

# Statement of Common Ground Between

London Borough of Merton and  
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames

March 2022

## 1. Executive Summary

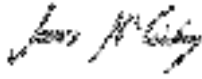
- 1.1. A Statement of Common Ground (SCG) is a written record of the progress made by strategic policy-making authorities during the process of planning for cross-boundary matters. This SCG has been prepared to demonstrate that Merton's and Kingston's's draft Local Plans are *'based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters'*, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 27 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance chapter on Maintaining Effective Co-operation.
- 1.2. This SCG focuses on strategic cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address them. It also forms part of the evidence demonstrating compliance with the 'duty to cooperate'. In the London context, most strategic issues beyond borough boundaries (e.g. housing targets, major growth areas, etc.) are largely addressed by the London Plan.
- 1.3. Updates to this document will be agreed as matters progress and agreement is reached on any outstanding issues. It therefore includes details on mechanisms for review and updating. It forms part of the evidence to demonstrate compliance with the 'duty to cooperate'. The document is intended to be 'live', updated as circumstances change, and agreement occurs on any outstanding issues.

## 2. Parties Involved

- 2.1. This SCG has been prepared by Merton Council in agreement with the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames.

### 3. Signatories

**London Borough of Merton** agree to matters referred to in this document which directly impact them, as outlined in the 'Strategic Matters' section.



Signed:

Position: Assistant Director Sustainable Communities

Date: 21 March 2022

**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames** agree to matters referred to in this document which directly impact them, as outlined in the 'Strategic Matters' section.



Signed: Councillor Rebekah Moll

Position: Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Culture

Date: 21 March 2022

## 4. Strategic Geography

- 4.1. This section sets out the factual position regarding cross boundary matters.
- 4.2. The London Borough of Merton is where inner meets outer London, bordered by the London boroughs of Wandsworth, Lambeth, Croydon, Sutton and the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames. It is referred to as “Merton” for the purposes of this document.
- 4.3. The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is an outer London borough bordered by the London Boroughs of Merton, Richmond upon Thames, Sutton and Wandsworth, and by Surrey County Council containing the districts of Elmbridge, Epsom and Ewell and Mole Valley. It is referred to as “Kingston” for the purposes of this document.
- 4.4. The area shown in Map 1 has been identified as the strategic planning area for the purposes of the SCG.

*Map 1: The geographic relationship between Merton and Kingston as well as the South London Waste Plan (joint DPD) authorities*



Merton and Kingston have co-operated closely on plan-making including the preparation and adoption of the joint waste development plan document, the South London Waste Plan 2012 and subsequently its successor.

Merton published its [Local Plan Regulation 19 in July 2021](#) and submitted its Local Plan to the Secretary of State in December 2021.

Kingston undertook [early engagement \(Regulation 18\)](#) on their draft local plan between May and July 2019 and undertook a subsequent round of [further engagement \(Reg 18\)](#) between June-September 2021.

### ***The London Plan***

- 4.5. Within the wider London context, collaboration on many strategic issues that go beyond borough boundaries are addressed through the London Plan.
- 4.6. The London Plan is the spatial development strategy for London, produced by the Greater London Authority on behalf of the Mayor of London. [The current London Plan was adopted in March 2021.](#) Every London borough local plan must be in general conformity with the published London Plan. Together, the policies in the London Plan and in each borough's Local Plan constitute the statutory local development plan for that borough, along with any neighbourhood development plans, once made. In a London context, collaboration on many strategic issues – such as the distribution of housing, identification of major growth areas, strategic infrastructure etc – are largely addressed through the London Plan, and the formal and informal arrangements that exist between boroughs to enable this to happen.

### ***Strategic Agencies and Authorities in London***

- 4.7. Transport for London (TfL) is the integrated transport authority responsible for the implementation of the Mayor's Transport Strategy (2018). The Strategy uses the 'Healthy Streets Approach', making health and personal experience the priority in planning the city. The Healthy Streets Approach is applied to the whole transport system to help create:
- a. Healthy streets and healthy people
  - b. A good public transport experience
  - c. New homes and jobs
- 4.8. The boroughs are required to work with TfL to support the implementation of the Mayor's Transport Strategy.
- 4.9. TfL runs the day-to-day operation of the city's public transport network (including London Buses, London Underground and Overground, Docklands Light Railway, TfL Rail and London Trams). Network Rail own, operate and develop London's rail infrastructure (to become Great British Railways from 2023).
- 4.10. The [All London Green Grid \(ALGG\)](#) partnership is recognised by DEFRA as the Local Nature Partnership for London. The partnership does not yet have a governance structure that allows it to respond on matters of local plan consultations. ALGG aims to promote and protect green and blue infrastructure (including rivers) in London. Merton and Kingston share the [Arcadian Thames](#) and Merton also contains the [Wandle Valley Area Framework](#) (shared with Wandsworth, Sutton and Croydon). Each area framework includes sections of the River Thames and/or River Wandle. Development on the riverside should have regard to the aims of the ALGG and the opportunities identified in the area frameworks.
- 4.11. Thames Water is the statutory water and sewerage undertaker for Merton and Kingston and is hence a specific consultation body in accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2012.

### ***Merton***

- 4.12. Merton is an outer London borough of around 37 km<sup>2</sup> situated to the east of Kingston. It also borders Croydon, Sutton, and Wandsworth and shares a small border with Lambeth. Key cross boundary issues between Merton and Kingston include the opportunities and issues caused by the A3 road, other rail travel routes between the two boroughs and beyond, the provision of healthcare needs by NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group across six boroughs (including Merton and Kingston) and the Beverley Brook, which runs along the borough's boundaries in places.

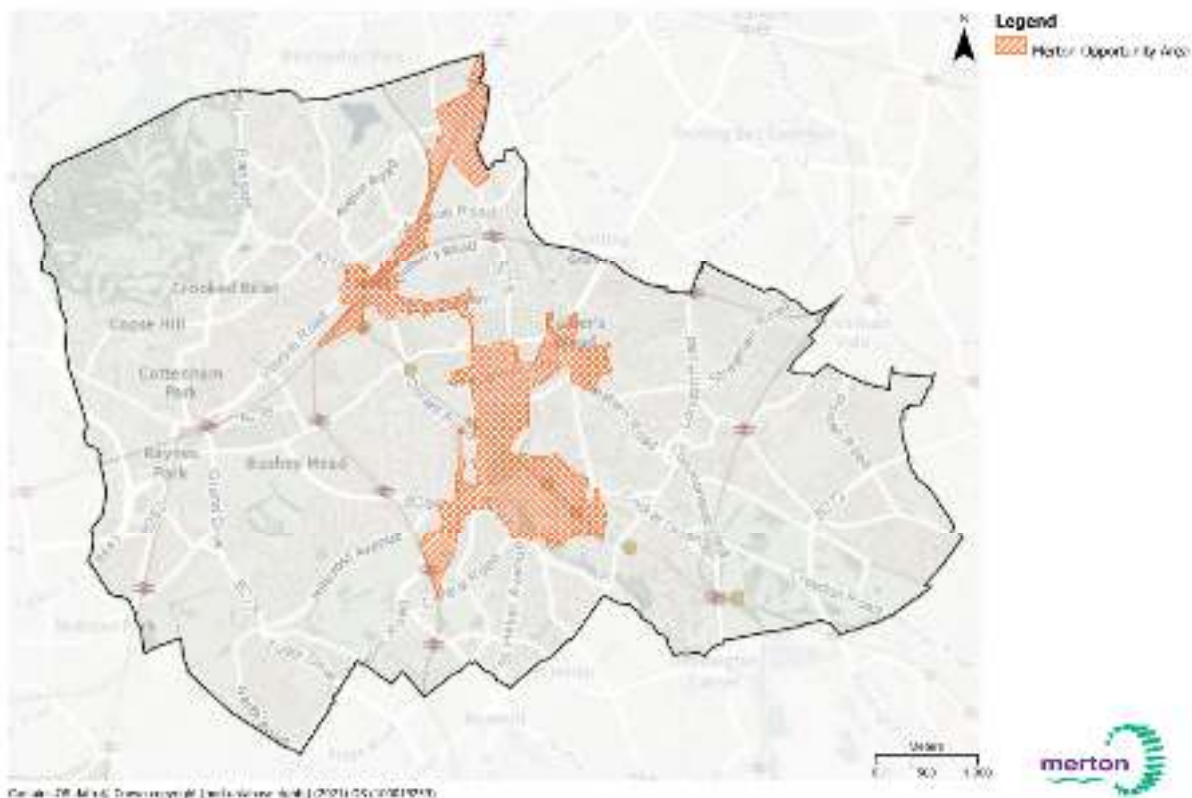
*Kingston*

- 4.13. Kingston is an outer London borough of around 37km<sup>2</sup> area with a boundary on the River Thames to the west. Centred around the town of Kingston upon Thames and the Wandle Valley, the borough includes within it the town centres at Surbiton, Norbiton, Chessington and New Malden. Kingston shares significant boundaries with Surrey County Council, particularly the districts of Esher to the west and Epsom and Ewell to the east. It also shares a significant border with Richmond upon Thames.

***Shared Planning Matters***

*Opportunity Areas*

- 4.14. The London Plan identifies areas that will see the most significant change. These are known as Opportunity Areas (OAs). Many OAs are already seeing significant development and have the potential to deliver a substantial amount of the new homes and jobs.
- 4.15. The London Plan 2021 identifies the Wimbledon – South Wimbledon – Colliers Wood Opportunity Area. Merton's draft Local Plan 2022 Chapter 1 proposes the Wimbledon – South Wimbledon – Colliers Wood Opportunity Area boundary as set out below. This borders Wandsworth to the north (Durnsford Road Strategic Industrial Location in Merton) with the river Wandle acting as the borough boundary. Both boroughs agree there are no cross boundary issues identified.



- 4.16. The Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames is identified in the London Plan 2021 as having the potential for three opportunity areas, based on rail connectivity to central London and the number of stations that would be serviced by Crossrail2. Kingston will develop further information on this in the future.

*Strategic Areas for Regeneration*

- 4.17. As outlined by London Plan policy SD10, there are parts of London where the impacts of inequality and causes of deprivation are particularly concentrated. Based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), many of the city's neighbourhoods lie within the 20 per cent most deprived areas in England. The London Plan identifies these neighbourhoods as Strategic Areas for Regeneration (SARS).
- 4.18. The London Plan 2021 identifies Strategic Areas for Regeneration in Merton around the Phipps Bridge, Pollards Hill and Mitcham town centre, some distance from the borough boundaries. Cross boundary issues are not identified.

*Housing Market Area*

- 4.19. 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). Merton is identified within the South area along with immediate neighbours, Kingston, Wandsworth, Richmond and nearby boroughs of Sutton and Croydon.

### *Town and Local Centres*

- 4.20. The London Plan identifies a hierarchy of the city's larger town centres, recognising the different size, draw and function of them.
- 4.20. The Merton Local Plan identifies one Major Centre (Wimbledon), three District Centres (Colliers Wood, Mitcham and Morden) and local centres and neighbourhood parades. Colliers Wood is proposed as a new District Centre in Merton's Local Plan. There are not considered to be any cross boundary issues arising from this proposal.
- 4.20. The Kingston Local Plan identifies four town centres – a Metropolitan centre (Kingston town centre) as a metropolitan centre – and beneath this it also identifies New Malden, Surbiton and Tolworth as District Centres.
- 4.21. Between boroughs, town centres and parades can be shared by virtue of them crossing the borough boundary. There no instances of this between Merton and Kingston.

### *Neighbourhood Planning*

- 4.22. There are two designated neighbourhood planning areas in Kingston: North Kingston and Malden Rushett. Neither have a boundary with Merton.
- 4.23. An application for a neighbourhood forum area in Wimbledon (Merton) was refused in July 2021 but is likely to emerge again. This area would have had a boundary with Wandsworth and, at Lambeth Cemetery, a boundary with the Tooting Bec and Broadway Neighbourhood Forum.

### *Transport*

- 4.24. Main roads that cross the border between Merton and Kingston and surrounding boroughs:

#### TfL Road Network:

- A240 (Kingston – Sutton – Epsom and Ewell)
- A3 (Lambeth – Wandsworth – Merton – Kingston)
- A243 (Kingston – Mole Valley)

#### Overground rail lines that cross the border between Merton and Kingston and surrounding boroughs:

- Central London - Clapham Junction - Earlsfield – Wimbledon - Raynes Park – New Malden – Surbiton – Esher and to the south coast (South Western) (Merton)
- 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

### *Flooding / Critical Drainage Areas*



*(a) Flood Risk*

- 4.25. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance for Flood Risk and Coastal Change (PPG) set out the active role Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should take to ensure that flood risk is understood and managed effectively and sustainably throughout all stages of the planning process. The NPPF outlines that Local Plans should be supported by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and LPAs should use the findings to inform strategic land use planning.
- 4.26. Merton and Wandsworth Councils have produced an updated joint Level 1 (November 2020) and Level 2 (February 2021) [Strategic Flood Risk Assessment \(SFRA\)](#). [Kingston has updated its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 in 2021 with Level 2 due to be published in 2022](#)
- 4.27. There are three fluvial flood zones as defined by the Environment Agency (EA); Flood Zone 1, 2 and 3. These areas have been defined following a national scale modelling project for the EA and are regularly updated using recorded flood extents and local detailed modelling. The flood zones are based on the likelihood of an area flooding, with Flood Zone 1 areas least likely to flood and Flood Zone 3 areas more likely to flood. The map below shows the flood extents that cross adjoining boundaries, particularly around the Beverley Brook which runs along the borough boundary between Kingston and Merton in places.



- 4.28. The Thames Barrier is managed and maintained by the Environment Agency and protects 125 square kilometres of central London from flooding caused by tidal surges. The Thames tidal defences also include tidal walls and embankments along the banks of the River Thames. Should they fail or become breached, the area most at risk of flooding would be in the north of the borough, but this could also impact on the surrounding neighbourhoods. The Environment Agency holds tidal breach modelling.
- 4.29. In 2019 the Environment Agency started its first full review and update of the [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan](#) (2012). The Plan sets out the measures that require implementing to maintain adequate flood risk protection from the River Thames by the year 2100. Kingston is identified within Action Zone 1 (West London). The Plan outlines a number of recommendations to mitigate flood risk within the Central Zone, including to maintain, enhance or replace, the river defence walls and active structures through central London

over the 25 years of the plan from 2012 to 2035, and then 2035 to 2050. Within the West Zone, the Plan outlines several recommendations including to agree a programme for putting in place within 25 years, alternative measures for managing fluvial flood risk in the west London tidal area. The Plan advises that by 2065, the existing flood defences of the river wall will need to be raised by 0.5m and a further 0.5 by 2100.

- 4.30. There are no substantial cross boundary issues arising from flooding and drainage between the two boroughs

*Provision of energy (including heat)*

- 4.31. The London Plan states that boroughs should engage at an early stage with relevant energy companies and bodies to establish the future energy and infrastructure requirements arising from large-scale development proposals within London (see Policy SI3, Energy Infrastructure). It states that development plans should identify the need, and suitable sites for, any necessary infrastructure requirements such as energy centres, energy storage and upgrades to existing infrastructure. Development plans should also identify existing, and propose locations for, heating and cooling networks.

- 4.32. The Mayor has established the London Heat Map as a tool to help this process, and has identified Heat Network Priority Areas, which can be used to where the heat density is sufficient for heat networks to provide a competitive solution for heat provision. Kingston (around Kingston town centre and Chessington) and Merton (Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and Mitcham) are included in the Heat Network Priority Areas map

*Green infrastructure*

- 4.32. Both boroughs have substantial amounts of Metropolitan Open Land. Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath crosses the borough boundaries between Wandsworth, Kingston and Merton, as illustrated from the map below which highlights the Wimbledon Common, Kingston Vale designations of Metropolitan Open Land.



- 4.32. Further south, to the west of the A3 in Merton, there are other cross boundary open space designations, for example around New Malden where the borough boundary is contiguous with the Beverley Brook. These can be viewed via [Kingston's Policies Map](#) and [Merton's Regulation 19 \(Sept 2020\) green infrastructure policies map extract](#)

*Views, heritage, design and conservation*

- 4.33. Kingston's adopted Local Plan has designated a Strategic Area of Special Character adjoining Wimbledon Common; however this is not a designation shared with Merton. There are no shared heritage designations between Kingston and Merton. Merton designated Westcombe Avenue Conservation Area in 1990 which abuts the borough boundary and prepared the [Westcombe Avenue design guide](#); however this designation not replicated on the Kingston side. This is not considered to be a strategic cross boundary issue.

*Map of Westcombe Avenue Conservation Area, Merton (borough boundary in purple)*



## 5. Strategic Matters

- 5.1. This section documents key strategic matters covered in Merton's and Kingston's Local Plans that are considered to be of cross-boundary significance arising from the potential impacts of the Local Plan Review. It summarises where agreement has or has not been reached with relevant key partners to which the issue relates.

### ***Housing***

#### *Housing Delivery and affordable housing*

- 5.2. The delivery of new and affordable housing is one of the largest strategic issues London faces. Through the London Plan and in line with Planning Practice Guidance<sup>1</sup>, the Mayor of

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<sup>1</sup> Paragraph: 034 Reference ID: 2a-034-20191216

London sets housing targets for each local planning authority, based on evidence of housing need and development capacity across the capital. Through their own local plans, authorities must then plan to meet or exceed London Plan targets to ensure they are in general conformity with the London Plan.

- 5.3. 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.
- 5.4. In accordance with the London Plan, the Local Plans identifies a requirement for the entire Plan period and capacity to meet this target, acknowledging that the London Plan target will change once it is updated within around 5 years' time.
- 5.5. The Local Plan housing target is lower than the objectively assessed local housing need for both boroughs, however a comprehensive review of land and sites available for development (including large, small and windfall sites) indicated that there is insufficient capacity to meet the objectively assessed local housing need. All options have been thoroughly explored with regards to meeting as much of the objectively assessed housing need as possible, subject to environmental constraints.
- 5.6. All local planning authorities that are part of this SCG have fed into the London Plan figures – either expressing their support or objection to the new figures, based on a localised understanding of development capacity.
  - Merton and Kingston agree that they can meet or exceed the total numerical housing target assigned to them by the Mayor of London in the published-London Plan 2021, within their own borders, thus it is not considered that it constitutes a cross-boundary issue.
  - In 2019, during the drafting of the London Plan when the draft London Plan target for Merton proposed as 13,280 homes per decade, Merton asked Kingston if it could assist with the housing requirement. Kingston stated that it was unable to assist due to insufficient housing capacity. However Merton can now meet its 10 year target within its own borders so this is no longer considered to be a cross boundary issue.
- 5.7. [Kingston's Housing and Supported Accommodation Need Assessment \(2020\)](#) identifies needs over the next 10 years for housing and supported accommodation for adults, children and their families who are living with disability and / or social care needs within Kingston.
- 5.8. [Merton's Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2019](#) identifies a need for 878 - 1,084 homes per annum in social / affordable rented sector and a need for 786 - 933 in affordable home ownership sector. The level of need is significant, and for that reason Merton's proposed affordable housing policy (H11.1, Reg.19 version) sets the aspiration to secure 50% of all new homes to be affordable, in line with the intent of the London Plan 2021.

- 5.9. Both new Local Plans will seek to deliver a range of housing types, including Build to Rent, housing for students and the elderly. It is not believed that any of these forms of accommodation, or the provision of affordable homes, leads to strategic cross-boundary issues with the neighbouring boroughs.

*Gypsies and Travellers*

- 5.10. Kingston has one public traveller site which accommodates 18 pitches and 1 private site that accommodates 1 pitch as well as a number of unauthorised sites. [Kingston's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment \(2018\)](#) found that there is a need for 44 additional pitches to be provided within Kingston. Kingston is currently working on its strategy to meet unmet need, that may include approaching neighbouring boroughs in this respect.
- 5.11. Merton has one long established public traveller site on the border with Wandsworth that accommodates 15 pitches. [Merton's gypsy and traveller accommodation needs assessment 2019](#), prepared alongside Merton's Strategic Housing Needs Assessment 2019, found that needs could be met within the borough.
- 5.12. This has not been identified as a strategic or cross-boundary issue for Merton, but is a cross boundary issue for Kingston's Local Plan which will be addressed further in the next update to this Statement of Common Ground.

***Town centres, retail and employment land***

- 5.13. Merton's Local Plans set out a new approach to retail in response to legislative changes (particularly in respect of the new Class E), both maintain a hierarchical town centre approach as a preferred strategy despite new changes to permitted development from Class E to Class C3 that could undermine both town centres and such an approach. Merton plans to designate Colliers Wood as a district centre, despite it not being recognised as such in the London Plan; this is not considered to impact on Kingston's town centres.
- 5.14. Kingston and Merton recognise the potential for investment in existing centres (Wimbledon, Surbiton, Kingston and elsewhere in RB Kingston) if Crossrail 2 is realised.

***Transport infrastructure***

- 5.15. As identified in Section 4 above, 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.
- 5.16. For [Crossrail 2](#), both Merton's and Kingston's Local Plans recognise that the project may not come forward during the lifetime of either local plan (having been suspended in November 2020).
- 5.17. Kingston and Merton 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). Funded by Kingston's "mini Hollands" funding from the GLA, the off road cycle route opened in 2019.

The boroughs worked together on feasibility, consultation and other background work to support the scheme.

### ***Telecommunications and digital infrastructure***

- 5.18. Not identified as a strategic or cross-boundary issue with any one specific borough. National Grid is building the London Power Tunnels 2 project, 33km of underground cabling from Wimbledon to Bexley via Wandsworth, Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham and Greenwich. The project is under construction and National Grid has already compulsory purchased the necessary land. The first circuit from Wimbledon substation in Merton to New Cross in Lewisham is due to be complete in 2025. Although it connects to the large National Grid substation in Merton, the tunnelling work and shafts for the boring machine to exit will be located in Wandsworth within the Garrett Mills business park.

### ***Waste management***

- 5.19. Together with the neighbouring boroughs of Croydon, and Sutton, Kingston and Merton prepared and adopted the joint development plan document, the [South London Waste Plan in 2012](#) and have nearly finalised its review, the South London Waste Plan 2022.
- 5.20. The [South London Waste Plan 2022](#) was submitted to the Secretary of State in February 2021, the public hearing element of the examination in public was held in September 2021 and at the time of writing the four boroughs are preparing for a seven week public consultation on the post hearing modifications. Duty to co-operate on waste planning matters was considered as part of the preparation of the South London Waste Plan 2022

### ***Water supply and wastewater management***

- 5.21. As set out above, Thames Water is the statutory undertaker for water and wastewater in Merton and Kingston and both councils will continue to work together with Thames Water on water supply and wastewater management. No planning related strategic cross borough issues have been identified between Merton and Kingston

### ***Climate change mitigation and adaption***

- 5.22. Merton and Kingston, like many, declared a Climate Change Emergency in 2019, and in response has developed the [Merton Climate Strategy and Action Plan \(adopted 2020\)](#) and [Kingston has consulted on a climate action plan in 2021](#) . Both are cross-cutting strategies on addressing climate change – which focuses both on internal and external actions, including carbon neutrality as an organisation by 2030 and zero carbon by 2050.
- 5.23. Merton'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. These include setting carbon targets for minor developments.
- 5.24. 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.

### ***Provision of minerals***

- 5.25. Not identified as a strategic or cross-boundary issue between Merton and Kingston.

### ***Health care***

- 5.26. The [NHS South West London Clinical Commissioning Group](#) is responsible for planning, commissioning and buying health services for people living and working in south west London. The CCG serves around 1.5 million people living within the six boroughs of Wandsworth, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Croydon. The CCG is responsible for primary care (the services received at a GP practice), hospital treatment, rehabilitation services, urgent and emergency care, community health services, mental health and learning disability services. Strategic cooperation already takes place.
- 5.27. Merton Council has published its [Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2022](#), which is informed by the NHS CCG Merton Borough Estates Strategy. This sets out the projected health needs in Merton. As stated above, Merton and Kingston share the NHS South West London CCG with four other boroughs.
- 5.28. Kingston is in the process of updating the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which will be published alongside the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

### ***Schools and education***

- 5.29. Merton has planned for increased school places and in addition to the expansion of primary schools that took place from 2007 to 2015, a new secondary school was opened in 2018 (Harris Wimbledon) and in 2020 moved to its new site in South Wimbledon. As identified in Merton's Infrastructure Delivery Plan, there is an increasing need for school places for children with additional needs; Merton Council has expanded the existing special needs school at Cricket Green and proposes additional places at Whatley Avenue towards the west of the borough.
- 5.30. Kingston is preparing an Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which will inform Kingston's Local Plan and will include the need for future school provision. Kingston will continue to work in partnership with Kingston University and Kingston College, recognising their importance in the borough.
- 5.31.
- 5.32. There is school places movement across borough boundaries but this issue is not identified as a strategic cross-boundary issue beyond what is referred to above.

### ***Community and cultural infrastructure***

- 5.33. Merton Council has published a number of strategies to promote different aspects of community and cultural infrastructure including Merton's Community Plan 2020-2026 (with partners) and Merton's Heritage Strategy 2021-2025
- 5.34. Working with communities, Kingston is creating [community plans](#) for each of the four neighbourhoods.
- 5.35. There are no identified strategic cross boundary issues.

### ***Natural environment and green infrastructure***



- 5.36. As set out in section 4 above, Merton and Kingston have cross boundary designations of open space and Metropolitan Open Land around Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath (also shared with Wandsworth), which is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 5.37. Merton has published an Open Space and Green Infrastructure Study 2020 which has informed the Local Plan policies, site designations and Policies Map amendments. Kingston's existing open space study supports Kingston's adopted core planning strategy 2012
- 5.38. In Kingston and Merton, the approach to the protection and enhancement for these types of open space has not changed. The findings from [Merton's Green infrastructure study 2020](#), [Merton's Playing Pitch Strategy 2019](#), [Kingston open space assessment 2006](#) and [Kingston's Playing Pitch Strategy 2015](#) are available online. Both boroughs agree to continue supporting green links and green chains that cross over the boundary.

### **The built environment**

- 5.39. Merton adopted a [Borough Character Study SPD in June 2021](#) has undertaken an Urban Design Study (UDS), to develop a better understanding of the values, character and sensitivity of different parts of the borough and to enable a design-led approach to capacity on allocated sites. This includes a chapter on taller buildings and has informed Merton's strategy for taller buildings, as set out in Merton's Local Plan.
- 5.40. Taller buildings in Merton are permitted in specific parts of Colliers Wood, Morden and Wimbledon town centres and on specific site allocations. In all other cases Merton follows the London Plan 2021 approach of defining taller buildings as no taller than 6 storeys across the rest of the borough. The GLA's response to Regulation 19 of Merton's Local Plan proposed some amendments to ensure this was clear in both the policies and on maps in order to bring Merton's draft Local Plan into line with the London Plan 2021.
- 5.41. Kingston undertook a [borough character study in 2011](#) which has informed their adopted Local Plan.
- 5.42. There are no identified strategic cross boundary issues.

## **6. Governance arrangements**

- 6.1. 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.

## **7. Timetable for agreement, review, and update**

- 7.1. This statement has been informed by on-going engagement between the parties and has been informed by various evidence base documents. In addition to Duty to Cooperate meetings, the Council also regularly partakes in the Association of London Borough Planning Officer (ALBPO) meetings.

- 7.2. This SCG 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.
- 7.3. As this statement focuses on issues of relevance to Kingston's Draft Local Plan, post examination will only need further updating once work commences on any future revisions to the Local Plan. Ongoing collaboration between partners will continue through regular meetings on a one to one basis and through attendance at group meetings where cross boundary issues are discussed.