



Kingston Local Plan

**Statement of Common Ground between
the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and
The London Borough of Merton**

August 2026



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
Background	3
2. Strategic Geography	4
3. Strategic Matters	5
Meeting identified housing needs within the borough and wider unmet housing needs	5
Meeting identified employment land needs within the borough and wider unmet needs	5
Meeting the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the borough and wider unmet needs	6
Cross Boundary Development	6
Sports and Recreational Facilities	7
Infrastructure	7
Transport	8
Town Centres and Retail	9
Minerals and Waste	9
Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment	9
Climate change mitigation and adaptation	10
Record of agreement:	10
4. Governance Arrangements	11
5. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation	12
6. Signatories	13

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) is a documented record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities in addressing cross-boundary matters during the planning process. This SoCG has been created to show that Kingston's draft Local Plan is built on effective collaborative efforts regarding cross-boundary strategic issues, aligning with the requirements of paragraph 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on Maintaining Effective Cooperation.
- 1.2. This Statement of Common ground addresses key strategic matters between the two signatories, the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Merton, as relevant to the preparation of the Kingston Submission Draft Local Plan and its progression to public Examination.
- 1.3. Strategic matters overseen by other organisations will be addressed in other SoCGs, in order to streamline the process of reaching agreements with each party.
- 1.4. This SoCG concentrates on the strategic cross-boundary issues being tackled and the progress made in cooperative efforts to address them.
- 1.5. In the context of London, most strategic issues that extend beyond borough boundaries, such as housing targets and major growth areas, are primarily addressed by the London Plan. London Boroughs are working to implement the policies in the London Plan. Some of these policies are particularly relevant to this SoCG and are summarised in the key strategic matters below.
- 1.6. The document is intended to be 'live', updated as circumstances change. Please see the Governance Arrangements section of the statement for more details.

Background

- 1.7. Kingston Council prepared the Publication Draft Local Plan and will publish it for consultation between 6 July and 4 September 2026. This is the version of the plan that the Council considers to be 'legally compliant' and 'sound' and will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in December 2026.
- 1.8. To date, Kingston Council has consulted on:
 - 1.8.1. Early engagement on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) between May and July 2019
 - 1.8.2. Further engagement on the draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) between July and September 2021
 - 1.8.3. A First Draft Local Plan (Regulation 18) between November 2022 and February 2023.
- 1.9. The Council will consult on a Publication Draft Local Plan (Regulation 19) between July and September 2026.

2. Strategic Geography

- 2.1. This section sets out the factual position regarding cross boundary matters.
- 2.2. The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is a London borough and, together with the other 31 boroughs and the City of London Corporation, sits within the regional governance of the Greater London Authority. Kingston is bordered by the London Boroughs of Richmond, Wandsworth, Merton, and Sutton. In addition, Kingston shares its boundaries with the Surrey borough councils of Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, and Mole Valley which are also covered by Surrey County Council - the borough councils are responsible for planning, and the county council is responsible for strategic functions and services such as transport and education.
- 2.3. The area shown in Map 1 has been identified as the strategic planning area for the purposes of this SoCG. These boroughs represent key cooperative partners and contain areas most likely to be directly affected by the policies set out in the Kingston Local Plan.



3. Strategic Matters

- 3.1. Kingston's new Local Plan seeks to address a number of key strategic matters. Each is considered in turn. The SoCG identifies where there are specific areas of joint working or cooperation. The parties agree to work together through several actions, which are detailed as records of agreement. Where relevant, this SoCG also highlights where agreement on key strategic matters have not, as yet, been reached.
- 3.2. Both parties will continue to communicate in a collaborative manner and engage with each other through 1-2-1 meetings, informal telephone and email correspondence and statutory consultation exercises.

Meeting identified housing needs within the borough and wider unmet housing needs

- 3.3. Kingston's identified housing land supply falls significantly short of the total homes required through 2043. With a current five-year housing land supply of only 1.48 years, the Council faces an acute delivery challenge.
- 3.4. Whilst Greater London is considered to be the strategic housing market area for the purposes of the London Plan and its SHLAA, the more detailed assessment at a local level identifies five sub-regional areas (North, East, West, South and Central). Kingston is identified within the South area along with immediate neighbours, Merton, Wandsworth, Richmond and Sutton.
- 3.5. Kingston's emerging Local Plan will seek to deliver at least 964 homes per year (against a target set by the London Plan of 9,640 homes between 2019/20 and 2028/29), and Merton's Local Plan will seek to deliver 9,180 homes over the London Plan period in a stepped annual target. There is identified capacity to meet this requirement for the first ten years of the Local Plan period for both boroughs, meaning that housing delivery is not a cross-boundary issue.
- 3.6. In April 2026 Kingston approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs, including housing delivery. Merton has advised that they have recently adopted their local plan and is not in a position to assist in Kingston's housing target.

Meeting identified employment land needs within the borough and wider unmet needs

- 3.7. Kingston's Employment Land Review (ELR) 2021 identifies a requirement to plan for 59,050 sq.m of new employment floorspace up to 2041. However, when comparing our estimated demand against all currently identified supply (including potential intensification of existing sites), the ELR identifies a significant overall shortfall of up to 67,270 sq.m. Specifically, there is an acute shortfall of 44,400 sq.m

for office space, alongside insufficient supply to meet our industrial and light industrial requirements.

- 3.8. In April 2026 Kingston approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs, including employment lands needs. Merton has advised that they do not have the capacity to take on Kingston's shortfall for office, retail or industrial space.

Meeting the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation within the borough and wider unmet needs

- 3.9. The 2025 London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA) identifies a requirement for 52 additional permanent pitches (2022–2032) and 100 residential units to address overcrowding for those currently in 'bricks and mortar' housing. Despite conducting site assessments of council-owned land and a Green Belt Review, the Council is still struggling to meet its need in the first 10 years of the New Local Plan.
- 3.10. In April 2026 Kingston approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs, including gypsy and traveller accommodation needs. Merton has advised that they do not have surplus capacity to take on Kingston's shortfall for gypsy and traveller accommodation.
- 3.11. Kingston is continuing to investigate all reasonable opportunities to meet identified needs within the borough boundary, including through site allocations, optimisation of existing provision, and engagement with landowners and development partners.
- 3.12. Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is a strategic cross-boundary matter requiring ongoing cooperation. The boroughs will continue to engage constructively and actively through the preparation of their respective Local Plans, including through the exchange of evidence and updates relating to accommodation needs, site delivery, and any emerging opportunities for collaboration.

Cross Boundary Development

- 3.13. Proposed Site Allocation 38: Gas Holders, West Barnes Lane, Motspur Park is located on a parcel of land that requires access via the north on land contained within the London Borough of Merton.
- 3.14. The parties acknowledge that a planning application relating to the site is currently under consideration. Given that the deliverability of the proposal is dependent on the approval of the northern access point into the site, both authorities have engaged on cross-boundary transport and access considerations associated with the proposal.

Sports and Recreational Facilities

- 3.15. The Council's approach to leisure, sport, and physical activity is currently guided by the Active Kingston Framework (2023), the Indoor Leisure Facilities Strategy (2022), the Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2023), and the Playing Pitch Strategy (2023). These strategies provide the evidence base for protecting and enhancing outdoor sports provision, increasing participation, and improving accessibility.
- 3.16. Sports facilities identified as in undersupply, and thus may require strategic cooperation, include (but are not limited to):
- Archery
 - Golf courses
 - Netball courts
 - Skateparks
 - Outdoor gyms
 - Tennis courts
- 3.17. Several playing pitches technically located in Merton, namely the Commons Extension Sports Ground, Colliers Wood Football Club, and Wibbandune Sports Ground, accommodate significant sporting demand from Kingston residents due to their proximity. Conversely, Kingston's green infrastructure assets, such as the Malden Golf Course are utilised by Merton's residents. Both boroughs agree to support the protection and management of these spaces.

Infrastructure

- 3.18. The Council has produced an updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which identifies the key physical, social, and green infrastructure required to support the borough's projected population and housing growth over the plan period. The IDP specifies the locations for these projects, alongside delivery timescales and funding mechanisms (such as section 106 agreements and CIL) to ensure a coordinated and viable development process. As a 'live' document, the IDP will be subject to regular updates to reflect the borough's evolving needs and shifting priorities.
- 3.19. To ensure transparency, the annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) serves as the statutory mechanism to monitor developer contributions and track IDP delivery. For real-time oversight, the Council also maintains public-facing 'live' records of S106 and CIL agreements, accessible through the Council's website.
- 3.20. Working with communities, Kingston has created community plans for each of the four neighbourhoods. These plans serve to identify local priorities, ensuring that investment from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) is directed toward resident-led community projects.

Transport

- 3.21. Main roads that cross the border between Merton and Kingston are the A238 and A3.
- 3.22. Overground rail lines that cross the border between Merton and Kingston are the Southwestern services, namely:
- Central London - Clapham Junction - Earlsfield - Wimbledon - Raynes Park - New Malden - Surbiton - Esher and to the south coast
 - Central London - Clapham Junction - Wimbledon - Raynes Park - Norbiton - Kingston town centre and on to Shepperton
 - Central London - Clapham Junction - Wimbledon - Raynes Park - Motspur Park - Epsom - Dorking
- 3.23. Bus routes that cross the border between Merton and Kingston and surrounding boroughs:
- 57 - connects Kingston town centre/Norbiton with Raynes Park, Wimbledon, South Wimbledon, Merton Abbey and Colliers Wood.
 - 131 - runs between Kingston and Tooting Broadway via New Malden, Raynes Park, Wimbledon and South Wimbledon within Merton.
 - K5 - links Kingston, New Malden, Motspur Park, Raynes Park and Morden.
 - 152 - connects the Kingston borough area to Raynes Park, Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and Mitcham in Merton.
- Other routes also provide more localised cross-boundary connectivity between the boroughs include:
- 213
 - 265
- 3.24. For Crossrail 2, Kingston's Local Plan recognises that the project may not come forward during the lifetime of either local plan (having been suspended in November 2020). However, both boroughs also recognise the potential for investment in existing centres if Crossrail 2 is realised.
- 3.25. Merton and Kingston share road and rail links between each borough and out to Surrey and the south coast. Both are also London boroughs who deliver the Mayor's Transport Strategy via each borough's Local Implementation Plan which is produced every three years, in consultation with Transport for London and neighbouring London boroughs. Both boroughs have co-operated on installing a new 1.2km traffic free cycle route between New Malden (Kingston) under the A3 bypass to Raynes Park (Merton). The boroughs worked together on feasibility, consultation and other background work to support the scheme.

Town Centres and Retail

- 3.26. The London Plan identifies a hierarchy of the city's larger town centres, recognising the different size, draw and function of them. The Kingston Local Plan identifies four town centres – a Metropolitan centre in Kingston town centre and New Malden, Surbiton and Tolworth as District Centres.
- 3.27. RBK's Retail and Leisure Needs Assessment (RLNA) 2022 indicates a strong need for new convenience goods floorspace within the borough. The projections forecast a need for 8,532 sq.m net by 2029, and 7,971 sq.m net by 2041. Our strategy aims to direct this need to our existing network of town and local centres in the first instance.
- 3.28. In April 2026 Kingston approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs, including retail. Merton has advised that they are in an early stage of their adopted local plan but are likely to struggle to meet their own needs therefore, they do not have the capacity to take on Kingston's shortfall for retail space.

Minerals and Waste

- 3.29. Together with the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, Merton and Sutton, Kingston prepared and adopted the joint development plan document, the South London Waste Plan in 2012 and its review, the South London Waste Plan 2022. The South London Waste Plan 2022 was adopted on 14 December 2022.
- 3.30. The provision of materials is not identified as a strategic or cross-boundary issue between Merton and Kingston.

Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment

- 3.31. The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and Merton agree that the protection, enhancement, and restoration of the natural environment and strategic green and blue infrastructure are cross-boundary matters necessitating sustained, coordinated action.
- 3.32. The boroughs share cross-boundary open space and Metropolitan Open Land designations, particularly around Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath (which are designated as a (Special Area of Conservation and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)). They also share the Beverley Brook river which runs along their contiguous boundary in places. Both boroughs agree to continue supporting green infrastructure including green corridors that cross over the boundary, biodiversity and access to nature.
- 3.33. Both councils are committed to aligning our respective planning frameworks to secure measurable Biodiversity Net Gain and support the cross-boundary delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, ensuring that development near the boundary

contributes to a robust, climate-resilient, and multi-functional green infrastructure network.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

- 3.34. Both Kingston and Merton declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019.
- 3.35. Kingston's Regulation 19 local plan proposes introducing a range of policies to reduce carbon emissions from new development, mitigate the effects of climate change and reduce water use.
- 3.36. Both boroughs participate in pan London forums on climate change matters and while climate change is a strategic cross boundary matter for all councils, there are no specific issues identified between Merton and Kingston.

Record of agreement:

- 3.37. Both parties agree that the above represents the key strategic matters at this stage of the Local Plan process.

4. Governance Arrangements

- 4.1. SoCGs need to be prepared and then maintained on an ongoing basis; and be made publicly available to allow transparency. This SoCG is a live document, to be reviewed and updated regularly so that it reflects the most up-to-date position in terms of joint working, especially:
 - 4.1.1. Whenever agreements on outstanding matters have been reached and where progress in addressing strategic cross boundary matters is achieved, or
 - 4.1.2. At each subsequent key stage of the plan making process, as it progresses towards adoption.
- 4.2. Requirements for signing documents differ between Local Authorities depending on their structure. It will be for each body to decide who is the appropriate person to sign the statement.

5. Timetable for review and ongoing cooperation

- 5.1. This statement has been informed by on-going engagement between the parties and has been informed by various evidence base documents.
- 5.2. This SoCG is a live document and will be reviewed on a regular basis, informed by continued communication between the parties through meetings, statutory consultation at key plan making stages and electronic communication.

6. Signatories

- 6.1. Both parties agree that this statement is an accurate representation of matters discussed and issues agreed upon.
- 6.2. Both parties agree that they have engaged positively on an ongoing basis and that on this basis the Duty to Cooperate has been met.
- 6.3. Both parties agree that there are no substantial areas of disagreement between the parties relating to the emerging Kingston Local Plan and will both continue to work proactively on the key strategic cross boundary issues identified in this SCG.

Signed:	Signed:
	
Name:	Name:
Hannah Harris	Paul McGarry
Position:	Position:
Head of Spatial Planning	Head of Regeneration & Economy
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	London Borough of Merton
Date:	Date:
25/06/2026	02/06/2026



If you have difficulty reading this document or would like it in a different format, please call our helpline on 020 8547 5000 or ask someone to call on your behalf.



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES