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Consultation Programme for Kingston's Sustainable Community Strategy

Report for Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

June 2008



Document Control

Project Title: Consultation Programme for Kingston's Sustainable Community Strategy

MVA Project Number: C8115500

Document Type: Draft Report

Directory & File Name: M:\Mvacsm\Contract\C8115502.Cs Kingston Scs\Reports\Final Report Draft 3.Doc

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Distribution

Issue	Date	Distribution	Comments
1	24/06/2008	RBK	

1	Introduction	1.1
1.1	Background	1.1
1.2	The Draft Sustainable Community Strategy	1.1
1.3	The consultation programme	1.2
1.4	Report structure	1.3
2	Objective 1: Sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment	2.1
2.1	Introduction	2.1
2.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	2.1
2.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	2.2
2.4	Factors that affect quality of life	2.3
3	Objective 2: Raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment	3.1
3.1	Introduction	3.1
3.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	3.1
3.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	3.2
3.4	Factors that effect quality of life	3.3
4	Objective 3: Increase supply of housing and its affordability	4.1
4.1	Introduction	4.1
4.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	4.1
4.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	4.2
4.4	Factors that effect quality of life	4.3
5	Objective 4: Make communities safer	5.1
5.1	Introduction	5.1
5.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	5.1
5.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	5.2
5.4	Factors that effect quality of life	5.4
6	Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part	6.1
6.1	Introduction	6.1
6.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	6.1
6.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	6.2
6.4	Factors that effect quality of life	6.4

7	Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently	7.1
7.1	Introduction	7.1
7.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	7.1
7.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	7.2
7.4	Factors that effect quality of life	7.4
8	Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic	8.1
8.1	Introduction	8.1
8.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	8.1
8.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	8.2
8.4	Factors that effect quality of life	8.4
9	Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces	9.1
9.1	Introduction	9.1
9.2	Views on the objective and its priorities	9.1
9.3	Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved	9.1
9.4	Factors that effect quality of life	9.2
10	Other suggestions for and comments on the Sustainable Community Plan	10.1
10.1	Introduction	10.1
10.2	Suggestions for shifts in emphasis for the plan as a whole	10.1
10.3	Other comments about the draft plan and consultation process	10.1
11	Conclusions	11.1
11.1	Attitudes towards the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy as a whole	11.1
11.2	Key issues emerging from individual objectives and priorities	11.1
11.3	Conclusion	11.4

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Under Part One of the Local Government Act 2000, local authorities in England and Wales have to produce a community strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local area, and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom. A Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the long term vision for the area within a council's boundaries, supported by action plans to achieve it. The Community Strategy should provide a framework which brings together issue-based strategies, for example crime and disorder reduction and the environment.
- 1.1.2 The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames (RBK) are currently writing their Sustainable Community Strategy and have commissioned MVA Consultancy to consult with the public and with key local groups about whether the objectives identified in their draft strategy are the right ones to match the needs and expectations of local people. The Borough seeks to ensure that the needs of its residents are fully understood, and that they are consulted in an effective and meaningful way to assist both strategic decision-making and service delivery.

1.2 The Draft Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.2.1 The draft sustainable community strategy used for the consultation was divided into three themes, each with two or three of eight objectives. Under each of the eight objectives a number of proposed priorities have been identified. The themes and objectives are described below while the related priorities are described in the following chapters.

Theme One: Prosperous and Inclusive - sharing prosperity and creating opportunities for everyone

Objective 1: Sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment

Objective 2: Raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

Objective 3: Increase supply of housing and its affordability

Theme Two: Safe, Healthy & Strong - promoting safe and healthy lives and encouraging independence and well-being

Objective 4: Make communities safer

Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

Theme Three: A Sustainable Kingston - protecting and enhancing our environment for us and future generations

Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse & recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces

1.3 The consultation programme

1.3.1 MVA put together a consultation programme to seek the views of Kingston residents and representatives of a wide range of community groups and organisations. Care was taken to ensure that people of different neighbourhoods, ethnic groups, religions, ages and genders; people with disabilities; volunteers; local businesses; visitors to the area, and those with environmental concerns, were all represented.

1.3.2 Consultations took place between 10th May and 13th June 2008 using a variety of qualitative research techniques including workshops, focus groups and one to one in-depth interviews. Details of those consulted, and the method used, are shown below.

- 32 local residents attended a half day workshop. (Quotas were used to select residents to ensure there was a good mix of people from different neighbourhoods, ages, genders, socio-economic groups and ethnic origins).
- Approximately 25 members of the Disability and Older People's Forum attended a half day workshop. All members were invited - those who attended were self selective.
- Five focus groups were held with members of the following five groups and forums: Kingston Racial Equality Forum; members of the Korean community; Kingston Youth Council; Eco-Footprint and teachers.
- Eight in depth interviews were held with a representative from each of the following eight organisations: Kingston Voluntary Action; Kingston Town Management; Chamber of Commerce; Age Concern; the Causeway Centre; Crescent Resource Centre; Kingston Centre for Independent Living and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

1.3.3 All consultations took place using a semi-structured topic guide to steer discussions around the three themes and eight objectives of the strategy. This type of consultation technique provides an opportunity for people to express their views or the views of the people they are representing without being restricted by a rigid questionnaire. All groups and individuals consulted on the Sustainable Community Strategy were asked (1) what factors affected their/the people they were representing's quality of life; (2) their thoughts on the draft strategy in general; (3) their views on the individual themes, objectives and priorities of the strategy, and (4) how they thought the draft priorities could be achieved. The topic guide used and the draft strategy's themes, objectives and priorities for each objective are provided in Appendix A.

1.3.4 This type of public consultation seeks to ensure that the views of a wide a variety of different types of residents are heard rather than to seek the views of a group of participants whose profile is representative of the local population. All views and ideas that came out of the

1 Introduction

discussions are presented in this report but they are not quantified in terms of saying how many people agreed with each comment made, and we have not tried to interpret their comments. The purpose of qualitative research is to uncover and present all themes and suggestions that come out of the research, with equal importance placed on each, and to show the different types of comments made by different groups of people.

1.4 Report structure

1.4.1 This report provides the key findings from the consultation programme with residents and representatives of community groups and organisations. The following eight chapters are each dedicated to one of the eight objectives in the draft Sustainable Community Strategy. For each objective we have examined:

- views of and suggestions for the objective and priorities provided;
- ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved; and
- factors relating to the objective which affect people's quality of life.

1.4.2 Chapter Ten provides details of other comments and suggestions that people made during the consultation which relate to the draft Sustainable Community Strategy as a whole rather than to a specific objective. Conclusions and a summary of the main findings are provided in Chapter Eleven.

1.4.3 Throughout the sections in the report that relate to 'factors which affect people's quality of life' we have indicated the type of person who has made different comments. This has been done using the following key. The appropriate letters are provided in brackets following the relevant comments:

- A:** Residents (all ages, genders, ethnic groups and socio-economic groups)
- B:** Older people and people with disabilities and those who represent them
- C:** Young residents
- D:** Those representing people of ethnic minority groups and religions
- E:** Teachers
- F:** Those with a particular interest in the environment
- G:** Representatives from other community groups and organisations (Kingston Voluntary Action Group; Kingston Town Management; Chamber of Commerce and Citizens Advice Bureau).

2 Objective 1: Sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This Chapter examines the first objective: 'sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment'. This is the first objective in the theme: 'prosperous and inclusive'.
- 2.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- we will regenerate and develop the Kingston town centre and district centres;
 - we will increase employment opportunities by providing training and support and increase the availability of childcare; and
 - we will help residents off benefits and into work.
- 2.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

2.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: share in prosperity and create opportunities for everyone

- 2.2.1 The priorities of this objective were considered to be understandable and the outcomes measurable. However, they were not considered by all to be the most appropriate priorities to tackle all the factors related to this objective that negatively affect quality of life, and in some cases it was felt that they were not relevant to all groups in society.
- 2.2.2 Some people thought that these priorities were not the most important priorities to help the business community to grow and prosper, nor would they be the most effective priorities to make Kingston more economically viable. Some respondents, for example, felt that this objective needed to tackle transport and access issues, and therefore needed an additional priority to state this. Transport and accessibility were considered to be vital in regenerating town and district centres, and in the economic success of RBK.

Priority One: we will regenerate and develop the Kingston town centre and district centres

- 2.2.3 With regards to the first priority, many respondents felt that Kingston town centre was constantly being re-developed and more emphasis should be placed on the regeneration of the district centres and particular housing estates.

"Why do they have to keep regenerating it – it was regenerated not that long ago... I see regeneration everywhere in Kingston and I'm shocked because there are other parts of the Borough that really need it like Tolworth."

- 2.2.4 Some respondents felt RBK would benefit from encouraging a wider range of retail into Kingston, including cheaper retail outlets, as well as expanding existing businesses.

Priority Two: we will increase employment opportunities by providing training and support and increase the availability of childcare

- 2.2.5 The priority about increasing the availability of childcare was considered by some to be very vague and some wondered whether it meant employers would have to provide childcare. Many thought that providing childcare was not a key area that needed to be tackled to achieve this objective. In fact some suggested that RBK needs to enable people to stay at home to look after the children instead of being forced into work. These participants felt that it is much better for children to be looked after by a parent than by someone else.
- 2.2.6 With regards to increasing employment opportunities, some respondents felt this priority needed to show that it was inclusive of all groups within society i.e. it needs to show that thought had gone in to how people with disabilities or people who do not have English as a first language will be supported while seeking employment. In addition to this it was felt that any training and support provided needs to be accessible, both in terms of physical accessibility to venues and ease of accessing information about help that is available.

Priority Three: we will help residents off benefits and into work

- 2.2.7 It was acknowledged that getting people off benefits and into work would help the council reduce their benefits bill. However, there were two arguments as to why this priority was felt not to be appropriate. First, it was thought that this priority would not make a difference to existing business because businesses are currently looking for skilled staff, not unskilled staff. Second, it was felt that getting people off benefits and into work was not always appropriate, for example some people with mental health problems or learning difficulties are not suitable for employment and need to be supported to stay out of work. It was therefore suggested that the third priority should be amended to “We will help residents off benefits and into work where appropriate”.

2.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

- 2.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective One can be achieved:

Priority One: we will regenerate and develop the Kingston town centre and district centres

- Use Kingston Town Centre as an example of how this priority can be achieved in other areas.
- Partnership working with other service providers and organisations.
- Strive to keep local shops by replacing set business rates with a percentage of businesses’ turnover.

Priority Two: we will increase employment opportunities by providing training and support and increase the availability of childcare

- Promote links between employers and universities, colleges and other education establishments.

2 Objective 1: Sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment

- Provide alternative education such as apprenticeships in the crafts, but ensure the apprenticeships are worthwhile for employers.
- Provide more formal skills based education in schools and colleges.
- Better advertising of education and employment opportunities.
- Ensure an inclusive approach to advertising of and access to education and employment opportunities, i.e. make sure opportunities are genuinely and equally available to all groups of people in society.
- Provide information about childcare in other languages besides English.
- Provide free or more affordable childcare (possibly means tested vouchers/subsidised childcare) both generally and in colleges and employment places.
- Encourage and attract employers that allow parents back into work by having flexible working patterns and/or that subsidise childcare.
- Increase employment opportunities in the local area by encouraging businesses to employ Kingston residents. Perhaps a kite-mark system could be implemented to encourage local businesses to have at least 80% of their workforce Kingston residents. This would reduce people's travel expenses and therefore help people back into work.
- Promote unskilled work for certain people and attempt to remove the stigma attached to such jobs (e.g. street cleaning).

Priority Three: we will help residents off benefits and into work

- Be more supportive of people with disabilities or mental health problems who are seeking employment.
- Support people to manage their illness while in employment.
- Partnership working with the voluntary sector.
- Better policing of benefit fraud.
- Provide people on benefits with education.

2.4 Factors that affect quality of life

2.4.1 The following factors relate to economic prosperity and employment and were described by those we consulted as affecting their, or the people they represents' quality of life.

Employment Opportunities

- Lack of employment opportunities other than low paid/minimum wages/low skilled work, for people in general and for non British respondents, thus having to take work for which you are overqualified/over skilled. (A, D, G)
- Lack of employment opportunities for migrant workers/those without English as a first language/people with work permits. (D, G)

Getting people into work

- For people with learning disabilities or mental health problems, being supported to work where appropriate, but also being supported not to work where appropriate. (B, G)

2 Objective 1: Sustain and share economic prosperity, including links to employment

- Infrastructure to enable provision of a range of day time occupations/employment for people with learning difficulties. Most opportunities to get involved in the community are considered to be leisure activities and not everyone finds this fulfilling.

"They want purposeful occupation during the day." (B)

Transport and access affecting economic prosperity

- Transport options and access to Kingston are real issues which affect everyone travelling into Kingston Town and retail businesses that rely on customers being able to access the area. Road closures can cause retailers to lose thousands of pounds worth of revenue, and businesses will start to relocate to more accessible areas when their leases end if nothing is done to improve congestion and/or public transport. (G)

3 Objective 2: Raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This Chapter examines the second objective: 'raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment'. This is the second objective in the theme: 'prosperous and inclusive'.
- 3.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- We will raise the standard of education across the Borough;
 - We will close the gaps in achievement between schools, between boys and girls and between different ethnic and income groups; and
 - We will increase the numbers of young people in education, training and employment.
- 3.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

3.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

- 3.2.1 The priorities within this objective were again considered to be measurable and appropriate and there was little disagreement that they should be there. However it was felt that both the objective and the priorities were too narrow in their focus and did not necessarily address all the issues of concern around education.
- 3.2.2 In particular it was felt that this objective focuses on raising standards of education for young people, but no thought has gone into education and training for older people. It was therefore felt that a commitment to improving access to adult and further education should be an additional priority.

"There is not any sort of statement there that relates to adult education, further education or lifelong learning. I think that's a shame really, an opportunity missed".

"It doesn't say enough to me about what Kingston's commitment to lifelong learning should be".

- 3.2.3 Other issues that are not covered in this objective that respondents felt should have been were:
- a change in admissions procedures to enable children to go to their closest school;
 - improving the quality of school meals (it was thought they should be cooked on site);
 - improving children's attitudes to education and training by seeking to understand and address the issues that 'turn them off';

3 Objective 2: Raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

- more education and training opportunities for children and adults with disabilities; and
- more English classes for people who do not have English as their first language.

Priority One: we will raise the standard of education across the Borough

- 3.2.4 There were no specific comments about this priority except that it was acknowledged that it is a very broad statement, and without knowing any further details no one could make further comment.

Priority Two: we will close the gaps in achievement between schools, between boys and girls and between different ethnic and income groups

- 3.2.5 Closing gaps in achievement was perceived as a positive step that should be taken. Some respondents felt passionately that this priority should be expanded to include closing gaps in achievement between 'classes' or 'socio-economic groups', and closing the gaps in achievement between schools, in particular between selective and non-selective schools. This, they felt, could only be achieved by abolishing the selective school system.

Priority Three: we will increase the numbers of young people in education, training and employment

- 3.2.6 This priority was well received, particularly by local businesses:

"From a commercial point of view having young people in education or training is better than having them drifting around town making a nuisance".

- 3.2.7 Respondents were concerned again, that the third priority is specifically aimed at getting young people into education, training and employment. Respondents wanted to see something about older people, people who missed education the first time around, people from different cultures, people with disabilities, etc who are looking for further education and training.

"Where are the options for people who missed it first time around?"

- 3.2.8 Some respondent remarked that this priority should explicitly include practical training rather than having a primarily 'academic' focus.

3.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

- 3.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Two can be achieved:

Priority One: we will raise the standard of education across the Borough

- Businesses and education providers should work together to improve attainment, for example the 14-19 diplomas that are currently being developed.
- Improve employer engagement in education services.
- Provide more vocational courses which are more meaningful with realistic work placement systems.

3 Objective 2: Raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

- Better teacher training.
- Better discipline in the classroom.
- More enthusiasm from teachers for their subjects.
- Decrease class sizes.
- Improve schools' ethos.
- Be more proactive in preventing and spotting bullying.
- Better awareness and identification of people with special needs.
- Provide more youth schemes such as the homework club on the Cambridge Estate and the youth centre in New Malden.
- Schools should provide more out of hours sports.
- Integrate people with special needs into mainstream education.

Priority Two: we will close the gaps in achievement between schools, between boys and girls and between different ethnic and income groups

- Use recovery reading to reduce illiteracy and attainment gaps.
- Provide more information for parents to raise awareness of what they can do to support their children's education.
- Promote the importance of good, strong role models to encourage learning.
- Stop negative attitudes from parents being passed on to their children - one respondent thought a 'bring your parent to school day' would be an excellent way of targeting parents and getting them more involved.
- Give bonuses to unemployed parents who get their children to school on time.

Priority Three: we will increase the numbers of young people in education, training and employment

- Provide more adult education, such as computing skills for older people.
- Provide local education for people aged 16 and over who have special needs.
- Place a stronger focus on education rather than qualifications.
- Provide more advice for people making choices about further education – could provide short taster sessions so that people have a better idea of what courses involve.
- There should be more partnership working between education services and employers, e.g. the Rose Theatre and University have devised a course which includes a module working at the theatre where students get to experience a whole range of work, from box office to lighting.

3.4 Factors that effect quality of life

- 3.4.1 The following factors relate to education and were described by those we consulted as affecting their, or the people they represent's quality of life.

School Admissions

- Inadequate number of school places for the families moving into the new developments in the area. (E)
- School catchment areas and admission policies resulting in children not getting into their local school and having to travel considerable distances/difficult journeys with transport interchanges to a different school. (A)

"I think there is a serious problem if your child can not get into their nearest school";

"It's worrying to have an 11 year old having to get two buses especially on a winter morning".

- Long waiting lists for the better schools. (D)

Travel to School

- The ease of/distance to/time taken to travel from home to school. It was pointed out that there are differences in terms of distance to boys and girls schools and boys in general have to travel further to get to their place of education. (C)

School Meals

- Poor school meals, particularly since the move to provide meals that are cooked off site. (A)

"I'm all for healthy food but why do they have to shut down the kitchens and bring it all in?"

Further Education

- The perceived gap in educational facilities in the Borough for disabled children aged 16+. (A)
- High cost of English classes so they are inaccessible for those who need it, resulting in language barriers which inhibit people from integrating into the community. (D)

School Staff and what they teach

- Quality of teachers in general, sometimes as a result of teachers being drafted to other subjects which are not in their area of specialisation. (C)
- Lack of education in schools about the things that effect people's lives, such as politics; values and morals and friendship. (C)
- Schools focussing on Christianity, rather than equally on all religions. (C)

4 Objective 3: Increase supply of housing and its affordability

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This Chapter examines the third objective: 'increase supply of housing and its affordability'. This is the third objective in the theme: 'prosperous and inclusive'.
- 4.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- we will provide our growing population with more housing;
 - we will provide more affordable housing for first time buyers; and
 - we will improve the condition of existing housing and ensure a fair deal for council tenants.
- 4.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

4.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: housing

- 4.2.1 The main theme, brought up by a wide range of respondents, but particularly by the elderly and those with disabilities and those representing them, was that all priorities for this objective need to address the issue of making housing more accessible for elderly and disabled people.
- 4.2.2 Other priorities suggested for this objective were to improve access to housing information and advice, and to ensure that house builders and Local Authorities had a clear understanding of the needs and priorities of the population prior to embarking on the building of new homes.

Priority One: we will provide our growing population with more housing

- 4.2.3 It was felt that this objective needed to be more focussed on the type of housing that was needed, for example which tenure (do we need more houses for rent or to buy?) and for whom (do we need more accessible housing for the elderly and disabled, more family housing or more single occupancy accommodation?). Some thought it should be about increasing the availability of Council stock, and many thought it should be about increasing the availability of accessible housing.
- 4.2.4 Many people considered that the priority should specifically make reference to the inclusion of more 'accessible housing' rather than 'housing' to include housing which is accessible and suitably adapted for the elderly and those with disabilities. It was pointed out that making housing accessible is not difficult, and some thought that those in charge of making decisions needed to better understand disabilities and factors that affect the way people with disabilities live their lives.

4 Objective 3: Increase supply of housing and its affordability

- 4.2.5 In addition it was suggested that this priority should include the phrase 'sustainable housing' in place of 'housing'.
- 4.2.6 A number of people were against the concept of more housing as they did not want the density of housing in the Borough to increase; were concerned about losing green spaces, and were concerned about increased pressure on existing resources (schools, medical services, roads and transport, the sewerage system, etc). They were also concerned that standards may be compromised to accommodate as many houses as possible.
- 4.2.7 Finally it was suggested that the priority should include the provision of free off road parking with any new housing to relieve the pressure of parking in the streets.

Priority Two: we will provide more affordable housing for first time buyers

- 4.2.8 Some people thought that this priority should include providing more affordable accessible housing for the elderly and those who have a disability. It was also considered there should be a commitment to providing housing with more affordable rent for key workers, low income earners and students.

Priority Three: we will improve the condition of existing housing and ensure a fair deal for council tenants

- 4.2.9 Some respondents felt that this priority should include sheltered housing, which they considered to be of a poor standard. Others said it should include improving the accessibility of existing housing to enable people to stay in their own homes for longer.

4.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

- 4.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Three can be achieved:

Priority One: we will provide our growing population with more housing

- Stop the decline in council housing by either limiting the sale of council housing or buying/building more council houses so that the available stock remains at least stable or (preferably) is increased.
- Encourage housing associations to take people with disabilities including learning disabilities.
- Provide information and advice on what housing is available, including a list of housing associations for elderly people.
- Reduce the number of people losing their homes.

Priority Two: we will provide more affordable housing for first time buyers

- The council should encourage the development of low cost suitable housing by providing incentives or restrictions for house builders to achieve the housing stock as required, not just allowing high spec expensive housing. Planning permission could only be given on the proviso that they will supply a certain number of affordable housing – they could go a step further by saying that some have to be for rent.

4 Objective 3: Increase supply of housing and its affordability

- In order to keep existing housing stock available to first time buyers a lower percentage of sale in tax could be offered as an incentive to sell existing stock to first time buyers. Also, discounts and/or Council Tax reductions could be offered to first time buyers to make housing affordable.
- There should also be more Housing Associations where houses can be part owned by the tenant and part owned by the Association.
- Housing near universities and places of education should be more affordable for students.

Priority Three: we will improve the condition of existing housing and ensure a fair deal for council tenants

- Improve the energy efficiency of existing housing stock.
"I put my heating on and it goes straight out of the window"
- Improve the speed of repairs on council houses.
"the bath now is coming through into the kitchen"
- Improve the logic of repair decisions on council houses.
"they currently will not mend things which are partially broken – they need to be totally broken"
- Train staff so that they know how to deal with issues amongst council tenants better.

4.4 Factors that effect quality of life

- 4.4.1 The following factors relate to housing and were described by those we consulted as affecting their, or the people they represent's quality of life.

New Housing Developments

- Inadequate consideration to protecting the existing character of Kingston when designing new housing. New gated commuter communities, particularly flats for commuters, will affect the sense of community in the area. (B, E)
- Inadequate facilities (road network, schools, parking, shops, etc.) to support new families moving into new developments, hence existing resources/road networks will be over stretched and existing residents will suffer. (E)

Accessible housing

- Lack of affordable accessible accommodation for disabled people (level access, adapted bathrooms etc) which is important for disabled people to live independent lives. (B).
"Lack of affordable accessible accommodation is an issue"
- Inadequate support to adapt housing and support for everyday issues such as changing a light bulb, to prevent people having to move elsewhere/into sheltered accommodation. Tenants of privately rented accommodation want to be able to make changes to their property such as fitting a stair lift. (B, G)

Affordable housing

- High house prices combined with low wages makes it very difficult for people to buy houses and, in light of the current 'credit crunch' situation, to pay their mortgages. (E, G)
- Inadequate amount of affordable housing for key workers. (E)

Sheltered housing

- Poor standards of and inadequate amount of sheltered housing. The lack of sheltered housing means people can't be moved out of residential care into supported living, or out of their own homes into sheltered housing. (B)

"Support living is the way forward as opposed to residential living"

Council Housing

- Inadequate supply of council housing stock; poor repairs; lack of parking with some stock, and long waiting lists (A, D);

"I've only just got a council flat and I was very lucky because they're like gold dust"

"Then if you get one there's no parking, there's nowhere to park at all"

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

- Homelessness and people living in temporary accommodation for long periods of time. (D)

5 Objective 4: Make communities safer

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This Chapter examines the fourth objective: 'make communities safer'. This is the first objective in the theme: 'safe, healthy and strong'.
- 5.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- we will work closely with our Safer Neighbourhood teams to reduce all types of crime and anti-social behaviour and tackle the misuse of drugs and alcohol;
 - we will reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; and
 - we will keep Kingston one of the safest boroughs in London.
- 5.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

5.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: make communities safer

- 5.2.1 Overall it was thought that this was a good objective and that the priorities are the right ones for the objective. It was felt that this objective and achieving its priorities would benefit everyone including businesses, residents and visitors to the area. It was also thought this was the least controversial objective as everyone wants a safer environment.
- 5.2.2 Despite this, many respondents commented that Kingston is already a relatively safe Borough with a low crime rate. The overwhelming issue that respondents had in terms of crime and safety was concerning the pubs and nightclubs and the young, drunk people in Kingston town centre at night time. Some people therefore felt that the emphasis of this objective should be on safety at night and in particular Kingston town centre.
- 5.2.3 It was felt that a partnership approach was necessary to meet the priorities, and that the police, emergency services, education, employers, residents, and the health services should all work together to meet these priorities.
- 5.2.4 As well as safety at night, there were a few other issues that people felt should be priorities for this objective. These were:
- improving road safety; and
 - social cohesion.

Priority One: we will work closely with our Safer Neighbourhood teams to reduce all types of crime and anti-social behaviour and tackle the misuse of drugs and alcohol

5.2.5 Whilst it was acknowledged that Kingston has a relatively low crime rate, this priority was considered essential to reduce crime further; to show the public that the council/ police are tackling the issue of crime and anti-social behaviour, and to reduce fear of crime.

5.2.6 Some thought that 'all types of crime' should explicitly say it includes domestic violence and abuse of disabled people and elderly people; and that anti-social behaviour includes lack of consideration and respect of others and your local neighbourhood.

Priority Two: we will reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

5.2.7 Respondents were in favour of this priority and felt it was very important, but some said that they found it meaningless as they could not understand how it could be achieved.

5.2.8 Respondents felt it was particularly important for RBK to show they are tackling crime as a way of reducing fear and reassuring the public. Although most are aware that crime rates in Kingston are relatively low, many are still afraid to go out at night, particularly those who felt more vulnerable: teenagers, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Priority Three: we will keep Kingston one of the safest boroughs in London

5.2.9 This priority was again considered very important and necessary to the future of the Borough, although some respondents found it difficult to conceptualise without the priority stating how it could be achieved.

5.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

5.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Four can be achieved. It should be noted that many of the suggestions below were considered applicable for other priorities within this objective as well, but they are only reported once.

Priority One: we will work closely with our Safer Neighbourhood teams to reduce all types of crime and anti-social behaviour and tackle the misuse of drugs and alcohol

- There should be stricter licenses on the nightclubs and other similar places in the town to stop students descending on the town centre at night.
- Night time entertainment needs to be more spread out so that it is not all based in one small area.
- Drinking on the streets should be prohibited.
- New Malden Police Station should become a 24 hour station.
- There should be undercover police on streets and on buses.
- There needs to be more police and Community Officers with the authority to arrest people on the streets.

- The police should prioritise crimes involving personal safety.
- Police should have more freedom to deal with crime - let them use their discretion.
- Police should have less paperwork and more time to be dealing with issues on the streets.
- The police and other service providers/ organisations should be proactive in engaging young people and preventing them from becoming offenders.
- There should be more focus on and support given to youths who offend so as to avoid repeat behaviour.
- There should be stricter enforcement and discipline of children to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- There needs to be more care in the community for those people who have mental health problems.

Priority Two: we will reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour

- More visible policing in the community, both during the day and at night, and on foot, in vehicles, on public transport, and at bus stops.
- If police can not be provided on public transport then there should be some other kind of guard on duty.
- Provide information to local people on actual crime levels and focus on the positive statistics rather than the negative ones.
- More venues like the Rose theatre would be beneficial to the area in terms of altering the current dynamics and making the town centre at night time a more diverse and balanced environment.
- Put CCTV in the estates, as well as having police presence, to enable higher level of monitoring and quick response to crime, as well as making people feel safer in these areas.
- Greater encouragement to report crime and police protection and anonymity to protect informant.
- Organise events that would encourage people to go out and about in the town centre, for example, family nights on the river.
- More control over the media is needed so as not to dwell on the negatives but instead to promote positive events and happenings in the borough.

Priority Three: we will keep Kingston one of the safest boroughs in London

- There needs to be more variety in the night time economy.
- Teach people to respect their environment and other people in the community.
- There should be more positive police engagement with the community, especially young people.
- There should be more youth outreach workers.
- There should be greater punishments for crime and awareness of what these punishments are - people need to know there are consequences to their actions.

- Put a curfew in place for people under the age of 16 (note: this point was debated and only one person argued for it).
- Introduce ID cards.

5.4 Factors that effect quality of life

5.4.1 The following factors relate to safety, and in particular fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, and were described by those we consulted as affecting their, or the people they represent's quality of life.

Crime and fear of Crime

- Feeling able to go out during the day and the night and feel safe is a very important factor affecting quality of life. This includes feeling safe in your own neighbourhood; feeling safe when walking around in the Borough of Kingston during the day and night; feeling safe in the town centre in the day and at night; feeling safe on buses, and feeling safe in parks and open spaces. Many people reported feeling unsafe, and some perceived it to be too unsafe to go out at night, particularly to some parks (poorly lit/over grown ones in particular) and to Kingston town centre, particularly elderly and disabled people. (A, B, C, D)

"I can leave my stuff outside and more or less going to be there all the time. That affects my life, I can be quite free where I live"

- Some people with disabilities feel less able to defend themselves and therefore more vulnerable/likely victims of violent crime in the street; some feel afraid within their homes; and some reported feeling vulnerable in a disaster such as a terrorist attack due to a perception that emergency services have poor awareness about how to deal with people who have special needs due to disabilities in a disaster. (B)

"It is difficult for us to increase people's mobility, and [give them the] ability to be able to integrate in the community if they don't feel safe to go out"

- Threatening or anti-social behaviour from neighbours or people who live in one's local neighbourhood, for example noisy neighbours; racist behaviour and hate crime, and 'yobs' hanging around the street/being abusive. (B, C, D)

"If the people are all yobs and if they are racist that would affect me"

"It is the people that impact the safety"

- Police presence: neighbourhood police were thought to be effective and police presence helped people to feel safer. Some people felt that although there was a visible presence of special constables, there was not enough police presence at night, particularly on foot, at bus stops and around the nightclubs at closing time. (A)

"If you come out of a nightclub at around 2 or 3 in the morning and have a look for policemen... there's not a policeman to be found... They're relying too much on those CCTV cameras now rather than being there."

6 Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This Chapter examines the fifth objective: 'improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part'. This is the second objective in the theme: 'safe, healthy and strong'.

6.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:

- we will promote healthy living and tackle issues such as smoking and obesity;
- we will encourage people to make the most of what Kingston has to offer by engaging in activities, sport and community events; and
- we will increase opportunities for volunteering by offering grants and support to the voluntary sector so that effective relationships are maintained.

6.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

6.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part'

6.2.1 This objective was considered to be very important, as were its priorities. However, many respondents felt that the priorities focussed too much on promoting healthy living and encouraging people to take an active part, and not enough on providing facilities to enable people to be fitter and more healthy.

"You can put as many posters up as you like but it's not actually going to provide anything".

6.2.2 Additional issues considered to be necessary priorities for this objective were:

- provide more resources (in terms of money and doctors) to reduce hospital waiting lists;
- provide more health care, free health education, affordable sports facilities and affordable evening classes on healthy living to enable people to be healthier;
- provide more equality in service provision for people with physical disabilities; and
- promote healthy living by providing a local environment which enables people to easily get to local services/shops/parks. This is particularly important for elderly and disabled people.

6 Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

Priority One: we will promote healthy living and tackle issues such as smoking and obesity

- 6.2.3 Some respondents felt that this priority was not necessarily relevant to a lot of the people in the Borough as smoking and obesity are not a big problem. It was therefore suggested the priority be expanded to include issues such as eating disorders, heavy drinking and mental health problems.

Priority Two: we will encourage people to make the most of what Kingston has to offer by engaging in activities, sport and community events

- 6.2.4 It was generally felt that more affordable and accessible activities needed to be offered if the Council wants people to take part in them and therefore provision of affordable activities and sports should be included in the priority.
- 6.2.5 Current leisure activities for teenagers were considered to be limited and costly, and it was felt that activities for people with disabilities or the elderly needed to be more supported in terms of actual help/ volunteers at the activities.
- 6.2.6 Some respondents thought there needed to be more emphasis on the Council actively involving the public in activities and community events because at present it seems as though the onus is on the public to find out what is happening and get themselves involved.
- 6.2.7 One respondents felt that the safety objective linked to this priority because if people do not feel safe they will not 'make the most of what Kingston has to offer' and will not go out.

Priority Three: we will increase opportunities for volunteering by offering grants and support to the voluntary sector so that effective relationships are maintained

- 6.2.8 Some respondents were uncertain exactly what this priority meant and thought it could have been written in a more straight forward manner.
- 6.2.9 It was suggested that support for voluntary groups should be provided in terms of it being easier for them to obtain funding and that they should be able to get longer term funding e.g. 3 years funding instead of 1 year.
- 6.2.10 It was also thought that there should be more partnership working between voluntary organisations and other organisations and that these other organisations should have a better understanding of the importance of voluntary groups.

6.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

- 6.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Five can be achieved:

Priority One: we will promote healthy living and tackle issues such as smoking and obesity

- Provide information about health related issues through the following methods:

6 Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

- provide affordable adult education classes in healthy living (including smoking and obesity) and healthy eating;
 - provide a local magazine or leaflet about the services and activities that are available;
 - provide drop in centres for general health advice at GP clinics;
 - partnership working with other organisations and local businesses who can help promote healthy living and/ or distribute information;
 - neighbourhood based community development; and
 - more projects like the Wireless Technologies project work that Kingston Voluntary Action do with 'splash' pages on computers highlighting health issues e.g. a splash page that says "Do you want to give up smoking?" or "Don't be afraid if you're a bloke you can still go to weight watchers!".
- Promote health visitors' role more effectively.
 - There needs to be greater awareness of the needs of disabled people. For example, if a disabled person goes to a GP and is overweight, they should be given options/ alternatives rather than being told it is because they are in a wheelchair.
 - Provide free or reduced cost access to gyms, or one free session per week for young people and people on benefits, or means tested, or for children of single parents, etc.
 - Ban smoking in all public places including outdoor areas such as parks.
 - Provide more cessation clinics and support for smokers who want to give up.

Priority Two: we will encourage people to make the most of what Kingston has to offer by engaging in activities, sport and community events

- Make activities more accessible in terms of locality, the type of activity provided, and the cost of activities. For example activities should be close to residential areas, free or reduced prices, and there needs to be more appropriate activities for all groups within society so that they can take part (e.g. more hydro-pools for disabled people).
- More thought needs to go into making all activities accessible for minority groups - people do not want a group for people with disabilities, they want various interest groups to be accessible for people with disabilities.
- There should be better training for people working in leisure facilities on how to deal with disabilities (for example, loop systems are often available but staff do not always know how to use them or they are not switched on).
- Promote interaction between different groups in the community (i.e. young and old, different nationalities, etc).
- Better publicity/advertising about the activities and events that are available to people.
- Provide more varied activities including trips away, and more facilities in general (e.g. skate parks and indoor sports facilities).
- Develop the carnival and plan more fun days in the parks to help engage local people.
- Focus on physical activity for all rather than excellence in sports.

6 Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

- Encourage sports companies to subsidise events.
- Youth clubs should be better advertised and open on a more frequent basis.
- Encourage people to go out more by having more police presence on the streets so people feel safer.
- There should be support for the Personalisation Agenda (this is about people having more choice, flexibility and control about how services are delivered).
- Open school facilities to communities out of hours, with organised activities.

Priority Three: we will increase opportunities for volunteering by offering grants and support to the voluntary sector so that effective relationships are maintained

- Provide incentives for volunteers such as free transport, free travel season tickets or reduced cost activities.
- Make CRB checks free for all volunteers.
- Provide information on all the different places/situations a person could volunteer so that they know where help is needed and they can choose where they feel they would be best suited to help.
- Advertise the need for volunteers in lots of different places and in different ways so as to reach all potential volunteers (e.g. in shops, community facilities, schools and work places, and by newspaper adverts, leaflets, on the Council website and on voluntary organisations' websites).
- Encourage a variety of people to volunteer such as parents who may have some spare time, or young people who could volunteer instead of going out drinking in the evening.
- Promote the importance of community spirit in volunteer work and involve schools where appropriate.
- Provide better management of volunteering and communication between voluntary organisations and their volunteers.
- Find new ways to get funding and provide advice to voluntary organisations on how to do this.
- Better partnership working between service providers and other organisations.

6.4 Factors that effect quality of life

6.4.1 The following factors relate to health, voluntary work and activities in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and were considered to affect the quality of life of some or all respondents:

Availability of activities

Availability of the following facilities were factors perceived to affect people's quality of life.

- *Varied nightlife.* Some people were concerned at the lack of variety in Kingston's night time scene, which was felt to be too heavily dependent of pubs and clubs, and should diversify to include more cafes and restaurants open at night. (A)

6 Objective 5: Improve overall health, reduce health inequalities, and encourage people to take an active part

"I don't go into Kingston at all at night because of the drunks....Years ago we used to with the children but you wouldn't do it now."

- *Good shopping facilities.* Shopping facilities were generally considered to be good in Kingston, though some people thought it was lacking in bargain shops. (A)
- *Good libraries.* These were generally considered good though there was some discontent about the removal of the mobile library, the impact of which is most felt by pensioners and people with young children. (A)
- *Sports facilities.* The Borough is considered to have good sporting facilities for both children and adults, although some people with disabilities noted the lack of hydro pools in the Borough. (A, B)
- *Entertainment and activities.* Kingston was seen as having good leisure and entertainment opportunities, and many applauded the new theatre and the schools opening their facilities to the community. However many considered activities were geared towards younger people, for example a music studio was built in a library and was geared towards younger people. This was felt to be discriminatory and stops older and younger people interacting together. (B, D) There was also considered to be a lack of low cost, affordable, accessible activities for young people, people on low income, migrants and asylum seekers, older people, people with disabilities, young people who are too old for youth groups and too young for pubs and clubs. (A, C)

"It's expensive to go to the cinema, people can't afford it"

"A lot of young people are saying there is nothing to do, that is what people say"

"There are not enough free things for us to do"

Healthcare

- *Integration of healthcare and social services.* (B)
- *The quality of local facilities* (hospital, doctor's surgeries, day centres and emergency services). These facilities were generally perceived as good, however some people had been refused the use of an interpreter at hospital and at GPs surgeries. (A, D)
- *Hospital parking charges and payment method.* Charges and use of pay and display were seen as inappropriate for a hospital facility. (A)
- *Accessibility of GP and counselling services.* Some people perceived GP surgeries to be too spread out, and counselling services are dictated by GP local authority and not home address local authority. (A)

Community spirit

- *Sense of community.* There is a well-established Korean community in New Malden which is considered to be one of the main reasons why people from Korea settle in the area; it feels more like a community and they feel more at home. (D)
- *A good and active voluntary sector.* Kingston was perceived as having a good and active voluntary sector. (A)

7 Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This Chapter examines the sixth objective: 'support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently'. This is the third objective in the theme: 'safe, healthy and strong'.

7.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:

- we will help vulnerable people live independently with better access to health services, housing, employment, education and leisure;
- we will involve local communities in designing services to meet their needs; and
- we will improve access to information and advice and encourage and support local communities to work together.

7.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

7.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

7.2.1 In general this objective was considered to be very important and a necessary part of the plan. However, there were a few issues with the specific priorities which are discussed below.

Priority One: we will help vulnerable people live independently with better access to health services, housing, employment, education and leisure

7.2.2 The wording of this priority caused confusion among many respondents for different reasons. For example, the term 'vulnerable people' caused uncertainty among many respondents. It was felt that it is not explicit enough; it could mean the elderly, disabled, young people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, or it could mean all of these. Respondents thought this needed to be clarified. Further to the need for clarification, some respondents felt that there should be specific mention of 'support for the disabled and elderly', either within this priority or as a new priority.

7.2.3 Another concern was what was actually meant by 'better access to'. Respondents were not sure whether this meant better access to information about the services listed in the priority, or better physical access to, for example, hospitals.

7.2.4 Some people thought this priority should state explicitly how and where people will be helped to live independently, i.e. did it mean better home care and social care. There was concern that these services had been cut back and were very costly, which made some respondents sceptical about how this priority will be achieved.

7 Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

- 7.2.5 Some people considered that 'transport' and 'information' were missing from the list of services in this priority, and that better access to transport and information were key to helping vulnerable people to live independently.

"Transport is a real issue to allow people to access social opportunities, and not be isolated."

- 7.2.6 There was concern that not all vulnerable people can or would be happy living independently, and therefore there still needs to be support for these people. One respondent suggested changing the word 'help' to 'support' so that vulnerable people did not feel like the 'help' would be withdrawn once they were settled but that instead they would be continuously supported to live independently.

Priority Two: we will involve local communities in designing services to meet their needs

- 7.2.7 Respondents wanted clarification on whether 'local communities' meant people in your neighbourhood, your district or the whole of the Borough. People thought this was an important term to explain because depending on what services were being designed would determine who should be consulted.
- 7.2.8 Respondents felt the Council needed to ensure they involved the local community by inviting people to get involved, rather than relying on those who push to be involved.

Priority Three: we will improve access to information and advice and encourage and support local communities to work together

- 7.2.9 It was considered that some groups in society, such as those with certain disabilities, have real problems understanding the information that is available to them and that more thought needs to go into how to produce more user-friendly information.
- 7.2.10 In addition it was thought that more emphasis is needed on forging stronger community links e.g. encouraging people to know their neighbours and supporting them.

7.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

Priority One: we will help vulnerable people live independently with better access to health services, housing, employment, education and leisure

- Improve or widen the scope of community transport and make use of existing resources (e.g. use school buses at weekends and holidays for other purposes).
- Provide specialist transport for access to leisure, social and support facilities.
- Provide more choice in special needs facilities and day centres so that there is something to suit everybody.
- Help set up more local community groups/centres that are low-cost and accessible to all and provide more facilities for social groups.
- Provide more accommodation that is accessible for people with disabilities.

7 Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

- Assess people's needs for equipment in their own homes, to enable them to stay at home, at an earlier stage.
- Provide more information on eligibility for certain benefits/care/etc.
- Do not have polyclinics because this will make access to health centres more difficult for the elderly and disabled.
- Provide more health services on Saturdays.
- Improve partnership working between all the service providers and other organisations and improve awareness of roles and responsibilities.
- Think outside the box - don't think 'that's not what we do', think 'how can we incorporate that in our current work' or 'can one of our partner organisations help?'
- Talk to service users and carers about how independent living can be achieved.
- The Council should carve out specific (single task) roles for people with learning disabilities so they are able to get employment.
- Better education for people with learning disabilities.
- RBK should keep a register of potentially vulnerable people.

Priority Two: we will involve local communities in designing services to meet their needs

- The Council need to be honest and upfront with people that some things are unlikely to be possible because of central government drivers. It is important not to disillusion the local community.
- Make people feel they have a part to play and that they are heard and listened to.
- The Council need to ensure they hear from all groups of people within society, and need to be imaginative about how to engage hard to reach groups.
- The Council need to recognise why certain groups of people (such as disabled and elderly people) can not get to meetings to discuss services and therefore make sure systems are in place so as all groups in society can be consulted.
- Promote and increase people's awareness of how they can be involved in neighbourhood committees by providing information so that people can become more involved in satisfying local needs.
- Provide support to people forming community groups.
- Enable more partnership working.

Priority Three: we will improve access to information and advice and encourage and support local communities to work together

- RBK should promote 'meet a neighbour week'.
- Schools should be involved in supporting their local community (e.g. school children should visit vulnerable adults).
- Provide better information in at least one of the following ways: Newsletters, leaflets, talking newspapers, posted letter, websites (including improved information on the council website), and digital TV.

7 Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

- Provide information in a range of languages.
- Provide migrants with information about British culture to aid social cohesion.
- More funding is needed.
- Enable better partnership working including sharing information between service providers and other organisations.

7.4 Factors that effect quality of life

7.4.1 The following factors relate to providing better access to services for vulnerable people, providing information to the community, and helping local communities work and play together and have a say in the services they receive. These factors were considered to affect the quality of life of some or all respondents:

Access to information

- *Access to appropriate information.* This includes healthcare information; information about and explanation of local services; information about what is happening in the Borough; information about what people are entitled to in simple terms. Respondents felt frustrated at the following barriers to accessing information: information is increasingly provided by the internet and many do not have access to this or are unable to use it; length of time it takes to get through to the hospital on the phone; lack of information in different languages; assumption everyone has access to the telephone or the internet. Some people are concerned that due to lack of information they are not receiving all of their entitlements or are unaware of local services from which they may benefit. (A, B, D, G)

"I'm not getting enough - I'm not getting any information about what happens in Kingston"

- *Dissemination of information about local consultations.* Some people felt there are lots of public consultations by the Council and community groups but outcomes are never shared with the people that take part thus people, leading to loss of faith in the process. (B, D)

Access/transport to services

- *Availability of affordable transport suitable for the disabled and elderly.* This includes suitably adapted public buses with a network which accesses residential areas with reasonable frequency; taxi-card schemes; dial-a-ride, and community transport. People felt the cost and availability of suitable transport is one of the key barriers to being involved in the community (therefore avoiding isolation and loneliness), and being able to access service provision. Many considered better and more community transport is needed. (B, D)

"Transport is really quite key; if people can't get places their options are limited"

- *Availability of ambulances to take wheelchair users to hospital appointments.* The new system was reported to make it very difficult to arrange. (B)

7 Objective 6: Support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

- *Availability of disabled parking spaces and control of their use.* Kingston was seen to be lacking in enough disabled spaces and control over their use was reported as poor. (B)
- *Poor location of services in relation to where people live.* People have difficulty in accessing services due to poor planning of the location of services (such as GPs, hospitals, libraries etc) in relation to residential areas. Some people felt that the Council gives planning permission for new housing without thinking how far residents will have to travel to access services. (B)
- *Inaccessible services.* People in wheelchairs can not use services where there has been poor planning for physical disabilities, for example bells for assistance to get into shops/banks etc. not being at the correct height; GP surgeries not having automatic doors; lack of ramps; there is not much room to move around easily, etc. This in turn is an issue for health and safety reasons, for example in the case of a fire alarm. (B)
- *Availability of translators at Council and health services.* Some people felt that the Council and health service are not always accessible for people who do not have English as a first language because, although policies are in place for translation services, this does not work on the frontline of the Primary Care Trust. (D, G)

Provision of suitable services

- *Availability of services for older people and vulnerable people to meet up, and transport to access these services.* Isolation and loneliness is a big issue for elderly and vulnerable people in the borough. Support systems, such as Age Concern, and day services offer a great deal of support and a variety of services and social events for people to access. Services like these help to stop people from feeling isolated. However, some day centres are being closed down. (B, D)
- *The reliability, cost and quality of home and social care staff.* The cost of home and social care is reported to have increased greatly because the Council now uses agencies. It is perceived as much cheaper to hire your own but if you do there is a perception that the Council "wash their hands of you".
- *Consistency of care.* People don't want to have to change their social workers/carers once they reach a certain age. (B)
- *Provision of suitable services.* Some considered that service providers have a lack of awareness of disabled people and their needs within the community. (B)
- *Integration of healthcare and social services.* (B)

Access to facilities/equipment to support independent living

- *Availability of specialised equipment for disabled people.* For example electric wheelchairs, stair lifts, to enable them to be independent, and to get out and about in the community. (B)

8 Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

8.1 Introduction

- 8.1.1 This Chapter examines the seventh objective: 'tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic'. This is the first objective in the theme: 'a sustainable Kingston'.
- 8.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- we will work hard to reduce the local carbon footprint and reduce CO² emissions;
 - we will increase recycling efforts and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills; and
 - we will reduce congestion and air pollution by fostering sustainable travel in the borough, through improved cycle routes and better public transport links.
- 8.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

8.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

- 8.2.1 This objective was seen as essential by a large majority of respondents, who agreed, at least in principle, with the concept of residents and businesses in the Borough being more environmentally friendly.
- 8.2.2 However the Sustainable Community Strategy was seen by the majority of those consulted to lack commitment to improve public transport, other than a 'tokenistic' mention of improving 'transport links', hidden in the third priority of this objective. Most considered that improving all aspects of public transport (e.g. reliability, frequency, coverage, cost etc.) should be an additional priority in this objective, or even an entirely new objective, as it was so important in effecting people's quality of lives.
- 8.2.3 Car travel was also another major factor affecting people's quality of lives, and tackling congestion, parking problems and improving traffic management were perceived to be missing from the community plan. Whilst people understood there needs to be more emphasis on public transport in the future to allow people to leave their cars at home where possible, an improved car friendly infrastructure for everyone (in particular businesses and their customers and for the disabled and elderly) was also high on people's agendas. Again there was debate about whether this could be another priority in this objective or whether it

8 Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

required its own objective, particularly considering it may conflict with reducing carbon footprint.

Priority One: we will work hard to reduce the local carbon footprint and reduce CO² emissions

8.2.4 This priority was seen to be entirely appropriate but some people commented that it is very complex, and that in order to make it appear more meaningful and realistic it needs to be broken down further so people can see what role they can play. For example it was suggested that it should be broken down into statements such as:

- we will provide information on how to be environmentally friendly and what is being done locally for the environment;
- new buildings will be energy efficient (i.e. make good use of solar panels/ insulation/ heat probes in the ground/ reusable water etc.).

Priority Two: we will increase recycling efforts and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills

8.2.5 The large majority of people agreed with this objective. Some commented that it should state that the Borough will improve the frequency of recycling collections from homes and public recycling sites. A very small minority did not wish to play a part in this themselves due to lack of space in their homes or the 'hassle' of sorting their rubbish.

Priority Three: we will reduce congestion and air pollution by fostering sustainable travel in the borough, through improved cycle routes and better public transport links

8.2.6 There was much concern over this priority; primarily because it suggests cycling and public transport should replace the car, but also because that there is no commitment to other measures to tackle congestion such as improved traffic management.

8.2.7 This was of concern because it is not appropriate for everyone to travel by bicycle or public transport. Elderly people and people with disabilities often need to door-to-door transport. In some cases this is vital to avoid isolation.

8.2.8 There was also concern over young people being encouraged to cycle as many perceived the roads to be too dangerous for cyclists.

8.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

8.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Seven can be achieved:

Priority One: we will work hard to reduce the local carbon footprint and reduce CO² emissions

- Plan for climate change.

8 Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

- Reduce the message of blame about climate change.
- Engage with businesses to encourage them to switch off office lighting and equipment at night etc.
- Make new and existing houses more energy efficient and put tougher environmental standard requirements in place.
- Generate energy locally.
- Grow more trees.

Priority Two: we will increase recycling efforts and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills

- Increase the message on the importance of recycling to residents and businesses.
- Provide better information on what can be recycled and how to do it.
- Target children in schools and educate them about recycling and tackling environmental issues.
- Increase what can be recycled (e.g. wood and plastic) and provide residents and businesses with the facilities to recycle (e.g. more recycling stations and subsidised composting bins for use at home).
- Provide more support for people with physical disabilities who need help with recycling because they may not physically be able to do certain things (e.g. move a wheelie bin).
- Provide residents and businesses with feedback on how what they are doing helps and how much recycling is happening locally so that they feel more involved.

Priority Three: we will reduce congestion and air pollution by fostering sustainable travel in the borough, through improved cycle routes and better public transport links

- Improve traffic management.
- Reduce congestion by better planning of roadworks and better off-road parking facilities.
- Design safer cycling provision and pedestrian provision, keeping each of them separate from each other and separate from road traffic.
- Educate drivers and cyclists so that roads are safer places for cyclists to be.
- Provide more cycle lanes on roads.
- Reduce the cost of public transport.
- Employ more staff on public transport to deal with enquiries, ticketing and safety issues.
- Improve public transport in terms of cleanliness, comfort and accessibility.
- Encourage work based car share schemes where people who only use a car for work infrequently can book a car through the scheme.
- Tackle the logistical and engineering side of getting people in and out of Kingston.

8.4 Factors that effect quality of life

8.4.1 The following factors relate to climate change and transport. These factors were considered to affect the quality of life of some or all respondents:

Recycling

- *Frequency of recycling collection and emptying of recycling pods.* Central recycling pods were reportedly always full and not emptied enough, and home collection of recycling and/or garden refuse for composting was also not collected often enough. Recycling efforts in school classrooms had been blocked because it was considered to be a fire hazard. (A, E)
- *Inconvenience of refuse collection.* Collection of refuse was an issue for some people, particularly collection during peak traffic times. Residents suggested night-time collections would be preferable. (A)

"Why can't they collect it at night like they do in Spain? And they get collections every night."

Public Transport/provision of cycle routes

- *Quality of public transport.* Some people were concerned about the quality of public transport and many considered better public transport would increase people's use of it, hence reduce carbon footprint. Concerns about public transport related to available routes, frequency; removal of Real Time Information signs at some bus stops; buses sometimes being delayed or cancelled; cost; availability/state of repair of access for wheelchairs and buggies on buses. (A, G)
- *Provision of cycle paths.* Provision of cycle paths was perceived as good, and to have improved in the last five years, for example the green lane cycle bridge. This has increased the number of pupils who cycle to school now. A cycle lane over the iron bridge would encourage even more pupils to ride to Hollyfield school. (E)

Traffic and traffic management

- *Speed bumps.* For some people speed bumps had a negative effect on their quality of life because cars make a noise as they go over them in the night leading to sleep problems; they are bad for drivers and their cars; they are unsafe and cause accidents (particularly when drivers drive across them diagonally); the big ones are too fierce; the gentler ones are ineffective. Other people were concerned by speeding and thought that speed bumps were necessary to slow the traffic down.

"The bigger ones shake the life out of the car and people still speed over them"

- *Speeding traffic.* Speeding was of particular concern when children were going to school. Twenty mph zones near schools were favoured by some people but many thought they should only apply during school hours and term times. Others favoured speed humps. (A)

"Speeding is a massive problem, speed bumps make no difference at all, people still drive over them at 50mph"

8 **Objective 7: Tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic**

- *Traffic violations* such as cyclists riding on the pavements; white vans parking overnight and obstructing footways and sightlines; and cars blocking footways. (A)
- *Difficulties driving due to congestion.* Congestion was considered to be a big problem affecting many people throughout the day. Causes were considered to be roadworks; poor public transport and too many cars on the road. (A, E, G)
- *Safe routes to school.* Respondents felt that the route to school for children has recently been made a lot safer; roads have been widened and the lights have been developed. (E)

9 Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces

9.1 Introduction

- 9.1.1 This Chapter examines the eighth objective: 'ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces'. This is the second objective in the theme: 'a sustainable Kingston'.
- 9.1.2 Three priorities for this theme were provided for those who we consulted:
- we will conserve parks, open spaces and natural habitats;
 - we will improve and protect the environment by keeping streets clean and coming down hard on fly-tipping throughout the borough; and
 - we will ensure that new housing and employment development is accessible by public transport.
- 9.1.3 In this chapter we examine people's views on this objective and the priorities for this objective; people's ideas about how the objective and priorities can be achieved, and the factors related to this objective which people told us affect their quality of lives.

9.2 Views on the objective and its priorities

General comments on the objective: ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces'

- 9.2.1 It was commented that both the objective and its priorities were essential but perhaps did not 'go far enough'. Concern was expressed that the objective is about 'preserving the environment' rather than 'improving the environment'.
- 9.2.2 A minority considered the priorities to be too general and suggested they should be more specific. It was also suggested they lacked ambition and aspiration, i.e. keeping streets clean should be considered a bare minimum for any location.
- 9.2.3 It was also suggested that there should be a priority showing a commitment to making future developments to the area and the street scene more accessible, with greater awareness of people with disabilities in the design stage of any improvements to/developments in the local area.

9.3 Ideas about how the objective and its priorities can be achieved

- 9.3.1 The following suggestions were made as to how each of the three priorities within Objective Eight can be achieved:

9 **Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces**

Priority One: we will conserve parks, open spaces and natural habitats

- There should be more public events to promote the use of parks, such as live music in parks.

Priority Two: we will improve and protect the environment by keeping streets clean and coming down hard on fly-tipping throughout the borough

- Provide education on littering to prevent it from happening.
- More surveillance to catch fly-tippers and more severe punishments for people who do fly-tip.
- Provide skips on a regular basis so residents can have a clear out without having to hire a skip or making a trip to a refuse site.
- Provide low cost automated toilets in parks that are accessible for disabled people.
- Provide smokers' areas provided at bus stops.
- Provide more bins in public places.
- Upgrade the street environment.
- Put up bollards/ barriers to prevent parking on footpaths and damage to pavements.
- Better understand who benefits from improvements to an area so as to better understand where funding for improvements can be obtained from.
- Put in place/stick to planning regulations to maintain green space and stop private houses turning front gardens into drives.

Priority Three: we will ensure that new housing and employment development is accessible by public transport

- Do not centralise services, keep them available locally within communities to make access easier and to minimise travel and transport.
- Provide cycle paths to all new housing and employment developments.
- Reduce the cost of public transport.

9.4 Factors that effect quality of life

9.4.1 The following factors relate to urban realm and sustainable growth. These factors were considered to affect the quality of life of some or all respondents:

Street Environment

- *Pavement and footpath maintenance.* Issues included: uneven pavement slabs; tree roots on the path; pot holes; lack of suitable dropped kerbs in the right locations and over hanging trees. These particularly affected elderly people, people with buggies and people with disabilities, although they were considered a hazard to anyone. Obstacles on pavements such as shop boards and parked cars are difficult for people with visual impairments to navigate themselves around. (A, B)

9 **Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces**

"They seem to like replacing pavements, and then half an hour later the gas board are along digging it up again"

- **Roadworks.** Poorly coordinated roadworks and poor reinstatement by utility companies.
"New Malden High Street, they seem to keep digging it up and they never put it back right again"
- **Poor drainage systems and lack of cleaning of drain gullies.** Sewer flooding and the horrible smell in summer time. (A)
- **Tactile markings.** These are problematic for people with mobility problems and those in wheelchairs. (B)
- **Shared surfaces** (i.e. spaces for both pedestrians and cycles to use) are difficult for the visually impaired but also affect the confidence of other elderly and disabled people. (B)
- **Parking in bus stops.** Disabled people can not get off the bus; parking on narrow roads/bus routes which holds up the traffic because the buses can not get past; and a lack of car parks. (A)
"Provide more car parks in open spaces – corner places like grass verges"
- **Dog mess** was considered to be a problem i.e. people not clearing it up; no bags available for people; a lack of notices which are big enough; it not being adequately policed (there should be more fines); and, the health risk. Some people thought the amount of dog mess had improved, while others thought it had got worse. (A)
- **Street cleanliness.** Some respondents felt that the Borough was very clean and well maintained whilst others commented on the refuse on the pavements originating from retail premises in some locations. (A)
"I was on a girls night out and at the bus stop and there was, I can't remember what they're called, but there was a group of people with uniforms on going round getting rid of bottles and cleaning up."
"It's an absolute eyesore, you think 'what a dirty old place this is'"
- **Maintenance of private hedges obstructing footways.** There was a perceived need for RBK to enforce better maintenance and to notify owners of the need to maintain their hedges. Lack of maintenance was felt to be linked to the beginnings of degradation of an area and compared to low level nuisance such as littering. (A)
"All it takes is a note through the door from the Council. It's little things like that that have been let slip."

Green Space

- **Availability of parks/green spaces/open spaces.** The provision of green space and parks was seen as an important factor for many people. Most thought there were a lot of parks. Some felt there were not enough open spaces in the Borough of Kingston, particularly for teenagers. They did feel that there were sufficient park play areas for small children. It was felt that the river and riverside, the walks along the river, the

9 Objective 8: Ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces

barge life, boat trips on the river, and the wildlife along the river was one of the most important factors that affected quality of life in Kingston. (A, C)

"The river makes a huge difference, and then there's the parks"

"Linked to the river, you've got the wildlife, and the barges and house boats"

- *Charter Quay*, the riverside development was also mentioned, however, participants were divided in their views. Some view this as a positive step, by encouraging new business, a nice meeting area with bars, providing new housing, and developing the area. However, others felt this was an inappropriate area for development as the green space along the riverside was removed and replaced by concrete structures. (A)
- *The market place* was considered to have a positive affect on residents' quality of life. (A)

New Housing Developments

- Sustainability of new housing developments/buildings. People considered that new housing developments are going up with no consideration into how the road network/local services will cope with the increased demand/increase in cars that comes with having more homes. (E)
- Regard to new housing regulations. Some new school buildings do not meet any of the future regulations that are coming in; there are no solar panels, no triple glazing, no grey water pipes, etc. Respondents felt it is the council's job to be looking to the future when building new schools and homes. (E)

Public toilets

- Availability of public toilets. There was a perception that there are inadequate toilet facilities in the Borough, especially for disabled people. Richmond has a scheme where shops with disabled toilets have a sign on the outside of the premises showing they have a disabled toilet. New Malden has one toilet available but it is closed on Sundays and is only open for 5.5 hours a day the rest of the week. There are no other toilets in New Malden that disabled people can access. This is really important to all wheelchair users who can not get into toilets in shops, restaurants etc as they are usually too small or have steps. Disabled toilets being used by other members of the public and families is also a concern. (B)

10 Other suggestions for and comments on the Sustainable Community Plan

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 Throughout the consultation process we were provided with many suggestions for alternative objectives and priorities for the Sustainable Community Plan. All of these were closely related to existing objectives and have therefore been reported in the Chapters where they seemed most appropriate. For example, many people considered provision of improved public transport and tackling congestion should be included as separate objectives, and these issues have been discussed in Chapter 8.
- 10.1.2 In this Chapter we report on the comments received which relate more to the plan as a whole.

10.2 Suggestions for shifts in emphasis for the plan as a whole

- 10.2.1 Many people made general comments about how the plan as a whole should be considered, or where the overall emphasis of the plan should be shifted. These included the following suggestions.

- There should be an overarching theme about improving the efficiency of all council services.
- There should be an emphasis on improving access to services in general. Accessibility is a key issue for the elderly and disabled people and this is not clearly reflected in all of the draft Sustainable Community Strategy's themes, objectives and priorities.
"They could isolate and they could divide if they are not inclusive and accessible"
- Some people felt there is not enough emphasis on the needs of the elderly population, which is a growing population in Kingston, as in the rest of the country.
- There is nothing about happiness, quality of life, social cohesion and social sustainability i.e. achieving a happy, vibrant, diverse and cohesive community. Instead it was felt by some that the plan is largely centred around money.
- The plan needs more emphasis on being 'inclusive', particularly in themes two and three.
- There should be an over-arching objective stating that there should be 'quick access to timely advice for all people on all matters'. This would mean help is more proactive and preventative rather than reactive, which is good for the people concerned, less funding required to 'fix' problems and there is less need for crisis management.

10.3 Other comments about the draft plan and consultation process

- 10.3.1 Other comments about the plan as a whole, and the consultation process, were as follows.
- The aspirations are good but there was doubt that it can be achieved.

- It is a very high level, broad and generic plan which makes it hard to disagree with. The broad headings are not something most people would oppose. It is the more specific details that should be debated.

"It's what's underneath these objectives that matters"

"It's all very nice and all, but it's a bit of a large sweeping statement"

- There should be an independent body adjudicating on these matters.
- In general more emphasis is needed on partnership work – the key to achieving objectives and priorities is a commitment to work with local people and local organisations.
- One respondent felt that 'accountability' (of the council) was missing from the draft Sustainable Community Strategy as it currently stands. Tax payers should be aware of how their money is being spent and have a say in how it is spent.

11 Conclusions

11.1 Attitudes towards the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy as a whole

- 11.1.1 Overall the themes in the draft sustainable community strategy were accepted with little comment, and no additional themes or changes to themes were considered necessary.
- 11.1.2 To a large extent the objectives in the plan covered the broad areas that people described as affecting their quality of lives. The objectives were generally considered appropriate, although there were some which were considered too narrow and limited and suggestions for expanding them were made. Key points are explored below in Section 11.2.
- 11.1.3 Key comments affecting the whole plan were as follows.
- There should be an overarching theme about improving the efficiency of all council services.
 - There should be more of an emphasis on improving access to all services (including housing) for all people (including those with disabilities, the elderly, those on low income, those with language barriers, etc.).
 - The ethos of quality of life and social cohesion (i.e. achieving a happy, vibrant, diverse and cohesive community) should be more prominent.
 - The plan needs more emphasis on 'inclusion', particularly in themes two and three.
 - There should be an over-arching objective stating that there should be 'quick access to timely advice for all on all matters'.
 - There should be more evidence of an emphasis of partnership work with local people and local organisations.

11.2 Key issues emerging from individual objectives and priorities

- 11.2.1 Whilst it was usually recognised that the draft objectives and priorities are a summary of a larger document, some participants in the consultation process felt frustrated that the objectives did not go far enough and that key priorities for the objectives were missing. A summary of the key issues arising are provided in this section.

Objective one: Sustain and share economic prosperity including links to employment

- 11.2.2 Additional considerations for priorities for this objective were as follows.
- Improving transport and access issues to enable economic success.
- 11.2.3 Concerns about some of the existing priorities were as follows.
- Some felt Kingston town centre was 'regenerated' too frequently compared to district centres and that regenerating the town centre should not be prioritised.
 - Whilst increasing childcare is considered important, it must be affordable and parents who wish to stay at home with their children should not be penalised.

- Increasing employment and training opportunities should be explicitly inclusive of all people (such as those with disabilities, learning disabilities, migrant workers etc) whilst recognising that some people with disabilities should be supported in other ways if employment is not suitable for them. The priority should also aim to increase employment opportunities to match the skill base of the population, rather to increase unsuitable opportunities.

Objective two: raise educational standards and close gaps in attainment

11.2.4 Education is a wide ranging service and the priorities within the objective were considered much too narrow. The most frequently mentioned additional considerations for priorities were as follows.

- Improve provision of and access to education and further education in the Borough for all people (inclusive of those with disabilities, language barriers, all age groups, etc.).
- Change in admissions procedures to enable children to go to their closest school, thus reducing travel time and costs and differences in attainment between schools.

11.2.5 Concerns about some of the existing priorities were as follows.

- Closing the gaps in achievement should be directed not only at gender and ethnic group, but also between those of different socio-economic groups and between schools.
- Increasing numbers of young people in education, employment and training was considered ageist, and it was thought there should be a recognition and encouragement of the concept of life long learning.

Objective three: increase supply of housing and its affordability

11.2.6 The only additional consideration for priorities in this objective was as follows.

- Improve provision of access to housing information and advice.

11.2.7 Concerns about the existing priorities related primarily to the lack of mention of accessible housing. Concerns were as follows.

- Provision of more housing should be explicitly related to: houses of all different tenures, sustainable housing, housing with off road parking and housing accessible to those with disabilities.
- Some people were not in favour of increasing the supply of housing without reference to increasing local services/road capacity to cope with additional demand and maintaining the character of the area.
- Provision of low cost housing should not be limited to first time buyers but should also be aimed at lower income people, those on benefits, key workers and students. In addition the priority should make explicit reference to 'accessible housing' for those with disabilities.
- Improvement in existing housing conditions should not be limited to council housing but should include sheltered housing, housing associations and temporary accommodation for the homeless.

Objective four: make communities safer

- 11.2.8 Overall it was thought that this was a good objective and that the priorities are the right ones for the objective. To some it was also thought that as Kingston is already relatively safe in the day, the emphasis should be more on night time safety and reducing elderly and disabled people's fear of going out at night. The only additional considerations for this objective were to include priorities showing commitment to improving road safety and safety in the home.

Objective five: improve overall health, reduce health inequalities and encourage people to take an active part

- 11.2.9 This objective and its priorities were considered to be very important, but many people considered the priorities focussed too much on promoting healthy living and encouraging people to take an active part, and lacked commitment to provide health and leisure facilities to enable people to be fitter and more healthy. Additional considerations for priorities for this objective were therefore as follows.

- Put more resources into health services and leisure/entertainment facilities to provide more health care and more affordable and accessible health education, sports facilities and leisure and entertainment activities that would appeal to different ages.

- 11.2.10 Concerns about the existing priorities were as follows.

- Promoting healthy living should include other issues such as eating disorders, heavy drinking and mental health problems.
- There is inadequate reference to making facilities available and accessible to all.

Objective six: support the needs of vulnerable people to help them live independently

- 11.2.11 This objective was considered important by all, and no new priorities were suggested. However a few concerns about the existing priorities were raised. These were:

- The need to clarify that access to services is physical access as well as services being available for them.
- Concern about the type and amount of help vulnerable people would be given to ensure they could make a success of living independently.
- The lack of mention of 'transport' as a service where better access would be available for vulnerable people.
- Concern that not all vulnerable people can or would be happy living independently, and therefore there still needs to be suitable accommodation for these people.
- Concern at the lack of mention about services being affordable.

Objective seven: tackle climate change and reduce our ecological footprint including reduce, reuse and recycle, and encouraging alternatives to the car to reduce traffic

- 11.2.12 This objective and its priorities were seen as essential to the future well being of the Borough. However the following priorities were also seen as vital but lacking from this

11 Conclusions

objective. Some consideration was given to whether they should be added to this objective or should form an objective, or even a theme, of their own.

- Improving all aspects of public transport (e.g. reliability, frequency, coverage, cost, information, access for wheelchairs and buggies, etc.).
- Tackling congestion, parking problems and improve traffic management.

11.2.13 Concerns about some of the existing priorities were as follows:

- Reducing congestion by fostering sustainable travel concerned those who are less able to travel by public transport or cycle and it was considered some consideration should be given to improving facilities for the elderly and people with disabilities to travel by car.

Objective eight: ensure sustainable development and preserve the quality of the local environment, including street scene, parks and open spaces

11.2.14 Both this objective and its priorities were perceived as essential but perhaps did not 'go far enough'. Concern was expressed that the objective is about 'preserving the environment' rather than 'improving the environment'.

11.2.15 It was also suggested that there should be a priority showing a commitment to making future developments to the area and the street scene more accessible, with greater awareness of people with disabilities in the design stage of any improvements to/developments in the local area.

11.3 Conclusion

11.3.1 In conclusion the draft Sustainable Community Strategy was well received by the large majority of people consulted. The key omissions were considered to be the following.

- Lack of emphasis throughout to ensure inclusion, i.e. access to all services (housing, education, health, leisure services etc.) for all people, and in particular ensuring all services are affordable and are accessible for people with disabilities, all age groups and people with language barriers.
- Lack of an overarching theme about improving the efficiency of all council services.
- Lack of an ethos about improving quality of life and social cohesion.
- Lack of priorities which explicitly address the following:
 - reduction of travel times for school children;
 - access to information and advice on all services;
 - provision of improved health services;
 - provision of improved affordable leisure/entertainment facilities;
 - provision of improved public transport; and
 - improvements to the road network and improved traffic management.

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