Herefordshire Council

Place Shaping Options Consultation - Kington

Local Plan 2021-2041

June 2022



Kington Place Shaping Options

Background

Kington is situated in north west Herefordshire and lies 20 miles west of Hereford and 2 miles east of the Welsh border. Kington is the smallest market town in Herefordshire, in terms of population and size, Kington town itself has a population of 3300 (ONS 2020 mid-year estimate). The town is predominately surrounded by open countryside and hosts views of the black mountains to the south, Hergest Ridge to the west and Bradnor Hill to the north. The town centre has primarily an older building stock retaining the medieval street pattern and back lanes, it also has a conservation area with approximately 140 listed buildings. Kington is an important service centre for its rural hinterland, serving many parishes in western Herefordshire.

Current and emerging policy background

Core Strategy

The Core Strategy identifies Kington as an area of focus for strategic growth in the county. Of relevance to Kington in the plan includes:

- The target of 200 dwellings to be developed during the plan period of 2021-2031.
- No site allocations were identified in the Core Strategy, site allocations were expected to be developed through a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- Policy KG1 sought to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre and supportive of small-scale employment sites.

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

The Kington NDP 2018-2031 referendum was held on 25 July 2019, 51% of voters voted not to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan. Kington Town Council is currently reviewing and updating their Neighbourhood Plan.

The neighbourhood plan sought to support a number of measures, some of which include:

- Allocated several sites these include: land east of Kingswood Road (up to 100 dwellings), and field adjacent to Mill St (15 dwellings), Old Wesleyan Chapel (10 dwellings), Land off Victoria Road and Land to the Corner of Llewellin Road/Garden Close.
- Allocated areas for Local Green Space and support opportunities for green infrastructure along the river corridors as well as safeguarding valued amenity areas.
- Support and encourage further opportunities for employment growth in Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate.
- Supports a mix of housing types, including a target of 35% affordable housing to meet identified needs.
- Improve walking and cycling measures as well as current provision of community facilities.
- Maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre as a location for shops, supported by service and tourism facilities.
- Supports opportunities for sustainable tourism and leisure facilities.

Market Town Investment Plan

The Kington Investment Plan 2021 proposes a series of projects to encourage investment in the town and support the local economy and skills development, civic amenities, housing and improvements to support the visitor economy. Among these are:

- Kington Hatton Gardens small extension or a new site along the bypass to create a new employment site to create units for small-scale employment and start-up units.
- Kington High Street regeneration and Kington Market Hall and its surroundings, making more pedestrian-friendly/shared surfaces in Town Centre
- Wesleyan Chapel redevelopment as a mixed-use facility to provide a range of uses.
- Improved bus/car parking
- Improve Kington's role as a significant walking centre supporting a strong crafts sector, and improve local footpath networks and signage.
- Kington Police and Fire Station relocation and redevelopment-relocate the Police and Fire Stations from their current location in Churchill Road to provide new modern facilities with lower maintenance costs,
- Strive to gain Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) designation status and have a Herefordshire Marches AONB

The investment plan provides further detail on each of the above-proposed projects.

Other local documents

As part of the NDP process a Call for Sites was undertaken in October 2015, the assessment concludes that 9 sites have the potential to be given further consideration through a site allocation.

The Kington Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Assessment (2015) includes 10 maps setting out the landscape sensitivity and capacity in the Kington Area including the town.

The Landscape Review of Town Settlement Boundary & Local Green Spaces Study (2017) includes further analysis of the landscape in and around the town settlement boundary considering the site allocations and local spaces.

A Characterisation Study of Kington was prepared in 2015 which has informed various policies in this Plan. This study has identified key building features that contribute to the Towns character.

Issues from the Spatial Options Consultation

Listed below are the responses from the Spatial Options Consultation to the issues regarding Kington Town. The comments have been taken into consideration when creating the place-shaping options.

- Kington is not generally a priority due to poor transport links but has potential for growth and regeneration as employment opportunities would need to be prioritised to drive housing growth, as well as concerns to retain the character of the town.
- Town is too remote and has no demand for housing. For these above reasons, this would add to carbon emissions.
- Provide services to support west Herefordshire to stop it from 'dying out'.

Spatial option growth for Kington

The preferred spatial option suggested an indicative strategic growth target of approximately 250 homes within Kington up to 2041 (in addition to approximately 25 commitments). However, having taken into account the physical constraints, size and deliverability of potential sites and the capacity of the local housing market a strategic target of 150 new homes is considered to be more appropriate for the town.

Capacity for development

Built April 2021- April 2022	Commitments at April 2022
2	approx. 25

The suggested approach provides an indicative strategic growth target of 150 dwellings for the plan period of 2021-2041. In addition, the housing development granted permission at the land to the rear of Headbrook for 33 dwellings, has not been included in the built and committed housing figures and can count towards the 2021-2041 housing target.

Opportunities and constraints

Key constraints to development in Kington are:

- Flooding from the River Arrow in the central area as well as north and east of the town area.
- Topography/elevated land and it is indicated as a high quality landscape.
- The town is within the River Lugg catchment phosphates area which is currently affecting housing delivery
- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)/ Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

Other constraints include:

- Lack of brownfield sites within the built-up area.
- Historic nature of town there is limited highway capacity and traffic congestion in the centre of Kington town.
- Lack of cycling/pedestrian infrastructure.
- Lack of nearby rail station/rail links, reliance on buses for public service provision.
- Historically struggle to meet housing needs and affordable housing.
- Low building competition rates affect housing delivery.

There are more specific weaknesses and opportunities in relation to certain sites/areas:

- Land opposite Mill Street. Has partial flooding issues and is close to historic environment.
- Land south of Elizabeth Road. Flooding issues mean the site can only partially be developed.
- Land west of Kingswood Road. There is a nearby priority habitat.
- Land north of medical centre. Proximity to household waste site.
- Land at Livestock Market. This site is not currently available, this could be phased.
- Land of Kingswood Road. Some access issues, as well as landscape issues with a nearby priority habitat.

Other opportunities:

- Celebrate and harness Kington's natural beauty and landscape to attract visitors.
- Engage with Kington's heritage and improve existing town centre older buildings.
- To create shared spaces in the town centre to improve pedestrian access and connectivity.
- Opportunities for Electric Vehicle infrastructure, better cycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout town.

Options

Strategic housing growth options

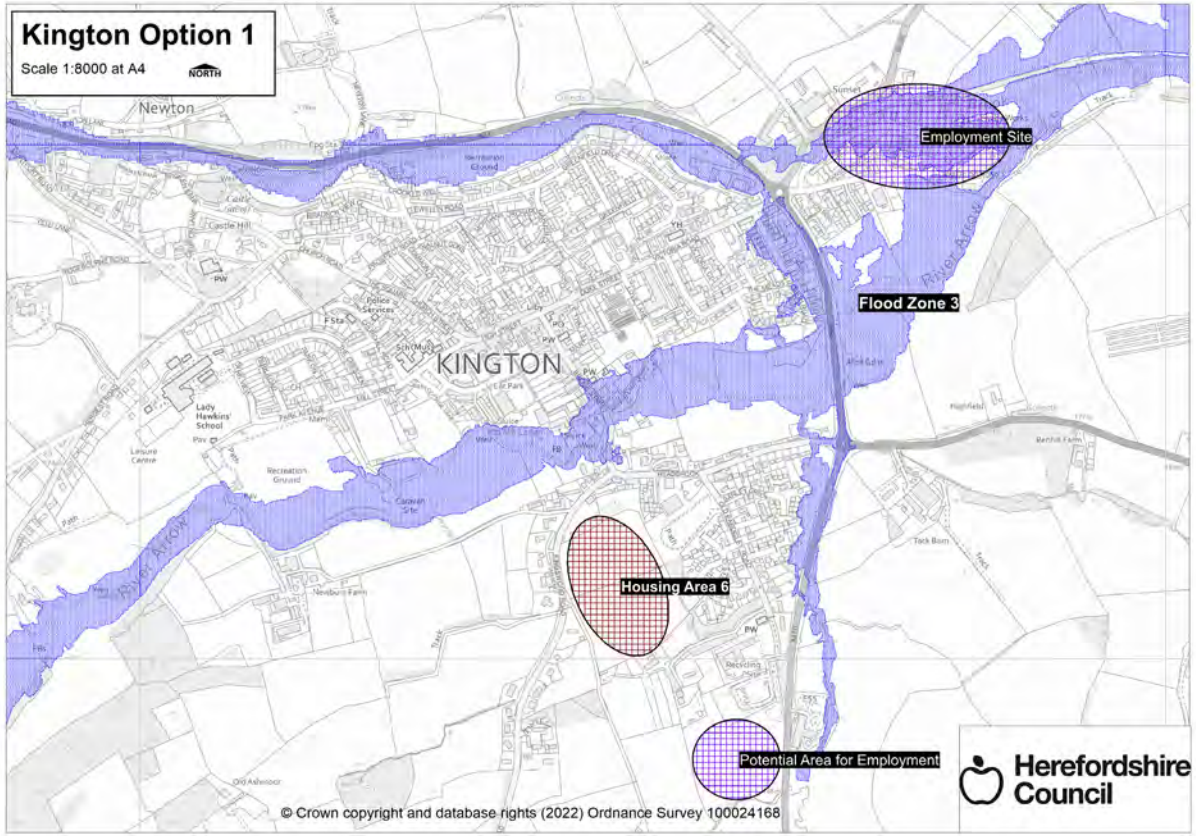
There are three options for strategic growth. Due to the constraints from land liable to flood and the topography constraints on all sides of Kington, to the north and east of the town.

In order to achieve the proposed growth targets for housing and employment, it is likely that option three may be required; either in part or in whole. Smaller infill sites haven't been identified on the map, these will also contribute to achieving the housing target for Kington.

A summary of the opportunities and constraints for each direction of growth is provided below. This will be followed by a more detailed breakdown of the key points in relation to a number of place-based topics.

Option 1- Single larger area

This area east of Kingswood Road (Housing Area 6) could potentially contribute up to 100 dwellings, along with the existing commitment sites and future windfalls would potentially to meet housing target of 150.



Opportunities:

- A larger site could provide a greater range of community facilities and greenspace
- Could allow opportunity for improvement to connectivity between the south and north of Kington.
- More affordable housing, is important, especially where this town struggles to meet housing needs.
- Area is not within River Arrow flood risk zone.

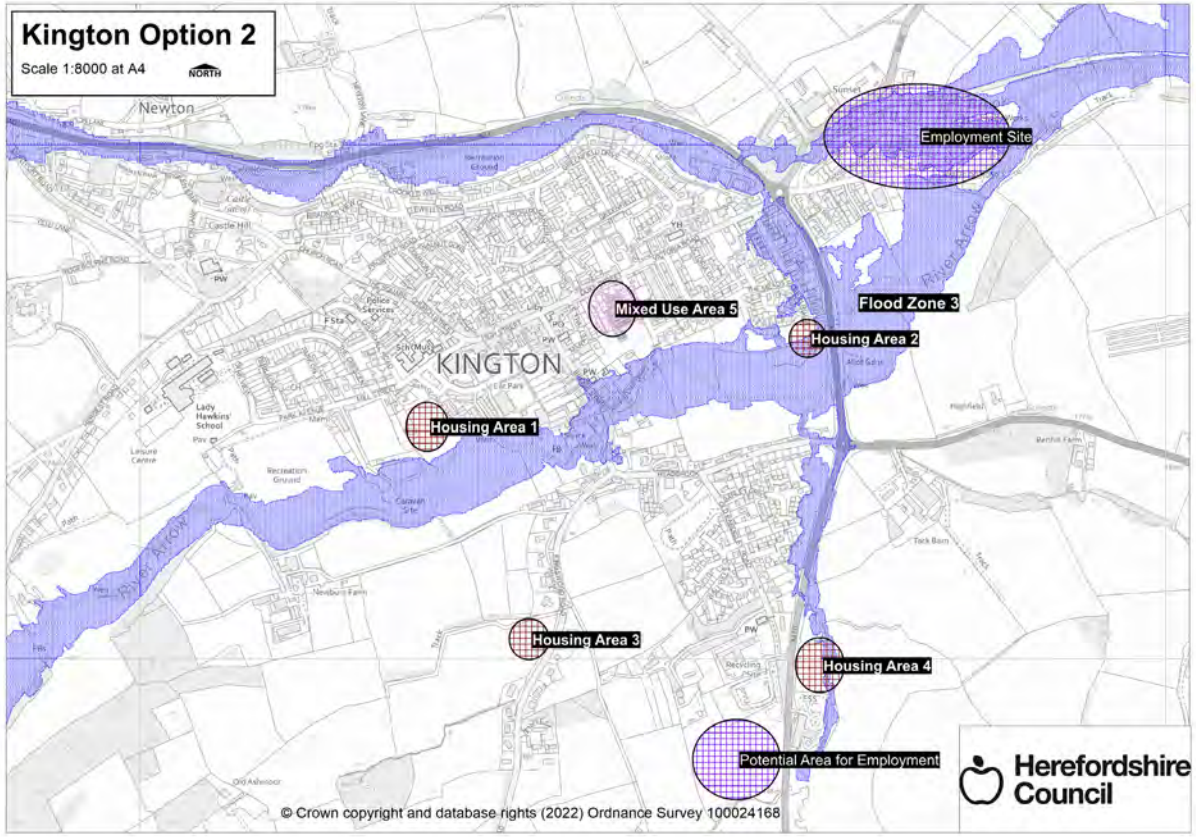
Constraints:

- This area needs to be comprehensively planned, where the design of scheme overcome needs to address landscape issues and opportunities for mitigation.
- Safe and convenient road access to the site is challenging. Options for access to from Kingswood Road may be very limited and consideration for road access from either the north east or the south east may need to be considered.
- Previous public concern, this site was previously identified in the Kington NDP which did not pass the referendum.

Option 2- Distributing housing over a number of smaller potential sites

This option would distribute new housing over a number of smaller areas. There may be opportunities for mixed-use area in Kington Livestock Market for around 35 dwellings, the market is still in use and not currently available but should the site become available it could provide a central brownfield location for new housing.

Housing Area 1. Land to the rear of houses at Mill Street (around 12 dwellings)
Housing Area 2. Land south of Elizabeth Road (around 15 dwellings)
Housing Area 3. Land south of Newburn Lane west of Kingswood road (around 6-11 dwellings)
Housing Area 4. Land north of the medical centre (around 15 dwellings)
Housing Area 5. Land at Livestock Market (around 35 dwellings).



Opportunities:

- Flexible approach as not reliant on one large site to meet housing.
- Development on brownfield land, opportunities for mixed-use in a central location.
- Opportunities for Kington Livestock Market to be moved to a more suitable location.
- Development is distributed around town and impact is not focused on one area.

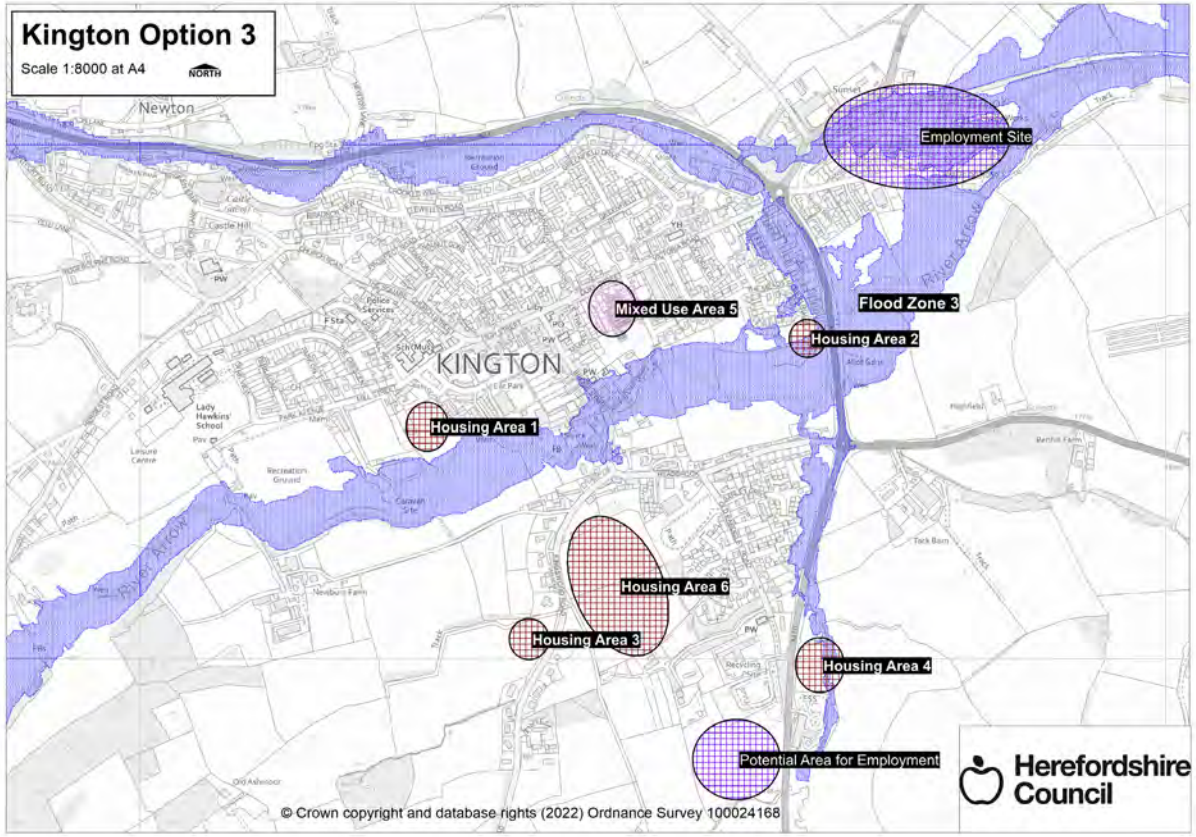
Constraints:

- Smaller areas are less likely to achieve affordable housing and community benefits.
- None of the areas are free of constraints and will require levels of mitigation.
- Element of agricultural heritage and character of the livestock market would be lost.

Option 3. All areas identified developed

This option would combine elements of both option 1 and 2 to deliver the housing target. Including all potential sites could make the delivery of the housing target more certain and enable potentially lower housing densities on identified sites, in particular the land off Kingswood Road. Potential sites are listed below.

Housing Area 1. Land to the rear of houses at Mill Street
Housing Area 2. Land south of Elizabeth Road
Housing Area 3. Land south of Newburn Lane west of Kingswood Road
Housing Area 4. Land north of the medical centre
Housing Area 5. Land at Livestock Market
Housing Area 6. Land to the east of Kingswood Road



Opportunities:

- Flexible approach not reliant on one larger site to meet housing.
- Reduces pressure on one area to come forward.
- Likely to have a lower density on a large area can have more opportunities for greenspace and provision for biodiversity to flourish.
- Community benefits from affordable housing and community facilities
- Development is distributed around town and impact is not focused on one area
- Opportunities for car parking provision/EV infrastructure
- Opportunities to improve connectivity with the town

Constraints:

- If all areas were to be developed to their full capacity may exceed the growth target.
- Local road infrastructure may require improvement.

Environment:

Open Space:

- Strategic sites coming forward will need to accommodate open and amenity spaces as part of any new development going forward.
- If the large site east of Kingwood Drive was to be developed, it will have opportunities to expand the existing play area to the east of the site, creating a larger play space and park.

Green Infrastructure:

- There are opportunities for improvements to green infrastructure when sites come forward. Some of these opportunities are improving the River Meadows along with River Arrow and the northern boundary of Kington Town, these both function as important wildlife corridors.
- These spaces were identified in the previous Herefordshire Green Infrastructure study, a revised Green Infrastructure study will be produced later on in the year.

Community:

Community facilities:

- The Kington NDP highlights the numerous community services and facilities that serve Kington Town and the surrounding area.
- The Kington Town Investment plan suggests there are opportunities for improving existing community facilities.
- There is an opportunity for the Wesleyan Chapel to be developed into a mixed-use space for the local community, the chapel is in a central location which can easily be accessed from most areas within the town centre.

Public Realm:

- There are opportunities for improving the public realm in the central area of Kington Town
- The town centre of Kington is vibrant and has a strong culture of independent shops and local retailers based on local trade and tourism. There are opportunities to regenerate the town centre improving connectivity and access in the town that is pedestrian and cyclist-friendly, with opportunities to create shared spaces in high town.

Education:

- Kington primary school (214 pupils) and Lady Hawkins' secondary school (315 students) cater for students in Kington Town and its rural hinterland. There is an indication the primary school is currently at capacity, so it is likely further capacity is required to accommodate pupils from additional development.
- Kington NDP highlights the importance of safe pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access to the highway network and to local facilities especially schools and medical services.

Healthcare:

- In terms of health care Kington medical practice GP surgery to meet the needs of the residents in the town and its rural hinterland, at present, there is no indication of this facility expanding or indication that the surgery is overcapacity.
- In Kington NDP highlighted in the public consultation there is public support for a safe shared pedestrian and cycle pathway to the Kington Medical Practice (Surgery) alongside the A4111 from its junction with the A44.

- In addition, there is an opportunity for Kington Police and Fire to be relocated to a more suitable area probably with better access to the wider transport network, as this is currently located in a residential area.

Economy

Employment Sites:

There are small scale industrial units at Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate, these are still in current use. Once of the largest companies on the estate is Arrow Medical.

Opportunities:

- Can retain and enhance the Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate. Opportunities to improve the condition of the existing units. Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate has a haphazard layout and poor amenity needs enhancing.
- Some potential for expansion around Kington Building Supplies, currently farmland.
- Consideration could be given to the site could be land to the south of recycling centre, could accommodate further employment (recycling centre is on 4.2ha site, currently using 0.8ha).

Constraints:

- Limited market for employment sites in Kington.
- Flooding, some areas in the employment area liable to flood.

Other employment facilities:

Markets:

- The rural nature of Kington and its hinterland mean that its economy continues to have a significant dependency upon agricultural and related enterprises Kington has a functioning livestock market that is run on a weekly basis selling mostly sheep.
- The largest employment sectors in the town are wholesale and retail, business admin support and health services.

Retail:

- The high street provides retail and is occupied by a number of independent stores.
- Three medium sized supermarkets in the town centre and a variety of Café/bars/restaurants serving residents and visitors on a regular basis.

Tourism:

- There are several hotels and B&BS. Kington has been named a centre of walking and hosts its own Walking Festival ‘Kington Walks’ every September.
- The Town is situated close to the Offa’s Dyke Path, The Mortimer Trail, The Arrow Valley Trail, The Herefordshire Trail, and The Wyche Way, all long-distance footpaths. Opportunities to improve tourism facilities including the walking hub are welcomed.