

chapter

4

vision, objectives and proposals, sustainability appraisal





4.0 VISION, OBJECTIVES AND PROPOSALS

4.1 The Vision for the town centre by 2020 is:

“A thriving metropolitan centre serving the needs of its catchment and providing a sustainable and enhanced range of town centre services including: retail, leisure, employment, education and community facilities, as well as new homes and improved job opportunities, in a high quality environment, that is safe, clean, and easily accessible to all. High quality new development will maximise the potential of vacant, outmoded and underused sites. Kingston’s distinctive character, especially its historic environment and riverside, will be safeguarded and enhanced. A range of improvements to transport, access, public spaces and the natural environment will enhance its attractiveness for residents, businesses, workers, shoppers, students and visitors, in the daytime and in the evenings.”

4.2 The Vision (Plan 3) has been developed from the strategic and local policy context (Chapter 2), the analysis of spatial characteristics and issues (Chapter 3), the evidence base provided by the specialist studies, sustainability appraisal and from community and stakeholder engagement. It reflects the Community Plan vision for the town centre (para.2.23) and takes

account of the London Plan and relevant local strategies and plans, as set out in Figure 1. At Preferred Options stage in 2005, 77% of respondents supported a summarised version of this Vision.

4.3 To achieve the Vision, Kingston will build upon its strengths as identified through community/stakeholder engagement: its attractive character; riverside; historic core; and high quality shopping, cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities, by improving its range of attractions so that it maintains its role as a successful metropolitan centre and by protecting and enhancing its riverside and historic environment to reinforce its character and distinctiveness. This AAP addresses its weaknesses: its peak time congestion and parking issues with a range of access and parking improvements, its poor approaches and the quality of its streetscape with environmental improvements; its weak status as an office centre with better quality offices and transport improvements and the problems associated with its vibrant night-time economy with an ‘After Dark’ Strategy to better manage the town centre at night and provide a broader range of visitor attractions, especially in the early evenings.

4.4 Key spatial objectives have been developed to achieve the Vision. They will assist in delivering Community Plan objectives and realising its Vision. They are designed to ensure that Kingston maintains and enhances its attractive and distinctive character and its status as a metropolitan centre, in particular its role for shopping, business, education, culture and entertainment.

1. To maintain a diverse and sustainable economy, providing for business and employment development needs, with a wide range of employment opportunities
2. To enhance the quality and range of town centre uses and provide housing, including affordable housing
3. To provide a high quality environment with well designed buildings and spaces
4. To protect and enhance the distinctive historic environment
5. To promote and enhance use of the River and Riverside
6. To improve transport, access and connectivity for all
7. To provide a clean, safe, friendly, well managed and well maintained town centre in the daytime and at night
8. To ensure that new development is supported by adequate infrastructure and services and minimises flood risk



4.5 The AAP Vision proposes a shift in priorities concerning uses in the town centre, consistent with the London Plan and PPS6, with emphasis now placed on supporting and enhancing Kingston's role as a metropolitan centre by promoting new retail and commercial development, alongside a range of other uses and facilities.

4.6 The Vision will be realised through this Plan by identifying and promoting sites suitable for new development and regeneration, through redevelopment and intensification; by identifying key areas for conservation and enhancement and by promoting a range of access, transport and environmental improvements.

4.7 The precise scale of change and development will evolve as the Plan's anticipated proposals are brought to fruition. The policies and proposals have been drafted to accommodate appropriate levels of new development, whilst conserving and enhancing the historic environment and the attractive character of the town centre and by improving the quality of the built environment and the public realm.



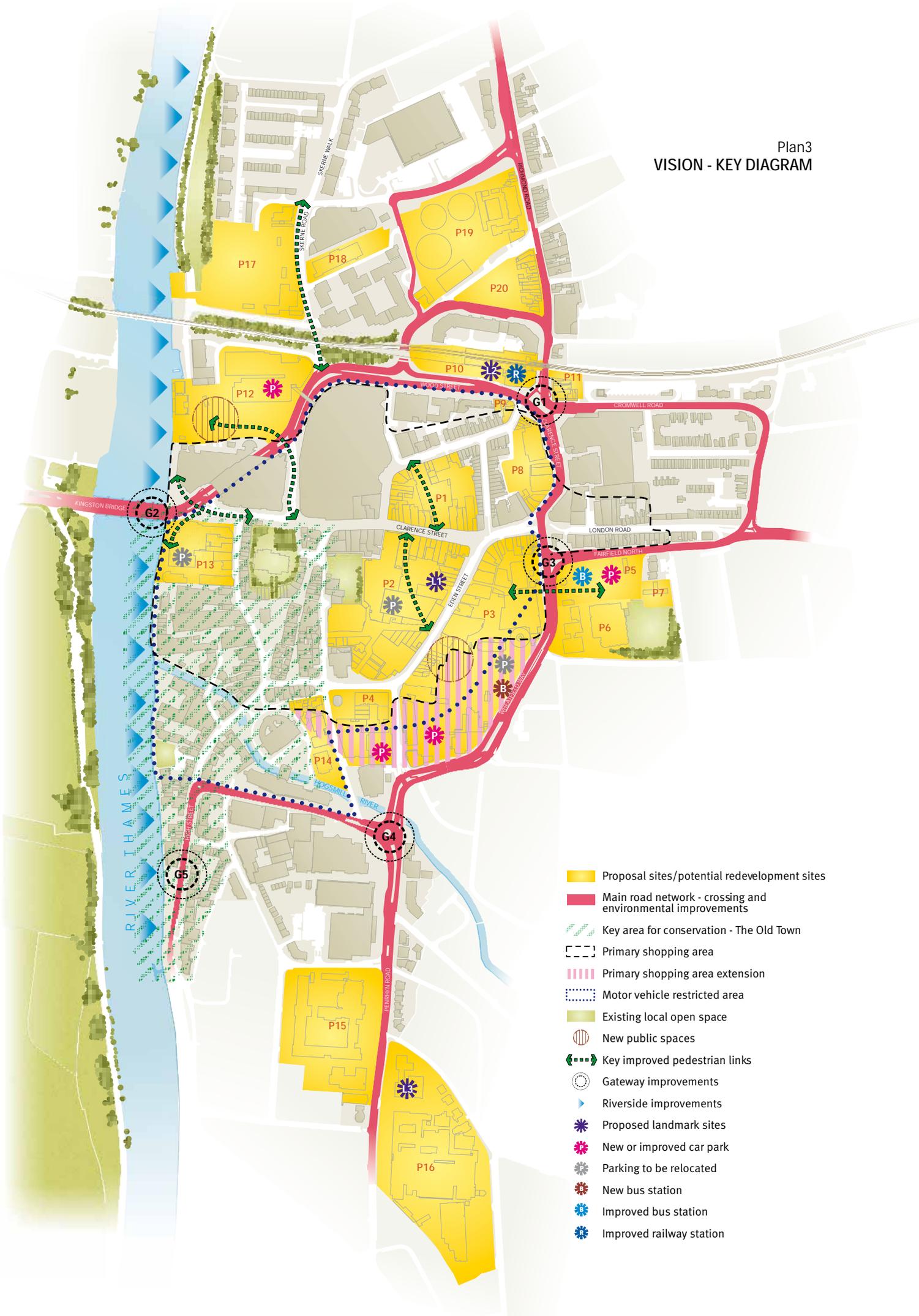


4.8 The AAP policies are designed to be flexible to accommodate change over the lifetime of the Plan, however the broad scope of development envisaged by 2020 includes:

- New retail facilities to provide up to 50,000m² gross additional floorspace for comparison goods by 2016, focussing on the primary shopping area and extending it to complement existing facilities and enhancing secondary frontages and markets
- Around 1,000 new homes as part of mixed use development, including family and affordable housing, together with managed student accommodation for around 500 students
- New and upgraded offices, including small business space
- New facilities for Kingston University and Kingston College
- Enhanced cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities, including the theatre and an improved library/museum
- A high quality full service hotel
- Enhanced Court facilities
- Improved facilities for the faith, community and voluntary sector
- The protection and enhancement of the Old Town Conservation Area and other areas of historic interest, and the designation of Old London Road and Castle Street as Areas of Special Character

- Significant improvements to the quality of buildings and spaces, the approaches to the town centre, landscaping, signage, public art and lighting
- Improved facilities for recreation and leisure along the riverside and environmental improvements
- A new bus station, to enable the removal of buses from Eden Street; improvements to the Fairfield bus station and Kingston Station; new and improved car parks to maintain around 7,000 parking spaces; improved walking and cycling routes and secure cycle parking; and a potential permanent park and ride facility

4.9 The AAP also proposes a range of measures unrelated to built development to enhance the town centre including: promoting tourism and the riverside; attracting a wider spectrum of visitors in the evenings; attracting creative and knowledge based businesses; providing an improved range of job opportunities; improving public transport and travel planning; enhancing biodiversity; supporting town centre management, especially in the evenings and at night and training and cultural initiatives, together with measures to protect the town centre from flooding and ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided to support new development.



- Proposal sites/potential redevelopment sites
- Main road network - crossing and environmental improvements
- Key area for conservation - The Old Town
- Primary shopping area
- Primary shopping area extension
- Motor vehicle restricted area
- Existing local open space
- New public spaces
- Key improved pedestrian links
- Gateway improvements
- Riverside improvements
- Proposed landmark sites
- New or improved car park
- Parking to be relocated
- New bus station
- Improved bus station
- Improved railway station

4.10 Implementation of the Plan's proposed retail, residential, leisure and education growth is expected to result in an increased number of trips to the town centre and potentially longer stays. A combination of transport and travel demand measures are proposed, as set out in Policies K16 – K20, which aim to cater for growth without adverse impact on the main road network or additional parking demand. New development is located on the Proposal Sites so as to redistribute and rebalance town centre attractions, including retail and car parking (see paras.3.27 and 9.27) and to make better use of current parking capacity.

4.11 A Transport Assessment has been undertaken by consultants, in association with developer Hammerson, TfL and the Council to test the feasibility of accommodating the significant increase in retail and residential development, consistent with London Plan aspirations, as well as other town centre facilities, with associated highway and transport improvements. This used a VISSIM model with modified highway layouts including new bus and cycle lanes,

and a new bus station. Subject to the redistribution of uses and the measures set out in paras.4.8 and 4.9 to improve public transport, walking and cycling and rebalance parking (excluding the potential permanent park and ride facility), the model demonstrates that the transport infrastructure has the capacity to accommodate the level of growth proposed and that acceptable traffic circulation can be maintained on the town centre's road network. The Council will not allow the scale of development proposed in the Plan to proceed in the absence of necessary transport improvements.

4.12 The Plan's policies and proposals to deliver the objectives and the Vision for the town centre are set out as follows:

- Part B – Policies related to the eight key spatial objectives
- Part C – Character Area objectives, Proposal Site and key Conservation Policies

The policies are interrelated and should be read together, alongside relevant 'saved' UDP policies (until they are superseded by other local development plan documents), national planning policies and the London Plan.



Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.13 This AAP is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal Report (SAR), which assesses the likely social, economic and environmental effects of the Plan, building upon the earlier SAR, prepared at Preferred Options Stage. Sustainability issues include the need for sustainable development, to protect the quality of life and ensure access for all. Sustainability appraisal is an integral part of the planning process, which has informed the vision and policies in this AAP.
- 4.14 The findings of the SA indicate that overall, new proposals delivered through the plan will have positive social, economic and environmental impacts on sustainability and will allow for further growth and enhancement of the town centre. The proposed increase in retail floorspace and enhancement of office accommodation will help maintain a diverse and balanced economy, providing local employment opportunities for residents. The enhanced range of cultural, entertainment and community facilities will benefit residents and visitors, catering for a wider spectrum of ages and social groups. New housing, including affordable housing will help to meet local housing needs. A range of public transport improvements, together with a better distribution of parking associated with new attractions should reduce congestion from cars queuing for popular car parks, with spin-off benefits for environmental quality and accessibility. Environmental improvements will ensure that Kingston remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.
- 4.15 Some areas of potential conflict have been identified, including the need to safeguard the historic environment and open spaces, to improve biodiversity and minimise flood risk, whilst accommodating significant new development. The AAP policies and detailed proposals for individual sites have been drafted to ensure that any potentially adverse social, economic or environmental effects will be minimised, and that appropriate mitigation is secured. (SAR page 67 paras. 5.63 – 5.64). The Plan endorses the use of sustainable forms of construction and renewable energy in new development. Adopting the measures set out in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment will manage and reduce flood risk and minimise adverse impact on the environment.