



Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Within the King's Lynn Urban Renaissance Strategy Cabinet Meeting May 2006

Urban Development Strategy

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King's Lynn Urban Renaissance Strategy

Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, EEDA, English Partnerships
and Norfolk County Council

The Urban Development Strategy

March 2006

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“[King’s Lynn]...is a beautiful, well built, and well situated town, at the mouth of the River Ouse, and has this particular attending it, which gives it a vast advantage in trade; namely, that there is the greatest extent of inland navigation here of any port in England, London excepted. The reason whereof is this, that there are more navigable rivers empty themselves here into the sea, including the washes, which are branches of the same port, than at any one mouth of waters in England, except the Thames and the Humber...”

The situation of this town renders it capable of being made very strong...”

Daniel Defoe Tour through the Eastern Counties of England (1724)

1. Introduction and Foreword

This document sets out an Urban Development Strategy for King's Lynn. It provides the basis on which a programme of structured and other improvements can be planned and implemented. It is intended to be living document, and as such may be amended or added to in the light of changing circumstances. It sits amongst a family of documents, which together form the Urban Renaissance Strategy for King's Lynn.

- Councillor Dobson; leader, Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

Where now for King's Lynn?

King's Lynn today: a town at the crossroads

This is an exciting time for King's Lynn; opportunities are arising. The Nar-Ouse Millennium Community is starting to take shape. The Walks are being restored to their former glory, with other parks and public spaces to be improved. Plans for a marina, which will help transform how people think about King's Lynn, are emerging. Key sites that are derelict or under utilised are coming forward for development that will benefit the town as a whole, as well as those living in the surrounding villages. Government planners have delivered a vote of confidence in the town: the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy identifies King's Lynn as a sub-regional centre and sets out plans for continued growth, with a total of 11, 000 homes to be built in the borough by 2021.

These are just the changes that are already under way, or about to get under way, but the potential is far greater. A step change in the way we plan, design, move about and use King's Lynn is required if we are serious about achieving the Vision of the town becoming

“an attractive, vibrant and prosperous town, where people choose to live, work and visit”

The raw materials are in place: a well-preserved historic core that would be the envy of many towns in the world (if only the world knew about it); a waterfront location that gave King's Lynn its identity (before the town turned its back on it); a vibrant market square that can once again become the hub of an entire sub-region (provided its people can be enticed back to the market); a location on the fringes of a growing, high-value

tourist area (if the tourists realised the benefits of turning off the A47); high levels of local accessibility and car parking (which is threatening to clog up and strangle the town); several good development sites (that are currently a blight); a population ready to help shape the environment around them (if they were given the opportunity to do so); the chance to grow the town's population in an attractive, sustainable way (that is, better than it has typically been done since the 1970s). These are some of the opportunities discussed later in the document.

This Urban Development Strategy must be a turning point. It sets the strategy for developing the town centre and its fringes over the next 20 years, learning lessons from initiatives that have proved successful elsewhere and applying them to the local context.

The Urban Development Strategy is based on a thorough analysis of how King's Lynn works today. The audit carried out during its preparation found that:

- There is a poor relationship between the high quality historic core along the waterfront and the ‘functional’ or ‘operational’ town that people visit on a daily basis;
- The quality of the buildings and public spaces in the functional town centre varies greatly;
- Apart from areas close to pubs, restaurants and theatres, the town centre becomes deserted from the early evening onwards;
- Cars – moving or parked – dominate the street scene and there is much congestion;
- Many peripheral housing areas are poorly designed and contribute to social problems;
- Young people feel that there is not enough for them to do;
- The local economy needs to broaden its base because it relies too heavily on sectors that have little growth potential.

The bigger picture: why urban renaissance in King's Lynn?

King's Lynn has to be the focus of growth, development and improvement in West Norfolk. As the East of England Towns and Cities Strategy points out, putting the region's existing urban centres first, making them more attractive and efficient, is a priority for several reasons. Principally:

- Market towns, sub-regional centres and cities are, and always have been the logical places to group services of all kinds, and to locate the majority of the public transport; it cuts average journey lengths, makes it more likely that people will choose sustainable transport options, and makes services more accessible to all;
- More compact development, in and around town centres, and where possible on previously-used ('brownfield') land, helps to protect the countryside.

For these reasons, government policy now expects development to be in towns first. This is why King's Lynn has to be rediscovered, revitalised and revalued. As does solid, imaginative and responsive planning and design.

The watchword for these activities has to be 'quality'. In line with the vision above, King's Lynn needs to attract people to live, work and enjoy themselves. It has to become a place of choice. It has to exploit the clear link that exists between quality of place, of design, of the built and natural environment and of economic and social well-being. The economy of the 21st century, all over Western Europe, is going to be led by lively, well-designed, efficient, well-balanced urban centres, and not necessarily large ones. The challenge is to ensure that King's Lynn is amongst them.

King's Lynn tomorrow: making the most of what it's got

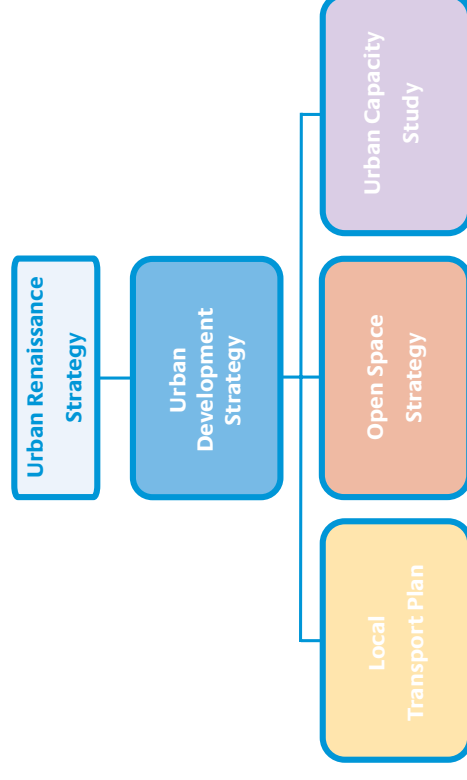
The town envisaged in this document is coherent and compact in the places it needs to be. It has rediscovered its waterfront, which has become lively with people of all ages, locals and visitors alike. They are enjoying new riverside attractions: restaurants, cafes, walks and a marina. People are living in the town centre, making the most of its improved shops, services jobs and homes. More people are working in growing sectors, such as education, tourism and business services, as well as the food related and shipping industries that have always been prevalent in King's Lynn. More residents are choosing more sustainable modes of transport

to get into and about town, including foot, bike and bus. Residents working to improve their housing estates have brought about marked improvements. King's Lynn is seen as a model of thoughtful, sustainable regeneration that stands the test of time.

About this document

The Urban Development Strategy is one of a family of documents that contributes to policy for the future of King's Lynn. The others are a Local Transport Plan, an Urban Capacity Study and a Sports, Open Space and Recreation Assessment.

The Urban Development Strategy is predominantly concerned with King's Lynn town centre, but its remit also stretches throughout the surrounding residential and industrial areas.



It has been produced in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including community groups, business representatives, the Council and service providers.

The remainder of the document contains is set out as follows:

Chapter 2 outlines the principles that the Urban Development Strategy is based upon;

Chapter 3 introduces the overall Urban Development Strategy and the constituent layers;

Chapter 4 contains more detailed plans for specific development areas;

Chapter 5 concludes the report with a section on implementation and delivery.