



Kingston Local Plan

**Statement of Common Ground between the
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
and Mole Valley District Council**

August 2026



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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 RBK'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 (RBK) and Mole Valley District Council (MVDC), 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.

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 upon Thames, 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. Local Government reorganisation is underway and due to create new unitary authority of East Surrey from April 2027 to replace these councils in Surrey.
- 2.3. The area shown in Figure 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.

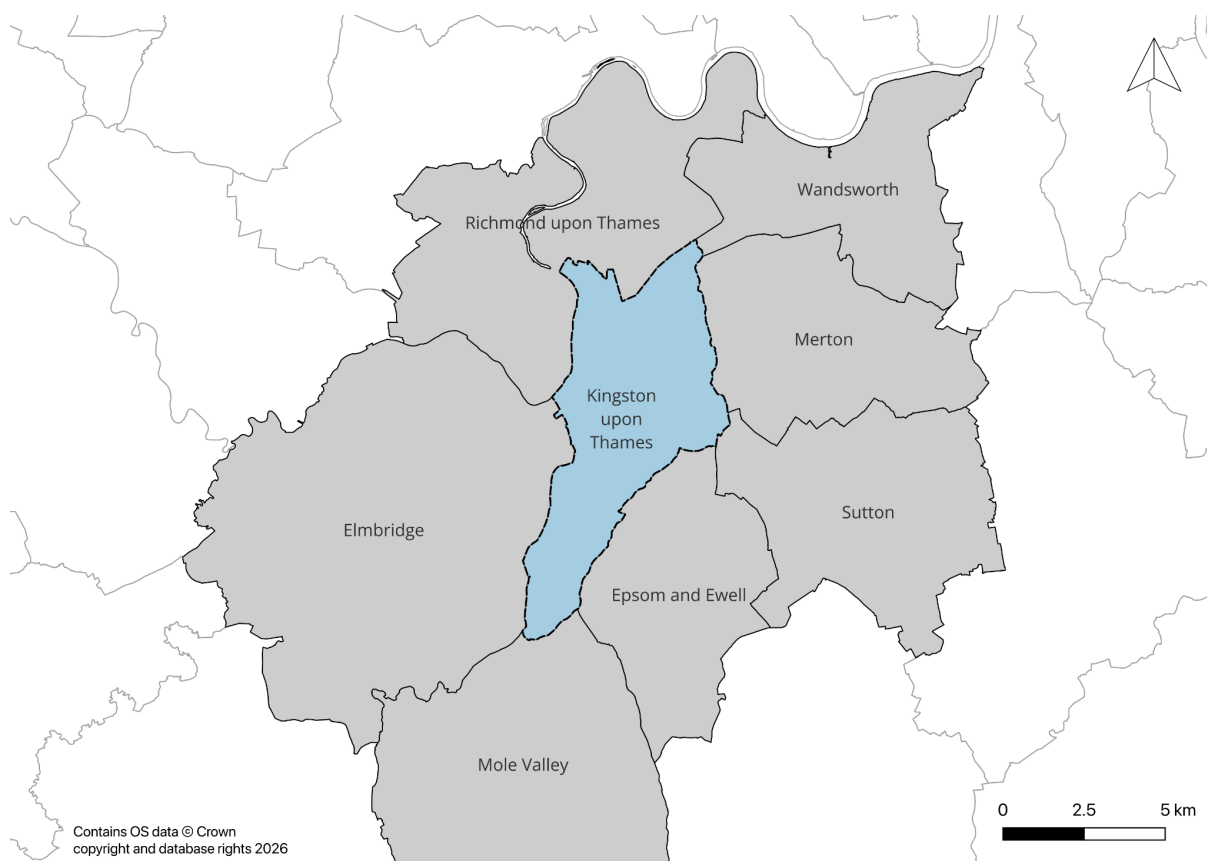


Figure 1: Map of Kingston in relation to its neighbouring authorities

3. Strategic Matters

- 3.1. RBK's draft 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. RBK'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. MVDC's Local Plan was adopted in October 2024 and covers the period 2020–2039. The Council is subject to fundamental environmental and planning constraints, with 77% of the district's area designated as either Green Belt or National Landscape. MVDC's adopted plan can only meet approximately 75% of its own housing need against the old standard method, and only 40% when judged against the new standard method (a target that already required the release of Green Belt land).
- 3.6. While MVDC is committed to undertaking an early review of its plan before its third anniversary (by October 2027) to assess further deliverable housing capacity, the search will prove immensely challenging given these acute local constraints. In April 2026 RBK approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs, including housing needs. MVDC have advised that they do not have the capacity to take on Kingston's shortfall.

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

- 3.7. RBK'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. MVDC's Economic Development Needs Assessment identified no significant additional floorspace requirements for office or industrial uses. A 2025 snapshot survey revealed that small and medium-sized office stock remains generally well-occupied. While office vacancy rates are dominated by six larger offices, two of these have already been allocated for residential conversion in the adopted Local Plan.
- 3.9. In April 2026 RBK approached its neighbouring authorities seeking clarification on whether neighbouring authorities could assist in accommodating Kingston's unmet development needs. MVDC have advised that they do not have the capacity to take on Kingston's shortfall for employment space.
- 3.10. Although MVDC intends to thoroughly re-examine its employment policy in due course, it is highly unlikely that the district will be able to absorb RBK's unmet employment needs. Any surplus employment land that might be identified in future assessments would likely be limited and strictly required to address MVDC's own local housing needs.
- 3.11. Regarding convenience retail floorspace, MVDC notes that Leatherhead is on the cusp of viable travel distance for Kingston residents and is already well-served by existing supermarkets. As supermarkets fall under Use Class E, market changes will dictate provision, meaning MVDC cannot commit to taking on external convenience floorspace requirements.

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

- 3.12. 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, RBK is still struggling to meet its need in the first 10 years of the New Local Plan.
- 3.13. RBK 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.
- 3.14. 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.

- 3.15. MVDC has an identified local need of 52 Gypsy and Traveller pitches over its own Local Plan period. The Council utilizes a three-strand policy approach to meet this target: intensification of existing sites, a modest number of pitches allocated within large residential developments, and windfall sites.
- 3.16. While planning permissions and applications have successfully identified pitches within large residential allocations, none have yet been formally delivered, and no significant applications for existing site intensification have materialized. Until this three-pronged policy approach is proven successful through concrete local delivery, MVDC cannot commit to accommodating any Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs from surrounding authorities, including Kingston.

Green Belt, MOL & other Open Spaces

- 3.17. The two boroughs share Green Belt land, and thus must work strategically to ensure the purposes of the Green Belt remain protected in accordance with national policy.

Infrastructure

- 3.18. RBKI 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, RBK 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.

Schools and Education

- 3.21. RBK's education facilities - including childcare, primary schools, secondary schools, and further education facilities - are essential to the regional economy, providing direct training and employment opportunities while enriching the borough's cultural and social life. Achieving for Children (AfC) is commissioned to provide the

Council's children's services, including planning for school places and specialist SEND places.

- 3.22. RBK currently offers approximately 15,500 primary school places and approximately 10,000 secondary school places. The recent rebuild of Burlington Junior School has allowed the school to expand from 4 forms of entry to 5 forms of entry, if needed. RBK will continue to work with schools and other educational partners to identify demand and consider how needs can best be met.
- 3.23. Key providers in RBK include Kingston University and Kingston College, of which the majority of students live outside the borough. To meet the needs of all learners, RBK will support the expansion and upgrades of both institutions, recognising their significance beyond boundary lines.
- 3.24. MVDC works with Surrey County Council to ensure there is sufficient provision to meet future needs at the early years stage through to post 16 education/training.

Transport

- 3.25. Kingston's development trajectory will likely have an impact on the A243 southbound and Junction 9 of the M25.
- 3.26. Main roads that cross the corridor between RBK and MVDC are:
- A243 Leatherhead Road / Hook Road (direct link from Kingston via Chessington to Leatherhead/M25 Junction 9)
 - A24 Kingston Road (runs adjacent through Epsom & Ewell, connecting Kingston to Leatherhead and Dorking)
- 3.27. There are no direct train services between the RBK and MVDC.
- 3.28. The main bus routes that crosses the border between RBK and MVDC are:
- 465 (connecting Kingston to Leatherhead and Dorking)
- 3.29. MDVC is particularly interested in any significant impacts on the A243 southbound and Junction 9 of the M25.
- 3.30. Where development with strategic transport implications is proposed close to the authorities' common administrative boundary, the authorities will work together, and with Surrey County Council and National Highways, to ensure that all strategic cross-boundary impacts are fully explored and addressed as far as possible.

Green Infrastructure and Natural Environment

- 3.31. RBK and MVDC 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. MVDC has the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within its administrative boundary.
- 3.33. Both authorities acknowledge that ecological networks transcend administrative boundaries and provide essential ecosystem services, including climate resilience, natural flood management, and biodiversity conservation.
- 3.34. 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.
- 3.35. Furthermore, the authorities agree to actively collaborate to appropriately manage the impacts of development on shared, adjacent, and internationally or nationally designated nature conservation sites, including the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (located within the administrative boundary of MVDC) and Epsom and Ashstead Commons.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation

- 3.36. RBK and MVDC both declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019.
- 3.37. RBK's draft 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.

Record of agreement:

- 3.38. 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:
	
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Hannah Harris	Duncan Clarke
Position:	Position:
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Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames	Mole Valley District Council
Date: 29.06.2026	Date: 27 May 2026



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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES