

Kingston First draft business plan themes for 2025-2029 for Member Feedback

Who we are

Kingston First Business Improvement District is a not-for-profit organisation, funded by and representing businesses in Kingston Town Centre, dedicated to creating a town where businesses can thrive and people want to be.

Our vision is for Kingston to be a vibrant town where everyone has an amazing experience.

Every 5 years there is a ballot, where all businesses and organisations have a vote. Kingston Firsts next ballot is in June 2024, and if successful we will start our fifth term from January 2025 – December 2029.

What we do

We are the leading voice for Kingston town centre businesses and organisations

- We listen and work in partnership with Kingston's businesses to represent them at a local and national level, and provide services which save them money and give them insight into the town centre
- We work to create an attractive and welcoming town centre through events activations and improvements to public spaces
- We manage a strong consumer facing brand - Kingston Upon Thames - that positions Kingston as a destination and promotes local businesses and what's on offer in the town centre

Kingston First 	Kingston Council 
A snapshot of what your levy contributes to	A snapshot of what your business rates include
Christmas - the market, lights and marketing	Day to day street cleaning and emptying the bins and fly-tipping
Activations in the town centre - sculpture trail, chimp trail, street art	Fixing and replacing street lighting and furniture
Free recycling - First Mile and free support to reduce your bills	Parking charges

Additional deep cleans and graffiti removal	Anti-social behaviour, homelessness, shoplifting And the POLICE
Keep It Kingston app, with offers for town centre employees, including discounted parking for employees	Pigeons
Free training including Fire Marshall and First Aid	
Extra flowers and planting in the town centre	

Our draft business plan themes for 2025 -2039

The Kingston First team have been collating views from members in the town centre to help shape our focus and priorities for the next term 2025-2029, should we be successful in securing a yes vote from local businesses and organisations.

We have heard from over 250 members, almost half our membership, across 12 sectors within the town, from retail and leisure to office, commercial and independents.

We've used the feedback from members to develop a draft business plan which outlines what our areas of focus would be for 2025-2030. We would like to get your views on whether we've got this right.

1. Invest in a safe and welcoming town centre

What we've heard from you

"Any improvement in town centre cleanliness and security would help"

'Working with the police and retailers to reduce the current high level of crime'

'Entertainment or river bank to attract families and younger generations'

- o 89% of you would like more arts and cultural events
- o 49% of you feel we should prioritise helping to provide a clean, attractive town centre
- o 92% say improved public realm is important to the future of Kingston

What we will deliver in the next 5 years

Security and Safety

- Invest in skills and resources, including people, to provide a safer and secure town centre. This will include designated pastoral support to any member (owner or employee) who has been affected by anti-social behaviour in the town centre
- We will encourage a safe and secure representation at Board level including a representative from the police on the Kingston First Board
- We will lobby the council for better and more widespread CCTV in the town centre
- We will provide monthly updates on what the Police have done to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and make sure your voice is heard and responded to

Clean and welcoming

- Carry out regular deep cleans throughout the term, to remove grime, gum and graffiti
- Respond to your street scene concerns within 24 hours.
- Lobby for cleaner and healthier streets for people that work here as well as visitors using data and insights to drive change
- We will invest, lobby and support public realm projects that focus on the Ancient Market Place, Clarence Street and the riverside that create an attractive town centre
- Work with local artists, Kingston University and Kingston College to deliver more public art
- Create a working group with landlords, estate agents and officers to facilitate a more diverse town centre offer including more start-ups and meanwhile use

What success looks like

Businesses, residents and visitors feel safe and are proud of Kingston. They rate it's cleanliness and welcoming appeal positively

Kingston's riverside will become a destination in it's own right with new activities and experiences and better connection to and from the town centre

2. Promote and celebrate Kingston as a unique destination

What we've heard from you

- o 49% of members feel we should prioritise Marketing campaigns to improve footfall
- o 79% say a strong brand for Kingston is important and they understand why we have invested in it
- o 85% say activities for young children/families are important to the future of Kingston

"promote and help small businesses"

'More support and marketing for the night time economy and later hours trading'

What we will deliver in the next 5 years

- Every year we will introduce at least one new activation, experience or event that encourages footfall and dwell time in the town centre
- Continue to celebrate and promote Kingston through the consumer brand and website, kingstonuponthames.info, advertising, PR and social media
- Attract new visitors with marketing campaigns targeting the after work crowd, students as well as families and activations that bring these audiences to the town
- Showcase our independent businesses through specific campaigns and encourage new independent to set up home in Kingston
- Introduce annual activations, events, trails, play options in the town to encourage visitors to spend longer in the town
- Provide an exciting and welcoming Christmas experience in Kingston, including a town wide Christmas lights display

What success looks like

Kingston is becomes known nationally as a destination for its retail and leisure offer as well as its arts and culture experiences

We provide something new and interesting to do and experience every year in Kingston which helps support footfall and dwell time in the town centre

3. Deliver a better connected Kingston

What we've heard from you

Members at networking events and workshops voted Transport improvements as the no 1 priority

"Improve bus waiting area in Eden street in front of McDonald"

"Better signage for shops in old London Road"

"If the Transport to and from Kingston is made more convenient, it has a great business opportunity"

"It would be nice if the River could be used more, for water taxis up and down the river, and create some kind of commuting scheme using the River Thames"

"Moving towards a partially pedestrianised centre, with better links to the High Street from satellite roads like OLR"

What we will deliver in the next 5 years

- Work with SWR Trains to transform the train station into a welcoming entry point into the town
- Lobby and support the Council to develop and implement a street by street improvement plan including decluttering and greening for the entire town centre to help make sure streets look attractive, and are safe and accessible for everyone
- Introduce new wayfinding across the town to better connect different streets and areas of the town
- Lobby TfL and SW Trains for better rail and bus links within and around Kingston

What success looks like

A pedestrian friendly town centre that is easy to find your way around with better transport links to/from Kingston

4. Champion Kingston as a place for business and community

What we've heard from you

"Business Rates are excessive"

"more work on bringing business to those empty shop by lowering the rates etc and fund for small businesses"

"keep the flag flying we love it especially discount for staffs and we need more shops on it especially those nice new shop that is just opened"

"More clear and actionable advice to support businesses in saving money."

- 97% say less empty shops are important to the future of Kingston

What we will deliver in the next 5 years

- We will tackle the broadband issues many of you experience by supporting access to better broadband including 5G.
- Continue to help members in the town save hundred of thousand pounds through our free recycling, reduced cost trade waste and cost saving opportunities to all members
- Provide free training courses for members on key business topics from sustainability, fire safety to first aid and will base our programme on the needs of members
- Save employees money by continuing to grow and develop offer employee discounts through our employee discount app, Keep it Kingston
- Support businesses and the town to become more environmentally friendly and sustainable
- Nurture a strong and connected community, investing in community initiatives, partnerships and bringing people together to create a thriving town centre
- Be the voice of Kingston town centre; representing you and lobbying for what matters

What success looks like

The business community in Kingston feel supported and listened to and continue to thrive in the town centre

We attract new businesses and investment into the town because of the support we provide and the community spirit we nurture

All employees are signed up and enjoy the benefits of our loyalty card app KiK

BID Renewal Timelines

November 2023 - March 2024	Workshops, survey and working with members to understand your priorities
March 2024	Draft business plan themes released along with opportunities to give your views
22nd May 2024	Kingston First Business Plan launch event
28th May 2024	Ballot papers posted
27th June 2024	Ballot closes - Ballot papers must be received at Civia by 5pm on 27th June
28th June 2024	Ballot results announced

We look forward to hearing what you think, please get in touch if you would like to discuss.