a record of all revenue expenditure and income relating to the Authority's own housing stock. There are a number of elements of expenditure and income which make up the HRA budget. The Council is required to budget to avoid a deficit on its HRA at the end of the year and the 2004/05 projected outturn and the 2005/06 base estimates for the Housing Revenue Account were reported.

The Council is also required to implement the Government's rent restructuring system for harmonising the rents of local authority and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants by 2011. The effect of this, together with other requirements, for the coming year is an overall average rent increase of £3.41 per week (4.8%). Other fees and charges will rise by 2.5%.

There are significant pressures on the repairs and capital budgets and the condition of the housing stock is posing a major challenge for the Council. Already responsive repairs budgets are being restricted to the minimum required to meet statutory and health and safety requirements and to keep residents safe and warm. In addition, the Council must find resources to bring properties to the Government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010, a task made more difficult as some £4m of the Council's rent income is taken by the Government to support housing in other authorities. More resources will have to be found from within the HRA and a number of possibilities have been considered. These include borrowing under the Prudential borrowing scheme, with such loans being repaid through rental income, and transferring savings from the revenue budget to capital. Other options have been considered, some can be implemented immediately, as shown below, others will need further investigation and will be longer term possibilities. Although it is an option, it is not proposed at this stage to increase the charges for the Warden and Alarm Service, and the Floating Support

Scheme for Older People, as, depending on the subsidy arrangements, this could result in arrears for vulnerable tenants through no fault of their own.

RESOLVED that

1. the Housing Revenue Account 2004/05 projected outturn be noted;
2. the Housing Revenue Account 2005/06 base estimates be agreed;
3. the continuation of the approach to rent restructuring adopted for the Housing Revenue Account budget in 2004/05, resulting in a rent increase for Housing Revenue Account residential property of 4.8% (£3.41 per week) on average effective from 4 April 2005 be approved;
4. rents of properties owned by other Directorates, caretaking service charges, and other fees and charges for the ancillary property, be increased by 2.5% with effect from 4 April 2005;
5. charges for the sheltered warden and alarm service, and charges for the floating support scheme for older people continue at the 2004/05 levels;
6. prudential borrowing of £2m in 2005/06 be approved and £192,000 be allocated to meet the revenue costs of the borrowing;
7. a revenue contribution to capital of £119,000 be approved to be available for Decent Homes; and
8. the savings and growth items set out below be approved:

	£000s
New Initiatives/Growth Items	
Choice Based Lettings	26
Ranger Service	0
Handyman Pilot	0
Savings	
Anti Social Behaviour Officer	38
OAP Decorations	80
Environmental Improvements	100
Under Occupation Payments	60
Dog Warden	10
Tenancy Sustainment	21
LAWN Scheme	43
0.5 Resident Participation post	19

Reason for decision

To meet the Authority's statutory obligations for a balanced Housing Revenue Account budget for 2005/06.

3. the extension of the existing Building Professional Services Contract 1 (Consultants Panel) and Contract 2 (Technical Services other Departments) be approved under the existing terms and conditions to 31 March 2008, and Officers be authorised to implement the necessary action; and
4. the extension of the existing Repair and Maintenance contracts for Housing Services to 4 November 2005 be approved.

Reason for decision

In accordance with the Council's Procurement Strategy and Contractor Charter, to allow the Council sufficient time to properly consider the strategic partnering options for the long term provision of Building Professional Services and to ensure such services are secured from April 2006.

134. TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2005/2006

Appendix L

The timetable of meetings for 2004/2005 largely follows the pattern of the current year, with changes to enable all Neighbourhood Planning Sub Committees to feed into the Development Control Committee to facilitate the consultation process. Arrangements have been included for the new Licensing Sub-Committees to meet regularly, anticipating the demand under the new Licensing regime. It is proposed that the Annual State of the Borough Debate should take place on 1 November, although this may be altered following a review of arrangements.

RESOLVED that the timetable of meetings be approved, with the inclusion of a Licensing Committee meeting on 16 May 2005, and the proposed dates for Council meetings be **RECOMMENDED** to the Council for approval.

Reason for decision

To agree a timetable so that the necessary arrangements can be put in place, venues booked, etc.

135. ANIMAL HEALTH ACTS 1981 AND 2002 Etc.

Appendix M

The Animal Health Acts deal with the control and prevention of disease in and from animals and such matters as their transport and welfare and rabies control. Over recent years the duties have increased very significantly partly due to outbreaks of BSE and foot and mouth disease so the Government has issued to Councils a framework agreement for service delivery requiring a minimum of 0.5 post dedicated to these duties. This Council has insufficient work to justify employing this level of resource so it is proposed that Surrey County Council deal with this work, an arrangement approved by Government, and which happens in other similarly placed authorities.

RESOLVED that for a period of three years from 1 April 2005, the authority's powers and responsibilities under the Animal Health Acts 1981 and 2002 and other relevant legislation related to the control of disease in animals and their health and welfare, but excluding the Council's powers related to the licensing of zoos, pet shops, riding and

animal boarding establishments and dangerous wild animals, be delegated to Surrey County Council.

Reason for decision

To ensure that the Council's powers and responsibilities under this legislation are operated cost effectively.