

South Gloucestershire Council

Policies, Sites & Places Plan Draft Town Centre Profiles

Kingswood Town Centre Draft Profile Updated to June 2014

Please send any further suggestions for change to PlanningLDF@southglos.gov.uk

This is one of a series of draft town centre profiles which will be used to inform future planning policy. Initial comments were invited to arrive by 31st December 2013.

Comments were made by:

- SGC local ward members

These are summarised at Appendix. Appendix 2 provides extracts from the Town Centre Health Check prepared by Kingswood Business Association (December 2012).

Kingswood Town Centre

1. Location

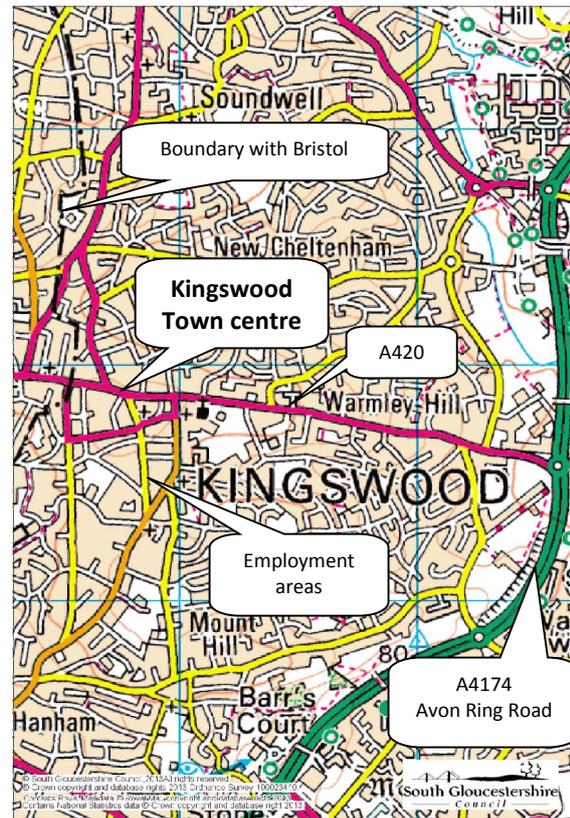
Kingswood Town centre straddles the A420 at the heart of the East Fringe. It borders the City of Bristol and is surrounded by residential and employment areas.

2. Origin

Kingswood developed along a main arterial route from Bristol through Kingswood Forest. Its initial prosperity was based on 18th and 19th Century coal mining and the associated industries – boot and shoe making, precision engineering etc.

Kingswood also became a religious centre, associated with the non-conformist churches, and later the trade union movement.

Prosperity lasted into late 20th Century.



Map 1. Kingswood Town Centre – context.

3. Character

Kingswood is based on a linear high street generally of late Victorian character.

The main high street (Regent Street) is characterised by shopping frontages with shop units which are generally small and mixed between local, regional and national retailers.

To the north Kings Chase Shopping Centre dates from 1975 and is in the form of a pedestrianised precinct with decked car park at the northern end. The forecourt area was recently remodelled and includes a café and bus stops. Sainsbury's and Wilkinson's help to 'anchor' both the shopping precinct and wider town centre.

To the south stores at Halls Road were originally developed for Somerfield in the 1990s but is now occupied by the Co-op and a discount store.

There was a more recent retail development at the junction of Regent Street and Downend Road but other than this there has been modest retail development over the past twenty years. A number of stores have changed operator and a Sainsbury Local has opened close to the library at the eastern end of the town centre.

Area around the town centre are predominantly urban/suburban built form but the existing and former church yards and Kingswood Park provide some green space.

There are some remaining industrial areas mainly to the south (Moravian Road/ Douglas Road area) although these are partially allocated for housing.

Overall many of the town centre buildings and backland areas behind shops appear tired and in need of a lift.

4. Strategies and Research

A Town Centre Partnership and regeneration project ran for around ten years from the mid 1990s. A Strategy was prepared and partially implemented including a new foodstore, scheme of traffic management, environmental improvements and CCTV.

A Town Centre Health Check was carried out as part of the RTP Study for the Council (Undertaken 2008 - published 2010).

A second health check was undertaken in December 2012 by Kingswood Business Association. It is in two parts The first area of focus is *developing the town centre* and the second area of focus is *chamber of trade activities*. It can be viewed at:

<http://www.insouthglos.co.uk/invest/retail/> or via the KBA web site at:

http://www.mykingswood.co.uk/kingswood/business/kingswood_business_association

The Health Check placed the Association central to delivering improvements. However the Association is currently dormant and it is unclear how actions will be driven forward.

This profile draws from this earlier work.

5. Catchment Area and Competition

Kingswood has traditionally served as the main service centre for the whole of the East Fringe and some suburbs of east Bristol. The catchment has narrowed with competition from out of centre retail facilities at Longwell Green and Cribbs Causeway and the new town centre at Emersons Green.

Longwell Green in particular has a mix of convenience, comparison and leisure floorspace of a scale which draws trade from Kingswood. That floorspace could not reasonably have been accommodated in Kingswood without major land assembly and construction projects.

Kingswood's catchment is becoming more focused on communities either side of A420 and other areas served with bus links. Kingswood may struggle to compete in the long-term unless it can find a unique offer to draw trade back.

6. Retail provision

(From SGC Town Centres and Retailing – Monitoring Report August 2013)

Kingswood is a centre providing convenience and low order comparison shopping, together with local service facilities. In total there are 88 units with an A1 use class providing 10,651 square metres of retail floorspace.

The centre accommodates a Sainsbury's supermarket and an Iceland foodstore, as well as some multiple stores (Boots, WH Smiths, and Wilkinsons). In addition a Co-op foodstore and Pound-Stretcher Extra store adjoin the centre.

Comparison shopping forms the majority of retailing activity in the town/district centre

with 47% of units or 6,180 square metres, in comparison use.

Convenience functions account for 17% of all A1 units and total 2,916 square metres, while service functions account for 19% of all A1 units or 7% of the available A1 floorspace.

At the time of the survey there were 15 vacant or empty A1 units. This represents 17% of all A1 retail units in the town/district centre.

(Source: SGC Town Centres and Retailing – Monitoring Report August 2013:

2013	Floorspace sq m	%	Units	%
Total Town Centre	10,651.3		88	
Convenience	2,916.1	27.4	15	17
Comparison	6179.9	58	41	46.6
Service Uses	780.2	7.3	17	19.3
Vacant floorspace	775.1	7.3	15	17
Edge of Centre				
- convenience	2,000			
- comparison	500			
Key – traders	Sainsbury, Wilkinsons, Boots, Co-op			
Key community uses.	Civic Centre, Library, Health Centre, Park Centre, Park School, and Kingswood Foundation – are all outside of core retail area.			
Markets	There is a small indoor market/Arcade at the east end of Regent Street.			

(Source: SGC Town Centres and Retailing – Monitoring Report August 2013)

In addition to the above floorspace there is also a new Sainsbury Local store next to Kingswood Library.

7. Retail Frontages

The South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006 defines primary and secondary shopping frontages. The aim (of Policy RT9) is to maintain the vibrancy of shopping frontages by resisting changes of use at street level. In Kingswood the defined frontages are:

- **Primary**
 - Kings Chase Units 1-23
 - Regent Street Odd Nos 1 - 33, 37 - 43, 63 -123. Even Nos 8 -74
- **Secondary**
 - Two Mile Hill Road – Odd Nos 81-101
 - High Street – Odd Nos 1 – 49
 - Two Mile Hill Road – 382a – 6 Regent Street
 - Regent Street – 78 -104, Telephone exchange,
 - High Street - Kings Arms

Monitoring

Monitoring at 2013 shows the extent to which frontages retain their main retail function.

Retail Frontages	Total Metres	In A1 Use	% in A1 Use	Non A1 Use	% Non A1 Use
Primary	780.7	598.9	76.7	181.8	23.3
Secondary	422.8	114.4	27.1	308.4	72.9
Total	1203.5	713.3	59.3	490.2	40.7

Source: Drawn from annual Town Centre and Retail audit August 2013.

8. Health check (Drawn from South Gloucestershire Town Centres and Retail Study Final Report Roger Tym & Partners February 2010).

“3.18 Kingswood, defined as a Town Centre appears to be popular and well supported at its centre but less successful on the periphery, with higher vacancy rates. Whilst the convenience and comparison sectors are comparable to national averages, albeit lower than average comparison floorspace, the night time economy offer is poor. Correspondingly the centre has high representation from the other service uses such as accountants. These provide jobs and opportunities to encourage people into the centre to make linked trips.

3.19 Demand from national retailers is low, and although this is to be expected to an extent with the proximity of Bristol City Centre and to a lesser extent Cribbs Causeway. Provision of larger, modern units would likely attract more multiple retailers to the centre. Parts of the centre appear tired and in need of modernisation and possibly redevelopment, particularly around the Kings Chase Shopping Centre. It is considered that improving the town centre environment, possibly through the redevelopment of the shopping centre and the under utilised area between Somerfield and the main shopping street will have a positive effect on the overall vitality and viability of the centre – at present the centre could suffer from further decline without investment and with increasing competition and convenience from other areas.”

Local Members note that vibrancy of the local night time economy has changed over time. While it is not accepted as ‘poor’ there is more that could be done to improve both the quantity and quality of activities available.

9. Non-retail uses

Kingswood is a very mixed-use town centre. In addition to the retail offer there is:

- **Commercial floorspace** – a significant number of banks, buildings societies, property agents etc at ground floor. There is also more general office floorspace to the south of the centre. The main Post Office and sorting office are south of the main retail area as are the main employment areas around Moravian Road, Wood Road and Douglas Road. The Civic Centre also provides office jobs and potential walk-in trade for the town centre.
- **Community Uses** –
To the east: The Royal British Legion and Kingswood Community Association Kingswood Park; the Community Centre, Civic Centre (SGC Offices); the Health Centre (Alma Road); Library; The Park Centre (youth and community buildings) and Park School (Primary) are all out of the primary retail area but contribute greatly to the town centre as a whole.

To the south west: Kingswood Foundation Estate (off Britannia Road) is a major provider of floorspace to community groups.

There is a wide range of church and community groups focused in and around Kingswood. Other community assets in the wider Kingswood Wards include the Kingsmeadow Flat, New Cheltenham Hall and community facilities at St. Stephen's school.

Churches in and around the centre also contribute to community uses.

The vacant church buildings and land at the Whitfield Tabernacle (Park Road) and Blackhorse Road have potential for re-use for community purposes.

- **Service uses** – There are modern GP Surgeries at South Road and with the remodelled Health Centre at Alma Road which compliment the town centre and help to promote linked trips.
- **Hotels, Pubs and commercial leisure** – Kingswood has several pubs but no overnight accommodation. Two night clubs have closed. The Lindens was a hotel and is now an eyesore in need of refurbishment/development.
- **Residential uses** – distributed all around the town centre. The number of residential uses remaining above shops needs to be verified.
- **Community Activity/ events**

A number of community based events are listed at:

<http://www.mykingswood.co.uk/>

Further examples of community activity can be added following consultation.

10. Evening Economy

There are a number of pubs, restaurants and takeaways around the Town Centre.

Two night clubs, Soapey Joe's and the Rotunda, have closed in recent years. The Rotunda, on Moravian Road, has been demolished as part of a housing scheme. The evening economy which was source of local complaint for many years may be less problematic in consequence.

11. Governance

Kingswood is un-parished – i.e. unlike most of South Gloucestershire there is no town or parish council. When balloted residents have consistently rejected the idea of creating a town or parish council. Liaison on planning and other local issues has therefore to be managed through other channels.

A Town Centre Partnership and regeneration project ran for around ten years from the mid 1990s.

While there is currently no single co-ordinating body Connecting Kingswood does try to promote local action.

http://www.mykingswood.co.uk/kingswood/local_organisations/organisations_and_groups

The surrounding area is identified as a priority neighbourhood as it experiences some deprivation

(see <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/census/priority-neighbourhood-profiles/>)

The Kings Chase Shopping Centre has on site management. (see <http://www.kingschase.co.uk/>)

The wider town centre has a mix of national, regional and local retailers. Kingswood Business Association has a web site and the potential to represent traders but is not currently active.

(http://www.mykingswood.co.uk/kingswood/business/kingswood_business_association)

12. Safety and Security

There are actively monitored CCTV systems for the shopping precinct and for the main

high street and car parks.

13. Accessibility

Pedestrian and cycle routes into the centre are not ideal but improvements have been made within the centre. The main precinct is pedestrianised.

Public Transport - The centre is well served by bus routes and has central stops.

Car parks are well distributed around the centre. South Gloucestershire Council car parks in Kingswood Town Centre make no charge.

The Kings Chase Centre does charge for parking in the multi storey car park (from (£0.60p).

The Somerfield store was developed with the understanding of free parking for all for 2 hours. This has subsequently been reduced to 1.5 hours.

Traffic congestion was originally perceived as both an environmental and safety issue. The position has eased with a scheme of traffic management which includes partial one way operation. This allowed some pavement areas to be widened.

Mobility issues - While access issues have improved for the mobility impaired in and around the town centre they are still not good with some potentially difficult road crossings and narrow /cluttered footways remaining.

14. Environmental Quality

Heritage - Kingswood's history is linked to the former Royal Forest, coal mining, engineering, clothing, food preparation and packaging industries.

The Methodist tradition is evident in many churches and chapels. Also of note is the industrial heritage with Douglas Motorbikes and the boot and shoe industry.

More background on the heritage of the town centre and wider area can be found at: http://www.mykingswood.co.uk/kingswood/history/heritage_museum

Environment - The overall impression is of an area which is busy but tired and in need of some rejuvenation. The vacant church sites of Whitfield Church and Blackhorse Road are in a very poor condition.

There has been recent investment in a number of public buildings including the Civic Centre and Health Centre.

15. Tourism

The history of Kingswood Forest, coal mining and industrial heritage are of public interest and the wider Kingswood/East Fringe area has significant visitor potential with the Steam Railway at Bitton, Heritage Museum and gardens at Warmley, the Old Railway Line Cycle path and with the significance of Kingswood and Hanham to the non-conformist Church.

Local members are keen that this profile, and consideration of issues in Kingswood, should have a greater focus on Kingswood's history, heritage and tourism potential and would welcome work on developing a history trail in order to draw visitors from further afield.

There is currently no visitor accommodation and limited co-ordination of activity to support tourism at present.

16. Health Check Summary

Health Check Tests	Comments
○ Diversity of uses	Kingswood is a traditional mixed-use town centre based along a high street.

○ Proportion of vacant street level property	At August 2013 there were 15 vacant units (17% of the stock and 7.3% of the available floorspace) This is a cause for concern.
○ Commercial Yields on non-domestic property	No recent data available
○ Customers' views and behaviour	No recent data available – needs to be investigated.
○ Retailer representation and intentions to change representation	There is a good mix of retailers but little indication of new operators wishing to set up.
○ Commercial rents	No recent data available
○ Pedestrian flows	No recent data available
○ Accessibility	Generally an accessible centre but with some concern over traffic pressures.
○ Perception of safety and occurrence of crime	Kingswood did have a difficult reputation when night clubs were operating. The current perception needs to be tested.
○ State of town centre environmental quality	Kingswood appears a little tired and dated and would benefit from new investment.
○ Health issues	The centre has GP services and pharmacies. There are concerns over air quality in the main retail area.
<p>17. Key Messages from Roger Tym Study</p> <p>Recommend that Kingswood be identified as a Town Centre in the retail hierarchy (now confirmed in the Core Strategy as a Larger High Street Shopping and Service Centre). (RTP 2010 table 7.2 and SGC policy CS14).</p> <p>Kingswood may be able to accommodate a limited increase in retail provision through redevelopment but it will not be sufficient to meet all the anticipated comparison floorspace (RTP 2010 para 7.17)</p> <p>Kingswood is tired and in need of modernisation and further environmental improvement to aid vitality and viability. It has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Potential for further decline without investment and with increasing competition. ○ Potential for in the order of 6550 sq m of additional comparison floorspace ○ Some potential for redevelopment around the central Kings Chase and Halls Road areas. ○ Some potential for Bingo and restaurants to 'claw-back' from Bristol. ○ Very limited potential for large scale office development. 	
<p>18. Consultation and Feedback</p> <p>This profile was published in draft in December 2013. In preparing a revised profile account has been taken of both feedback from a questionnaire sent to town and parish councils and more general consultation on the draft profile. These are summarised at Appendix 1. Most were relatively minor suggested changes which have been considered in updating the profile.</p>	

19. Policy: Role and Function

Core Strategy Policy CS14 identifies Kingswood as a “larger high street shopping and service centre’ and states that “The Council will work with partner organisations and the local community to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres”.

Policy CS29 seeks to ‘Improve the viability and vibrancy of Kingswood [and other east fringe town centres] to enhance their role as service centres for the urban and surrounding rural areas and provide for additional comparison floorspace”

20. Suggested Vision

Consolidate Kingswood as a mixed-use town centre with a greater diversification of use and with independent traders serving the needs of the local area and attracting additional customers from outside the area and through the creation of a family friendly evening economy.

21. Land use issues and opportunities

While the initial RTP Study identified potential further comparison growth at Kingswood site opportunities appear limited without complex land acquisition which does not currently appear viable.

- Kings Chase Shopping Centre – Some potential for new development but major remodelling does not appear viable in the current market.
- Halls Road Area – Some potential but would require either intensification of existing stores (additional floors) or to undertake land assembly in rear service yards.
- Whitfield Tabernacle – Listed Grade 1 is a vacant site with historic interest – potential for residential and /or community uses but unlikely to provide for retail growth. Graveyard has potential as remodelled green space. As a whole the site has tourism potential.
- Blackhorse Road Chapel – vacant site but difficult to redevelop. While the owner is understood to be keen to develop there are consideration issues which have provide difficult to resolve.
- There are garage (maintenance and car showrooms) in and around the town centre which at some point may be considered for redevelopment. There is a risk that if developed for retail purposes they would draw investment and expenditure away form the primary retail area.
- Other opportunities appear limited without either major users pulling out or complex land assembly which does not appear viable at present.
- There is some concern that charity shops are selling new, rather than recycled, items, damaging the trade of permanent retailers.

Strategy

- Preserve and enhance the distinctive identity and heritage of the town centre and its vibrancy and vitality.
- Identify a primary retail area to be retained in mainly retail use and other areas where there can be a more general mix of office uses, beauty parlours, restaurants etc.
- The need is to maintain and safeguard the vibrancy of the existing offering. There is little scope to expand retail floorspace in the High Street area itself.
- Encourage evening trade with retailers being more flexible in their opening hours and with better family leisure facilities.
- Encourage the active use of space behind and above shops where possible for retail, storage and business uses. Allow residential use

	only where that would not undermine the retail function.
Development needs/ sites:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider scope for redevelopment of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whitfield Churches Sites ○ Blackhorse Chapel Site
Retail growth	<p>1. Convenience Floorspace - The working assumption is that there is limited further need for new convenience floorspace.</p> <p>2. Comparison Floorspace</p> <p>While the initial RTP Study (2010) suggested provision of 6,500 sq m net additional comparison floorspace for Kingswood Town Centre that assumed major housing growth in the East Fringe which was not supported through the Core Strategy process. The Final RTP report did not provide a specific growth figure for Kingswood.</p> <p>Development of 2108 sq m has been approved for a site off Downend Road. The working assumption is of retail expansion for around 500 sq m of comparison floorspace.</p> <p>If sites are not identified edge of centre alternatives should be considered. However these too are limited and could result in trade being drawn from the centre.</p>
Markets	Markets were held on the site of the Kingswood Colliers pub until that was developed. The town might benefit from the draw of a weekly or monthly market but sites are not readily available.
Public Realm. Sense of place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to build stronger links with landlords of premises, particularly vacant units, with a view to further regeneration of the town centre’s physical landscape. ○ Work with local history groups to develop and promote the town centre’s historic identity. ○ Consider ideas that can brighten the aesthetic appearance of the streetscape, in particular pavements. Ensure all future highway signage does not create a sense of clutter but complements existing ones ○ Review cleaning regimes with a view to improving them and consider quarterly intensive spring cleans of streetscape. ○ Encourage and create a greater awareness of pride by working with the local community to maintain a higher degree of cleanliness in the town centre. Consider installing ‘enforcement signage’ to deter people from littering. ○ The annual Big Spring Clean community clear-up is spearheaded by the local councillors.
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport links with other parts of South Gloucestershire are generally inadequate, especially non-linear bus routes. ○ Develop reliable, punctual and frequent public transport services with neighbouring suburbs, with the North Fringe of Bristol and with Hanham. ○ Review the spread of bus stop locations with a view to alleviate town centre congestion, particularly outside Kings Chase Shopping Precinct. ○ Aim to provide real time bus information at the shopping centre.

Walking, Cycling routes	Review routes into the centre to identify any specific barriers or opportunities for improvement.
Mobility:	Signpost town centre businesses to relevant web sites for guidance on commercial property accessibility issues. All new projects should consider mobility and accessibility.
Parking	Work towards ensuring all private car parks serving Kingswood Town Centre are free for at least two hours, to encourage greater footfall into the area.
Traffic management	No specific measures identified at this stage.
Centre Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider funding for and appointment of a Town Centre Manager. ○ Continue to develop identified retail crime deterrents and further promote the reporting of criminal activity and damage to the appropriate bodies; ○ Implement the proposed shop watch scheme. Invite other agencies to future KBA meetings to discuss how retail crime can be further addressed. ○ Strengthen the links between all parties involved with Kingswood Safer and Stronger Community Group
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase the working relationship between KBA and larger commercial organisations such as national chain stores and Kings Chase Shopping Precinct. ○ Highlight actions to improve the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, to make it a more attractive shopping destination, place to visit and do business. ○ Continue to lobby agents and landlords of empty premises in the town centre and create a detailed accessible 'vacant property register' for interested parties to view. ○ Continue to explore the idea of producing a Kingswood Town Centre brochure for advertising purposes as well as a town centre display board.
Visitors/Tourism	Do more to promote the existing green facilities, e.g. Kingswood Park and the graveyards as places of recreation and quiet retreat as appropriate.
Evening economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider scope to provide better family leisure facilities. ○ Consider scope to provide a better balance between restaurants providing a 'venue' with fewer takeaways.
Community	With the current limited activity of the Kingswood Business Association an alternative community based group is perhaps required to take up the baton and run with the actions previously identified.

22. Kingswood Town Centre Summary

Kingswood is a traditional town centre in linear form but with retail areas also north and south of Regent Street. Core Strategy Policy CS14 aims to consolidate Kingswood as a town centre with the role of a larger high street shopping and service centre.

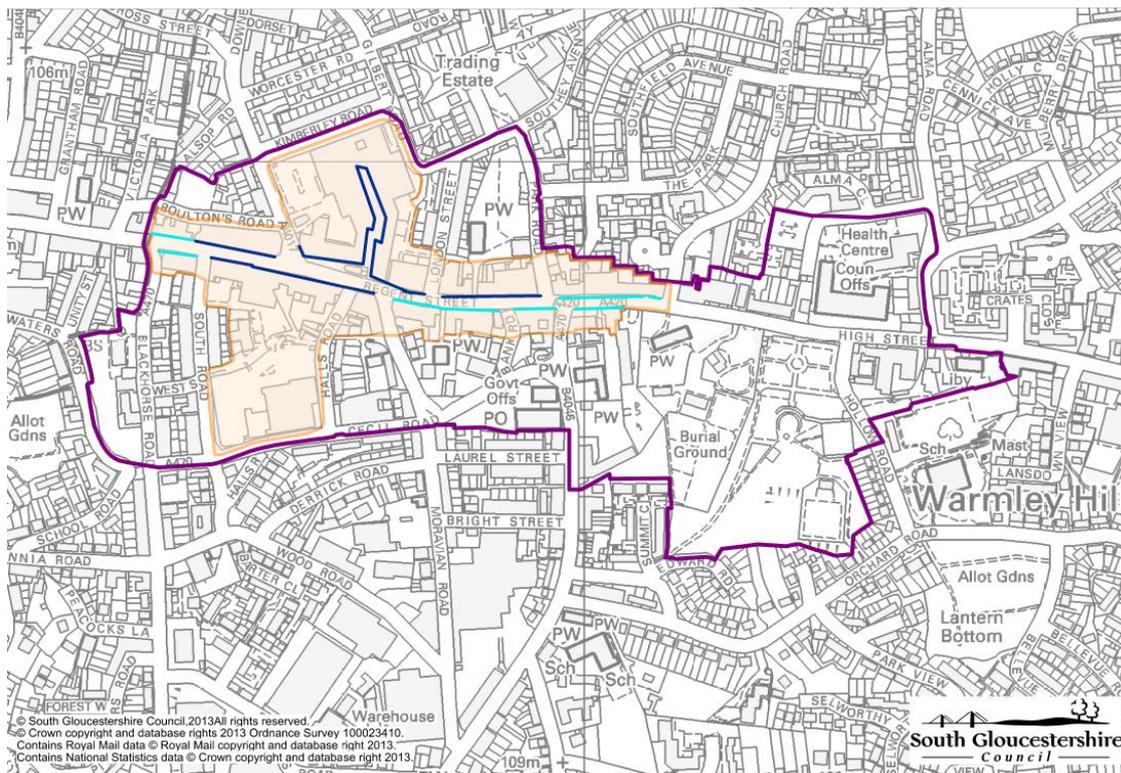
It is proposed to define a town centre boundary which includes both a primary retail area, based on the existing shops, and a wider area including the civic and community buildings and Park to the east of the town centre. At the western end the Town Centre abuts the Bristol boundary and the aim is for policy areas to link to similar designations within Bristol.

Primary and secondary retail frontages are shown. These are not proposed to be changed from those adopted in the SGLP of 2006.

Kingswood has experienced limited recent development at Downend Road and it is assumed that despite retail capacity and likely operator interest physical constraints will limit new comparison floorspace to about 500 sq m unless a more major redevelopment opportunity arises.

There is concern for the appearance and condition of heritage buildings and land off Park Road and Blackhorse Road. There is a range of promotional and management actions which can be considered to enhance the vitality of the centre but the town centre partnership is currently inactive. More detail is set out in the town centre profile.

Kingswood Town Centre Proposed Policy Diagram



Legend

	Proposed Town Centre Boundary
	Proposed Primary Retail Area
	Proposed Primary Retail Frontage
	Proposed Secondary Retail Frontage

Appendix 1 – Kingswood Town Centre Profile –feedback form Consultation.

This profile was published in draft in December 2013. In preparing a revised profile account has been taken of both feedback from a questionnaire sent to town and parish councils and more general consultation on the draft profile.

a) Town and Parish Council Questionnaire Feedback

Q3 Please list any land use/building projects that your local community consider would benefit their area and where known your preferred location.		
Response from	Project/Proposal	Preferred Location (if known)
None		
<p>Q4</p> <p>(a). Please indicate any significant issues/problems your community feel are present in the town centres that they most frequently use.</p> <p>For example do the community have good access to shops, banks, cultural and community facilities etc?</p> <p>(b) Please also indicate if there are positive aspects of particular town centres that the community value.</p>		
Comment by	Issue/Problem with Centre	Positive Aspects of Centre
Bitton PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depressing and downbeat. Too many charity shops. Greater diversification needed. Needs a radical facelift 	
Warmley and Siston Community Gardens Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough variety of shops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much valued local resource with easy of access.
Siston PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too many empty outlets and charity shops. Need to actively encourage residential use of space above shops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Much valued local resources – convenient for most to visit on a sometime daily basis with a good range of independent retail and service outlets. Crown Post Office is a key facility

b) Feedback on the draft profile

Local member feedback – general comments	Suggested Changes
<p>Kingswood Business Association issued a health check as recently as December 2012 and this is not referenced. This placed the Association central to delivering improvements, which we now know is highly unlikely to happen, at least in the short term. It was a wide-ranging study, for example referencing the Portas Review, and we do not want to see this work lost entirely.</p>	<p>Cross references to KBA Health Check to be included and extracts at appendix 2.</p> <p>No other group, other than KBA, has come forward to take implement actions although Connecting Kingswood provides a mechanism for other groups to share activities.</p>
<p>We feel that the profile has insufficient focus on Kingswood’s history, heritage and tourism potential. We would welcome work on developing a history trail in order to draw visitors from further afield.</p>	<p>Noted – and reference to this included – but it remains unclear how actions will be taken forward.</p>
<p>We are always happy to meet and work closely with officers developing plans for our wards.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
Comments on the draft text	
<p>Para 6 – There is no reference to the new Sainsbury Local store that has opened next to Kingswood Library in recent months.</p>	<p>Now included.</p>
<p>Para 8 – A 2010 report is quoted which describes the night time economy offer as “poor”. We are unconvinced that this was true then or now, and feel it should not be presented in the profile unchallenged.</p>	<p>Note added at Para 8 as follows: Local Members note that vibrancy of the local night time economy has changed over time. While it is not accepted as ‘poor’ there is more that could be done to improve both the quantity and quality of activities available.</p>
<p>Para 9 (Hotels) – The Lindens was a hotel and is now an eyesore crying out for refurbishment/development.</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 9 (Community) – The Kingswood Foundation is cited so other ‘beyond the High Street’ resources ought similarly to be mentioned, including the Kingsmeadow Flat, New Cheltenham Hall and community facilities at St. Stephen’s school.</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 10 – The Rotunda has been demolished.</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 11 – Please add to the first sentence “<i>and residents have consistently rejected the idea when balloted</i>”.</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 11 – There ought to be a reference to Connecting Kingswood.</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 13 (Car parks) – This is inaccurate: South Gloucestershire Council car parks in Kingswood Town Centre make no charge. If this refers to privately-owned car parks (e.g. the Chase Shopping Centre) then this should be made explicit. We could make reference to Somerfield reducing the hours it allows shoppers to park free (from 2hrs originally to 1½hrs now).</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>
<p>Para 15 – There is no visitor accommodation at present, so “<i>limited</i>” is inaccurate!</p>	<p>Comment noted and text included.</p>

Para 18 (Whitfield) – Reference ought to be made to this site’s tourism potential.	Comment noted and text included.
Para 18 (Blackhorse Road Chapel) – Some rationale should be added. The owner is, in fact, keen to develop but has faced objections from the council’s listed buildings team.	Comment noted and text included at Section 21.
Para 18 (Other) – We are a tad bemused by the reference to car showrooms. Are you thinking of a specific site and if so should the profile be more explicit? It may be better simply to remove this reference.	There are several garages/car showrooms in and around the centre. These kind of sites are often promoted for redevelopment. The main issue for this profile is whether they would be suitable for retail use and so offer capacity for retail growth. There are no site specific proposals at present.
Para 21 (Actions) – With the inactivity of the Kingswood Business Association, we should state that someone needs to take up the baton and run with the actions previously identified.	Agreed that actions set out in the KBA Health Check and this profile will probably not be taken forward without some local leadership.
Para 21 (Actions) – Point (v) could be prefaced with a reference to the annual Big Spring Clean community clear-up spearheaded by the local councillors.	Comment noted and text included at Section 21.
Para 21 (Actions) – Point (x) replace the words “ <i>all current and future</i> ” with “ <i>private</i> ”.	Comment noted and text included at Section 21.
Para 21 (Actions) – Point (xi) should include reference to ensuring real time bus information at the shopping centre.	Comment noted and text included at Section 21.
Councillors Pat Apps, Michael Bell, Bill Bowrey, Gareth Manson, Andy Perkins, Pat Rooney	

Appendix 2 – extracts from Kingswood Town Centre Health December 2012 – Kingswood Business Association.

Introduction

The Health Check, led by Kingswood Business Association (with support from local partners), aims to identify the work currently taking place in Kingswood to improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre and highlight actions that will help it continue to improve.

Background

In May 1997 the Steering Group for the Kingswood Regeneration Partnership published a draft strategy, which aimed to improve Kingswood Town Centre as well as the surrounding residential and employment area. This group consisted of representatives from South Gloucestershire Council, Kingswood and District Business Partnership, Warmley Clocktower Association, local police, Kingswood Environment Forum and local residents.

In spring 1998, an update was produced summarising the 300 comments received after circulating the draft strategy. Some of these comments were also used to amend the draft strategy, which clearly showed wide ranging support for the following key aims of the project:

- Creating a better, safer more user-friendly town centre
- Ease parking congestion and parking problems
- Increase trade and services in the town centre
- Increase leisure and community facilities
- Provide for environmental improvements
- Bring back life to the town centre

The spring 1998 update also included a number of key proposals addressing the above aims and formulated a vision for the town centre with three main aspects:

1. Kingswood as a major district centre
2. Kingswood as an urban village
3. Kingswood as a centre of opportunity

Once the final strategy for Kingswood Town Centre was produced in November 2000, the majority of the actions highlighted were successfully achieved by partner groups.

Further to the dissolution of the Kingswood and District Business Partnership, local businesses felt the need to re-establish a chamber of trade and in summer 2009, the Kingswood Business Association was formed. With the help of local delivery partners, this new chamber of trade aims to build on previous work and make Kingswood a better place to shop, visit and do business.

The Health Check

In spring 2011, Kingswood Business Association (KBA) took the initiative and with support from South Gloucestershire Council, started the health check process. A draft version was circulated to local partners for comment (including South Gloucestershire Council, Kingswood Safer Stronger Community Group and Avon & Somerset Police) and made available online for the public to view before publishing.

The health check has two primary areas of focus, which are both seen as crucial in helping to create a vibrant town centre. The first area of focus is developing the town centre and the second area of focus is chamber of trade activities. For the purpose of this health check and to be in keeping with previous studies, 'town centre' refers to Regent Street, High Street and the adjoining economy.

This health check will help inform South Gloucestershire Council's future plans for Kingswood Town Centre and will also act as guide for local partners engaged in developing the vitality and vibrancy of Kingswood Town Centre.

Kingswood Heritage

Kingswood is located to the east of Bristol. It comprises three wards: Kings Chase and Rodway, north of the A420, and Woodstock to the south.

The Kingswood name came from the King's Wood or Forest, used by royalty as hunting grounds dating back to Saxon times. By the 17th Century the king had lost the forest to wealthy landowners who let the land for coal mining. Lots of small pits existed where coal came to the surface. As these were worked out, mining went deeper until there were fewer collieries e.g. Hanham Pit, Speedwell Pit, Deep Pit - these continued into the early 20th Century.

The miners of the area, during the 18th Century, were known as a "lawless people" ripe for conversion by such preachers as Whitfield and Wesley whose preaching made such an impact on the people as is shown by the numerous chapels, some of which are still standing. Methodism is said to have been born here, in 1739.

As the coal pits closed, the ex-miners went into boot making, which had previously been a side-line job. Messrs Daniel Flook and Abraham Fussell led early mass production of boots and, later, shoes, using specialised machinery, from the mid 1850's. Around 1900 there were over 80 small boot/shoe workshops. Some of these buildings still exist with their zigzag roofs. As the trade declined from the 1930s there were fewer factories. G. B. Britton did continue, now using new production methods e.g. moulded soles – as "Tuf" shoes of the 1950s. Eventually they were bought out in the 1990s.

There have been a few notable people, like Samuel Budgett, who lived on Kingswood Hill, becoming trade grocers – buying in bulk and reselling, as early as the 1820s. H. H. & S. Budgett eventually moved their business into the city of Bristol. It continued into the 1960s when they were bought out.

Today there are a few retailing businesses that have been trading over 100 years e.g. Zahringers (clocks, jewellery, etc), Lloyds Bank and Aldridge (undertakers). There are a few others that have a long track record. Some shop facades show something of earlier Victorian glory – two are dated 1892.

In 1975 the Kings Chase shopping precinct was created bringing into the area some larger businesses such as Sainsbury's, Iceland, Wilkinson's and a number of smaller shops, modernising the former run down retail area.

(Information courtesy of John Oldham, Local Historian & volunteer with Kingswood Heritage Museum).

1. DEVELOPING THE TOWN CENTRE

A. Unique Sense of Place

Town centres are vital to the local community. Local people and groups should work together to maximise the advantages of a town centre's local heritage and natural surroundings whilst providing facilities for modern retailing. A town centre's local identity should be complemented by an appropriate retail mix that is marketed effectively. This will encourage shoppers to appreciate the true retail experience.

Current Status

- KBA is working to build stronger relationships with South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) and statutory bodies to maintain the town centre's economic heritage and identity. KBA actively encourages new retailers to move to the town centre.

- The town centre has historically been the hub of economic activity in the area. Remnants of its historic affluence are still visible in the high street through architecture and monuments.
- KBA has produced marketing material to promote local shops and businesses. This has raised awareness of the variety of retail and other service businesses in the area to local residents and visitors from further afield.

Future Actions

- Continue to build stronger links with landlords of premises, particularly vacant units, with a view to further the regeneration of the town centre's physical landscape. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Work with local history groups to develop and promote the town centre's historic identity. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Heritage Museum)
- Continue to explore the idea of producing a Kingswood Town Centre brochure for advertising purposes as well as a town centre display board. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)

B. Attractive Public Realm

A town centre should have an attractive trading environment with consistent styling, pedestrian signage and public spaces maintained to high standards. This should include effective deterrents against pollution. The local authority, public bodies and private interest groups need to work together to achieve such improvements.

Current Status

- The town centre has scope to be more attractive than it currently is. Styling varies somewhat between old and new buildings.
- Current cleaning regimes are adequate in most places in the town centre. In some areas however, street cleansing does not provide acceptable results. There are no visual deterrents against pollution in the town centre (except litter bins).
- Work has taken place between KBA and SGC to identify 'trouble spots' of unacceptably high levels of rubbish in and around the town centre.

Future Actions

- Consider ideas that can brighten the aesthetic appearance of the streetscape, in particular pavements. Ensure all future highway signage does not create a sense of clutter but complements existing ones. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Review cleaning regimes with a view to improving them and consider quarterly, intensive spring cleans of streetscape. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Encourage and create a greater awareness of pride by educating the local community to maintain a higher degree of cleanliness in the town centre. Consider installing 'enforcement signage' to deter people from littering. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)

C. Planning for Success

Monitoring the health of the town centre should underpin any effective town centre system. A clear strategy should be established to address the increasing rates of vacancy and the accompanying decline in fortunes of town centres.

Current Status

- KBA has worked with Kings Chase Shopping Precinct and regularly has contact with SGC on relevant matters. There is no town or parish council in Kingswood. KBA have a close working relationship with the local police.

- KBA is leading on the Town Centre Health Check initiative to identify areas for improvement.
- KBA has investigated empty premises in the town centre to find out who the landlords are and has offered to publicise their units but there has been little interest from agents to collaborate on this project.

Future Actions

- Increase the working relationship between KBA and larger commercial organisations such as national chain stores and Kings Chase Shopping Precinct. (Lead Partner – Kings Chase Shopping Precinct)
- Highlight actions to improve the vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, to make it a more attractive shopping destination, place to visit do business. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Continue to lobby agents and landlords of empty premises in the town centre and create a detailed and accessible ‘vacant property register’ for interested parties to view. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association).

D. Accessibility

Parking and transport policy should reduce town centre congestion and parking demands without affecting footfall. Car parking and cycle locking facilities need to attract customers to the town centre and adequate public transport links should connect local communities to the town centre. Retail premises should be easily accessible to encourage visits from wheelchair users and buggy users.

Current Status

- Kingswood town centre has a number of car parks within walking distance of the high street and Kings Chase Shopping Precinct. Free car parking times vary between 90 minutes and two hours. The Kings Chase Shopping Precinct car park (which is not free) is currently under-used.
- There are various, well-used bus services routed through the town centre connecting local and wider communities.
- Given the age of the buildings in the town centre, there is variable access to retail premises.

Future Actions

- Work towards ensuring all current and future car parks serving Kingswood Town Centre are free for at least two hours, to encourage greater footfall into the area. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Review the spread of bus stop locations with a view to alleviate town centre congestion, particularly outside Kings Chase Shopping Precinct. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)
- Signpost town centre businesses to relevant websites for guidance on commercial property accessibility issues. (Lead Partner – Kingswood Business Association)

E. SAFETY & SECURITY

Retail crime and anti-social behaviour should be deterred, with damaged property and streetscape restored as quickly as possible. Meaningful deterrence can be achieved through a co-ordinated response by local retailers and businesses. Neighbourhood policing should meet the needs of the local community to ensure the town centre is a safe, inclusive and accessible place.

Current Status

- Kings Chase Shopping Precinct has its own security. There is an established Pub Watch scheme. Street Pastors are also being deployed. KBA actively encourages all local businesses and residents to report relevant damage to SGC, who give prompt attention.

- Discussions have taken place between the local police and KBA with regard to the possibility of a 'shop watch scheme'. Many businesses in the town centre already have their own security.
- There has been a recent review by local police resulting in the allocation of additional police resources into the area. Kingswood Safer Stronger Community Group holds regular dialogue with KBA and the police, to highlight relevant and current issues.

Future Actions

- Continue to develop identified retail crime deterrents and further promote the reporting of criminal activity and damage to the appropriate bodies. (Lead Partner – Safer & Stronger Community Group)
- Implement the proposed shop watch scheme. Invite other agencies to future KBA meetings to discuss how retail crime can be further addressed. (Lead Partner – Avon & Somerset Police)
- Strengthen the links between all parties involved with Kingswood Safer Stronger Community Group. (Lead Partner – Safer & Stronger Community Group)

F. Core Strategy

The Core Strategy sets the strategic planning policy framework to guide future development across South Gloucestershire. In the Core Strategy, Kingswood is defined as a town centre which functions as a high street and shopping service centre. This Health Check therefore, complements the Core Strategy.

Under Policy CS14 (Town Centres and Retail), South Gloucestershire Council will work with partners and the local community to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of existing centres in South Gloucestershire, in recognition of their retail, service and social functions.

As a result of community engagement, the Core Strategy's vision for the future of the East Fringe of Bristol (which includes Kingswood) aims to:

- Preserve and enhance the distinctive identity and heritage of the physical community
- Strengthen the vibrancy and vitality of the town centres
- Improve employment opportunities (by being in close proximity to the Bristol & Bath Science Park)
- Develop reliable, punctual and frequent public transport services with the North Fringe of Bristol
- Integrate well designed housing developments (which do not isolate the town centre)

Policy CS29 in the Core Strategy aims to deliver this draft vision through managing development and partnership working.

The viability and vibrancy of Kingswood will be improved to enhance its role as a service centre for the urban and surrounding rural area including making provision for additional comparison floor space as appropriate.

2. CHAMBER OF TRADE ACTIVITIES

Kingswood Business Association has been established since 2009. The group encourages businesses in the Kingswood area to meet regularly, gain access to business support, trade with each other and promote the local economy. The 'Key Messages' section of this health check identifies the need for a strong and active chamber of trade to be in place, to work with local partners and undertake activities that can improve the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre. Kingswood Business Association, has highlighted a set of ambitions and goals they believe will help contribute towards a vibrant and prosperous town centre.

Current Status

- A. **Development of a business environment in which entrepreneurship can flourish.**
The recent growth of KBA has led to a closer working relationship between local businesses. KBA Retail Group meetings facilitate closer understanding of one and another's businesses and enable the sharing of good practice and initiatives.

Future Actions

- Continue to promote close working relationships between all businesses.
- Encourage businesses to attend KBA's newly established, Business Breakfast Club.

- B. **Create and foster a spirit of goodwill, friendship and unity amongst local businesses.**
General KBA meetings allow for an open exchange of views. Input from all businesses is actively encouraged.

Future Actions

- Encourage businesses to communicate and interact outside of ordinary KBA meetings using existing channels (such as social media) and social functions and events.

- C. **Provide facilities for the exchange of views and interaction between businesses.**
KBA provides opportunities for businesses to meet and discuss issues affecting their business at the main and Retail Group meetings.

- Promote the new Breakfast Club as another facility for businesses to interact with each other.

- D. **Develop informative website for the Chamber.**

KBA has an on-line presence generously provided by www.MyKingswood.co.uk/KBA.

KBA's page on My Kingswood lists all current members and activities taking place.

- Develop a dedicated KBA website with a secure log-in section for KBA members to access with useful resources available to download. Incorporate a members' benefits section as well.

- E. **Improve communications between the Chamber and Parish, Town and District Councils through meetings and circulars.**

There is no Town or Parish Council in Kingswood however, KBA regularly communicates with SGC on various issues.

- Ensure KBA maintains a close working relationship with SGC by attending meetings as appropriate and responding to and acting on consultations as relevant.

- F. **Establish a rapport with the whole community and be recognised as representing the view of local businesses to the wider community.**

There have been limited opportunities for KBA to represent the views of businesses to the community.

- Raise the profile of KBA so that relevant bodies are aware of its capacity to effectively address issues affecting the local economy.
- G. Keep members informed on important matters affecting trade, businesses and industry, retail and tourism.**
- KBA circulates information to local businesses about issues of relevance and information that can prove beneficial to them.
- Increase the regularity of circulating relevant business support material and information to members and utilise the new KBA website as a medium to do this.
- H. Establish and maintain relations with bodies having similar objects to promote the vibrancy of the local town centre.**
- KBA is aware of and has met other local business groups in South Gloucestershire. KBA has a good working relationship with Kings Chase Shopping Precinct.
- Continue to be involved in activities of the South Gloucestershire Business Forum and attend its events to represent Kingswood businesses.
- I. Support and have presence at local events for promotional purpose as appropriate.**
- KBA has been involved with various national, local and seasonal events to promote both its members and Kingswood Town Centre.
- Identify other events at which KBA can have a presence to effectively promote the local economy.

SUMMARY & CONTACTS

- This health check provides a guide that will be used by local partners currently engaged in developing the vitality and vibrancy of Kingswood Town Centre.
- Coordinated by Kingswood Business Association, these partners will enlist the help of relevant delivery partners and review the health check regularly to ensure the future actions identified are being achieved.
- For information about the progress being made with each of the future actions or to offer your support to any of the lead partners, please contact:
 - Kingswood Business Association - enquiries@silverbridals.co
 - Avon & Somerset Police - Dominic.Graham@avonandsomerset.police.uk
 - Kingswood Safer Stronger Community Group - marian.jones@southglos.gov.uk
 - South Gloucestershire Council - business@southglos.gov.uk
 - Kingswood Heritage Museum - kingswoodstudy@hotmail.co.uk
 - Kings Chase Shopping Precinct - Karl.taylor@htccentres.uk.com