

Kingston Town Neighbourhood Committee

6 September 2018

Kingston Riverside Public Realm SPD

Report by Acting Assistant Director, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure

Purpose

To note the proposed adoption, by Strategic Housing and Planning committee, of the Kingston Riverside Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which sets out a planning framework to guide the redevelopment of the open space along the riverside. To note the document responds to the consultation process and provides a clear set of principles, in order to shape future development.

Recommendations

To **resolve** that the committee -

1. notes the findings of the Kingston Riverside Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document (as attached at Annex 1), the Statement of Consultation (Annex 2) and the changes made to the document in light of the community feedback; and
2. provides comments and observations which will be reported back to the Strategic Housing and Planning committee 11 September 2018.

Key Points

- A. This report seeks the formal adoption of the Kingston Riverside Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document (Annex 1).
- B. A number of early stage engagement sessions were undertaken prior to the production of the Kingston Riverside Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document Draft (SPD). The Draft SPD for Consultation was published for formal consultation from 19 January 2018 to 19 March 2018, for a period of eight weeks.
- C. Amendments have been made to the document in response to the public consultation. A Consultation Statement setting out the Council's full approach to consultation, and an analysis of the responses received, is set out in Annex 2.
- D. Once adopted by the Council, the Riverside Public Realm SPD will have a key role in shaping future development proposals in the riverside area and will carry material weight for consideration as part of decision making in Development Management. The Riverside SPD will also support the Council in gaining access to available funding from public and private sources, including in support of proposed development in the town centre.

Context

1. Kingston's historic growth is intimately linked to its position on the River Thames, which remains one of the town's key assets. Despite this and recent improvements, the links between the town and the riverside are often poor, and the quality of the public realm does not fulfil its potential. In areas, it is also subject to conflicts due to the various roles the riverfront has to fulfil. The riverside has an important role to play in supporting leisure activities and quality of life for residents as well as supporting the wider economy of the town centre, reinforcing Kingston's role as a metropolitan centre, and a hub for retail, business and tourism.
2. The area covered by the SPD stretches from the north entrance to Canbury Gardens to the Seething Wells (as highlighted within the SPD Annex 1). The eastern extent of the study area varies but is typically extends to the depth of one urban block. This has been defined in relation to land use, function and intensity of usage. The geographical extent of the SPD area has been defined in relation to the main areas of change in the borough, primarily associated with the growth of the town centre and adjoining neighbourhoods.
3. With growth in population and visitors the use of the riverside is likely to increase and with it the potential for conflicts could increase too, to the potential detriment of the quality of the environment. There is also the opportunity to positively shape the future of the Riverside, ensuring it supports the different demands of the community and enhances the natural setting of the borough, and the economic success of the town centre. The Local Plan is being updated to reflect current growth expectations and positively influence growth across the borough including within the town centre. The Riverside Public Realm SPD is intended to form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.
4. The SPD, once adopted will have material weight in the determination of planning applications. The SPD will provide an important framework to coordinate and guide development and infrastructure investment along the riverside, while also forming a formal basis from which the Council can seek to gain access to and allocate funding.

Consultations

5. Prior to preparing the SPD the Council ran a number of 'walkabouts' and a drop-in session with local stakeholders in October 2016, to help shape the formation of the SPD from the outset.
6. The draft Kingston Riverside Public Realm SPD was published for formal consultation on 19 January 2018 to 19 March 2018 for a period of eight weeks (in excess of the statutory minimum). As part of the consultation process the following methods were used to raise awareness:
 - 10,500 Riverside newspapers were distributed to residents, local

organisations and businesses

- newspapers and posters distributed to community hubs such as places of worship, education establishments, cafes, leisure centres and large businesses in Kingston Town Centre
- emails sent to statutory consultees, residents, boat user groups and businesses
- Printed copies of the SPD made available in all 7 libraries throughout the borough, at the Information and Advice Centre
- Posters and digital display boards
- Press release and Public Notice
- Online portal and targeted social media campaign.

All stages are summarised in the Statement of Consultation (Annex 2)

7. The document was made available on the Council's website, at the Council's Information and Advice Centre in the Council offices and at the seven libraries across the borough. An audio summary of the document was prepared for the benefit of the visually-impaired.
8. The Council undertook a programme of drop in events throughout the consultation period, all of which were advertised through the Council's website, social media and the distribution of consultation posters and newspapers across the riverside area.

Consultation responses and main observations

9. A more complete summary of the consultation responses and observations is contained in the Statement of Consultation (Annex 2).
10. In summary 104 submissions were received via Kingston's on-line engagement platform; 35 submissions were received via email; and 2 submissions were received via post, totaling 141 formal responses submitted.
11. Of the respondents to the online platform, 70% of respondents either strongly agreed/agreed with the vision set out in the SPD. Support for the other themes set out in the SPD, as posed through the portal, ranged from 70-75% either agreeing or strongly agreeing.
12. Issues raised through respondent's submission are summarised in the Statement of Consultation, however particular concerns raised were;
 - the impact of proposals on the operation of the river for river users and the potential for conflict between different users,
 - the potential for conflict in the public realm between different land-based users (including pedestrians and cyclist), and
 - the availability of moorings and their impact on the use and attractiveness of the riverside.
13. Document Changes: The Statement of Consultation highlights how each of the planning concerns raised in formal responses to the consultation has

been addressed in the redrafting of the Riverside Public Realm SPD. Changes focus on the resolution of conflict, including;

- Highlighting the risks to continued operation of the river as a result of conflict with other uses including biodiversity improvements, and the need for this to be addressed and reconciled in any detailed proposals,
- Clarifying within the SPD that any detailed proposals must address any potential conflict between different users, including cyclists and pedestrians, focusing cycle use on those routes which are capable of dealing with and reconciling the needs of different users, especially within Canbury Gardens,
- More clearly defining the meaning of 'active' use and how appropriateness of such uses will be assessed. Emphasising the distinct role of Queen Promenade as a restive environment distinct from the town centre.

There were also changes to formatting and images to ensure the clarity and ease of use of the document.

Timescale

14. Following the recommendation of the Committee, the decision published and the call in period successfully completed, any minor amendments necessary, including those identified by this Committee, will be taken forward and the final SPD will be prepared for publication and formally adopted.
15. When the SPD is published, an adoption statement, the statement of consultation and a copy of the final document will be made available on the Council's website.

Resource Implications

16. All costs have been met within existing budgets.

Legal Implications

17. Once adopted, the SPD will support Kingston's Development Plan and will function as a material consideration when the Council is considering applications and development proposals in the Riverside Area.
18. In line with Regulation 14 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, upon adoption, an Adoption Statement will be produced and made available on the Council's website alongside the SPD, and sent to any person who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the supplementary planning document.
19. The Riverside Public Realm SPD has compiled in line with, and meets, all the regulations contained within the The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Health Implications

20. Active travel and undertaking sports and leisure pastimes can help support healthy lifestyles. Improving and opening up pedestrian and cycles routes can reduce barriers to and will support uptake of active travel choices. Improving the quality of open space, including access to sporting and leisure activities, can raise awareness and support uptake of healthy leisure activities.

Community Benefits

21. Recognising the community value of the Riverside and public spaces give the community a sense of pride, help achieve greater understanding of and recognition for these assets and makes a positive contribution to sustainable communities.
22. Highlighting the need for investment and protection of open spaces and public realm in the SPD, will support the Council in gaining access to funding opportunities from public and private sources to bring about significant community benefit.

Risk Assessment

23. The absence of specific guidance within an SPD for the Riverside area will limit the Council's ability to manage future proposals coming forward on sites. In addition a significant proportion of the riverside is in private ownership, the Council is therefore reliant on working with developers and the private sector to fulfil the aims of the Riverside Public Realm SPD.
24. Not having a public realm SPD in place for the riverside may leave the Council unable to secure appropriate open space and supporting infrastructure when new development comes forward.
25. Without a suitably strategic approach to public realm in the riverside the area risks becoming the subject of piecemeal and uncoordinated development, failing to maximise the potential of the riverside and adjoining neighbourhoods.

Equalities Impact Assessment

26. A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out. The findings of the EQIA Form B is attached as Annex 3.
27. The EQIA demonstrates the proposal or policy is robust and there is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. All opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

28. When adopted as an SPD, the document will adhere to policies contained in the Core Strategy which has also been the subject of an equality impact assessment.

Road Network Implications

29. The SPD does not have direct road network implications. Any detailed proposals brought forward in light of the SPD will be tested and assessed for their road network implications with the relevant authorities at the appropriate time.

Environmental Implications

30. Planning obligations enable the Council to secure environmental benefits from development that can contribute to local environmental improvements and reduce any adverse environmental effects, subject to meeting the statutory tests.

Annexes

Annex 1: Riverside Public Realm SPD.

Annex 2: Statement of Consultation

Annex 3: EQIA Form B

Background papers

- Core Strategy, 2012
- National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 & 2018
- London Plan, 2016
- Kingston Town Centre Area Action Plan, 2008
- Thames Landscape Strategy, 2012
- All London Green Grid (Area 9: The Arcadian Thames), 2011

Author of report - Lisa Fairmaner, Acting Assistant Director, Strategic Planning & Infrastructure, email: lisa.fairmaner@kingston.gov.uk