

K<sub>+20</sub>

# Designing our Future Together

A Strategy for Kingston Town Centre



Consultation on  
Issues

March 2004



## Introduction to K+20

Kingston is a popular and successful town centre. K+20 aims to develop a vision for the town centre to guide future development and improvements over the next 20 years. The strategy will influence planning decisions by the Council on new development & transport.

The town centre has seen many changes over the last 20 years. In the late 1980's, the relief road was opened & Clarence Street pedestrianised and office blocks built. During the early 1990's, new shopping developments were completed - the Bentall Centre, John Lewis and C&A. The focus then shifted away from shopping towards diversification to - residential, leisure and community uses. Kingston University and Kingston College expanded; the Crown Court, car parks, a bus station and housing were completed; new cafes, bars, restaurants and clubs opened; and Kingston Bridge was widened.

The last few years have seen the completion of:-Sainsbury's, Esporta and housing on Richmond Road; the Rotunda leisure development (14 screen cinema, bowling, health and fitness and



restaurants), the Oceana nightclub; Travel Lodge hotel; new facilities for Kingston College; the Charter Quay riverside development with the new Theatre; the riverside walk; Seven Kings car park and over 750 new flats and houses, with 650 more under construction.



We are now looking to the future and would like to work together with you to prepare a strategy to enhance and develop the town centre for the benefit of the whole community. We would like Kingston to remain a prosperous, vibrant, attractive & environmentally sustainable centre.

The strategy aims to build on the town's strengths:-

- its attractive character
- the variety and quality of shops
- the riverside and historic Market Place
- the Rotunda leisure development
- excellent bus services

and provide a range of improvements:-

- to the town's facilities
- to the transport network
- to the quality of the environment, including the approaches to the town centre and the streetscape.



Specialist studies on retail, offices, parking, park and ride, transport, signage and the historic core, will help us prepare the Strategy. The Council is also working with development company Hammerson, who are looking at opportunities for new retail-led mixed use development.



Land use and transport policies should assist in maintaining a buoyant economy and attracting a wider range of uses and jobs, so that more residents can work and spend their leisure time locally.

We have identified some important issues for K+20, which are set out in the centre of this leaflet and we would like your views. More detailed Issues Papers are available on request.

## How to comment or find out more

Please let us have your views on the town centre to help us prepare the K+20 Strategy. We will be carrying out further consultation on the draft strategy later this year.

To let us have your views, please fill in the questionnaire and return it to us by Friday 30th April 2004. Alternatively, you can contact us by letter, fax, phone or e-mail, as set out below, please include your name and postal address.

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## Shopping

There has been no new shopping development for 10 years. Retail studies show that there is now need, demand and capacity for more retail floorspace, so that Kingston maintains its position as a major shopping centre, its attraction to shoppers and retailers and its prosperity, in the face of competition from other major centres which are expanding. One of the issues is providing for new shopping facilities, whilst retaining the town's distinctive character and attractiveness as a pleasant place to shop. There is potential for some retail development on the Ashdown Road site and through some redevelopment of existing shopping facilities.

## Culture, Entertainment & Leisure

There is a need to further broaden the increasing range of cultural and leisure facilities, to include a quality hotel and a new library, to attract a wider range of visitors, especially in the evenings and not just young people (under 30's). As with shopping, the town's vibrant evening economy attracts large numbers of visitors from a wide area. There is a need to reduce associated problems, including noise and disturbance to local residents and anti-social behaviour and to improve late night transport.

## Offices

The town's role as an office/business centre has declined relative to nearby centres in Surrey, although holiday, insurance and advertising firms have been attracted. The issues are: the need to provide quality offices and to actively promote the town centre as a business location, to attract more firms and provide a wider range of jobs to help the local economy and so that more residents can work locally. There may be potential to convert some vacant office blocks to housing.

## Higher and Further Education

Kingston University and Kingston College have over 20,000 students, are large employers and bring investment and spending into the local economy. There is currently a shortage of student residential accommodation.

## Housing

The housing sector is buoyant, with new housing developments – large and small, providing over 1400 flats. The main issues are: high prices and rents and a lack of affordable housing. There is a need to identify sites for housing, including in mixed use developments above shops to cater for a wide range of needs.

## Urban Design and Environmental Quality

- Reduce clutter and co-ordinate styles of street furniture, lighting, signs and paving
- Improve signing
- Promote the creative lighting of spaces and buildings
- Increase landscaping and planting
- Promote public art to enhance buildings and spaces, adding interest and identity
- Respect landmarks and views and create new ones to add interest and identity
- Define and improve existing public spaces
- Identify opportunities for new 'streets' and public spaces
- Ensure buildings enclose public spaces and define street edges
- Replace blank frontages with active street frontages
- Improve the approaches to the town centre



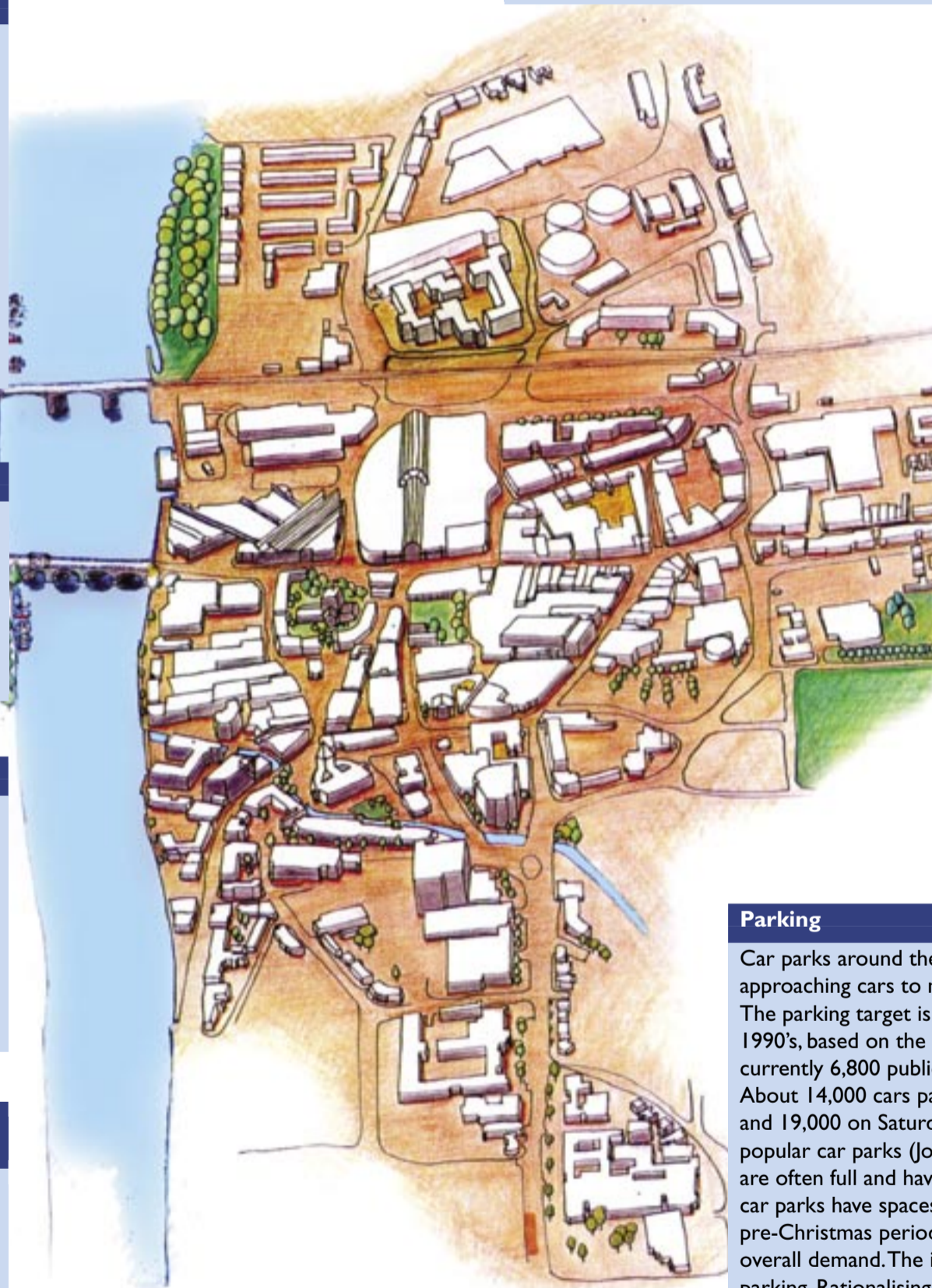
## Urban Design and Environmental Quality

A successful town centre needs an attractive environment as well as a good mix of uses and good transport.

Kingston's heritage, the Market Place and Museum, together with the riverside, are key assets, which should be promoted. Some areas of the town centre have a poor quality environment, vacant sites and lack of identity.

Key issues for the future:

- Secure the comprehensive development of vacant and underused sites, including the Northern riverside and Ashdown Road
- Establish a strong identity for the town centre taking account of local character
- Improve the design of new development
- Improve the quality of the environment, streetscape & public spaces:
  - Clarence St
  - Memorial Square
  - Market Place
  - Fife Road
  - Castle St
  - Riverside north and south of Charter Quay
  - Kingston Station area
  - Old London Road
  - Skerne Road & Skerne Walk
  - St James Square



## Road Network

Traffic flows have decreased by 10% since 1996. Congestion is still a concern for residents, visitors and businesses. When congestion occurs, it is usually in the morning and evening peak hours, Saturday mid-day and in the pre-Christmas period. Some congestion is caused by cars queuing to enter car parks. The main issue is whether there are any alterations to the road system, which could benefit traffic circulation, pedestrians and cyclists.

## Parking

Car parks around the town centre aim to intercept approaching cars to minimise traffic on the relief road. The parking target is 7,000 spaces, which dates from the 1990's, based on the capacity of the road system. There are currently 6,800 public spaces in 22 car parks and on-street. About 14,000 cars park in the town centre during a weekday and 19,000 on Saturdays. The Parking Study has found that popular car parks (John Lewis, Bentalls and Eden Walk) are often full and have queues at busy times, whilst other car parks have spaces. It concludes that (apart from the pre-Christmas period), there are sufficient spaces to meet overall demand. The issue is how to make the best use of car parking. Rationalising and improving parking in parts of the town centre, as well as improving signing, may help.

## Buses

Buses are a popular and important means of increasing transport to the town centre, used by about 23,500 people daily on 20 routes, plus night services. Bus use has increased significantly over the past 5 years and bus services have improved, Eden Street is being upgraded to cater for this growth. We need to cater for further growth, with new facilities, retaining convenient bus stops and improving waiting areas.

## Walking and Cycling

The town centre is compact and offers a reasonable environment for walking and cycling. There is a need to:

- improve the attractiveness of routes, particularly on the approaches to the town centre and across the relief road, to encourage more people to walk and cycle
- to consider further pedestrianisation
- to improve signing to make it easier for people to find their way around
- to improve cycle parking.

If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address or telephone number shown on this document.

إذا رغبت في الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات بلغتك الأم،  
يرجى مراسلتنا على العنوان لمذكور في هذه النشرة.

यदि आपनार निज भाषा आदरा ब्यादि पेत चान अबे दया करे  
एई लेखाते देव्या ठिकानाया आमादेर अद्द योणायोग करुन।

如果您想索取以你的语言写的更多的资讯，  
请按照本文件所示的地址和我们取得联系。

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यदि आप अपनी भाषा में अधिक जानकारी चाहते हैं  
तो कृपया इस दस्तावेज में लिखे हुए पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

日本語での詳しい情報は記載住所までご連絡下さい。

한국어로 된 정보가 더 필요하시 경우  
이 문서에 있는 주소로 연락해 주십시오.

آرٹھی (ایڈی زبان) سبج بڈر معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہزیے او  
تہ مہربانی دے ناں ایڈے اُنے تکیے پوئے پتے تے رابطہ  
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नेकर दुगहूँ आपही घेही रिच हेंर जाहकारी चाहीरी है,  
उं बिपा करके रिस रसउदेज उे रिंउे पडे उे साडे नाल संपरक करे।

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تو دیئے گئے پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Information is also available in large print, braille and tape.

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