

chapter **2** strategic and local
policy context





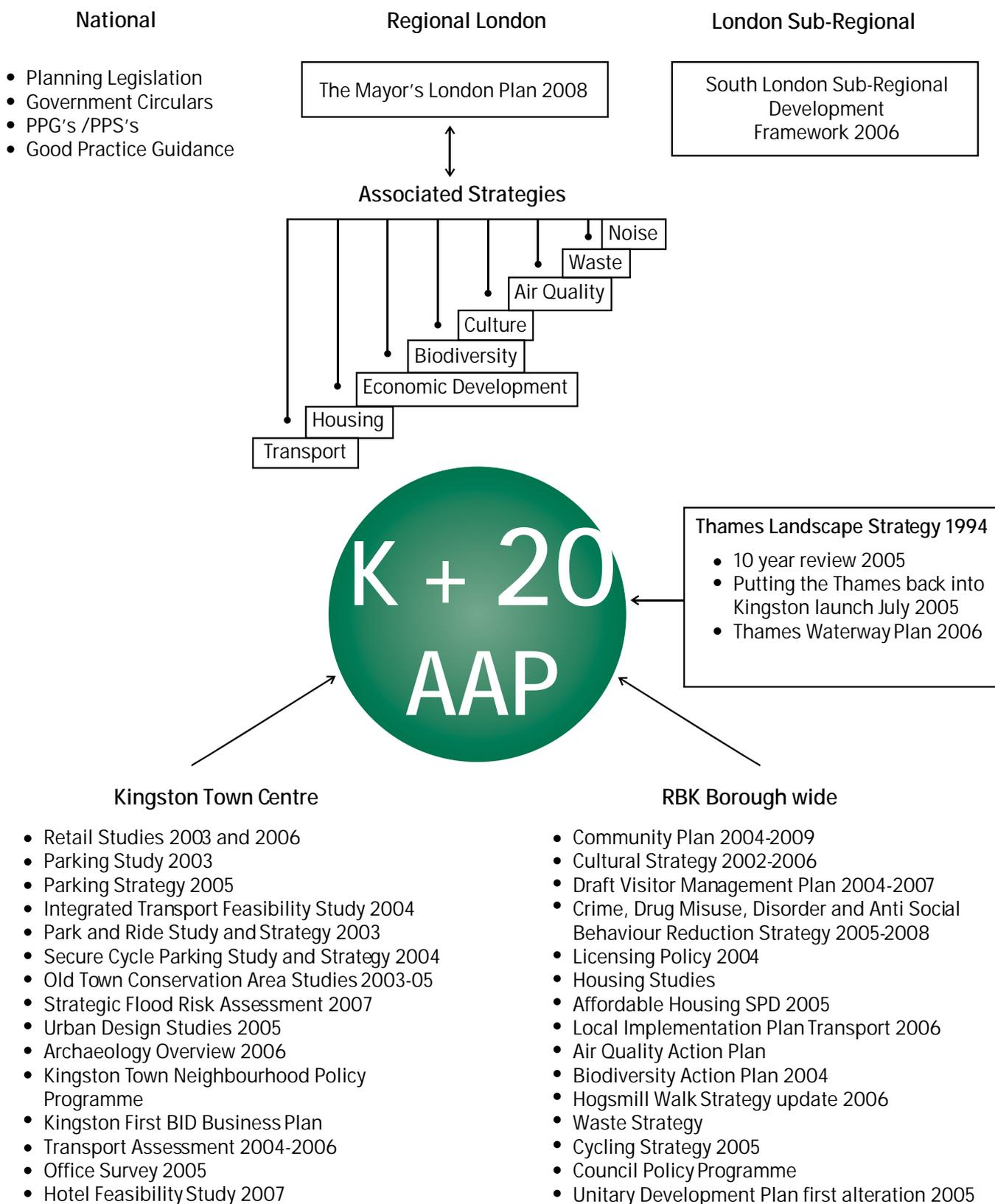
2.0 STRATEGIC AND LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 The policy context for this AAP is provided by:
- National planning policy, as set out in Government Planning Policy Statements (PPSs), Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Circulars
 - Regional planning policy, as set out in The Mayor's London Plan and its related strategies and the South London Sub-Regional Development Framework
 - Local plans and strategies for the borough, including the Unitary Development Plan First Alteration 2005, the Local Implementation Plan (Transport) 2005 and The Community Plan 2004
- 2.2 This AAP accords with national planning policies and is in general conformity with existing and emerging London Plan policies. Figure 1 identifies the plans and strategies which provide the context and supporting information that have underpinned the AAP preparation. The Plan's focus on investment and regeneration of the town centre is consistent with the overall aims and priorities in those plans and strategies.

National Planning Policy

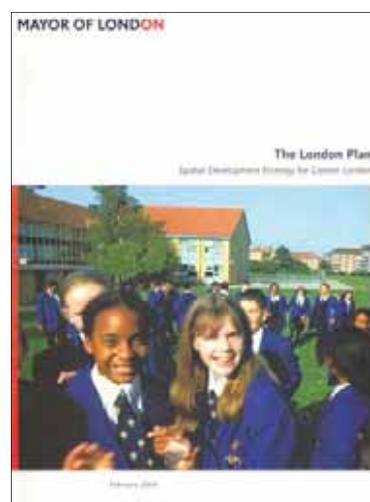
- 2.3 A key objective of PPS6 Planning and Town Centres is to promote the viability and vitality of town centres by:
- "Planning for the growth and development of existing centres by promoting and enhancing them and by focusing development and a wide range of services there in a good environment which is accessible to all".*
- 2.4 Action plans, alongside other initiatives, can be used to actively plan for growth and to manage change or conservation. Town centres should continue to meet community needs by consolidating and building on their strengths and addressing key issues. Plans should: provide for a range of shopping, leisure and local services; improve accessibility; promote social inclusion, economic growth, tourism, the efficient use of land, high quality and inclusive design, improvements to the public realm and open spaces and protect heritage.

Figure 1
POLICY CONTEXT



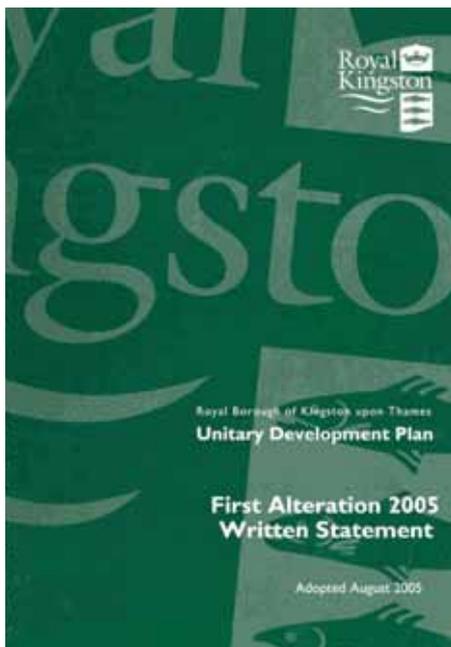
The Mayor's London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London 2008

- 2.5 The London Plan is part of the statutory development plan for the borough. Key objectives are to:
- Accommodate growth without encroaching onto open spaces
 - Make London a better place to live
 - Make London a more prosperous city with strong and diverse economic growth
 - Promote social inclusion and tackle deprivation and discrimination
 - Improve accessibility
 - Make London a more attractive, well designed and green city
- 2.6 Policy 2A.5 Town Centres sets out the over-arching policy to support and regenerate town centres, which are important in accommodating economic growth, meeting the needs of Londoners and improving the sustainability of development.
- 2.7 Other relevant London Plan policies cover: London's Economy (3B.1); Integrating transport and development (3C.1); Supporting Town Centres (3D.1); Sustainable Design Principles (4B.1); Housing Targets (3A.2); Higher and Further Education (3A.25); the Blue Ribbon Network (4C.1) and Strategic Priorities for South West London (5E.1). The AAP text cross-refers to relevant London Plan and AAP policies.
- 2.8 London Plan policies aim to exploit the strength of metropolitan town centres. They support the development of a competitive retail sector; promoting the complementary, competitive offers of town centres and engaging with developers and operators to find appropriate sites. Development Plan Documents (DPDs), such as this AAP, need to undertake local assessments to identify future retail and other requirements and capacity to meet these needs.
- 2.9 Policy 2A.9 Supporting Sustainable Communities reinforces the need for DPD policies to focus retail, leisure, key commercial activity and community services in town centres and to address structural economic changes, including changes in the office market, improving provision for small and medium-sized enterprises and refreshing the local skills base.
- 2.10 The London Plan proposes that Kingston will form part of a new South West London sub-region for which strategic priorities are to:
- Further exploit the strength of the metropolitan town centres and encourage sensitive restructuring of some town centres to reflect changes in the office market and the need for a range of economic activities and housing
 - Ensure that new housing has adequate social and other infrastructure provision
 - Consolidate the attractiveness of SW London by addressing areas in need of regeneration and by improving the quality of the public realm
 - Promote improvements to the national rail network
 - Improve orbital movement by public transport and access to Heathrow



South London Sub-Regional Development Framework May 2006

- 2.11 The South London Sub-Regional Development Framework (SRDF) is a non-statutory planning document, prepared to inform the London Plan review. It identifies significant scope for town centres to absorb much of the forecast growth for South London, through mixed-use schemes and increased densities.
- 2.12 The SRDF (para.126), supports the scope and growth envisaged in this AAP stating that: "Implementation of Kingston's K+20 vision will strengthen its metropolitan role further and build upon its main attractions including the ancient market, major department stores, the River Thames and expanding leisure offer". It refers to the need for improved public transport provision to match the opportunities for growth, in order to maximise modal shift from the private car, to improvements to encourage walking and cycling (Annex 4 Table 2B.1) and to Kingston's potential for substantial new retail, residential and leisure development, modest office based employment growth and as a primary location for hotel development.



Local Policy Context

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Unitary Development Plan First Alteration 2005 and the relationship between this AAP and the UDP.

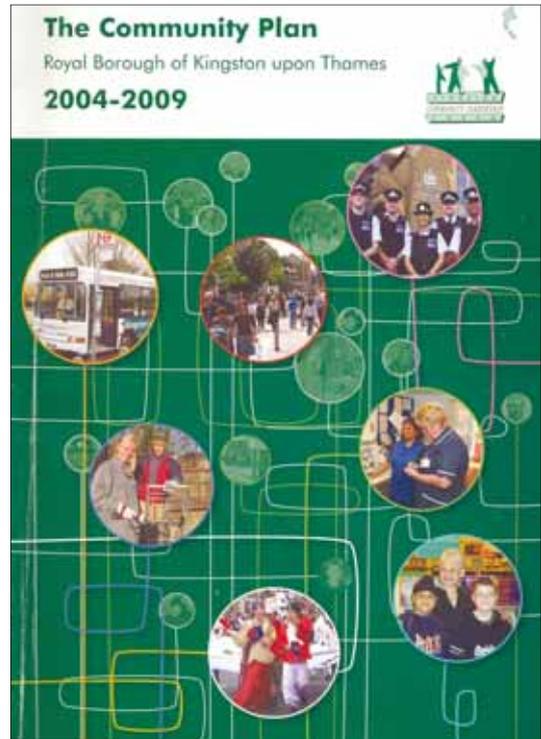
- 2.13 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is part of the statutory development plan for the borough, along with the London Plan. It sets out strategic and detailed planning policies for the borough and key objectives for land use planning, which are also relevant to this Area Action Plan:
- Encouraging new development to be sustainable
 - Encouraging strong sustainable communities
 - Safeguarding and enhancing the existing environment for future generations
 - Practising equal opportunities
- 2.14 The UDP will be replaced by the emerging Local Development Framework for the borough, which will comprise a series of local development documents, including this Area Action Plan for Kingston town centre, which is a Development Plan Document (DPD) as set out in the Local Development Scheme. Most strategic and many general policies in the UDP will remain in use, some being 'saved' until September 2007 and others until August 2008 or longer, subject to the agreement of the Secretary of State, until they are superseded by the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies.
- 2.15 For Kingston town centre this AAP, on adoption, supersedes all the policies for the town centre as set out in Chapter 12 of the UDP that is: the three strategic policies STR21 Range of Functions, STR22 Townscape Strategy and STR23 Accessibility, detailed policies KTC1-KTC27 and policies for town centre Proposal Sites PS1-PS22a and PS29a.

- 2.16 The reasons why this AAP replaces the strategic policies for the town centre relate to the pressing need to address issues such as the lack of new comparison shopping development in the town centre over the last decade.
- 2.17 UDP Policy STR21 Range of Functions affords priority to residential, recreational, leisure and community uses and open space in the town centre and does not envisage growth and significant retail development. It stems from the early 1990s when substantial retail and office development had been completed and diversification to other uses was required. Diversification has been achieved over the past few years with significant residential and leisure development. Retail studies show that there is now significant need, demand and capacity for additional town centre retail development and that need will grow in future years. In addition, the changing policy context, in directing the appropriate scale of retail development to reflect a centre's position in the retail hierarchy, concerns about the vitality of the town centre, reflecting increasing competition from retail development in other major town centres and renewed developer interest, reaffirm the importance of the town centre for a whole range of uses, including retail. These factors indicate a need for a shift in priorities concerning town centre uses, consistent with Kingston's role as a metropolitan centre and with the London Plan and PPS6, which promote economic growth and a full range of uses.
- 2.18 UDP Policy STR22 Townscape Strategy included a general height restriction for new development in the town centre, which is now considered to be too prescriptive. New policies covering the high quality design of buildings and public spaces are a more appropriate means of safeguarding Kingston's character and securing a high quality environment. (Policy STR22 has now been deleted from the UDP, under direction of the Secretary of State, as Townscape issues are addressed elsewhere).
- 2.19 This AAP implements UDP Policy STR5 Shopping and Town Centres which seeks to enhance Kingston's role as a regional retail centre and strategic centre. It will also rely on the remaining 'saved' UDP strategic policies (excluding STR21, STR22 and STR23), until they are replaced by other development plan documents.
- 2.20 In addition, the AAP is responding to Policy 2A.8 of the London Plan, which designates Kingston as a metropolitan town centre and requires local policies that:
- Seek to exploit and enhance the accessibility of town centres from the areas which they serve, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling
 - Provide for a full range of town centre functions including retail, leisure, employment services and community facilities, in line with other policies of this plan
 - Seek to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres including maximising housing provision through high density, mixed use development and environmental improvement
- 2.21 On adoption, this AAP will become part of the development plan for the borough, along with the remaining 'saved' UDP policies and the Mayor's London Plan. Once the Core Strategy is adopted, the strategic policy framework for this AAP will comprise national planning guidance, the London Plan and the Core Strategy DPD.



Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Community Plan 2004

- 2.22 In accordance with government requirements, this AAP has been prepared with regard to The Community Plan, prepared by the Kingston Community Leadership Forum. This sets out a Vision for the Borough with key themes and priorities, a number of which focus on the town centre, and have thus informed the proposals in this AAP. A draft of the new Community Plan (Sustainable Communities Strategy) was consulted upon in mid 2008 and is due to be finalised for adoption and publication in Autumn 2008.



2.23 Through its policies and through proposals for individual sites, the AAP will deliver the following aspects of the Community Plan:

- A clean, safe and environmentally sustainable town centre
- A centre of excellence for learning, with Kingston University and Kingston College playing a central role
- A diversified and balanced economy with the town centre:
 - remaining attractive to businesses
 - providing employment that is attractive to residents, including highly skilled jobs with high added value
 - maintaining a strong service sector and providing for creative industries
 - maintaining its position as a regional retailing centre with a diverse choice and a pleasant environment
- A regional entertainment and cultural centre with vibrant and exciting entertainment options for the whole age range and the Thames providing a focal point for a range of activities on and around the river
- A focus for tourism and recreation, with a quality hotel and conference facilities
- Well maintained, sustainable housing meeting the needs of the whole community
- A transport system accessible to all

Further references are made to the Community Plan throughout the text of this AAP.

Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Local Implementation Plan 2006

2.24 The Local Implementation Plan (LIP), which is a statutory document approved by the Mayor for London that sets out the Transport Strategy for the borough to 2011, has informed the policies in this AAP.

