

Consultation: 15 June 2022 - 5 September 2022
www.spelthorne.gov.uk/localplan

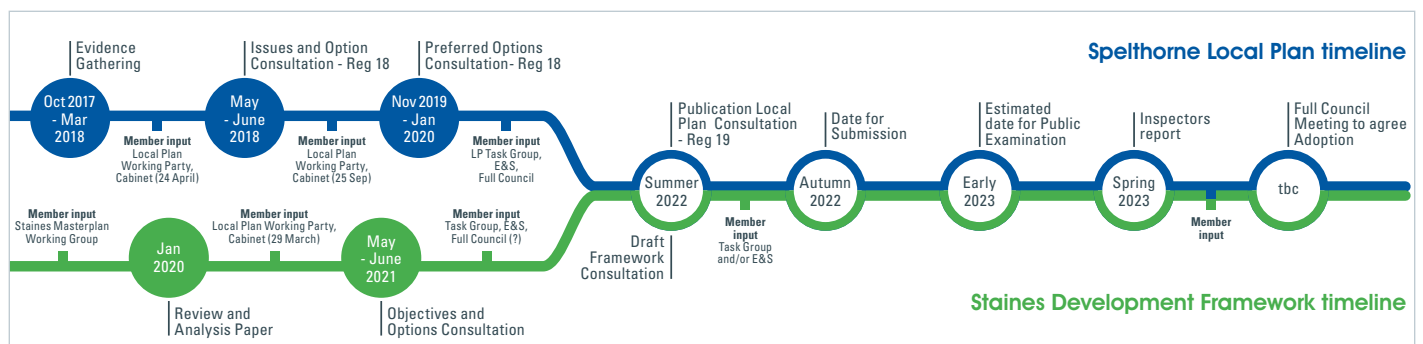


Pre-Submission Spelthorne Local Plan 2022-2037 and Staines Development Framework Consultation

The Local Plan sets out how and where development will take place across the Borough over the next 15 years and will affect every resident in Spelthorne. It is important that you read this summary and have your say.

The full documents are available to read on our website

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/localplan and paper copies are available to view at the Council Offices and all libraries in the Borough. Please see the last page of this article for further details on how to find more information and respond to the consultation.

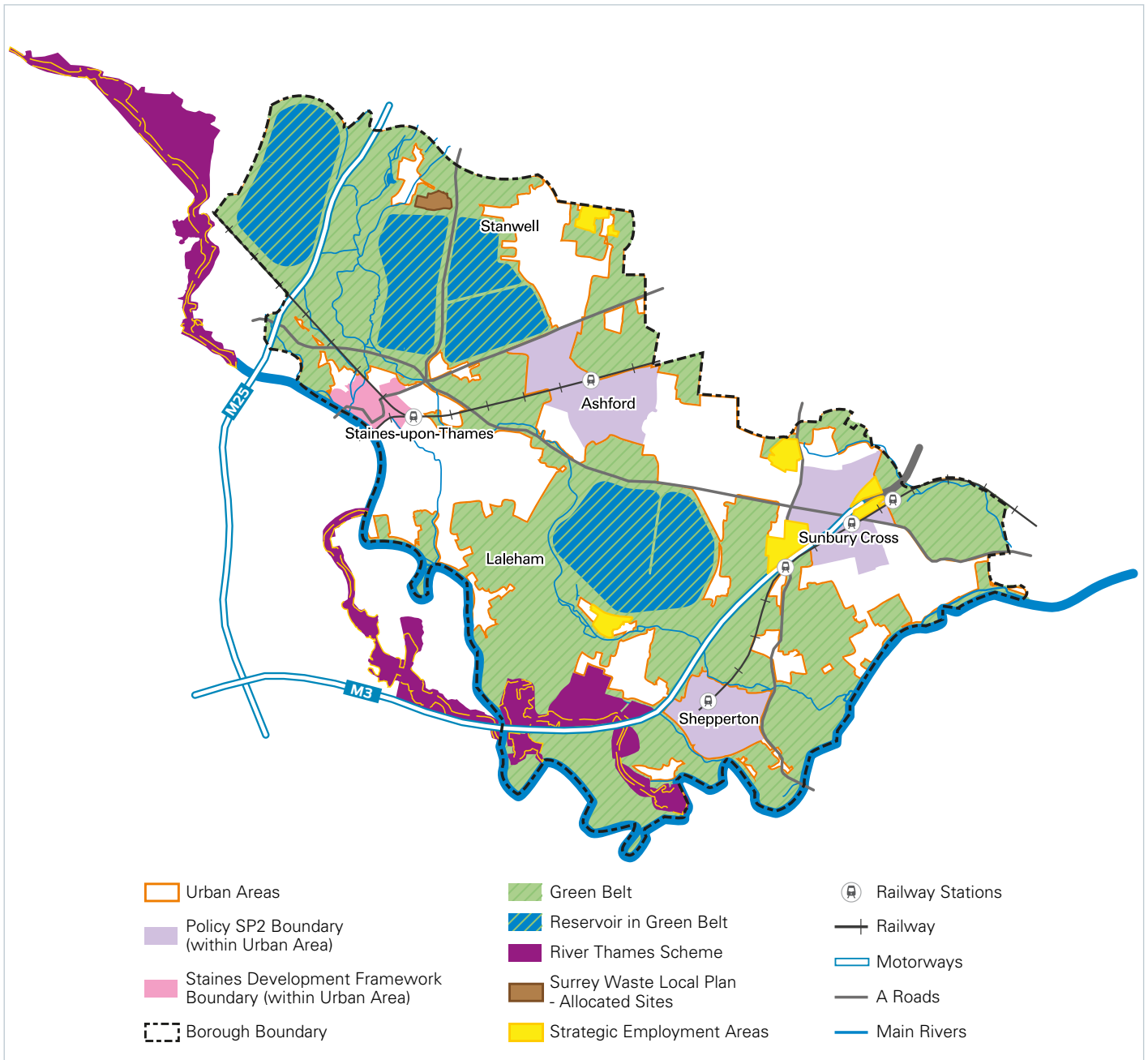


Why do we need a new Local Plan?

All Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required by the Government, to provide a long-term plan setting out how we will meet our future needs. In Spelthorne, as in much of Surrey and the South East, successfully and sustainably accommodating this growth and new development presents a real challenge. This challenge is all the greater in Spelthorne due to our extensive Green Belt, much of which comprises waterbodies and areas at risk of flooding, which limits the supply of land which is suitable and available for the level of development required to meet our housing need. An up to date, evidence based Local Plan allows us as a Borough to take a proactive approach to planning for and managing

growth in a way that most benefits our present and future residents, while protecting what is most important.

If we do not have a Local Plan development will still take place, however we will not be able to use our own policies to determine the type and location of development, which may result in increased risk to, for example, our strategically important Green Belt, attractive open spaces and heritage assets. We will also be less able to require the improvements to our infrastructure, such as highways and green and blue infrastructure, which are essential to support additional development and deliver a wide range of benefits for our residents.



Benefits to our community of the new Local Plan:



The climate emergency

The Plan responds positively to the climate emergency with more robust up to date policies and will be supported in time by more detailed guidance for developers and homeowners in a new a Supplementary Planning Document



Affordable housing

Policies which set out ambitious affordable housing targets, especially on undeveloped sites and mean that it will be much harder for developers to backtrack on their promises



Homes to meet a variety of needs

Delivery of a range of homes that will meet a variety of needs including providing family homes with gardens and enhanced standards for those with additional needs



Green and Blue Infrastructure

The Plan supports the delivery of new Green and Blue Infrastructure, offers greater protection for existing open spaces with the new Local Green Space designation and will enable the enhancement of sports and recreation facilities



A new Sixth Form college

A new Sixth Form college in Sunbury to support further education for our students so many will not need to travel out of our Borough to access courses



Improvements to key infrastructure

Improvements to key infrastructure such as education and healthcare to support growth, including an innovative new health and wellbeing centre in Staines-upon-Thames



Enhancing Spelthorne's unique character

Policies which focus on maintaining and enhancing Spelthorne's unique character, recognising the sensitive areas need greater protection and setting positive design standards



An new vision for Staines-upon-Thames

An exciting new vision for Staines-upon-Thames that will bring new life to the town, enhancing access to the river, improving pedestrian and cycle links, creating new open spaces and managing development opportunities

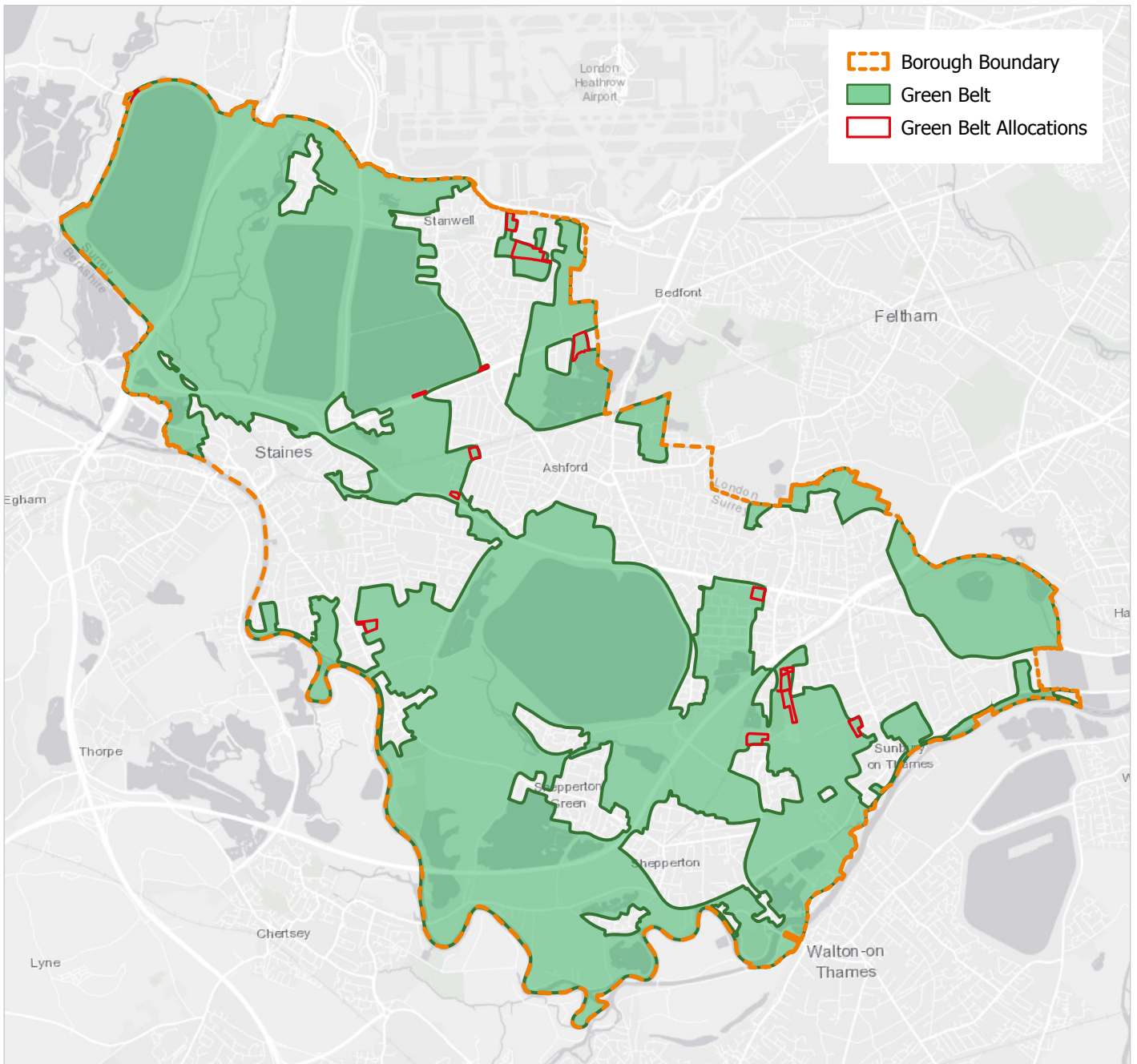
Local Plan Strategy

The Spelthorne Local Plan 2022 – 2037 sets out how we can achieve a sustainable future for Spelthorne that protects and enhances our Borough, delivers a wide range of benefits for our residents and meets our future housing needs.

The Plan seeks to deliver 9,270 homes over the Plan period, which equates to an average of 618 homes per year. This figure is Spelthorne’s objectively assessed need, based on the Government Standard methodology, which is set out in the NPPF and the accompanying

Planning Practice Guidance.

To meet our housing need, while managing the impact of new development on Staines, the Local Plan strategy agreed by the Council is to release a small amount (approximately 0.7% / 24.8 ha) of Green Belt. This approach will allow for more family homes with gardens to be built, as well as offering the opportunity for lower building heights in the more sensitive areas of Staines-upon-Thames.



Place Shaping

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that good design should contribute positively to making places better for people. Development should contribute to creating places that encourage mixed communities, promote walking and cycling, improve access to public transport, and ensure that new development connects with existing parks and open spaces for recreation. Our plan will also protect the Borough’s historic environment, including our listed buildings and Conservation Areas which contribute to the Borough’s character, sense of place and quality of life.

The Council declared a climate emergency in October 2020 and recognises that climate change is the greatest challenge currently facing us. Every decision we take must count towards reducing carbon emissions and climate change mitigation. Our Local Plan will help to support the transition to a low carbon future, helping to address the climate emergency, taking account of flood risk.



Spatial Policies

The spatial policies provide the basis around which the Council can secure improvements to the centres in the Borough. This allows for all development needs to be considered within suitable locations including housing, employment and retail space. This is reflected through an area-based approach which sets out a hierarchy for development types which suit the size and character of the area. This will lead to improvements to the benefit of residents and users through enhanced public spaces and accessibility.

As well as considering the urban environment, there is also an approach to the Borough’s river network. This allows for opportunities to improve the local environment and biodiversity as well as ensuring that impacts on the network are avoided or mitigated.

Housing

Different groups within our community, including families, older people, younger people, people with disabilities requiring more specialist accommodation and the Gypsy and Traveller community have differing accommodation needs. The policies within the Plan set out how a wide variety of high-quality homes, of all tenures, types and sizes, which meet the needs of our residents will be delivered.

The Borough’s accessible location, together with the diverse natural environment and prospering economy means the Borough offers a good quality of life. While this has many positive impacts, the desirability of Spelthorne as a place to live does have a negative impact on affordability. The policies within the Plan set out ambitious targets for meeting the needs of our residents who are not able to afford adequate housing on the open market.



Environment

Two of the most pressing challenges to be addressed at all scales in the 21st century are climate change and the loss of biodiversity. Addressing these challenges, as well as supporting development which delivers health and wellbeing benefits for our community, lies at the heart of achieving sustainable development. The natural environment plays a key role in meeting these objectives and as such the protection and enhancement of the Borough's natural environment is fundamental to the success of the Plan and securing a sustainable future for Spelthorne.

Spelthorne benefits from a diverse natural environment, highly valued by our communities and offering a wide range of benefits; our natural environment plays a key role in making the Borough an attractive place to live and work. Recognising the importance of both protecting the existing natural environment and delivering high quality development which provides further enhancements, the policies within the Plan set out how this will be achieved over the next 15 years.



Economy

Economic performance is an important indicator of the 'health' of the Borough. Ensuring the vitality and viability of Spelthorne's centres and shaping these to be appealing places for local residents and visitors to access for shopping, leisure and entertainment purposes remains a key strand of the Local Plan. The Borough's location provides a strong basis for attracting visitors and new businesses. Providing a diverse mix of business and facilities enhances the attractiveness of these centres and provides for the needs of local people within their communities and employment opportunities for a wider population.

The Borough provides a home to major companies such as Shepperton Studios and BP, which are valuable contributors to providing local employment opportunities and supporting the local economy. Retaining these and identifying suitable locations for other high-profile companies to locate in Spelthorne are important parts of the Borough's economic and employment performance.

Infrastructure and Delivery

To support a sustainable future for the Borough, infrastructure provision is a key element in the delivery of a Local Plan. Infrastructure includes transport and physical infrastructure (including roads and cycle lanes), social and community facilities (including schools and youth facilities) and green infrastructure (including open and green space). The Council is required to identify the infrastructure needed to support the development proposed over the next 15 years. This is done through the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

To compile an IDP the Council undertakes ongoing engagement with providers, developers and other key stakeholders to establish the impacts of new development on essential infrastructure within the Borough. The IDP outlines any potential gaps in provision and identifies what new infrastructure is required to mitigate some of the potential effects of the levels of development being proposed. This, together with the policies in the Plan, sets out how the needs of the Borough will be met over the plan period.



Staines-upon-Thames Town Centre Development Framework

The Development Framework sets out six 'big ideas' to ensure that Staines-upon-Thames can move into the future and successfully become more liveable, more sustainable and can provide more of what

local people need and want. By building on its assets such as the River Thames and grasping big new opportunities for change through planned growth, the town centre can ensure it will be successful

into a changeable future. These 'big ideas' are woven through all the Development Framework's strategies and implementation priorities.



Big Idea One: Connecting to the Rivers

The River Thames is a huge asset to Staines-upon-Thames but is underused and poorly connected. The Development Framework sets out a number of ways to make it a true destination and hub for Staines-upon-Thames. These include the potential for new community facilities within an extended Memorial Gardens, an improved street environment on Clarence Street and Thames Street, improved crossings between the High Street and river, new connections through development sites to link locations in the town to the river, and the use of new development in the town to face towards the river to provide a more active and secure environment in Memorial Gardens.

The Rivers Colne and Wraysbury also run through the centre and offer the potential to create different river environments for leisure and recreation including new and

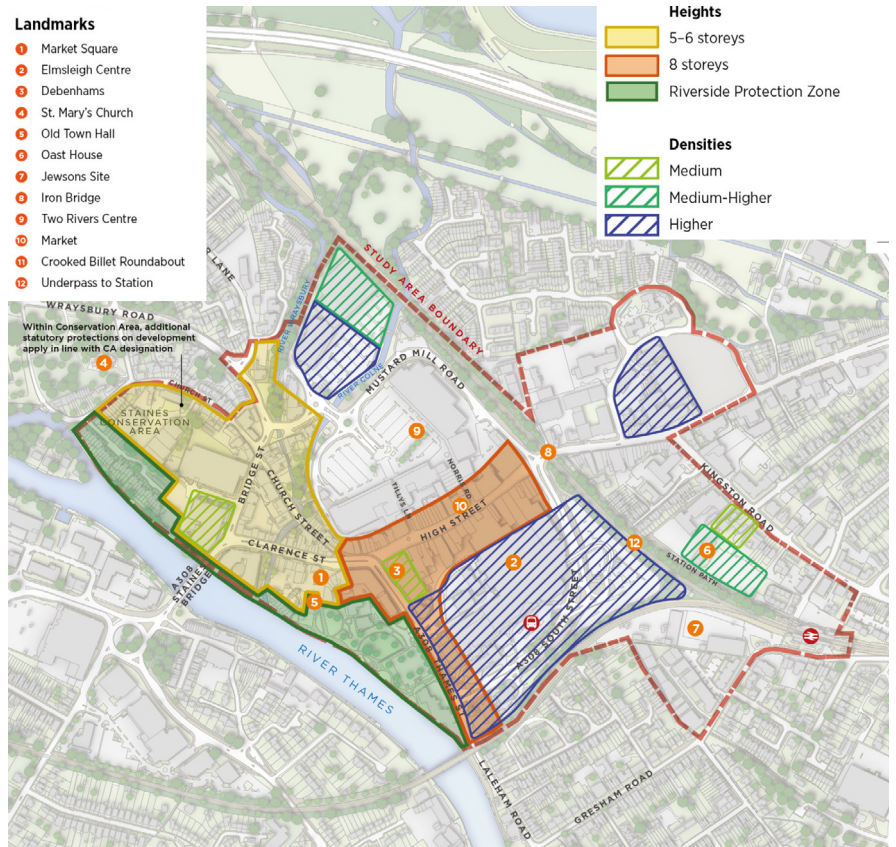
improved connections and river restoration to improve biodiversity, manage floodwater and provide a new type of open space.



Big Idea Two: Development that Respects Character

The Development Framework sets out where and how new development could be accommodated within the town centre. Central to this is understanding what needs to be protected to ensure the distinct character of Staines-upon-Thames is retained and enhanced, while ensuring that new homes, facilities, jobs and public spaces can be delivered successfully.

A new 'zoning' plan makes this clear, providing guidance on the appropriate heights of future buildings in particularly sensitive parts of the town centre, protecting the riverfront, and also highlighting locations where higher-density developments, complying with clear design principles, would be best located.

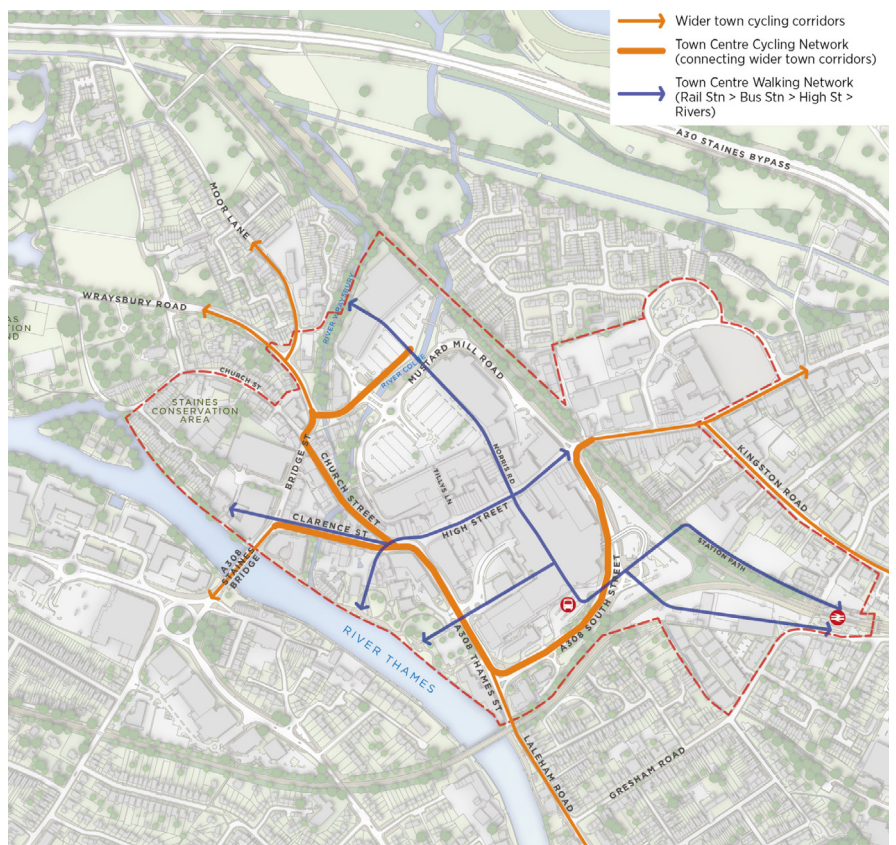


Big Idea Three: Healthy Streets for People

Too many streets in Staines-upon-Thames are dominated by vehicle traffic, with over two-thirds passing through the centre en-route to somewhere else. Major roads cut the High Street off from the riverfront. For a future where the town centre is more liveable, sustainable and attractive, now is the time to begin the process of changing this and transforming streets into places where people feel comfortable walking, cycling and using outside space for more activities.

The Development Framework sets out an aspiration for transformation of the A308 through the town centre, demonstrating how its space may be better configured to support walking, cycling, planting and street trees and space for street activities such as cafés and events.

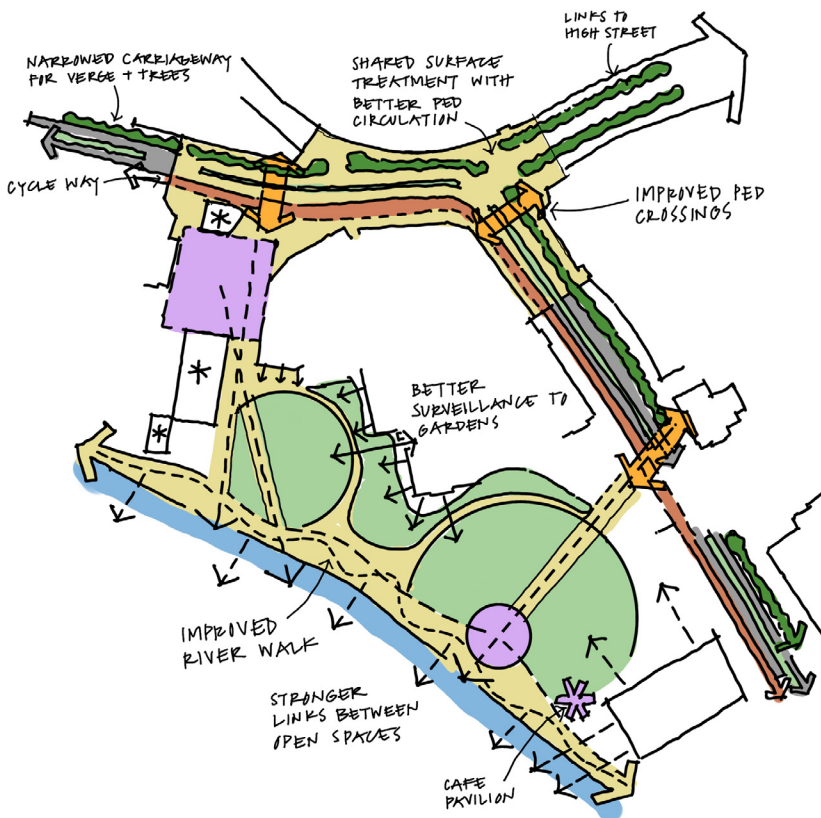
Away from the main vehicle routes, there are opportunities to provide new and higher quality street connections through areas identified as suitable for redevelopment such as at Two Rivers North and the Elmsleigh Centre.



Big Idea Four: New Open Spaces

Staines-upon-Thames currently lacks a variety of open spaces in the town centre. To support an increase in town centre living and create new destination spaces for activities and leisure, the Development Framework sets out the opportunity for a variety of new publicly accessible open spaces, each of different character and intended use, to complement existing provision. These could include green urban squares, riverfront plazas, event space and natural spaces based around the River Colne, creating new areas for informal sports, meeting places, leisure activities, events and street life.

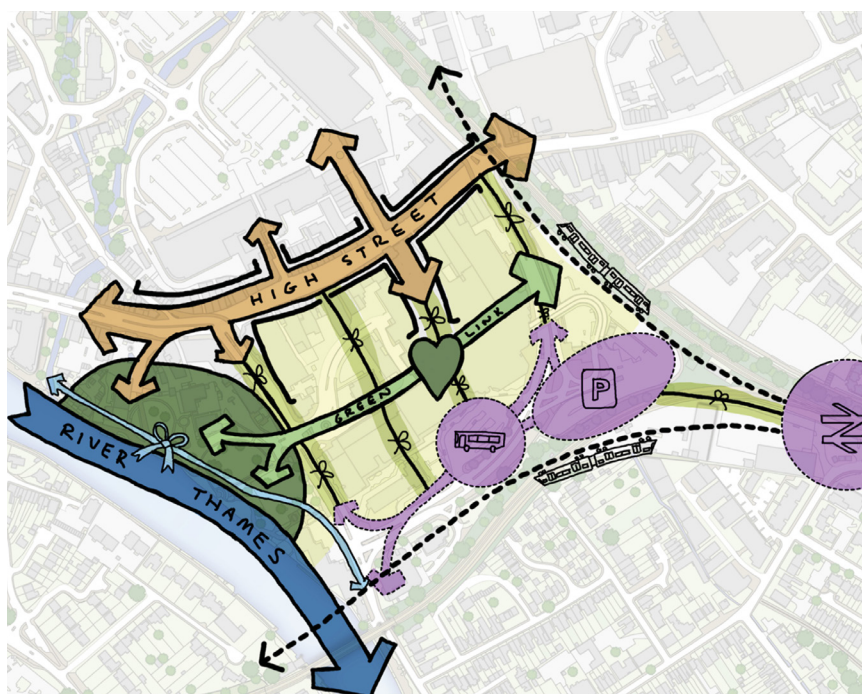
Improved facilities at Memorial Gardens, turning the Riverside Car Park into high-quality open space with new café or community facilities facing onto the park and river, would be an early priority. Coupled with future public space improvements on Thames Street and a redevelopment at the Elmsleigh Centre, this could reactivate and reconnect the whole south-eastern quarter of the town centre.



Big Idea Five: Redevelopment of the Elmsleigh and Tothill Area

Town centres are changing, with the traditional dominance of retail receding in importance and a resurgence in a mix of activity-based uses including community, civic, leisure and residential. Whilst a relatively strong centre, Staines-upon-Thames is experiencing a fall in demand for larger retail spaces, pressure for new homes and local aspirations for a wider variety of uses and facilities.

The Elmsleigh Centre is a successful shopping centre but its design is increasingly showing signs of obsolescence. The area surrounding it, including the car parks, South Street, and the service roads, do not make a positive contribution to the quality and character of Staines-upon-Thames. Redevelopment of this area to provide new streets, open spaces, homes, flexible facilities and commercial/retail space in a new neighbourhood would make a huge contribution to revitalising this part of town and supporting the sustainability of the town centre.



Big Idea Six: Design for Urban Living

The town centre has been identified by the Local Plan as having the potential to accommodate thousands of new homes in a location easily accessible by sustainable means of transport, with most facilities on the doorstep, and with easy access to a variety of open spaces. New residents can provide new vitality and footfall to support a diverse mix of town centre businesses, contributing to ensuring the town centre can continue to cater for its wider catchment.

The Development Framework sets out a series of design principles to ensure that residential schemes deliver great places to live, contribute to the wider town, and avoid creating new problems for new and existing residents. These are grouped into three themes: People-Friendly Streets, Attractive, Long-Lasting Buildings and Quality Homes for All.



How to respond to the consultation:

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/localplan

The full Local Plan and Staines Development Framework documents are available to read on our website along with all of the research and evidence documents which supports them.

You can respond online
www.spelthorne.gov.uk/localplan.

Paper copies of the documents are available to view at the Council Offices and all libraries in the Borough.

The best way to respond is using the website (a response template is available online) but you can also email local.plan@spelthorne.gov.uk or write to us: Strategic Planning, Spelthorne Borough Council, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB

Consultation closes at 11.59pm on Tuesday 5 September 2022

