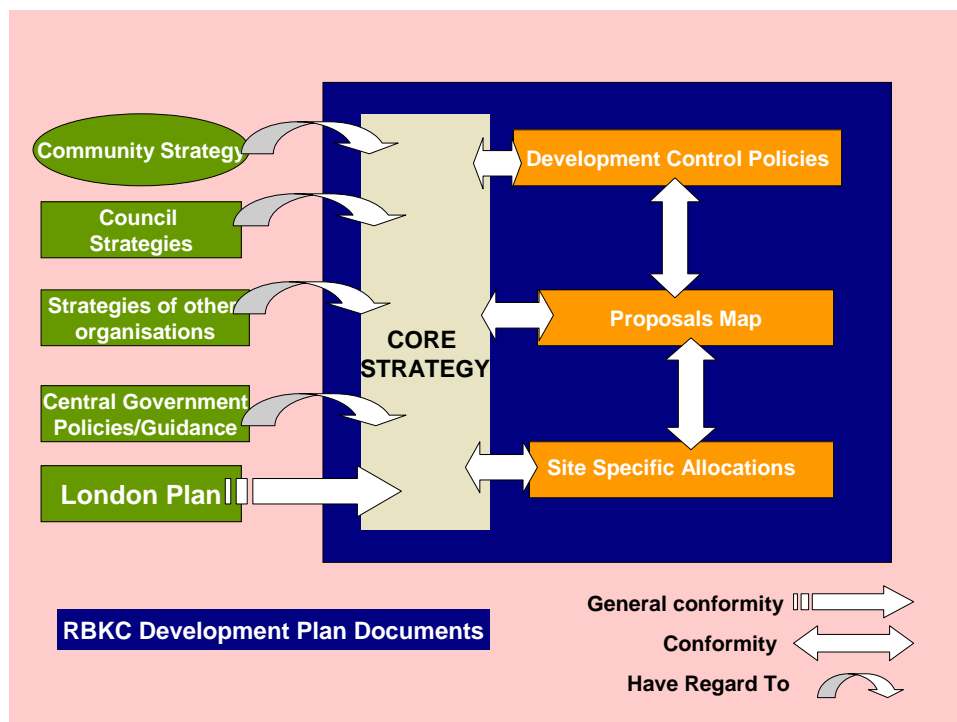


Introduction

1.1 The Core Strategy is one of a portfolio of documents produced by the Council to provide the spatial planning strategy for the Borough in line with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The portfolio is known collectively as the *Local Development Framework* (LDF). The Core Strategy, Development Control Policies, Site Specific Allocations and Proposals Map form the statutory development plan for determining planning applications, together with the London Plan.

1.2 A full account of all the documents in the LDF, their content, timescale for production and relationship to the Core Strategy is set out in the *Local Development Scheme* (LDS). The following diagram illustrates the main inputs to the Core Strategy and its relationship to the other Development Plan Documents. The Core Strategy has been prepared with regard to Government advice in PPS12 on 'Tests of Soundness'. In line with this advice, the Strategy has regard to Government guidance, the Community Strategy, Council and other organisations' strategies and is considered to be in general conformity with the London Plan. The Core Strategy has been informed by Sustainability Appraisal before, during and after public participation, meeting the requirements for Strategic Environment Assessment, ensuring that it encourages development which is sustainable.

Figure 1: The Chain of Conformity



1.3 The Core Strategy has an end date of 2020 and sets the framework for all the Development Plan Documents to fit within. It comprises a spatial portrait of where we are now, a vision of where we want to be by 2020, strategic objectives, a spatial strategy (including core policies and key diagram) and a monitoring and implementation framework. The Core Strategy also includes a limited suite of

development control policies. It does not include site specific allocations, which are the subject of a separate development plan document.

1.4 The Unitary Development Plan (2002) has served the borough well and its strategy provides an important local background to the new Spatial Vision for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Spatial Strategy for the borough and the core policies.

1.5 The Community Strategy (2005) was produced by the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership as a tool for joining up services to address local issues and to make more efficient use of available resources. The strategy is organised around eight themes which deal with many different aspects of life in the borough - environment and transport; culture, arts and leisure; safer communities; health and social care; homes and housing; community, equalities and inclusivity; learning; and work and business. The Community Strategy sets out the Partnership's vision for the future and the Local Development Framework documents, taken together, give spatial expression to those elements of the Community Strategy that relate to the use and development of land.

1.6 The Community Strategy seeks a borough:

- with an environment and amenities which enhance the quality of life of the whole community;
- where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy its public parks and open spaces and a wide variety of high quality cultural, artistic and leisure activities;
- where people live their lives free from crime and the fear of crime;
- where everyone has the opportunity to lead a healthy and independent life and can access good quality health and social care services when they need them;
- with good quality housing that is well managed and put to the best possible use to meet people's needs;
- where all local people feel confident of their place in the wider community, and where everyone can access the services that they need;
- where everyone is a learner with high aspirations and achieves high standards whether for employability or personal development; and
- which enjoys high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, with the benefits of increasing prosperity enjoyed across the borough.

1.7 The Community Strategy, and other Council strategies, national planning policy guidance and the Mayor of London's *London Plan* have been taken into account in developing the Spatial Vision for this Core Strategy for the borough. London is a huge and diverse city. Different parts of London are at different stages of development which require different policy responses; this is acknowledged in the London Plan. Now that the London Plan forms part of the development plan for the borough, the aim of this Spatial Strategy is to adapt the London-wide policies to the particular and unique circumstances of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The Context

2.1 The borough is a very special place. For over three hundred years, Kensington and Chelsea has been one of the most desirable places to live in London, ever since a private country house was acquired by William and Mary and adapted for royal residence by Sir Christopher Wren. For many decades Kensington was the favoured home of some of Britain's most famous kings and queens and the palace was at the centre of the life and governance of the kingdom.

2.2 Kensington and Chelsea grew throughout the nineteenth century to provide homes for the newly wealthy middle and upper classes. More recently it has been the centre of fashionable London and at the forefront of the restoration of the Victorian terraces of Inner London.

2.3 This has left a rich architectural heritage and a vibrant and attractive urban life which has always – and still continues - to attract gifted and talented residents from all walks of life. Kensington and Chelsea residents include leaders, stars, opinion-formers and dynamic wealth creators from the arts, media, business, politics, the law and other professions. Their contribution is essential to the well-being of London as a whole.

2.4 Alongside this wealth there have always been the less well off – whether in the hostels of Earl's Court or the larger areas of social housing in the north of the Borough. The process of providing decent affordable housing has been a long one, pursued by both the council and social landlords over more than a hundred years.

2.5 The borough is a sustainable place, with some of the highest density building in Europe, with all of its new developments taking place on previously developed land, with low car ownership and usage and high public transport use.

2.6 Other indicators of success are plentiful – there are numerous shopping, leisure and community facilities within half an hour of everyone's home; levels of investment in the built environment are high; crime levels are low and falling; life expectancy and educational attainment are high and rising; and our most deprived areas are improving. The overwhelming majority (86%) of residents say that they are satisfied with the area as a place to live; furthermore, most local people believe that the Council is working to make the area a better place to live (this is the third highest score recorded across all the London boroughs).

2.7 The desirability and success of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has produced an exemplar urban environment which is a model for the future. But past success is no guarantee of success in the future. The Local Development Framework is an essential part of ensuring that future generations can continue to benefit from the borough's distinction.

The Spatial Vision and Strategy

2.8 The special nature of the borough has been recognised by planning strategy since the 1980s. Successive development plans have sought to preserve what is

excellent in the borough while seeking to address matters of concern. Because of the borough's location close to central London, plans have always had to strike a balance between the strategically important function of maintaining a high quality, historical residential environment and the pressing needs of development that come from being so close to the heart of the capital city.

2.9 The Spatial Vision re-endorses this balanced approach. The six fundamental goals of the Spatial Strategy are:

- ◆ Providing housing to meet community needs;
- ◆ Improving the quality of life for local residents;
- ◆ Preserving and enhancing the architectural and historical character and appearance of the borough, ensuring that new development brings high standards of quality and design;
- ◆ Contributing to the wider social and economic well-being of the borough and London as a whole;
- ◆ Enhancing the borough's significant contribution to sustainability; and
- ◆ The regeneration of North Kensington.

2.10 The *Spatial Vision* for the borough is to achieve a *Better City Life* so that in the year 2020:

Kensington and Chelsea will remain one of the most desirable places to live in London. It will be a prosperous, vibrant, accessible and safe place where more people will live and work, enjoying a better city life.

Providing housing to meet community needs

There will be an increased number of homes, with more family accommodation, more affordable housing and more special needs housing, especially for elderly residents.

There will be a greater mix of tenures in those areas currently dominated by public housing, producing mixed and balanced communities throughout the borough, to benefit the area as a whole.

Improving the quality of life for local residents

There will be a strong sense of community with more and better facilities for residents – particularly local shopping facilities, state and private schools, community, health, sport and leisure facilities.

There will be an appropriate provision of services which are highly valued by the community, such as independent shops, public houses, post offices, elderly persons homes and petrol filling stations.

Preserving and enhancing the architectural and historical character and appearance of the borough, ensuring that new development brings high standards of quality and design

The architectural and historical character of the borough will have been preserved and enhanced.

Developments will be well designed and built, complementing both the quality built and natural environment, to help retain local distinctiveness.

A significant number of inappropriate post-war developments will have been redeveloped and replaced with new developments of the highest architectural quality.

The street environment will continue to play an extremely important role in the overall success of the area. Design lessons learnt during the award winning Kensington High Street project will have been developed in other parts of the borough.

Contributing to the wider social and economic well-being of the borough and London as a whole

Office based employment will continue to be an important source of work for residents and commuters and there will be an increased provision of small and very small offices to stimulate self-employment and business start-ups.

The three Employment Zones will provide a diverse range of employment opportunities based on a variety of light industrial, office and media and creative activities. Mixed development will deliver homes within the Employment Zones.

The borough's international and national shopping centres of Knightsbridge, Kensington High Street, King's Road East and Portobello Road will be encouraged to flourish and remain successful .

The borough will remain a world class tourist destination and the visitor experience will be enhanced, particularly round the South Kensington Museums' complex.

Enhancing the borough's significant contribution to sustainability

The borough will become the most sustainable borough in London, with the lowest carbon footprint per resident. All new housing will be zero emission, and the waste we produce will be dealt with sustainably.

Public transport facilities, particularly in the north of the borough, will be significantly enhanced and more people will walk and cycle to work, school and the shops.

The Regeneration of North Kensington

The North Kensington Regeneration Area will have been enhanced. The North Kensington Action Area Plan will have provided the framework for the Council and its partners to bring together regeneration, development

and transport proposals with improvements in learning and skills, health, safety, access, employment, environment and housing.

2.11 This Spatial Vision applies to the whole of the borough. However, while many parts of the borough are well-established, conservation areas subject to limited change, others are more likely to see significant improvement and development over the plan period. Accordingly, the Plan identifies individual development sites such as Warwick Road and Notting Hill Gate and proposes that particular attention should be paid to North Kensington through an Area Action Plan. The main land use elements of the Spatial Strategy are illustrated on the Key Diagram at the end of the chapter. Individual sites are identified in the Site Specific Allocations.

Providing Housing for Community Needs

2.12 The intrinsic character of the borough is of an intensely developed, inner-city area that is primarily residential - it is estimated that in 2005 the borough was home to 196,200 people and had the highest population density of all local authorities in England and Wales.

2.13 The borough's outstanding built environment, the quality of the architecture and spaces in most parts of the borough and its position close to the Capital's centre make it one of the most desirable places to live in London (and quite possibly the world). This popularity comes at a price, in the literal sense, bringing with it the highest property prices in the United Kingdom. In 2005, the average price of a home in the borough was £752,760 (£160,000 more than anywhere else in London).

2.14 The housing market provides opportunities in terms of investment in our historical buildings and regeneration of our poorer areas. But it provides challenges, first, in terms of pressure for new residential development, which is both a threat to the diversity of and services within the borough as well as a threat to our rich architectural and historical townscapes through over-development. Second, it results in a lack of suitable accommodation for the children of residents, families who wish to stay in the borough but cannot afford to, those on low incomes, the elderly who wish to stay near to their families and teachers, doctors, nurses, policemen and other vital public servants trying to find somewhere to live near to their work but who are forced to live outside the borough. This poses a threat to social cohesion and healthy local communities because of the increasing polarisation between the well-off and the poor and the lack of accommodation for key workers.

2.15 The borough is composed mostly of small households and past development trends have reinforced this; development proposals have tended until recently to favour smaller housing units (76% of the borough's households contained two or less people in 2001); more family units are required to build stability into the community. New solutions are being tried; for example, there is an increasing desire to seek new underground rooms, for home leisure and accommodation purposes. This may enable some families to remain in their family home – but the schemes cause great concern to some neighbours, who fear that excavation work may damage their houses. Where family housing is proposed, the needs of children should be taken

into account, in particular the provision of private gardens, play areas and informal play space.

2.16 Affordable social rented housing has historically been provided in the form of large estates in the less expensive areas within the north and south-west of the Borough; there is a particular concentration of affordable housing within the five northern wards of Golborne, St Charles, Notting Barns, Colville and Norland. Fifty three per cent of the housing stock within these wards is rented directly from the Council or from registered social landlords. There is a need for more affordable housing to be sought on smaller sites throughout the borough in order to help to address the chronic shortage of such housing; but in the northern wards, the introduction of more intermediate housing (such as key worker) and market housing could help to build more mixed and balanced communities, along with the consequential support infrastructure to benefit the area as a whole. There are only two types of affordable housing in the borough – social rented and intermediate, with a focus on key worker housing. The Plan addresses the major issues of what percentage of affordable housing will be sought (the London Plan has a London-wide target of 50%) and the social rented / key worker split (the London Plan seeks 70%/30%). This Plan proposes a variation on these proportions, depending upon the area of the borough in which the development is proposed.

2.17 The strategy will be to ensure that there is an appropriate mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, particularly to address affordable and special housing needs and the need for more family housing. In spatial terms, the Plan foresees substantial new housing developments around Lots Road, Warwick Road, Notting Hill Gate and in the north of the borough, and in the Employment Zones where the Plan will provide mixed use development.

Improving the Quality of Life for Residents

2.18 London's role as a capital city depends upon the maintenance of an established and stable residential population which in turn requires the support of social and community services. The provision of social and community facilities, leisure and sports, health facilities and education is essential if the vitality and stability of the community is to be maintained; they are essential for successful urban life. High land values and competition for development mean that facilities for residents and other land uses that contribute to local cultural community and civic society can be squeezed out. It is important for the continued competitiveness of the borough as a whole that new facilities are provided and existing facilities are protected to meet the needs of residents.

2.19 The very popularity of the borough has led to increasing polarisation between the wealthy, those on middle incomes and the poor. While a large part of the borough is extremely affluent, there are significant concentrations of deprivation. Parts of Golborne ward are amongst the worst 4% (in terms of multiple deprivation) in England, and much of St Charles, Golborne, Notting Barnes and Colville wards are within the worst 20%. The north of the borough is also the area least served by public transport, with lower incomes, poorer health and higher levels of unemployment than the rest of the Borough.

2.20 The areas of social housing have been in danger of becoming isolated enclaves of deprivation. The particular problems of North Kensington have long been recognised and the area has been defined within the *London Plan* as an *Area of Regeneration*. The Core Strategy is a further opportunity to address this issue and in order to tackle identified problems in an integrated way the Council is preparing an area action plan for North Kensington.

2.21 It is essential that the type of facilities required by all sections of the community are provided; the needs of those fortunate enough to be able to afford private provision need to be tended to as well as seeking facilities to meet the needs of those less well off.

2.22 There has been increasing concern that a diverse range of uses, which fall outside the standard definition of social and community uses but which are equally important to the local community, are being lost (such as independent shops, public houses, post offices, elderly persons homes and petrol filling stations). The Core Strategy seeks to protect such uses but has to recognise that while the planning system can provide a degree of protection to all land uses, so long as there is a prospect of the use continuing if planning permission is refused for alternative development, it cannot preserve unviable uses.

2.23 The network of 37 local shopping centres and local convenience shops spread across the borough play an essential role in the life of the community by serving the everyday needs of residents and workers. The *Retail Needs* study showed that there is a little extra capacity for small scale growth in convenience shopping.

2.24 The town centres are the areas where residents, workers and visitors go to benefit from a wide range of services. They are the main concentrations of restaurants, bars, social facilities, cinemas, offices and above all shops, with retailing remaining the principal function. The nine 'higher order' centres are well spread throughout the borough and generally equate to those areas best served by public transport. The spread of centres helps ensure that anywhere in the borough is less than a 30 minute trip by public transport from all the essential social and community facilities traditionally found in a shopping street.

2.25 The borough has some of the best maintained schools in the country; 37 schools maintained by the Council and 38 independent schools. The independent sector is popular with many parents and some 51 per cent of school-aged children are educated in private schools. The local authority is graded excellent for its education service but while there are places in primary schools for virtually everyone who wants one, there are only four secondary schools in the borough. The majority of secondary aged children have to find places in maintained schools outside of the borough. The Council intends to meet this challenge by expanding the number of good local secondary school places, including building a new school in south-west Chelsea and redeveloping Holland Park School.

2.26 The Community Strategy points out that the achievement of health and well-being is about far more than just the delivery of those services. Action to tackle issues such as poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, poor housing,

homelessness, poor transport access to local services, pollution and the fear of crime can all contribute to better health for local people. So too can access to open space, leisure and recreation facilities and sports provision. While men in the borough live longer than any where else in London, and life expectancy for women is the highest in England and Wales, many areas in North Kensington fall into the least healthy 20% in London. Poor health in the borough tends to concentrate in areas of social housing; people living in the northernmost wards have an average life expectancy more than five years lower than the borough average and more than ten years lower than those in the healthiest wards.

Maintaining or improving people's health can help them to study, get jobs, get around and feel more confident, so promoting good health is not only a good thing in itself, but also a means to other desirable outcomes. The Core Strategy therefore seeks to retain and enhance those recreational, leisure and sports facilities that provide the opportunity for general well-being. It also promotes access to high quality health and social care services in the community, seeking to ensure that everyone can access primary care services when they need them and to successfully deliver new health and care facilities for which there is an identified need.

2.27 With regard to the provision of "greenspace" in the Borough, which includes all areas of open space and gardens, there are 849 residents per hectare of greenspace with only the London Borough of Islington having more people per hectare. The borough's parks and open spaces therefore have a special importance. The borough contains some open spaces of extraordinary quality. Four open spaces have been designated by the Mayor of London as Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) because of their strategic significance; Holland Park, the western part of Kensington Gardens, Kensal Cemetery and Brompton Cemetery. Two further areas of MOL are to be found on its boundaries (Battersea Park and Hyde Park). Apart from their landscape value, the cemeteries contain examples of high quality funereal architecture and are further significant because of the famous people buried there. The borough also has 97 of London's protected garden squares which contribute enormously to the townscape value of the borough.

2.28 Nevertheless, the borough remains densely urban in nature and has the second lowest provision of public open space in the Capital. Forty-eight percent of the borough, measured both by population and by area, is classified as suffering from a deficiency in public open space. This deficiency is ameliorated to some degree by the private garden squares and other private communal spaces spread throughout much of the borough, which provide for the open space needs for those who are resident in neighbouring houses.

2.29 There are three main leisure centres serving the borough (Kensington Leisure Centre, Chelsea Sports Centre and the Westway Sports Centre, which is run by the Westway Development Trust) and each of the five main parks has some sports facilities on offer. However, opportunities for outdoor sports and leisure in the borough are limited with only three publicly accessible sites where sports pitches are available and the difficulty in providing more given the borough's densely built up nature. A shortage of outdoor sports provision means that the Council rely heavily on commissioning the use of facilities in neighbouring authorities and there is a shortage of indoor sports space, particularly in the south of the borough.

2.30 Despite a shortage of public open space the borough offers a wealth of opportunity for the enjoyment of culture, arts and leisure activities. It is host to important institutions such as the South Kensington Museums and events such as the Notting Hill Carnival. There is also a thriving local arts scene with more than 600 arts organisations and artists based in Kensington and Chelsea and an area rich in innovative streetscape projects and public art. However, there are challenges if the local arts scene is to continue to thrive. The Community Strategy mentions the lack of affordable land and buildings limiting the kind of activities that can take place and making it difficult for successful local cultural and arts organisations to grow without locating elsewhere. There is also a need to secure facilities in locations which are easily accessible to all of the borough's population.

2.31 Consultation has shown that there is almost unanimous support for preserving and enhancing the residential, natural and historical character of the borough and its amenities to ensure a high quality of life for all its residents. Consultation has also shown unanimous support for policies that will secure the amenities necessary to provide a better city life for the whole community – health, education, leisure and recreation, arts and culture, local services and shops. The community wishes to see the borough's parks, trees and other open spaces protected.

2.32 It is essential that the borough remains a diverse and interesting place, sustaining, enhancing and promoting the scale and mix of activities and settings that make it the successful place that it is today. However, most residents believe that it is important to ensure an appropriate balance between the borough's contribution to London as a 'world city' and as a place which people call home. Policies will reflect the community's wish to retain the individual character of the different parts of the borough.

Preserving and enhancing the architectural and historical character and appearance of the borough ensuring that new development brings high standards of quality and design

2.33 London is an historical city. The borough contributes significantly to the architectural and historical interest of London as a whole. This is valuable in its own right but it also contributes to the attractiveness and economic competitiveness of London on the global stage.

2.34 The Borough has an extraordinary quality of buildings and spaces, much of this derived from its rich heritage of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture. Because of the special qualities of the borough, there has always been a strong emphasis on controlling and mitigating the impacts of development. Development throughout much of the borough will continue to be affected by the fact that there are 36 conservation areas, covering 72% of its area, which the Council has a legal duty to preserve or enhance. Extreme care will need to be taken in designing proposals that either affect or will be located near to the 4000 Listed Buildings which are to be found in the borough (which include some of the jewels in Britain's architectural crown such as the Royal Hospital Chelsea, Kensington Palace and the Victoria and Albert and Natural History Museums).

2.35 The quality of the buildings and spaces is complemented by the grandeur of the River Thames forming the southern boundary to the borough and in the north the Grand Union Canal. The multi-functional nature of these water spaces need to be protected and enhanced so that they can fulfil their potential. These waterways need careful management to ensure that a balance is achieved between competing economic, social and environmental interests.

2.36 There will be some need for change, to meet both local needs and the wider strategic needs of London. The *Community Strategy* recognises this and acknowledges that the demand for homes and businesses means that the borough is set to continue to grow in the future; and that the challenge is to ensure that future growth is managed in a sustainable way. It states that *we need to make provision for new homes, shops and community facilities, whilst at the same time protecting and improving our environment and our use of resources*. Where development is necessary and appropriate, it will contribute as much as possible to meeting the needs of the local community. A high quality of environment will remain a priority, with proposals based on a clear understanding of the local context and designed to a high standard accordingly.

2.37 The borough contains some of the highest densities in London, but this is not consistent across the area; in order to meet the need for growth, higher densities will be allowed in areas where regeneration is needed.

2.38 A significant proportion of development within the Borough takes the form of high density proposals on small sites. This is not without its problems and great care is required to ensure that only the highest quality development is permitted. The Core Strategy supports developments which provide inclusive design, which sit well within their setting, which deliver sustainability and which maximise the development potential of the site. The same amount of care is required for conversions and for small scale alterations; sensitive additions and minor alterations to existing buildings can greatly add to the life of a property without harming the historical character of the borough or adversely affecting the lives of neighbours.

2.39 The Mayor for London has a positive approach to tall, landmark buildings and sees them playing a role in both the promotion of London as a high density world class city and in achieving other planning benefits, such as investments in transport infrastructure. Tall buildings will be generally out-of-keeping in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea – they will generally only be acceptable where they form part of a cluster or where a landmark building would contribute positively to the character or appearance of an area.

2.40 Although the quality of the environment in the borough is generally extremely high, there are sites and locations where improvements could be achieved, and would be beneficial, through redevelopment initiatives. For example, there are a number of post-war buildings whose redevelopment would provide the opportunity for further world class architecture to be located in the borough.

2.41 In order to keep the borough special and to encourage the best in architectural quality, the future focus of managing change will be constructive and proactive,

encouraging quality and innovation rather than on concentrating solely on the adverse aspects of development. The intention is to create certainty as far as possible through the Local Development Framework, but to be creative and considered in the approaches adopted. When starting from such a high base that the borough's success represents today, normal expectations will have to be stretched to produce exemplar developments which both care for and enhance the environmental assets of the area for the benefits of existing and future residents. Schemes will optimise the potential of land that is to be developed and will be accessible to all sections of the community.

2.42 The borough has achieved national recognition for the high quality of its public realm. This involves not only the design of buildings but also the scale and proportion of the spaces between buildings. There are many examples of buildings of architectural note in the borough and the quality of these buildings need to be complemented by streets and spaces designed and maintained to the same high standards. However, if no part of the borough is to be excluded from the treatment of the public realm that seeks to bring out the best in the area then this programme needs to be rolled forward in a managed and coordinated way.

Contributing to the wider social and economic well-being of London as a whole

2.43 The desirability of the borough as a place to live attracts the type of residents who are important to London's businesses, professions, entertainment, culture and the creative arts. In socio-economic terms, Kensington and Chelsea is very prosperous. It is home to some of the country's wealthiest people. It has almost double the national average of managers, senior officials, associates and professional and technical staff. The southern wards are amongst the wealthiest in the country. Its unemployment level of just 1.8 % is about half the national average.

2.44 The Borough makes a significant contribution to the wider economy through the provision of world class retail facilities, through the collection of world class museums, tourist attractions and educational facilities in South Kensington and by providing high quality residential accommodation.

2.45 Some of London's finest shopping areas are to be found in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Knightsbridge is a major retail destination for residents from the borough and the rest of London, in addition to an international catchment of shoppers who are attracted to the major stores and the various high fashion houses. The Portobello Road 'Special District Centre' is unique, with its specialist antiques sector, its world famous street market and some 300 retail units still largely in the hands of independent operators or small local chains.

2.46 The *Retail Needs Study* showed that, by and large, all of the borough's main shopping centres were healthy. However, there is growing concern across the country about the phenomenon of 'cloned high streets', where national multiple chain stores move in to a high street, forcing out local independent traders and specialist shops and destroying any sense of individual identity. Public consultation has shown particular concern expressed about the future of Portobello Road, whose attractiveness is under threat from the steady influx of outlets which can be found on any high street. The Council has set up a *Retail Commission* to investigate ways of

protecting the independent trader and maintaining an appropriate balance of multiple and independent traders, thereby maintaining local character in the face of market pressures.

2.47 The Core Strategy has to address the external threats of a possible decline in shoppers due to the inclusion of the borough within the extended congestion charging zone, coupled with the future competition from the White City shopping centre. The Core Strategy seeks to ensure that the borough's town centres continue to flourish with a lively mix of shops and services.

2.48 Tourism is one of the country's major industries and it is an important source of employment in London and the borough. Kensington and Chelsea is famous for its visitor economy. In addition to its shopping centres, the borough is home to some of London's top tourist attractions such as the South Kensington Museums complex. Renowned events are held here, such as the Notting Hill Carnival and the Chelsea Flower Show.

2.49 The borough affords easy access to the Central Activities Zone (CAZ), which offers a greater scale and concentration of visitor attractions than anywhere else in the Capital and the South East – the Mayor of London defines the Central Activities Zone as “an agglomeration of vitally important activities that define London's role as a world city”. Knightsbridge and the South Kensington Museums have such significance that they are defined as being the western boundary of the CAZ.

2.50 Tourism is a key driver of the borough's economy with it being estimated in 2003 that seventeen million tourists spent an estimated two billion pounds here. Much of this spend will relate to visitor accommodation – the borough has always made a substantial contribution to London's stock of visitor accommodation.

2.51 While tourism brings large revenues to the borough, the amount of visitor accommodation has been recognised as tending to have a negative impact on residential communities (particularly in areas where low standard hotels have been over-concentrated, such as used to be the case in Earl's Court). Previous planning policy has not sought to protect visitor accommodation and in recent years hotels have reverted to housing use. In order to contribute to the success of the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, and to maintain their contribution to the local economy, hotels should be protected and new ones allowed selectively in suitable locations. This position will be reviewed after the Olympics are over.

2.52 The borough is home to 10,000 diverse businesses employing over 127,000 people. About 40,000 of these jobs are within the retail or hotel and restaurants sector and therefore are largely based in the borough's town centres. These are both sectors where the borough has a greater proportion of employees than the rest of the country. A significant proportion of the borough's 29,500 office jobs are also located within the town centres - a focus most pronounced in the wards around Kensington High Street and South Kensington.

2.53 The borough is not a major office centre. Office based employment tends to be small in scale but is an important source of work in the borough for residents and commuters. The London Plan sees major growth in office employment in the

Opportunity Areas, none of which are in the borough. It is considered important to maintain office employment, especially in small and micro offices that encourage business start-ups, but any great expansion in floorspace is not anticipated; to do otherwise could threaten an adverse effect on residential character and amenity, infringe on other shopping centre activities and place additional pressure on both the roads and the Underground. Industrial activity and employment has been declining for many years; nevertheless what remains makes a valuable contribution to the vitality of the local economy and to the diversity of job opportunities available in the borough.

2.54 There are also concentrations of office employment within the north of the Borough and particularly within the three Employment Zones. Each of the Employment Zones has its own distinct character, although all were designated to reflect the existing concentrations of both office and light industrial premises. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the decline in traditional manufacturing there are very few 'general industrial uses' left within the borough. Those small scale operations which do remain, such as coach works, panel beaters and the like, are largely located within the Latimer Road Employment Zone – a zone also characterised by a range of traditional light industrial premises as well as the more widespread office premises. Lots Road, to the south-west of the borough, is dominated by antiques and art-related firms, designers and business services, whilst Kensal Road, in the extreme north of the borough, has a character reflecting its links to the media hub at the BBC in White City.

2.55 Whilst the borough is home to some major employers, the average size of businesses within the Borough is small, at just 239 sq. m. which is less than half the national average. Three-quarters of local workplaces employ less than five people.

2.56 It is important that the local economy continues to generate and retain employment opportunities for local residents so that jobs and homes are accessible to each other, thereby minimising the need to travel and making use of the skills and abilities of the local workforce. Office employment will continue to be focussed in the town centres and three Employment Zones, with the latter being the focus for any new industrial activity. Existing office and industrial uses throughout the borough will be protected.

Enhancing the borough's significant contribution to sustainability.

2.57 Climate change is one of the most serious threats we face today. International agreements, European Union directives and Government and London Plan targets on environmental quality and sustainable development all depend upon local action to deliver change. The Kensington and Chelsea Partnership believes that local residents and employers should be encouraged and expected to 'do their bit', to reduce and recycle waste, use energy efficiently and reduce pollution.

2.58 The borough makes an important contribution to the environmental sustainability of London as a whole. The density of residential development in some part so of the borough is amongst the highest in Europe; public transport facilities, particularly in the centre of the borough, are generally good. The Council's ambitions

in terms of environmental sustainability are set out in the five-year Environment Strategy 2006, one proposal of which is to produce a 'green development guide'. The Council has signed the Nottingham Declaration, thereby pledging to actively tackle climate change within its area and to work with others to reduce emissions country-wide.

2.59 The Government has established a target that all new homes in England will have to be carbon neutral by 2016. The UK's 21 million homes are responsible for 27% of CO² emissions and with a rising population and more people living in smaller households, the demands on housing are only set to increase. A zero carbon house is defined as a property with 'zero net emissions of carbon dioxide from all energy use in the home'. This includes energy consumed by appliances such as TVs and cookers, not just other uses that are currently part of building regulations, including heating, hot water and ventilation. The government hopes that the measures will help it meet the target of cutting CO² emissions by at least 60% by 2050. Climate change is a real and imminent threat so it is vital that homes and other buildings are as sustainable and eco-friendly as possible. The challenge that faces the borough is to introduce such developments without detriment to cherished townscapes.

2.60 Air quality is intrinsically linked to traffic emissions, and correspondingly higher levels of air pollution are found in proximity to the main roads. Levels of nitrogen dioxide and fine particles are so high in the borough that the Council has declared the entire borough an Air Quality Management Area. We have yet to see what the impact of the recent inclusion of the borough within the Central London Congestion Charge Zone will have upon congestion and upon air quality.

2.61 Despite the densely built character of the borough there is a surprising variety of habitats with 22 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance designated within its boundaries. However, the opportunity of creating further habitats is limited so emphasis will be placed on protecting and enhancing the borough's biodiversity resources. This will involve increasing biodiversity in the borough, counteracting habitat fragmentation and recreating and enhancing natural landscapes and features. The challenge will be to integrate these within the dense urban fabric of the borough.

2.62 The pedestrian environment is a key aspect of the quality of life for those who live, work or visit the borough. For many people, walking is a most convenient way of getting about. It is a most environmentally sustainable and healthy mode of travel and it is important to establish a culture which increasingly favours walking. Cycling is a convenient, low cost and polluting form of transport. As a way to travel, it improves health and fitness and is often quicker than alternative forms of transport in congested urban areas.

2.63 Although located on the edge of central London, and with twelve Underground stations and numerous bus routes, the extreme south and the north-west corner of the Borough still have inadequate public transport accessibility. The high population density, together with a housing stock with minimal off-street parking, means that much of the borough has reached car parking saturation with intense demand for any available on-street parking. In an attempt to deal with extreme parking pressure, a Controlled Parking Zone is maintained for the whole of the borough. Car clubs and permit-free developments are increasingly being encouraged.

2.64 The London boroughs are the waste planning authorities for London. The key objectives for the spatial distribution of waste facilities within London as set out in national planning policy are that communities should take more responsibility for the management of their own waste (self-sufficiency) and that waste should be disposed of in one of the nearest appropriate installations (proximity). This means that boroughs should achieve the maximum degree of self-sufficiency commensurate with their obligations for managing waste. The Mayor of London forecasts that about 215 hectares of additional waste management capacity, not currently in waste use, will need to be identified in London from 2005-2020. At the strategic level, he has indicated that boroughs should identify in their development plans a range of waste management facilities to manage their apportionment of the annual amount of London's municipal and commercial/industrial waste (estimated for the borough to be 309,000 tonnes per annum by 2020). This is a substantial challenge given the intensity of development in the borough and the high value of land.

2.65 Consultation showed unanimous support for minimising the impact that the community has on the environment through the facilitation and encouragement of recycling, waste minimisation and energy efficient construction. Similar support was given to encouraging sustainable approaches to maintaining and enhancing buildings and the environment, including the improvement of air quality. Sustainable construction policies will be applied to new buildings (but with sensitivity when applied to Listed Buildings and buildings in conservation areas).

The Regeneration of North Kensington

2.66 A key element of the London Plan's vision is tackling social exclusion and a strong focus on 'areas for regeneration' is a major part of this. The Council has long recognised that particular circumstances exist in North Kensington which requires special attention. The area experiences a high level of deprivation and has traditionally been characterised by social housing and higher levels of unemployment. These circumstances were instrumental in the successful *City Challenge* bid for the area, an initiative which ran from 1993 to 1998. A Single Regeneration Budget Programme *Fighting Unemployment in North Kensington (FUNK)* was funded for six years from 1997 to pick up and develop City Challenge training and employment initiatives in the area. In the past central Government has made available extra resources to help the Council and its partners to tackle such problems. The London Plan designates North Kensington as a Regeneration Area.

2.67 The *Community Strategy* recognises that from facts, figures and experience in delivering services that the northernmost parts of the borough have a combination of problems such as low incomes, high unemployment, higher crime and poorer health (one part of Golborne ward falls in the worst 5% of areas in England on a combination of such factors). Tackling these multiple problems in isolation is less effective than addressing all of them together. Two of the Employment Zones are located in this area, and these play an important role in contributing to the provision of, and access to, jobs. The western half of North Kensington lies close to the White City Opportunity Area and the Council is keen to make appropriate functional links

between the two to assist those living in the former to take advantage of the employment and other opportunities created in the latter.

2.68 Work has already commenced on improving the local environment through the work of the North Kensington Environment Project, a partnership between the local community and the public, private and voluntary sectors with an anticipated lifespan up to Spring 2009. The Council has also embarked on a number of projects including a regeneration of the Golborne Road, proposals for improving the Kensington Memorial Park and, partly as a result of concerns over the future of the Portobello Road, has instigated a Retail Commission in order to attempt to preserve the character of its unique shopping areas and reduce the cloning effect all too apparent on major high streets. Consideration is being given to future infrastructure needs and how improvements, such as to the Hammersmith and City Underground Line and possibly a new Crossrail station in the north of the Borough, could aid the regeneration efforts. Estate renewal is under consideration such as at Wornington Green – a partner led project supported by the Council providing the chance to remodel a disadvantaged corner of the borough.

2.69 Much work still needs to be done to pull together all of the various strategies and activities that are occurring in north Kensington and policies and proposals will be put forward in other Local Development Documents, in particular the Site Allocations development plan document. Given the above, and the London Plan's designation, one way forward would be through a North Kensington Area Action Plan.

The Core Strategy's goals and Strategic Objectives

The Core Strategy is formed around six key goals. Each has strategic objectives setting out how they will be achieved and, in turn, each objective has Core Policies which will deliver the objectives. The following are proposed:

Key Goal: PROVIDING HOUSING TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

S01: To provide a range of new dwellings to meet the borough's, and to contribute to London's strategic, housing needs

Core policies will cover:

- The quantity of new housing required
- The Housing Trajectory: how the housing target will be met
- The housing mix, with an emphasis on family housing
- Homes for local people
- The proportion of market / affordable housing to be sought
- The proportion of social rented / intermediate housing that is provided as affordable
- The threshold at which affordable housing will be sought
- The protection of the Westway Travellers' site
- The provision of amenity and play space

Key Goal: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR RESIDENTS.

SO2: To protect and enhance the diverse character and local distinctiveness of the borough.

SO3: To meet the diverse needs of communities in the borough.

Core policies will cover:

- Protecting local convenience shops
- Protecting social and community facilities and planning for future growth; extending the definition of social and community facilities to include such valued uses as petrol filling stations, public houses, post offices.
- Enhancing public and private education provision in the borough
- Protecting essential healthcare provision and supporting the provision of new facilities where required
- Protecting all public and private open space in the borough
- Enhancing the quality of the borough's parks
- Using development to augment the provision of open space or to fund the improvement of existing public spaces
- Seeking additional sports and leisure facilities
- Seeking additional arts, cultural and entertainment facilities

Key Goal: PRESERVING AND ENHANCING THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL CHARACTER OF THE BOROUGH, ENSURING THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT BRINGS HIGH STANDARDS OF QUALITY AND DESIGN.

SO4 :To ensure that the borough remains one of the best places to live in London by protecting and improving the built and the natural environments.

SO5: To ensure that new development demonstrates high standards of quality and design

Core policies will cover:

- Seeking the highest standards of architectural, urban design, landscape and environmental quality
- Seeking considered, yet innovative, approaches to architectural solutions, where they make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness
- Preserving or enhancing buildings and spaces of recognised architectural or historical importance
- Protecting or enhancing important and acknowledged views across or within the borough
- Resisting inappropriately designed or sited tall buildings
- Resisting over-development
- The redevelopment of inappropriate and unsightly post war developments, to be replaced with new developments of the highest architectural standard
- Using development to provide environmental improvements that enhance local distinctiveness and reinforce those streetscape qualities that make an area special
- Proposals incorporating public art

- Proposals preserving the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties
- Providing a good quality of life for the occupiers of developments (daylight, sunlight, noise, privacy, safety and security, sense of enclosure, vibration)
- Developments not being physically or visually intrusive or harming the street scene

Key Goal: CONTRIBUTING TO THE WIDER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF THE BOROUGH AND LONDON AS A WHOLE.

SO6: To enhance the vitality and viability of the borough's town and local centres.

SO7: To meet the diverse land use needs of businesses in the borough.

SO8: To maintain a diverse range of job opportunities for local residents, subject to the protection of the residential character of the borough.

SO9: To maintain the benefits from the visitor industry to the local economy and the economy of London

Core policies will cover:

- Recognising the role of the borough's International Centre (Knightsbridge) and Major Centres (Kensington High Street and King's Road)
- Maintaining the vitality and viability of the borough's town, district and local centres and ensuring that appropriate town centre uses (retail, offices, leisure, entertainment, hotels etc), identifying core areas primarily for shopping use
- Maintaining the local distinctiveness of centres
- Recognising the dual role of the Portobello Road, a district centre with an international catchment
- Requiring development within the Employment Zones to retain or increase existing business floorspace
- Resisting development which undermines the balance between multiple and independent traders and which harms the character of town centres
- Resisting the development of large hotels anywhere in the borough
- Resisting further visitor accommodation in the Earl's Court Ward
- Resisting the loss of existing hotels and promoting town centres as the suitable location for small and medium sized hotels until after the London Olympics and Paralympics in 2012
- Supporting economic development in those parts of the borough recognised as having additional capacity for commercial or industrial activity
- Retaining business uses throughout the borough and focusing new development on very small office units

KEY GOAL: ENHANCING THE BOROUGH'S SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABILITY.

SO10: To combat the adverse effects of climate change and to promote energy efficiency, recycling and the reduction of pollution.

SO11: To ensure that new development is sustainable.

SO12: To make the borough an easy place to get to and to move around and to reduce reliance on the car.

Core policies will cover:

- Ensuring that development has a positive impact on the environment, mitigating against pollution and flood risk and by bringing contaminated land back into beneficial use
- Encouraging developments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, supporting zero and low carbon developments (where there is no adverse impact on townscape)
- Helping to meet the 85% target for London waste self-sufficiency by 2020 by resisting the loss of waste management facilities and supporting the development of new waste management facilities within the Employment Zones as part of mixed use development
- Promoting the reduction and recycling of waste
- Supporting developments which contribute to the concept of zero waste and the Council's target of 33% for household recycling and composting
- Protecting Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
- Protecting and promoting the enhancement of areas with particular biodiversity importance identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan
- Locating high trip generating development in areas well served by public transport (or that will be well served following development contributions)
- Encouraging cycling and walking
- Discouraging gated communities
- Encouraging rail, tube and bus travel and encouraging better use of the borough's waterways
- Ensuring that new development does not encourage unnecessary traffic, increase congestion or compromise road safety
- Ensuring development does not increase parking pressure on-street or lead to a net loss of parking

KEY GOAL: REGENERATION OF NORTH KENSINGTON

SO13: To co-ordinate and proactively plan for a number of developments proposed for the north of the borough and to help stimulate regeneration.

- Policies and site allocations will address such matters as employment zones, mixed communities, decent homes, the Kensal Green Gas Works Site, Portobello Road, Notting Hill Gate and Cross Rail.