

MAKING CONNECTIONS LAND USE

The High Street displays a positive mix of uses, ranging from an assortment of pubs and food establishments to shops and public utilities (the post office). At the time of survey there was only one vacancy on the High Street. As a result of this mix of uses, pedestrian movement to, along and across the street is frequent throughout the village centre

There are no assembly and leisure-orientated buildings on the High Street and there are several residential uses that detract from the High Street uses. There are few residential units above the commercial and retail uses.

Land Use (ground floor)



KEY ISSUES MCI: LAND USE

MCIA
Residential buildings detract from High Street vitality.

MCIB
There are no community or leisure uses on the High Street.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. All Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Dacorum Borough Council Licence No. LA1000 18935 2006

MAKING CONNECTIONS CIRCULATION, DEMAND AND LINKAGES

The circulation diagram to the right represents an analysis of existing conditions with contributions made by local residents at the consultation event.

The High Street is the most heavily used road in the village, simultaneously used for through traffic, local shopping traffic, and work to home journeys. Church Lane and Vicarage Lane (the western extension of The Nap) are secondary routes out of the village. Major demand was cited during mornings and afternoons to the schools, represented by purple dots on the western side of the village. The two secondary schools draw many students from outside Kings Langley.

The pedestrian paths show major and minor usage, including the significance use of a footpath that connects the residential homes on the eastern side of the village with the High Street. The Canal serves as both a path for recreational use and a barrier to east-west movement



KEY ISSUES

MC2: CIRCULATION DEMAND AND LINKAGES

MC2A

Footpaths running to the High Street, as opposed to parallel to it, are the most frequently used.

MC2B

Vehicular movement is congested at the beginning and end of the school day on the western side of town.

MC2C

Traffic frequently uses the High Street as a through route.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Dacorum Borough Council License No. LA1000 18935 2006

MAKING CONNECTIONS

PARKING

The width of the High Street facilitates some on-street parking which has reduced the demand seen in other Dacorum towns and villages for off-street car parks. There are also two off-street car parks located within the vicinity of the High Street.

There is considerable variation in parking conditions on the residential streets. Many streets provide little on-street parking, resulting in partial or total parking on pavements.

Many of the detached homes contain their own driveways. While reducing the demand for on-street space, a strategy for off-street residential parking is an issue for planning future densities.



On-street parking on the High Street.



An example of residential off street parking

KEY ISSUES

MC3: PARKING

MC3A
On-street parking frequently blocks the pavement and affects pedestrian paths.

MC3B
Planned development must resolve the issue of on-street and off-street parking, particularly as it affects density and traffic flow.



The Church Lane pavement is frequently blocked by parked cars.



In many instances parked cars partially block the pavement.

MAKING CONNECTIONS WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

Wayfinding signage is a critical aspect of navigating the urban landscape and can be significant in forming distinctive urban or rural character as well. Four key elements of wayfinding signage are discussed below with regard to Kings Langley.

Marking critical paths

As described earlier, the railway station is located outside the village centre due to its primary use for freight rail and the need to serve both Kings Langley and Abbots Langley. While the passenger station is well-marked, there is poor signage for both vehicles and pedestrians from the station to the village. There are only a few small signs marking the paths to the canal towpath, which are also often ill-maintained.

Creating gateways

The Kings Langley village centre sign (top far right) serves as a useful gateway sign into the settlement. It can also be valuable to combine gateway signs with landmark buildings or places. The road from the south has a beautiful dairy farm just before the village centre sign, and the listed building with classical features also serves as an important gateway landmark. An old railway bridge is a significant landmark along the road arriving from the north.

Discouraging clashes

Wayfinding signage provides an opportunity to present a coherent vision of a place. With the development or re-location of new places, clashes can easily develop between old signage and new signage. While many places stress the need to create total consistency between signs, other places either highlight old signs as distinctive or produce new signs in an older fashion.

Developing hierarchy

Signs are frequently grouped together to provide an array of directions with major destinations given a higher profile than minor ones. In the cluster of signs shown at the bottom far left the signage hierarchy has given more prominence to the 'toilets' than the 'public footpath'.

KEY ISSUES

MC4: WAYFINDING SIGNAGE

MC4A

Poorly marked signs to/from the train station.

MC4B

Mediocre use of gateway signage.

MC4C

Frequent combination of clashing signs.

MC4D

Unclear hierarchy of signage.



Critical paths: There are few signs leading from the station to the village. Above is an example of one of the few signs marking the circular walk along the canal towpath



Gateway signs: The village centre sign at the southern entrance to Kings Langley is the most prominent gateway sign to the village.



Signage Clashes: The older street sign for The Nap has had a new sign tacked to it.



Signage hierarchy: Kings Langley's scenic public footpath is overwhelmed by a sign for public toilets.

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

Kings Langley's streetscape elements perform several roles, from reaffirming the village's distinctiveness to facilitating High Street vitality and retail success and slowing through route traffic.

The current use of highway streetlighting (top left) continuously on the approach to Kings Langley and along the High Street do not serve to slow through route traffic. A shift to smaller-scale street lights would serve as an additional reinforcement to slow through traffic and affirm a sense of place.

Shopfront signs throughout the Kings Langley conservation area reflect an inconsistency that does not reinforce the village's character. The consultation participants emphasised that quality and diversity in keeping with the village's character was more desirable than uniformity.

There were few public planters along the High Street. The occasional existing feature adds vitality to the street.

In a few notable places, attempts were made to use more traditional materials and styles, such as the bus stop shown in the lower far right. It should be emphasised that traditional materials and styles are less successful when applied to modern conveniences and not built with the highest quality materials.



Highway streetlights do little to add to Kings Langley's character.



Consultation participants frequently cited this shop sign as garish.

KEY ISSUES

QPR1: STREETSCAPE ELEMENTS

QPR1A

Streetlights make the High Street appear like a major trunk road.

QPR1B

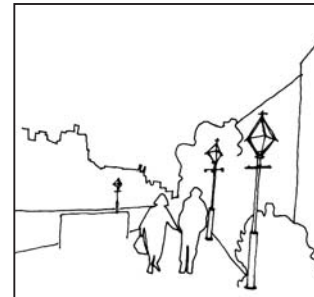
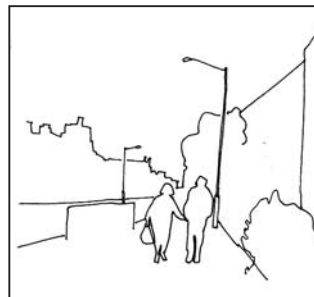
Shops signs in the conservation area are not fully regulated.

QPR1C

Planting adds to the character of the High Street.

QPR1D

The use of traditional materials and styles in streetscape features has met with mixed results.



The two illustrations above emphasise the difference between the existing highway-style streetlight and distinctive traditional streetlights.



This bus shelter references the village's traditional materials.

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM NATURAL ELEMENTS

Kings Langley sits entirely within the Upper Gade Valley surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt. The area has a long natural history in terms of wildlife, livestock, and cultivation. Eleanor of Aquitaine had numerous orchards at the Royal Palace and Kings Langley was also the site of a medieval deer park.

The Dacorum Borough Council's Urban Nature Conservation Study notes that 'the river valley is well defined here, rising up from the quite wide and well defined flat valley floor to plateau areas either side.' There are trees and hedge lines along the course of the River Gade and the canal. Kings Langley Lake is a former gravel pit and another small lake exists to the north of Kings Langley.

Kings Langley currently has no wildlife sites, heightening the significance of Kings Langley Common and the Grand Union Canal as reservoirs for wildlife and habitat stepping stones.

Recent developments have occurred directly on the edge of the river, eroding the wildlife corridor, preventing public access to the water. The private edge has necessitated a break in waterside paths. The area around these developments is entirely asphalted, leading to additional run-off into the river and canal.



The canal is lined with trees that form significant wildlife habitats.



The Kings Langley Common is heavily wooded in parts.

KEY ISSUES QPR2: NATURAL ELEMENTS

QPR2A
Kings Langley Common and the Grand Union Canal form significant reservoirs and stepping stones for wildlife.

QPR2B
Recent development has encroached onto the edge of the canal, preventing public access.



Recent developments have extended to the water's edge.



The driveway leading to the left is paved over the River Gade. The use of asphalt leads to increased runoff into the river.

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM

SAFETY/SECURITY

Many of the footpaths in Kings Langley are heavily used and are significant features in the village landscape. The footpaths run between residential homes which often have high fences to discourage overlookers. These fences often replicate existing poorly designed municipal fences. Consequently, the footpaths can appear to be quite isolated. Additionally, the lighting used along the paths is perceived to be 'urban' in nature, detracting from the sense of place and providing little additional sense of security.



Residents' fencing, designed to keep people from looking into their gardens, is often coupled with poor municipal fencing.

KEY ISSUES

QPR3: SAFETY AND SECURITY

QPR3A

Poor fencing contributes to a sense of insecurity and represents a poor public amenity.

QPR3B

The lighting used along path is perceived to do little to encourage sense of safety.

LEGIBILITY VIEWS, VISTAS, GATEWAYS

The development of Kings Langley on the western slope of the Upper Gade Valley has produced a number of view corridors across the valley from residential streets and open spaces. There is a need to regulate or control the building heights and building quality of development that may occur within these vistas.

There are also a number of smaller-scale critical views along the Grand Union Canal as well.

Currently, the major gateways into and out of Kings Langley (as noted by the dashed circles) do not form particularly strong view corridors.



KEY ISSUES LE1: VIEWS, VISTAS AND GATEWAYS

LE1A
There are several strong view corridors from the village of Kings Langley across the Upper Gade Valley.

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Dacorum Borough Council License No. LA1000 18935 2006

LEGIBILITY

EDGES, PATHS, LANDMARKS AND CHARACTER AREAS

Village centre

The village centre character area maintains a strong presence through its cohesive building line and strong listed buildings. The connections to and from the High Street are clear by both foot and vehicle. The gateway at the southern end of the village is marked by a series of large listed buildings, but the northern end of the village centre does not have a clear conclusion.

Open space

There is little signage to Kings Langley Common but local access is good and the Common has a significant function. The open land between the High Street and Blackwell Street has no active buildings overlooking it and suffers from a sense of isolation. The Canal towpath is heavily used by local people and visitors alike.

Connectivity

Connections to the Canal towpath from the village centre are limited. The most direct route is along Church Lane which has a narrow pavement often blocked by parked cars. The bridge link over the canal is a lost opportunity, being preceded by a wide roundabout and a poorly maintained listed building. There is little signage or indication of the access point to the Canal towpath.

KEY ISSUES

LE2: EDGES, PATHS, LANDMARKS AND CHARACTER AREAS

LE2A

The connections to the Canal towpath from the village centre are poor.

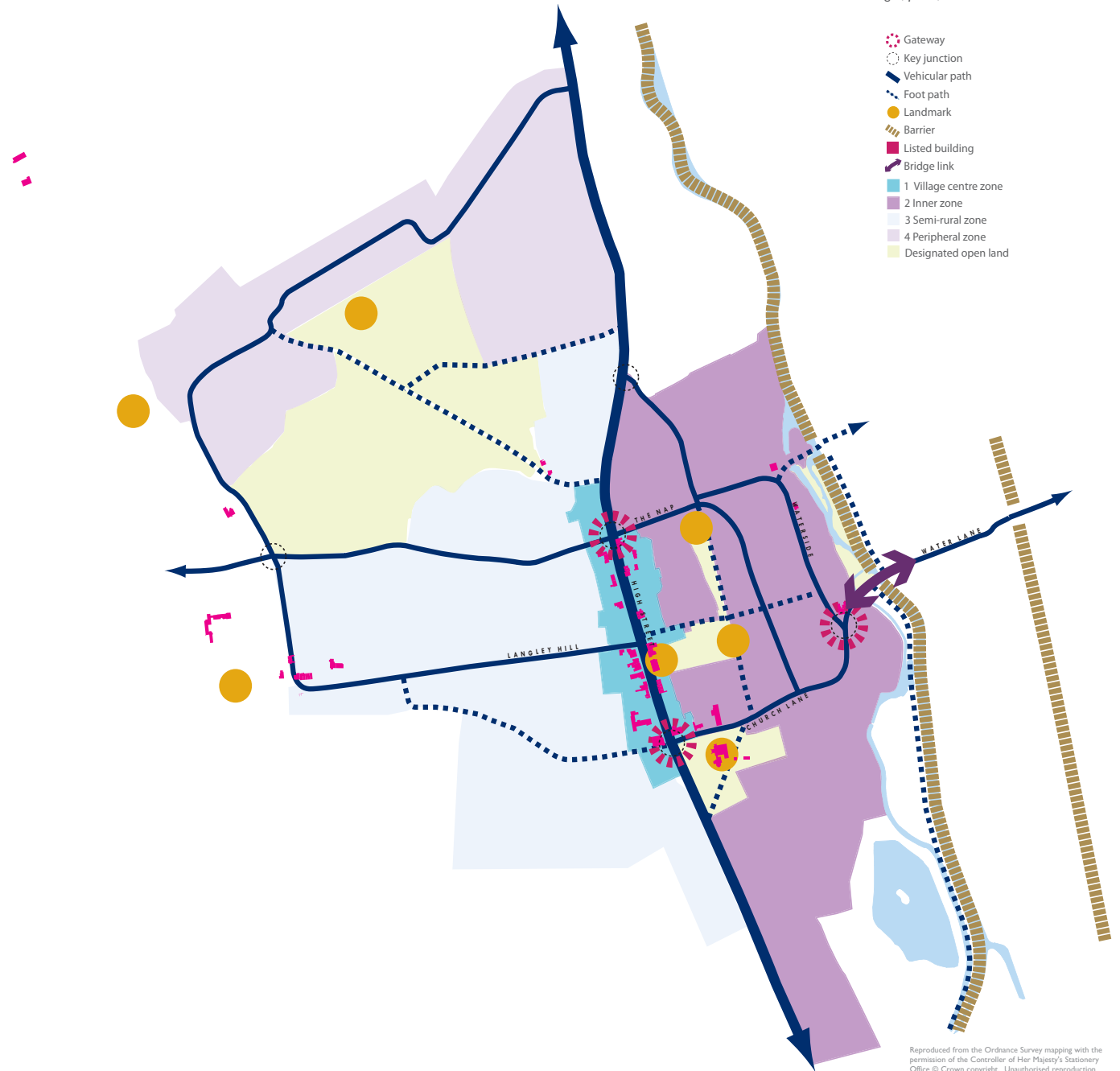
LE2B

The bridge link over the canal has poor visibility and is a poor gateway.

LE2C

The High Street is strong but lacks defining gateways at both ends, particularly at the northern end.

Edges, paths, landmarks and character areas



- Gateway
- Key junction
- Vehicular path
- Foot path
- Landmark
- Barrier
- Listed building
- Bridge link
- 1 Village centre zone
- 2 Inner zone
- 3 Semi-rural zone
- 4 Peripheral zone
- Designated open land

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Dacorum Borough Council License No. LA1000 18935 2006

KEY ISSUES, SAFEGUARDS, CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The key issues arising from the urban design assessment are set out here with recommended safeguards, opportunities and capacities. The safeguards identify to considerations which should be made in order to protect existing strengths or regulate the existing built environment. Opportunities refer to the potential for improvements that could be made in reference to particular issues. Capacities call for a consideration of potentially larger developments or changes

MAKING PLACES	Criteria	Issue Number	Issue	Safeguards	Opportunities	Capacities	Agency Responsibility (where not solely Dacorum Borough Council)	
	MP1: Materials and Textures	MP1A	Popularity of older brickwork.	Protect buildings with older brickwork.				
		MP1B	Dislike of new machine-made brickwork.		Specify higher quality machine-made bricks for any new development.			
		MP1C	Inconsistent use of paving materials.					
		MP1D	Distinctiveness of split rail fence.	Protect split rail fence.		Improve maintenance with more frequent painting and removal of weeds at base of fence. Apply fence at clear start/ finish points of the High Street. Change other railings in village to match this distinctive element.	HCC & DBC	
	MP2: Listed buildings and Conservation Areas	MP2A	Presence of several distinctive listed buildings.	Protect existing listed buildings.				HCC
		MP2B	Lack of role of listed buildings acting as gateways.			Improve listed buildings at the junction of Waterside Lane and Church Lane. Create appropriate gateway signage adjacent to listed buildings. Consider alterations to the roundabout junction to create more distinctive gateway. Consider any appropriate changes to Memorial Gardens make the parish church more visible from the High Street.	HCC & DBC	
		MP2C	Streetscape elements often detract from the quality of Conservation Areas.			Apply appropriate streetscape elements - including streetlighting, rubbish bins, handrails - in the conservation areas. Use traditional materials and styles to retain village identity.		
		MP2D	The Canal towpath has no listed designations nor is it a Conservation Area.	Provide locks and bridges with protected status.		Apply appropriate built elements - including streetlighting, rubbish bins, handrails - in the conservation areas. Use traditional materials and styles to retain village identity.		
	MP3: Building Heights *	MP3A	Building heights in the village centre are low-rise.	Maintain low-rise nature of village centre.				
MP3B		Two-storey heights on the eastern side of the street facilitates views across the Gade Valley.	Closely regulate new development on eastern side of the High Street.					
MP4: Density	MP4A	Predominance of two storey housing.	Maintain low-rise nature of housing.				HCC	
	MP4B	Variation in density of two-storey units.		Examine capacities for on-street parking at the sites of any new developments.				
	MP4C	Existence of high density low-rise housing in places throughout the village.		Explore design opportunities for high -density low -rise housing with reduced garden areas.				
MP5: Topographical studies * village Centre	MP5A	Topography is a critical feature in Kings Langley and creates significant views across the valley.	Preserve view corridors.			Develop built elements around good viewing points.		
	MP5B	Key urban design features such as the elevated pavement on the High Street, have emerged as a result of the gradient.				Develop these built elements to create distinctive place-making elements in Kings Langley.		

KEY ISSUES, SAFEGUARDS, CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CONTINUITY AND ENCLOSURE	Criteria	Issue Number	Issue	Safeguards	Opportunities	Capacities	Agency Responsibility (where not solely Dacorum Borough Council)	
	CE1: Village Morphology	CE1A	Kings Langley's morphology has generally evolved with an axial growth, consisting of through streets running parallel to the valley and key residential streets running perpendicularly to the valley.	Preserve existing circulation patterns.				
		CE1B	Recent development has not been consistent with this pattern.		Examine capacity for any new development to integrate with existing axial street pattern.			
	CE2: Village Centre Morphology*	CE2A	Each side of the village centre has a consistent frontage onto the High Street.	Maintain the densely built nature of the village centre.				
		CE2B	The clarity of the High Street is lost behind each side of the High Street.			Develop an integrated plan for servicing commercial and retail units on the High Street. Improve connections to open space behind the eastern side of the High Street.		
	CE3: Building lines/ setbacks/ gaps*	CE3A	Each side of the village centre has a consistent frontage onto the High Street.	Preserve the overall consistency of the street frontage.				
		CE3B	There are three notable exceptions on either side of the street that disrupt the predominantly even building lines.			Develop the sorting office frontage into a useful civic space. Improve the quality of the frontage space in front of the private residential developments.		
	CE4: Building front/ back orientation*	CE4A	The post office and the residential building along Little Hayes detract from the consistent active frontages on the High Street.				Develop the post office frontage into a useful civic space. Improve the quality of the frontage space in front of the private residential developments.	
		CE4B	The set of residential units at the southern end of the High Street on the eastern side are setback and create a poor relationship with the High Street.				Improve the quality of the frontage space in front of the private residential developments.	
	CE5: Designated open spaces	CE5A	Kings Langley Common makes a significant contribution to the village.	Preserve and protect the Kings Langley Common.				
		CE5B	The open space on the eastern side of the village appears isolated.		Consider development that allows new uses alongside the open space.	Improve connections and signage to open space from the High Street.		
		CE5C	Connections are poor to the Canal towpath and Memorial Gardens.	Regulate parking on pavement along Church Lane.		Improve wayfinding signage to the Canal towpath and Memorial Gardens.		

* village Centre only

KEY ISSUES, SAFEGUARDS, CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Assessment Category	Criteria	Issue Number	Issue	Safeguards	Opportunities	Capacities	Agency Responsibility (where not solely Dacorum Borough Council)	
MAKING CONNECTIONS	MC1: Land Use*	MC1A	Residential buildings detract from High Street vitality.	Regulate residential development along the High Street.				
		MC1B	There are few community or leisure uses on the High Street.		Explore potential for new community or leisure uses along the High Street.			
	MC2: Circulation demand and linkages	MC2A	Footpaths running to the High Street, as opposed to parallel to it, are the most frequently used.				Improve quality of fencing, pavement and lighting of footpaths. Potential to re-establish pedestrian link along old Green Lane (if opportunities arise)	HCC and DBC
		MC2B	Vehicular movement is congested at the beginning and end of the school day on the western side of town.		Consider road management options to improve traffic flow. Explore school busing options. Explore carpooling options. Explore alternative routes.			HCC
		MC2C	Traffic frequently uses the High Street as a through route.		Consider road management options to regulate traffic flow. Explore alternative through routes.		Create smaller-scale streetlighting to discourage appearance of trunk road.	HCC
	MC3: Parking	MC3A	On-street parking frequently blocks the pavement and affects pedestrian paths.	Regulate parking on pavement; create parking management objectives.				
		MC3B	Planned development must resolve the issue of on-street and off-street parking, particularly as it affects density and traffic flow.		Explore capacity for off-street parking in new developments.			
	MC4: Wayfinding signage	MC4A	Poorly marked signs to/from the train station				Improve signage to/from the station.	HCC
		MC4B	Mediocre use of gateway signage				Establish clear framework for developing gateways to Kings Langley.	
		MC4C	Frequent combination of clashing signs				Develop signage plan that will reinforce the distinctiveness of Kings Langley.	
		MC4D	Unclear hierarchy of signage				Create signage hierarchy that emphasises key destinations within Kings Langley.	
	* village Centre only							

KEY ISSUES, SAFEGUARDS, CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

QUALITY OF THE PUBLIC REALM	Criteria	Issue Number	Issue	Safeguards	Opportunities	Capacities	Agency Responsibility (where not solely Dacorum Borough Council)	
	QPR1: Streetscape Elements	QPR1A	Streetlights make the High Street appear like a through route.				Create smaller-scale streetlighting to discourage use as a through route.	HCC
		QPR1B	Shops signs in the conservation area are not fully regulated.	Regulate shopfront signs for quality and diversity, not uniformity.				
		QPR1C	Informal planting adds to the character of the High Street.				Add planters to High Street.	DBC and private landowners
		QPR1D	The use of traditional materials and styles in streetscape features has met with mixed results.	Use traditional materials and styles in appropriate ways and with high quality materials only.				
	QPR2: Natural Elements	QPR2A	Kings Langley Common and the Grand Union Canal form significant reservoirs and stepping stones for wildlife.	Development within the vicinity of these open spaces should be regulated closely.				
		QPR2B	Recent development has encroached onto the edge of the canal.	The use of porous paving materials within vicinity of the canal should be encouraged.				
	QPR3: Safety/ security measures	QPR3A	Poor fencing contributes to a sense of insecurity.	Regulate fencing where possible.			Improve municipal fencing.	DBC housing services
		QPR3B	The lighting used along path is perceived to do little to encourage sense of safety.				Introduce distinctive lighting that reinforces the village character.	

* village Centre only

KEY ISSUES, SAFEGUARDS, CAPACITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

LEGIBILITY	Criteria	Issue Number	Issue	Safeguards	Opportunities	Capacities	Agency Responsibility (where not solely Dacorum Borough Council)
	LE1: Vistas, views, gateways	LE1A	There are several strong view corridors from the village of Kings Langley across the Upper Gade Valley.				
	LE2: Edges, paths, nodes, landmarks, districts	LE2A	The connections to the Canal towpath from the village centre are poor.			Improve pedestrian conditions along Church Lane. Improve signage to Canal Walk from footpaths and Church Lane.	DBC and HCC
		LE2B	The bridge link over the canal at Water Lane has poor visibility and is a poor gateway.			Improve listed building at junction of Waterside Lane and Church Lane.	private owner and DBC
LE2C		The High Street is strong but lacks defining gateways at both ends, particularly at the northern end.		Develop design plan to improve the identity of the High Street by strengthening the gateways to the village centre.			
* village Centre only							