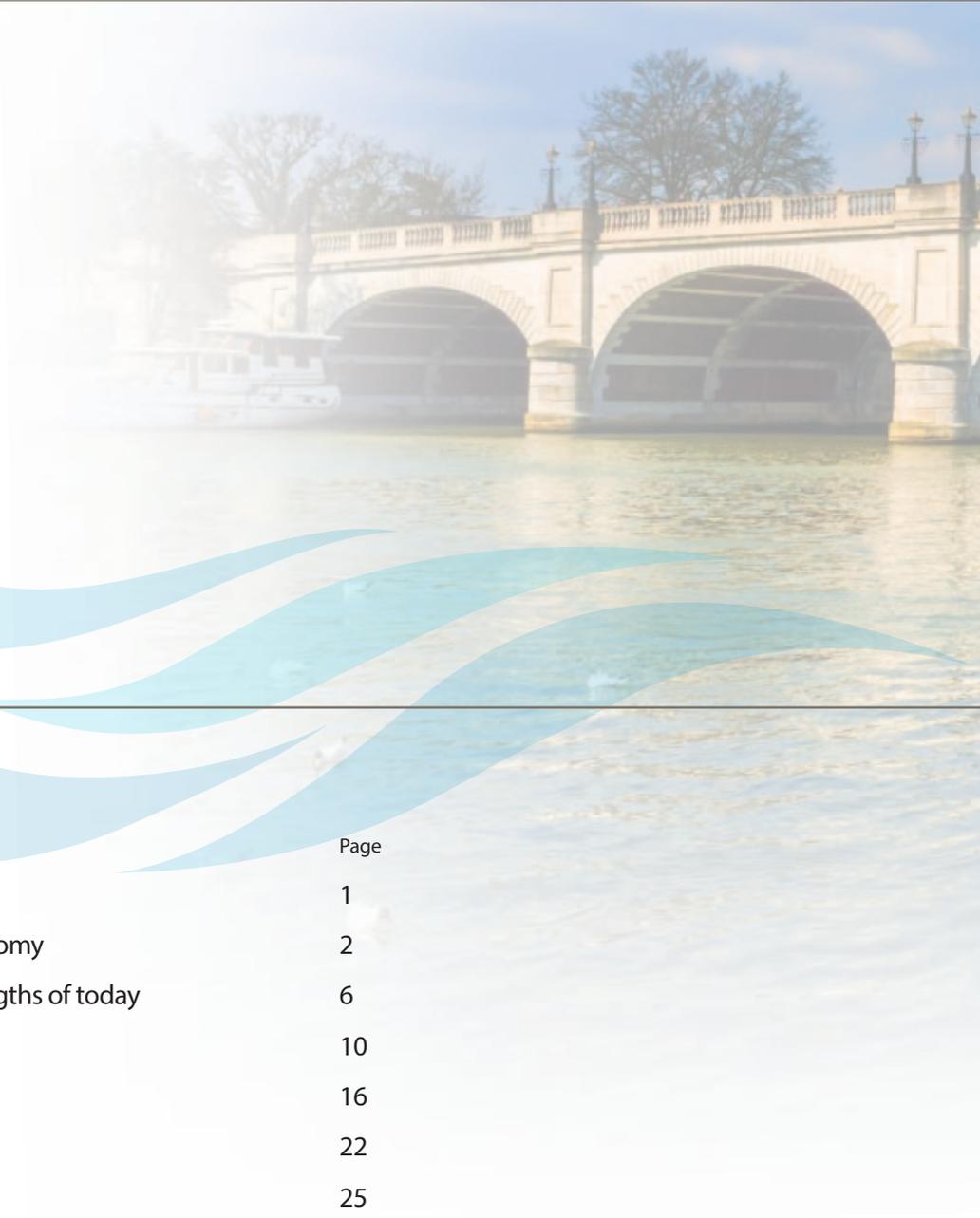


Economic Growth and Development Strategy 2018-2025





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Front cover: CGI of the new £70m Lidl HQ in Tolworth
Source: Kingston Council

For further information please email the Regeneration and Internationalism Team on kingstonfutures@kingston.gov.uk

Foreword



What makes the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames unique?

I have often thought it is a combination of our diverse business base, highly talented residents and a strong cultural offer which grows year on year. However, this is only part of our story. In creating this economic growth and development strategy, we sought the thoughts of key stakeholders from the private, public and third sector to capture a wider view before establishing a new narrative.

The Council itself is embarking on the formation of a suite of strategies setting out future outcomes for the borough and its population. These strategies will support growth to create new opportunities, new jobs and new homes for existing and future residents, aligning each strategy as they emerge.

Our strategy isn't solely about the economy. It addresses the need to twin track the physical and social change which is happening as a result of many external factors such as Brexit and the emergence of the government's new Industrial Strategy. Building resilient local communities is central to the borough's overall mission acknowledging the high level of talent and making sure residents aren't left behind.

From a physical perspective, over the last couple of years we have seen investment in key sites, regenerating parts of our borough. For example, Eden Walk, a major landmark project is bringing forward a significant increase to the retail and leisure offer attracting luxury brands and the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, providing the borough with much needed hotel accommodation, conference facilities and enhances the town centre proposition.

There are also plans in place for the regeneration of the borough beyond the town centre. Tolworth is witnessing a changing landscape with the delivery of a new Premier Inn site and plans for a new Lidl Headquarters. In the south, Chessington has seen growth in jobs and New Malden has a

growing small business dynamic, creating resilience in the economy. Major Opportunity Areas have been identified prioritising sites for development with several consented schemes delivering new housing, business accommodation and supporting infrastructure.

This strategy, which comes at a time of great change, seeks to set out the strengths and challenges the borough faces and puts into place a series of priorities to support its continued growth and development. We welcome these changes and have started to set out our plan to achieve equitable growth. The six priorities outlined in this document give shape and direction to how we will prioritise resources to deliver this growth blueprint.

We look forward to working with residents, businesses and wider stakeholders to deliver the success measures set out in this strategy.



Councillor Andy Johnson Creek
Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for
Growth and Identity

1

Developing the borough's new economy



The royal borough of Kingston upon Thames is a distinctive part of Greater London with a unique set of assets, opportunities and challenges. It has a rich culture and heritage offer and an iconic riverside location. It is the oldest of the four Royal Boroughs in England and its recorded history dates back to 838 AD, with six Saxon Kings being crowned in the borough.

Kingston is also a forward looking and ambitious borough. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that by 2025 the borough can demonstrate that it is establishing itself as a 21st century university town with a stimulating riverside central area, a unique character and a melting pot of residents, students, employees and visitors enjoying the high-quality retail, cultural and leisure facilities and history. It will be home to the UK HQs of a growing list of businesses and the location of a dense cluster of knowledge-based and creative businesses which has grown up through a combination of university spin-offs and residents choosing to work nearer home.

This document begins the development of a suite of strategies that will deliver equitable growth in Kingston. It sets a framework establishing how, where and when growth will come forward. This strategic overview aligns the emerging Local Plan, Housing Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Investment Strategy all integral to the successful future of Kingston.

The strategy is intended to enable the borough to build a balanced and diverse economy that is:

- the financial and business services centre for South West London and the Heathrow / Gatwick corridor;
- an international food centre majoring on a combination of food service businesses, Korean Cuisine, restaurants and eateries;
- the location of a dense cluster of knowledge - based technology and creative enterprises;
- home to a unique market and a retail environment that competes with the top retail offer in London.

The vision is that in 2025 Kingston will be a SMART borough using digital technology to the full, will be proud and confident of its cultural diversity and at the forefront of public service reform. The borough will also have developed a new model for enabling economic growth and business support which is genuinely business-led with sustained political support.

The strategy builds on Kingston's economic strengths, including its:

- Rich business base, including a large and growing health sector;
- Unique culture and heritage offer;
- Net contribution to the London economy;
- Riverside town centre with a high-quality retail offer and medieval street pattern;
- Locational advantages, including its proximity to Gatwick and Heathrow and the potential impact of Crossrail 2;
- Highly qualified residents.

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that by 2025 the borough can demonstrate that it is establishing itself as a 21st century university town.



The challenges the strategy has been designed to address include:

- The daily talent drain as highly skilled residents commute out of the borough;
- A lack of space for business start-ups and growing companies;
- Under exploited relationships with, for example, Kingston University;
- The absence of an effective business-led infrastructure to enable growth;
- Enabling the town centre to continue to prosper in a rapidly changing retail market.

This strategy sets out a comprehensive plan of action to meet these challenges which will include:

- A programme to bring forward a varied portfolio of quality sites and premises to meet the growth ambition of Kingston businesses and developers;
- Tackling sectors with lower productivity through business support programmes and enabling growth in high productivity sectors;
- Providing opportunities for highly skilled residents to seek work within the borough by attracting more, or existing, employers able to offer degree qualified or above roles to entice residents to remain;
- Developing an enabling role within the Council to create the conditions to fully exploit Kingston's assets and relationships;

- Tasking the business support organisations to redesign the infrastructure to support growth and development, working with local businesses to ensure buy-in;
- Creating a polycentric marketing offer, development of a strong USP and delivering inclusive growth;
- Exploiting Kingston's competitive advantage and opportunities created by the borough's relationship with the GLA and SLP, the post-Brexit landscape, and the Industrial Strategy.

This strategy is set within the wider context of the Mayor's emerging Spatial Development Strategy, the London Plan (to be published in autumn 2019), which brings together housing, transport, economic development and environment strategies. The Royal Borough of Kingston has produced a joint statement with the Mayor to support development and intensification, giving clarity to residents, developers and landowners.

The core of this growth and development strategy is a set of programmes and actions grouped around six strategic priorities. The priorities consider at a national level the new Industrial Strategy, the UK Productivity Plan and at a sub-regional level, the South London Partnership Growth Propositions to drive growth and investment in south London. These are outlined next.

The Council is proposing to bring forward a varied portfolio of quality sites and premises to meet the growth ambition of Kingston businesses and developers.

1

Developing the borough's new economy



Excellent spaces to grow

Action to tackle the slow growth in business start-ups should include a drive to enhance the attractiveness of Kingston Borough as a place for businesses, retail, culture and leisure, and steps to link the high streets across the area. The Council is proposing to bring forward a varied portfolio of quality sites and premises to meet the growth ambition of Kingston businesses and developers. Despite reasonable train connections to London from Kingston, the Kingston office market peaked in the mid-80s, but with no new development since, there is limited high quality office stock with which to attract new corporates and smaller businesses. This is a central issue which must be addressed to support growth in the borough.

Diversify: business and people

Kingston must seek to further diversify its business base and address the need to create higher levels of productivity and business diversity to promote Kingston in its widest sense. Between 2011 and 2015 the financial and business services sector grew from 21.7% of all employees in Kingston to 29.6%. However, between 2009 and 2015, jobs were lost in the information and communication sector. This is in part due to a lack of quality, affordable office space in Kingston, which needs to be addressed. It is also important for Kingston's economic future that sectors with lower rates of productivity are provided with business support programmes.

Innovation in partnership

There are significant borough-wide assets that are under exploited in Kingston, including:

- Nationally and internationally noteworthy culture and heritage with a growing reputation;
- The university and its generation of significant start-up numbers;
- Talented and qualified residents.

In addition, there are relationships with partners such as Heathrow and Gatwick that should be further developed. Kingston Council's role is central to the borough, facilitating and enabling change and development. In the future, it will be providing services in a different way, at the forefront of public service and local government reform. The Council wants to become a commissioning Council and is also keen to focus business activity internationally as well as nationally. As a result of this proposed shift, a new economic development and business support infrastructure to drive growth in the economy will be required.

There will be a new business leadership that spreads across the borough and addresses parts of the borough not currently supported through business or engagement networks.

Talent in Kingston

A big challenge for Kingston is the need to rebalance resident and workplace earnings and reduce pressure on road and rail networks caused by high levels of out-commuting. There is currently a steady flow of 20-somethings out of the borough, often relocating to other parts of London and Surrey as housing costs stretch beyond their means and the cultural offer does not appeal to singles in their 20s.

To retain talent within Kingston, the borough needs to grasp more of the value created by its residents, by providing opportunities for highly skilled residents and older residents to seek work within the borough. If successful, this will have positive knock-on impacts for local supply chains and connected occupations.

Developing resilience and ensuring accessibility

Given the significant private and public sector developments that are scheduled to take place over the next five years, as well as plans likely to arise from redeveloped train stations, Kingston needs to manage business continuity for local businesses and residents. This is particularly important given Kingston's commuting links with London and Surrey.

Addressing this will require building business confidence in sharing the narrative for the future and understanding the short-term inconvenience. This will mean involving the business community in designing the solutions to support growth and development in the borough.

Strategic place promotion

The key aspect of this priority is to build on the assets of Kingston and ensure that the area's qualities and USP's are known. This will require a new brand and greater focus on parts of the borough with high levels of deprivation. Kingston must also take advantage, and expand upon, its international trading links by developing a new marketing offer and USP to attract inward investment. This will be key to driving productivity and increasing Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through investment, setting a new trajectory into the future.

The strategy also sets out a spatial and place-based approach to enabling inclusive growth in the borough focussing on four places: Kingston Town Centre; Tolworth; Chessington; and New Malden.

Between 2011 and 2015 the financial and business services sector grew from 21.7% of all employees in Kingston to 29.6%.

To retain talent within Kingston, the borough needs to grasp more of the value created by its residents, by providing opportunities for highly skilled residents to seek work within the borough.

2

Kingston 2025: Building on the strengths of today

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is a distinctive part of Greater London with a unique set of assets, opportunities and challenges. The aim of this strategy is to ensure that by 2025 Kingston can demonstrate that it is establishing itself as:

- a 21st century university town with a stimulating riverside central area, a unique character and a melting pot of residents, students, employees and visitors enjoying the high-quality retail, cultural and leisure, and heritage offer;
- the home to the UK HQs of a growing list of businesses, following in the footsteps of Lidl and Saipem, attracted by the place, the workforce and its ongoing investment in connectivity by air, rail and road;
- the location of a dense cluster of knowledge-based and creative businesses which has grown up through a combination of university spin-offs and residents choosing to work and socialise nearer home;
- having an international food offer majoring on quality and diversity for residents and visitors of all ages and nationalities;
- the financial and business services centre for South West London and the Heathrow corridor;
- having a balanced and diverse economy with a unique market and a retail environment that competes with the top retail offer in London;
- a SMART borough using cutting edge technology to manage the increase in population and challenges that come with good growth, while learning from best international practice and partnerships;

- proud and confident of the diversity that growth in business and residents has created and its positive contribution to the character heritage and leisure offer;
- being at the forefront of public service reform with a truly enabling Council, that supports and collaborates with a cluster of businesses to deliver public service outcomes at reduced cost;
- having developed a new model for enabling economic growth and business support which is genuinely business-led with sustained political support.

Kingston today

This vision for Kingston in 2025 builds on its strengths today as a vibrant, diverse and successful south London borough. It has a strong, and growing, local economy that often outperforms the wider region and the country. The borough also has a unique culture and heritage offer, setting it apart from other London boroughs.

Kingston is strategically located 12 miles from London and 8 miles from the M25. It is also served by 11 train stations, with trains to London Waterloo a key service, and Crossrail 2 (CR2) plans are anticipated to provide additional trains to ten routes and stations. The borough's proximity to Heathrow and Gatwick is a massive locational advantage.

There are significant growth plans in place across sites in the borough including development in Kingston Town Centre, Tolworth and alongside the Kingston Riverside. With this will come new and improved infrastructure and growth in housing, economy and facilities for the community.

The Council is proposing to bring forward a varied portfolio of quality sites and premises to meet the growth ambition of Kingston businesses and developers.





The south of the borough, particularly Tolworth and Chessington South has seen strong growth in new jobs in two key areas of Professional, Scientific and Technical, and Arts and Entertainment.

Today, Kingston possesses considerable strengths, alongside a strong local economy. These can be summarised as:

- A strong business base with growth in jobs, arrival of new businesses and stability across sectors, also supported in the Industrial Strategy;
- A riverside location and culture and heritage offer that is central to Kingston's identity, making it a unique part of Greater London;
- Highly qualified residents with an increasingly global population offering opportunities for inward investment and greater exporting;
- A university and wider asset base that is delivering, with more potential to underpin ambitious place-shaping and public service reform;
- A town centre with a strong retail offer, the potential to respond creatively to the changing retail market and a changing shape and growing residential offer;
- Growth and investment to deliver new homes and support the local business base exploiting the potential of Crossrail 2 developments.

Kingston has seen significant population growth in the last decade, with that projected to continue to rise to 203,143 by 2039¹. A key driver of this

has been growth in the number of young people and working age residents. However, given its proximity to Central London, higher than average house prices and no clear strategy for retaining graduates in the borough, there has been a steady flow out of Kingston.

Addressing this will be central to achieving a more smart and dynamic economy in the future. Kingston does possess a highly skilled workforce, with over half of its working age residents qualified to degree level or higher, and only a small proportion with no qualifications. The fact that workplace earnings in Kingston are significantly lower than resident earnings suggests that out-commuting workers are benefitting from higher pay elsewhere. Key to Kingston's success in the future will be developing an offer that will encourage residents to start-up new businesses and work in the borough, thereby retaining more of these high-skill, high-wage workers locally.

This will build on an already high employment rate, 74.2% in 2015 which is out-performing London and England. Complimenting this is an unemployment rate below 5%. This has coincided with a steady rate of growth in Kingston's business base, with an increase of 29% between 2010 and 2016. However, three sectors make up disproportionate amounts of this growth:

- Professional, scientific and technical;
- Information and communication;
- Business administration and support.

Key to Kingston's success will be to develop and encourage residents to start-up new businesses and work in the borough.

Kingston also has a large and growing health sector, in terms of business formation and employees.

¹ GLA forecast. NB ONS Population Projections reach 224,500 over the next 25 years.

2

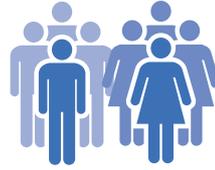
**Kingston 2025:
Building on the strengths of today**

Kingston also has a large and growing health sector, both in terms of business formation and employees. Between 2010 and 2016, 110 new businesses in the health sector were formed. This was complimented by growth of 600 jobs. To build on these strengths, Kingston needs to develop an enhanced offer to attract more health-related businesses to the borough.

A shortage of business accommodation is now constraining economic growth in the borough. There are businesses in Kingston that could grow but are not. The main reason for this is a reduction in the amount of business space. Between 2000/1 and 2015/16, business floorspace fell by 3.8% overall, with a near 10% fall in office space. If this is not addressed, the recent growth in the business base will be stymied by a dearth of suitable premises. Quality of stock is a further dimension. Research has identified the low availability and development of Grade A office space in the borough which is constraining the options for international companies to locate in the borough and limiting the potential of the borough to attract foreign direct investment.

Future growth will also depend on a further diversification of the Kingston business base to the high-value, high-productivity sectors. Success will also depend on addressing the negative aspects of part-time employment such as an increase in commuter congestion, a higher level of lower value jobs and resulting lower levels of productivity. At present, nearly 4 in 10 employees in Kingston are working part time, with only a quarter of all workers in London doing the same. Although labour productivity in Kingston is 7.6% above the national average, it is 2.7% below the rate for South London.

Alongside this, key to Kingston's future success will be an enhanced international perspective. The borough already has links to the cities of Oldenburg in Germany, Gwanak-Gu and Jinju in South Korea, and the province of Jaffna in Sri Lanka. In terms of performance compared to other South London boroughs, Kingston performs more favourably in terms of the number of investments and jobs. This puts in perspective the conventional wisdom that it is Central London, with its infrastructure, internationalised supply chains and workforce availability, which attracts the majority of investment. As the UK strikes new trade agreements after leaving the European Union, Kingston will be well placed to expand its offer and support its business base.



74.2%

employment rate in 2015

5%

unemployment rate

Between 2011 and 2015 the financial and business services sector grew from

21.7%

of all employees in Kingston to

29.6%

Kingston has seen significant population growth in the last decade: projected to continue to rise by 2039 to:

203,143

At present, growth in Kingston is strongest outside the town centre, increasing the proportion of business and employment density in surrounding wards. There is also a pattern of business formation being stronger inwards with better transport connections and motorway access.

To build inclusive growth, Kingston needs to focus on the outlying areas with greatest potential whilst ensuring that a recent loss in town centre employment does not continue at the expense of its businesses and their ability to recruit talent.

Kingston boasts a university which has created the highest number of start-ups of UK Universities, and has plans to integrate its campus more fully with the town centre. The university was recently named in the top 150 of the world's most international institutions, reinforcing the importance of the borough's education offer to international investment. There is also a strong college offer, with plans for Kingston College and Sutton to merge with South Thames College with an opportunity to create a new curriculum offer that meets the local business base.

Kingston tomorrow

In summary, this strategy can build on significant, and in many cases unique, strengths including: Kingston's business base; its riverside location, culture and heritage; its further and higher education provision; the town centre; its growing health sector; its locational advantages and the potential of CR2; and its highly qualified and increasingly diverse population.

The strategy must also address significant challenges, most notably: a daily talent drain, constraining the borough's productivity; a lack of business space; under-exploited assets, including its university; the lack of an effective business-led infrastructure to support growth; enabling the town centre to continue to prosper in a rapidly changing retail market; and the need to influence perceptions about the borough and its future.

This strategy sets out a comprehensive plan of action to meet these challenges which will include:

- A programme to bring forward a varied portfolio of quality sites and premises to meet the growth ambition of Kingston businesses and developers;
- Tackling sectors with lower productivity through business support programmes and enabling growth in high productivity sectors;
- Providing opportunities for highly skilled residents to seek work within the borough by attracting more, or existing, employers able to offer degree qualified or above roles to entice residents to remain;
- Developing an enabling role within the Council to create the conditions to fully exploit Kingston's assets and relationships;
- Tasking the business support organisations to redesign the infrastructure to support growth and development, working with local businesses to ensure buy-in;
- Creating a polycentric marketing offer, development of a strong USP and delivering inclusive growth.;
- Exploiting Kingston's competitive advantage and opportunities created by the borough's relationship with the GLA and SLP, the post-Brexit landscape, and the Industrial Strategy.

This will mean that a Kingston of the future can reduce congestion through levels of commuting, support the local business base and promote a start-up culture. It will also reduce the risk of overly dominant sectors through a strategy of diversification. In addition, the skills need of businesses in Kingston with the potential and ambition to grow can be delivered. This will enable the borough to retain more of the value created by its residents, creating knock-on impacts for local supply chains and ancillary occupations.

Kingston boasts a university which has created the highest number of start-ups of UK Universities.

To build inclusive growth, Kingston needs to focus on the outlying areas with greatest potential.

3

Priorities and interventions





Key components of the strategy

This strategy has identified the opportunities and interventions that will lead the Royal Borough of Kingston through inclusive growth ensuring its continued development. It comes at a time when London's ability to accommodate growth is being challenged by unprecedented pressures.

In considering the priorities required to deliver growth and development in Kingston, there are several factors that must drive this equation.

Businesses across the borough have reported a challenge in accessing business accommodation, increasingly congested infrastructure and a lost opportunity of retaining more of the value created by its residents, creating knock-on impact for local supply chains and related occupations.

Cross-cutting themes

Several cross-cutting themes have also been identified which sit centrally to this strategy. These themes have emerged through discussions with businesses, developers, third sector representatives and wider stakeholders throughout RBK.

- **Inward investment and international outlook**
This theme is twofold: the first consideration is to grow the industrial base to ensure diversity and resilience in the economy, reducing reliance on a single or set of sectors which may not drive forward productivity; the second is engaging with communities locally that have ties to other parts of the world with an aim of making Kingston the first-choice international location for outer-London.

- **Cultural creativity and heritage**

This theme needs to be capitalised to the maximum advantage of Kingston. The rich culture and heritage offer is under-exposed and needs to be nurtured to enable the creative sector to play a bigger place shaping role. Working with developers for example to drive public realm enhancements and forging a new identity to encourage more young people to remain in the borough.

- **Business support and start-ups**

Key to progressing with this strategy is a business support offer that fits within a new Council and partner model to deliver growth.

- **SMART agenda**

Being able to compete requires fast connectivity and superfast broadband to attract technology-oriented and creative businesses.

The priorities identified in this strategy are:

- Excellent spaces to grow;
- Diversify: business and people;
- Innovation in partnerships;
- Talent in Kingston;
- Developing resilience and ensuring accessibility;
- Strategic place promotion.

3

Priorities and interventions

The following paragraphs scope each of these priorities.



Excellent spaces to grow

Loss of stock and plans for redevelopment (primarily mixed use)

Local agents estimate that there is c. 800,000 - 900,000 sq ft of office space in Kingston town centre². However, with Combine House, Parman House, Kingsgate House and possibly Millennium House being converted to either residential or student accommodation, this figure is expected to dramatically reduce. There are a small number of significant office buildings within the town centre, with the majority of floor space being below 10,000 sq ft and designated as leisure and retail uses or above shops³. In addition, stock is relatively old with 82% being built pre-1990, impacting on Kingston's competitive position in the modern office market⁴.

Despite reasonable train connections to London from Kingston (31 minutes to London Waterloo), the Kingston office market peaked in the mid-80s, but with no new development since, there is limited high quality office stock with which to attract new corporates and smaller businesses. In fact, an 8% decline of office space in the Royal Borough of Kingston was estimated between 2000-2012, compared with an increase of 12% across Greater London and 17% across England and Wales. This is due to a loss in existing space (through permitted development rights) and the absence of any new office development for over 20 years⁵.

Kingston's economic base continues to be stable. Growth in number of employees across the borough, and in particular wards such as Tolworth and Hook Rise and Chessington South, has overcome losses in the town centre wards of Grove and also Alexandra.

The creation of small and medium sized units which are accessible for a business audience is much needed. To fulfil the growth potential of local businesses and attract an international business base, the supply of accommodation is crucial.

Businesses are keen to ensure that smaller centres surrounding the town centre were also encouraged to grow as they are seen as essential 'feeders' to the workforce and accommodation offer.

This diversity extended to ensuring that all sectors were supported to locate or grow in the borough in particular with additional business hubs, serviced offices and flexible workspace.

Kingston Town Centre continues to witness considerable change. The growth of the residential market and additional student accommodation has brought redundant buildings into active use, reducing the level of poor quality stock. However, Kingston's offer still lacks coherence. Businesses are keen to ensure that Kingston is not solely known as a shopping destination and wants initiatives to persuade 'travellers through' to dwell for longer. Part of this will involve not only enhancing the attractiveness of the Town Centre but also linking high streets across Kingston.

Businesses also feel that the central district would benefit from more start-up and grow on space with initiatives and financial incentives to support businesses to locate or relocate. For this to come to fruition there has to be a programme to bring forward a portfolio of sites and premises to meet the growth and ambition of Kingston businesses and housing providers. It will be necessary to ensure a diversity in future workspace provision with, for example, availability of physical spaces for technology-led businesses, including super-fast broadband. Additional businesses hubs, serviced offices and flexible workspaces will also be important.

Growth in number of employees across the borough, and in particular wards Tolworth and Hook Rise and Chessington South, has overcome losses in the town centre wards of Grove and also Alexandra.

The creation of small and medium sized units which are accessible for a business audience is much needed

² https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/1250/kingston_eden_quarter_market_report_feb_2015

³ Market Commentary by Capita, 2014

⁴ Nathaniel, Litchfield and Partners, 2014

⁵ ibid



Diversify: business and people

Kingston's industrial structure is distinct. There is a higher concentration of employees in the arts, entertainment, recreation and other services sector. The same can be said of financial and business services, public administration and wholesale and retail.

There is a very low concentration of employees in the manufacturing and transport and storage sectors compared to the national industrial structure. Employment trends since 2009 show that Kingston has sustained its growth in both market and non-market activities, with significant jobs growth in financial & business services (+2,100 jobs) and public administration, education and health (+1,200).

Kingston must seek to further diversify its business base, with a particular focus on those sectors that contribute the most in terms of productivity. Between 2011 and 2015 the financial and business services sector grew from 21.7% of all employees in Kingston to 29.6%. However, between 2009 and 2015, 100 jobs were lost in the information and communication sector. Part of this will be down to a lack of quality, affordable office space in Kingston, putting it at a disadvantage to other London boroughs, which needs to be addressed. Diversifying the business base must also mean greater support for start-ups, particularly with a view to keeping new graduates within the borough to start new businesses. Action in these areas will reduce the risk of overly dominant sectors through a strategy of diversification.

It is also important for Kingston's economic future that sectors with lower rates of productivity are provided with business support programmes. This needs to be complimented by measures to enable growth in high productivity sectors through land being made available for new developments.

Underpinning all of this must be a change in the perception of Kingston. The borough needs to be promoted in a way that drives inward investment, business retention and develops talent.

Encouraging investors, new business development, as well as utilising wider stakeholders and assets requires the creation of a polycentric marketing offer to create value added propositions. Kingston has a unique culture and heritage that, combined with a powerful business offer, should give it a significant competitive advantage within London.



Innovation in partnership

There is a strong set of partnerships in Kingston bringing together public, private and third sector organisations. The discussions over Crossrail 2 mean that Network Rail and the Greater London Authority are fully engaged on the growth, opportunities and challenges facing the borough.

The development community is well supported and has an open dialogue with RBK through Kingston Futures. With the scale of development in the pipeline, this relationship becomes more integral to RBK's future.

Businesses have a range of fora with which to network with each other and engage with the Council and partners. Kingstonfirst provides a framework of activity for the town centre while the Chamber of Commerce serves the whole borough. Kingston Futures, the Council-led initiative, aims to drive and shape an ambitious development programme focusing on the town centre.

Even more opportunities lie ahead. With the Council's core aims and vision changing significantly over the next few years towards an enabling role, the local business support structure will need to act quickly and flexibly to meet the emerging needs of businesses and the local workforce.

Enabling and not delivering

Kingston Council's role is as the central pivot of the borough and a facilitator. In the future it will be providing services in a different way, at the forefront of public service and local government reform. The Council wants to become a commissioning Council, with the core of its activities focused around:

- Commissioning services and new ways of working;
- Engagement with residents, businesses and government;
- Creating one public service with one front door.

The Council is also keen to focus business activity internationally as well as nationally. This will tie in with how the Council engages with communities. They are currently working with the government on how to increase trade with South Korea, given the significant Korean population within the borough.

Businesses are keen to ensure that Kingston is not solely known as a shopping destination and wants initiatives to persuade 'travellers through' to dwell for longer.

Underpinning all of this must be a change in the perception of Kingston. The borough needs to be promoted in a way that drives inward investment.

3

Priorities and interventions

As a result of this proposed shift, a new economic development and business support infrastructure to drive growth in the economy will be required. There is a need for new business leadership that spreads across the borough and addresses parts of the borough that are not currently supported through business or engagement networks.

Advantages afforded to businesses through the likes of Digital Catapult Centres, for example, could be better engaged to support, grow and develop new product innovation within the existing tech and emerging tech sector.

By creating this new support infrastructure, RBK will be able to work with current delivery partners to understand and develop the business support offer in Kingston. There is great potential for the private and third sector to contribute to this shift to support new businesses, growing businesses as well as creating the conditions for start-ups and inward investment to establish and grow.



Talent in Kingston

RBK has many residents who are qualified to a degree level or beyond and have mid-career or senior roles in ICT, management, media and legal professions. The borough's own businesses however offer predominantly A-Level and equivalent jobs in administration and clerical, retail and health and education sectors. This manifests itself by younger working age residents and learners moving out of the borough post-education and highly skilled residents working out of borough in highly paid jobs.

The route to changing this dynamic is considered to be three-fold:

- Attract more employers, or those parts of existing employers, who can offer the residents with higher level qualifications encouraging them to remain in the borough for employment thereby supporting productivity;

- Retain more of the value created by its residents, creating knock-on impact for local supply chains and ancillary occupations;
- Address the challenge of high-cost housing which is a barrier to keeping learners after formal education and attracting key workers in teaching and care roles.

By having support and infrastructure to enable local residents either to carry out their roles for large employers while physically located in the borough (such as remote working), or move to freelance working from home or flexible workspaces locally to support the gig and freelance economy.

Among early-career graduates the picture is quite different however. There is a steady flow of 20-somethings out of the borough (Kingston University graduates or graduates from other Universities who stayed living in RBK with parents) often going to other parts of London as equivalent housing for single, entry-level earners is cheaper in other parts of London or the benefits of RBK for families (dual earners in 30s/40s) do not appeal to singles in their 20s.

This means that there is a gap in demographic which is impacting sectors such as arts and creative industries. There is a strong desire from the digital technology sector to find and retain young talent while emphasising the need for education providers to keep pace with technological change.

There will be new roles created in the future and a resilient skills system with involvement from business is key. By developing career pathways and programmes to support the likes of internships, work placements and apprenticeships, the current dynamic of Kingston as the classic bedroom suburb will shift.

Addressing this requires a programme of activity to:

- Deliver the skills needs of business in Kingston with the potential and ambition to grow;
- Attract and retain the talent of Kingston residents to enable them to benefit from growth in the borough;
- Rebalance workplace earnings and reduce pressure on networks caused by high levels of out-commuting;
- Provide opportunities for high skilled residents to seek work within the borough.

Kingston Council's role is as the **central pivot of the borough** and a **facilitator**.

The Council is also keen to **focus business activity internationally as well as nationally**. This will tie in with how the Council engages with communities.



Developing resilience and ensuring accessibility

There is a big appetite among businesses to have more information and certainty about the developments of Crossrail 2. The development plans bring a huge opportunity to the borough, with ten stations throughout Kingston to have Crossrail 2 access. Despite opening in the 2030s developers are already looking at high growth areas which businesses are keen to hear about. Businesses are also keen to hear about the construction that will be needed at stations. Therefore, it is important that businesses and residents are fully engaged throughout the process.

Given the significant developments that are scheduled to take place over the next five-years as well as the plans likely to arise from new train station refurbishments and future plans from the private sector, RBK needs to manage business continuity for local businesses and residents. This is particularly important given Kingston's commuting links with London and Surrey. In particular:

- During the economic development plan period significant physical, economic, environmental and social change is likely to take place. Plans need to be put in place to ensure resilience and business as usual for commuters and visitors;
- Despite Crossrail 2 not due to open until the 2030s, developers are already looking at high growth areas and construction management plans which will be needed at stations.

A particular challenge is access to the town centre, and elsewhere in the borough, by road. Many residents and commuters find main roads difficult to navigate and heavily congested. Outside of the town centre, there is often heavy congestion around junctions on the A3 and Hook and Tolworth roundabouts. A key priority for the area is improving accessibility, which will create new opportunities for businesses and residents.



Strategic place promotion

The key aspect of this priority is to build on the assets of Kingston and ensure that the area's qualities and USP's are known.

The affluence of Kingston often precludes many funding opportunities. In fact, Kingston has a very multi-layered, multi-tiered identity, but the marketing of the area focuses on the town centre, somewhat overlooking the quality offer in the rest of the borough. Kingston and, in particular the town centre, has an image of an outer London shopping town. Whilst retail is central to the local economy, showcasing a broad commercial offer and demonstrating quality of creative businesses in the borough will strengthen the 'Kingston experience'.

Kingston must also take advantage, and expand upon, its international trading links. Kingston already generates good amounts of inward investment in areas such as sales and marketing. However, Kingston has been less successful at generating from other EU countries. Alongside developing a new marketing offer and USP to attract inward investment, Kingston has to be ready to take advantage of post-Brexit trade deals with both the EU and the rest of the world.

The Action Plan in Section 10 outlines specific recommendations for RBK and its partners to progress across the short, medium and long-term to deliver these objectives.

There is a big appetite among businesses to have more information and certainty about the developments of Crossrail 2.

A key priority for the area is improving accessibility which will create new opportunities for businesses and residents.

4

The wider perspective

**Context**

This strategy is being drafted at a time of significant change nationally and in London. This section of the strategy highlights key elements of this wider context and opportunities for exploiting competitive advantage to deliver inclusive growth.

Ambition

The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames' (RBK) position within the London economy is changing. It has always benefitted from a strong skills base of its residents and a stable business and industrial make up. The challenges that present themselves are offering RBK an opportunity to grow; but this growth must be sensitively handled in order to ensure it is inclusive growth.

The borough's strength lies in its resident and business base. New developments have brought forward housing and student accommodation, bringing more life into the town centre, while employment space has begun to balance out into other wards.

RBK is considered to be one of the next London growth zones. With the potential to deliver ten new Crossrail stations, it will become a more attractive location of existing and new businesses. If delivered successfully, this will spread the wealth across the borough and reach parts that have not yet benefited.

Brexit

At a national level, there are a number of uncertainties and this strategy reacts in a void of detailed information. The result of the 2017 General Election, a minority Conservative government, means that there will be an ongoing degree of political and economic uncertainty. The government's recent White Paper *'The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union'* gives some clarity over Britain's exit from the EU. Trade negotiations are ongoing with an anticipated two-year window to reach trade agreements, while the impact of Brexit on labour is uncertain.

Alongside this has been a significant pot of EU funding accessible in support of initiatives to drive start-ups and business growth while upskilling and supporting those furthest from the labour market.

RBK has a clear international agenda. It has been working with local businesses and residents to drive interest from overseas in an effort to attract new businesses and put the borough on the London map. This goes beyond the EU boundaries to countries such as Sri Lanka and South Korea and considers where partnership success is most likely.

The borough's strength lies in its resident and business base.

With the potential to deliver ten new Crossrail stations, RBK will become a more attractive location of existing and new businesses.



Industrial Strategy

At a macro level, the emerging Industrial Strategy recognises a number of key sectors that are considered to have high levels of productivity, competitive advantage at a global level and growth potential. Kingston has seen growth in a number of these sectors over the last five-years and of the relevant sectors has a higher location quotient in creative industries, digital, financial services and professional and business services. The borough is also embracing the need to understand its businesses, places and people through a concerted effort to engage at a local level.

Productivity Plan

The government's Productivity Plan which launched in 2015 highlighted the need for UK industry to become more productive by improving Gross Value Added (GVA) for the country. It recognised that output per hour in the UK is 17% below the G7 average and behind that of Germany, France and the United States.

The Plan set out fifteen areas that could help solve Britain's productivity problem. These included: increasing workforce skills; seeking international investment; world-leading universities open to all; and planning freedoms with more homes that people can afford to buy.

Devolution and growth

Devolution in London is also gaining traction with increased access to budgets at a local level to deliver initiatives, for example in support of adult skills. The London Enterprise Partnership (LEAP) is driving forward initiatives to better support business and activity at a South London Partnership level and is clear on its priorities to support key sectors.

The Mayor's Transport Strategy

The Mayor's draft Transport Strategy which was launched in June 2017 for public consultation makes several references to the Royal Borough of Kingston. Its overall aim is to set out a vision for a 'fairer, greener, healthier and more prosperous city' including support for Crossrail 2 to improve direct connections and relieve crowding. With the proposed expansion of Heathrow, the strategy outlines its plans to lobby for a southern rail link to Heathrow to deliver capacity and connectivity and could be strategically important for Kingston.

Achieving financial independence

Kingston has historically received a low amount of formula grant from central government compared to other boroughs. The level of grant funding has also been falling for the last 20 years and the Council is working towards financial independence in 18-months. Not being dependent on government funding allows more space to be able to be more inventive with local budgets and income streams.

A big opportunity is business rate retention. By driving inward investment and creation of new business accommodation, RBK is in a position to adopt a business-like approach to development and growth to maximise the impact and become more outward facing.

Kingston has historically received a low amount of formula grant from central government compared to other boroughs.

4 The wider perspective

Council’s Investment Strategy

The Council is currently developing an investment strategy to ensure it is able to capitalise on the opportunities afforded through growth and development as well as ensuring it is able to direct investment in regeneration schemes.

It is considering the use of financial mechanisms available to Local Authorities to bring forward schemes that the market may not. This will not be at additional cost to residents but will be managed through strategic funds.

Council’s Asset Strategy

Kingston’s aim is to deliver a ‘One Kingston Estate’ for the borough. Its Asset Strategy is focused upon the enabling of seven ‘Key Themes’ (depicted diagrammatically) and four ‘Cross-Cutting Goals’⁶ which will support its development and growth. By reducing the amount of space that the Council itself occupies, it can deliver place shaping and commercial opportunities for local companies. By joining up developers that own adjacent land better spaces and mixed developments can be created through supported land assembly.

Kingston has a rich history of innovation and creativity.



⁶ RBK non-housing operational portfolio asset strategy 2013 - 2018
⁷ https://www.kingston.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/777/borough_investment_plan.pdf

Strategies for Growth Businesses

Businesses across the borough have reported a challenge in accessing business accommodation, increasingly congested infrastructure and a lost opportunity of retaining more of the value created by its residents, creating knock-on impact for local supply chains and ancillary occupations.

Council and partner investment

The Kingston Investment Plan was produced in 2011 via the 'single conversation' negotiation with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) at a time of considerable change⁷. For the borough and Kingston Strategic Partnership this Plan will make an important contribution to:

- Achieving the vision set out in the Kingston Plan for the borough as a place to live, work, learn and relax;
- Promoting our place-shaping priorities, for example in the town centres in the Borough;
- Enabling the achievement of outcomes required by the London Plan and the Mayor's Housing Strategy for London;
- Delivering the Partnership's own housing objectives, particularly in providing higher quality affordable housing, securing investment in council homes to bring them to the Decent Homes Standard and reducing the reliance on temporary accommodation for homeless households.

Direction of Travel

In October 2016 Kingston published 'Direction of Travel for the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames'. The document set out the broad context in which the growth agenda needs to be planned and delivered. It also began the process of engaging with a wide range of residents, stakeholders, interest groups and developers on the future direction of travel. It outlined what redevelopment in different parts of the borough could lead to, as well as outlining emerging areas of opportunity:

- Kingston Town Centre, the Cambridge Road Estate, New Malden and Tolworth were identified as areas of immediate opportunity for growth;
- The Hogsmill Valley is seen as likely to provide opportunities for growth in the medium-term dependent on the requirements of the Council's waste facilities and Thames Water;
- Chessington has been identified as a potential long-term area of opportunity linked to the arrival of Crossrail 2 in 2030.

The cultural and creative industries need to thrive and prosper in Kingston.

It is important that Kingston intervenes directly in the market, as without doing so, housing land values will fail to deliver employment.



4

The wider perspective



3.8%

is the total fall in business floorspace in Kingston between 2000/1 and 2015/16

10%

fall in office-floorspace and just over 4% fall in industrial floorspace



The creative industries accounted for

3,800

jobs in Kingston in 2015 ,

4.6%

of total employment



Between 2010 and 2016, 110 new businesses in the health sector were formed.
This was complimented by a jobs growth of

600



£580,144

is the average house price in Kingston

This is an increase of

492%

on 1995

Kingston Futures

Kingston Futures Regeneration Programme is a borough wide initiative seeking to deliver physical planning and regeneration, inward investment, growth and business opportunities. Its role has developed to promote appropriate development and ensure that the necessary infrastructure and funding is in place. It works closely with the business and developer community of Kingston and has begun to create a vision for its future.

The Economic Growth and Development Strategy is positioned to support this overarching vision for the borough which will support its inclusive growth. The new Local Plan, which will identify Opportunity Areas within Kingston, will be the vehicle by which the programme is taken forward.

Place-shaping

Kingston is promoting the borough as a business destination on an international scale. Kingston must generate significant interest in the borough to continually enhance and develop the economy. This could be through attracting larger businesses or new industries into the borough or maintaining emerging and existing economic strengths.

This will involve focusing on maximising inward investment from physical, social, housing and green infrastructure through to commercial growth. It is important that Kingston intervenes directly in the market as without doing so housing land values will fail to deliver employment.

Within these frameworks, Kingston can act to deal with specific issues that might hinder development such as unlocking sites and stalled developments. Kingston can work with landowners to bring forward development and innovation and generating opportunities through land assembly⁸.

A comprehensive spatial programme could be developed to create a critical mass of business activity in each location for targeted sectors to be sustainable.

Housing delivery

According to GLA population projections (using a long-term migration scenario), Kingston's population is forecast to rise from around 180,000 in 2019 to between 200,000 and 225,000 by 2041, which is an increase of between 14% and 21%.

The Land Registry data suggests that in 2017 the average house price in Kingston is £580,144, which is an increase of 492% on 1995. Kingston's rate of affordable completions has fallen, aligning with the trend in London. There were -7 net additional affordable homes completed in Kingston during 2015/16 which is 140 completions away from the affordable housing target. This is a fall from a delivery of 132 affordable homes in 2014/15.

The Land Registry data suggests that in 2017 the average house price in Kingston is **£580,144**, which is an increase of 492% on 1995.

⁸ https://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200279/performance_and_improvement/717/annual_planning



5

Cultural outlook



“ A borough with an identity rich in history, heritage, cultural and creativity which drives its future”

Work is currently ongoing to produce a cultural strategy for the borough. The Cultural Strategy will underpin the Economic Growth and Development Strategy and both are key strategies that will guide partnerships and enable inclusive growth.

Kingston has a growing reputation as a regional attraction for heritage, culture and arts as defined within the London Plan. The Council and its partners have formed Creative Kingston – a cultural community interest company to develop the cultural and heritage offer across the whole of the borough. The fact that Kingston is becoming more diverse makes this context more appealing to a business and visitor audience.

Recent investment in local venues and a clear appetite to develop its cultural assets and programme will be an attractive proposition for an international audience. A new approach is required to respond to the changing nature of demand for cultural activity that attracts and retains younger people in the borough, including a vibrant and diverse night time offer.

Kingston has a rich history of innovation and creativity. From the first Roman bridge across the lower reaches of the Thames, the birth place of Eadweard Muybridge (who invented the cinema), to the elimination of cholera and the borough's role in aviation and car design, Kingston has an extraordinary track record of innovation and creativity.

The cultural and creative industries need to thrive and prosper in Kingston. The heritage and cultural offer is an integral part of Kingston's identity and Kingston needs to be seen as a vibrant cultural place. Through this rich confluence of people, ideas and ambition there is a desire to build a cultural and creative centre that capitalises on the borough's history of creative thinking – unleashing the creative vibrancy of the borough.

With great transport links, high education attainment, an expanding College and a University internationally recognised for the quality of its creative courses, Kingston is uniquely positioned to kick start an entrepreneurial offer for south west London; contributing to social health and wellbeing and future economic success.

The Cultural Strategy is important and timely given the borough's reputation as a regional attraction for heritage, culture and arts. RBK's engagement with strategic partners at a pan London level, including Night Time Commission, Cultural Forum, Creative Industry Zones, as well as the backdrop of a changing target operating model of financial independence and an enabling Council demonstrates a tangible shift in focus.

The Cultural Strategy is important and timely given the borough's reputation as a regional attraction for heritage, culture and arts.



The launch of a 'London Borough of Culture' gives an ideal opportunity to bring partners together to work on a common goal; reviewing and developing Kingston's cultural and creative offer to support growth and position Kingston as a serious contender for the London Borough of Culture title. Working through newly established Creative Kingston to deliver successful outcomes for the borough, timing is opportune. Building on borough assets such as The Rose Theatre which has generated £7m of economic benefit, attracting 153,000 visitors while performing and welcoming international shows will be buoyed by cultural activity at a grass roots level.

The Strategy

The Cultural Strategy will set an enabling framework within which the future cultural offer can be developed for the borough through collaborative work with stakeholders. It will consider a number of dimensions including mobilising and empowering Kingston's cultural and creative sector to shape a collaborative vision, and clearly articulate what is required to achieve it. It will also need to create a viable model for ensuring the resources exist to propel the strategy. If successful this will enable the whole borough to maximise the contribution of Kingston's cultural and heritage offer by:

- Capturing more of the value of the cultural professionals and cultural resources which are already here in the borough to help develop Kingston's physical and social infrastructure;
- Leveraging the production and consumption of culture in the day-time and night-time economy to strengthen the borough's business base, its competitiveness and productivity and supporting the creative start-up process;

- Enhancing the attractiveness of the borough as a place in which to live, move to, and settle in, to work, invest and visit – and to advance the image and identity of the place through this significant period of London's growth.

The Cultural Strategy playbook

The Kingston Cultural Strategy will include a "playbook" which will include six themes and links creative and cultural stakeholders across the borough. These are outlined below.

Creative skills pathways

Kingston is unique as a London borough having a significant proportion of its residents employed in the Creative Industries, but they travel out of the borough each day to work. Its challenge is to keep these existing skills in the borough and to cultivate talent in the next generation. This will ensure residents and the future generation have a clear understanding of what Creative Industries can offer as a career pathway which in turn will increase the scale and value of in-borough creative jobs as well as reducing the scale of daily out-commuting by those residents with creative skills.

In order to deliver this, the strategy will require greater commitment and engagement from schools, colleges and cultural education to promote and develop career pathways. Career pathways to develop and keep pace with the borough's ambition to retain young people in the creative sector will add value to the new cultural model.

Kingston wants a strategy for unlocking new venues and making hidden assets more visible.

The borough has a particular desire to connect the value from culture into economic growth.

5

Cultural outlook

Space for cultural and creative production and consumption day and night

Kingston wants a strategy for unlocking new venues and making hidden assets more visible. Ensuring availability of spaces for all types of creative work; conventional creative industry business space, space for work with specialised equipment, performing arts and exhibition space as well as “dirty fingernails” space will guarantee a better offer.

Critical to this aim is the ability to deliver affordable space under different tenures (formal to meanwhile to temporary) as well as adapting public spaces, and enabling them to be used (e.g. through licensing or an Agent of Change principle), so they support culture and creativity better during the day and at night. Accessibility and the ability to protect existing assets for cultural creative production and consumption, day or night, will need to feature centrally.

Hardwiring value from growth into culture, and culture into growth

The borough has a particular desire to connect the value from culture into economic growth, and to harness growth to provide investment for culture. There are several proposed ways to deliver this including:

- Developing a clear proposition on the contribution of creative and cultural activity and assets to economic growth;
- Defining a clear ‘ask’, or rules or framework which delivers investment into culture;
- Delivering a model for securing a sustainable blend of multiple funding streams including, but going further than, short-term funding opportunities.

The Council are testing some of the above approaches with the GLA.

Connecting culture across the whole borough

Kingston’s new focus to connect cultural and creative activity at a borough-wide level involves connecting people and connecting ‘episodes’ of cultural activity from one year to the next. It will result in a strategic borough-wide view of culture from Kingston Hill to Malden Rushett through a new mechanism for connecting people, micro networks and events, for example meeting each year to share and connect programming ideas.

The express outcome of this objective is to develop opportunities for grassroots culture and arts to break out and grow.

Visitors and international cultural ties

One of the key drivers for developing a Cultural Strategy is to join up arts and culture-led visitor events build international links and build bigger audiences for visiting international artists. This will support the need to link and leverage different celebrations of the borough’s own cultural traditions, including Kingston carnival, Korean Festival and State of Seething.

It will also combine and mobilise the pulling power of unique events such as International Youth Arts Festival, Ignition and Frame (International BalletBoyz Festival) while large events like Ride London, Kingston Carnival and the Regatta will continue to act as a platform for large-scale engagement.

Developing the cultural narrative

Kingston wants a narrative about the borough’s cultural strengths which builds on Royal heritage and focuses on contemporary achievements and legacy (e.g. music, invention, aviation).

It is proposed that this will come in the form of:

- More emphasis and examples of ‘Made in Kingston’, creation and invention to complement the ‘Ancient Kingston’ narrative;
- A narrative on performing arts – the current scene (theatre, dance, music) and the 20th century legacy; and
- A logic model which links culture to inclusive growth, building local talent, keeping talent local, and high quality built environments.

One of the key drivers for developing a Cultural Strategy is to join up arts and culture-led visitor events.

6

Digital outlook



The Digital Kingston: Smart Borough strategy sets out the Council's vision, goals and principles to ensure it removes digital exclusion for residents, communities and better supports local businesses. With the creation of an enabling borough it is seeking to realise value from shareable data and partners to connect web-intelligence.

This has commenced at the centre of the Council through a system of forecasting future demand for services and managing through digitally enabled platforms. Its next phase is to ensure coverage of superfast Broadband to attract tech and creative businesses; contributing to economic growth as well as balancing population growth and smart ways to deal with energy and transport consumption.

The strategy sets out how RBK will embed digital technology and data innovation to help transform its services and deliver its outcomes through:

- A new relationship with residents;
- A cross-sector, one system approach;
- Making the best use of its resources to deliver its outcomes.

It further sets out the principles for embedding digital into the organisation at every level, focussing on people, place and the platform to deliver the outcomes by:

- Redesigning services in innovative ways rather than simply automating existing processes;
- Opening up its data, sharing with partners and realising its value;
- Building a shared smart city infrastructure;
- Creating a digitally confident workforce;
- Joining-up procurement based on common business need;
- Embedding digital by default as RBK formulates and implements policy.

Current digital capabilities and ongoing initiatives

There are a range of capabilities already established. The website has been redesigned to make services and information more accessible and available regardless of the type of device. Complimenting this is free public Wi-Fi in all of the Council's core buildings, providing citizens with free Wi-Fi, and enabling staff to bring their own device. G-Suite from Google has been implemented as the Council's core email and calendar system to provide all staff with access to their email, calendar and office productivity tools for documents, spreadsheets and presentations anytime, anywhere. Moreover, the Kingston Data portal is opening up many data sets from multiple sources, improving the Council's transparency and enabling RBK to turn data into intelligence.

Connecting Kingston is providing borough-wide Wi-Fi, faster broadband and better reception.

6

Digital outlook

There are also a number of ongoing initiatives. Connecting Kingston is providing borough-wide Wi-Fi, faster broadband and better reception. The Kingston Care Passport is a Health and Social Care integration initiative being led by Your Healthcare to deliver an Integrated Care Record.

This increased visibility across a wider set of service user information will help improve pathway planning to improve resident health and wellbeing outcomes. Library systems are being renewed to allow self-service and greater ease of access. Finally, the current ageing PC and laptop hardware will be replaced with modern role-appropriate equipment that is fast, secure and low cost, enabling the Council to maximise the benefits of ICT investment.

Enabled Community

Kingston Council believes that residents should be able to simply and seamlessly access the services they need without the friction caused by complicated processes and unnecessary bureaucracy. The Council wants residents, visitors and businesses to be able to engage digitally with the Council and access its services through the channels and on the platforms with which they are familiar. To engage digitally it will:

- Transact with its residents and businesses on the devices they are familiar with;
- Engage with its communities through the channels and social media they use;

- Lead by example in Kingston and strengthen collaboration to ensure effective delivery of outcomes;
- Co-create services with residents, local businesses and partners;
- Build and maintain an integrated evidence base to inform decisions; and
- Recognise and promote digital engagement excellence.

The next steps

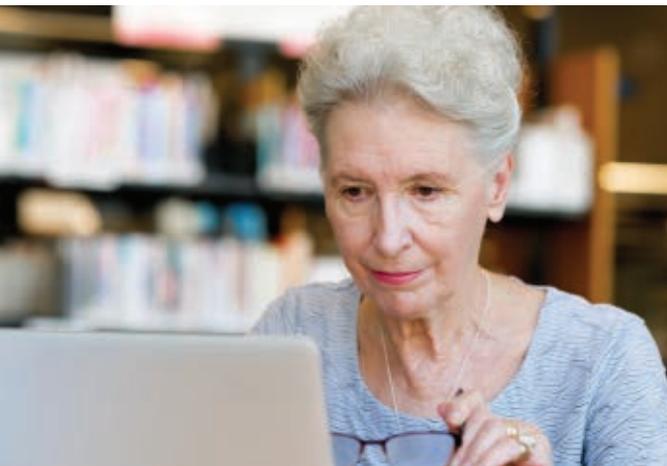
The Digital Kingston: Smart Borough vision is ambitious and will herald changes in approach and culture within the Council, both in implementing digital and how this digital advantage is embedded across the Council.

Utilising the enormous potential for digital technology to transform how services are delivered in Kingston will mean improving the digital engagement and online offer to customers. This will ensure that those who are hardest to reach are not excluded, including by upskilling and supporting the workforce to respond to challenges.

To achieve this, Kingston Council will create a "digital by default" culture, focussing on pro-active policies to build for the future now. The Council will also create a digital programme to guide it over the coming year as it embeds the priorities and principles within the digital strategy across the Council.

Utilising the enormous potential for digital technology to transform how services are delivered in Kingston will mean improving the digital engagement and online offer to customers.

The Council wants residents, visitors and businesses to be able to engage digitally with the Council.



7

International outlook



“ Our vision for the future is to raise the profile of Kingston upon Thames to become the best outer London location to set up, invest, visit and study in”

Summary

Kingston Council recognises the importance of becoming pro-active in its international reach and taking an active part in shaping its vision for the future. It has developed an evidence-based international strategy to provide a framework to attract more jobs and investment, boost exports and increase tourism flow and spend.

The strategy identified three key challenges in the delivery of the international activities over the short, medium and long-term:

- **Access to good quality commercial spaces:** flexible and affordable; grade A which will allow companies to stay and grow within the borough;
- **Infrastructure and connectivity:** not all parts of the borough are quickly accessible from Central London which will limit the number of potential investors and visitors;
- **Tourism infrastructure:** lack of accommodation variety and infrastructure such as conference centre and coach parking spaces.

It recommends that the Council are directly involved in the delivery of business and tourism, in partnership with Kingstonfirst, and harness the borough's stakeholders' expertise and resources to deliver on the remaining areas.

International activities

The borough is well positioned to attract foreign companies in the sectors of finance and business services, administration, education, health, retail and creative. This is demonstrated by the size of the local talent pool and the concentration of skills, providing a good alternative to companies looking to set up in London.

The evidence shows that 92% of investments into Kingston are new and that Kingston is missing out on job creation from expansions. In total, 43% of new jobs created in London over the period 2003 to 2015 were from expansion projects, against 16% in Kingston. Therefore, the strategy recommends the development of a systematic business engagement programme for new and existing investors. This aftercare programme will be integrated with the activities of the business liaison team working with domestic businesses.

In geographical terms, investment from businesses in Asian regions (particularly using existing connections with South Korea) is the focus for the short-term, whilst North America and Western Europe are a longer-term goal.

The evidence shows that **92% of investments into Kingston are new.**

7

International outlook

Kingston is also losing talent in some key sectors such as ICT, to the benefit of neighbouring boroughs. It will use the international activities to help grow the tech sector in Kingston by:

- Targeting tech companies to choose Kingston for their London expansion;
- Working closely with London & Partners to make a strong case for the borough;
- Providing business support such as international trade events to help our local tech businesses grow.

Tourism

Across the south west of London, Kingston competes with Richmond which benefits from its cultural heritage and location, though attracts a lower share of London's tourism and associated spend than it could. Richmond attracts 75% more visitors and 79% more spend than Kingston.

A potential explanation, alongside its proximity to Heathrow airport, is that Richmond is on the Visit London website, raising its profile to potential visitors. Kingston Town Centre now does benefit from a website (www.visitkingston.co.uk), created and managed by Kingstonfirst. However, the task now is to enable a borough-wide offer.

The strategy showed the key leisure tourism target markets for Kingston, based on analysis of 2015 figures. This is shown in the table below.

Table 1:
Key leisure tourism target markets for Kingston (2015)

Total value for London	Visits (in 000s)	Nights (in 000s)	Spend (in £ million)
France	1,607	6,419	489
USA	1,411	7,749	880
Germany	1,072	4,737	385
Spain	898	4,618	360
Australia	518	4,188	364
Netherlands	470	1,691	174
Belgium	369	1,071	108

Source: 2016 International Passenger Survey (IPS), ONS

The strategy recommends designing a "Welcome to Kingston" programme to ensure the best quality of service from the different operators in the tourism lifecycle. This could be done in cooperation with Kingstonfirst and London & Partners to promote and recognise best practices amongst local operators.

Current international partnerships

Kingston currently has active relationships with three different countries. These are: Oldenburg, Germany; Jaffna, Sri Lanka; Delft, Netherlands⁹; and South Korea. The strategy makes clear that, historically, these relationships have been reactive, answering requests and building initiatives as they presented themselves.

Two more relationships are being built with the Seoul Metropolitan Government and the Province of Jeju in South Korea.

Future partnerships

Going forward, Kingston's objectives are to leverage international partnerships to:

1. Identify shared international interests among Kingston institutions, most notably Kingston University and The Rose Theatre, as well as businesses and individuals so that they can work together to improve links and partnerships internationally;
2. Create sustainable partnerships that deliver long-term benefits for residents and businesses in Kingston and partner territories;
3. Facilitate individual, commercial and cultural links between businesses and organisations in Kingston with international partners;
4. Increase mutual cultural understanding amongst diverse Kingston residents and promote social inclusion.

Kingston will also consider potential future collaboration with: Kingston, Canada; Frankfurt, Germany; and Xi'an, China. After deciding if these suggestions are fit for purpose, the Council wants to forge links in early 2018 to start collaboration projects in late 2018.

The heritage and cultural offer is an integral part of Kingston's identity and Kingston needs to be seen as a vibrant cultural place.

Kingston in its subregion benefits from its cultural heritage and location.

⁹ Kingston was twinned with Delft, but this is no longer active.

8

Challenges to delivering inclusive growth



This section explores the challenges that must be overcome in delivering inclusive economic growth and development in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

Regional

To be effective, a growth strategy for Kingston must be based on a clear understanding of the contribution of action at a London and south London perspective. The GLA is responsible for the administration of Greater London, sharing local government powers with the Councils of 32 London boroughs and the City of London Corporation. It is a strategic regional authority, with powers over transport, policing, economic development and fire and emergency. The emerging London Plan highlights Kingston as a priority. It's strategic plan released last year, *'A City for all Londoners'* sets the framework for equitable growth in London while acknowledging the significant challenges brought about by significant change. As part of the inclusive growth agenda, the Mayor has launched Skills for Londoners, which is:

- Investing in state of the art learning facilities and equipment with the Skills for Londoners Capital Fund;
- Helping young people to develop the skills for digital, tech and creative jobs with the Mayor's Digital Talent Programme;
- Ensuring young people and adults can access the careers information, advice and guidance they need; and
- Establishing a Construction Academy Scheme with the housebuilding industry.

Kingston forms part of the South London Partnership. The SLP is a sub-regional collaboration of five London boroughs: Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton. Together, the SLP boroughs make a significant and distinctive contribution to London as a World City and are well positioned to contribute to wider growth opportunities in the capital and the south east of England. If it were a city, the SLP would be the fourth biggest in the UK. South London Partnership published its 'Growth Proposition' in 2017, acting as an invitation to stakeholders to unlock the economic potential of south London. By bringing forward investment at a sub-regional level, a clear commitment to accelerating the potential for economic growth has been made.

A key partner for RBK is London and Partners, London's inward investment agent. Although Kingston performs better than the rest of the SLP on inward investment, its piecemeal nature gives perspective to the theory that Central London, with its infrastructure, internationalised supply chains and workforce availability, attracts the majority of investment. This highlights a broader point. Although Kingston does have significant locational advantages, it might develop and refine its offer to overcome the attraction to many of Central London boroughs.

8

Challenges to delivering inclusive growth**Local**

Although Kingston has a strong, and growing, local economy there remain challenges to be addressed.

Under-exploited relationships and assets

Kingston has considerable locational advantages that it can take greater advantage of. Not only is it close to Central London, but it is close to both Gatwick and Heathrow airports. The Gatwick dimension is central to boosting inward investment in Kingston going forward. The new British Airways terminal offers the opportunity of increase business tourism with countries such as the United States.

Developing international supply chains and building international partnerships will aid the diversification of Kingston's business base and boost exports.

A new generation of partnerships are required to cement the business support offer that will be crucial to attracting new businesses into the borough. However, the challenge for Kingston is making sure that it gets it right, particularly with the competition posed by the close proximity to central London.

Kingston can also benefit from opportunities offered from a restructuring of the Council. It should aim to be at the forefront of the public service revolution, focusing less on service delivery and more on commissioning, building relationships with a cluster of businesses to develop innovative ways of delivering public services at a lower cost.

Commuting

Given its proximity to Central London, Kingston has significant inflows and outflows of commuters. In 2011, just over 45,000 of its residents commuted out of the borough for work. Two of the main drivers of commuting are access to job opportunities and the potential to earn higher salaries elsewhere.

The weekly median resident earnings in Kingston are £144.60 higher than workplace earnings, suggesting that out-commuting workers are benefitting from higher pay working elsewhere. Central to Kingston's future plans is retaining highly skilled and productive workers within the borough.

To do so requires a diversified business base that can offer these jobs. This would also help stem the flow of new graduates out of the borough for work.

Therefore, a key challenge for Kingston is to diversify and grow its business base. Although employment and business stock has increased in recent years, two sectors to see a fall in jobs between 2009 and 2015 were information and communication (-100) and financial and insurance activities (-400). Rather than seeing residents commute out of the borough to work in these fields Kingston should be encouraging these businesses to locate and/or start-up within the borough.

This would also address productivity challenges in the borough. Retaining highly skilled residents within the borough for work should be central to Kingston's ambition of driving up levels of productivity.

Kingston can also benefit from opportunities offered from a restructuring of the Council. It should aim to be at the forefront of the public service revolution, focusing less on service delivery and more on commissioning, building relationships with a cluster of businesses to develop innovative ways of delivering public services at a lower cost.

Gig economy

Although Kingston has a high employment rate (74.2% in 2015), the borough has a relatively high proportion of part-time workers. Of the 81,100 employee jobs in the borough in 2015, 37% were part time. Moreover, around 8,500 were working on zero-hours employment contracts. Many people on zero hours appreciate the flexibility of the working arrangement. However, for Kingston's economy to go to the next level there needs to be a shift away from low pay towards highly skilled, highly paid jobs that residents currently commute out of the borough for.

Diversifying the employment base

Linked to the gig economy is the high proportion of jobs in the retail sector. In 2015, 17.5% of all jobs in Kingston were in the wholesale and retail sector, making it the third highest sector for employment. Of the part-time workers, 20.2% work in the wholesale and retail sector.

A key partner for RBK is **London and Partners**, London's inward investment agent.

Although Kingston **does have significant locational advantages**, it might develop and refine its offer to overcome the attraction to many of Central London boroughs.

A new **generation of partnerships are required** to cement the business support offer that will be crucial to attracting new businesses into the borough.

In addition, there are just under 15,000 people in Kingston working on zero-hours contracts in the sector, although these statistics point to the strong retail offer Kingston has, particularly in the town centre. However, although important, wholesale and retail is not a high productivity, dynamic sector. Kingston's goal must be to retain and grow its wholesale and retail offer, whilst simultaneously shifting focus towards high value sectors such as finance, business services, information and communications.

Lack of space for business start-up and growing businesses

However, a linked problem to this is the lack of business accommodation. The issues surrounding business accommodation in RBK are two-fold. Firstly, like much of London, RBK has been witness to a large reduction in office accommodation due to changes in planning legislation in 2013. As a result, existing Kingston based businesses as well as businesses wishing to start-up and locate in the borough struggle to find suitable accommodation.

Secondly, there have been no new Grade A quality offices built in over 20 years. This has caused an issue with the perception of RBK as a place to locate for inward investors and large companies requiring large floorplates.

Kingston has seen a fall in business space in recent years, with significant falls in office and industrial space since 2004. The total amount of business floorspace in Kingston has fallen 3.8% between 2000/1 and 2015/16, with a 10% fall in office-floorspace and just over 4% falls in industrial floorspace.

This needs to be addressed if Kingston is to continue to grow and diversify its business base into the high performing and high pay sectors that will keep residents working in the borough.

17.5%

of all jobs in Kingston were in the wholesale and retail sector, making it the third highest sector for employment

4%

of A-Level finishers in Kingston went on to Oxford or Cambridge in 2014/15

45,000

of its residents commuted out of the borough for work in 2011

8

Challenges to delivering inclusive growth**Talent**

Kingston boasts a highly skilled population. Over half of its working age residents are qualified to degree level and higher, with only 5.9% having no qualifications. Illustrating this is the fact that 4% of A-Level finishers in Kingston went on to Oxford or Cambridge in 2014/15, compared to just 1% nationally. However, this has posed problems for the borough which need to be addressed.

There has been a continuing talent drain of highly skilled professionals and new graduates out of Kingston to Central London because of a lack of suitable job opportunities.

Rectifying this through a rebalancing of the sectors and promoting a start-up culture will raise levels of productivity locally and help deliver the diversified business base Kingston needs.

Skills gaps

Although Kingston does boast a highly skilled population, the availability of skills remains a significant challenge for local businesses. According to the 2015 UKCES Employer Skills Survey, Kingston employers had hard-to-fill vacancies at all levels of employment. 36% of employers had a least one hard-to-fill vacancy for a high-skill position, 25% for a middle-skill

position, 31% for a service-intensive position and 10% for a labour-intensive position. Reasons for these centred on a low number of applicants with the required skills, a lack of qualifications companies demand and the quality of applicants.

This emphasises the need for Kingston to recruit and retain more skilled workers within the borough and illustrates why Kingston must continue to diversify its business base and adapt its offers to prospective workers.

Strategic place promotion

Kingston needs to encourage investors and new business development, as well as ensuring wider stakeholders and assets are utilised. An example of this is graduates. At present, there is no mechanism for encouraging graduates to start up new businesses in Kingston and this, combined with the lifestyle offer in Central London, means that many people in their twenties choose to live and work elsewhere.

Kingston needs to promote the borough in a way that drives inward investment, business retention and develops talent if it is to end the talent drain, raise productivity and generate new business opportunities.

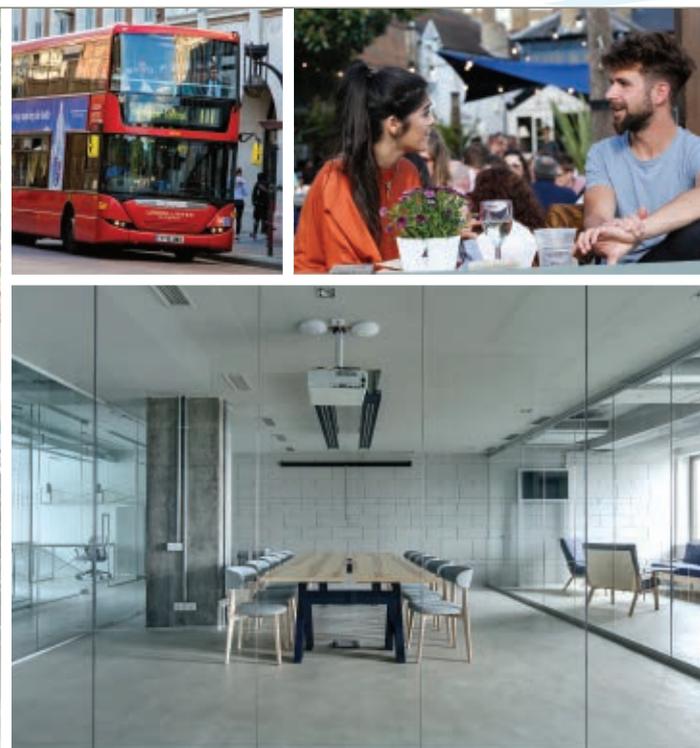
In 2015, 17.5% of all jobs in Kingston were in the **wholesale and retail sector**.

Kingston has seen a fall in business space in recent years, with **significant falls in office and industrial space** since 2004.



9

A place-based perspective



An important theme of the recent Industrial Strategy Green Paper was the emphasis it gave to the need to link economic sectors and places in identifying the action needed to enable inclusive growth. This in turn has a direct relationship to changing and growing demographics. This is particularly relevant in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames which comprises a number of very different places with a different business base and potential for growth.

Making this relationship an effective driver of growth requires a spatial perspective, and a robust understanding of the businesses and resident base in each area, their appetite to grow and welcome inclusive growth and the barriers faced in growing. This section introduces a place and people-based perspective to the strategy.

Perceptions of Kingston as a place are driven by the town centre with its unique location and high-quality retail offer. But in economic terms there is much more to the borough than the town centre, crucial though it is in terms of both the economy and quality of life. In fact, RBK has an economic geography focussed on four places with significant opportunities for economic growth. Its demography is shifting in relation to overall growth across London and the borough must embrace the change to drive inclusivity and provide opportunity.

The four changing locations with potential to develop are:

- Kingston Town Centre;
- Tolworth;
- Chessington;
- New Malden.

Surbiton has a strong offer for residents due to its already established business community which has been developed around the excellent transport links between Surbiton and central London. Its growth in employment over the recent past and above average level of highly qualified residents has an opportunity to generate more self-employment and business start-ups.

Kingston Town Centre

History and change characterise Kingston Town Centre. Its riverside location and medieval market town street pattern are vital to its character. It is London's third leading retail destination. Yet in recent years it has seen major change with a significant increase in residential accommodation, much of it for students, a decline in office accommodation and employment, and a slight relative decline in retail attraction.

The town centre is also home to many of the borough's assets including the University of Kingston and The Rose Theatre, and to leading businesses including the UK headquarters of Saipem. Of strategic importance to the town centre are surrounding areas of Norbiton where employment in education and health has been growing.

Significant investment is taking place and planned in the town centre, including the potential impact of Crossrail 2.

9

A place-based perspective

Significant investment is taking place and planned in the town centre, including the potential impact of Crossrail 2. Four themes capture the core of a vision for the town centre in 2025:

- Capturing the feel of the town centre Christmas market throughout the year by developing its day and night time offer;
- Providing a spatial focus for graduate retention and sustaining start-ups spun out from the University;
- A SMART city strategy with an early focus on world class traffic management and realising the benefits of digitisation; and
- Enabling an improved cultural offer whilst continuing to support successful cultural assets.

There is also potential to:

- Support a new demographic with an offer that is suitable for the growing and changing population;
- Enable the retailers to re-think their offer and presence in the light of the rapidly changing retail market;
- Encourage the provision of high class office accommodation to meet the business services market in South West London;
- Encourage a high quality residential offer to retain a skilled workforce and sustain the night time economy while ensuring that the housing strategy can address the need to deliver affordable housing for key workers; and
- Do more to exploit the potential of the river in terms of its history and its contribution to the Kingston's unique features.

Tolworth

Tolworth is in many ways a hidden gem in the borough's economy. It had the highest rate of employment growth between 2010 and 2015. Its three business parks are home to a rich mix of businesses including New England Seafoods a nationally significant food processing business.

Enabling further growth in Tolworth is essential if the vision for Kingston in 2025 is to be achieved. It has the potential to play a leading part in the densification and diversification of the economy with, for example, potential for mixed use development at Tolworth Tower and at Tolworth High Street and the surrounding area.

These opportunities would enable improved links and an increase in connectivity between the industrial areas and the high street businesses. There is, however, a need for significant investment to reduce the environmental impact of the A3.

Its accessibility is one of the factors which led Lidl to choose it as the location for its new £70m UK headquarter, providing long-term employment for residents. Growth in professional, scientific and technical sectors in Tolworth is ensuring an ongoing interest in the area as the emerging location with opportunities for large organisations.

Chessington

The Chessington World of Adventures is the largest employer in the area, providing a national leisure offer. Growth in arts, entertainment and recreation in employment terms is setting the scene for further development of a wider leisure offer. Other leisure facilities in the area include a sport centre, which is being refurbished.

The employment areas in Chessington, such as the Barwell Business Park, are important economic assets but the area's residential offer is particularly important. The construction of Crossrail 2, which is due to terminate in the area, would be particularly important. Collaboration with neighbouring Councils will be key to managing large areas of land protected with Green Belt status.

New Malden

New Malden has a high concentration of companies providing business administration and support. There are no major employers but rather a rich mix of small businesses. There is a concentration of economic activity around the High Street and Station, including in the Apex Tower and CI Tower. New Malden has the highest concentration of local residents working in local businesses, but it is also home to a large number of well-qualified professionals who commute out of the borough to work.

This is an economically dynamic part of the borough, but it will be important to maintain an appropriate balance between housing and employment to support the growth of these businesses in Kingston.

Tolworth is in many ways a hidden gem in the borough's economy.

The Chessington World of Adventures is the largest employer in the area, providing a national leisure offer.

New Malden has a high concentration of companies providing business administration and support.

In addition to the resident and business dynamic, Cocks Crescent is a major regeneration opportunity for the area. The site currently has a mix of residential, retail, leisure, community, commercial and parking uses, as well as open space.

A comprehensive redevelopment on the whole site will transform it into the new heart of New Malden District Centre. There is potential around the station for further business and retail development on the back of Crossrail 2 which will complement the existing high street.

New Malden is also home to a large number of Korean residents. This adds a distinct dimension to Kingston's cultural and food offer and has greater potential to develop other parts of the economy. This area is well positioned to take advantage of the business links associated with this community in the short-term and future trade deals which could be more greatly enhanced in a post-Brexit world before trade deals with EU countries are secured.

The River Thames

The River Thames is an asset which has undergone considerable change in the past 10 years, yet there remain some areas which have seen limited development from a place-shaping perspective. The river stretches from Richmond Bridge, through Kingston, and to Hampton Court Bridge. Across Kingston Bridge is a tree lined river bank fronting the expanse of Hampton Court Park.

There are regular riverboats in the summer to take residents and visitors between Hampton Court and Richmond. Developments along the water include bars, restaurants and the Rose Theatre, opening up the area to tourism and open air activity for residents. There are further plans to make better use of the riverside through maximising public enjoyment and activating the frontage, which would complement the other opportunities in the borough.

Social Change

Finally, understanding how physical change in the borough can advance social change to deliver good growth and bring accessibility of opportunity to new communities in relation to housing, employment, skills and focusing existing investment where it is most needed.

£7m

of economic benefit has been generated by
the Rose Theatre



Kingston's population is forecast to rise*
from around

180,000

in 2019 to

200,000 to 225,000

by 2041, an increase of between

14% and 21%

* According to GLA population projections
(using a long-term migration scenario)

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Summary of interventions to deliver

During the course of creating this strategy, the evidence base including desk-based analysis and stakeholder workshops and interviews, has defined a number of key actions that are recommended in support of delivering the strategy.

Each of the six priorities has a set of actions and can be delivered as: a 'quick win' to fix some of the pressing concerns of businesses, developers and wider stakeholders; a medium-term priority or; a 'slow burn' if actions are considered to take considerable time to agree or deliver.

PRIORITY THEME

ACTION TO DELIVER

Excellent spaces to grow



- Creation of business hubs in satellite locations such as Tolworth and Chessington South (to support growth in creative and professional sectors) to bring forward start-ups and promote touch down space for overseas businesses exploring new markets (reversing significant losses in business administration and support services in the town centre)
- Develop incentives to bring forward new or refurbished premises (business rate relief, supportive planning policy)
- Review planning policy and conditions for developers to promote and protect mixed development sites
- Establish a borough-wide business-led board to support policy development and ensure business growth outcomes are more central to plan-making
- Consider a new set of delivery principles to generate a programme of 'affordable office space' akin to principles used to deliver affordable homes
- Review the borough's relationship with Metropolitan Open Land and any Brownfield sites that can be brought forward

Diversify – business and people



- Drive an entrepreneurial culture through a borough-wide campaign promoting the current start-up support offer and identify support gaps such as digital catapult and centres of excellence for workforce needs
- Tackle sectors with lower productivity by creating a local international trade and export offer
- Enable growth in high productivity sectors such as manufacturing and finance by protecting employment and industrial accommodation
- Reduce the risk of overly dominant sectors through a strategy of diversification, promotion of new markets and an international programme to develop supply chains

Innovation in partnerships



- Explore new delivery vehicles to bring forward growth in business accommodation and housing that will attract the new generation of companies and their workforce
- Develop a wider international offer in high growth markets matched with high productivity sectors
- Develop a new economic development infrastructure to ensure provision of support in all parts of the borough thereby cementing an enabling role within the Council
- Create the conditions for start-ups and inward investment through new relationships and supply chain development
- Use international partnerships to drive innovation and best practice

PRIORITY THEME	ACTION TO DELIVER
<p>Talent</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Vocation Centre of Excellence for retail, customer services, hospitality and leisure • Offering apprenticeships via the University to retain more mid-range qualified individuals in the borough • Explore the major short-term opportunity of the Apprenticeship levy to ensure opportunities and levy is not lost to the borough • Require greater local supply chain activity in new developments through Section 106 agreements to highlight opportunities for local companies to deliver new jobs to retain local people • Establish a programme of internships between Kingston businesses, Kingston College and Kingston University to encourage young talent to remain in borough • Create career pathways in key sectors to promote the retention of young talent and deliver the new generation of start-ups
<p>Developing resilience and ensuring accessibility</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and launch a series of competitions for local businesses to design solutions of 'mapping' and 'apping' using SMART Technology and open data to enhance business continuity • Include digital as a planning condition to drive it as the fourth utility • Develop a town centre management plan to ensure business continuity and encourage developers to contribute • Develop a mini masterplan for each proposed Crossrail 2 station with appropriate consultation programme involving businesses to understand area growth potential and requirements
<p>Strategic place promotion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a polycentric marketing offer that focuses on unique parts of the borough outside the town centre • Promote the borough on an international level in a way that drives inward investment, business retention and develops talent at a local level • Align greater focus on parts of the borough with high deprivation and stagnant business growth (such as those in the north) to promote employment opportunities • Develop and promote the international tourism offer to increase visitor coverage and volume • Develop a route to ensuring leisure and cultural space is accessible to all

