

TOLWORTH REGENERATION STRATEGY

Report by the Director of Planning and Transportation
Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration

Purpose

To provide a framework to guide and promote the social, economic and environmental regeneration of Tolworth.

Action proposed by the Executive Member for Planning and Regeneration:

The Executive is requested to:

1. Approve the Regeneration Strategy for Tolworth;
2. Note progress on the Public Realm Improvement Scheme for Tolworth Broadway, which forms an important element of the overall Strategy (paras.7 and 25-27).

Reason for action proposed

To approve a framework to guide and promote social and economic development and environmental enhancement to achieve the regeneration of Tolworth over the next ten years or so.

BACKGROUND

1. The Tolworth Project was initiated in 2008 in response to:
 - concerns about the district centre's attraction and vitality
 - the significant opportunities for social, economic and physical regeneration to enhance local services, improve the quality of the environment and connections and strengthen the role of the district centre
 - the need to progress improvements to Tolworth Broadway to make it more attractive
 - the need for a comprehensive, co-ordinated approach to development and enhancement
 - the need for a co-ordinated approach to public engagement, funding, design, approvals and timescales
2. The Project Brief was approved in Autumn 2008 by the South of the Borough and Surbiton Neighbourhood Committees, which led to the setting up of a Tolworth Project Member / Officer Working Group to oversee the Project, provide advice on the scope and content of the framework and ensure an integrated approach.
3. There are a number of development pressures and improvement initiatives within the Tolworth area. It is important that these are managed and progressed comprehensively in order to avoid piecemeal development and to enhance the quality and attractiveness of the area.

4. In July 2009, the Member/Officer Working Group (MOG) oversaw the preparation of a public realm improvement scheme for Tolworth Broadway, which is an important element of the Strategy.

COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

5. Three editions of a newsletter entitled the 'Tolworth Times' have been distributed to 4,500 households and businesses in Tolworth.

6. The first newsletter circulated in March 2009, informed the community about the Tolworth Project and sought views (via a questionnaire) on attitudes to Tolworth, how people use the district centre and what changes or improvements they would like to see. The 361 responses identified the following elements as most in need of improvement, in descending order:

- the range of non-food shops
- traffic congestion
- car parking
- the appearance of the streets
- the range of food shops
- seating areas
- road crossings for pedestrians
- local services
- cycle parking
- community facilities/local services
- public transport

There were also meetings with local residents and businesses in April and May 2009.

7. The second newsletter circulated in September 2009 informed the community about progress with the public realm improvement scheme and an exhibition which was held in October 2009.

8. Key issues emerged as follows:

- the dominance and adverse impact of the A3, A240 and Tolworth roundabout – traffic, congestion, noise, air pollution and severance
- the poor quality environment and public realm along the A240 corridor
- poor connections and crossings for pedestrians and cyclists across:
 - a) the A3/Tolworth roundabout and fear of using the subways
 - b) Tolworth Broadway due to the central barrier
- the poor range of shops, food/drink outlets and services
- vacant, underused and poor quality sites
- vacant office / business space
- the range, quality and accessibility of community facilities
- a lack of continuous, segregated cycle routes on main roads
- on and off-street public parking is well used and close to capacity
- the poor quality appearance of Tolworth Station and poor frequency of rail services and lack of services at night

9. The draft Strategy for Tolworth was agreed for consultation by the Surbiton and South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committees on 25 November 2009. The consultation ran for six weeks from mid January to the end of February 2010.

10. The third edition of the 'Tolworth Times' newsletter was circulated in January 2010 which summarised and illustrated the draft Strategy', included a questionnaire, provided an update on key sites and progress with the public realm improvement scheme and gave details of two exhibitions/drop-in sessions. In addition, a press release was issued, an advert was placed in the Chessington Chat newsletter and a meeting of the Tolworth Business Forum, arranged jointly by RBK and the Chamber of Commerce, was held at the end of January.
11. Statutory organisations and key stakeholders including land and property owners, developers and local groups were consulted by letter and sent the draft Strategy. Additionally, Youth Services have engaged with young people via group discussions.
12. The consultation responses on the draft Strategy are summarised in paras.18-21 of this report. Reports on the consultation responses received in May 2009 and February 2010 are available on the Council's website www.kingston.gov.uk/tolworth_project .

REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR TOLWORTH

13. The Strategy provides a Vision to guide the regeneration of Tolworth and a framework to promote and secure social and economic development and environmental enhancement over the next ten years or so. It covers the wider Tolworth area, but focuses on the District Centre and the A240 corridor (Ewell Road, Tolworth Broadway, Tolworth Roundabout to Kingston Road), which offer the greatest scope for improvement.
14. The Strategy has been influenced by a number of existing plans and strategies, specialist studies, and stakeholder engagement.
15. In terms of status, the Strategy is a non statutory document, the aims of which are set out in para.13 above. It supplements planning policies set out in the borough's statutory development plan which includes the London Plan and the RBK Unitary Development Plan (saved policies). It is consistent with the Local Development Framework Core Strategy 'Preferred Strategy', which includes area guidance for Tolworth. The Tolworth Strategy supports and expands on the LDF Preferred Strategy for Tolworth. It also represents a spatial component of the Kingston Plan.
16. The Strategy document sets out:
 - the background to the Project, the status of the Strategy and details of community engagement (Section 1)
 - the policy context (Section 2)
 - a profile of the area's socio-economic and physical characteristics, identifying issues and opportunities and the outcome of the specialist studies (Section 3)
 - the Vision for Tolworth and objectives for the Strategy to achieve (Section 4)
 - guidelines for sites with development and improvement potential (Section 5), including Tolworth Tower and the former government offices site (owned by Tesco) which have the potential to make a significant contribution towards the regeneration and enhancement of Tolworth.
 - arrangements for delivery and implementation, including actions, responsible agencies and likely timescales (Section 6).
17. The Vision for Tolworth is to provide:

- an attractive and thriving district centre with a good range of shops and services
- a high quality public realm that reduces the dominance and adverse effects of traffic and congestion
- safe, convenient and attractive connections for pedestrians and cyclists, especially across Tolworth Broadway by removing the central barrier and across the A3 by providing an alternative to the subways
- high quality new development and improvement at Tolworth Tower, the Red Lion pub, the former government offices and sites along Kingston Road to enrich the mix of attractions, provide new homes and enhance the environment
- improved green spaces, leisure and community facilities with better connections to and from residential areas for pedestrians and cyclists
- an attractive and well laid out Tolworth Station served by an extended 281 bus service to improve bus accessibility to homes and facilities south of the A3.

18. Delivery of the Vision through the implementation of the Regeneration Strategy for Tolworth will involve a range of short and longer term measures and will incorporate partnership work with public, private and community/ voluntary sector stakeholders, residents and local groups. It will be dependent upon a range of potential funding sources including: the private sector, the Council and its partners, government, the Mayor of London/ Greater London Authority/ Transport for London/ Design for London/ London Development Agency and transport providers, including South West Trains and Network Rail.

FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT STRATEGY

19. The consultation period ended on 26 February. A total of 290 responses have been received via questionnaires submitted on line or by post. A summary analysis of the results is set out below.

Question	YES	NO
1. Do you agree with the overall Regeneration Strategy for Tolworth?	80%	20%
Do you agree with the various elements of the Strategy? :		
2. Enhancing Tolworth's attraction by improving local facilities and the environment?	91%	9%
3. Providing an attractive and thriving District Centre by diversifying the range and quality of shops and services?	89%	11%
4. Stimulating economic growth to attract new businesses, create new jobs and reduce vacant office and business space?	92%	8%
5. Enhancing the environment along the A240 corridor through public realm improvements, including across the A3/Tolworth roundabout by providing an alternative to the subways and across Tolworth Broadway by removing the central barrier?	73%	27%
6. Securing high quality new development and improvement at Tolworth Tower, the Red Lion pub, the former government offices and sites along Kingston Road?	86%	14%
7. Improving Tolworth Station, rail and bus services, including extending the 281 bus service to the station?	92%	8%
8. Improving provision for servicing for businesses?	86%	14%
9. Improving short stay public parking at Tolworth Tower?	88%	12%
10. Providing more segregated cycle routes on main roads?	72%	28%
11. Improving green spaces, leisure, recreation, play and community	90%	10%

facilities and providing better links to them for pedestrians/cyclists?		
12. Securing new or improved GP/Doctors' surgeries?	80%	20%
13. Expanding schools to provide more school places?	77%	23%

20. Comments tend to focus on the following matters, which were also raised at the drop-in sessions and the Tolworth Business Forum:
- Support for regenerating Tolworth, to lift its depressing 'stuck in a time warp' feeling and make it an attractive, dynamic centre.
 - Support for the exciting public realm improvements, as well as some strong objections due to concerns about the removal of the central barrier along Tolworth. Broadway and the creation of a 'greenway' and adverse impact on safety, traffic flows and congestion due to an increase in the number of crossings and pedestrians crossing the road at different places and potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists on the 'greenway'. conflict
 - Support for the provision of alternatives to use of the subways for crossing Tolworth roundabout but concerns that proposals will increase congestion
 - Support for diversifying the range of shops to provide stylish high street shops, shoe shop, clothes shops, butcher, bakers, branded restaurants, family friendly cafes/restaurants
 - Equal support/objection to development of the former government offices for a Tesco store
 - Comments from residents of the Sunray Estate that they feel isolated and support for better integrating areas north and south of the A3. Concerns that public realm improvements will make the already limited vehicle access into and out of the estate at Tolworth roundabout more difficult
21. Youth Services engagement with young people via group discussions at Kingston Youth Council and Devon Way Youth Club and via outreach work with groups of young people in parks, gained a high level of support for the Strategy (over 95%) from the 71 young people who participated.
22. In addition to the questionnaire responses, ten responses have been received from the following organisations:
- Transport for London
 - Surrey County Council
 - Metropolitan Police
 - Environment Agency
 - Thames Water
 - Natural England
 - English Heritage
 - London Concrete and the Day Group (Tolworth Depot)
 - Tesco
23. Consultation on the LDF Preferred Strategy for the borough which included guidance for Tolworth took place from November 2009 to January 2010. This Regeneration Strategy is consistent with and supplements the LDF guidance for Tolworth and so the LDF consultation responses on Tolworth are also relevant.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CONSULTATION

24. The Strategy was considered by the Surbiton Neighbourhood on 17th March and South of the Borough on 24th March.

25. The **Surbiton Neighbourhood**, whilst continuing to express support for the Strategy, sought to defer formal agreement of the Strategy to enable consideration of any additional issues that may be identified over the next few months. Concern was expressed with regard to the wording relating to site 5 (the former Government Office site), and specifically the wording that recognises that an element of non residential enabling development may be required to unlock the site for an otherwise residential-led approach.
26. The officer response is that there is a compelling case for adopting the strategy now, for the following reasons:
- It will form an integral part to securing external funding currently 'in the pipeline' from both TfL and the Homes and Communities Agency for both the delivery of affordable housing and public realm improvements.
 - It forms an important component of our Place Shaping agenda and gives a clear intention of our strategic direction from a external perspective
 - The Strategy forms part of the Council's Strategic Housing project that seeks to remove the CAA red flag relating to the delivery of new market and affordable housing.
 - The Strategy will assist in creating certainty and a stronger policy position for the Council in dealing with development proposals within the Tolworth area and help to secure S106 funding where appropriate.
 - The Strategy will also dovetail with the Council's emerging Property Strategy, particularly around the disposals policy.
27. In terms of the former Government Offices site, it is inevitable that some form of non residential use will have to be incorporated into any scheme coming forward, because of the economics of the development process, and to secure an appropriate balance of uses in planning terms. Reference to 'commercial' enabling development (that was presented to the Neighbourhood Committee) has consequently been deleted from the narrative. Furthermore, the 'policy' position on the site contained within the Tolworth Regeneration Strategy must conform to the emerging LDF Core Strategy to have any credibility in the terms of the weight that can be attached to the advice. Therefore the key policy making decision for this site will be through the Core Strategy, over which the Council has overall control.
28. The comments of the **South of Borough Neighbourhood** will be reported as late material.

FINALISED REGENERATION STRATEGY

29. The Strategy document has been amended and updated to reflect elements of the feedback and progress on development sites and improvement initiatives and to include a summary of the 2010 consultation responses. The finalised Strategy is included as Annex 1 to this report.

PROGRESS WITH THE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

30. The Tolworth project was conceived as two distinct elements: (i) the Vision for Tolworth (The Tolworth Regeneration Strategy), and (ii) a major public realm improvement scheme for Tolworth Broadway to enhance the local environment, and act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Centre. The latter has attracted significant external funding and was the subject of an Executive decision in December to progress the scheme. The Tolworth Broadway public realm

improvement scheme involves alterations to Tolworth Broadway to enhance the environment, including removing the central barrier and creating the central reservation as a hard surfaced 'greenway' for pedestrians and cyclists, with signalised and informal raised crossings to make it easier for people to cross. It also involves the provision of surface crossings across Tolworth roundabout as an alternative to the subways and the continuation of the 'greenway' along Kingston Road to Tolworth Station.

31. Since the public consultation on the concept for the public realm improvement in October 2009 and the resolution of both the Surbiton Neighbourhood and the South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committees on the 25 November 2009, the following progress has been made:
- Computer modelling of the proposals in association with Transport for London (TFL) to simulate traffic volumes and movements that may be affected by the improvement proposals to demonstrate that the additional movements across the A3 and Tolworth Broadway can be undertaken safely and without reducing road capacity or impacting on existing traffic flows.
 - Undertaken reviews on the proposals with national bodies such as Sustrans (UK's leading sustainable transport charity) and the Royal Institute for the Blind.
 - Developing the design for the final layout (road, greenway, parking, lighting, crossing points and materials).
 - Progressing the initial design concept for the ramping and crossing of Tolworth roundabout from Tolworth Broadway to Kingston Road.
 - Cost estimates to show that existing budget expectations can still be achieved.
32. It is anticipated that there will be public consultation on detailed proposals for the public realm improvements focussed on Tolworth Broadway before the summer recess. In view of the high level of interest in these proposals and requests for wider consultation, the consultation area will be extended following discussion and agreement with the Tolworth Member /Officer Working Group.

TIMESCALE

33. The timescale for achieving the Vision for Tolworth and implementing the Regeneration Strategy is over the next 10 years or so. Details of proposed timescales for individual elements of the Strategy are set out in Section 6 of the Strategy document: Implementation and Delivery.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

34. There are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of this Regeneration Strategy which sets the framework to guide and promote social and economic development and environmental enhancement. Implementation of the various elements of the Strategy will involve a range of short and longer term measures, partnership working with public, private and community/ voluntary sector stakeholders and will be dependent upon funding from various sources including: the private sector, the Council and its partners (in respect of Schools Expansion and improvements to Green Spaces) NHS Kingston, the government (also in respect of Schools Expansion), the Mayor of London/ Greater London Authority/ Transport for London (in respect of public realm improvement) / Design for London/ London Development Agency and transport providers, including South West Trains and Network Rail.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

35. EQIA implications have been assessed. The Strategy is designed to enhance Tolworth – socially, economically and environmentally for the community as a whole and the Vision for Tolworth is equality and community cohesion sensitive. There was consultation with the local community prior to the preparation of the Strategy to gain views on attitudes to Tolworth and to identify which areas were most in need of improvement and the Strategy aims to address these matters. Some elements of the Strategy already have EQIA (for example the Green Spaces Strategy and the Schools Expansion and Improvement Programme).
36. It is recognised that the implementation of individual components of the Strategy has the potential to affect different groups in different ways, with beneficial positive impacts and some potentially negative impacts. The groups likely to be affected are disability groups and younger and older people. It is acknowledged that further work and EQIA on individual components of the Strategy, in particular public realm improvements, will be required as we move towards implementation to ensure that positive impacts are maximised and potential negative impacts addressed and minimised.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

37. One of the main aims of the Tolworth Project and the Regeneration Strategy is to provide a framework to promote and secure environmental enhancement in Tolworth and to improve the quality of the environment, especially along the A240 corridor and Tolworth Broadway. The implementation of the Strategy will have significant environmental implications in terms of improving the quality of the public realm, securing high quality new development on vacant, underused and poor quality sites and upgrading the quality of Green Spaces through the annual implementation plans.

Background papers: held by (Pat Loxton – author of the report), 020 8547 5420;
e-mail: pat.loxton@rbk.kingston.gov.uk

South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee 24 September 2008

Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee 1 October 2008

Surbiton and South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committees 25 November 2009.