

A Vision for Newbury Town Centre

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A Vision for Newbury

Crossroads are a place where routes, and therefore people, come together. Crossroads are why many places exist and were the 'birthplace' of many market towns.

In placing the concept of The Crossroads at the heart of the future Vision our aim is to ensure that as Newbury responds to the need for change, it remembers its market town heritage, and remains a focus for social interaction, economic growth, civic engagement and community activities.

Newbury will continue to be a successful, modern market town by ensuring it is a place that:

- promotes its heritage and independent identity
- is innovative and entrepreneurial, able to respond quickly to economic change
- is social and welcoming, where people gather to meet and celebrate
- is green in the widest sense, promoting sustainability, biodiversity and healthy living
- listens to the needs of its urban and rural community.

The survey will ask for your views on this Vision



Newbury today

Newbury is a successful market town with a high quality of life. The town enjoys many attractive attributes including:

- A number of large, high profile employers
- High-quality retail investment
- Immediate access to the strategic road network and excellent rail connections
- Regular host of events that have a national profile, a historic core and high-quality parks
- A range of markets, independent retailers and well respected cultural organisations.

Given these strengths, it is perhaps not unreasonable to ask why Newbury needs to change.



Why does Newbury need to change?

All town centres are having to respond to the huge change in national shopping and leisure habits, driven by the growth in internet shopping and accelerated by the impact of Covid-19. All towns and all communities have suffered socially and economically from the enforced closures over the last 12 months and Newbury is no exception. The impacts on the town centre are most visibly demonstrated by the loss of the John Lewis Homes and Debenhams stores that anchor the Parkway Centre. The loss of these stores whilst impacting on footfall in the short term provides an opportunity to revision and revitalize the centre and its relationship with Victoria Park to meet the changing needs of visitors in a Post COVID-19 future.

Our study has also undertaken a survey of local residents to establish their view on the town centre. Over 4,000 people completed the online survey, which was open from 7 December 2020 to 31 January 2021. This represents around 10 per cent of the population, the largest response to a survey in the town.

“Towns and cities across the UK will need help and space to rethink the purpose of their centres. The high streets of the future will need to become multi-purpose locations, combining retail and hospitality amenities with residential, education, healthcare, cultural, technology, community and more. Office space will need to be transformed for three main purposes: collaboration, creativity and culture, with less space devoted to tasks that could be done remotely. Transport links will need to be reconsidered, as well as additional infrastructure needs. The pandemic has made it essential for places to galvanise their centres for the new way of living.”

KPMG - The future of towns and cities post COVID-19 January 2021

89% of survey respondents think that Newbury Town Centre could be improved



How does Newbury need to change?

The evidence nationally shows that the town centres which will 'bounce back' most effectively from the impact of the pandemic are those with strong local identities and connections with their local communities. 'Multi-functional' centres with a good leisure, community and cultural offer are less heavily reliant on retailing and more resilient to change. Town centre living and a strong employment base is also a key asset.

The evidence locally shows that Newbury has many of these characteristic. Residents value Market Place, Northbrook Street and St Nicholas Church, the canalside, the parks and green space. They value Camp Hopson and the independent shops and the range of restaurants and coffee shops, complemented by the national retailers in Parkway and the Vue Cinema.

The survey also highlights a number of weakness in the town centre.

Theses weaknesses relate particularly to the make up and balance of the shopping, cultural and leisure offers, the amount and quality of open / public/ green space, and the lack of facilities for younger people.

Survey question: "What are your favourite places in the town centre?"



Survey question: "What do you think is missing from the town centre?"



What should Newbury aspire to be?

Based on its identified strengths, key national trends and local priorities, we believe Newbury town centre should aspire to be:

Inclusive & Welcoming

A town centre that is walkable and easy to navigate. That everyone can access and in which they feel safe and comfortable.

Social & Cultural

A town centre that encourages social interaction in its streets, spaces and buildings. A place where people want to come to meet friends, relax and have fun.

Historic & Progressive

A town centre that protects its distinctive market town identity but recognises the need to adapt and evolve. A place that values its heritage assets and places them at the centre of modern civic and community life.

Green & Healthy

A town centre that puts people and the planet first. That addresses the challenges of physical health, mental health, and the climate emergency.

Independent & Entrepreneurial

A town centre that welcomes innovation. That promotes local, ethical and independent traders. Where start-ups and small businesses can thrive.

Local & Regional

A community focused town centre that provides a high quality of life, that meets the needs of all its residents and those in the rural areas that depend on it.

Vision Objectives

Based on the national and local priorities for change, the following objectives have been identified for Newbury town centre:

- 1.** Broadening the shopping offer
- 2.** Improving the leisure/food and drink offer
- 3.** Improving access to open space
- 4.** Improving the cultural offer
- 5.** Creating opportunities for businesses
- 6.** Creating a liveable town centre
- 7.** Increasing attractive travel choices
- 8.** Protecting the heritage and market town identity

1. Broadening the shopping offer

Demand for physical retail floorspace is predicted to fall, as the growth of online shopping continues, and survey results show that this has been accelerated by Covid-19.

The UK is seeing a rapid decline in national high street chain retailers, as shifting consumer preferences move to online purchasing and to more ethical, local consumerism, with nearly two thirds of the UK population expressing a willingness to support local businesses post-pandemic.

Nearly 40% of Newbury residents surveyed said that the pandemic had changed the way they would shop in the future, with increased use of the internet but also an increased awareness of the importance of local, independent businesses. Young people in particular place a higher priority on ethical trading and supporting local businesses.

This Vision supports a proactive retail strategy focused on supporting the growth of the independent retail sector through the creation of new short lease flexible retail units and advice and guidance to those starting a new business to help establish successful and sustainable businesses.

Northbrook Street and Parkway represent the core area of Newbury's shopping, and contains the highest proportion of national retailers. A planning application has recently been submitted for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre to be rebranded as the Eagle Quarter, proposing a reduction of retail floorspace and unit sizes and a focus on attracting a mix of independent and artisan operators.

The Vision therefore identifies measures to consolidate, protect and enhance the important role of Northbrook Street and Parkway whilst at the same time embracing a revitalised Eagle Quarter.

Despite the fact that shopping is by far the biggest reason for people visiting the town centre, only 17% agreed that Newbury has interesting shops.

The biggest local priority for Newbury town centre is to improve the range of independent and local shops. When asked what would make Newbury town centre a better place in the future 67.6% prioritised more local and independent shops.



The importance of markets

Markets are one of our oldest forms of collective retailing and have experienced something of a revival in recent years, with a new generation of innovative young traders coming to the fore. Latest figures indicate the sector has a collective turnover of £2.7 billion a year from around 32,000 market traders – a gradual increase of around £200 million year on year since 2013.

But simply providing “a market” is not enough to achieve this. In order to provide the unique content and progressive product offerings that cater to a wide taste and become a ‘destination’ a market needs to be expertly curated. The range and quality of traders, the stall design, layout, ambience and marketing all have to be of sufficient quality to attract visitors regionally.

Newbury’s markets, including the Farmers’ Market and Artisan Market provides an opportunity for residents to shop local and independent. The Vision seeks to ensure that these markets create a high quality identity for Newbury, an opportunity for exciting new local businesses to test trading in the town centre, and provide an attraction that can draw visitors to the shopping areas on the edge of the town centre, including Broadway, Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street.

As a modern market town Newbury must do markets well. The High Streets Task Force now recognises markets as one of its 25 ‘Vital and Viable Priorities’ for town centres and a key generator of local identity. It states that the operation of a market is capable of significantly increase footfall by up to 25%.



2. Improving Newbury's leisure offer

Whilst the demand for town centre retail space is expected to fall, expenditure on leisure activities, including food and drink, is still expected to grow.

The 2017 West Berkshire retail study identified 47% growth in expenditure in restaurants and cafes, and 46% growth in expenditure on leisure activities in the Newbury area by 2036.

Young people are more likely to use the town centre during the day and to meet friends for eating, drinking and socialising - 47% of survey respondents under the age of 25 said they visit Newbury Town Centre to do this.

It is important, therefore, that Newbury improves its offer in this respect and finds a way to support new independent businesses to establish themselves in the town centre whilst minimising their financial risk.

Alongside a proactive retail strategy the Vision would provide similar support for the independent food and drink sector through the creation of new temporary short lease units and guidance to support the creation of new outlets that will help to revitalise the town centre, as well as supporting live music venues and improving its evening offer to support the night-time economy.

The survey results indicate that fewer than half of residents in the catchment are visiting the town centre to eat and drink, and significantly more respondents that live in Newbury are more likely to visit in the evening.

Only 45% of residents agreed that Newbury has great places to eat and drink.

The second highest local priority for Newbury town centre is to provide more local and independent cafes and restaurants.



3. Improving access to open space

Five of the top eight priorities for Newbury residents relate to provision of open space and the quality of the public realm. The results reflect the national desire for more green space, more planting and more social space in town centres.

Although Newbury has a good range of green space relatively close to the town centre, only Victoria Park is within easy walking distance for visitors, and has the feel of a town centre park.

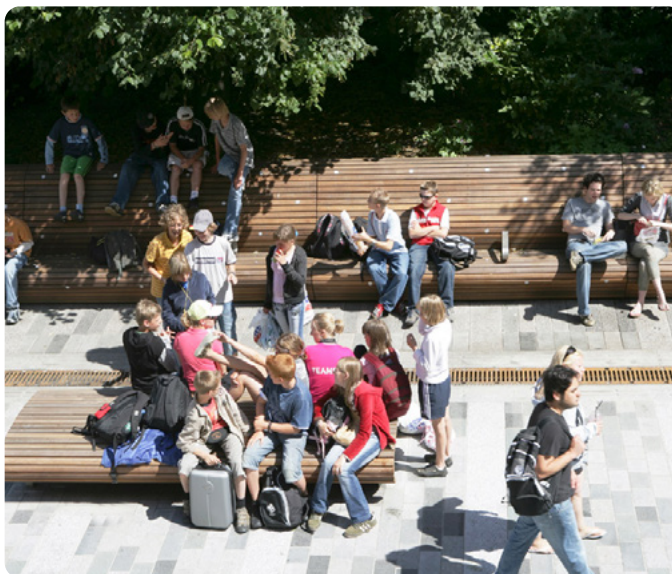
As the number of people living in the town centre increases, and as peoples desire for a broader town centre offer (that shifts away from reliance on retail), the need for additional green space will continue to grow.

The Vision seeks to improve use of the existing parks and the canalside, and provide more green space and more social space in the town centre.

By providing new and enhancing existing green spaces, as well as improving access to and between them by walking and cycling, the town will be visibly addressing environmental sustainability and social sustainability in terms of health and well-being.

66% of respondents said they would use Victoria Park more often if it was better connected to the town centre.

The biggest priority for young people is more outdoor space. Nearly half of under 25s said the biggest priority was space for hanging out.



4. Improving Newbury's cultural offer

Arts and cultural activity is important in its own right, as a generator of employment, of economic vibrancy (one of the UK's largest economic drivers) as a growing source of visitor expenditure for town centres and as a source of local identity.

The 2017 West Berkshire retail study identified 47% growth in expenditure on cultural activities in the Newbury area by 2036.

Research also shows that cultural activity is important in attracting high-quality employers to a town, in encouraging business start-ups and in persuading people to 'work from home' more often.

The Vision prioritises improving indoor and outdoor space for arts and cultural activity in Newbury town centre and will work with key organisations such as The Corn Exchange and Greenham Trust to achieve this.

Young people place a higher priority than any other age group on the provision of outdoor space for leisure and cultural activities. Improving the relevance of events and cultural activity for younger people should be a specific priority for Newbury.

Two of the top six local priorities relate to improving opportunities for events, festivals, cultural and arts provision in the town centre.

Only 41% of survey respondents identified cultural activity, including film, theatre or other event as a main reason for having visited Newbury. For under 25s this fell to 31%.



5. Creating opportunities for business

Research shows that stronger town centres are less reliant on shopping floorspace and are likely to have a greater proportion of skilled jobs within easy walking distance. This is a virtuous circle. Innovative and creative businesses are attracted to vibrant town centres with a good range of services and a diverse cultural and leisure offer, as well as good physical and digital communications and access to a skilled labour market.

In recent years Newbury town centre has seen a growth in new homes but a decline in office space and jobs which have moved to out of town locations. The need for more office and incubator space is identified by the Town Strategy and supports recent market trends accelerated by the Covid-19 crisis for new serviced office space within town centre locations.

The Vision prioritises space within the town centre for start-ups, small businesses and people looking for occasional workspace closer to home.

Discussions with a local co-work space operator Myworkspot have identified a requirement for up to 20,000 sq. ft of new serviced office space within the town centre that will help to meet demand and diversify the town centre offer.

Research by Workthere has shown that the popularity of flexible office spaces in more rural locations outside of city centres is expected to rise as a result of an increased work-life balance and reduced commuting times. The research points to the fact that town centres with a poor cultural and creative base are less likely to attract these businesses. Thus it is important that Newbury builds on its cultural momentum.



6. Creating a liveable town centre

Residential uses bring life to the town centre during the evenings and weekends, supporting local businesses and making the town centre feel more secure.

Newbury has a variety of residential streets in close proximity to the main shopping streets, and this will increase with the Market Street development currently under construction.

The Parkway scheme has increased the number of people living on upper floors above ground floor retail, and it is likely that this will increase further with the proposed redevelopment of the Kennet Centre (Eagle Quarter). The vacant Bayer office premises also have permitted development rights for potential conversion to apartments.

The Vision therefore believe there needs to be a greater diversity of living in the town centre, and that priority should be given to identifying opportunities for innovative forms of housing wherever possible.

The research shows that people who live close to the town centre spend more money in the town centre, support the evening economy and are more likely to shop at local and independent businesses.



7. Increasing attractive travel choices

Given that 44% of respondents to the survey felt that they lacked attractive alternatives for travelling into Newbury town centre other than by car, the Vision seeks to provide as many viable, attractive travel options for people as possible, but this needs to recognise and be tailored to the town's different catchments. Those visiting Newbury can be sub-divided into two key groups – those living within a couple of kilometres of the town centre in the surrounding neighbourhoods that make-up the wider Newbury area, and a far more dispersed catchment that lies beyond this in more rural areas, including smaller towns, villages and hamlets.

66% of respondents to the survey said that they usually travel by car to Newbury town centre. However, this is an average figure that hides a disparity between those living within and those living outside of Newbury. For those living outside of the town this figure rises to almost 90%, but for those that live in the town the split between those who arrive by car and those who either walk or cycle is almost 50:50. Importantly, the survey also highlighted that those people who feel like it is easier to walk or cycle into the town centre tend to visit more frequently, at a wider variety of times of the day, and, over the course of a week, spend more money in the town centre.

Where appropriate corridors for attractive cycling infrastructure already exist or there is the potential for them to be created then the town centre needs to ensure that these routes terminate in desirable locations with appropriate facilities. And where public transport options exist, journey times need to be competitive with the private car. However, for many people living outside of the town centre the Vision recognises that there is a high probability that walking, cycling or using public transport to access Newbury town centre will continue to be an impractical option. The need to continue to accommodate significant volumes of traffic should be recognised, but wherever possible, the cleanest types of vehicles should be encouraged.

In contrast, there is clearly scope to encourage a sizeable proportion of the 50% of residents living in Newbury who currently choose to drive into the town centre to consider alternative modes of travel. The Vision seeks to encourage more people to walk into the town centre by addressing potential barriers such as the A339 and improving the 'gateways' to the town at London Road and Bartholomew Street. The Vision will also promote the cycle network set-out in the Council's recent LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan), the possible creation of a cycle hub in the centre of the town

centre to complement those already proposed at the train station, the extension of key bus services to the train station (facilitated by bus priority measures) with a view to creating a larger public transport hub in this location, the review of general traffic access in the town centre with the aim of creating more space for outdoor eating and events, and an expansion of the town centres publicly accessible electric vehicle charging facilities.



8. Protecting Newbury's heritage and market town identity

Newbury is a town with a rich history spanning many centuries evolving from an early Saxon settlement into an important market town and centre of the cloth trade during the 13th Century bolstered by the town's location on two intersecting roads and later the Kennet and Avon Canal.

The north-south route connected Southampton to Oxford passing through Winchester and then Newbury passing along what is now Old Newtown Road.

The east-west route from London to Bath connected the two major ports and came into Newbury along London Road near Speenhamland, which was then part of Speen, rather than Newbury.

The current urban form of the town still follows the inverted Y shaped street pattern defined by these intersecting routes with the buildings scale and form still largely based on the original burgage plots either side of Northbrook Street, Mansion House Street, Market Place and the adjacent part of Bartholomew Street.

The Vision will look to retain and enhance the historic street pattern and buildings within the town centre through alignment with the advice and guidance set out in the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area assessment.

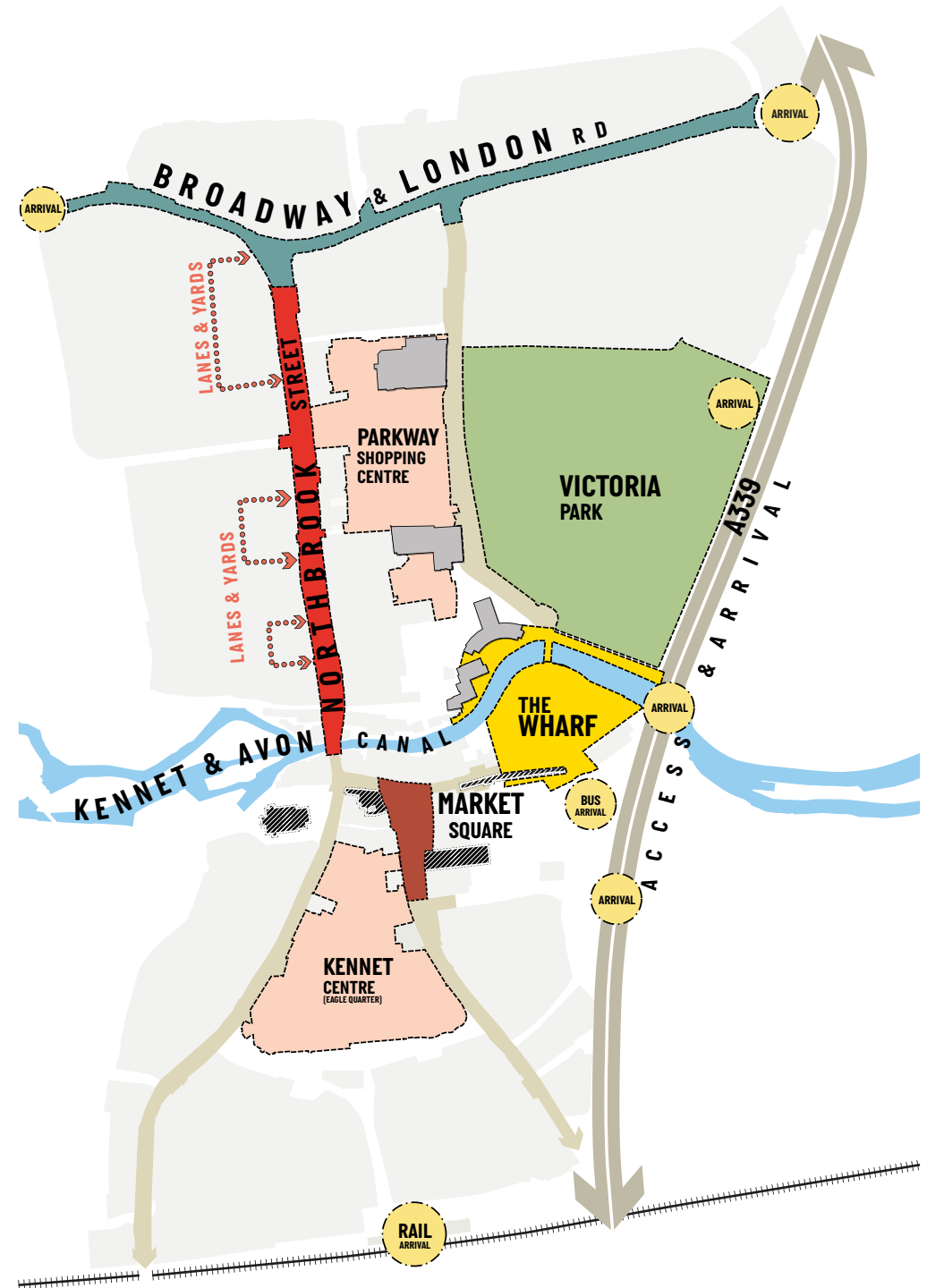


Vision Proposals

Vision Proposals

The Vision proposals are considered under the following headings:

- Kennet & Avon Canal
- Victoria Park
- Parkway Shopping Centre
- Northbrook Street
- Lanes & Yards
- Broadway & London Road
- Market Place
- The Wharf
- Kennet Centre (Eagle Quarter)
- Access & Arrival.



Kennet & Avon Canal

The Vision prioritises clearer access points to the waterfront, and improvements to the towpath for pedestrians and cyclists. It promotes an increase in activity overlooking this central section of the canal, and it considers opportunities for a new pedestrian crossing east of Bridge Street.



There are very few opportunities for pedestrians to cross the canal in the town centre with just one bridge between Bridge Street and the A339. All existing crossings take pedestrians away from the water and only Bridge Street provides an attractive environment for pedestrians.

The Vision identifies potential for a new crossing, between Bridge Street and Park Way. Together with improvements to Park Way itself, this would encourage more visitors to walk along the towpaths, and visit the Park.

A new footbridge would create a pedestrian circuit connecting Parkway, Camp Hopson, The

Waterside Centre, the Museum and Market Place.

[The Waterside Centre](#) will be an important new destination along the canal. The potential also exists for the Camp Hopson building to create a more lively frontage to the canal, with complementary cafe or leisure uses at ground floor. The south side of the canal provides opportunities for the existing buildings to make better use of the water frontage.

The existing opportunities for “waterside” or “parkside” eating and drinking in Newbury Town Centre are relatively limited. Lock Stock and Barrel and the Tea Rooms are notable

exceptions. The Vision identifies potential to increase the range of cafes and restaurants close to the canal, which would complement the existing offer in Market Place and Northbrook Street.

The safety and well being of visitors to the river and canal is paramount and the Vision and proposals will ensure that any improvement to the river and canal make provision for enhanced community safety.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for The Kennet & Avon Canal.

Victoria Park

Victoria Park is the most significant green space in Newbury town centre. Improving access to the Park is a local priority and will help meet the requests for better green space in the town centre.



Victoria Park is only 2-3 minutes walk from Northbrook Street or Market Place yet feels relatively isolated from the core shopping area.

The Vision seeks to create a more connected, town centre park by reducing the barriers created by the relatively poor pedestrian quality of the towpath, canal crossings and Park Way.

This is key to creating a 'social' town centre where people are encouraged to meet and connect with each other. It creates more opportunities for hosting events. It will also help

bring more visitors into the town centre and encourage them to stay longer.

The Vision is investigating the potential for a new pedestrian bridge across the canal. This could significantly improve links between Victoria Park, Market Place and The Wharf, and make this area much more accessible for visitors.

Redevelopment proposals for London Road Industrial Estate would mean more people living and working east of the A339. The Vision seeks to ensure Victoria Park provide an attractive walking and cycling route into the town centre.

The Vision proposes to improve pedestrian connections across Park Way in order to encourage visits between the shopping centre and Victoria Park.

It proposes a new cafe, leisure or cultural use for the vacant Debenhams to front the Park and which could be complemented by a new facility within the Park itself.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for Victoria Park.

Parkway Shopping Centre

The Vision seeks to reduce the relative isolation of Parkway by creating a more connected and permeable town centre. It proposes to improve the quality of Park Way as a 'civic' street rather than a service road, create stronger connections to Victoria Park and the canal, and using a new footbridge to create interesting routes leading back to Market Place and the Wharf. This should significantly increase footfall by making Parkway a more central and accessible destination in the town centre.

The Vision seeks to address the loss of Debenhams and John Lewis by creating a new destination for Parkway which will connect with Victoria Park and draw visitors across to the shopping area. The aim is to diversify the offer by introducing a wider mix of uses to include independent food and drink outlets, serviced office and work space and arts and cultural uses.

Improving the pedestrian quality of Park Way would help create a new destination in this part of the town centre, linking the shopping centre with Victoria Park and the canal, bstFitness and London Road.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for Parkway Shopping Centre.

Parkway shopping centre is a key part of the town centre retail offer, but has been reliant on national retailers as anchors.

The Vision seeks to address the loss of Debenhams and John Lewis Home by creating a new destination for Parkway and connecting it better with the rest of the town centre.



Northbrook Street

Northbrook Street is the street that defines Newbury town centre, and it is critical to the success of the town that it remains vibrant and successful.

The Vision identifies measures to draw visitors north from Bridge Street, to increase dwell time, to provide spill out space for cafes and restaurants and to encourage a more diverse mix of businesses.

The central area of Northbrook Street is dominated by national retailers and therefore potentially vulnerable to changes in shopping habits and a further evolution of the retail landscape. With limited opportunities for new development on Northbrook Street itself, the Vision focuses on other measures to increase footfall and support businesses.

The Vision proposes to promote Northbrook Street's lanes and yards as destinations for independent businesses. It will work to ensure that the market stall layout makes a feature of the entrances to the Lanes as well as providing ample space for seating outside the existing cafes and restaurants. The focus on independent businesses will create increased

footfall and complement the larger retail units and national retailers on the main street and in Parkway to create a more "rounded" offer. New destinations in Parkway, better connections to Victoria Park will also help draw more visitors to this part of the town centre.

Public realm improvements, signage, planting and seating will help draw attention to the lanes. The aim is to reduce the perceived length of Northbrook Street by creating points of visual interest and spaces to rest, which will increase footfall and dwell time, helping draw visitors northwards from Bridge Street. These enhancements will help to improve the historic street pattern and reinforcement of the lanes and courtyards off Northbrook Street.



The improvements will also create opportunities for spill out space for businesses, and increase opportunities for al fresco eating and drinking (we have all witnessed the popularity of that during this past year). This will help address the relative lack of cafes and restaurants in the central area of Northbrook Street.

To support more life on Northbrook Street the Vision proposes greater flexibility to pedestrianise it for events and at those times when there is demand for greater business and community use of the street.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for Northbrook Street.

Lanes and Yards

The Vision seeks to promote Newbury's Lanes and Yards as a distinctive area for local and independent businesses, and to use them to attract visitors northwards along Northbrook Street and into Broadway.

Some of Newbury's lanes provide attractive destinations, particularly west of Northbrook Street. But others require improvement. Feature entrances and new street furniture can create points of interest along Northbrook Street and Broadway, encouraging shoppers to venture further north along the street, particularly on market days. Better connections to residential areas and to car parks can create attractive routes for shoppers into the town centre, and create more footfall along the Lanes.



Broadway and London Road

The Vision promotes the historic “coaching inn” qualities of Broadway / London Road as a location for high quality food and drink and accommodation, creating a distinctive destination for visitors, and a location for local businesses.

The Broadway has a neighbourhood quality, subtly different from Northbrook Street, characterised by local independent businesses. The Vision supports this role, creating links through the lanes to the surrounding residential areas, and making it as easy as possible to walk to the shops and businesses.

The east-west route of Oxford Street and London Road has a slightly grander character, reflecting its historic role as a coaching route. The Vision promotes the area as a location for high quality pubs and inns, which will support the large number of ‘professional’ office companies in the area.

The Vision supports the creation of new serviced office space through conversion of existing buildings that will help to complement the food and drink and hotel offer and support the local economy.

The Vision proposes public realm improvements to improve the sense of arrival into London Street. It encourages an improvement to the external spaces and sense of arrival of the budget hotels to attract more overnight stays in Newbury town centre. This will help to enhance the original character of the area historically known as ‘Speenham Land’ as a new destination for visitors to the town centre.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for Broadway and London Road.



Market Place

Market Place is the most important public space in Newbury Town Centre, and historically it used to connect activities on the 'High Street' with those on the Wharf.

The Vision seeks to ensure that Market Place is seen as the focal point of the town, the “crossroads of public life” creating a stronger network of streets leading from it, and strengthening its role as a social, cultural and leisure destination.

Market Place is the town's civic space, it hosts regular markets, it is the focal point for outdoor eating and drinking, it is home to the town's main arts/cultural building and acts as its central event space. The variety of roles show the quality of the space, but also highlights the lack of other suitable spaces in the town centre.

The Corn Exchange has highlighted the complexities of coordinating events and hosting the market in Market Place, and would welcome additional internal and external space.

The Vision seeks to create the flexibility for larger, longer and more regular events by creating a second and linked public space at The Wharf. The Wharf is close enough to Market Place to run joint events, but far enough away to function as a separate space.

The Vision seeks to improve the connection between Market Place and the canal via Wharf Street. This also improves links to the Museum and the Library, and improves arrival into the town centre, particularly from the bus station.

The Vision proposes a new footbridge over the canal, which would place Market Place at the centre of a wider pedestrian circuit, connecting to Camp Hopson, Victoria Park and Parkway shopping centre.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for Market Place.



The Wharf

The Wharf is a key site for the future of the town centre, and ensuring the best long term use is essential.

The Wharf has the potential to meet a variety of local resident priorities, including more green space, improved access to Victoria Park, better access to the waterside, more space for events or just to ‘hang out’, better leisure facilities, food and drink or cultural facilities.



The Vision for ‘The Wharf’ encompasses both sides of the canal, including The Waterside Centre, Camp Hopson and Victoria Park. The Vision will investigate the potential for a new pedestrian crossing which would help maximise this potential.

The Vision reflects the cultural importance of The Wharf, creating a destination incorporating the Museum and the Library. It will also investigate the opportunity to create a more flexible event space to complement Market Place, enabling the town centre to host a

greater variety and scale of events. Any change to the use and public realm of the area will respect the heritage and character of the canal and nearby heritage assets to offer an important enhancement to the towns public realm and relationship with the River and Canal.

The Vision seeks to promote new jobs and homes at The Wharf as such uses bring life to the area and helps to support town centre businesses. It is important however that the design of any such uses recognise the public importance of The Wharf, and do not unintentionally make visitors feel unwelcome.

The Wharf provides the opportunity to enhance the independent retail and food and drink offer through the creation of a cluster of temporary retail/food and drink outlets located in converted shipping containers or vans. These would act as ‘seedbed’ outlets to help grow and establish a flourishing independent retail and food and drink sector.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for The Wharf.

Kennet Centre (Eagle Quarter)

The Kennet Centre is currently the subject of a planning application. The owners propose to redevelop it and rename it the 'Eagle Quarter'. It has the potential to deliver a more integrated, independent and mixed-use town centre development.

Full details of the proposals can be viewed [here](#).



The existing Kennet Centre is outdated and redevelopment has the potential to bring a variety of benefits to the town centre. The proposed street structure improves linkages between the rail station and the town centre, and can create interesting lanes connecting to Market Place. Importantly it seeks to replace the indoor shopping environment with a series of open streets and spaces.

Reducing the number of large retail units enables the Eagle Quarter to prioritise independent businesses and specialist food

and drink operators. Additional retail units can replace the blank frontage currently on Bartholomew Street. If this space is managed effectively it can complement the rest of the town centre and support the incubation of new businesses in Newbury.

Increasing the amount of residential and office space at upper levels brings more life to the town centre, and greater support for town centre businesses. The key issue for the scheme will be whether it can create sufficient development value whilst respecting the historic character of the town centre.

The parallel work on the Town Centre Conservation Area will help to provide a framework against which the proposals for the Eagle Quarter can be assessed to ensure they minimise the impact on the historic buildings and views and of the town centre whilst also retaining the historic street pattern.

Access and arrival

The Vision seeks to improve arrival for all visitors. To improve arrival for pedestrians and cyclists, especially crossings of the Canal and the A339. To make the rail and bus stations stronger parts of the town centre, and a more comfortable and pleasant place to wait. To improve views of the town centre from the A339, encouraging those passing through Newbury to visit the town centre.



The Vision recognises that even with significant improvements to bus services, much of the rural community that Newbury serves will continue to be reliant on the car for access to the town centre.

There is however significant potential to improve the quality of the travel choices available, particularly to those living within the Newbury urban area who may currently feel that their only viable option is to drive.

A significant proportion of those choosing to drive to the town centre are making trips of less than 2km. The Vision will seek to provide attractive alternatives so that as many as possible feel that they can conveniently access the town centre without the need to have to park their car or get stuck in congestion.

The Vision supports residential as part of mixed-use redevelopments of the Eagle Quarter and London Road Industrial Estate. Increasing the number of people living in or close to the town centre will help to support town centre businesses and enhance town centre vibrancy, particularly in the evenings, without a corresponding increase in traffic congestion or the need for additional public car parking.

The surveys indicate that people who walk to the town centre visit more often and spend more money. Importantly they are also more likely to visit in the evening, to support the cultural and evening economy and to spend their money with local businesses.

The Vision supports further improvements to the bus and rail stations alongside

enhancements to the historic routes from the station into the town centre along Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street.

The use of the town centre's main retail core by general traffic in the evenings continues to be a contentious issue with no consensus on whether Northbrook Street should be fully pedestrianised at all times.

The Vision seeks to enable more flexible use of the retail core in the evenings to facilitate specific events, but this is unlikely to require permanent changes to the existing traffic management arrangements.

The survey will ask for your views on these objectives for town centre access and arrival.

A public survey to gather views on the draft Vision for Newbury Town Centre is available [here](#).

The survey is open for 3 weeks from 24th June closing on the 15th July after which we will consider the results to inform the preparation of the spatial vision and masterplan for publication of our draft report at the end of August 2021. This will then form the basis of the Newbury Town Centre Vision Supplementary Planning Document that will be subject to a formal six week round of consultation by West Berkshire Council in the Autumn prior to adoption later in the year. This will then set the formal planning framework for the future regeneration and development of the town centre.

Thank you for your time!