

Draft Tall buildings Strategy

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Tall Buildings Strategy and what does it do?

The Tall Buildings Strategy is an evidence base document which has been produced to inform the policies in the new Local Plan about the definition and location of tall buildings in Kingston.

It has been prepared to ensure that Kingston's new Local Plan meets the requirements of the London Plan, which directs all London boroughs to identify locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development and to set parameters for building heights.

It aims to give further guidance for developers wishing to propose tall buildings in the borough about what heights are acceptable and where, and for council planning officers and elected councillors to use as part of determining a planning application.

It does not hold the weight of a policy in a Local Plan, however it is a material consideration as part of the planning determination process.

Why has Kingston Council produced a Tall Building Strategy?

The council is preparing a Tall Buildings Strategy to ensure that the development of tall buildings in the borough takes place in the most sustainable locations, but also respects local character and heritage.

An earlier version of this document, the Emerging Tall Building Strategy, was published to support the consultation on the first draft of the Local Plan which took place from 28 November 2022 and 28 February 2023. A number of changes have since been made (see below).

The strategy will provide further guidance to the design and heritage policies in the Local Plan and in particular what is currently draft policy KD11 Tall Buildings. When the Local Plan is adopted all planning applications will be considered against the policies within Kingston's Local Plan. This tall buildings evidence base document will give specific guidance in relation to planning applications that propose buildings that are taller than their surrounding context. It will help to ensure that tall buildings are only developed in appropriate locations, and that proposals for tall buildings in areas not considered appropriate will not be supported.

Will this document mean that proposals for tall buildings, in locations considered ‘appropriate’, will now be automatically approved?

Any proposals for tall buildings which are in a location that is considered appropriate, will not automatically receive planning permission. Kingston’s numerous heritage assets, established character and important local views mean that the borough has a high level of sensitivity towards new development, so all planning applications for all - including tall - buildings would be expected to meet exemplary design standards and address all other policies set out in the new Local Plan.

Is this document seeking to allow more tall buildings to be built in the borough?

The Draft Tall Building Strategy is not a document which allows more tall buildings in the borough. It has been prepared to ensure that Kingston’s Local Plan is consistent with national planning policy and the policies and guidance in the London Plan, which directs all London boroughs to identify locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development and to set parameters for building heights. The strategy is intended to provide greater clarity for communities, developers and council officers regarding the appropriate locations for tall buildings, to help determine planning applications.

Following this engagement and when the document is finalised, it should be used by applicants to ensure developments are not out of context with the surrounding pattern of development.

What are the main changes made to the updated draft document?

The main changes made to the previous Emerging Tall Building Strategy are:

- A new map has been added which more clearly highlights the areas of the borough which are most suitable for tall buildings. This map overlays the factors relating to tall building suitability, such as public transport accessibility, proximity to town centre amenities and locations of existing tall buildings, which are an indication of an existing urban character.
- Sensitivity maps for each study area, and a combined sensitivity map has been created which includes conservation and heritage, views and open space. Buffers have been added around heritage assets to indicate greater sensitivity. These maps highlight where sensitivities are most concentrated in the borough.
- Some minor changes have been made to the extent of sites and locations considered appropriate for tall buildings.

What is Kingston Council now seeking views on?

While there is no statutory requirement for the council to engage on this evidence base document, due to the significant amount of interest in building heights during the consultation for the first draft of the Local Plan we are sharing an updated Draft Tall Buildings Strategy for your feedback. This is so that those who wish to do so, have an opportunity to review and comment on it before it is used to inform the Tall Buildings policy in the next version of the new Local Plan (the Publication version), which we will consult on next year.

We would like to learn if there:

- Is any technical information or evidence that you feel should be considered as part of this strategy
- If there are any factual errors or omissions in the strategy

We appreciate that there are wide-ranging views on building heights. However as this is an evidence base document to provide an objective assessment we are not asking whether you agree or disagree with the findings of the strategy.

How do I submit my comments?

We have prepared a Draft Tall Buildings Strategy to review and we have created an online [interactive version](#) to summarise key information which allows users to locate and zoom in on sites around the borough.

If you have any comments on the Draft Tall Buildings Strategy you can:

- Complete the online survey on the council's engagement website - www.kingstonletstalk.co.uk/planning/draft-tall-buildings-strategy
- Send an email to localplan@kingston.gov.uk
- Write to Strategic Planning Team, The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Guildhall 2, High Street, Kingston, KT1 1EU

When does the engagement end?

The engagement will be open until 19 December 2023.

What happens after the engagement closes?

Following the engagement period, council officers will review all feedback received in relation to the Draft Tall Building Strategy. Where appropriate, officers will propose amendments to the draft document, which would seek to address the concerns or comments received.

A final document will then be used to inform the preparation of the Local Plan – Publication version (Regulation 19 stage), which will be published for public consultation, currently scheduled for spring 2024

It will be used formally following adoption of the new Local Plan.

How do I find out more about the Draft Tall Buildings Strategy?

You can read the Draft Tall Building Strategy in the 'Documents' section of the engagement website page.

We have also created an [interactive online version](#) of some of the pages within the document, so that you can more easily search and zoom in on the maps.

If you have any further questions please email localplan@kingston.gov.uk