



# TRANSFORM KINGSTON

SHAPING THE FUTURE, CELEBRATING THE PAST

GUILDHALL, KINGFISHER AND CATTLE MARKET  
STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

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## Section One: Background

### Introduction

#### Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the mechanisms open to the Council to redevelop and find an alternative purpose for the following sites:

- The Kingfisher Leisure Centre
- Cattle Market Car Park
- The Guildhall, Guildhall 1 and Guildhall 2
- Ashdown Road Car Park
- Market House

#### Our Vision

Kingston has so much to be proud of – heritage and history, arts, shopping, culture, green spaces and of course the beauty of the River Thames. We also have a rich mix of communities and businesses – people who live, work, study or visit and enjoy what the area has to offer.

The Council's strategic vision is for Kingston to be a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive borough, where residents are empowered to remain independent and resilient. This proposed Town Centre Development and Renewal Programme is at the heart of realising this vision. It is also at the heart of placing the Council on a path to financial self-sufficiency by enabling it to invest in vital public services.

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise that these are very challenging times and that many people are really struggling. The pandemic has also accelerated the underlying changes which were already taking place in the town centre. Action is needed to support the recovery in the short, medium, and long term. Our proposals look to embrace new opportunities and create a brighter future for Kingston.

Our proposals should respect and celebrate our historic assets, enhance and increase our green spaces and waterways, provide new spaces to enjoy, promote healthy living, invest in a sustainable future and, most importantly, support our communities and our people.

#### Our Ambitions

In November 2020, a Committee paper set out the ambitions of the Council to comprehensively redevelop our town centre assets.

These ambitions are:

- To make better use of our land and assets, providing value to the Kingston economy and strengthening the town centre's resilience
- To create more sustainable places which celebrate the diversity of green and blue spaces within the town centre landscape
- To provide good quality housing for town centre living
- To bring stability for businesses in Kingston town centre through higher footfall
- Reduce the Council's carbon footprint through the rationalisation of their assets
- To provide more accessible places for residents
- To encourage more visitors to engage in the heritage of the town by integrating the cultural offer with our existing historic assets
- Improve the public realm and work with private and public sector partners on the delivery of a Master Plan for Kingston linked with the Kingston Vision.

As the owner and main occupant of these sites, the Council needs a strategy for our workplaces and how we plan to ensure continuity of service in delivering these ambitions. All these considerations are aligned with the Council's transformation programme and will form part of the Future Workplace Strategy being developed during the course of this year.

## **Our Plan**

Based on the market research and evidence-based reports commissioned to date, the recommended uses across the sites are:

- Leisure use on the existing site of Kingfisher Leisure Centre;
- Hotel use for the Guildhall;
- Mix of commercial and residential uses across the other sites.

These proposals are considered to meet planning ambitions and make a healthy connection to neighbouring developments.

Our priority is to replace the leisure centre with a new community leisure and cultural destination for everyone to enjoy, wherever they live in the borough, whatever their age, background or needs. We know many people have really missed this valuable amenity. We want to create a new destination which celebrates the neighbouring library and museum and provides outdoor spaces which are right for our residents and visitors, significantly enhancing this part of Kingston.

Our dynamic workforce is embracing innovation and technology to transform already excellent services in the face of new world realities and financial challenges. With more of our staff working remotely during the pandemic, we have been looking at the ways in which we operate as a council, and how we can move services closer to our residents. Our current offices need significant investment, are energy inefficient and are not easily accessible. We believe that the Council's finances should be used to deliver vital services for our residents and not on maintaining our office space.

That's why we are thinking about how we can find new appropriate uses for our buildings and invest in Kingston's future. The Guildhall is an iconic, historic building, which we want to respect and protect. This is also a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the Hogsmill River, creating a new public space for people to experience and enjoy.

## Policy and Planning Context

### Kingston Vision: Re:Imagined Kingston Town Centre 2035

Re:Imagined Kingston Town Centre sets the agenda for change and provides a strong narrative to drive recovery and confidence in the town centre. This framework for change sets out how the council plans to improve the town centre, by:

- Diversifying the offer including a mix of uses and new typologies
- Testing opportunities and options, including development capacity
- Creating an investor focused proposition to act in synergy with the Council's investment programme.

The full report with its technical evidence base will form part of the Local Plan review.

The framework sets out strengths and opportunities in the form of objectives, including those centred around economic recovery and development, following the principles of sustainability and climate emergency agenda. It proposes a number of activities or 'moves' to make change possible:

- **Concentrate:** redirect development energy and footfall to the core.
- **Connect:** improve and promote walking and cycling with sense of gateways into the town centre
- **Create:** character areas, building on the existing educational, cultural, and natural assets
- **Curate:** provide a sense of place and activities for routes in the centre, both day and night

Strategic Stakeholders were engaged during the production of the Framework. The key feedback points included:

- Commitment to Kingston
- Quality of the offer with public realm and experience at the heart of the centre
- Challenges faced by retail even before COVID-19
- Changes in retail patterns – shift to online sales
- Looking for ways to diversify
- Requirement for strong leadership coming out of COVID-19
- Looking to work in partnership with the Council

This high-level Framework will be used to guide the inevitable physical and economic change to the town centre over the coming decade, not only from private development but for the purposes of Council owned sites such as the Guildhall campus, Ashdown Road Car Park, and the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market Car Park site. The proposed redevelopment and mobilisation of these large sites is a necessity and will help provide a much-needed catalyst for positively transforming the fortunes of the town centre. By delivering new quality homes, jobs and accessible public open spaces, the Council is taking a place-leading role in regenerating and revitalising the town as part of its social and economic journey of recovery.

The redevelopment of Council's sites will help deliver opportunities for environmentally sustainable growth with a focus on transformation of the southern and central areas of Kingston town centre. In keeping with the Framework, the aim of the Council's programme is to:

- Provide community infrastructure like new leisure facilities and learning provision
- Enhance the visitor offer and user experience
- Improve wellbeing for residents by delivering new and enhanced green and blue open spaces
- Unlock new cultural offers
- Provide modern adaptable workspace hubs for businesses
- Maintain and enhance a strong civic heart and sense of place
- Introduce new and diverse types of homes including affordable town centre living



## RKTC Recovery & Investment Programme

In addition to developing the Re:Imagined Kingston Town Centre framework, the Council and partners are developing a programme of public realm and refurbishment projects in the town centre. The RKTC Recovery and Investment Programme's objectives are to:

1. Create a recovery and reinvestment rolling pipeline of physical projects, with a series of two year 'quick wins' delivered to enable and promote new cultural and economic activity, kick start job creation, visitor activity and return consumer spend to 2019 levels.
2. Develop strong and extensive partnership with key town centre stakeholders.
3. Define and express Kingston's ambition as a place in which to invest, build and do business in response to the immediate needs of the pandemic and longer-term.

Key deliverables of the programme are:

- An agreed programme of 'Early win' COVID-19 recovery projects that deliver rapid physical outputs and social and economic outcomes over next two years in the town centre
- To commence and/or deliver around five recovery projects from the adopted RKTC Streets and Spaces Strategy by Spring 2022
- To work with town centre partners like Kingston First to attract resources, collective support and inward investment.

## Planning Context and Strategy

Kingston Town Centre is recognised in the Local Plan and new London Plan as an Opportunity Area for *significant* change. In addition to this, the government has a particular drive at present to encourage living and working in town centres, being particularly important in a post-covid world. In principle, the proposed regeneration of the Guildhall Campus and the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market align with these strategic aspirations and can seek to support the sustainable growth of the town centre.

The planning strategy is centred around the degree to which the development proposals will accord with the relevant planning policy, identifying the constraints and balancing these against the planning benefits and reducing risk where possible, with an aim of securing a recommendation for approval.

In seeking to meet the project brief and to optimise the development potential of the sites, consideration must be given to the 'planning balance'. The Development Plan is the starting point for all planning decisions and the planning benefits of the proposed developments must be weighed against the potential harm to the Plan and other material considerations.

Various factors such as viability and affordable housing provision and high-quality design will play into the mix of achieving a suitable 'planning balance'. Both the Kingfisher and the Guildhall sites contain heritage assets and are within their settings. Therefore, the degree of 'heritage harm' (or enhancement) versus the planning benefits of the proposed developments will be a further key consideration.

Therefore, the Council has appointed planning consultants Temple Group to advise on the extent to which the development proposals accord with the RBKuT Local Plan, London Plan, National Planning Policy Framework and identify those conflicts which will need specific attention (See figure 1). It will be vital for the wider project team to demonstrate the planning benefits of the schemes and explain how these benefits will offset any perceived negatives, collectively and clearly. This will be communicated through various stakeholder meetings and in the planning submission documentation.

At this stage, the anticipated points of contention are the application type, public realm, design, tall buildings and massing, impact on heritage, environmental impacts of the scheme (EIA screening will be undertaken for both sites), sustainability, provision of affordable housing and overall scheme viability.

Following the Business Case, engagement will be secured through a Planning Performance Agreement with RBKuT Development Management team. Discussions are also intended to be had with RBKuT's Design Review Panel, Historic England and the GLA. There are other stakeholders who need to be engaged on the project including, for instance, the Environment Agency. Meaningful conversations with the community will also be required, to reduce the planning risk.

In addition to the London Plan and Local Plan, other key policies we have considered, and will continue to consider, as we develop proposals include:

- **The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019):** The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides an overarching policy framework for new housing and development to come forward and enable good planning decisions. The purpose of the NPPF is to deliver sustainable developments which by definition do not compromise the ability of future generations to plan effectively to meet their own needs. Sustainable development is required to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits which are mutually supportive to existing communities. Whilst there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF, there is also a requirement for development to reflect local need and be well designed.

The NPPF requires local authorities to engage in development planning in a positive and creative way, working in partnership with other strategic bodies and where possible supporting the delivery of new homes including affordable housing. The NPPF expects new homes to be planned strategically as part of larger scale development proposals with a view to community building through delivering a range of unit sizes and tenure mix.

National policy supports a strong and competitive local economy based on a diverse range of uses with a focus on town centre vitality and the important role this plays in the local community. The NPPF highlights the importance of health and wellbeing and the need to plan for active lifestyles in our towns including the protection and enhancement of local greenspaces. Planning for sustainable travel, making effective use of land, addressing climate change and conserving natural landscapes and heritage assets are all pillars of national policy.

- **Build Back Better, Our Plan for Growth (March 2021):** The goal of the Government's 'Build Back Better' report is to support growth through investment in infrastructure, skills and innovation whilst transitioning to a zero-carbon economy.

**Figure 1: Anticipated Planning Risks for all sites (at this stage)**

Risk item	Risk description	Effect	Comments
Affordable Housing	RBKuT local plan policies and London plan policies on affordable housing. There is a risk of a relatively low capital receipt generated due to affordable housing requirement	Impacts viability and capital receipt	Subject to negotiation with RBKuT
	Provision of affordable housing below policy target threshold of 50% (RBKuT and GLA) and the need to justify by way of a Financial Viability Assessment.	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Subject to negotiation with RBKuT
Massing	Height and massing perceived to harm existing built heritage assets.	Impacts programme through delays arising from objections. Impacts on the ability to obtain planning permission.	Details of design and justification through affordable housing offer. Pre-application engagement will lower this risk.
Archaeology	Impact of scheme on archaeological heritage.	Impacts programme through delays arising from objections. Impacts on the ability to obtain planning permission.	Suitable surveys and assessment can lower risk
Biodiversity/ Nature	Impact of the scheme on existing natural habitats and species and potential for net gain (and in relation the Guildhall Campus, the Hogsmill River)	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Suitable surveys and assessment can lower risk
Open Space	Impact of the scheme upon designated open space (Kingfisher and Cattle Market sites)	Attract public objection and impacts ability to secure planning consent	If building on some open space is required by the development this must be offset with provision elsewhere on site.
Residential Amenity	Amenity impact on the properties in proximity to the development proposals and future occupiers of the residential dwellings on site i.e., noise, air quality, daylight sunlight, overshadowing.	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Assessment and review of the massing by the relevant technical consultants and input into the final design should lower risk
Application Type	The content and approach to outline or hybrid applications will need to be considered in relation to their ability to demonstrate appropriate design.	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Subject to agreement with RBKuT (and likely the GLA).
Public Realm	Suitable integration of the sites within the existing Town Centre and providing meaningful public realm	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Pre-application and community engagement lowers this risk
Public Objections	Potential for public objections given high profile nature of the sites	Impacts ability to secure planning consent	Community engagement lowers this risk



## Public Engagement

Given the significance of the Kingfisher, Cattle Market car park and Guildhall campus in the town centre, for local communities in Kingston and in line with RBKuT's Community Engagement Framework, the Council has carried out a first phase of engagement on the future of these sites. The core focus of this engagement has been a 'listening' exercise to understand the local communities' priorities for the sites to help inform and develop the vision for them.

This engagement aimed to reach out as far as possible and give everyone an opportunity to find out about and feedback on the evolving proposals for these sites. Residents, students and visitors, interest groups, schools and businesses and other key stakeholders, of all ages and backgrounds, have been engaged to find out what is important to them and what they would like to see on the sites.

### Summary of activity

The Council commissioned London Communications Agency to support its in-house corporate communications team with this exercise. The Council will undertake further engagement and consultation on the plans in the summer for the sites should they progress.

The main principles of this first phase of engagement have been to:

1. Be inclusive by doing everything we can to reach a wide range of people from different ages and backgrounds that make up Kingston's communities
2. Be open and transparent by engaging early and being honest about what is possible on the sites
3. Offer a range of feedback mechanisms to give people different ways and opportunities to engage and give their comments
4. Commit to ongoing engagement letting people know that there will be further opportunities to have their say on what happens on these sites

The listening exercise took place between 18 March and 25 April 2021. The central pillar was an engaging digital survey, accessible from the *Kingston: Let's Talk* web platform. Additional feedback mechanisms were also set up for people without internet access or those who wanted to give their comments in other ways.

A full list of activity which took place is set out below:

- An engaging digital survey hosted on *Kingston: Let's Talk*. This survey, comprised of eight questions, asked people:
  - if they used and what they used at the Kingfisher before it closed in December 2019 and what they would like to see in a new community leisure destination.
  - what they would like to see in new, improved public outdoor spaces at the Kingfisher and Guildhall campus.
  - what is important to them if the historic Guildhall building is repurposed to ensure future generations can continue to enjoy it
  - what they would like to see as part of the redevelopment of the wider Guildhall campus
- In addition to the main digital survey a separate children's survey was set up and promoted via schools and the Library service, to capture feedback from people under 18.
- A children's activity sheet was distributed to schools and children asking them to show or tell us what they would like to see in a new leisure centre. It is hoped that we will be able to display these ideas on the new hoardings around the Kingfisher site.
- A series of meetings took place with different organisations and groups, comprising:
  - Kingston Museum and Libraries staff (11 March)
  - Kingston Academy (31 March)
  - Achieving for Children (multiple meetings)
  - Ed Davey MP (15 April)
  - Kingston First (16 April)

- Friends of the Kingston Museum (16 April)
- Rose Theatre (19 April)
- Kingston University (21 April)
- Creative Youth (27 April)
- South Thames College Group (28 April)
- Kingston Royals swim club (30 April)
- Kingston Quakers (meeting to be confirmed – week commencing 03 May)
- Two public webinars which gave people an opportunity to ask questions and give their feedback.
- A dedicated email address and freephone number were set up and widely promoted on all materials.

The listening exercise was widely promoted in the following ways:

- Letters issued to a range of stakeholders and community organisations informing them of the consultation and seeking to set up a meeting with them.
- A two-sided flyer with details of the survey, dates of the online meetings, email address, freephone and a QR code, distributed to over 17,000 homes and businesses in a wide radius around the sites.
- Information displayed on seven digital screens around the town centre.
- Large PVC banners with information about the consultation displayed at the Kingfisher, Kingston Museum and Library and Guildhall sites.
- Over 70 posters displayed at Council locations across the borough. The poster was also translated into Korean and distributed to community groups via Ward Councillors.
- Social media advertising on Facebook and Instagram.
- Advertising in the Surrey Comet.
- Press release to local print and broadcast media which led to editorial articles in addition to the Leader's column in the Surrey Comet.
- Organic social media posts across the Council's channels.
- Posts were put up on a number of different local Facebook groups.
- Articles included in a wide range of Council and local community newsletters.
- Information included in the Council's bulletin for schools.
- A 'toolkit' including the press release, a newsletter article, social media posts, a poster and flyer shared with the Council's strategic communications partners for them to help disseminate the information.
- Communication with staff and council members.

## Materials promoting our consultation in April 2021

**Transform Kingston**  
Published by Toni Knox · March 25 at 12:19 PM ·

We are looking at ways in which we can breathe new life into Kingston town centre.

**What would you like to see in new outdoor spaces in Kingston?**

**Have your say**

Quiet places      Places to eat and drink

**TRANSFORM KINGSTON**

TRANSFORM-KINGSTON-SURVEY-2021.CO.UK  
**Transform Kingston**  
Take part in our online survey.

[Learn More](#)

**TRANSFORM KINGSTON**

**SHAPING THE FUTURE, CELEBRATING THE PAST**

Breathing new life into Kingston town centre – the Kingfisher, Cattle Market car park and Guildhall campus sites

Kingston Council is looking at ways we can creatively reposition and diversify the town centre and want to work with the whole community to reimagine Kingston, so it is ready to thrive in a post-Covid world.

We are looking to comprehensively redevelop the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market car park to create a new destination for leisure, well-being, learning and culture.

We are also exploring options for how we can make better use of the under-used council offices on the Guildhall campus to better serve Kingston.

We are still at the drawing board stage of these proposals. We want to understand what is important to you so we can create something wonderful for Kingston – so join the conversation!

**WE WANT TO HEAR YOUR VIEWS**

You can provide your feedback by:

- Completing our online survey [www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/transform-kingston](http://www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/transform-kingston)
- Register online for one of our webinar sessions:
  - Saturday 17 April 10am - 11am
  - Monday 19 April 6pm - 7pm
- Calling us on freephone 0800 044 3916
- Emailing us at [transformkingston@kingston.gov.uk](mailto:transformkingston@kingston.gov.uk)

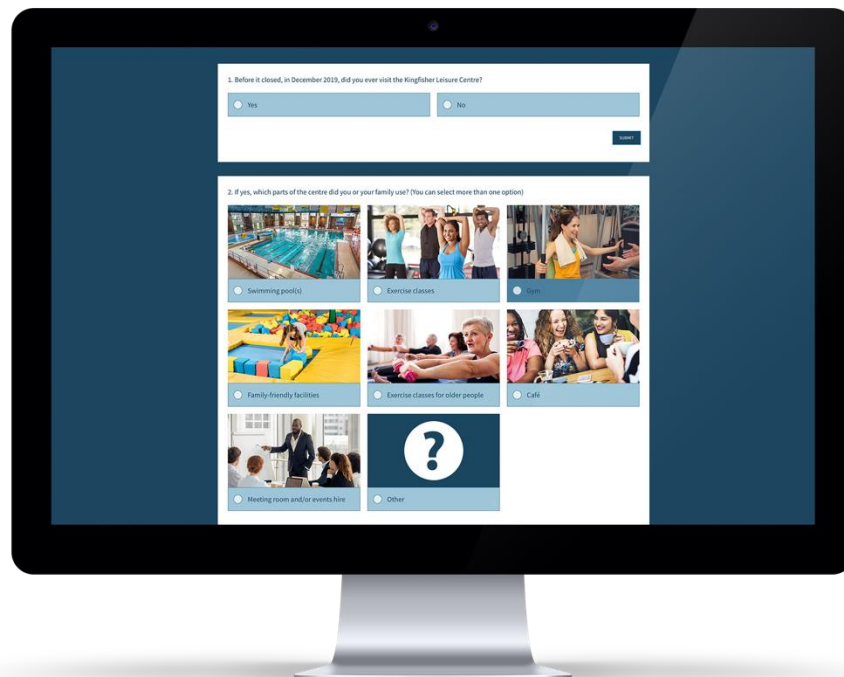
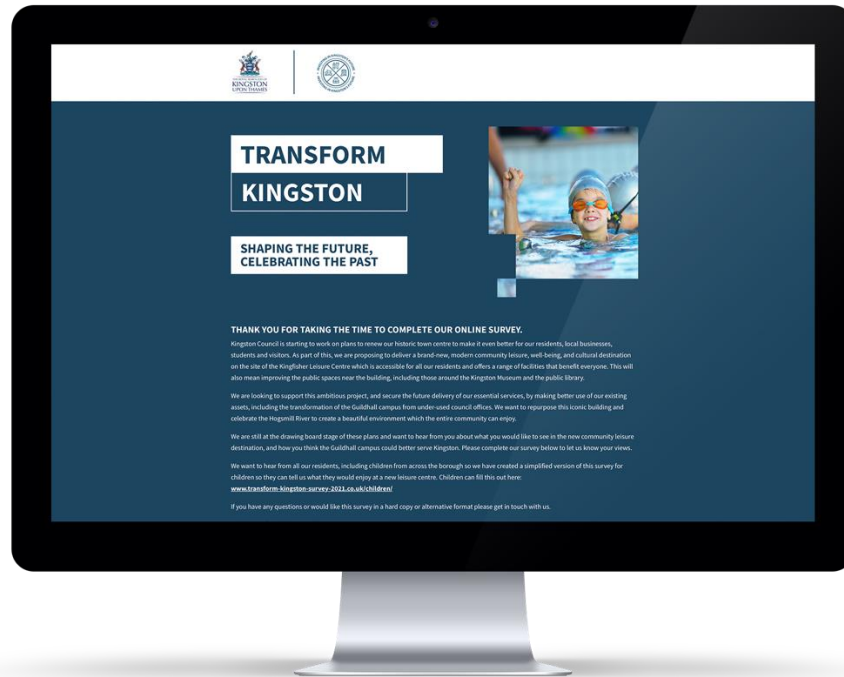
If you have any questions or would like to receive our survey in a hard copy or alternative format, please get in touch with us.

**TRANSFORM KINGSTON**

The Kingfisher Leisure Centre closed in 2019. We want to build a new one. Show or tell us what you would like to see in a new leisure centre for Kingston.

Sign your work

First name **LEO** Age **8**

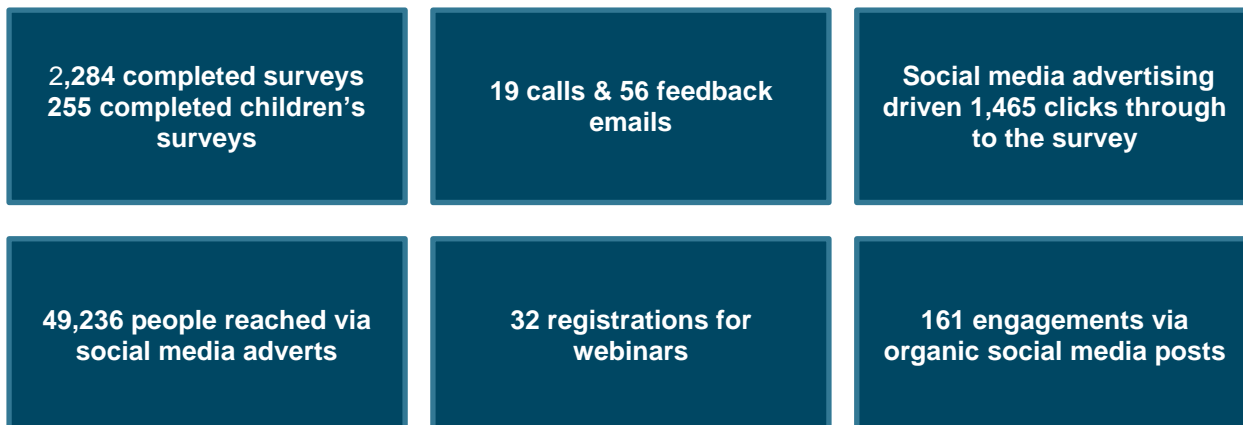








## Summary of feedback



The Council received over 2,500 responses to the survey between 18 March and 25 April 2021 hearing from a wide range of people. From those that completed the Equality Monitoring Form (73%), we have summarised the demographics of our respondents below.

### Gender

64% of survey respondents were women, which is in line with the Council's experience elsewhere with these kinds of engagement activities. With 81% of the respondents having used the Kingfisher facilities prior to their closure, the demographics of the survey likely closely match those of the leisure centre's user base.

66 people put 'prefer not to say', with just six identifying as 'other'.

### Age

The team had some success reaching a younger audience, receiving over 200 responses to the 'under-18' survey. The main survey's audience was largely over 35 years old, which although in line with what the Council normally sees for these kinds of consultations, we would like to broaden in the next phase.

During this consultation, the team held useful meetings and made connections with a range of interest groups, including those that target younger people such as Achieving for Children, Kingston University, South Thames College Group, Creative Voice and The Kingston Academy. We intend to build on these conversations in the next phase, for example by holding specialist workshops for younger people and potentially partnering with youth organisations to encourage young people to be involved in the design process.

### Race and Ethnicity

To engage with people from a wide range of backgrounds the team reached out to several organisations, for example:

- Kingston Race and Equalities Council
- Kingston LGBT Forum
- Kingston Association for the Blind
- MIND in Kingston
- Refugee Action

Materials were also translated into Korean and shared.

The demographic data collected however does show that an overwhelming white audience was reached and further work should take place in the next phase of engagement to reach a wider, more diverse, audience.

This will be built into the planning of the next phase of engagement. It will be achieved by working more closely with ward councillors and their networks, working with the Council's housing teams and existing organisations like the Race and Equalities Council and potentially being able to do more face-to-face engagement as lockdown restrictions ease.

### **Disabilities and health conditions**

Around 15 per cent of respondents who answered the monitoring question about disabilities, identified as having a disability or health condition, with a further 8 per cent stating they would rather not say. According to the World Health Organisation, around 10 per cent of the general population have disabilities. Accessibility was a strong trend in the survey responses and during meetings with stakeholder groups, with a significant number of people raising concerns about how inaccessible the Kingfisher was and calling for better accessibility in any new facility.

### **Survey Results**

Set out below are the main findings from the survey and summarised the themes which emerged from the comments people gave in the free-text boxes in the survey.

#### **Headline findings**

- Most respondents (81%) had visited the Kingfisher Leisure Centre before it closed in 2019
- The majority of those who had visited the Kingfisher used the swimming pool most frequently (40%), with the next most popular facilities being the café (22%). Family friendly activities (10%), exercise classes (10%) and the gym (9%) were next most popular.
- Those that did not use the old centre stated this was because of the quality of services (21%), then because they had never heard of it (20%) and then location (15%). A small but significant number (9%) put cost as a factor.
- When asked what they would like to see in a new facility at the Kingfisher, the overwhelming majority wanted to see swimming facilities (19%), with cafes and restaurants (14%), outdoor space (13%) and a climbing wall (12%) being the next most popular options. There was a fairly even split amongst options, with support evident for all suggested uses.
- For new and improved outdoor spaces, respondents were most supportive of 'places to sit and relax' (24%) and 'places to walk or exercise' (24%), although again there was strong support for all options (quiet spaces – 20%, play spaces – 15%, places to eat and drink – 15%).
- We asked respondents what was most important to them if the council repurposes the Guildhall – a very large percentage said continued public access (78%), that it be kept for future generations (93%), that landscaping be improved (93%) and that it be made more sustainable (92%), was very or quite important.
- The two most popular options for how the Guildhall campus could be repurposed were events space (21%) and a 'boutique hotel and/or leisure' (20%). However, there was no option that received significantly less support, with 17% for offices or workspaces, 17% for homes adapted for later living and 16% for private and affordable homes.
- A significant number of people (444) wrote in comments for the question about the Guildhall campus and these were largely centred around three trends:
  - anti-development sentiment, especially development of private homes or high-rise buildings,
  - a desire to see community and/or communal uses here, such as commercial units, events venues, educational facilities for young people and adults, arts or cultural uses,
  - a firmly held belief that the existing building must be preserved.

884 respondents submitted answers to Question 8, which asked people if they had any further comments. The main themes from this feedback and some selected quotes can be seen below.

1. The most popular comment centred around a new swimming pool (29%). A usual remark was the desire for the pool to be 50m in length (11 respondents) or concerned the provision of lessons (8 respondents).

- *"The swimming pool should be reopened / replaced as a priority."*
  - *"I have been incredibly worried about the future of The Kingfisher pool and was going to write to our MP. The leaflet that came through our door today is such welcome positive news."*
2. Many respondents expressed a wariness of residential development: excessive height and profit-driven developers. (15%)
- *"What Kingston most definitely does NOT need is more flats. The whole town is becoming overrun with new housing developments which is putting a huge strain on resources."*
  - *"Kingston is in real danger of losing its character with inappropriate or over-development."*
3. A frequent request was for more sport and gym facilities (8%). The most common specific ask was for a squash court (19 respondents) whilst a climbing wall (7 respondents) tennis/table tennis (3 respondents) and badminton (2 respondents) were also mentioned.
- *"As a Kingston resident for most of my life, having grown up here, I used the Squash courts in the Kingfisher leisure centre all the time. As there are hardly any Squash courts locally building squash courts in any new leisure centre on the Kingfisher site will be invaluable for me and my friends/ family."*
  - *"More places for sport - tennis - squash/gyms"*
4. Another common mention was for general health and leisure services. (7%)
- *"I'd like the development to put emphasis on wellbeing and mental health facilities/classes/provision."*
  - *"In a growing town like Kingston it is essential that we have publicly owned and run facilities that support health and wellbeing."*
5. Desire for a community and/or function space (6%). The most frequent suggestion was for a music venue (13 respondents).
- *"After losing the Hippodrome, I think it is vital that more space is made for live music in the town."*
  - *"A community hub is important more so now after the pandemic - a place for multi generations to be a part of and enjoy."*
6. Several respondents expressed a desire for more outdoor space in general. (6%)
- *"The new plans need to look at the borough as a whole, understand the real change to more active travel and general movement, the need for quality green space for mental and physical health, and the need to restore the wildlife habitats that we have destroyed."*
  - *"Make the place greener and nicer to walk around"*
7. Improvements to public realm. (5%)
- *"That part of Kingston is a bit cut off from the centre and yet is well served by public transport. The Hogsmill needs to be accessible for walking the length of it as far as possible."*
  - *"Would be nice if there were more benches/places to sit and enjoy the day around Kingston."*
8. Demands for the council to respect the heritage of Kingston. (4%)
- *"Have respect for the historic aspects of Kingston, instead of tearing down and building over the top of perfectly adequate public buildings that already exist."*
  - *"For me it's quite important to see the cultural heritage is preserved."*

Other less frequently cited comments included:

- The general affordability of the centre. (4%)
- The accessibility of the proposals. (3%)
- Concerns over the impact of any development on local infrastructure, particularly roads. (3%)
- Retention of the museum and library. (2%)

### Children's Survey

In addition to the main digital survey, a separate children's survey was set up and promoted via schools and the Library service, to capture feedback from people aged under 18. This focused only on the Kingfisher and was accompanied by an activity sheet for young children to draw their ideal leisure centre. The survey received a total of 255 responses.

Headline findings from this survey were:

- 79% of respondents had visited the Kingfisher centre before it closed
- Of these, most (80%) went to use the swimming pools, with the next most popular facility being the café (43%) and others being significantly less popular.
- Most respondents wanted to see swimming pools in the new facility (77%), and other popular options were a climbing wall (61%) and cafes and restaurants (59%).
- For outside spaces, all options had significant support, though places to sit and relax (65%) and places to walk and exercise (59%) were the most popular.

### Written Comments

We received a total of 155 written comments. The main themes which emerged from these were:

#### 1. Activities for young people, such as a skate park (27.8%)

- *"Teenage sport ... like skate boarding, outdoor gym, basketball"*
- *"Over lockdown I've been trying to find places to skate and there is only one place that has smooth tarmac and no cars or bikes and it's the Elizabeth walk way along the river which is really busy. I've seen loads of roller skaters, it seems to be more popular. None that I have spoken to have found a good spot to skate. Hype park is good. I think if we had a good place to skate it would encourage more people to skate together, making a social scene around it"*

#### 2. Swimming pool (21%)

- *"Swimming pool and teaching pool an absolute must, with at minimum the capacity of the kingfisher leisure centre prior to Dec 2019 but preferably much larger and better."*
- *"The pool is a real priority. There is only private swimming pools around now!"*

#### 3. Green spaces (13%)

- *"Environmental area - to attract bees, butterflies etc, bug hotels, bat boxes - an education area for schools and children to visit with family."*
- *"maybe a bit more green spaces to sit and relax because there is becoming less and less green space to hang out it just roads with loads of cars on them"*

## Stakeholder Feedback

The team has held nine meetings with stakeholders and groups, representing a range of local interests. The main themes which emerged are summarised as follows:

- **Town centre revival:** With the contraction of retail, many stakeholders felt that Kingston can no longer rely on its status as a shopping destination and needs to diversify to meet modern needs and continue to thrive. Several raised the need for an 'experience led' town centre.
- **Swimming pool and leisure facilities:** Many raised that the Kingfisher is a much loved resource and has been missed, stating that the leisure facilities should be prioritised in the delivery strategy.
- **Accessibility:** Some stakeholders raised the fact that the Kingfisher was not historically accessible to people with disabilities and that this should be put right in a new facility.
- **Kingston History Centre:** Several stakeholders raised the need for a new permanent home for the centre, possibly near the Library and Museum, given its current location in the Guildhall would be lost should the redevelopment plans progress.
- **Library and Museum:** There was widespread support for making more of these important buildings, and better connecting them to a new leisure facility to create a destination. Some stakeholders also felt that this could be an opportunity to improve or invest in the Library and Museum themselves.
- **Connectivity:** Some stakeholders noted that the Kingfisher site is an 'island' cut off from the town centre by the road network and connectivity into the centre is important. Many also expressed support for better pedestrian and cycling connections.
- **Green and blue space:** There was widespread support for work to open up the Hogsmill River, and to improve public green spaces across all these sites.

## Public Webinars

The project team hosted two online public consultation events via zoom on Saturday 17th April 2021 (10-11am) and Monday 19th April 2021 (6-7pm). A total of 51 people signed up to these events with a subsequent 31 attending.

Representatives from the Royal Borough of Kingston, architects FaulknerBrowns and community engagement consultants, London Communications Agency, were all in attendance to present the council's latest ideas and respond to questions live from the public. The project team also took the event as an opportunity to respond to some of the most frequently asked questions about the proposals. A total of 21 questions were asked across both meetings, all of which were responded to by members of the project team. At the event, attendees were also encouraged to provide further feedback via the Transform Kingston survey and project email, with these details presented on-screen during the Q&A.

The queries raised by attendees across both events varied, however, there were many questions about the current condition of the Kingfisher Leisure centre and what new facilities would be provided (28%). Attendees also wanted to understand more about the future of the Guildhall site and how the existing services provided within these buildings may be affected (23%).

## Analysis

Overall, there is demonstrable support for the delivery of a new leisure facility on the site of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre, from both survey responses and stakeholders. There is a clear enthusiasm for creating a new destination here with improved public space and better connections with the Library and Museum. In terms of facilities, a swimming pool is considered the priority, with most preferring a pool with swimming lanes as well as a teaching pool. Support for other facilities is fairly evenly split but there is a significant minority who raised their desire for the squash courts to be replaced.



There is also a trend towards support for social spaces, with many respondents calling for cafes, restaurants, and better public spaces where they can gather with friends and family. This was evident across both sites, and better public space was a real focus during stakeholder meetings. The suggestion to celebrate the Hogsmill River is particularly popular with survey respondents and stakeholders both seizing upon this suggestion and expressing their support.

Responses around the Guildhall campus demonstrate an even split of support for the various uses, with events space and hotel being the most popular, and all other suggestions seeing similar levels of support. There is a sense that people wish to still be able to access the building, for example by attending events here or having coffee or a meal, and this would be facilitated by a hotel use. Stakeholders were also broadly supportive of these uses, noting that a hotel might provide an events space, as well as supportive infrastructure for Kingston's existing cultural assets, such as a place for people to stay after visiting or catering for events.

There is demonstrable support for the Guildhall itself remaining council-owned and with public access retained, something which came up in the survey responses, public webinars and stakeholder meetings.

There is some evident suspicion about new homes being delivered in the comments from survey respondents but equally, the survey shows many people are open to this if done right. Private and affordable homes and homes for older people both achieved between 16% and 17% support in the survey, showing there is a less vocal but sizable group who are open to residential development in theory.

### ***Next steps***

If the Business Case is approved by the committee, further phases of focused engagement and consultation will take place as plans for the design are developed, from early concepts to more detailed designs before any planning applications are submitted.

The local community will be given opportunities and a variety of ways to feedback on the plans as they evolve, for the design team to consider.

## Our Heritage

These sites all sit within Kingston's historic town centre. With close linkages to the ancient market square, close proximity to the 12th Century Bridge and current placement of the first king of England's coronation stone, the considerations of heritage infrastructure are of significant importance as we develop these proposals.

In addition, the Kingfisher site sits next to Kingston's historic museum and library. These proposals seek to better connect these sites, transforming this into a culture and leisure destination for Kingston.

The Council sees this as a positive opportunity to enhance the town centre, increasing the public's enjoyment and engagement with their local heritage. To ensure heritage is at the heart of any plans for these sites, the council will be engaging throughout the design process with heritage experts.

The main principles by which the design and development will work by are:

- To create a resilient heritage estate which is focused on conservation and not preservation, future proofing access to Kingston's extensive history.
- A method of public engagement in the heritage estate which both informs the redevelopment of the sites whilst also laying the foundation for an enhanced sharing of Kingston's heritage.
- An architectural design which is sympathetic to existing heritage whilst also ensuring a sustainable estate is developed.
- To create a cohesive narrative about the town centre heritage, highlighting existing buildings and spaces, weaving them together to tell the story of Kingston.

### Historical context as a cultural destination

The Museum and Library are a crucial part of the fabric of Kingston's rich history. Very much connected, physically as well as historically, both are Grade II listed buildings, purpose built as a library and museum complex. A [video](#) made by one of the Museum Curator's relays the history of Kingston Museum which is recounted below and Historic England have a comprehensive record of the history of Library, Museum and Art Gallery on their [website](#).

A quote from Lord Rosebery's (Prime Minister, 1894-95) speech at the official opening of Kingston Museum on Monday 31 October 1904 encapsulates the original ambition for the development:

***... 'with a library, a museum and an art gallery of this scope and capacity, we have a building which should be a centre of intellectual illumination for the borough and for the district'***

From the 1880s, many leading Kingston residents were in favour of establishing a library and a museum in the town, especially Frederick Gould, who was mayor of Kingston twice. He donated a mass of archaeological and historical objects which formed the beginnings of the museum's collection. Another founding collection was the Muybridge Collection, bequeathed to the Museum by photographic and animation pioneer Eadweard Muybridge in 1905.

Kingston's first public library was established in temporary accommodation in 1882. Kingston Council raised a loan to finance a permanent building for the Library on the Fairfield in 1903. At this time Fairfield was used for allotments. The council asked Scottish American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to fund part of the Library's construction. Carnegie generously offered to pay the entire amount, which enabled the council to use the loan to build a museum in addition to the library. Carnegie funded the building of a staggering 2,811 libraries in Britain and the US. Mayor Henry Minnit laid the museum's foundation stone on 6 April 1904.

The Museum's primary purpose was educational and both Museum and Library were designed by architect Alfred Cox, who aimed to make the layout simple and well lit. The purpose-built Art Gallery now offers a programme of changing exhibitions. The gallery is lit by a skylight, which gives excellent illumination. Some local groups like Kingston Camera Club and the Thames Valley Art Society have

held annual shows in the gallery since it opened. For a while during the 1980s the Gallery was used as the Local History search room and the first gallery area was a Tourist Information Office which moved to the Market House in 1993. Heritage Lottery funding was acquired to refurbish the Museum between 1992 - 94 when the local studies service moved to alternative premises.

The Town of Kings Gallery was built as a lecture hall, which held up to 200 people, hosted talks, events and screened films, drawing considerable audiences in the days before mass television. Local organisations also hired the hall for meetings. It then became a library reading room and later, the local history room.

This demonstrates the building has a long history of being used for cultural events and activities. During the 1990s this double height room had its skylights blacked out and is now one of the permanent Museum galleries, displaying the history of Kingston's growth as a market town, then borough. What you can no longer see is that the room has a vaulted roof and used to have a stage complete with sink, which was used during scientific lectures.

Throughout the shop and the first gallery, are stained glass windows. These were taken from the old Town Hall in the marketplace when the new Guildhall opened in its current location in 1935. The windows were designed by Dr. W.E. St Lawrence Finney, who was a local historian and mayor of Kingston seven times. The windows in the shop include Saints and Martyrs, which contains the names of the seven Saxon kings who may have been crowned in Kingston; King Athelstan, and First Charter, which commemorates the 700th anniversary of the first charter, granted in 1200, and names the four trading companies who controlled all business in Kingston until 1835. The object portrayed in the middle of the window is the Alfred jewel.

The local collection policy was created when the first curator was employed in 1959 and the collections have been more closely linked to Kingston since that date rather than donations from the residents of Kingston that don't necessarily have a Kingston connection.

The main road was built as a relief road in 1998 and cut off part of the Museum's garden. At this time, the road changed its name from Fairfield West to Wheatfield Way. The routing of the one-way system to pass down the new Wheatfield Way in front of the Museum was a massive change in setting and access, which was accelerated with the development of the Cattle Market car park.

The book 'Kingston Museum 1904-2004' by Shaan Butters (2005) refers to leisure and recreation in the borough and cites education as being a long-standing focus for the Council which was supplemented in the 1980s by leisure and heritage and increased promotion of adult education classes, libraries and other cultural facilities. The Kingfisher pool was opened in 1984 replacing the Coronation baths that closed in 1980, and offered a pool, a learner pool, function rooms, a cafe, squash courts and gym.

## Historical foundations to modern place making

The delivery of the redevelopment will seek to provide an enhanced community offer building on the history of cultural and leisure development on this site.

The Kingston Museum and Library complex, adjacent to the Kingfisher Leisure Centre site, provides the opportunity to create a 'Cultural Destination' in a joined-up way which has not been achieved in previous developments. As purpose built, Grade II listed public amenities, the library and museum provide a gateway to the borough's heritage and a community space for arts and cultural activities.

Coupled with a refreshed leisure offer at the Kingfisher Leisure Centre, this part of the town centre will become a culture and leisure destination, offering an 'afternoon out' for families with a swim, trip to the museum and an event in the library all in one location. Our proposals seek to enable people to move seamlessly across the sites guided by improved way finding and public realm. There are significant opportunities for community and cultural events to be held in the open spaces in the area and through quality design to blur the crossover between inside and outside spaces.

The Knight Foundation have recently released a [report](#) 'Adaptive Public Space: Places for People in the Pandemic and Beyond' based on research in America and looking at how public spaces both indoors and outdoors need to be designed to enable equitable communities who are connected through the spaces designed and provided. We now have an opportunity to implement these principles here in Kingston.

The History Centre currently based at the Guildhall could return as an addition to the Cultural Destination with some imaginative re-thinking of the library and museum spaces. There is also the opportunity to re-think the heritage offer for the town centre and the borough through a new approach which not only focuses on heritage buildings and collections but also on how to make heritage digital and bring it into the community through touring physical objects and via the collecting of stories from the community. The space adjacent to the Museum can be for events to engage a broader audience.

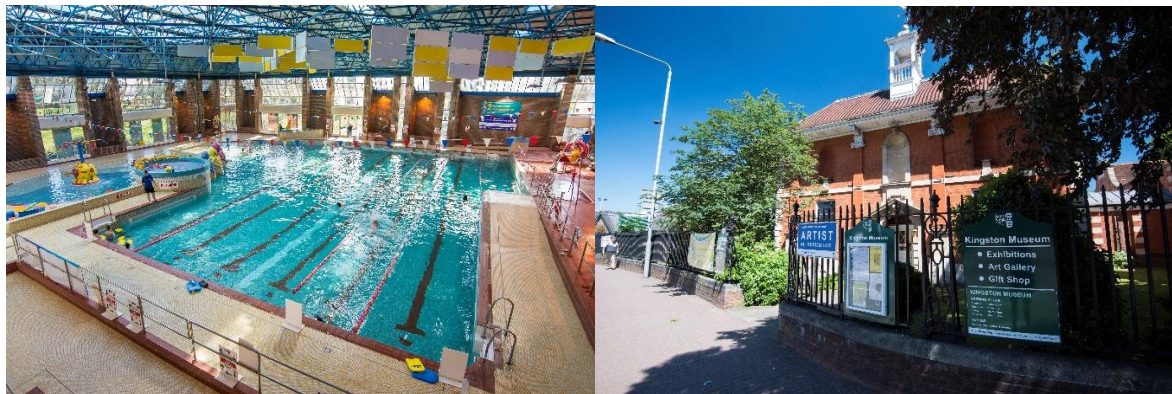
Across the town centre there are a range of heritage spaces and assets which can be weaved together to create a cohesive narrative. Trails and walks can join up All Saints Church, the Coronation Stone and the riverfront to enable people to explore and discover the town's rich heritage. Through a touring object and digital approach, it is possible to bring collections out of the museum and into town centre spaces such as pop-up shops, the Rose Theatre and the Market House to present heritage in a dynamic and engaging way. People will discover the heritage of the town during their visit, so a day out in Kingston is one of experience.

There is now an opportunity to create a Culture, Leisure & Heritage offer where the venues will bring seamless opportunity for the community to use them to meet their needs at a time when they need them to be available. Through these spaces, people can engage in a variety of activity that include accessing learning and sharing their stories to be added to the Heritage collections, making them vibrant and relevant.

Leisure taster activities such as rowing machines or indoor/outdoor bowls could happen in the library space and pop-up library and arts activity could be delivered in the Leisure Centre. One team will drive the offer between the spaces adding to the engagement in a space that is green and sustainable. A place where there is something for everyone.

## Section Two: Our Recommendations

### The Kingfisher Leisure Centre



#### Our Recommendation

We are recommending that the Council proceed to the design and planning phase for the Kingfisher Leisure Centre. To achieve this, we are proposing to allocate a budget of £40 million for the delivery of the new leisure facility. The proposed funding of this project will be facilitated through future decision making.

#### Vision

The comprehensive redevelopment of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre site offers the opportunity to deliver a contemporary, leisure focused community building that is an exemplar in design and at the leading edge in terms of sustainability. Besides incorporating modern, sustainable technologies, the new building will also encourage 'social sustainability', explored through the bringing together of complementary, community focussed uses. These should include a consideration for health and wellbeing, learning and cultural focussed uses.

Bringing such activities together in a new, identifiable town centre 'destination' will provide a stronger purpose for people to visit the area, building or buildings as well as having the potential to create a truly dynamic environment that provides an inspiring and welcoming setting for people to come together and share positive experiences.

The context in which the new community leisure building is located is as important as the activities that take place within; the redevelopment of the site will explore opportunities to extend leisure activities out into the surrounding public realm, offering the potential for both formal and informal exercise. The surrounding green, open spaces can be significantly enhanced, be more purposeful and, with a well considered approach to design, will provide accessible, safe and community focused places and spaces that are inclusive in nature and prioritise the health and wellbeing of the borough's residents, workers and visitors.



## About the site



The site of the now closed Kingfisher Leisure centre forms part of the three-acre site which also includes the Cattle Market car park. It is located just north of Fairfield Park and is directly adjacent to the Kingston Library and Kingston Museum, both Grade II listed buildings, as a purpose-built library and museum complex.

The existing leisure facility had to be closed in December 2019 due to structural issues relating to its roof which resulted in the site needing such significant repair, redevelopment was the clear both best sustainable and financial option.

### The Leisure Strategy

In late 2019, the Council initiated a refresh of its leisure strategy to align with current demand. This Leisure Facilities Needs assessment work is now concluded and can be found [here](#). This strategy has been closely considered in the development of early plans for the Kingfisher Leisure Centre redevelopment.

## Cattle Market Car Park



The Cattle Market site offers the principal opportunity to integrate the whole of the wider Kingfisher site with the town centre. We see the opportunity to improve connectivity, changing the principal access and public route across the site by creating a larger and more attractive area of public realm on the north west corner, with improved connections to the town centre beyond and south across the site. This would be an important space for both people arriving by foot from the town or by bus from Fairfield bus station.

This new public space would provide for orientation and wayfinding, from which there would be full visibility of the leisure centre entrance, a potential link to the listed building and views to Fairfield Recreation Ground to the south. This would encourage people to walk through a new urban square at the heart of the development, surrounded by complementary uses and landscaped to allow people to sit and relax, enhancing the setting of both the leisure centre and listed buildings. This strategy would allow users to walk through the site in a pedestrianised environment, away from the main road carriageway, allowing access to all facilities and providing an animated and safe route to the leisure centre and park beyond.

The site affords the opportunity to provide new homes for the town centre, including affordable, in a wide range of unit types and sizes. The ground plain could be a mix of flexible space to surround the public realm with public uses and animated frontages, complimentary to the leisure centre, library and museum and enhancing the overall community destination. There is also the opportunity to develop residential amenity space and improve biodiversity on the site.

The Cattle Market site would be developed to ensure it would not preclude development of Fairfield bus station in the future. The TfL bus station, however, affords further opportunity and the Cattle Market site will be developed in such a way that the scheme could also work as part of a larger development in partnership with TfL if there is an appetite for this approach.

## **Planning Considerations (Kingfisher and Cattle Market sites)**

The site is recognised within RBKuT's adopted Eden Quarter Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), providing key guidance in the design for the redevelopment of the former Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market Car Park.

Though the leisure centre and Cattle Market are intended to be delivered via separate planning application, a holistic design approach will integrate the two sites. There is an opportunity to include the parcel of land to the north of the site which is leased to Transport for London. Further engagement with TFL would be required to determine if this is a feasible option.

### Planning Constraints

There are planning constraints affecting the site and therefore some level of planning risk associated with developing the sites. The *key* issues have been identified as:

- Achieving a cohesive design, which delivers the project brief and meaningful public realm connecting the site with Kingston Town Centre;
- Delivering viable development, especially in relation to affordable housing;
- Potential for heritage harm to the Grade II Listed Museum and Library, their setting and the setting of the Fairfield/ Knights Conservation Area and the Old London Road Area of Special Character to the north of the site;
- Potential for impact on local views of the Fairfield Recreation Ground (designated Local Open Space);
- Potential heritage harm upon archaeological remains on the site;
- Amenity implications of developing residential units near to a busy and noisy road (Wheatfield Way and Fairfield North); and
- Re-provision of the Monday Market which, prior to covid, operates on the Cattle market surface car park.

### Planning Opportunities

The following planning opportunities have been identified for the site which will balance against the potential risks:

- Town centre location with excellent public transport accessibility (PTAL 5/6a) is a naturally sustainable location for development for walking and cycling and thus the site can support a 'car free' approach. Blue badge parking will be provided in line with minimum standards;
- The Local Plan supports the principle of comprehensive redevelopment of the Leisure Centre and the enhanced facility will support the local economy and employment in the town centre in line with planning policy objectives;
- Potential for a highly sustainable Leisure Centre which meets BREEAM 'excellent' standards;
- Strategic and local planning policy promotes the enhancement of town centres through mixed-use or housing-led intensification;
- Optimisation of residential growth (including affordable homes) for the borough in a sustainable town centre location;
- A new high quality public realm reflecting policies of the Local Plan and Eden Quarter SPD including, improving wellbeing, and encouraging dwell times in the town centre;

- Enhancing the setting of the Grade II Listed Museum and Library and celebrating these assets through design-led regeneration;
- Potential re-provision and enhancement of the Monday Market on site; and
- Improving the setting of the Fairfield and Knight Park Conservation Area (which the Leisure Centre site falls within).



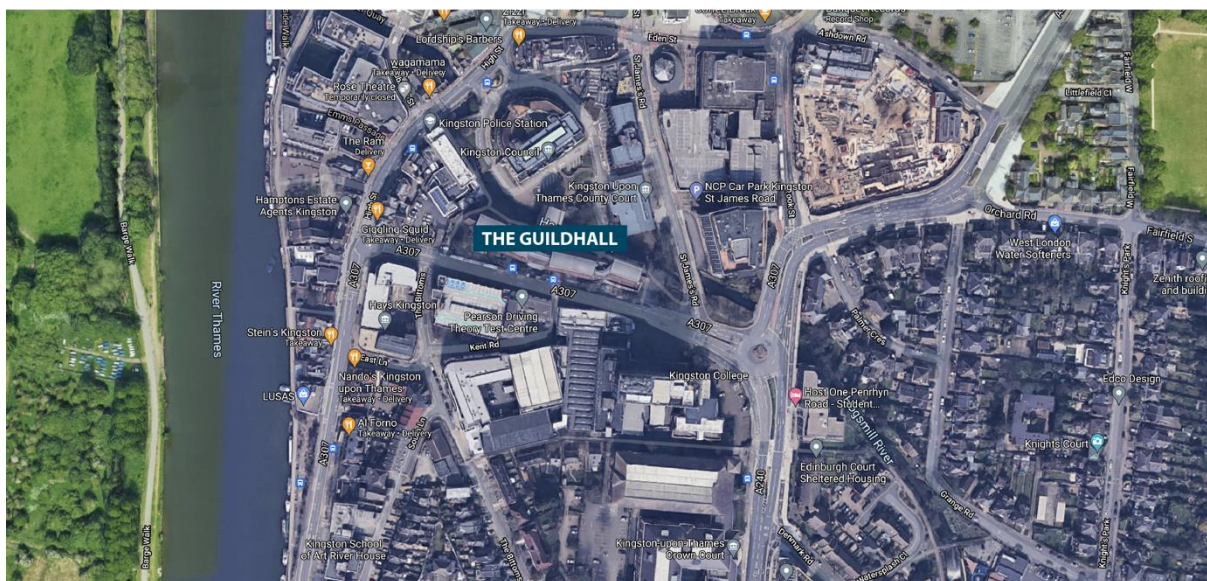
## The Guildhall Estate

### Our Recommendation

We are recommending that the Council carry out further due diligence on the delivery options for the redevelopment of the Guildhall campus, including Guildhall 1 and Guildhall 2 and the repurposing of the Guildhall building itself.

This chapter provides an update on the project team's findings so far in our exploration of options for the Guildhall Estate.

### About the site



The Guildhall Estate (or 'campus') is located within Kingston Town Centre. The site sits on the southern border of Kingston's commercial centre and is surrounded by a mix of predominantly commercial uses including retail, offices and public service buildings including a Police Station, Car Parks, Drapers Court and County Court.

The Guildhall campus is situated on the Hogsmill River and sits within 200m of the River Thames (approx. 5 minutes' walk). It also sits between the green open spaces of Bushy Park, Hampton Court Park and Richmond Park, which are all within a short walk or cycle ride.

The site is approximately 3.2 acres (1.3 hectares) in total. It occupies a significant portion of an island site in the town centre, bordered by the High Street and Bath Passage to the north, St James' Road to the east and Kingston Hall Road to the south. The Hogsmill River runs through the centre of the site and the campus is enclosed by the Police Station to the west, a terrace of properties known as 4-18 Eden Street to the north and the County Court building to the south east corner.

The campus itself is made up of 3 separate buildings; the Guildhall, Guildhall 1 and Guildhall 2. The site also features some surface car parking bays, cycle and waste storage space and a small garden courtyard. The site benefits from an internal road which provides vehicular access.



## The Guildhall



The Guildhall (GH) was built in 1935 and is Grade II listed. The building was designed by architect Maurice Webb and is of significant heritage value. The property is currently used as the council's civic building and administrative headquarters. The Council Chamber and associated suites are used for a range of formal and informal meetings as well as hired for other events. The Registrar's office and Kingston History Centre are accommodated in the basement of the building. The small cellular office space across the building is utilised by some council services as well as a call centre/provider and Kingston Chamber of Commerce.

The Guildhall building is in average condition, structurally sound with the building fabric intact, but currently requiring remedial works. Additionally, the building has very limited sustainability credentials and would be highly expensive to retrofit with forecasts at over £14m to meet lower energy consumption targets.

Given the building's listed status, any proposal to demolish and redevelop the building would be unthinkable and highly unpopular with the community (see Chapter Three on public engagement). Therefore, we consider the best option for the site is to:

- Consider what long term functions the Council needs to deliver from the site and how it might generate further revenue income.
- Consider an alternative use for the site, such as residential or commercial opportunities including leisure or hotel.

In exploring the possible options, the residential option is likely to render itself unviable. The building style and shape does not lend itself to conversion into homes and is unlikely to meet planning objectives.

Therefore, the option of a hybrid between commercial, leisure and residential is most likely to provide a positive output from both a viability and planning perspective.

### Guildhall 1 and 2

Guildhall 1 (GH1) is a secondary quality office building of brick construction and is five storeys in height. Currently GH1 is predominantly vacant, with a Council owned community interest company, Achieving for Children, occupying space on the ground floor and the rest of the building providing informal meeting space as and when required. The building is currently undergoing a light cosmetic refurbishment project.

Guildhall 2 (GH2) is a secondary quality office building of brick construction and is also five storeys high. There is a lower ground floor car park. The building is T-shaped with a large statement staircase in the centre space. The building accommodates most core council services, with Jobcentre Plus occupying part of the ground floor.

The occupancy of this building even before the COVID-19 pandemic was very inefficient and studies have shown the Council's requirements have reduced significantly considering changes caused by the pandemic. Both buildings are also in need of significant improvement to meet modern sustainability standards and the costs of retrofit to achieve this are projected to be in the region of £23m.

Given the Council no longer requires the space and the condition of the existing buildings, the opportunity to redevelop GH1 and GH2 is clear.

The market for office space in Kingston needs a significant revival given that the quality required to meet business needs is not currently available. It is therefore challenging to project the potential revenue that could be generated from a new build office block on the site. However, initial market analysis suggests that it would be a viable consideration. This is further strengthened by the introduction of Unilever HQ into the site adjacent attracting a more buoyant office market.

The sites of GH1 and GH2 could also be considered for residential development which would diversify and create a good neighbourhood mix. The exploratory work through the design process will look at the different formations to balance both the neighbourhood sustainability and viability of the project.

## **Planning Context**

The Guildhall proposals are less advanced than the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market Car Park site, but the site is excellently placed to deliver a scheme which optimises the potential of the town centre through refurbishment of the Listed Guildhall, demolition of Guildhall buildings 1 and 2 and delivery of new homes and compatible town centre uses.

At this stage, we have identified the most obvious constraints and opportunities to be as follows:

### Planning Constraints

- Potential for heritage harm to the Grade II Guildhall, its setting and setting of the Kingston Old Town Conservation Area and the Thames Side strategic area of special character and other Listed buildings/ structures in proximity to the site e.g., the Grade I Listed Clattern Bridge, the Coronation Stone, historic buildings on Market Place, Eden Street and High Street;
- Potential for impact upon the Hogsmill River which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation;
- Delivering viable development, especially in relation to affordable housing; and
- Potential impact upon archaeological remains on the site.

### Planning Opportunities

The following planning opportunities have been identified for the site:

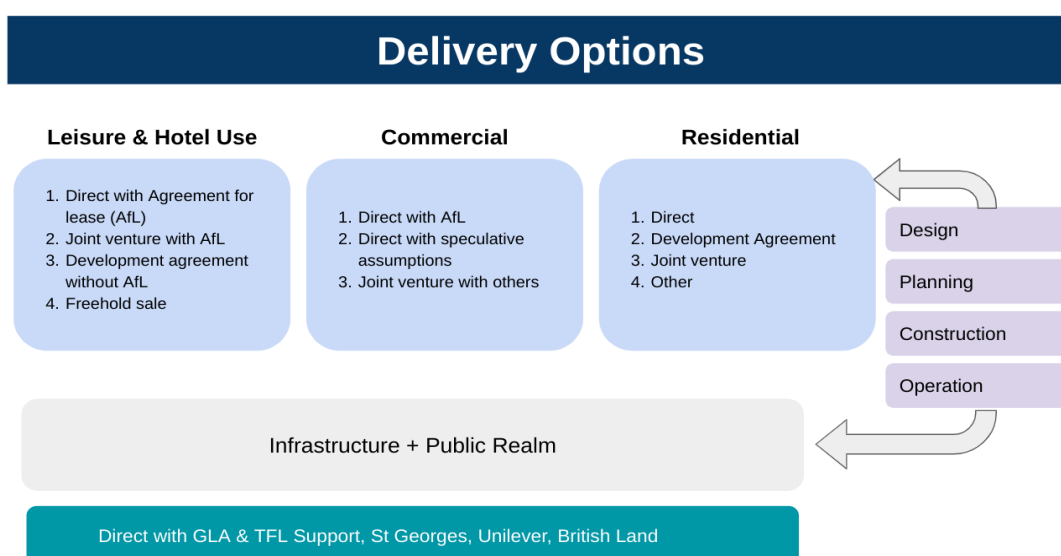
- A new approach to a flexible workspace model and securing a high standard of inclusive and accessible design;
- A change of use of the existing Guildhall building to another use i.e., a boutique hotel can ensure the longevity of the building and protection of its heritage N.B a consolidation strategy will be required to overcome any net loss of office space in the town centre;
- The adopted Area Action Plan (2008) for Kingston Town Centre supports redevelopment of Guildhall 1 for town centre and civic uses;

- A strategic and local planning policy position which promotes the enhancement of town centres through encouraging mixed-use or housing-led intensification;
- Potential benefits to new accommodation from the river setting, especially where the river is 'opened-up';
- Optimisation of residential growth (including affordable homes) for the borough in a sustainable town centre location;
- The potential to incorporate land outside of the Council's immediate control e.g., the Police Station would expand the site to create a logical and comprehensive regeneration opportunity;
- Town centre location with excellent public transport accessibility (PTAL 5/6a) is a naturally sustainable location for development for walking and cycling and thus the site can support a 'car free' approach. Blue badge parking will be provided in line within minimum standards.

## Delivery Options

We are not yet in a position to recommend a delivery route for the repurposing of The Guildhall and redevelopment of GH1 and GH2. Instead, we would recommend a further period of research and due diligence into the various delivery routes for such a project.

We have identified the following delivery options which the project team would now like to explore in more detail. These assume a combined leisure/hotel, commercial and residential use.



Further information around delivery options is provided in the Red Loft report in Appendix 1.

## Ashdown Road Car Park

### Our recommendation

We recommend the council proceed with the negotiations for the Ashdown Road car park and dispose of this asset to secure a capital receipt to help fund the redevelopment of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre and Cattle Market car park sites, subject to further consultation with the administration.

### About the site

Ashdown Road car park is a surface level car park with Eden Street to the East and sits strategically between the Guildhall Estate and Kingfisher Leisure Centre & Cattle Market Car Park.

Its purpose has therefore been brought into consideration of this master planning and development process as has Cattle Market car park. As we develop plans for these sites, an assessment of car parking capacity and requirements will be undertaken.

### Opportunity

The island site is an ideal opportunity for high density mixed use or residential development that would align with the Council's housing strategy.

Along with the Council's land holding, there are existing ownerships on the site by a major housing developer who are keen to explore options with Kingston to de-risk the site from a planning point of view and develop here.

The Council is currently seeking a valuation of land and further development appraisal work on the site which will establish the delivery strategy.

## Market House

### Our Recommendation

To ask the Committee for a capital allocation to support works at the Market House to make it accessible for public and civic uses therefore ensuring conservation whilst also enabling the building for a more efficient use.

### Opportunity

The Market House is a stunning heritage asset set within the market square of Kingston main town centre with a long history. It is Grade II Listed and sits adjacent to one of the most exemplary Churches in London, All Saints Church, which is Grade I listed and itself highly successful in gaining support from places like the Heritage Lottery Fund to support its flexibility of purpose and access bringing things like new art experiences to the Town Centre.

The Market House was let on a short-term basis to a retailer who unfortunately ceased trading in January 2021 and of late the building has been utilised as a COVID-19 testing site. The Council therefore were able to expedite their plans to consider the future options for the building and initiated some specialist consultancy to look at the condition of the building and how to make it more accessible for an enhanced public and civic use. The Market House plays into the wider heritage led regeneration and can help support the options to enhance existing services like registrations or use of buildings for public meetings. There are commercial benefits to Councils by providing high quality experiences for births and marriages in particular and this is going to be explored further. The project is still very much underway in consultation with its close neighbours like All Saints Church ensuring there is a chance for other interested groups to get involved. Progressive conversations are underway about other highly important historical assets like the Coronation Stone and the experience of visiting which are further explored in the heritage section of this business case which all forms and sits within

the wider strategy of heritage led regeneration. In order to progress the necessary works to sustain use of this much-loved heritage asset it is requested that a capital budget is allocated as part of this next stage of works.



## Section Three: Delivery

### Resource Implications

1. The overarching business case incorporates a number of distinct project areas that will ultimately complement and contribute to the totality of a fully sustainable and resilient financial model. All capital expenditure will be self-financing either through capital receipts or through the use of revenue income for prudential borrowing.
2. Elements of the programme require large capital investment sums whilst other elements will deliver capital receipts and revenue income streams. Specifically, the request for £40m investment in the Kingfisher Leisure Centre will need to be cost neutral for the Council. Funding will comprise a combination of capital receipts and revenue income streams, the latter providing the funding for prudential borrowing.
3. Throughout the next stage of the planning process, finance will work closely with the project team to provide and test opportunities and alternatives that complement the delivery brief and provide the most balanced and reliable funding sources.
4. The business case appended to this report starts to show the financial opportunities that are available to RBK to address the funding of the programme and will be explored in more detail over the forthcoming months. In summary, a combination of the funding opportunities laid out within this report will be explored to fund the development of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre including:
  - a. Leisure revenue income streams: Indicative income streams provided by our partners have estimated a net income stream from the activities associated with the leisure facilities. This revenue stream could fund in the region of £12m+ prudential borrowing for capital expenditure.
  - b. Capital Receipt from Cattle Market/ Guildhall land sale/Ashdown Road Car Park: The attached business case from Red Loft provides a number of opportunities for Royal Borough of Kingston to acquire capital receipts, whose values remain commercially sensitive, for each development area. Each of the scenarios presented will need to be considered and agreed through the relevant governance process.
  - c. Revenue savings from reduced Facilities Management costs: Current facilities management costs for the Guildhall estate total approximately £4m. Although alternative accommodation will need to be sought for staff returning to the office it is considered that this will be a much cheaper alternative. Early indications are that a revenue saving of £0.5m - £1m could be achieved. This in turn could support prudential borrowing of £10m+.
  - d. Grant funding: Grant funding from other government agencies has always been a key part of the RBK funding basket for capital programme delivery. This programme could attract significant external funding as part of its key delivery objectives.
  - e. CIL or S106 contributions: All new developments are subject to CIL/s106 contributions to their local planning authority. RBK would collect these funds and have the opportunity to invest them in the local infrastructure and public realm as set out in the relevant agreements.
  - f. Guildhall Estate revenue contributions: Initial work into the delivery of a hotel on the Guildhall site has been positive. It is unclear at the moment what the level of any income stream from this element of the programme would be. However, any additional revenue stream could help support prudential borrowing.

## Summary of Potential Capital Funding Sources

Funding Source	Possible levels of funding available
Leisure Revenue Income	£12m +
Capital Receipt from Guildhall Estate	Commercially sensitive
Revenue savings from Guildhall Estate	£10m +
Grant Funding	Unknown
CIL or S106	Unknown
Guildhall Estate Revenue income	Unknown

5. The funding of the £40m investment relies on decisions and discussions for all the potential funding sources. Should the Council be responsible for borrowing the full £40m required the impact on the revenue general fund would be £2m+ per annum. Affordability of this level of debt financing would need to be considered within the parameters of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and setting of a balanced budget.
6. The Market House investment funding required of £1.2m will be funded by Invest to Save borrowing supported by the savings derived from the asset costs of the current estate. The revenue cost will be in the region of £60k, an amount that is achievable based on our initial findings.

## Delivery Timeframe(s)

The detailed delivery programme for Transform Kingston can be found [here](#).

## Legal Implications/ considerations

Transaction Required	Legal Issues	Actions to manage risk
1. The Cattle Market Car Park ('the Car Park') and Kingfisher Leisure Centre ('the Leisure Centre')	<p><b>TITLE ISSUES</b></p> <p>(1) NSL (a carpark company) has an 'ad hoc' arrangement with the Council to use the Kiosk on site on a temporary basis. NSL does not pay rent, there are no restrictions on use and no documentation to formalise the arrangement.</p> <p>(2) NSL (carparks) also entered into a contract with the Council for parking services at the Cattle. The contract runs for an initial period from 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2022 and this can be extended by the Council for a further 5 years.</p> <p>(3) The Car Park is situated above an underground car park which extends beneath Fairfield Bus Station. The Council is the tenant of a 999 year lease ('the Lease') of that underground car park and London Bus Services is the landlord ('LBS').</p> <p>(4) The Council benefits from an option to repurchase the Fairfield Bus Station from LBS (subject to conditions). If LBS wishes to sell the Fairfield Bus Station, the Council has the right of first refusal to purchase.</p> <p>(5) The Leisure Centre is subject to a restriction on title in favour of The English Sports Council ('Sport England'). The restriction expires on 24 March 2036 and restricts any 'disposition' of the Kingfisher Sports Centre, without written consent of Sport England. No further information is given regarding what the restriction is protecting or what consent is required for specifically.</p> <p>(6) The Leisure Centre is subject to a Class C (IV) Land Charge in respect of an Estate Contract created by a Deed dated 11 June 1983 between the Council and London Industrial Leasing Limited (this company is still active (Co No: 00913007) and the</p>	<p><b>TITLE ISSUES</b></p> <p>(1) Blake Morgan have issued a 'Tenancy at Will' to document NSL's occupation. NSL are reviewing. The Council can determine the Tenancy at Will at any time they want NSL to vacate the Kiosk.</p> <p>(2) The parking contract can be terminated by the Council at any time on 6 months' notice in writing. When vacant possession is required, the Council should aim to terminate both the parking contract and the Tenancy at Will referred to in (2) above at the same time.</p> <p>(3) In the Lease, the Council covenants not to make any structural alterations to that part of the car park beneath the Fairfield Bus Station, or construct any new building or structure, or to cut or interfere with any structural and load-bearing parts of the car park beneath the Fairfield Bus Station without the consent of LBS. These covenants will need to be considered on development of the Property and for audit purposes, the Council may decide to keep LBS appraised of the development proposals.</p> <p>(4) If the Council intends to exercise its options it must do so before 28 March 2023 when the 'Option Period' expires.</p> <p>(5) The term disposition is not defined in the Land Registration Act 2002 but most restrictions refer to transfer of a registered estate or of a registered charge, so on that basis development of the Property may not be caught by the restriction and consent may not be required. We are in the process of further investigating the restriction with Sport England's Consent and Novations team who have confirmed</p>

	<p>nature of business is financial leasing). A copy of the Deed was not lodged at Land Registry or the land charges service so we are unable to identify the land that is subject to or benefits from the Deed.</p> <p><b>SEARCH RESULTS</b></p> <p>A Local Authority search revealed there are private footpaths in the vicinity of the Property; footpath from Fairfield North to Kingfisher Leisure Centre, from Fairfield East to Wheatfield Way and from Fairfield Road to the rear of Kingfisher Leisure Centre. The search revealed there are no public rights of way or pending applications or legal orders to record a public right of way over the Property.</p>	<p>this entry relates to a reward with unique reference 2012019807 and they have been able to retrieve a document from their archives which is being reviewed.</p> <p>(6) Further investigations should be carried out internally as the Council would have registered the land charge at the time and a copy may have been held. The existence of the land charge is a potential concern for development and in anticipation of such, the Council may wish to explore an indemnity policy to cover against London Industrial Leasing Limited making a claim for breach of any rights. However, if the land charge has been discharged or ceases to have effect an application can be made by the Council to cancel the registration.</p> <p><b>SEARCH RESULTS</b></p> <p>The private footpaths could refer to land previously used as a public right of way, land accessed by the public for at least 20 years without being prevented from use or where the landowner gives permission for use. We have commissioned a Search of the Index Map (SIM search) which will reveal whether there are any third party titles, pending applications for registration or any cautions against first registration within the Property boundary. A Highways Search should be commissioned by the Council to confirm the exact position of the footpaths.</p>
2. Requirement to meet best value/consideration in the disposal of any land or asset	<p>Requirement to ensure that the Council complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.</p> <p>Recognising that a failure to do so could result in a legal challenge arising from contractors within the market sector, impacting the reputation of the redevelopment and the Council, together with potential financial penalties to be borne by the Council</p>	<p>Establish the strategic route to market to appoint a provider to undertake Estate Management and Valuation related services. This will lead to a Provider to support the Council in meeting the best value consideration in the disposal of any land or asset.</p>
3. Procurement of professional consultants to deliver through the	<p>Requirement to ensure that the Council complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.</p>	<p>Development of a procurement strategy which is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015,</p>

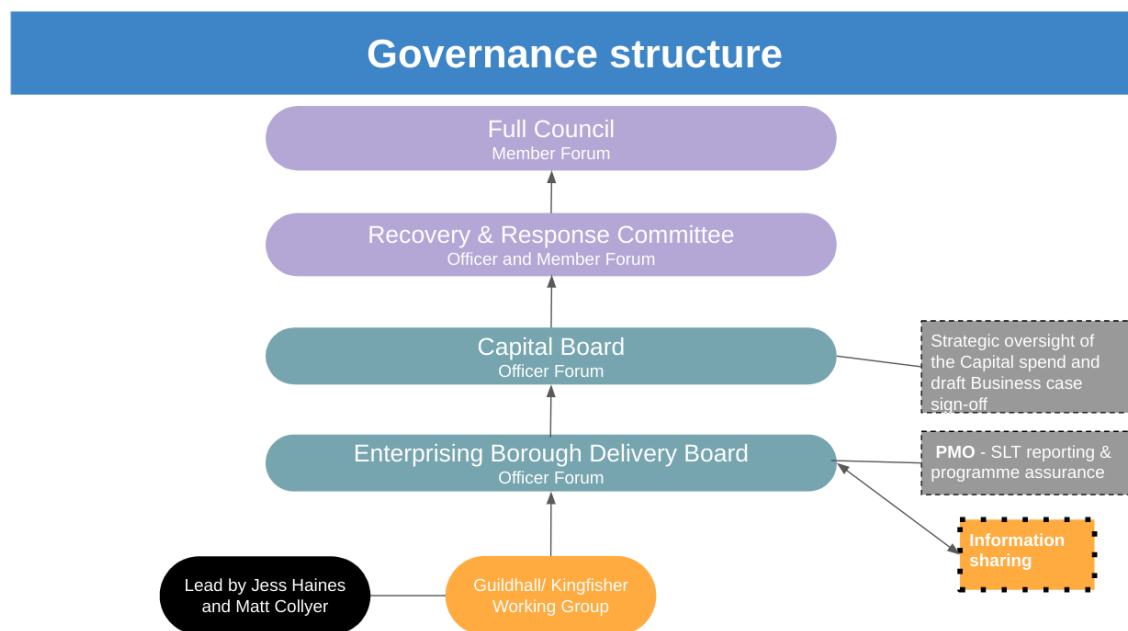


design and planning stages	Recognising that a failure to do so could result in a legal challenge arising from contractors within the market sector, impacting the reputation of the redevelopment and the Council, together with potential financial penalties to be borne by the Council.	<p>using nationally established framework agreements to procure services for local government bodies. Ensuring the Council delivers the vision for the development in accordance with best value for money.</p> <p>The contract terms for the successful tendered consultants will be prepared specifically for the Council ensuring that appropriate warranties, insurances and a 12 year limitation period are provided. The contracts will be future proofed and market standard to ensure their acceptability to future tenants, operators, funders and purchasers as appropriate.</p>
4. The entering of an Agreement for Lease (AFL) with a third party	<p>Any AFL would be require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deduction of title</li> <li>• Properly drafted construction obligations</li> <li>• No restrictions re tenants obligations to carry out commercial enterprises</li> </ul>	AFL requirements to be drafted and property and construction obligations fully considered.
5. The entering of construction contracts to enable the delivery of the sites	<p>Requirement to ensure that the Council complies with the Public Contract Regulations 2015.</p> <p>Recognising that a failure to do so could result in a legal challenge arising from contractors within the market sector, impacting the reputation of the redevelopment and the Council, together with potential financial penalties to be borne by the Council.</p>	<p>Development of a procurement strategy which is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, using nationally established framework agreements to procure works for local government bodies. Ensuring the Council delivers the vision for the development in accordance with best value for money.</p> <p>The contract terms for the successful tendered contractors will be prepared specifically for the Council ensuring that warranties, insurances and a 12 year limitation period are provided. The aim will be to ensure that the inherent risks of a construction project are the responsibility of the party best placed to manage that risk and that will provide for proactive project management. The contracts will be future proofed and market standard to ensure their acceptability to future tenants, operators, funders and purchasers as appropriate.</p> <p>Ensuring all planning applications have been approved before the contract commencement date for the successful tendered contractor.</p>

## Governance

The redevelopment programme will follow a robust programme governance. The Enterprising Borough Delivery Board provides a strategic space to oversee the programme and will provide a high-level summary to the transformation board (SLT).

The Capital Board provides a strategic oversight of this project as it sits within the Capital Programme. This board will establish a robust and effective governance framework which will evaluate and sign-off on the draft business case, monitor the progress of the capital project against key milestones and actual budget expenditure. The terms of reference can be found [here](#).



## Commissioning Strategy

This paper has set out a number of scenarios where the Council may pursue a strategy of direct delivery. To ensure the right skills and capacity for directly delivered projects of this nature, there will need to be a significant project team that includes internal officers and specialist consultants.

Once planning and design stages have concluded, the next stage will be setting out the proposed procurement strategy for the delivery of the design and main construction and building works.



## Appendices

**Appendix 1 - Commercially Confidential - Redloft Viability Business Case**  
**Appendix 2 - Commercially Confidential - KKP Leisure Facilities Need Assessment**  
**Appendix 3 - Commercially Confidential - LASR Emerging Findings Report**  
**Appendix 4 - Heritage Report**  
**Appendix 5 - Made in Kingston - Cultural Strategy**  
**Appendix 6 - Kingston Cultural Infrastructure Needs Assessment**  
**Appendix 7 - Commercially Confidential - Development Advice - Guildhall Kingston**

END