

## Supporting North Kingston businesses, employment and commercial activity through the Neighbourhood Plan

- Do you support local or neighbourhood shopping?
- Do you use the services provided at the local industrial sites? Printers? Building supplies?
- Do you find local jobs are poorly paid and tend to be low skilled?
- Are you frustrated by the slow broadband and poor mobile phone reception?
- Do you wish that bus routes ran closer to your house or place of work?
- Do you find it hard to find places for guests to stay locally?
- Are you fed up with local pubs closing down?
- Could your commute be easier?

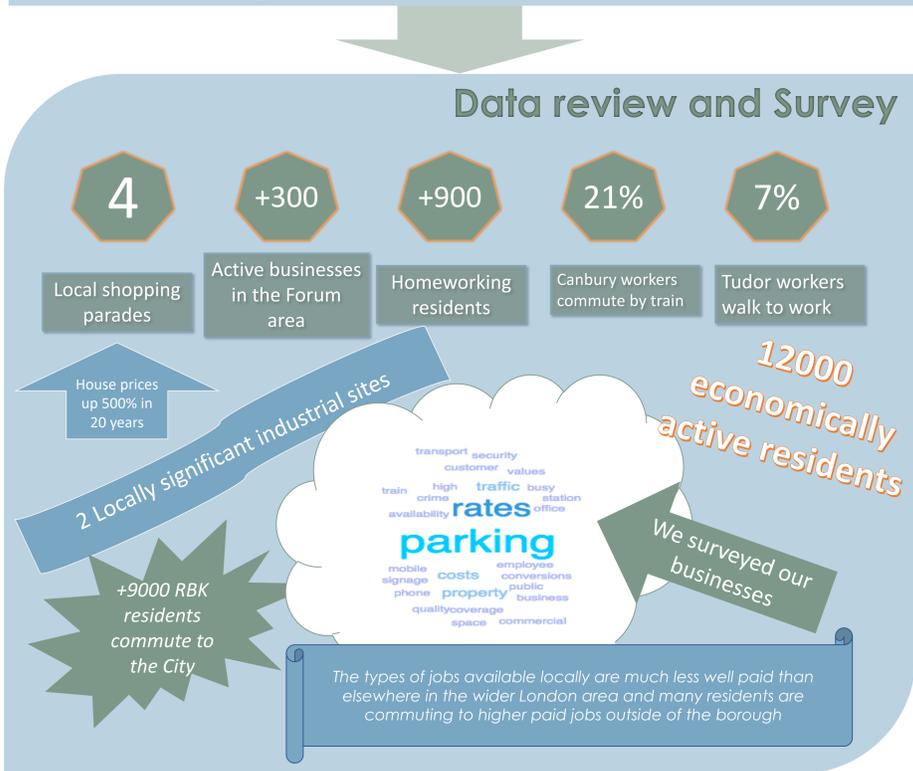
The challenge for the NPlan and forum from a business perspective is to reverse the trends established during a period of rapid house price growth in the forum area. This has led to a change of demographic, pressures on commercial property and higher demands on digital infrastructure and public transport.

Whilst the local retail and commercial opportunities still exist it has become increasingly difficult for small and medium enterprises to start and grow their businesses in North Kingston due to declining availability of commercial property.

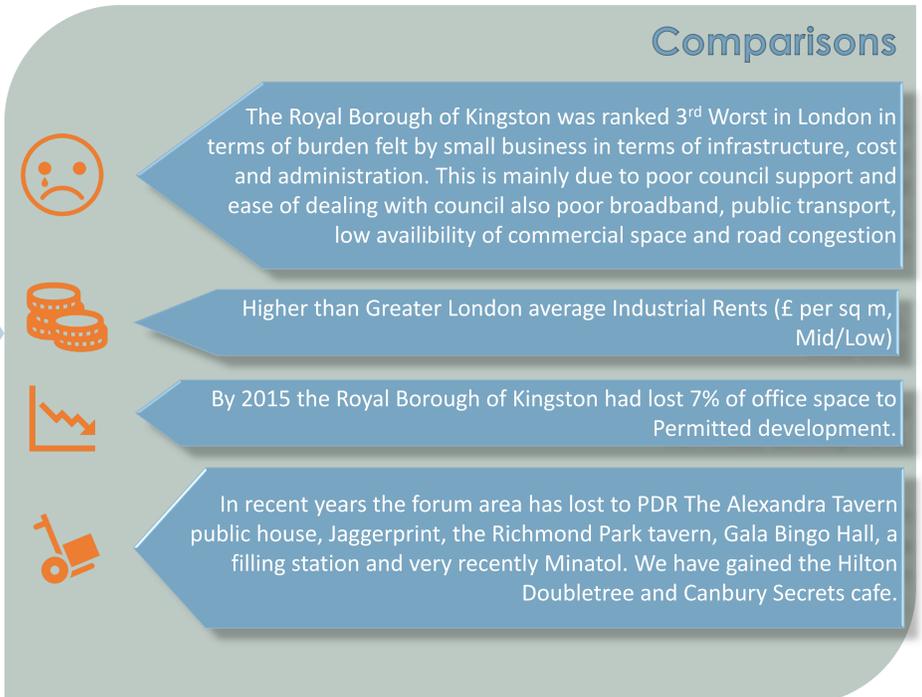
Local and national policy have been quick to recognise these issues but local enforcement of policy has been lax and many viable businesses have been lost to commercial sites. North Kingston has also suffered from being largely ignored from a planning perspective except for the brownfield areas closer to the town centre and the river (North Kingston development brief).

The business and commercial group seek to create a set of policies that attempt to stop the excessive conversion of commercial property to residential, enable small start-ups to grow and thrive, keep neighbourhood shops and parades vibrant and viable, establish new hubs and centres with pubs at the heart of the community and maybe reverse the trend of having to commute long distances to high skilled jobs.

### Summary



#### Comparisons



- The Royal Borough of Kingston was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> Worst in London in terms of burden felt by small business in terms of infrastructure, cost and administration. This is mainly due to poor council support and ease of dealing with council also poor broadband, public transport, low availability of commercial space and road congestion
- Higher than Greater London average Industrial Rents (£ per sq m, Mid/Low)
- By 2015 the Royal Borough of Kingston had lost 7% of office space to Permitted development.
- In recent years the forum area has lost to PDR The Alexandra Tavern public house, Jaggerprint, the Richmond Park tavern, Gala Bingo Hall, a filling station and very recently Minatol. We have gained the Hilton Doubletree and Canbury Secrets cafe.

- #### Potential Policy Proposals
- ✓ Protection and support of parades and local centres, neighbourhood shopping, night time economy and public houses.
  - ✓ Improve general signage to improve wayfinding for commercial sites
  - ✓ Stricter policies on vacant commercial premises
  - ✓ Improve digital and mobile connectivity in the forum area
  - ✓ Lobby for improvements to public transport access across forum area
  - ✓ Create planning policies to aid reduction in crime and improve personal and residential security in forum area
  - ✓ Identification, retention, intensification and expansion of viable existing commercial space in forum area.
  - ✓ Support for visitor economy and tourism in forum area

