

02/03/2022.

To: Councillors Phil Barnett, Jeff Beck, Jo Day, Billy Drummond, Nigel Foot, Roger Hunneman, Pam Lusby Taylor, David Marsh, Vaughan Miller, Andy Moore, Gary Norman, and Tony Vickers

Substitutes: Councillors Martin Colston, Jon Gage, and Stephen Masters

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the **Planning & Highways Committee** on **Monday 07/03/2022 at 7:30 pm**. The meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5AA. The meeting is open to the press and public.

Yours sincerely,

Darius Zarazel
Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies

Democratic Services Officer

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Chairperson

To receive any declarations of interest relating to business to be conducted in this meeting and confirmation of any relevant dispensations.

3. Minutes (Appendix 1)

Chairperson

3.1 To approve the minutes of a meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee held on Monday 14/02/2022 (already circulated).

3.2 To receive a report on actions from the previous meeting.

4. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

Chairperson

Questions, in writing, must be with the DSO by 2:00 pm on Friday 04/3/2022.

5. Members' Questions and Petitions

Chairperson

Questions, in writing, must be with the DSO by 2:00 pm on Friday 04/3/2022.

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- 6. Schedule of Planning Applications (Appendix 2)**
Chairperson
To comment on the planning applications listed at the attached schedule.
- 7. Schedule of Licensing Applications (Appendix 3)**
Chairperson
To comment on the licensing applications listed at the attached schedule.
- 8. Motion Received from Councillor Tony Vickers (Appendix 4)**
That this council resolve:
“To invite representatives of all surrounding parish councils and other interested organisations and individuals to a meeting, hosted by this Council, as soon as possible to establish a Greater Newbury Flood Forum and to request that the three Flood Authorities (West Berkshire Council, Environment Agency and Thames Water) attend and support such a forum.”
- 9. Update from the Canal Corridor Working Group (Appendix 5)**
Chairperson
To receive and update from the Canal Corridor Working Group.
- 10. Update from the Town Centre Working Group (Appendix 6)**
Chairperson
To receive an update from the Town Centre Working Group.
- 11. Town Centre Masterplan (Appendix 7)**
Chairperson
To resolve to endorse the Newbury Town Centre Masterplan.
- 12. West Berkshire Council’s Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan and Scheme for the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) (Appendix 8)**
Chairperson
To note the EP Plan and EP Scheme for the WBC BSIP.
- 13. Update on Newbury’s Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 9)**
Chairperson
To receive an update on Newbury’s Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 14. Update from the Sandleford Joint Working Group**
Chairperson
To receive an update on any relevant business from the Joint Working Group.
- 15. Update from The Western Area Planning Committee**
Chairperson
To receive an update on any relevant business from the Western Area Planning Committee.
- 16. Newbury Community Football Ground**
Chairperson
To receive an update.

17. **Forward Work Programme for Planning & Highways Committee (Appendix 10)**
Chairperson
To note and agree any other items that Members resolve to add to the Forward Work Programme.

**Minutes of a meeting of the Planning and Highways Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Newbury Town Council, Town Hall, Market Place,
Newbury
14/02/2022 at 7:30pm/19:30.**

Present

Councillors; Nigel Foot (Chairperson); Phil Barnett; Jeff Beck; Jo Day; Billy Drummond; Roger Hunneman; Pam Lusby Taylor; David Marsh; Vaughan Miller; and Andy Moore

In Attendance

Darius Zarazel, Democratic Services Officer

163. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillors Gary Norman and Tony Vickers.

164. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

The Democratic Services Officer declared that Councillors Phil Barnett, Jeff Beck, David Marsh, Andy Moore, and Billy Drummond are also Members of West Berkshire Council, which is declared as a general interest on their behalf and a dispensation is in place to allow them to partake in discussions relating to West Berkshire Council business. Councillors Phil Barnett and Billy Drummond are also Members of Greenham Parish Council.

The Democratic Services Officer made the following statement on behalf of Councillor Phil Barnett who is a Members of West Berkshire Council Planning Committee and Jeff Beck and Andy Moore who are Substitute Members of West Berkshire Council Planning Committee: "I wish to make it clear that any comments I make tonight are only being made in relation to the formulation of the Town Council's view and is not in any way prejudging the way that I may vote when any application is considered by West Berkshire District Council. At that time, I will weigh up all the evidence."

165 Minutes

165.1 Proposed: Councillor Roger Hunneman

Seconded: Councillor Andy Moore

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning & Highways Committee held on 24/01/2022, be approved, and signed by the Chairperson.

Councillor Jeff Beck abstained.

165.2 Officer's Report on Action from Previous Meeting:

- A) On Councillor Phil Barnett's Question on what WBC are doing to reduce car usage during school runs, they are operating a pilot scheme called the 'School Streets project'. This is a pilot project to encourage active travel and discourage car usage for the school run. The results of this pilot are being presented to the Transport Advisory Group who will make a decision in September 2022 as to whether this will be permanently implemented.
- B) On Councillor Stuart Gourley's question on pollution from the London Road Lidl spilling into the adjacent waterway, the WBC Planning Enforcement team responded to a complaint related to the Lidl development late Christmas eve. They worked with the site management team at the board level and specialist officers from other departments within WBC in conjunction with other agencies and bodies, including the Environment Agency, Natural England, and the Canal and River Trust. The Case Officer is assured that this multi-agency approach ensured that all necessary action was taken in a timely manner and resulted in an appropriate outcome.
- C) West Berkshire Council responded to Councillor Nigel Foot's motion on requesting safe late night travel under public safety as a licencing requirement. In summation, "WBC do not feel that [they] can amend the WBC Statement of Licensing Policy as requested by NTC ... [as the request] is not directly linked to the public safety objective [as it targets employee safety which is covered under separate legislation], and they cannot impose blanket conditions on all similar applications".

166. Questions and Petitions from Members of the Public

There were none.

167. Members' Questions and Petitions

Question received from Phil Barnett:

"Can this Planning and Highways Committee of Newbury Town Council request the local delivery office of Royal Mail to explain why so many Newbury residents have been waiting for local mail to arrive in some cases over 18 days?"

Response from the Chairperson:

“Thank you for this question. As this issue has been reported by Newbury residents, I will request that the Council write to the local delivery office for the Royal Mail to inquire if they are aware that has been reported and then if this can be resolved.”

168. Schedule of Planning Applications

Resolved that the observations recorded as Appendix 1 to these minutes be submitted to the planning authority.

169. Schedule of Licensing Applications

Resolved that the observations recorded as Appendix 2 to these minutes be submitted to the licencing authority.

170. Replacing Soft Verges with a Pebble Dashed Surfaces

The Committee agreed to send the following soft verge locations in the Turnpike Estate for pebble dashing to WBC:

- Avon Way
- Gaywood Drive
- Curling Way
- Oakley Road
- Cresswell Road
- Birchwood Road
- Ashwood Drive
- Audley Close
- Sorrel Close
- Hopwood Close
- Hedgeway
- lime Close
- Fir Tree Lane

Grasscrete was suggested as being a potential material used for converting these soft verge locations.

171. Consultation: WBC Proposed Highway Alterations on Andover Road

The Committee agreed to send the following comments to WBC in response to the consultation:

- The Committee welcomed the scheme, especially regarding the alterations to the cycle lane.

172. Consultation: WBC Permit Scheme Variation Consultation

The Committee agreed to send the following comments to WBC in response to the consultation:

- The Committee would like a WBC Officer to present to the Committee on this variation to explain the change.

173. Update on Newbury's Neighbourhood Development Plan

An update on Newbury's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) was received and noted by members.

It was noted that the Steering Group is producing the NDP's Vision and Objectives prior to them going out to public consultation.

174. Update from the Sandleford Joint Working Group

An update from the SJWG was received and noted by members.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing, & Communities has confirmed that the decision on the Sandleford Appeal has been delayed and will now be issued on or before the 28th of March 2022.

175. Update from The Western Area Planning Committee

An update from the WAP Committee was received and noted by members.

No Newbury items were on the upcoming meeting's agenda.

176. Newbury Community Football Ground

No further update was received beyond the discussed held on item 1 of Appendix 1 to these minutes.

177. Forward Work Programme for Planning & Highways Committee

No further items were added to the Forward Work Programme.

There being no other business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 21:40 hrs.

Signed: _____
Chairperson

Date: _____

**Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
Schedule of Planning Applications
14/02/2022**

Running Order	Resolutions	Ward	Application Number	Location and Applicant	Proposal
1.	<p style="text-align: center;">Objection based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The application is for a standalone site, but the sites justification was for a replacement for the Faraday Road site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the applicants don't mention the impact it will have on surrounding buildings & residents (on the surgery for example) - the transport statement is still not reflective of the sites position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the 30 car parking spaces at the Rugby club are insufficient <p style="text-align: center;">In addition, some objections from NTCs previous objections remain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The site does not have scalability to higher steps (beyond step 4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therefore, it is not a like-for-like replacement for the site at Faraday Road - it does not meet NTCs strategy of being within short walking distance from the Town Centre, meaning that businesses are unlikely to benefit from increased footfall - we would like to see plans for the development of Faraday Road considered alongside this proposed replacement site. <p style="text-align: center;">Cllrs Phil Barnett and Jeff Beck abstained.</p>	Adjacent Parish and Wash Common	21/02173/CO MIND	Newbury Rugby Football Club, Monks Lane, Newbury, RG14 7RW, for Alliance Leisure Services	<p>The proposed development is for a single storey sports pavilion building and car park providing facilities and social space to support a proposed artificial turf pitch, F2(C). The proposed artificial turf pitch forms part of this application and includes fencing, storage, spectator seating and artificial lighting. The building will provide approximately 400m² of internal floor space of use class F2(B).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amended:</p> <p>Additional drawings/amended plans for the above application have been received by WBC. The main changes to the application include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarification provided to the Noise Impact Assessment and Transport Statement outlining and ensuring an assessment of the facility's ability to

					<p>accommodate the FA's Step 4 grading.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An amended Noise Impact Assessment and amended Transport Statement submitted - Additional information submitted to address recommended conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BREEAM Pre-Assessment Report - A WBC Supplementary Statement (benefits and BREEAM) has been submitted - Diverted SW Sewer plan and photographs submitted - Construction Method Statement - Drainage General Arrangement Plan - Drainage Construction Details <p>Previous NTC Comments: <u>Comment submitted on 15/09/2021</u> Objection based on: 1) Failure to give adequate information about: noise pollution, light pollution, its impact on trees, transport (including active travel), impact on parking, and the facilities scalability (to higher 'steps') over time.</p>
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- 2) It is not a like-for-like replacement of the Faraday Road site: this proposed site is limited to Step 4, Faraday Road has the potential to go to Step 2.
- 3) The sports hub is unambitious on BREAM rating.
- 4) There are factual inaccuracies in the planning documents. For example, the site is within the Newbury Settlement boundary but is not described as such (on page 6 of the Design and Access statement).

Cllr Jeff Beck abstained.

Comment submitted on 17/11/2021

Objection in line with previous NTC objection. However, on point 1, the Council remained concerned about noise pollution, light pollution, impact on trees, parking, and the facilities scalability (to higher 'steps') over time despite the amended documents.

In addition, we object based on:

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The proposed parking at Newbury College is undesirable and the number of spaces available are still inadequate. - It doesn't meet NTC strategy aims of being within short walking distance from the Town Centre, meaning that town businesses are unlikely to benefit from increased football, and the site footprint is small, limiting the site to Step 4 and thus removing aspirations for senior teams to progress. - Would like to see plans for the development of Faraday Road considered alongside this proposed replacement site. <p style="text-align: center;">Cllr Tony Vickers, Phil Barnett, and Jeff Beck abstained.</p>
2.	No objection.	Clay Hill	22/00028/HO USE	29 Wyndham Road, Newbury, RG14 2NJ, for Mr & Mrs Davies	Two single storey rear and side extensions.

3.	No objection.	Clay Hill	22/00147/HO USE	65 Shaw Road, Newbury, RG14 1HG, for Mr J. Watts	Proposed removal of the existing single storey flat roof on rear extension and replace with a natural slate roof incorporating two conservation roof windows. Minor internal alterations to ground floor shower room and insertion of first floor bathroom window.
4.	No objection.	Clay Hill	22/00204/CO MIND	London Road Retail Park, London Road, Newbury, RG14 2BP, for London Road Limited	Section 73: Variation of Condition 8 (Customer Opening Hours) of previously approved application 20/01498/COMIND : Demolition of former public house (Class A4) and existing retail unit (Class E); erection of single storey building for use as a foodstore (Class E), together with associated access and servicing arrangements; reconfigured car park layout; enhanced landscaping; including a new pocket park adjacent the London Road, and associated works.
5.	No objection.	Clay Hill	22/00269/LBC 2	65 Shaw Road, Newbury, RG14 1HG, for Mr J. Watts	Removal of single storey flat roof on rear extension and replace with a natural slate roof incorporating two conservation roof windows. Minor internal alterations to ground floor shower room and insertion of first floor bathroom window.
6.	No objection.	East Fields	22/00121/HO USE	119 Boundary	Single Storey Rear Extension and Loft conversion with Rear Dormer.

				Road, Newbury, RG14 7NT, for Mr Silva	
7.	No objection.	East Fields	22/00196/FUL	Audrey Needham House, 29 Victoria Grove, Newbury, RG14 7RB, for John Rowan and Partners	A new lift shaft extension is being proposed to be installed on to the right flank elevation of the building to provide residents with a secondary lift. As the lift intends to serve all floors, the lift shaft will also extend upwards and will connect to existing communal landings and top floor plant room with these being slightly extended. This plant room will be altered internally to accommodate to the proposed lift.
8.	No objection.	Speenhamland	22/00051/HO USE	1 Chestnut Crescent, Newbury, RG14 1LG, for G. Austin and S. Davies	Demolish existing out house/utility. Construct new single storey rear extension.
9.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00029/HO USE	4 Chiltern Close, Newbury, RG14 6SZ, for Mr & Mrs Hipsey	Proposed single storey utility room extension.

10.	No objection.	Wash Common	21/03196/HO USE	48 Wendan Road, Newbury RG14 7AF, for Mr & Mrs Harvey	Single and Two Storey Front Extensions.
11.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00070/FUL	61 and 63 Kingsbridge Road, Newbury, RG14 6DY, for Mrs Creteur and Young	Single storey rear extensions to no.'s 61 and 63 Kingsbridge Road, Newbury.
12.	Objection based on: - the access on Dormer Close potentially causing traffic issues - the 2 proposed northern houses being too close to neighbours and thus being overbearing Comment: Sovereign should rethink the proposal. Cllrs Vaughan Miller and Jo Day abstained.	Wash Common	22/00086/FUL D	Newbury House, 237 and 235 Andover Road, Newbury, RG14 6NG, for Sovereign Housing Ltd	Demolition of existing 2 bedroom bungalow (no. 235 Andover Road) along with existing garage, and erection of 4no. four-bedroom dwellings, external alterations to Newbury House, new vehicular access from Dormer Close, and, associated landscaping.
13.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00083/HO USE	103 Newtown Road, Newbury, RG14 7EA,	Demolish existing rear conservatory and ground floor rear extension.

				for Mr R. Alex	
14.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00179/HO USE	1 Moreton Mews, Andover Road, Newbury, RG14 6BT, for Mr S. Hill	Change of use (garage to Accommodation) and provision of an additional parking space.
15.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00247/HO USE	11 Elizabeth Avenue, Newbury, RG14 6HA, for Mr & Mrs Jezzard	Two Storey Side Extension and Single Storey Rear Extension.
16.	No objection.	Wash Common	22/00209/HO USE	8 Bruan Road, Newbury, RG14 7AU, for Mr & Mrs Brooks	Proposed conversion of roofspace, with flat roof dormer and new gable to rear hipped roof. Proposed single storey front extension to form kitchen and dining room. Proposed single storey side extension to create new entrance following demolition of existing garage store.
17.	No objection.	West Fields	22/00084/FUL D & 22/00085/LBC 2	6 Cheap Street, Newbury, RG14 5DD, for Feltham	Change of use of existing building in office use to 8 No. 1 bed student bedsits with associated shared amenity space.

				Construction Ltd	
18.	No objection.	West Fields	21/02242/HO USE	40 Gloucester Road, Newbury, RG14 5JR, for Mr P. Weaving	Two Velux windows to serve loft conversion.
19.	No objection.	West Fields	22/00231/HO USE	84 Craven Road, Newbury, RG14 5NP, for Mr & Mrs Cox	Demolish existing rear conservatory. Erect single storey rear and side wrap-around extension. Convert the existing loft space extending the roof with rear hip to gable roof extension.

APPENDIX 2

Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
 Schedule of Licensing Applications
 14/02/2022

Resolutions	Licence	Applicant(S)	Premises
No objection.	Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licences & Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 Premises Licence – New Ref: 22/00088/LQN	Applicant: Lumber Distillers Limited	Location: 29 Parkway Shopping Centre, Middle Street, Newbury, RG14 1AY Proposal: Supply of alcohol (on and off sales) Sunday to Wednesday 09:00 – 22:30, Thursday to Saturday 09:00 – 23:30 Late Night Refreshment Thursday to Saturday 23:00 – 23:30

**Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
Schedule of Planning Applications
07/03/2022**

Running Order	Resolutions	Ward	Application Number	Location and Applicant	Proposal
1.		Adjacent Parish	22/00101/COMIND	Land To North of Spring Gardens Newbury, Newbury, RG20 0PR, for Calleva Community Energy Ltd	Proposed solar photovoltaic farm and associated infrastructure with ancillary equipment including substation, security cameras, deer fence, attenuation basin, access track and soft landscaping scheme.
2.		Adjacent Parish	22/00252/HOUSE	18 Speen Lane, Newbury, RG14 1RW, for Mr T. Patten	Addition of a 1.90 metre side gate and supporting brick columns. Addition of cedar trellis to existing boundary wall on side and front of property.
3.		Clay Hill	22/00091/COMIND	31 Turnpike Road, Newbury, RG14 2NX, for Grass Valley Ltd	Installation of security barriers/gates at the entrance to the site to prevent vehicle access. This will be at least 15 metres inside the entrance of the site and from Turnpike Road that runs in front of the site. They will be double leafed manual barriers/gates opening inwards. We would like these installed for security of our site out of normal working hours.

4.		Clay Hill	22/00161/FUL	Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, RG14 2DW, for Cinch Self Storage	Recladding the existing building. Installation of drive-up storage units in the rear car park/service yard. Change of use from class B2 Industrial with B2 (a) Office to B8 Storage.
5.		Clay Hill	22/00363/HOUSE	32 Regnum Drive, Newbury, RG14 2HF, for Mr Broom-Edwards	Loft extension (hip to gable roof).
6.		Clay Hill	21/03132/HOUSE	14 Lime Close, Newbury, RG14 2PW, for Mr P. Kuzdak	<p>Partial Retrospective: Retention of existing metal staircase to side gable end wall and addition of proposed privacy screen.</p> <p>Amendment: Amendment to include close-boarded black trellis on all sides of the existing staircase railings in the interests of increasing the level of screening afforded and reduce the impact through overlooking/perception of movements. This trellis would support climbing plants in the longer term to soften the appearance.</p> <p>Previous NTC Comment: Objection due to the overbearing of the neighbours causing privacy concerns and the noise caused by</p>

					the metal staircase.
7.		East Fields	22/00336/HOUSE	15 Greenlands Road, Newbury, RG14 7JS, for Mrs O. Hunter	Formation of new single story rear extension and new first floor rear extension over part ground floor with associated internal alterations, extended dropped kerb and parking for three cars.
8.		East Fields	22/00481/HOUSE	43 Priory Road, Newbury, RG14 7QT, for Mr & Mrs Brown	Single Storey Rear Extension.
9.		Speenhamland	22/00068/LBC2	18 The Broadway, Newbury, RG14 1AU, for Mr T. Stevens	This application covers the replacement large window at the front of the property. The existing window has a large crack and on inspection, the aluminium frame has twisted and also needs to be replaced. We seek approval to replace with a hardwood window frame and new window. The quote provided moves the opening from a single large frame to two half windows with a wooden divider between the two as per the diagram.
10.		Speenhamland	22/00460/HOUSE	18 Chaucer Crescent, Newbury, RG14 1TR, for Mr & Mrs Compton	Demolition of existing conservatory and replacement with single storey rear extension including part conversion of garage to habitable space for family accommodation with internal alterations.

11.		Speenhamland	22/00465/FUL	The Pilgrims Guest House, 33 Oxford Road, Newbury, RG14 1XB, for Mr K. Jeshua	Change of use from C1 to C2 without changing the structure of the building.
12.		Wash Common	22/00270/HOUSE	10 Enborne Gate, Newbury, RG14 6AZ, for Mr & Mrs Birch	Garage conversion and small extension to front of garage to form an office.
13.		Wash Common	22/00281/HOUSE	31 Paddock Road, Newbury, RG14 7DL, for Mr & Mrs Rawlings	Front, side and rear single storey extensions.
14.		West Fields	22/00084/FULD & 22/00085/LBC2	6 Cheap Street, Newbury, RG14 5DD, for Feltham Construction Ltd	Change of use of existing building in office use to HMO for seven occupants.
15.		West Fields	22/00234/FUL	40 Gloucester Road, Newbury, RG14 5JR, for Mr P. Weaving	Two Velux windows to serve loft conversion.
16.		West Fields	22/00333/HOUSE	78 West Street, Newbury, RG14 1BD, for Mr E. Westmacott	Proposed single storey rear extension.
17.		West Fields	22/00306/CERTE	6 West Mills, Newbury, RG14 5HG, for Rivar Ltd	The flat on the first and second floor of 6 West Mills should be changed to 'Apartment 6-West Mills' in order to obtain BT broadband.
18.		West Fields	22/00331/FULD	3 Toomers Wharf, Canal Walk, Newbury, RG14 1DY, for Artium Developments	Section 73a: Removal of Condition 11 (Requirement to fulfil Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes) of planning permission 13/02976/FULD : Creation of 2 x one bedroom apartments following erection of 3 storey extension.

19.		West Fields	22/00385/HOUSE	100 Craven Road, Newbury, RG14 5NP, for Mrs M. Bailey	Single storey side extension with glazed roof and new Oriel window to rear.
20.		West Fields	22/00389/LBC2	40 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, RG14 7BE, for Rufus Publications	Internal alteration with the ground floor of 40 Bartholomew street to form Office accommodation for Rufus Publication and a coffee shop to the front of the building to be called the Rufus Coffee House.
21.		West Fields	22/00464/FULD	9 St Michaels Road, Newbury, RG14 5PT, for Mr I. Smith	Erection of a new dwelling attached to the side of No.9 St Michael's Rd, to replace existing garage building.

**Planning and Highways Committee Meeting
Schedule of Licensing Applications
07/03/2022**

Resolutions	Licence	Applicant(S)	Premises
	Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licences & Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005 Premises Licence – New Ref: 22/00171/LQN	Applicant: SKMA Foods Ltd	Location: Sushizen, 16 Bartholomew Street, Newbury, Berkshire, RG14 5LL Proposal: New Premises Licence for Supply of alcohol (on and off sales) Monday to Sunday 12:00 – 22:45.

Newbury Town Council

Public Report

To: Planning & Highways Committee

Date of Meeting: 7th March 2022

Agenda item No. 8: Motion Received from Councillor Tony Vickers

Background:

In response to the submission of a motion by Councillor Tony Vickers to invite all surrounding parishes and other interested organisations and individuals to a meeting, hosted by this Council, as soon as possible to establish a Greater Newbury Flood Forum and to request that the three Flood Authorities (West Berkshire Council, Environment Agency and Thames Water) attend and support such a forum, Officers of Newbury Town Council (NTC) have considered such a proposal and devised a set of recommendations, laid out in this report, for this Committee to consider. These recommendations have been made giving due consideration to the newly adopted NTC Strategy and the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) – West Berkshire Councils (WBC's) – Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), as well as to the resources of NTC's Officers.

Issues Arising and Options Considered:

At the NTC Planning & Highways (P&H) Committee meeting on the 4th of October 2021, this Committee sent its response to WBC's LFRMS consultation. The first comment that NTC made in response to the consultation was:

“The main point raised was over a potential Greater Newbury Flood Forum. On point number 3 on Appendix 1 of the LFRMS, it says that “it is not considered that any other areas would benefit from a Flood Forum” (pg. 55). The Committee disagreed with this statement as they believe that the Greater Newbury area would benefit from a Flood Forum as large amount of land are on/near a flood plain.”

In addition to this, the Council responded to a public question at the P&H meeting on the 6th of December 2021 about the Councils plans in regard to a potential 'Greater Newbury Flood Forum':

“Question received from Paula Sanderson:

“Would this Committee like to see the answer to my email to the WBC Executive Member for Internal Governance & the Service Director (Strategy & Governance)? The email states the following:

In the Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2021-2026 on pg. 55 – Objective 1 – action point 3 advises WBC will not support any more Flood Forums which is contra to the EA & DEFRA Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Action Plan 2021, published in May 2021 - Strategic Objective 3.2 - Point 3.2.4 which states “Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) will support people at High Risk of Flooding, when they are wanted, to set up Flood Groups & Develop and test local flood plans”.”

Response from the Chairperson:

“Thank you very much for this question. One of the principal comments this Council provided in response to the Draft LFRMS was that we would like to see West Berkshire Council amend Objective 1, action point 3, to allow for the creation of a new Greater Newbury Flood Forum. In addition, as the Environment Agencies ‘Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy Action Plan 2021’ policy paper does in fact state that by 2025 RMAs “will support people living in places at high risk of flooding ... to set up flood groups, where they are wanted, and to develop and test local flood plans”, we will write to the Executive Member for Internal Governance & the Service Director (Strategy & Governance) to request that a response to Mrs Saunderson’s email be provided to her and a copy sent to this Council.”

Since these comments were made, the finalised LFRMS has been adopted by the LLFA. In page 56 of the LFRMS, point No. 3 of Objective 1 under ‘Appendix 1: West Berkshire Council – Strategic Flood Action Plan’, under the ‘progress since previous LFRMS’ column, WBC say that:

“Completed. West Berkshire Council have enabling flood forums to be set up for Lambourn Valley and Pang Valley. West Berkshire Council, as well as the Environment Agency and Thames Water, attend regular meetings with these flood forums to support their activities and liaise with them regarding flood risk and mitigation measures. It is not considered that any other areas would benefit from a Flood Forum. However, West Berkshire Council will support the development of additional Flood Forums where local interest exists. There are several informal action groups that West Berkshire Council support where possible.”

As the LLFA state that “it is not considered that any other area [Newbury] would benefit from a flood forum”, we believe that the spending of limited Council Officer

time and resources on something 'of no benefit' would not be an appropriate action to take.

In addition, there is no provision for the establishment and maintenance of a Flood Forum in the Newbury Town Council Strategy 2019-2024, or the NTC budget 2022/23.

For these reasons, NTC Officers recommend that the motion be amended as follows:

“To ask West Berkshire Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, whether they will enable a Flood Forum for the Greater Newbury area to be established, inviting to the Forum representatives of all surrounding parish councils and other interested organisations and individuals, and to request that the three Flood Authorities (West Berkshire Council, Environment Agency and Thames Water) attend and support such a forum.”

Considering the motion and this recommendation, the Council is presented with several potential options:

- 1) To resolve to approve the motion.
- 2) To resolve to approve the amended motion (listed above).
- 3) To not resolve to approve either the motion or the amended motion.

Considerations:

1. Reference to the Councils Strategy 2019-2024:

The NTC 2019-2024, Year 3 update, point G.12.G, states that NTC will use our role as a statutory consultee to:

“Request the planning authority to address the flood risks associated with development proposals and ensure that these are properly addressed.

21/22: The Council responded to the Local Flood risk management strategy, expressing our support for a local Flood forum for Newbury.”

Newbury Town Council have registered our support for a 'Greater Newbury Flood Forum' with WBC as part of our response to the LFRMS. However, as shown above, it is not a provision of the NTC Strategy to create and maintain a Flood Forum.

2. Legal:

As the 'Greater Newbury Flood Forum' would be established and maintained by this Council, as per the resolution, it could incur the Council the legal liabilities of such maintenance and operation due to it being a function of the Council.

As the LFRMS points out, NTC is not a flood authority. Without the support of WBC, the EA, and the TW, such a forum would have no legal status.

3. Financial:

The establishment of a 'Greater Newbury Flood Forum' would have financial implications for this Council. Information provided by the Clerk of Thatcham Town Council indicate that the Thatcham Flood Forum has a budget of £500 per year, in addition to the approximately 15 hours per month of Officer time going into the project.

As the proposed Greater Newbury Flood Forum would include more stakeholders than the Flood Forum for Thatcham, it is likely that these figures would be the minimum that NTC would likely have to provide upon the establishment and maintenance of a Flood Forum. (The approximate annual cost to this Council would be around £6,500, including all overheads, etc.)

In addition, as a Flood Forum is not in the budget, there are no dedicated budget lines for the funding of this project.

4. Climate/Environmental Issues:

Part of the impetus behind the drive for a Flood Forum is the recognition that the changing climate is leading to a higher risk of river and surface water flooding. As this Council does not have trained Flooding Officers, we utilise the work done by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA/WBC) in this area. This work, detailed above in the 'Issues Arising and Options Considered' section of this report, indicate that the LLFA do 'not consider that [Newbury] would benefit from a Flood Forum'.

5. Crime and Disorder:

There is no predicted effect on crime and disorder if the motion is resolved, amended and resolved as per the Officers recommendations, or not resolved.

6. Risk Assessment:

No risk assessment was considered immediately necessary if the motion is resolved, amended and resolved as per the Officers recommendations, or not resolved.

7. Equality and Diversity:

All members of the Newbury Community should be made aware of, be able to contribute to, and in some way benefit from, a Greater Newbury Flood Forum if one were to be created.

8. Consultation:

These recommendations have been made in consultation with the NTC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and with the help of information about the Thatcham Flood Forum provided by the Thatcham Town Council Parish Clerk.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

In sum, as WBC do not consider that Newbury would benefit from a Flood Forum, that the creation and maintenance of a Flood Forum is not a point in NTC's strategy, and due to the lack of Officer resources, NTC Officers recommend that this Committee not approve this resolution. Instead, it is recommended that this Planning & Highways Committee amend the resolution to instead ask that the Lead Local Flood Authority (WBC) themselves enable the establishment and maintenance of a Greater Newbury Flood Forum and invite key parishes and interested local individuals and organisations.

Report Author: Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer)

Date: 02/03/2022

**Minutes of a meeting of the Canal Corridor Working Group
held by Virtual Meeting on Zoom,
22/02/2022 at 14:00/02:00pm.**

Parties:

- A) **Newbury Town Council:** Roger Hunneman
- B) **Kennet and Avon Canal Trust:** Sally Coulson
- C) **Marinas:** Emma Fearnley (Newbury Boat Company) and Mark Wiltshire (Newbury Marina)
- D) **Others:** Ed Cooper (Newbury Canoe Club), Verna Smith (Waterways/IWA SE), Sukey Russell-Hayward (Secret Garden Project and West Fields Community Matters), and Graham Smith (WB Ramblers)

In Attendance:

Darius Zarazel, Democratic Services Officer at Newbury Town Council

Apologies:

Apologies received from Melissa Hughes, David Seward, Howard Bass, David Peacock, Jane Hennell and Councillor Martha Vickers.

Welcome and introductions:

Councillor Roger Hunneman welcomed all parties to the meeting.

Minutes of the last meeting:

The meeting agreed to approve the minutes of the last meeting.

To receive an update on items included in the Action Plan and to detail any future work on those items (Appendix 1 to these minutes):

The DSO to write to WBC (and WBC/NTC Councillors) and the C&RT to inquire about the status of their key actions and circulate the responses to the CCWG members:

To WBC and WBC/NTC Members, what is the status of:

- The progressing of repairs/improvements of the towpath between West Mills Swing Bridge to the Monkey Bridge.
- The low level safety Lighting (with minimal ecological impact) from Swing Bridge to Monkey bridge – to investigate installing this alongside the repairs/improvements.
- To install crossing facilities for towpath users at Hambridge Road Bridge (where they have to cross both the road and the canal) – what were the results of the survey undertaken?

- The WBC engineers investigating the section between Town Bridge and Victoria Park to address sheet piling.
- The shoring up of the bank of the Wharf.

To the C&RT, what is the status of:

- The upgrading/repairing of the section of towpath between West Mills and the Monkey Bridge, and ideally beyond at least as far as the town boundary by Lipscombe Close – to fix the washout holes.
- The progress of the conversation with West Fields Community Matters about the installing of the low-level safety lighting at Lock Island.
- The progress of the review of existing waste disposal signage in the Wharf. Is the C&RT the party responsible for the signage on the Victoria Park side of the canal saying that the nearest disposal point is further down the Canal, rather than in the Wharf opposite?
- The progress of the disabled angler access in Guyers lock.

The following items received updates during the meeting:

Towpath:

Find Ownership of the tunnel:

NTC did not have success finding ownership of the Tunnel. WBC will not put lighting in as although it is in the definitive map as a public footpath, it is not a public highway.

Sukey has had meetings with both the Newbury Building Society (NBS) and Holland and Barrett (H&B) and achieved a successful outcome – the installation of lighting in the underpass (from NBS) and repairs to the guttering (H&B).

The Working Group would like Sukey to pass on their thanks when the works are completed.

The Working Group were happy for Sukey to put forward proposals to NBS for a mural in the Tunnel.

Bankside Health and Safety:

The Working Group would like to thank the C&RT about the new safety equipment installed along the Canal. However, they wanted to ask about the access to emergency system (via phone) and ask whether this was the most effective way to access the equipment.

DSO to ask the C&RT about the process used to access the emergency system (currently accessed by mobile phone).

The Working Group discussed ways to help individuals who fall into the canal. The suggestions were: an integrated steps or ladder in the towpath (steps might be misused however) or lopped chains (something to hang on to).

It was also agreed to ask what the schedule for tree clearance behind weirs was.

Repair the ground where sink holes have appeared:

Action to repair Jubilee moore's sinkholes being repaired as of 21/02/2022.

Lock Island:

The Working Group had no objection to the removal of the Canoe on Lock Island.

The Wharf:

DSO to circulate the Masterplan for members information about the WBC proposals for the Wharf.

Paint the crane:

The Canoe Club has put in a price in for painting the crane.

The KACT are looking for formal approval for funding this project, however the Canoe Club are still waiting the WBC plans for the Wharf area.

Install signage requesting no feeding of birds:

The C&RT agree to installing the signs, but only if it is on their land. Their ecologist also agrees that overfeeding can be a problem and so would support this signage.

It was agreed to send the following locations to the C&RT for the instillation of 'don't feed the birds signage':

- 1) Lock stock lock
- 2) Front of the waterside centre
- 3) Front of Wharf Carpark

The WG believe the signage should be strongly worded and provide an explanation as to why this is a problem.

Signage in the Wharf:

The KACT putting up signage about the Wharfs history on the Museum side of the Canal, and also looking into signage about Jubilee Trip boat running.

The Canoe Club are looking into signage about Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race.

Facilities for Boat Users:

A water point:

The waterpoint is installed below the Tesco on London Road but the C&RT are struggling to get permission to connect it due to freshwater regulations. Continuing to monitor.

Verna Smith happy to advise on background of water legislation.

Waste disposal/recycling:

Opposite the Wharf, in Victoria Park, on the bins they point the boaters to Newbury Marina. That signage shouldn't be on the bins, should be changed to show the disposal point opposite.

A shower in the Wharf toilets:

There is currently a NTC project around revamping the Wharf Toilets & providing a Changing Places facility (as championed by the Mayor). The Project Plan includes looking at a provision for a self-funding Shower facility.

The NTC CEO and Community Services Manager have met with the Project Architect on the 7th of Feb to start the ball rolling on this project.

Other Users:

A new/improved access for the canoe club:

The Canoe club has tarmacked the entrance and made improvements to the river frontage they have.

Remove from the list.

To review the Canoe Club Strategy:

No yet written.

More information/interpretation panels along the corridor:

Sukey would like signage and information boards near the lock island considered.

The WG agreed to ask all the relevant parties along the Canal Corridor to form a plan about signage regarding the signages uniformity and agree on the placement of information boards/interpretation panels. These parties include the KACT, WFCM, NS, C&RT, NTC, and WBC.

Extension/promotion of "Quiet Zones":

These already exist, remove from the list.

Councillor Roger Hunneman thanked all the members of the CCWG, and the DSO, for their attendance and work.

To fix the date of the next meeting: In June 2022

Meeting closed at: 15:06

The Canal Corridor Working Group**Action Plan, 28th of June 2022**Abbreviations and Acronyms:

C&RT	–	Canal & Rivers Trust
CCWG	–	Canal Corridor Working Group
IWA	–	Inland Waterways
KACT	–	Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
NCC	–	Newbury Canoe Club
NS	–	Newbury Society
NTC	–	Newbury Town Council
WBC	–	West Berkshire Council
WFCM	–	West Fields Community Matters
WSP	–	Water Safety Partnership

The Canal Corridor Working Group

Action Plan, 28th of June 2022

No.	Proposal	Responsible Party	Priority (Low/ Medium/ High)	Action required	Who
Towpath					
1.	Repair/ improvements: Progress repairs/improvements of Towpath between West Mills Swing Bridge to the Monkey Bridge.	WBC	High	Paul Hendry (WBC) to take proposals to Capital Group (and investigate other funding possibilities). Likely in the next financial year.	WBC
	Low level safety Lighting (with minimal ecological impact): From Swing Bridge to Monkey bridge – to investigate installing alongside the repairs/improvements	WBC		Paul Hendry (WBC) to inquire with WBC Street lighting team about installing low level safety lighting when improving the Towpath.	WBC
	From Lock Stock and Barrell to Swing Bridge – to find ownership of tunnel and progress.	C&RT		Firstly, find ownership of Tunnel. Then have conversation with C&RT.	NTC, WFCM & C&RT
2.	Upgrading/repairing of the section of towpath between West Mills and the Monkey Bridge, and ideally beyond at least as far as the town boundary by Lipscombe Close.	WBC & C&RT	High	See No. 1.	WBC
				To fix washout holes.	WBC
				To formalise existing 'Swims' (fishing platforms).	C&RT
3.	Bankside Health and Safety.	C&RT & WSP & WBC	High	Wait for WSP recommendations/progress.	WSP
				WBC engineers investigating section between Town Bridge and Victoria Park to address sheet piling.	WBC
				Ask as to the shrubbery clearance for weirs and rivers	C&RT
4.	Repair the ground where sink holes have appeared.	C&RT/WBC	Medium	See No. 2 &3 above.	C&RT/WBC
5.	New piling to prevent further erosion.	C&RT/WBC	Medium	See No. 2 & 3 above.	C&RT/WBC
6.	Applying aesthetic, bound surfacing of the towpath in certain areas.	C&RT/WBC	High	See No. 1,2, & 3 above.	C&RT/WBC
7.	Measures to prevent cars and motor bikes accessing the towpath.	WBC	Low	Can be considered when repairs/improvement made to Towpath.	WBC
8.	Installing crossing facilities for towpath users at Hambridge Road Bridge (where they have to cross both the road and the canal).	WBC	Medium	Surveys conducted into usage. The WBC Principal Engineer for traffic signals will be reviewing to consider what/if any measures are needed.	WBC

The Canal Corridor Working Group

Action Plan, 28th of June 2022

Lock Island:					
9.	Low level safety lighting at Lock Island.	C&RT	High	Progress discussions between WFCM & C&RT.	WFCM
10.	Enhancements to “the tunnel” from Northbrook Street to Lock Island.	KACT, C&RT, WFCM	High	Draft ideas to enhance the tunnel.	WFCM
				Install lighting, drainage, and complete repairs in the underpass.	Newbury Building Society & Holland & Barrett
The Wharf:					
11.	Paint the crane.	KACT & NCC	High	NCC & KACT pursuing this – Waiting for plan from WBC	NCC & KACT
12.	Plant the flower beds.	NCC	High	NCC pursuing this (possibility for next year’s budget)	NCC
13.	Install signage requesting no feeding of birds.	C&RT/WBC	High	Suggested sign placement sent to C&RT for actioning Locations include: 1) Lock stock lock 2) Front of the waterside centre 3) Front of Wharf Carpark	C&RT
14.	Signage at the Wharf	KACT	Medium	KACT planning two signs, 1) History of Wharf and 2) about Jubilee Trip boat running.	KACT
		NCC	Medium	Canoe Club investigating Devises to Westminster International Canoe Race signage.	NCC
15.	Install lighting under the bridge.	NCC	High	NCC working with WBC to progress	NCC
16.	Shore up the bank of the Wharf.	WBC	High	See No. 3 above.	WBC
Facilities for boat users:					
17.	A water point.	C&RT	High	C&RT to look to hook up point installed below the Tesco on London Road.	C&RT
18.	Waste disposal/recycling.	C&RT	High	Existing signage in Victoria Park indicating nearest disposal point further down the canal (rather than opposite at Wharf) to be reviewed.	C&RT
19.	A pump house for human waste.	C&RT	High	C&RT to implement.	C&RT
20.	Electric hook-ups (Potentially at the Wharf).	C&RT	Low	C&RT to implement.	C&RT

The Canal Corridor Working Group

Action Plan, 28th of June 2022

21.	A shower in the Wharf toilets.	NTC	Low	NTC revamping Wharf Toilets, looking at provision for a self-funding shower facility.	NTC
Other users:					
22.	Disabled Angler Access.	C&RT	Medium	C&RT are progressing this along Guyer Lock.	C&RT
23.	To review the Canoe Club Strategy.	NCC	Medium	The CCWG to review the NCC Strategy when complete.	NCC
24.	More information/interpretation panels along the corridor.	KACT, C&RT, NS, WFCM, WBC	High	NS provided draft proposals – KACT leading on installing panels in the Wharf area (see point 14 above).	KACT
				Repair Guyers Lock interpretation boards.	WBC
		C&RT, WFCM, NS, NTC	High	Panels in/near the tunnel & Lock Stock and Barrell. (See No. 10 above).	?
		KACT, WFCM, NS, C&RT, NTC, and WBC (+ any other key stakeholders)	High	All relevant parties along the Canal Corridor to form a plan about signage regarding the signages uniformity and agree on the placement of information boards/interpretation panels.	KACT, WFCM, NS, C&RT, NTC, and WBC

**Minutes of a meeting of the Town Centre Working Group
held by Virtual Meeting on Zoom,
17/02/2022 at 02:00pm/14:00.**

Parties:

- A) Newbury Town Council (NTC): Councillors Nigel Foot, Sarah Slack, and David Marsh
- B) Newbury BID: Mellissa Hughes
- C) Kennet Centre: Richard Farley
- D) Parkway: Andy Marmot
- E) Newbury West Berks CIC: Ian Blake
- F) West Berks District Council (WBC): Sam Robins and Fi Crehan

In Attendance:

Darius Zarazel, Democratic Services Officer at Newbury Town Council

1. Welcome and introductions:

The Chairperson, Nigel Foot, welcomed all parties to the meeting and each member introduced themselves.

2. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Katharine Makant (WBC).

3. To note the terms of Reference of the Working Group:

The Terms of Reference were read and noted by the Working Group.

4. To note and discuss the Newbury Vision:

Sam Robins: Introduced the Masterplan, where it currently is, and how WBC are looking to progress it – putting together a delivery plan, focusing on the short term ‘quick wins’ and some longer-term aspirations. He wanted this meeting to discuss each party’s initial thoughts on the plan.

Cllr Nigel Foot: Mentioned the fact that the Masterplan was intended to form a Supplementary Planning Document. In addition, as the Newbury Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) is underway, can the NDP use the Masterplan?

Response from Sam Robins: The Masterplan is not an SPD as it didn’t align with the Local Plan Review, from a timescale perspective. The NDP can use the Masterplan.

Cllr David Marsh: Thinks that the Masterplan is an impressive document and a lesson in meaningful consultations. Is encouraged that it looks to have incorporated Town Council plans. In addition, he mentioned that the Wharf plans look to be a great proposal. However, he has some concerns, for example, based on the reaction of the WBC Executive, he fears there will be a pushback from WBC on the question of traffic. When asked about these policies, on when traffic and pedestrianisation can be enacted, there was no definitive response from the Executive – there does not seem to be enthusiasm for them from the Executive. Cllr Marsh believed there is a consensus among most people to see these changes happen and sooner rather than later.

The Masterplan also mentions parklets, nice green areas outside hospitality venues, but is not sure how these would work given the town centre traffic. The Masterplan also says this is not possible without removing through traffic. As the Town Centre has recent experience with a removal of through traffic (the pandemic and recent road closures), he wants to know why can't pedestrianisation be extended.

As NTCs strategy specifically focuses on the Market Place pedestrianisation, and the traders agree, can the pedestrianisation process be speed this up? Can we see action now?

Melissa Hughes: Is there a possibility of a cross agency committee that could take this forward? Shared responsibility has been proven to help progress action in other Town Centres. Very keen to help get other key people involved in actioning the Masterplan as soon as possible.

Response from Sam Robins: This is the next stage of what WBC want to do. Put key Council Officers and main stakeholders in a group, pulling people in as relevant. Their first job would be to prioritise what we want to do.

Ian Blake: Agrees with Cllr David Marsh, the Masterplan has been adopted so wants to see action on it. Has a question about funding. How much have WBC got to achieve the 'easy wins'.

Fi Crehan: Was considering funds from the DLUHC but Newbury is not the right location for these. Expecting new information about shared prosperity fund as the District will be allocated an amount from this. Looking to discuss and share a way forward. Is working on design brief proposals for the funds the Council has earmarked for the 'quick wins'.

Melissa Hughes: Has meet with the WBC CEO and was informed that a priority for WBC was identifying funding opportunities for things such as fulfilling the Masterplan, and this was reassuring.

Fi Crehan: Has a background in bid writing. Would like to make the most of what is already underway, for example the Town Council works in Victoria Park. Has extensive experience in grant funding applications and are working on these .

Cllr Nigel Foot: At the WBC Executive, they mentioned there was traffic monitoring surveys, can these be made public? It would be useful to see the results.

Fi Crehan: Will check to see if it is possible. The timescale of the survey is important in order to understand the actual rates rather than individual occurrences. Another group to include could be the Taxis by the Museum.

Andrew Marmot: Parkway will support the implementation of the Masterplan however they can. They are going through the process of getting multiple new occupiers in.

Richard Farley: Have independent popups planned until the decision about the Kennet Centre Redevelopment applications are known.

Melissa Hughes: The BIDs ballot deadline for their 3rd term is midday Thursday 24th of February.

Cllr Nigel Foot: On parking, (anecdotally) there are lots of spaces in the multistorey car park by the train station. Better utilisation of this might free up other areas for improvement.

Sam Robins: It is important to mention that Transport are reviewing their parking strategy, taking a wholistic view of parking in the town centre, how it can be changed and modified. Hopefully a review of the Wharf as a space will be done sooner than the release of the parking strategy.

Fi Crehan: This study is underway if members have any other anecdotal observations can be fed back to WBC Officers.

Andy Marmot: Parkway have already inputted into this as Parkway Carpark is running 25% down on 2019, down on income. The concern is that this review will take a year+, but this needs to be done faster.

Cllr David Marsh: Although the Newbury Station Multistorey is not far to the town centre, the routes in are not attractive, but the cost makes it more attractive.

Cllr Sarah Slack: Spoke to a member of the Library who is concerned about losing parking at Wharf, is this something WBC are aware of?

Response from Fi Crehan: WBC are working with Library services and looking at parking while the Museum is looking at community demand. Looking to work with the library and the space outside to make it pleasant and useful.

Cllr Nigel Foot: The Masterplan addressed the fact that young people wanted a place to hang out, is this a factor in regard to progressing the masterplan.

Response from Fi Crehan: Absolutely, WBC are discussing linking with Berkshire Youth and other young people's activity groups as stakeholders. The Wharf has potential as a multi-use community asset. Shading, seating, and other additions could make it a place to spend time in, encouraging people to stay longer is a principle and a goal for the Wharf.

Cllr Nigel Foot: Can we bring areas just on the outside of the Town Centre into consideration.

Response from Fi Crehan: Yes, looking at how people come into the Centre, want to create spaces where people can use and then spend more time and money in the Town Centre. Keen to explore increasing accessibility to Victoria Park.

Cllr Nigel Foot summarised the meeting:

- The creation of a Working Group for the Town Centre by WBC with key stakeholders to take up and progress the Masterplan was the primary takeaway.
- A priority for this group would be to progress pedestrianisation.
- An update from Sam Robins/WBC on the status of the Town Centre CAA at the next meeting.
- Ensuring youth issues are front and centre.
- Parking strategy is a longer-term project but would like to see action on this as well.

5. To note the progress of the Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA):

Cllr Nigel Foot: How is progress being made in regard to the CAA? These are very important for the Council and for the Newbury NDP.

Response from Sam Robins: Hemingway Design have finished, but WBC planning might know more. The team provided funding for these CAAs. As far as they are aware, these are still underway.

6. To receive an update on any other relevant business from the TCWG parties:

There was no other business.

7. To fix the date of the next meeting:

No date was fixed.

Meeting closed at: 14:54

DRAFT



HemingwayDesign

NEW masterplanning

urban
movement



Appendix 7

NEWBURY TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN DRAFT REPORT

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All town centres across the UK are having to respond to the huge change in national shopping and leisure habits, driven originally by out of town shopping, then by the growth in internet shopping and society’s increasingly more conscious approach to consumption (including a re-discovered desire to prioritise independent businesses) both of the latter accelerated by the impact of COVID-19. The pandemic has also resulted in a fundamental shift in working habits, with large-scale office closures requiring many employees to work from home. The traditional 9-to-5, office-centric work model is rapidly becoming replaced with a hybrid model, giving workers increased flexibility around when and where they work and resulting in less time spent in offices.

All towns and their communities have suffered socially and economically from the enforced closures over the last 18 months and Newbury is no exception. The impacts on the town centre are most visibly demonstrated by the loss of the John Lewis Home and Debenhams stores that previously anchored the Parkway Centre. However, the loss of these stores, whilst impacting on footfall in the short term, provides an opportunity to revision and revitalise the centre

and its relationship with the Canalside and Victoria Park to meet the changing needs of residents, visitors and indeed society in a post COVID-19 future.

As a result, to address these long-term issues, to give confidence to businesses, to the market and the local and regional community, and to take advantage of the funding opportunities available, it is essential that the correct vision is in place to steer the direction of travel for Newbury, and to implement a clear strategy for delivering it.

In October 2020, West Berkshire District Council appointed a multi-disciplinary team of consultants comprising HemingwayDesign, New Masterplanning, GL Hearn and Urban Movement, working in partnership with the community and local stakeholders, to produce a long-term strategy and masterplan to reposition the town centre’s commercial, leisure, residential, cultural and public realm offer, to ensure the town centre continues to meet the needs of residents, businesses, workers and visitors both now and for years to come.

It was clear from our first visit to the town, reinforced by the feedback from over 5,000 people, that Newbury has a lot to celebrate, particularly Market Place; Northbrook Street and Newbury’s distinct heritage; the parks and recreational space; and the Canal. The people of the town value the independent retail, restaurant and café offer, complemented by Parkway’s national retailers. Despite these strengths, nearly 90% of respondents believe

that the town centre could be improved, and we have received overwhelming support throughout the development of the vision, which has evolved through close engagement with those with an interest in the town.

The Vision is underpinned by the ‘Crossroads’ of Newbury, where Bridge Street crosses the Kennet & Avon Canal at the heart of the town centre.



The Vision

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.

This Vision and overall masterplan is reinforced by a number of fundamental principles based on both national and local priorities for change.

Principle 1: A ‘broader’ town centre

The key structural objective of the masterplan is to expand the perceived extent of Newbury town centre. This may seem counterintuitive given the declining demand for retail, but by broadening the leisure, community and cultural ‘experience’, the town centre can be transformed into a ‘multi-functional’ space, attracting more visitors and increasing dwell time.

Principle 2: Celebrating ‘The Crossroads’

Newbury’s ‘Crossroads’, where the town centre’s north-south route, Northbrook Street/ Bartholomew Street, meets its east-west route, the Kennet & Avon Canal, forms an integral part of the masterplan, by putting Bridge Street and the Canal firmly at the heart of the town centre.

Principle 3: A more ‘walkable’ town centre

The masterplan seeks to make the town centre more ‘walkable’ and aims to increase the appeal of the town’s spaces, buildings and key assets by enhancing north-south and east-west permeability by foot.

Principle 4: A more ‘welcoming’ town centre

The masterplan aims to improve the sense of arrival for pedestrians, cyclists, rail and bus users, and motorists, by enhancing arrival spaces at the rail and bus station, improving links from the rail station to the town centre, improving routes for pedestrians and cyclists and enhancing arrival spaces along London Road from Robin Hood roundabout.

Principle 5: A ‘greener’ town centre

The masterplan aims to improve Victoria Park, provide a ‘pocket park’ at the Wharf and improve accessibility to green space along the Canalside, whilst delivering additional open space and ‘greening’ of the town centre to address environmental sustainability and improve community health and well-being.

Principle 6: A more ‘sociable’ town centre

The masterplan proposes additional open space at the Wharf and enhanced leisure and recreation facilities at Victoria Park and along the Canal. The masterplan will also support opportunities for increased spill-out space, particularly for the existing cafes and restaurants on Northbrook Street, in Market Place, behind the Corn Exchange and Museum, as well as in the Lanes and Yards.

Principle 7: A more ‘cultural’ town centre

The masterplan seeks to improve existing and create additional indoor and outdoor space for arts and cultural activities catered for all ages, particularly by reinforcing the cultural importance of Market Place and creating a cultural and leisure destination at the Wharf.

Principle 8: A more ‘independent’ town centre

The masterplan seeks to promote the heritage of Newbury as an “independent” market town, by supporting the concentration of independent businesses in the Lanes as well as those in Broadway, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street, and recognising that the proposals for the Eagle Quarter, if approved, will provide units catered for small, independent businesses.

Principle 9: A more ‘entrepreneurial’ town centre

The masterplan recognises the importance of delivering new office space and focuses particularly on delivering smaller, fit-for-purpose, flexible office space for small businesses, start-ups and those looking for occasional workspace closer to home.

Principle 10: A more ‘balanced’ town centre community

The masterplan recognises the need to rebalance the significant increase in residential developments delivering apartments within the town centre, by delivering a wider range of housing, including family housing or more innovative residential schemes.

These principles which underpin the masterplan, and which will help to deliver the Vision for the town centre, have informed a range of public realm, infrastructure and development proposals across the key areas of the Wharf; the Canal; Victoria Park & Park Way; Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Market Place; The Lanes & Yards; and Broadway, Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street (South).

The proposals are also accompanied by a Meanwhile Use Strategy to support the temporary use of empty buildings or spaces for participative public events, pop up shops, workspaces and markets to bring people together and encourage community cohesion and enterprise. These measures will kickstart the delivery of positive change ahead of the longer-term, more permanent changes proposed as part of the masterplan. Key spaces within Newbury town centre to be used for 'meanwhile purposes' include vacant shop units, the Wharf surface car parking, and the former Debenhams buildings.

The Delivery Strategy sets out a variety of ways in which the objectives of the Vision and masterplan can be achieved over time. Although the implementation of some of these proposals is constrained by land ownership and sources of funding, the Delivery Strategy identifies 'quick wins' which will help to build momentum and deliver effective, vital change at the start of the process to creating and sustaining a thriving and prosperous future for Newbury. By prioritising these 'quick wins' and the wider set of masterplan proposals, Newbury town centre will embody its values, shape perceptions and start to build its own brand that better positions itself as a successful and distinctive modern market town.



1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The purpose of the masterplan

Some media reports would have us believe that we are witnessing the death of our urban centres and high streets, but this is far from the case. The UK's town centres have traditionally been places where people live, work, and socialise. However, over the decades they have become home to sprawling shopping centres and as a result, town centre high streets have been overtaken by mainstream retailers. This is sadly often at the expense of the real social importance of town centres - green spaces, generous public realm for social interaction, entertainment, nightlife, leisure, non-retail workplaces and homes.

We believe the future is bright for our town centres, for they are the beating heart of the community. We believe that recent store closures and the number of vacant shops nationwide does not mean town centres are dying, but that consumer behaviours are shifting. The 'offer' from retail needs to match a changing demographic that has a developing taste and understanding about the values of disposable income. It needs to recognise that people are

eschewing 'goods' in favour of experiences; something that's reflected in the general market buoyancy of leisure, sports, travel, cafe culture, and events.

No one would argue that online shopping hasn't affected our high streets, or that it won't continue to do so in the future. But this doesn't have to mean the end of busy town centres - it merely emphasises the urgency with which they must adapt. Humans will always be innately social beings - we will always want to get together, to celebrate, to share experiences. It is time to alter our course - to steer our town centres back to being the heart of our social lives, the places we live, work, and socialise. Retail is a key part of this, but it's not the sole focus. Opportunities to generate social capital must be built into our town centres from the ground up.

Strong social capital often reflects a community in which people are actively involved and their willingness to contribute. A sense of feeling able to influence events, being well informed, having access to key people as well as the

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

intensity of involvement. The role social capital and community play is pivotal for any town centre to maximise its potential and provide the space for people to enjoy, learn and call home. Towns that actively deliver on inclusivity, equality, accessibility through the type of homes it provides, the workplaces, the public spaces and parks are the ones that will make the kind of "noise" that reaches increasingly purposeful generations. The experience that is provided in a town centre can leave long standing perceptions of a town. By creating a town centre that is continuously changing and experimenting through pop-ups, exhibitions, festivals, and markets will leave its mark as being exciting and interesting.



Introduction

The purpose of the masterplan

It is well documented how COVID-19 has accelerated economic, social, and physical trends the UK high street was already witnessing. As the current pandemic has altered the way people live, work, shop and socialise, now is time town centres must react, and identify ways to maximise on these evolving habits. High streets need to be multi-purpose, multi-use, reflective of to the local context and relevant to the way people are now consuming. We have already seen early signs of this. Towns and councils have transformed streets into spaces where people can socialise, eat, play, and enjoy. Putting social experience above retail and returning town centres back to vibrant multi-dimensional places. Reclaiming streets back from the car is not just attracting people back in town centres but also addresses the need for healthier towns and cities via cleaner air.

The COVID-19 crisis has been described as a dry run for the climate crisis. The pandemic has exposed the fragility of the systems and governance that underpins our societies, acting as a wakeup call to prepare for a future where such challenges are increasingly common. But rather than see these as distinct challenges, we could use this pandemic to set in motion broader

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

changes to reduce carbon in our towns and cities. A more ecological approach to urbanism is key. An approach that reduces emissions and energy use, through the reuse of buildings, reducing car dependence, and by adding biodiversity.

The pandemic has also resulted in a fundamental shift in working habits, with large-scale office closures requiring many employees to work from home. The traditional 9-to-5, office-centric work model is rapidly becoming replaced with a hybrid model, giving workers increased flexibility around when and where they work and resulting in less time spent in offices.

Newbury is no exception to these societal shifts. The impacts on the town centre are most visibly demonstrated by the loss of the John Lewis Home and Debenhams stores that anchor the Parkway Centre. However, the loss of these stores, whilst impacting on footfall in the short term, provides an opportunity to revision and revitalise the centre and its relationship with the Canalside and Victoria Park to meet the changing needs of residents, visitors and indeed society in a post COVID-19 future.



Introduction

The purpose of the masterplan

There is no doubt that Newbury, as a town, has a number of key strengths. The place has a rich and colourful heritage associated with its market town identity, evident by Market Place. The town offers a range of high-quality parks, waterways and historic street patterns and architecture, including the coaching inns on Broadway and London Road, and St Nicolas Church.

Newbury caters for a range of markets, including its weekly and artisan markets, cultural organisations and independent retailers and food and drink operators at a time where national multiples are in decline.

A number of well renowned events are held in the town, helped by the location of Newbury Racecourse to the east of the centre, attracting visitors in their numbers.

The town also offers excellent road and rail connections, with immediate access to the strategic road network via the A339 and A34 and accessibility to London by train in under an hour making Newbury attractive to commuters. Workers can still take advantage of its proximity to key cities, including London, whilst benefiting

from larger residential properties offering better value for money than the likes of nearby London and Reading.

Newbury's reason for existence, like every town, is to bring people together. Whether it's to work, learn, shop, relax or simply somewhere to call home. Importantly, the role of transport should therefore be subservient to this higher purpose. Transport is there to connect people with the places they want to be – most people don't want to be travelling, they want to be somewhere. This relationship must underpin any understanding of the current role of Newbury's transport network and how it might change to better serve the town.

To establish how transport should change in the future we need to develop a Vision. Essentially, we need to decide upon the sorts of choices that we would like more people to make more of the time. It is highly unlikely that we will be able to do this directly (it is rare that it is either feasible or advisable to force people to do what we would like them to), but we can change the existing conditions in such a way that people are more likely to make these positive choices.

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

For example, we might make it easier for people to access the town centre, thereby encouraging more people to visit and spend more money there. We might improve conditions for less polluting modes of travel, thereby encouraging a mode shift that improves air quality. Or we might make the train station more accessible, thereby reducing journey times to other important towns and cities that encourages more large companies to locate in Newbury. Making these connections is important because such changes in people's travel choices invariably requires some people to make concessions. And these tend to be much more acceptable when they are seen as addressing universal concerns relating to social justice, public health, educational equality, economic justice, inclusive communities and social inclusion, rather than simply trading the convenience of one mode of travel for another.



Introduction

The purpose of the masterplan

We believe Newbury can grow successfully, but firstly must rediscover its identity as a bustling market town. Focus should be shifted towards independent retail; creative and community uses; residential and workspace. Fresh investment should be made in the core retail streets and public spaces including Market Place and the Wharf; canals and rivers; parks and cultural and historic buildings. Measures must be taken to address climate change, reducing reliance on the private vehicle and increasing uptake of sustainable modes of travel. Growth in residential development should be planned and designed to create a more diverse and inclusive town. Interventions should seek to make the town centre more relevant and accessible to all its residents and visitors, by catering for all ages.

We understand that a successful masterplan should be developed in collaboration with its local and wider community. This helps to restore civic pride, increase community involvement and ensure the overall Vision responds to the needs and desires of those most impacted, which cannot be fully understood solely through site visits and desktop studies.

This masterplan process has incorporated a wide range of consultation and engagement with over

5,000 local residents, stakeholders, business operators, landowners and both the district and local councils to ensure the Vision embraces different perspectives to deliver a more diverse, inclusive, robust and meaningful town centre.

We believe this to be Newbury's largest survey undertaken to date, both in terms of completion numbers and the time spent completing the survey, averaging around 25 minutes – proof of the community's enthusiasm to have their views on the town heard.

The process has sought to identify the key issues, challenges and opportunities preventing Newbury from fulfilling its full potential for growth and has worked with the town to embrace opportunities to revitalise the centre and to ensure the Newbury is well-positioned as a forward facing, thriving destination that can withstand future challenges presented by this continuously-evolving future.

The structure of the following document therefore presents the current conditions of Newbury, the aspirations of its community and a long-term Vision and masterplan proposals to deliver transformative change based on consensus.

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan



Any successful masterplan requires a robust methodology that is strictly adhered to throughout the duration of the project. The methodology has been underpinned by a 2-stage approach, split down into four separate stages.

Stage 1A - Launch, Baseline & Key Issues

The purpose of this stage has been to generate a ‘whole town’ understanding of the project. The team has engaged with local press and media to raise the profile of the project and create a ‘buzz’, involving the whole town, not just the ‘usual crowd’. It has involved a combination of baseline evidence review, desktop information gathering and site visits to provide us with a practical insight of the issues and opportunities. However, engaging with the community has been invaluable to provide us with a robust, meaningful picture of the key priorities and focus areas on which to base the Vision and masterplan.

Stage 1B - Vision & Evidence Base

The baseline findings of the engagement exercise have then been analysed and a draft Vision has been prepared to respond to the outcomes of Stage 1A. The Vision has identified how it responds to the specific needs of local residents and businesses, how it responds to wider trends and challenges and how it enhances the distinctive market town character of Newbury.

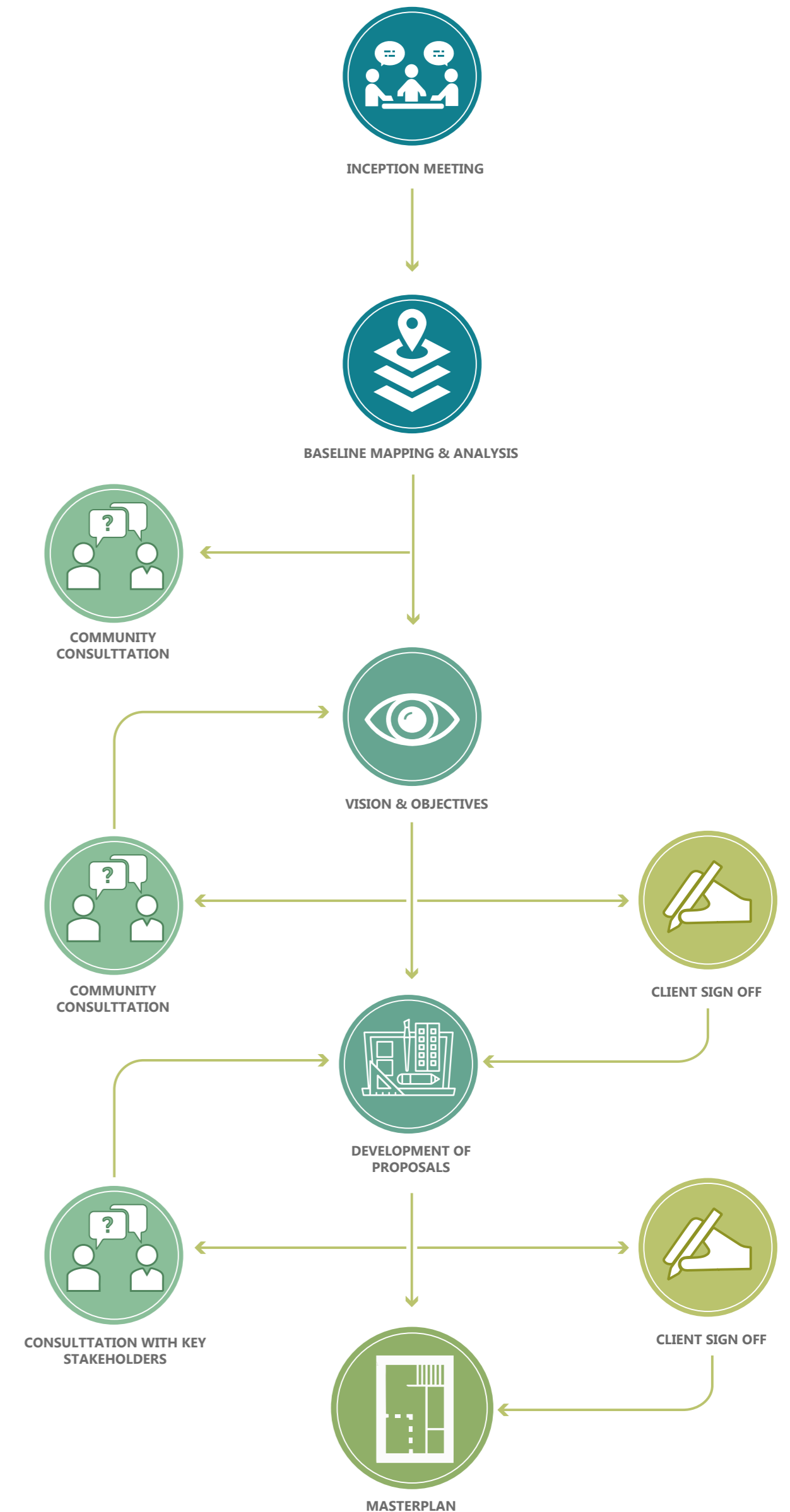
Having been tested with a number of key stakeholders including West Berkshire District Council and the Newbury Town Council, the draft Vision has been made publicly available for comment as part of the second round of public consultation and engagement. Analysis of the feedback received has resulted in the Vision being further refined ahead of Stage 2.

Stage 2A: Presentation & Refinement of Proposals

A series of deliverable proposals have been designed to achieve the Vision objectives. The team have undertaken an iterative and collaborative process to refine each proposal with key stakeholders and to devise ‘optimal’ proposals, rather than ‘preferred’ proposals.

Stage 2B: Action plans, Funding & Delivery

This stage has involved finalising the proposals and confirming the overall masterplan for the town centre based on the findings from the previous stages and the stakeholders’ needs and aspiration shaped through extensive consultation. The final document advises on the short, medium and longer-term actions required to deliver the Vision and identify potential funding sources to deliver the specific proposals.



Introduction

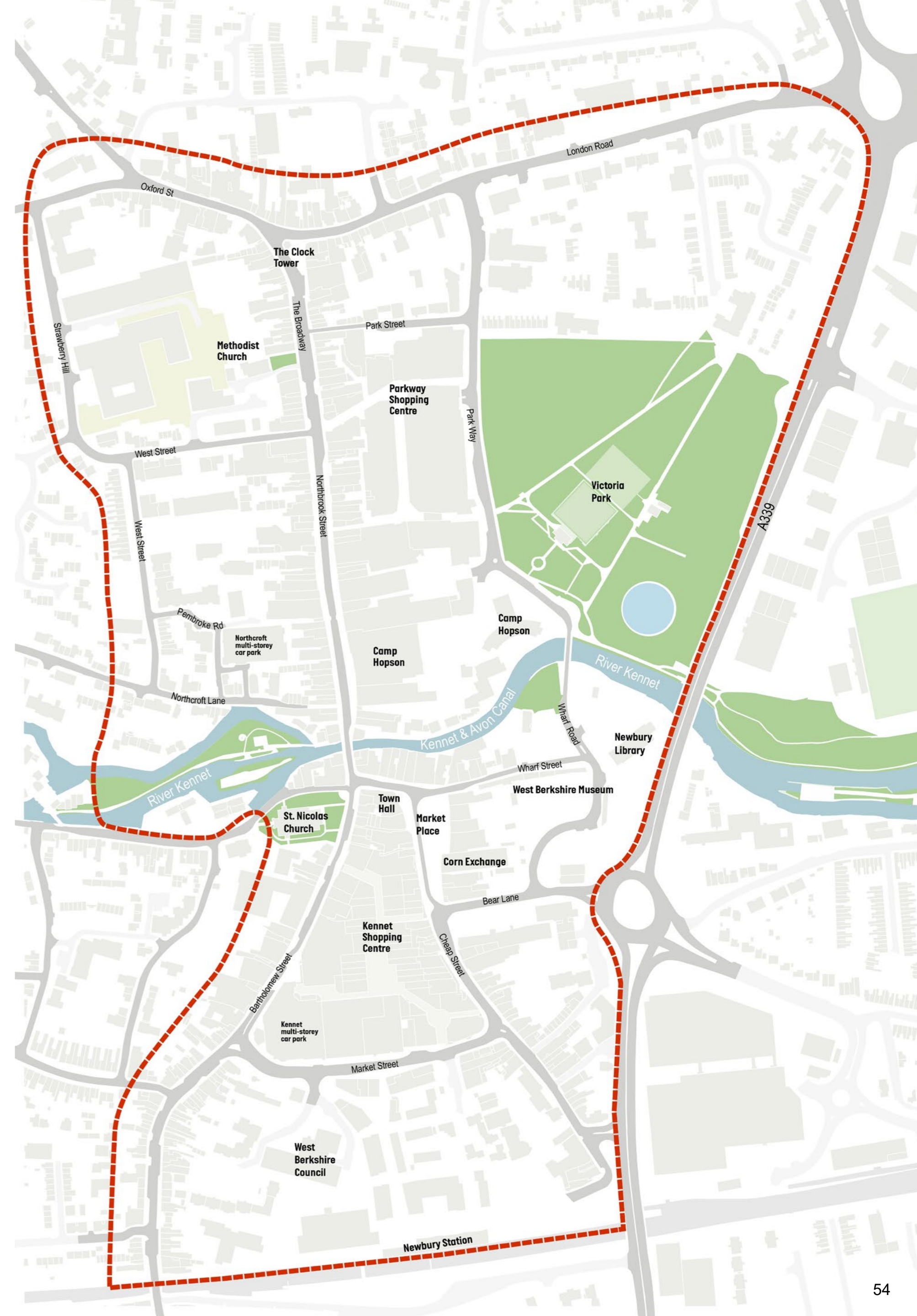
Study Area

The Study Area focuses on the town centre of Newbury, centred around the ‘Crossroads’ where Bridge Street crosses the Kennet and Avon Canal. The challenges facing town centre retail have resulted in the decline of high streets across the UK, evident by rising town centre vacancy rates and reduced footfall.

Consequently, over time, town centres’ reliance on retail has had a detrimental impact on their functionality. As mentioned in Beyond Retail Taskforce’s report ‘Beyond retail: Redefining the shape and purpose of town centres’, town centres must be rebalanced and repurposed to deliver a range of different and complementary uses, including community, leisure, commercial and residential.

In Newbury, these opportunities to deliver multifunctional uses are not confined to the main retail streets currently perceived as the town centre street network, specifically Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street, Market Place and Cheap Street. Instead, this masterplan embraces the opportunity to extend this network of streets within the existing geographical limits of the town centre to increase opportunities for social interaction, economic growth and community activities.

The masterplan will seek to improve connections through to the Wharf, the Canal and create better linkages through to Victoria Park, to make the park feel more integrated within the centre, as well as improving accessibility to Newbury’s Lanes and Yards.



An extensive consultation process including two public surveys, receiving a combined total of over 5,000 responses, as well as a series of conversations and workshops with local stakeholders, businesses, resident groups, students, and other local organisations, have helped shape this Vision and masterplan.

The survey results highlight that those who know Newbury best, those that live, and work in the town are welcoming of change. Out of the 4,095 respondents to the initial public survey, only 182 people wished for the town to stay as it is.

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 characteristics. Residents value Market Place, Northbrook Street and St Nicholas Church, the canalside, the parks and green spaces. 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 public survey highlights that Newbury is valued as a mid-sized market town, with a good range of town centre amenities, and convenient access to both urban centres (London, Reading and Bristol) and rural environments. But it also emphasises several weaknesses in the town centre, and a desire to address them. These 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.



Public

Initial online public survey
 7th December 2020 - 31st January 2021

4095 responses

Draft Vision survey
 28th June - 31st July 2021

1083 responses

Draft Vision public engagement
 22nd July 2021

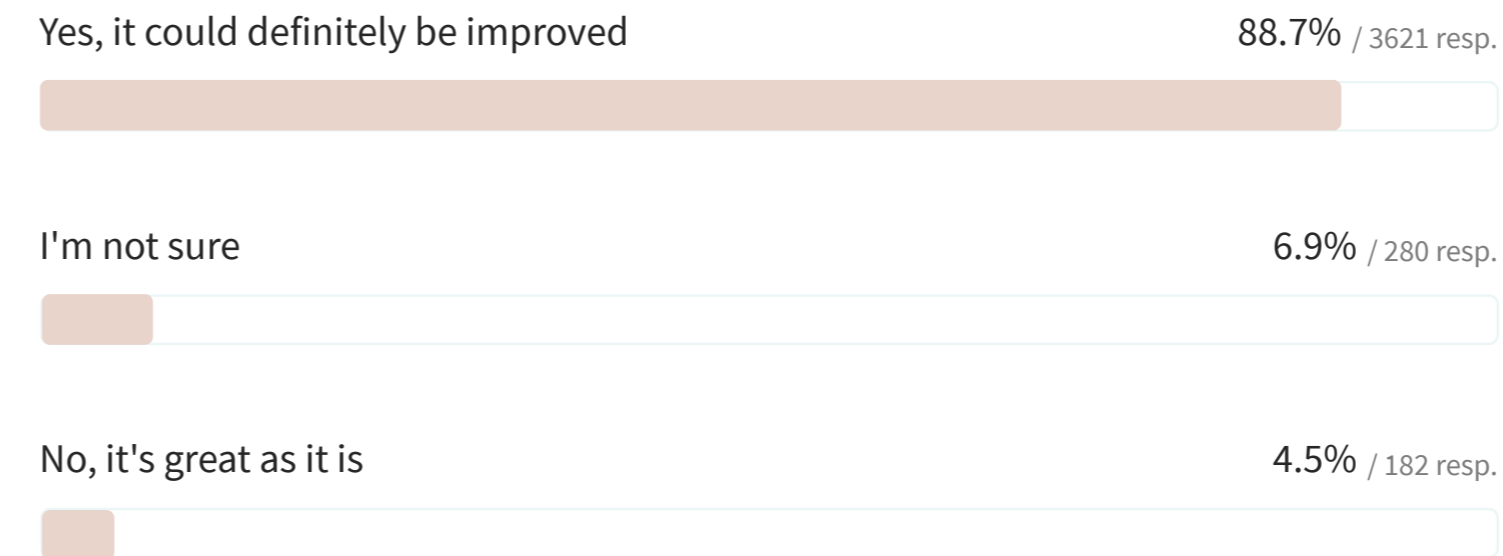
Stakeholder

Discussions & workshops with:

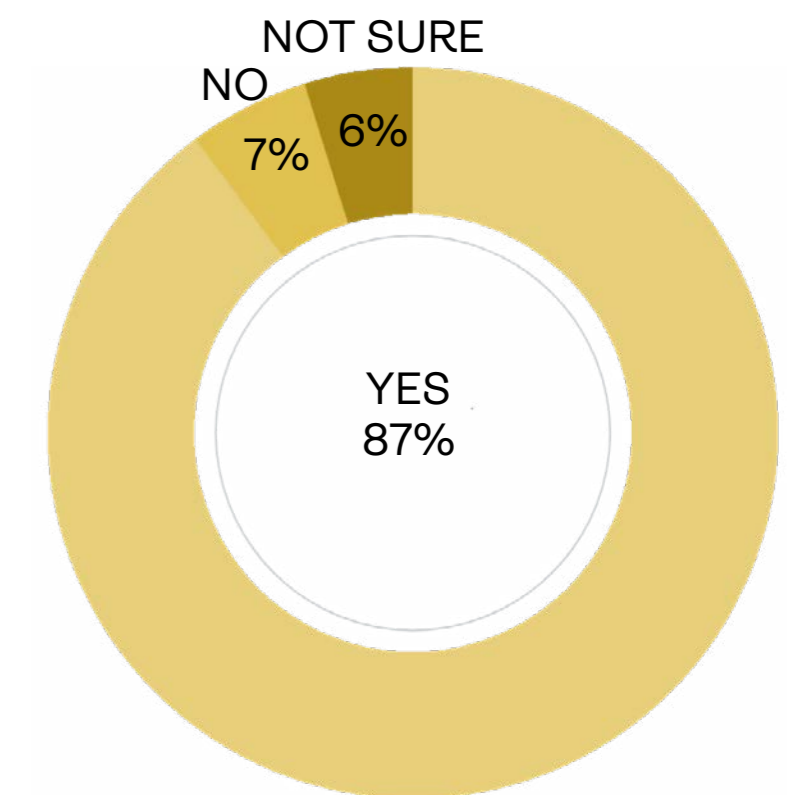
- Newbury BID
- Berkshire Youth
- Owners of Parkway Shopping Centre
- Greenham Common Trust
- Corn Exchange
- Watermill Theatre
- Newbury City Arts
- College Students



DO YOU THINK NEWBURY TOWN CENTRE COULD BE BETTER?



DO YOU AGREE WITH THE KEY OBJECTIVES/
 PRIORITIES FOR NEWBURY TOWN CENTRE?



Key Messages

- There are a wide variety of favourite places within the town centre, with independent shops and restaurants, cultural venues, and green spaces being favoured over large shopping destinations such as Parkway. This is in line with the national trend for multi-purpose town centres that offer a range of experiences alongside retail.
- Young people are more likely to visit the town during the day to eat and drink but are less likely to visit for a specific cultural activity. This is likely a result of a lack of cultural activities currently, as their desire for improved cultural space and importantly their desire for more 'spaces for young people to hang out' was nearly 50% compared to 22% of the wider population.
- People living locally use the town centre more in the evening, walk more, visit more often, and spend more. People living close to the town centre particularly benefit the evening economy.
- Overall reliance on the car is 66% (people driving or being driven) but for people outside Newbury it is almost 90%. By comparison – for those living in Newbury it is a reasonably even split between driving and walking/cycling. This shows that we can shift local people away from the car, particularly with a big increase in town centre living.
- Young people currently are more likely to visit a few times per month rather than a few times per week, as opposed to the overall response which was equally split between a few times a week, once a week and a few times per month.
- Local residents are more supportive of Northbrook Street being permanently pedestrianised.
- Top 5 priorities include more local and independent shops, cafes and restaurants, more green space and access to the canal, better spaces for public events and festivals, more street furniture and planting. All this backs up national surveys that show a shift towards an importance of green spaces, al fresco dining and a shift to independent retail.
- U25s top four priorities are spaces for young people to hang out, more independent shops, more green space and access to the canal, and more independent cafés and restaurants.

Status and structure of the masterplan

The Vision and masterplan have come out of an inclusive design process, which has engaged all stakeholders of Newbury, to create a common sense of direction that responds directly to the needs and wants of the local community. However, this report has little to no weight in the statutory town planning process. In order to attract weight, the document must be turned into a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will enable the District Council to apply weight to the objectives and policy guidance within it to successfully implement the vision for Newbury and the placemaking and masterplan proposals, to ensure Newbury serves as a multi-functional centre, well placed to respond to change for years to come. The SPD will also outline principles that must be followed by developers bringing forward proposals within the town centre.

Following the public examination and formal adoption of the Local Plan Review (anticipated in Winter 2022/23), the draft SPD will be subject to a formal six week round of consultation undertaken by West Berkshire District Council prior to adoption. Once adopted, the SPD will set the formal planning framework for the future regeneration and development of the town centre. At the time of writing, we anticipate the adoption of the SPD in 2023.



2

NEWBURY TODAY ~ POLICY AND ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Planning Policy

Local planning policy for Newbury is contained within the adopted Development Plan: the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2006 – 2026), adopted in July 2012, alongside the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document, adopted in May 2017, and the saved policies of the Local Plan 1991-2006, amended in 2012 and 2017.

The Council have begun a review of their Local Plan to cover the period up to 2037, and their emerging Draft Plan was published in December 2020. Adoption of the Local Plan Review 2020 – 2037 was scheduled for December 2022, however the process had been delayed due to revisions to national planning policy in July 2021.

The Core Strategy is based on a number of key strategic objectives, including to support housing growth by delivering at least 10,500 homes by 2026 and ensuring the provision of affordable and market housing to meet local needs. The Core Strategy seeks to support economic growth, whilst ensuring that the infrastructure needs (including community services and facilities) of the district are met. Local policy seeks to deliver vibrant town centres that meet a range of shopping needs. The Core

Strategy aims to create a strong network of well-connected, multifunctional green spaces and deliver a sustainable transport network, prioritising walking, cycling and public transport in accordance with the district’s focus on tackling climate change. Finally, future development must protect, conserve and enhance the local distinctive character, heritage and identity of the district.

Spatial Strategy

The Core Strategy sets out a clear vision for Newbury:

- Newbury will retain its traditional market town heritage whilst undergoing infrastructure improvements and development and renewal or commercial use and housing, to create a vibrant 21st century centre.
- Newbury will continue to fulfil its key role as the administrative centre and major town centre for the district, with a wide range of retail, employment, leisure and community services and facilities.
- Newbury’s accessibility in terms of access to rail and to the strategic road network will mean that it remains a key focus for business investment and development.

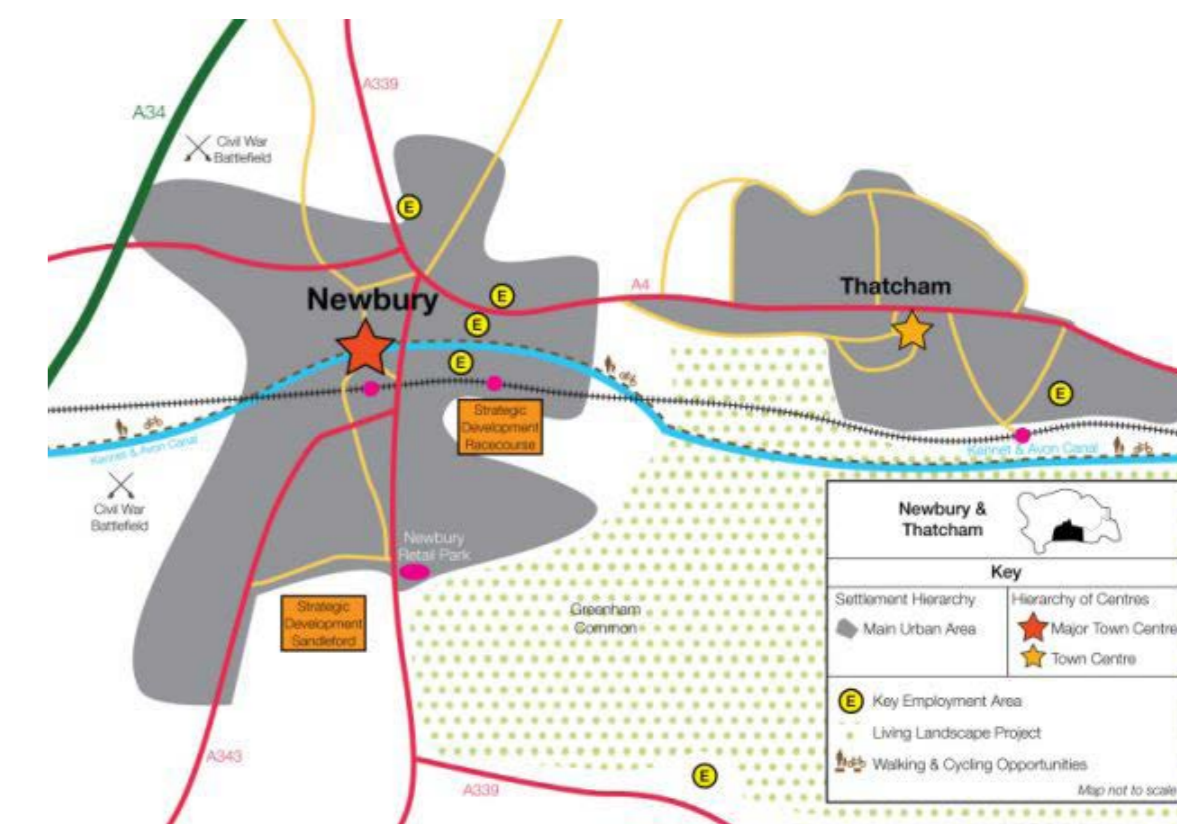
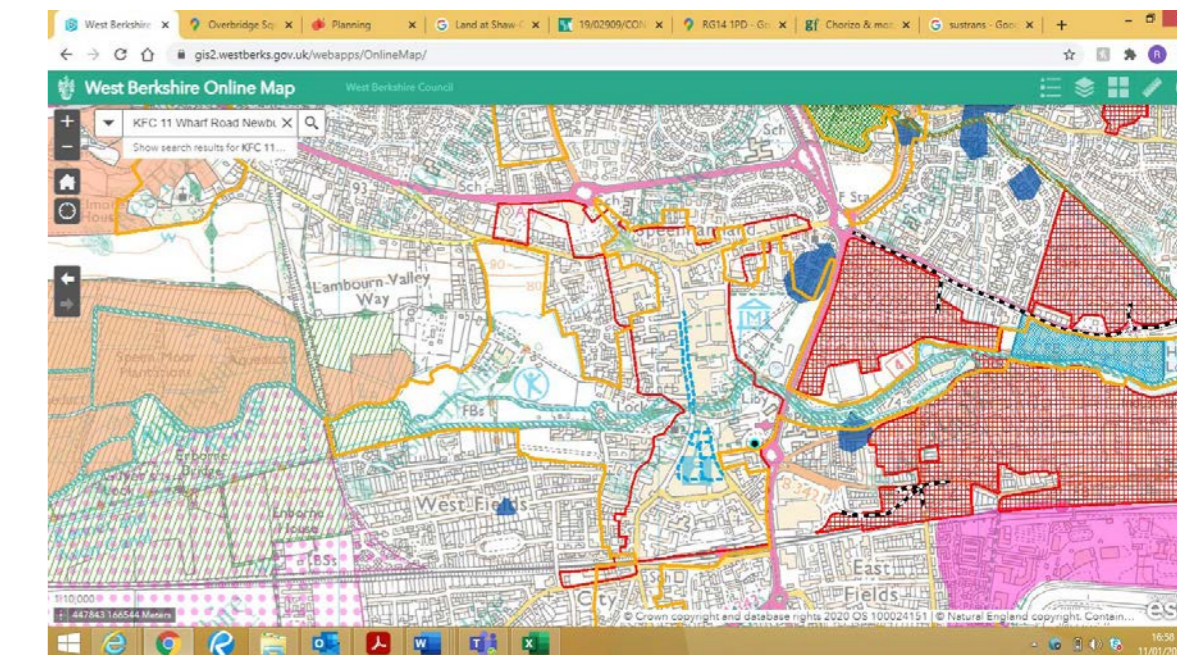
- Newbury will build on its existing strengths and historic legacy to reinforce its district identity and differentiate its shopping centre from other town centres in the region.

- Tourism will play a bigger part in the town’s economy.

- Open spaces will be better linked to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists within the town and to improve public access to countryside on the fringes of town which will continue to form an important recreational resource.

Specific policy relating to Newbury, particularly the town centre, supports improvements to Victoria Park, including improved linkages through to Northbrook Street to help to enhance the provision of open space in the town centre. The Wharf area will also be enhanced and developed as an extension to the cultural quarter of the Market Place, providing new open space and becoming a focus for cultural activities and outdoor events. The Market Place will continue to be developed as a high quality café and leisure quarter and Market Street developed as an ‘urban village’, a mixed use but predominantly residential area. Improvements will also be made to the Kennet and Avon Canal

to support its landscape and recreational role and to ensure the canal makes a strong, positive contribution to the character and heritage of the town centre.



Housing

The Core Strategy provides guidance on the scale of new housing development to be permitted within Newbury, which is anticipated to be 5,400 new homes over the plan period, particularly where there is significant development potential on previously developed land in the town centre and periphery.

Design

Local planning policy seeks to create safe environments that address crime prevention and promote community safety; ensure environments are accessible to all, whilst giving priority to pedestrians and cyclists; and make efficient use of land whilst respecting the density, character, landscape and biodiversity of the surrounding area. Opportunities to deliver a mix of uses, buildings and landscaping should be considered, and opportunities to display public art will be supported. Historic and cultural assets must be conserved and enhanced

and opportunities to display public art will be supported. Development proposals must also consider opportunities to provide, conserve and enhance biodiversity and create linkages between green spaces and wildlife corridors where possible.

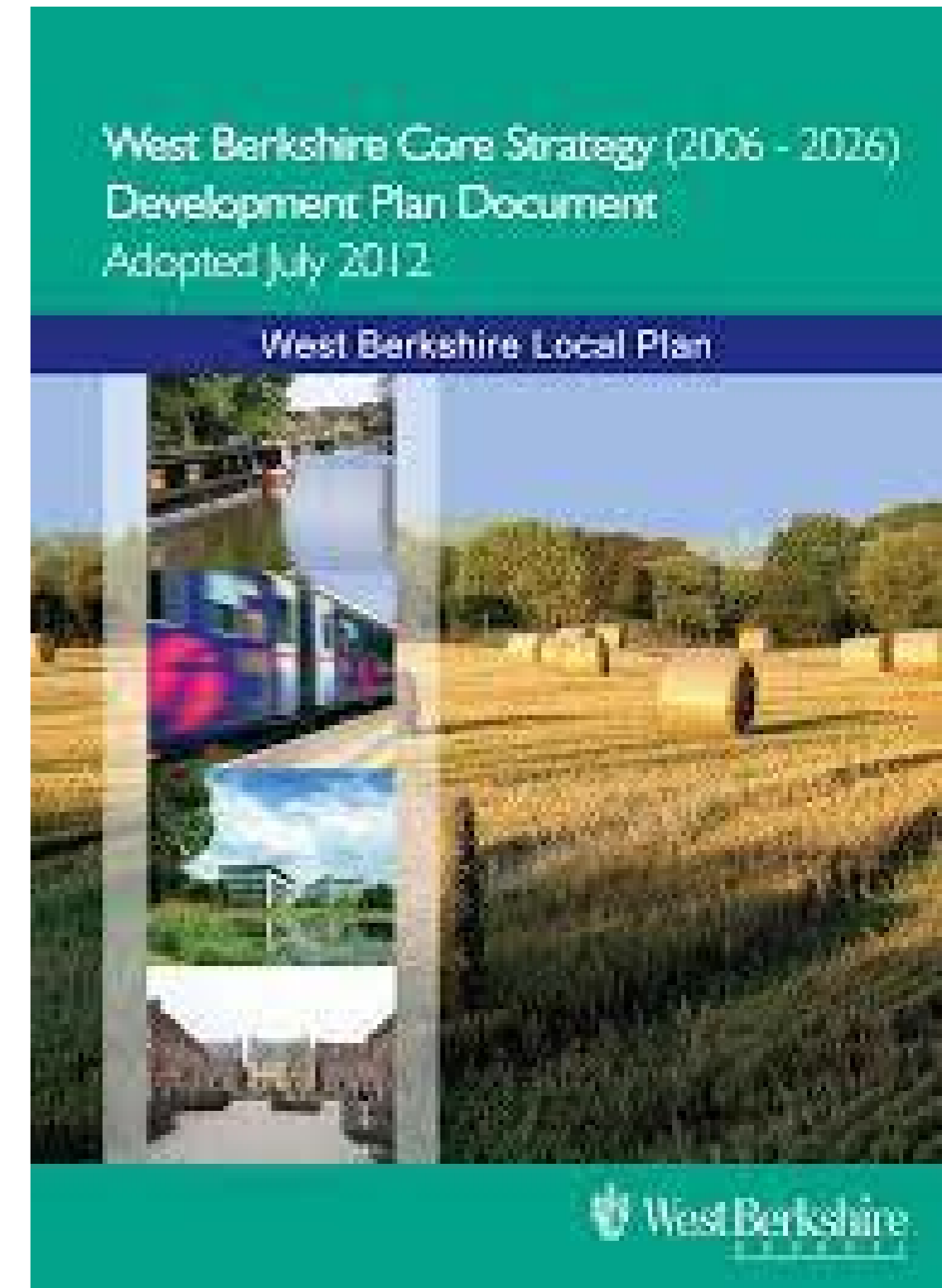
Transport and Accessibility

Demand for travel across Newbury will be managed and accessibility to sustainable transport opportunities increased by improving choice to a range of different transport modes. Additionally, measures to improve and manage flows along the A339 and A4 will be supported. Local planning policy also supports the provision of a range of facilities associated with different transport modes, including public transport, walking, cycling and parking provision, and seeks to promote opportunities for healthy and safe travel, minimise the impact of all forms of travel on the environment and mitigate the impact on the local transport network and strategic road network

Heritage and Historic Environment

Newbury Town Centre is allocated within a Conservation Area, and consequently, any proposals must accord with the Newbury Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal, which is currently being prepared. Opportunities will be taken to support and enhance Newbury's townscape whilst conserving and enhancing the centre's designated and non-designated heritage assets. Existing 'eyesore' buildings may provide redevelopment opportunities and improving the appearance of key gates to the town to enhance Newbury's identity will be supported.

However, regard must be given to the sensitivity of the area to change, ensuring that new development is appropriate in terms of location, scale and density in the context of the existing settlement form, pattern and character.



Green Infrastructure

The Core Strategy aims to protect and enhance the District’s existing green infrastructure, by providing for high quality and multifunctional open spaces of an appropriate size, whilst enhancing links to the existing green infrastructure network.

Retail and Commercial Uses

Any proposals for the change of use from retail uses to other uses within the primary shopping frontages of Newbury, specifically a portion of Northbrook Street and the area occupied by the Kennet Centre, will not be supported by the Council where they would result in a concentration of non-retail uses that would harm the viability of Newbury’s town centre.

In relation to the town’s commercial uses, Newbury will be the main focus for business development over the plan period to ensure the

vitality of the District’s economy is maintained. Additionally, the emerging Local Plan Review states that new office and retail development will be directed to Newbury Town Centre. The Council will also support proposals in town centres which incorporate local community and cultural uses, to support the vibrancy and economic sustainability of these centres.

Flood Risk

Due to the location of the Kennet & Avon Canal, that runs through the centre of Newbury, a large portion of the town centre, whilst benefiting from Flood Defences, is located in Flood Zone 3, particularly north of the Canal and south of London Road.

Socio-Economic Overview

- Newbury has a total population of just over 42,000, which has increased by 19% between 2011 and 2020.
- 19%% of Newbury’s population is aged 65 and over, up 25% since 2011.
- Incomes are relatively high in Newbury, with the total annual household income averaging £51,880.
- The majority of Newbury’s population are either in very good or good health (84.4%), which is slightly higher than the regional average for the south east (83.6%).
- Although slightly below the regional average of 74%, levels of economic activity are relatively high in Newbury, with 71.1% of the town’s economically active population (aged between 16 and 74) in employment.
- The majority of Newbury’s residential properties are owned, equating to 62%.
- The area maintains low levels of deprivation

Demographics

According to the mid-year estimates published by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) in 2020, 42,083 people live in Newbury. 60% of the population are of working age (between 18 and 64), marginally higher than the regional average for the south east. 19% of Newbury’s population is aged 65 and over, up 25% since 2011.

Economy & Employment

In recent decades, Newbury has seen significant growth in the technology, research and creative sectors, supported by the market town's prime location along the M4 corridor. The 2018 Tech Nation Report identified Newbury as leading Britain's tech boom on the basis of its digital density, 15 times higher than that of London, and consequently the town is becoming the most tech specialised local economy in the UK.

According to an article published by the fDi, a world-leader in investment promotion and economic development solutions, Newbury featured in its European Cities and Regions of the Future 2020/21. Based on its economic potential, human capital and lifestyle, cost effectiveness, connectivity and business friendliness, the town was ranked fifth in the Micro European Cities of the Future and ranked ninth in the Northern European Cities of the Future.

The District's recent Economic Development 2020-2023 also highlights the town's recognition as having more economic potential

than any other UK small town. Newbury will be a focus for the district's economic development, helping to create a sustainable environment for both existing and future businesses to prosper.

Since 1985, Newbury has been home to Vodafone's UK headquarters and technology hub for the UK, and across its 5 different business parks, supports a wide variety of businesses including Micro Focus, Newbury Investments, Hitachi, Rebound Technology and Sovereign Housing. In Newbury, employment sections focused on finance, business services, ICT and administration account for 33.8% of jobs, with the largest subsector, Information and Communication, accounting for 13.5% of total employment.

However, over recent years, Newbury has seen a decline in town centre office stock, a large proportion of which has been lost to office to residential conversion through permitted development rights, and jobs, which have moved to out of town locations. As a result, Newbury's office market is characterised predominantly by more traditional, outdated, non-purpose built

office space above existing town centre retail units and out of town centre business parks, offering larger, more modern facilities, including at Newbury Business Park. Since the end of 2018, this has created a Town Centre/Out of Town office take-up split of 13%/87%.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted office working practices for the longer-term, normalising remote working and many companies are now embracing a more 'hybrid' way of working. Employees have developed new expectations around flexibility, working conditions and work-life balance and a hybrid model is now emerging where companies are balancing the efficiencies and benefits gained by remote working with the benefits of social interaction and collaboration created by working with others in an office environment. A large number of organisations are rethinking their working arrangements. Many companies no longer require large city centre offices and are reaping the cost-savings in favour of a more flexible workspace model in more suburban locations.

Research by Workthere shows that the popularity of flexible office spaces in suburban locations outside of city centres is expected to rise as a result of an increased work-life balance and reduced commuting time. Their research points to the fact that town centres with a poor cultural and creative base are less likely to attract these businesses. It is important that Newbury builds on its cultural momentum, to firstly attract co-work space operators to Newbury, similar to the local operator Myworksport, who have identified a requirement for up to 20,000sqft of new serviced office space within Newbury town centre, but also attract start-ups, businesses and people looking for occasional workspace closer to home to occupy these spaces.

These operators will benefit from the town's relatively high levels of employment, with 71% of the town's economically active population (aged between 16 and 74) being in employment, only slightly lower than the regional average of 74%.

Housing Market

Newbury benefits from a strong residential market, with average house prices standing at slightly over £400,000, up £50,000 on the District's average. Demand for properties has increased by 15% since July 2020, with the market benefiting from the rise in people moving out of London and other cities within commuting distance of Newbury to take advantage of the increased flexibility of emerging working patterns. When once there was a desire to live close to your place of work, buyers are increasingly looking for larger properties in more suburban locations, combined with more open space and affordability, whilst still benefiting from good transport connections into business districts, making Newbury an attractive location. However, stakeholder feedback from Berkshire Youth highlighted that rising house prices in Newbury are pricing out locals who are increasingly unable to afford properties in the area.

Newbury has a variety of residential streets in the town centre, within close proximity to the main shopping streets. These are typically concentrated with semi-detached and terraced

dwelling built in the 18th and 19th century, as well as more recent higher-density apartment buildings. The concentration of flats will continue to increase, proven by the approved new-build and proposed pipeline residential development within the town centre, including Grainger's 232 dwelling Market Street development currently under construction, the proposed housing as part of Lochailort's Eagle Quarter redevelopment and the London Road Industrial Estate.

The proposed redevelopment of Kennet Centre, if approved, will see residential units delivered above retail, similar to the mixed-use Parkway scheme, completed in 2011, which delivered 147 residential apartments alongside 37 affordable units above the existing shopping centre. The town also benefits from a number of schemes specifically catering for Newbury's older population, including Churchill Retirement Living's Avonbank Lodge on West Street, as well as Eden Retirement Living's Pearl House on Bartholomew Street.

The volume of new-build and pipeline residential developments either proposed or under construction proves the popularity of Newbury for developers, attracted by strong house prices and increasing property demand. The vacant Bayer office premises, which has recently been sold, has prior approval for the building's conversion into 191 flats through permitted development rights. David Wilson Homes also has a strong interest in Newbury, and is currently delivering schemes at Cherry Blossom Meadow, The Chase at Newbury Racecourse and Willows Grange.

Given the scale of development coming forward across the town, it is important that the residential offer within the centre continues to cater for all needs, by delivering a greater diversity of dwelling types and tenures, including affordable units for first-time buyers, to help to create a liveable, thriving and sustainable centre.

Retail, Community and Leisure Market

Newbury boasts a traditional market town heritage and alongside Reading, is the focus for retail and commercial leisure activity within the district. These operators are supported by the Newbury Business Improvement District (BID), which was set up in 2012 by local businesses for local businesses to enable town centre operators to continue to thrive. The BID not only aims to support existing and new businesses but also seeks to increase footfall and engagement with these businesses through positioning and promotion of their ‘Visit Newbury’ brand, to establish Newbury as a go-to destination for both businesses and visitors.

Similar to the whole of the UK, Newbury has seen a decline in national high street chain retailers and restaurants, including Debenhams, John Lewis Home, Bella Italia, ASK and Café Rouge, as shifting consumer preferences heightened by the pandemic move to online purchasing and more ethical, local consumerism supporting local, independent businesses.

Northbrook Street and Parkway, at the northern end of the centre, represent the core area of Newbury’s retail offer, and alongside Bridge Street, are allocated as primary shopping frontage within local planning policy. These areas contain the highest proportion of national retailers, including Hotel Chocolat, Marks and Spencer and H&M.

The Kennet Centre, located at the southern end of the town, provides a second shopping centre facility, however it is older and noticeably more dated than Parkway and provides a lower quality retail offer. However, a planning application is awaiting determination for the redevelopment of the Kennet Centre to be rebranded as the Eagle Quarter. If approved, the scheme will reduce the overall volume of retail floorspace, whilst offering new flexible-use commercial uses of varying sizes to attract a mix of artisan and local operators, supported by flexible terms, to complement the national multiple retail offering more concentrated in the northern end of the town centre.

This independent-focused model has been successfully trialled by the Kennet Centre’s Asset Management, Rivington Hark, who have seen the Kennet Centre’s occupancy rates increase from around 65% to 95% over the last year, attributable to short term lets offered to local independents until the Centre closes in 2023.



Newbury’s market town heritage is evident in the town’s regular markets, including the Farmers’ Market and Artisan Markets, held in the Market Place. These provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to shop ethically from independent businesses and ensures the long history of the Markets, believed to have been around since Anglo-Saxon times, is retained.

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. The UK’s ‘experience economy’ is on the rise and Newbury must increase its provision of independent food and drink operators, and cultural activities to take full advantage of the economic benefits.

The leisure use provision in the centre notably includes the Corn Exchange Theatre in Market Place and the Vue Cinema in the Kennet Centre. Whilst there are a number of chain restaurants dispersed throughout the town centre, the Newbury BID recognise that greater dining successes now lie within the independent sector,

and whilst local operators make up the majority of the food and drink offering in the town, more financial incentives need to be in place to help these operators establish themselves and support the economic sustainability of the town.

Community uses in the town include the Waterside Centre, and the Museum and Library, both situated in the Wharf adjacent to the Canal. The Waterside Centre has benefited from a recent refurbishment of the building to deliver an outdoor seating area, informal social area and café. The Council have also recently appointed Shared Intelligence to carry out a Libraries Community Needs Assessment for library services across the district to better understand the current use of the facilities, whilst helping to improve and retain these vital community hubs by delivering a high-quality public experience.



Conservation

In early 2021, West Berkshire District Council instructed a Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan to be undertaken for Newbury Town Centre, with the purpose of clearly defining the area’s special architectural and historical interest; identifying ways to preserve and enhance the area’s uniqueness and providing a clear context for future development within the area with respect to heritage matters. The Appraisal is nearing completion but is not yet finalised.

As part of the Appraisal, the Town Centre Conservation Area boundary is proposed to be narrowed to concentrate on the main areas of special architectural and historic interest in the town centre. With regards to the Masterplan area, Newbury Bridge falls within the revised Town Centre Conservation Area boundary, however the Wharf and the canal to the east of the bridge falls within the proposed new Kennet and Avon Canal East Conservation Area and the area to the west of the bridge comprises part of the proposed new Kennet and Avon Canal West Conservation Area.

Public Realm

In terms of issues of direct relevance to the Masterplan, the Conservation Area Appraisal recognises the need to enhance the existing public realm, particularly by improving the town centre wayfinding to better reflect the town’s traditional character; retaining surviving historic boundary treatments; and improving pavement surfaces, including repairing traditional characterful surfaces, such as cobbles and sets.

Built form and Extensions

The Appraisal recommends that building extensions are sympathetic to the character and special interest of the Conservation Area and respectful to the character and appearance of the host building. Upward extensions of buildings will be discouraged, particularly where they would have an adverse impact on the heights, character and setting of existing buildings. There will be a presumption against the demolition of buildings that contribute positively to the Conservation Area. Any new development must respect existing building heights, should not be excessively tall or interrupt the overall roofline to restrict visibility

to key views. Additionally, schemes should be designed to re-establish historic plot sizes and scale rather than deliver large homogenous blocks and should use carefully chosen materials, forms and features that reflect the traditional character of the area.

Retail Uses

Retaining retail uses within the conservation area boundary will be encouraged wherever possible to support the economic vitality of the centre, and where changes of use are proposed, an assessment of the impact of the use on the character and sustainability of the Conservation Area will be required. However, to make the centre visually more attractive, improvements to the shopfronts of these units are encouraged, but they must respect the character of the buildings, and use traditional materials and colours that are sensitive to adjacent shopfronts. The Appraisal also recognises that parking creates urban voids, which can be repurposed or enhanced by providing public amenity space, ‘greening’ measures and planting. Improvements to Victoria Park are also encouraged by increasing planting, trees and access to public spaces.

Relationship to the Masterplan

The findings and recommendations of the Appraisal, although not formally adopted by the Council at this stage, have informed the development of the Masterplan proposals, particularly the opportunity areas identified within the Appraisal, such as improving the sense of arrival to Newbury for pedestrians through public realm improvements; enhancing the town’s interface with Victoria Park along Park Way; and promoting the sensitive redevelopment of the Kennet Centre.

NEWBURY TODAY ~ BASELINE ASSESSMENTS

Newbury has a rich heritage spanning many centuries, transforming from an early Saxon settlement into a town with the right to hold a fair and market during the 11th century. The town has evolved into a successful market town centred during the 13th century around the cloth trade, although this trade had virtually ceased by the 17th century. Newbury became an important coaching centre during the 18th and 19th centuries, due to its location on the old Bath Road and attracting those travelling from London to Bath, whilst also benefiting from its location on two intersecting roads and later the Kennet and Avon Canal.

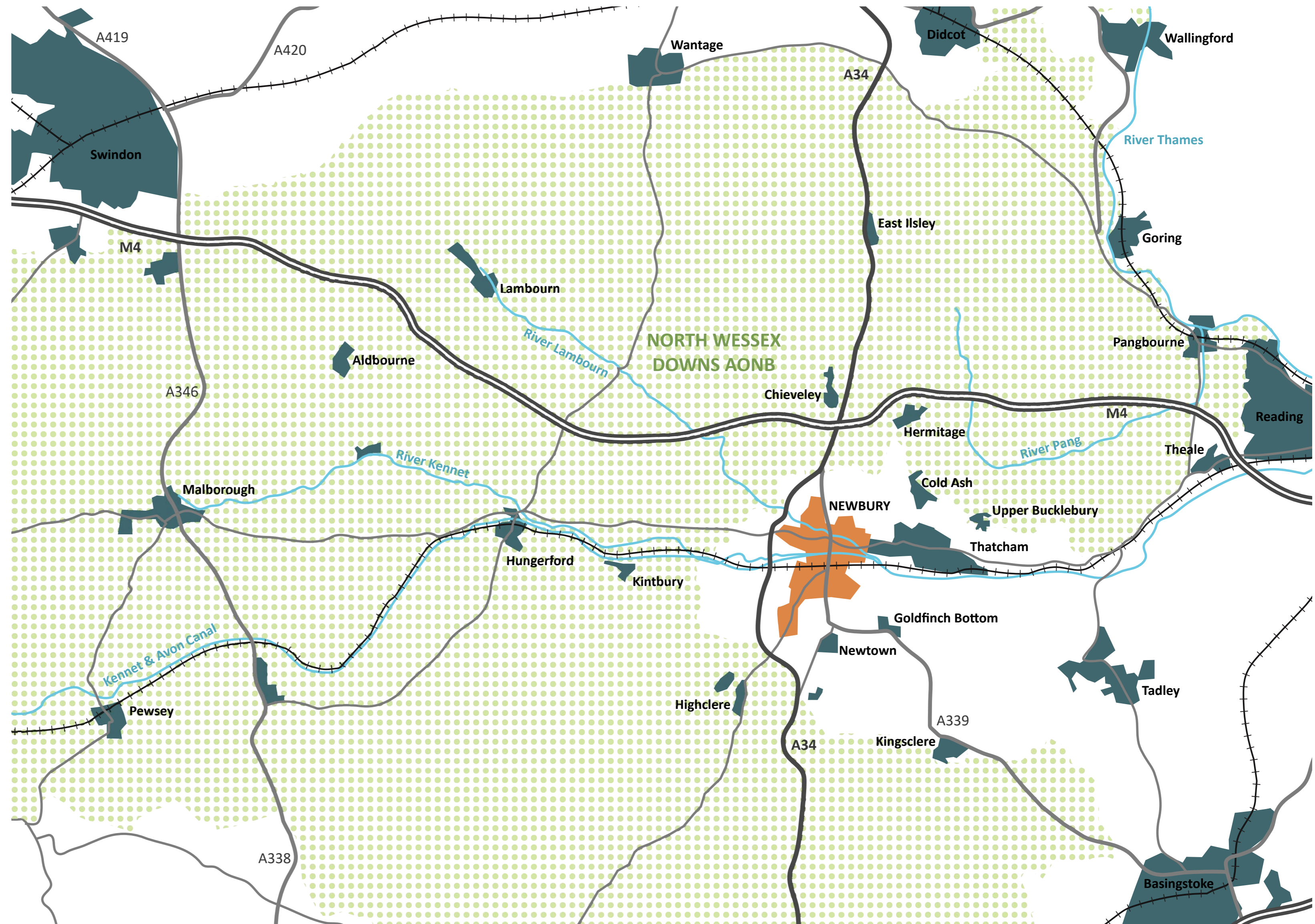
The town benefits from its historical buildings and rich architecture; green spaces and waterways; physical connections; established infrastructure; and a proud community of over 42,000 people. The following section will provide the context to the town, highlighting Newbury’s historical past and existing conditions, including the town’s urban structure and character, uses, connectivity, and socio-economic profile to help to inform the future direction of travel, whilst taking into account the planning policy context that informs future development within the town centre.



The study area reflects the Town Centre boundary as defined in the Newbury Town Plan and Design Statement. Our report does however have regard to the wider context and the different roles that Newbury town centre serves.

The Vision and masterplan need to recognise the increasing number of people that live within and immediately adjacent to the town centre, and how they are affected by any proposals.

West Berkshire District has a population of around 160,000. Whilst these areas contain local centres, alongside the town centre of Hungerford, the retail studies show that many residents within this wider rural area look to Newbury on a regular basis to meet their shopping, leisure, cultural and service needs. The town centre therefore has to ensure that it remains accessible and relevant to this population.



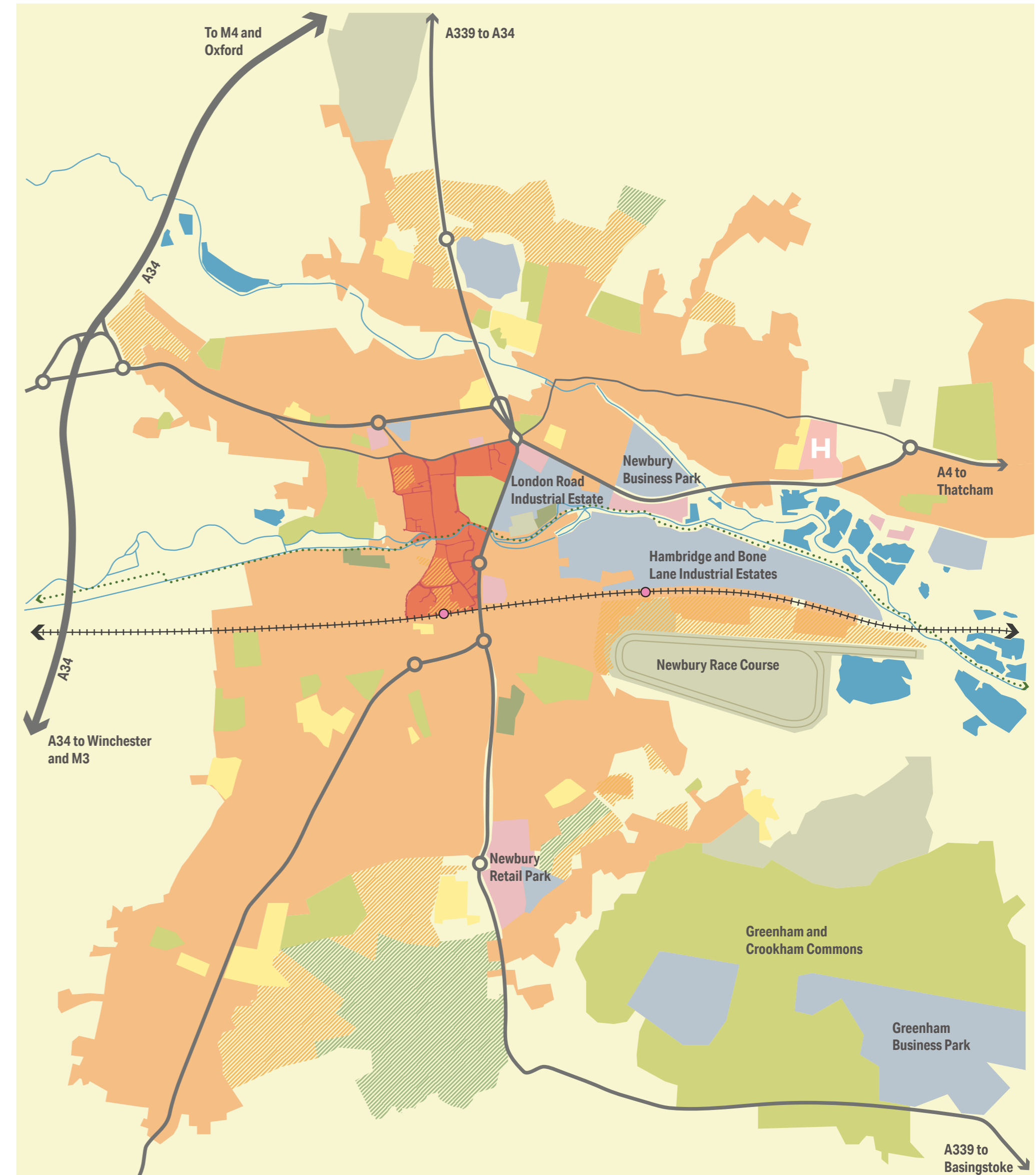
Newbury Town Urban Area

Newbury town has a population of 40,000, but for many shopping, leisure and service functions it is also the town centre for Thatcham residents. This gives it a combined population of approximately 70,000. Newbury town centre therefore needs to have regards to any needs of the population of Thatcham which are not being met by Thatcham town centre.

Although historically the major communication routes were east-west (London Road/A4, the canal/river corridor and the railway) the majority of residential growth has been north and south of the town centre. Crossing the barriers created by the railway line and the A4 corridor is therefore a factor in encouraging residents to walk and cycle into the town centre.

Employment has however been concentrated east of the town centre, between the A4 and the railway line/canal. The exception to this is the more recent development of Vodafone, located to maximise accessibility via the A339 and strategic road network.

There is a similar pattern of retail development outside the town centre, with a string of retail parks and supermarkets along the A4/railway line corridor but with the strongest competition coming from Newbury retail park located to the south along the A339 corridor.

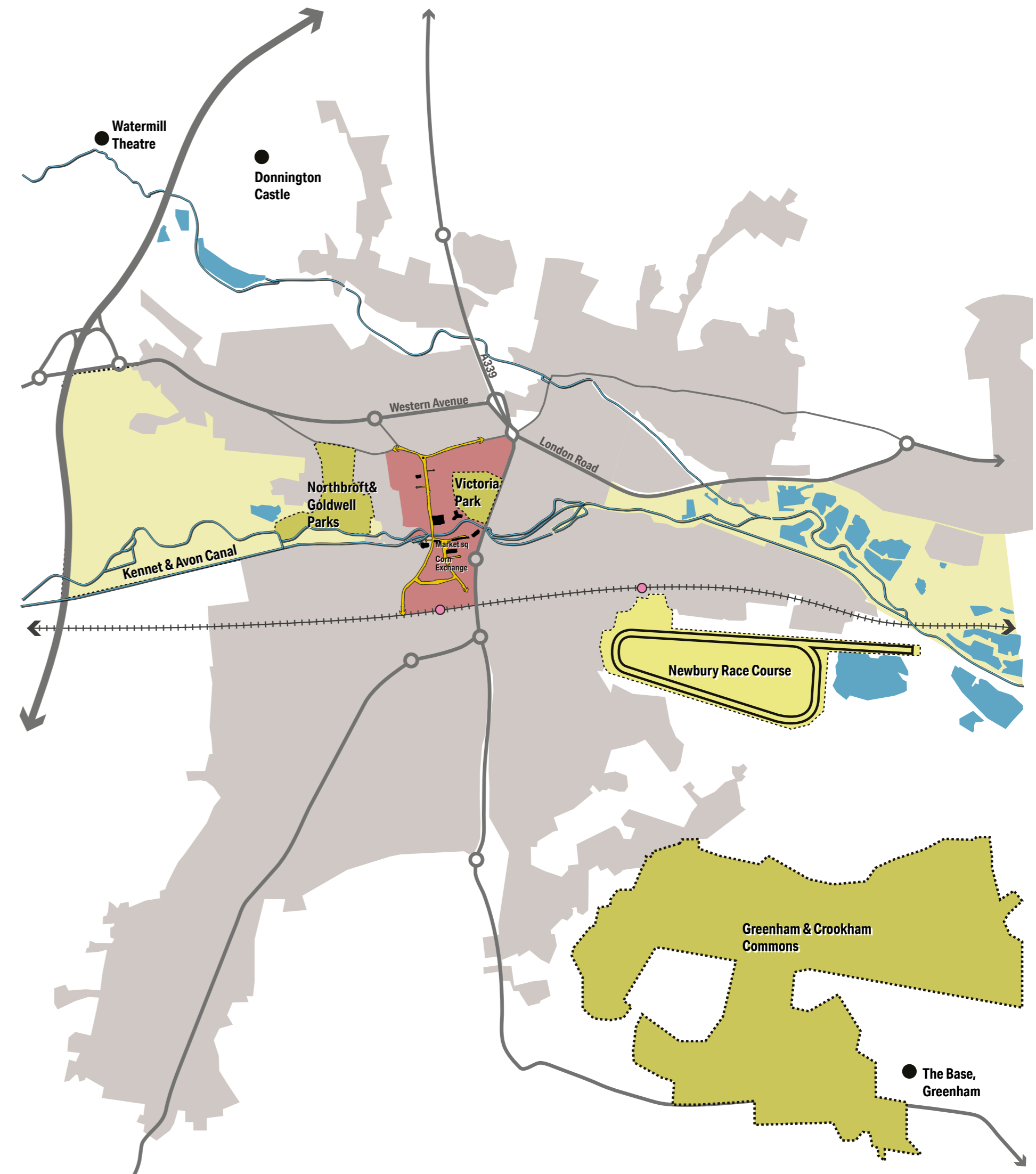


Newbury Townwide Destinations

Newbury town centre has a number of cultural, historic and key town centre attractions including the Corn Exchange, West Berkshire Museum, the Market square including its numerous artisan markets as well as the Canal and Victoria Park.

Outside of the town centre Newbury is also home to a number of venues and destinations that have the ability to attract large numbers of visitors at various times through out the year including Newbury Race Course, Greenham Common, Donnington Castle, the Watermill Theatre as well as the Kennet & Avon Canal and towpath and associated green spaces.

Improving connections, both physically and in terms of programming, and promotion across these sites will help to create a more dynamic Newbury and also help to support town centre businesses such as shops, restaurants and hotels.



Historic growth of Newbury

In Newbury historic east west connections such as the River, London Road, the Canal and Railway have brought growth and prosperity to Newbury while modern infrastructure such as the north/south A339 have perpetuated movement past the town centre and created barriers in particular for pedestrians and cyclists.

Kennet River

Newbury developed around its key crossing of the Kennet River and its role as a market town. Its focus was around the River, St. Nicolas's Church, the market square with the latter two originally joined as one space. Its historic inverted 'Y' shaped street structure shaped early in the towns history provided key routes into and supporting the market space.

London Road

The growth of Bath as a spa town perfectly placed Newbury as a over night stop halfway between London and Bath. Coaching inns opened to service the passing trade pushing the focus north of the river along London Road. Providing another strategic east -west connection.

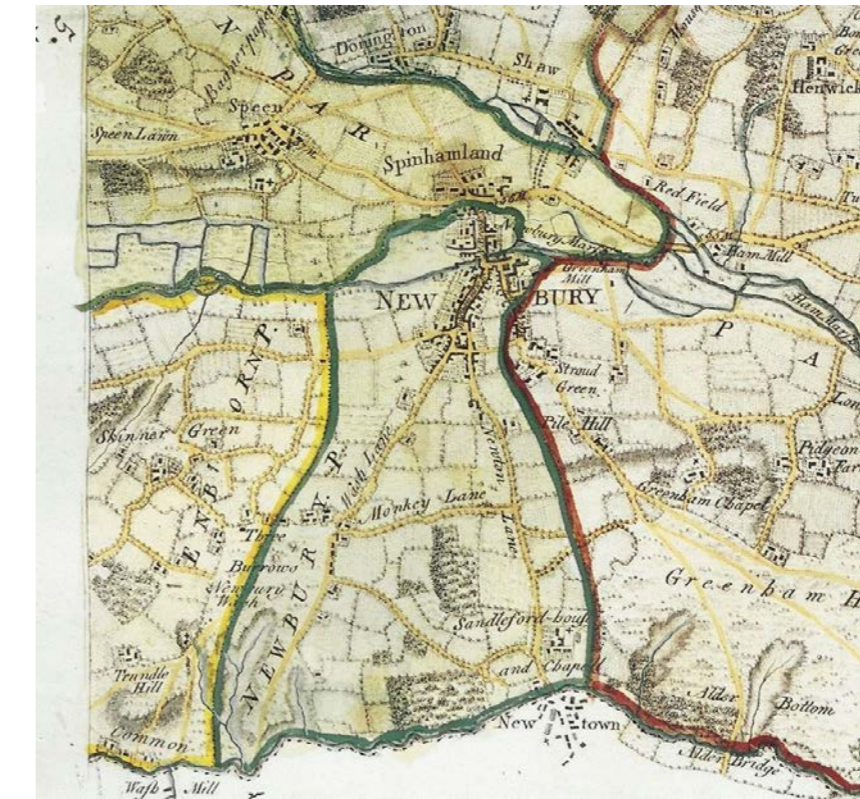
Canal / Railway

Construction of the Kennet and Avon Canal brought the focus back around the River. Development of the basin and Wharf buildings was undertaken to store bulky good and trade flourished. This was superseded by the development of the railway which sped up the movement of goods and people into Newbury again reinforcing another east-west corridor and a prominent point of arrival into the town centre.

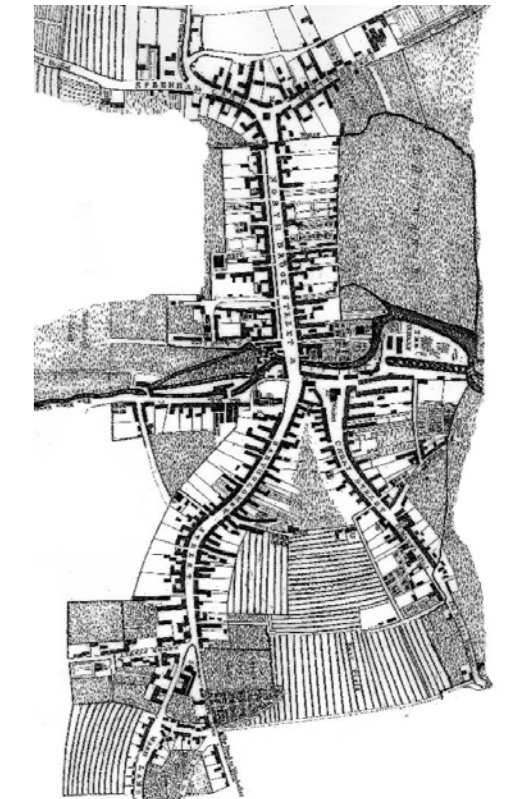
A339

The arrival of the A339 constructed between 1950's - 80's severed Cheap Street and the connection to the Market Place. It also created a corridor which allowed for people to move quickly through Newbury without the need to stop in the town centre and created a barrier along the eastern edge of the town centre.

The heritage value inherent in the town centre is recognised by the Conservation Area designation. The Council has commissioned an Appraisal of the Conservation Area and a Management Plan (CAAMP), alongside this Masterplan. The outcomes and implications of the CAAMP are reflected in the Masterplan and have been referred to in more detail earlier in this Report.



1761



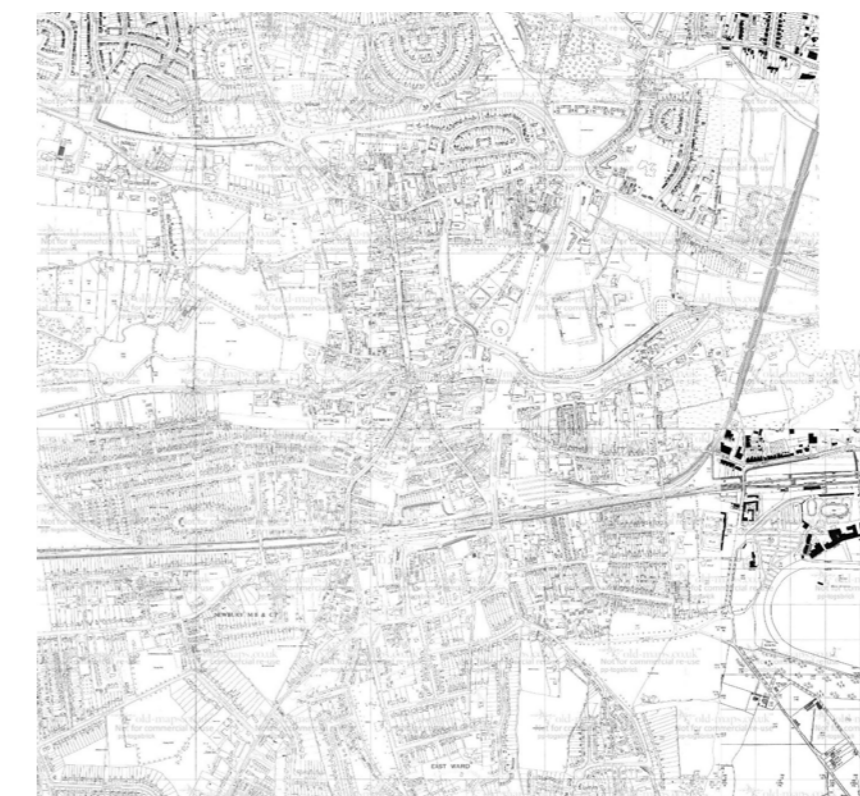
1768



1880 - 1881



1933 - 1934



1967



1982

Newbury Today

Urban structure and townscape

Town centre structure

The Nolli plan differentiates between internal spaces (within buildings), private external spaces and the public external spaces. The external (white) areas are the places through which people arrive in the town, through which they move within a town and in which they are encouraged to linger and spend time within the town. They include spaces accessible by foot, bicycle, bus, car or boat. These public spaces, together with the quality of the buildings that surround them, are the areas which shape a visitor's perception of the civic quality of a town.

The basic Nolli plan indicates large areas of external space. The key element which stands out is the scale of space at Victoria Park and the Wharf. The second element is the importance of the east-west corridor created by the canal. These two areas provide the majority of the green space within the study area.

The north-south corridor created by the A339 dominates the plan, but the parallel corridor created by Northbrook Street, Bridge Street and Bartholomew Street is also a very strong feature. Apart from the canal, the only coherent east-west route is provided by London Road/Oxford Road/Oxford Street.

Key Messages

- Victoria Park and the Wharf stand out as the most significant areas of publicly accessible space. Market Place and St Nicolas Church are notable spaces of smaller scale.

Nolli diagram.

A plan showing the relationship between built form and publicly accessible space (including streets) by presenting the former in black and the latter as a white background (or the other way round)

CABE/DETR: By Design 2000



Newbury Today

Urban structure and townscape

Town centre structure

When the traffic-dominated public areas are added to the Nolli plan, a different message emerges for Newbury. The A339 and the Wharf area no longer appear as attractive public spaces, and reflect the fact that they are dominated by through traffic and parked vehicles.

Although Victoria Park remains as an important green space, the plan shows it is surrounded on three sides by traffic dominated areas.

Apart from the grounds of St Michael's Church, the only other pedestrian friendly areas of significant scale are the core shopping streets. Outside 10am-5pm these areas are reduced to (most of) Market Place, and the privately owned by publicly accessible shopping streets within the Parkway and Kennet Centre (Eagle Quarter) developments.

Key Messages

- Newbury's public spaces are heavily impacted upon by moving or parked vehicles. Only a small area of the town centre is traffic free during the day.



Views

Due to the long linear nature of Northbrook Street and the continuous nature of the building line there are limited views into or out of the core historic area of Newbury. While there are limited views to surrounding areas the gentle curve of Northbrook Street provides interesting views in both directions along its length. This is more prominent closer to the bridge where the topography rises and falls more dramatically to cross the river.

The bridge and its raised position above the water affords fantastic open views in both directions and is the key vantage point from which to view the canal within the town. The dramatics of the view are heightened as the approaches are both enclosed suddenly opening to reveal the surrounding landscape.

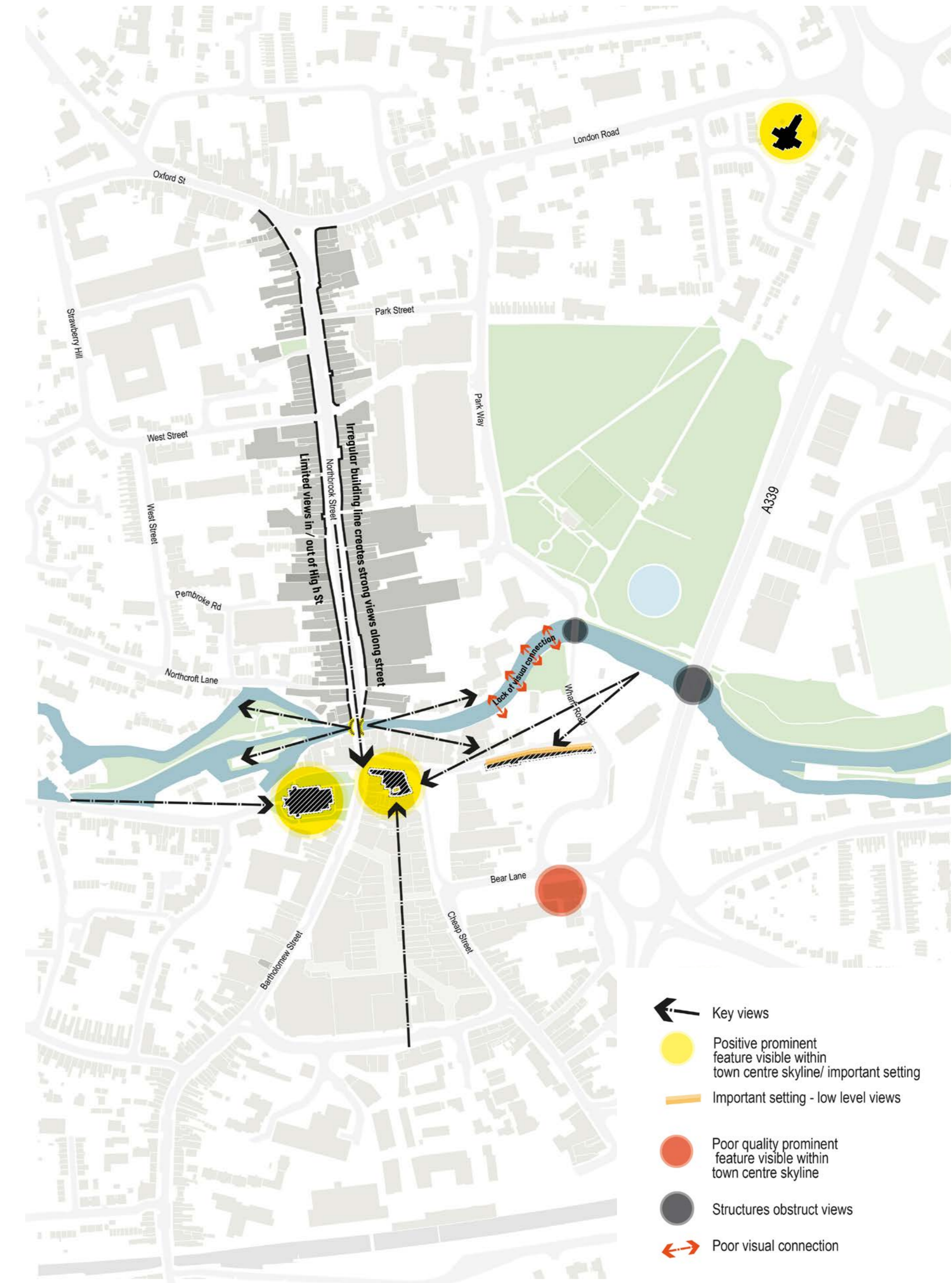
Historically there are very few tall buildings in the centre, with the maximum along core streets approximately 3 stories. This allows for strong views to key landmarks such as the Town Hall Clock Tower and the towers of both St. Nicolas and St. Joseph's. Their prominent position above the surrounding skyline making them visible from a number of vantage points.

The Museum building is another key landmark in Newbury. Its low, long linear shape is currently appreciated from the open environment of the Wharf area; however the public realm does little to reflect its importance.

The BT tower rivals the Clock and church towers for prominence on Newbury's skyline but its monolithic nature adds little to the skyline or as a welcome feature to visitors approaching on the A339.

“The views to and from Newbury Bridge are a significant feature (but) the views into and out of the historic core of the town are limited. From a distance the prominent landmarks include the towers of St Nicolas and St Joseph’s churches, the clock tower of the Town Hall and the late 20th Century telephone exchange building.”

Historic Character Study



Key Messages

- Key landmarks such as St. Nicholas and Town Hall towers create positive landmarks for the centre clearly visible from various locations around the town.
- Long linear high street limits views into and out of the space.
- Strong views from the Bridge in both directions
- Museum building is very low in scale and there are strong views towards it from the Wharf area.
- Lack of access to the southern edge of the river and over grown green spaces as well as raised bridges break up views between riverside edges making people less likely to cross the river to explore.



Street Network

The character of the town centre is defined predominantly by the core street network of Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street, the canal and Victoria Park.

As the only central street crossing of the canal, and the only shopping street providing views along the water, Bridge Street becomes a natural focal point for visitors in the town centre even though there is limited space to linger. The fact that there is only one crossing point also creates a sense of separation between areas north and south of the bridge.

Although much of Northbrook Street is pedestrianised during the day, Market Place is the only significant public space in the town centre. It is an attractive square and a focus for civic and cultural uses, food and drink, markets and other events. The library and museum are important uses to the east of Market Place, but the connections are weak and Market Place as a result can feel on the edge of the town centre.

There is a strong, north-south, linear quality to the town, but with a variety of short lanes leading off the main streets. Some of these lanes are connected to other streets or lead to attractive spaces, but many end in poor quality car parks or service areas.

The Parkway scheme creates a network of pedestrian streets east of Northbrook Street but the connections to Victoria Park remain poor, interrupted by the barrier of Park Way. There are proposals to redevelop the Kennet Centre and create a more open network of streets, connecting to the Market Street redevelopment and the rail station. The principle of the street structure is positive, but could have a potential impact on pedestrian flow in Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street.

“Newbury has two particularly strong character traits: the historic market core and the ‘garden suburbs’. The historic market core is reinforced by the historic street pattern, the character of the Market Place and the scale and materials used in the largely 18th and 19th century buildings fronting the Market Place, Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street.”

Historic Character Study



Street Character

Within the core street network, there are a variety of characters.

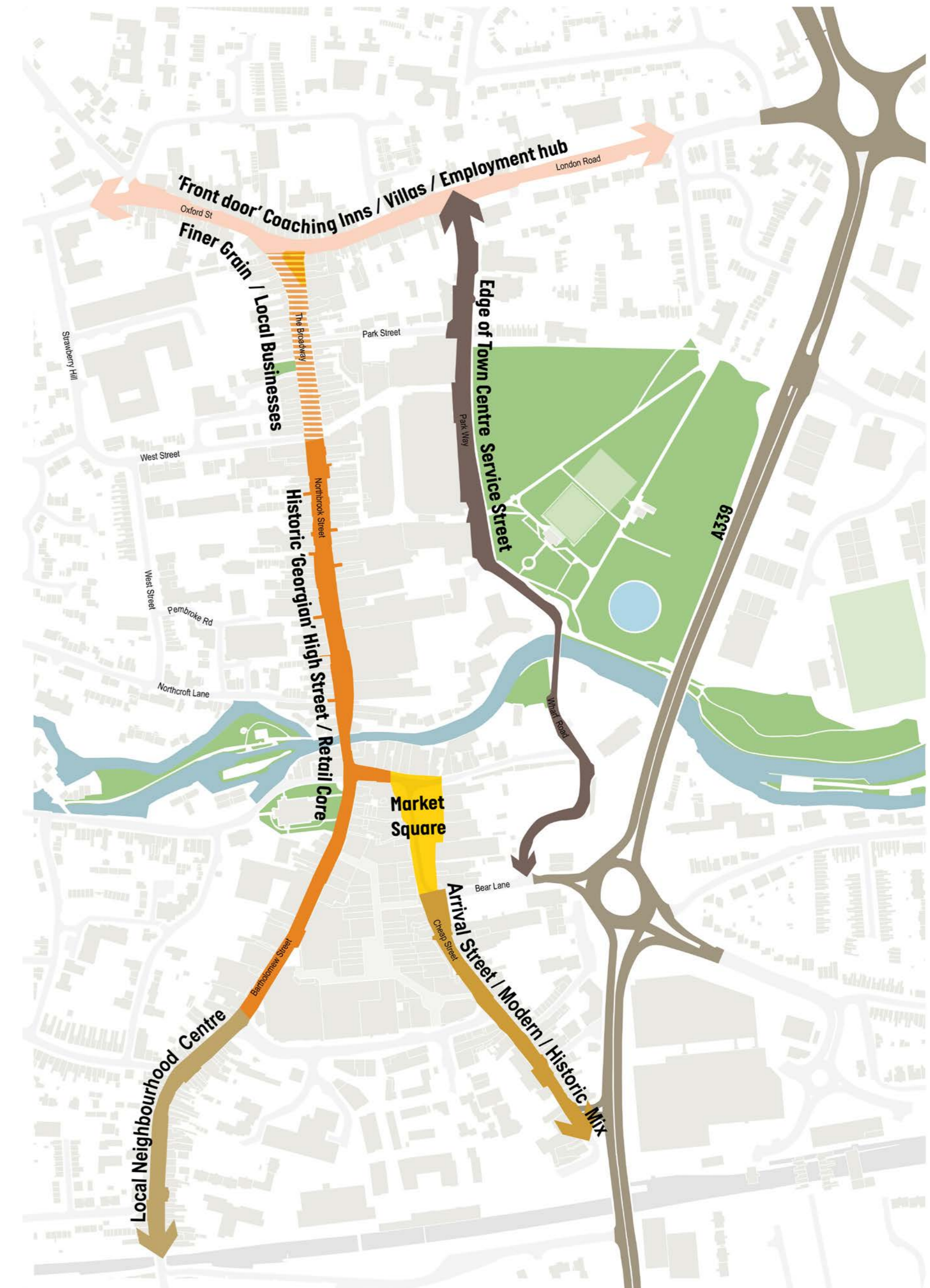
At the northern end of the town centre, the ‘Broadway’ has a distinctive neighbourhood character, but the east-west route of Oxford Street and London Road has a grander character, reflecting its historic role as a coaching route. The quality of the street does however decline as it approaches the A339, and the hotels have an out of town character despite being 2 minutes walk from Northbrook Street or Victoria Park.

Park Way is an important arrival street for residents and visitors, on foot, cycle, car or bus. Connecting London Road to the canal and the Wharf, and running alongside Parkway shopping centre and Victoria Park, it has the potential to be a grand civic street. Currently however its character is more of a service route, providing access to car parks, service yards and the bus station.

Northbrook Street, Bartholomew St and Cheap street a contain buildings from both the 18th and 19th century. The plot based nature of development is a key characteristic of Newbury. A rich mix of architectural styles create well composed streets despite the mix of architectural periods. Larger building footprints tend to be found in the core area along Northbrook Street and Bartholomew Street. Desirable for national retailers this area has provided the core retail focus for Newbury. Further on the fringe building frontages tighten and the mix of uses broaden along both Bartholomew and Cheap Street which encompass more of a local neighbourhood feel .

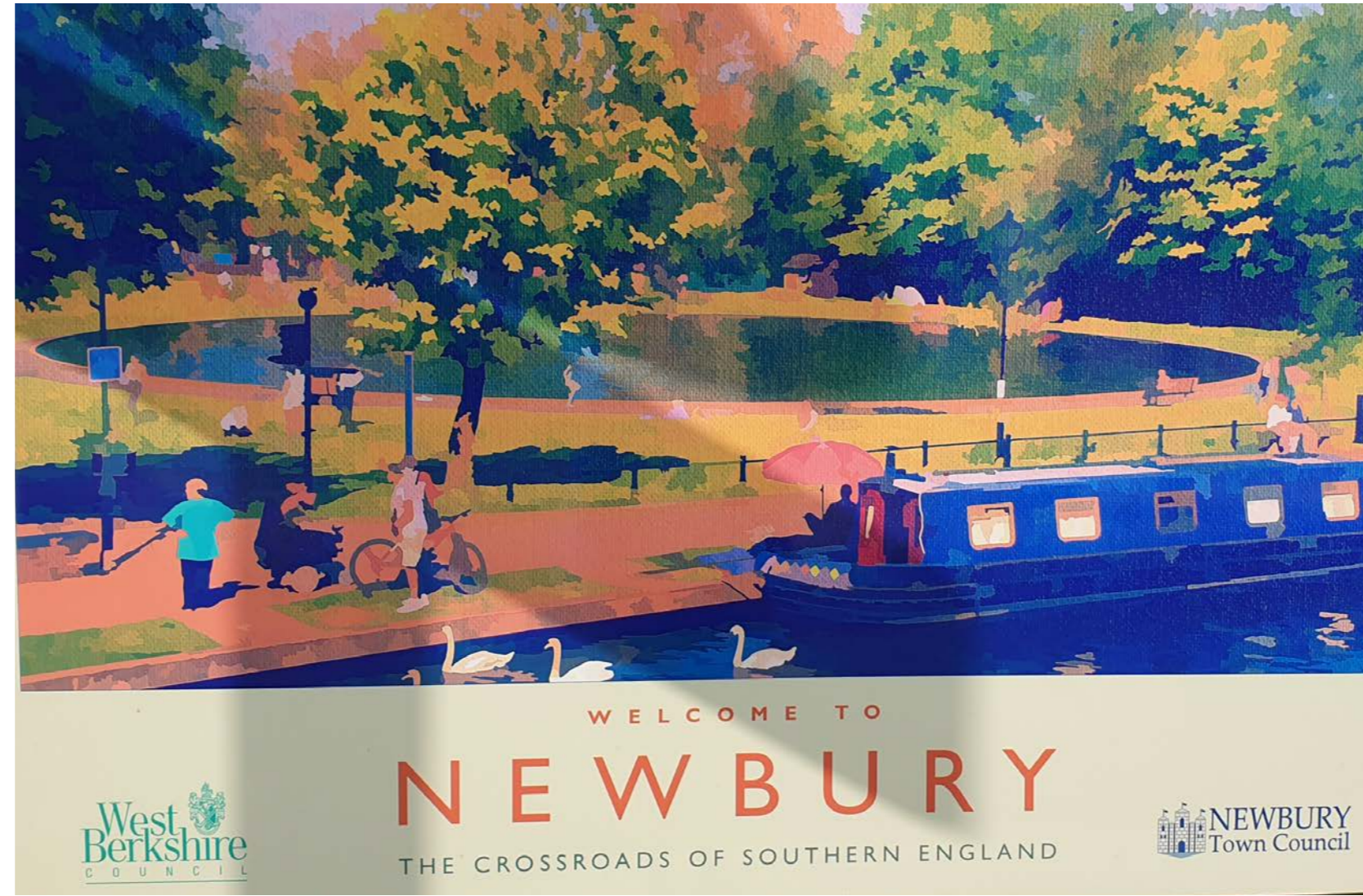
Key Messages

- The historic streets combine to create a common sense of ‘Newburyness’ but have distinctive characters which can be reinforced.
- The human scale of the town centre streets contrasts with the traffic dominated qualities of the A339.



Key Messages

- The town centre is very walkable, but linear rather than 'compact'.
- As the only 'town centre' crossing of the canal, Bridge Street is a focus and the natural 'crossroads' of Newbury.



The slogan "Newbury – the Crossroads of Southern England" has been devised with the intention to highlight Newbury's role as a town at the centre of innovation and creativity, open to outside influences, while retaining its strengths and character.

Newbury Town Plan



Public Space

The canal is an important accessible area of 'public open space' for Newbury as a whole. Within the town centre, the most important area is the Wharf which provides the main opportunity to relax and enjoy the waterfront.

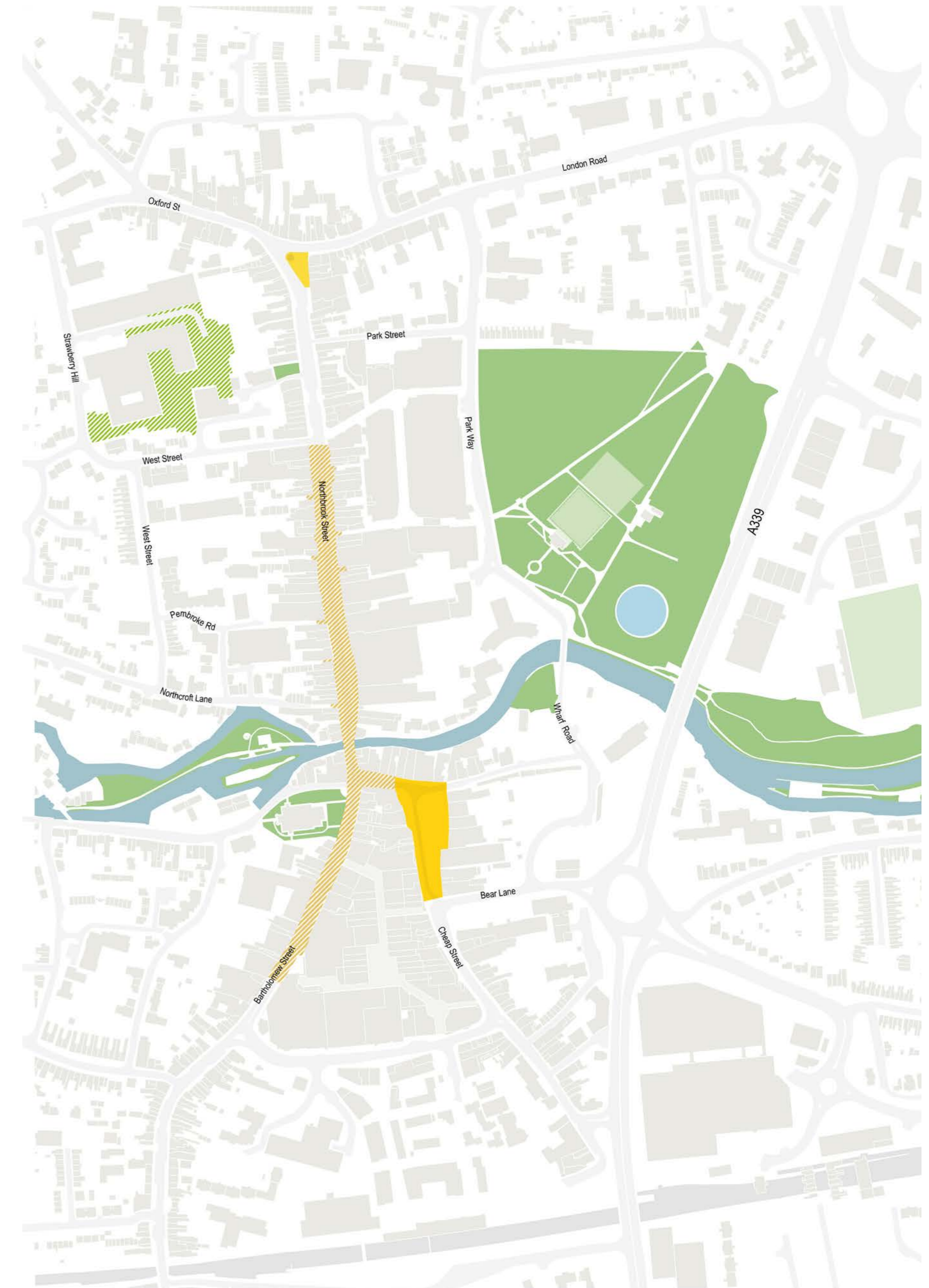
On the opposite side of the canal, Victoria Park is the most significant green space in the town centre. Northcroft Park is an important recreation and leisure area for Newbury but does not function as a 'town centre park' in the same way. Victoria Park is directly adjacent to the new Parkway scheme, and 2-3 minutes walk from Northbrook Street, Bridge Street or Market Place.

Key Messages.

- Victoria Park is a major asset but its pedestrian connections could be improved, particularly from the town centre.
- Market Square is an attractive space, but improving connections to the Wharf and the Canal would help improve its vibrancy
- There is a possible shortage of space for events.

“The great asset of Newbury is its present parks, public open spaces, and allotments.”

Newbury Town Plan



Kennet & Avon Canal

Character

The canal changes character as it passes through the town centre.

West of Bridge Street the canal is rural in character, with open views to countryside. As it approaches the town centre there are strong views to the church and to Bridge Street.

In the core area it has a more urban quality, with buildings close to the water's edge. Views of the water, and along the water, are relatively limited.

As the canal reaches Victoria Park and the Wharf it again becomes more open, but with a 'civic' town centre quality. There are longer distance views to the water and along the water, and recreational use of the water.

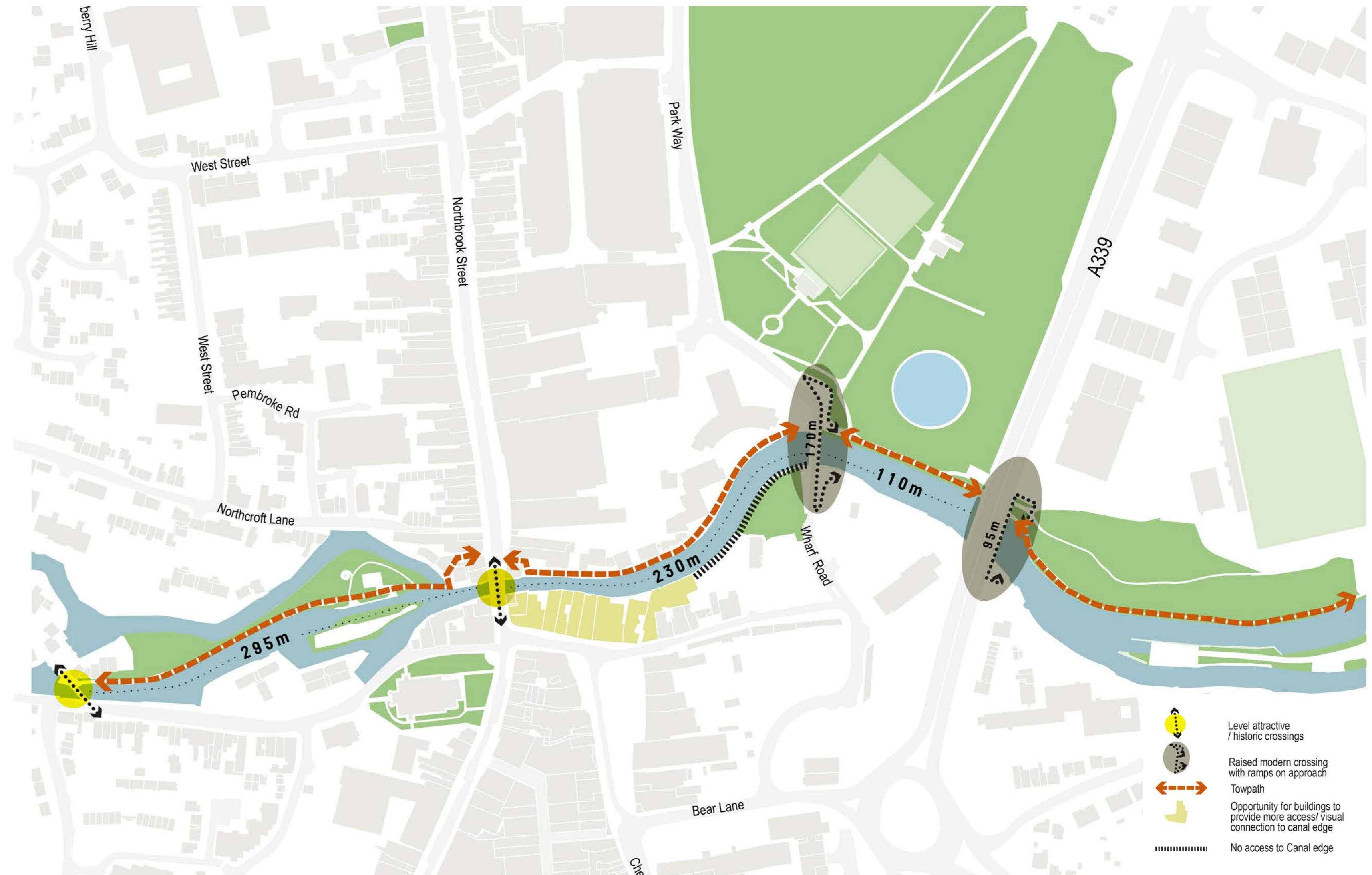
East of the A339 the canal has a 'working' quality, with a marina and industrial buildings, alongside sport, allotments and residential use.



Canal Access

West of Bridge Street and east of the bus bridge there is reasonably access to the edge of the water, the only exception being the restricted access past the canoe club. In the core town centre area however, access is more limited and more complicated. There is no towpath on the southern edge, and access to the northern edge is gained via a relatively unattractive connection from Bridge Street.

There are three crossing points in the 400m stretch of what can be considered the town centre area of the canal. Accessing these crossings requires pedestrian to take a circuitous route away from the water. All three crossings have only a weak association with the water itself and only Bridge Street provides an attractive environment for pedestrians.



Key Messages.

- Access to the water for pedestrians and cyclists needs to be improved in the 'town centre' area of the canal.
- More attractive and convenient crossings for pedestrians would help encourage exploration of the canal corridor.

Newbury Today

Uses

Town centre living

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 (shown on the plan) currently under construction. The vacant Bayer office premises also have permitted development rights for potential conversion to apartments and there are proposals to provide additional residential through redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate.

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 plan does however show a lack of town centre living in the core of the town centre, close to Market Place and along Northbrook Street. The new schemes under construction, with permitted development rights or currently out for consultation are also heavily dominated by apartments.

Key Messages.

- There is a variety of town centre housing within walking distance of the town centre. This is likely to increase significantly with a number of schemes at different stages of development. There may be concern however regarding the percentage of apartments proposed in the town centre and lack of diversity in the housing offer.



Newbury Today

Uses

Employment

Town centres with a strong employment base are predicted to recover quicker and stronger from the economic impact of the pandemic.

The core areas of employment are shown to the Oxford Road/London Road corridor, the rail station area and the London Road Industrial Estate. There is a relative lack of office or employment space in the core of the town centre. The Council offices are therefore an important ingredient in the town centre employment offer.

The Oxford Road/London Road corridor has a strong 'professional' office character, recognising the quality of some of the historic buildings along this route, but has lost significant employment in the former Bayer offices. The London Road Industrial Estate (and areas to the east) are a key employment area for the town, but likely to bring less direct expenditure to the town centre because of the barrier created by the A339.

“Newbury must provide opportunities to new business start-ups, growing businesses requiring new space, and businesses seeking to enter the area. More incubation hubs should be provided for start-up businesses and remote workers.”

Newbury Town Plan

Key Messages.

- Newbury has lost some large office employers. There is potential for new office space (and residential) on the London Road industrial estate but for the town centre to benefit from this pedestrian connections need to be improved.



Newbury Today

Uses

Retail & Leisure

'Multi-functional' town centres which have a range of attractions and are less reliant on A1 shopping uses are less vulnerable to the changes in shopping patterns which are seeing a reduction in demand for retail space.

The variety of uses in Newbury town centre shows that it is reasonably 'multi-functional' but there are some clear weaknesses. The core of Northbrook Street and Parkway is heavily dominated by A1 retail (red) and its potential vulnerability has been demonstrated by the recent loss of Debenhams and John Lewis. The Kennet Centre has also been dominated by A1 uses, and at the time of the GOAD survey in 2018 suffered heavily from vacancies. It is notable that the redevelopment proposals significantly reduce the scale of A1 uses and focus on food and drink and independent businesses.

Those areas with the best mix of uses are the more 'peripheral' areas of Broadway/Oxford Street, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street. Market Place also has a high percentage of food and drink uses (although these have suffered recently with the impact of the pandemic). The small number of cultural uses are also concentrated close to Market Square and the Wharf, including the Corn Exchange, Museum and Library.

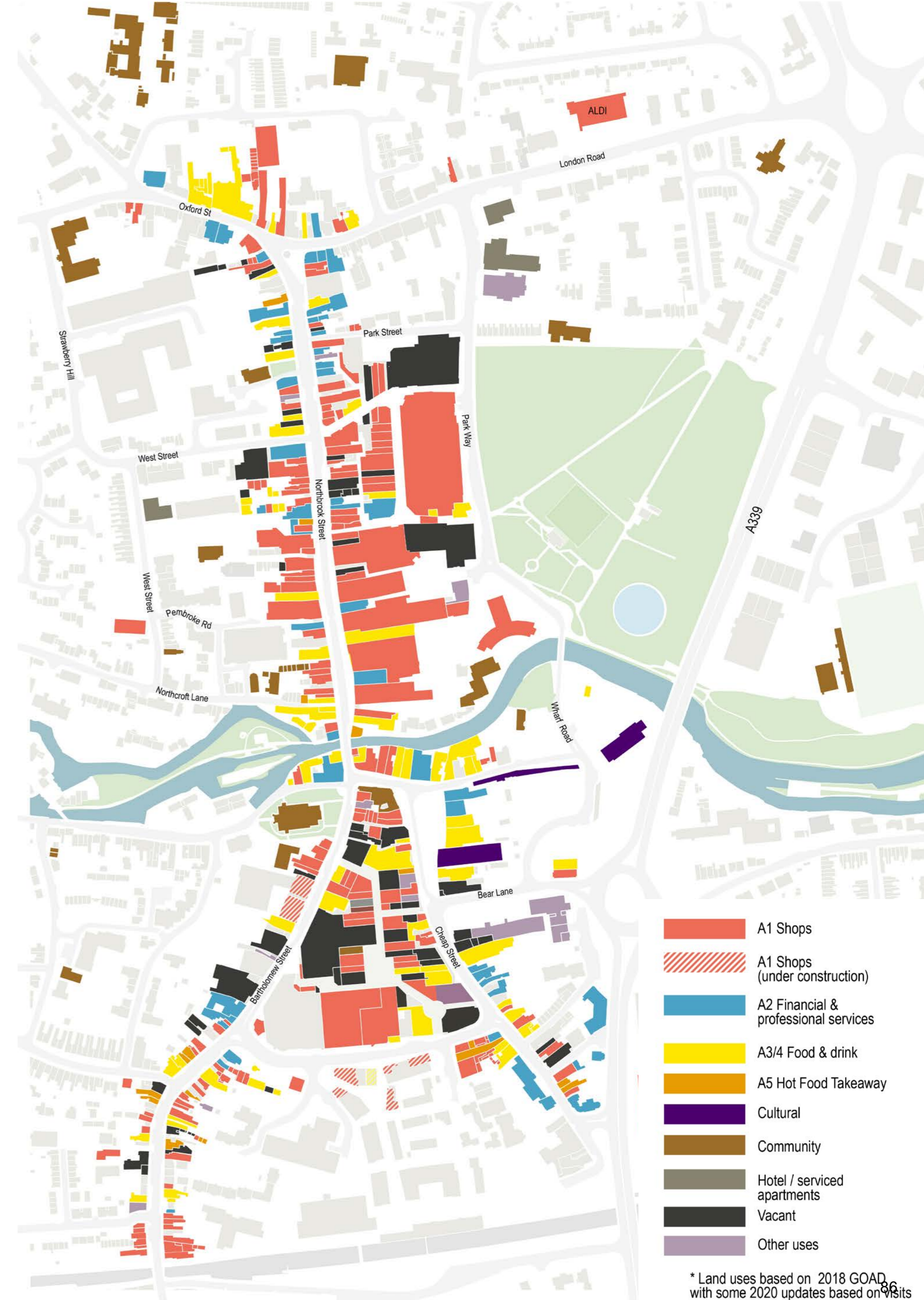
There is a mix of community uses in close proximity to the town centre, but an absence of secondary schools or colleges which can bring additional life and expenditure.

Key Messages.

- Pedestrianised area of Northbrook St and Parkway heavily dominated by A1 retail. There is greater diversity around Market Place and in secondary retail areas.
- Cultural uses clustered around Market Place & the Wharf but slightly isolated from the town centre.

"In recent times a clustering effect has made Newbury north of the Canal specialise in shops while south of the Canal specialises in restaurants, bars, and the night-time economy. South of the Canal is the Market Place with its weekly and monthly markets, but other retail outlets are at a footfall disadvantage compared to those north of the Canal, and are limited to specialist shops. The planned development at Market Street and refurbishment of the Kennet Centre should help to redress this imbalance."

Newbury Town Plan



- A1 Shops
- A1 Shops (under construction)
- A2 Financial & professional services
- A3/4 Food & drink
- A5 Hot Food Takeaway
- Cultural
- Community
- Hotel / serviced apartments
- Vacant
- Other uses

* Land uses based on 2018 GOAD, with some 2020 updates based on visits

Newbury Today

Summary

Key Features

- ➔ Compact nature of town centre - most key destinations/features all within a 5 Min walk.
- ➔ Strong North - South historic street network. Linear nature of North South route would makes features such as the clock tower feel more connected than the park despite being more than a 5 Min walk away.
- ➔ Secondary lanes are a key feature but they often don't link very well to additional uses/ spaces or create circuits
- ➔ Areas away from central north south spine are poorly connected. Wharf area and river provide perfect opportunity to create improved / new connections to make destinations such as the library and Victoria park feel more part of the town centre.



Newbury Today

Summary

Opportunity Areas

The baseline assessment has identified a number of vacant buildings, underutilised sites and areas in need of improvement within the town centre.

The Wharf

This includes the areas of surface car parking to the south of the canal, the Waterside Centre and land to the rear of Camp Hopson to the north of the canal. It includes the existing Camp Hopson building as they have indicated a potential desire to consolidate their retail use and that this may no longer be required. It is considered important that the areas north and south of the canal are considered as a coherent site, even if delivered independently.

Bear Lane

The BT Exchange and adjacent Royal Mail depot area has long been a priority for the town centre. Current discussions still indicate an unwillingness from BT to consider its redevelopment.

The A339

Treatment of the A339 is needed to improve perceptions of the town centre, and to reduce its impact on the Wharf and Victoria Park as well as on the proposed redevelopment of London Road Industrial Estate. Crossing of the A339 for pedestrians and cyclists needs to be improved to support the town centre.

London Road/Park Way

The vacant Debenhams building requires redevelopment or 're-purposing'. This provides an opportunity to enhance connections between Northbrook Street and Victoria Park. This should be considered comprehensively with the opportunity to improve arrival into the town centre via London Road.

Broadway

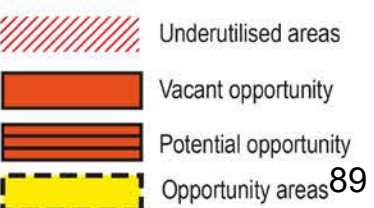
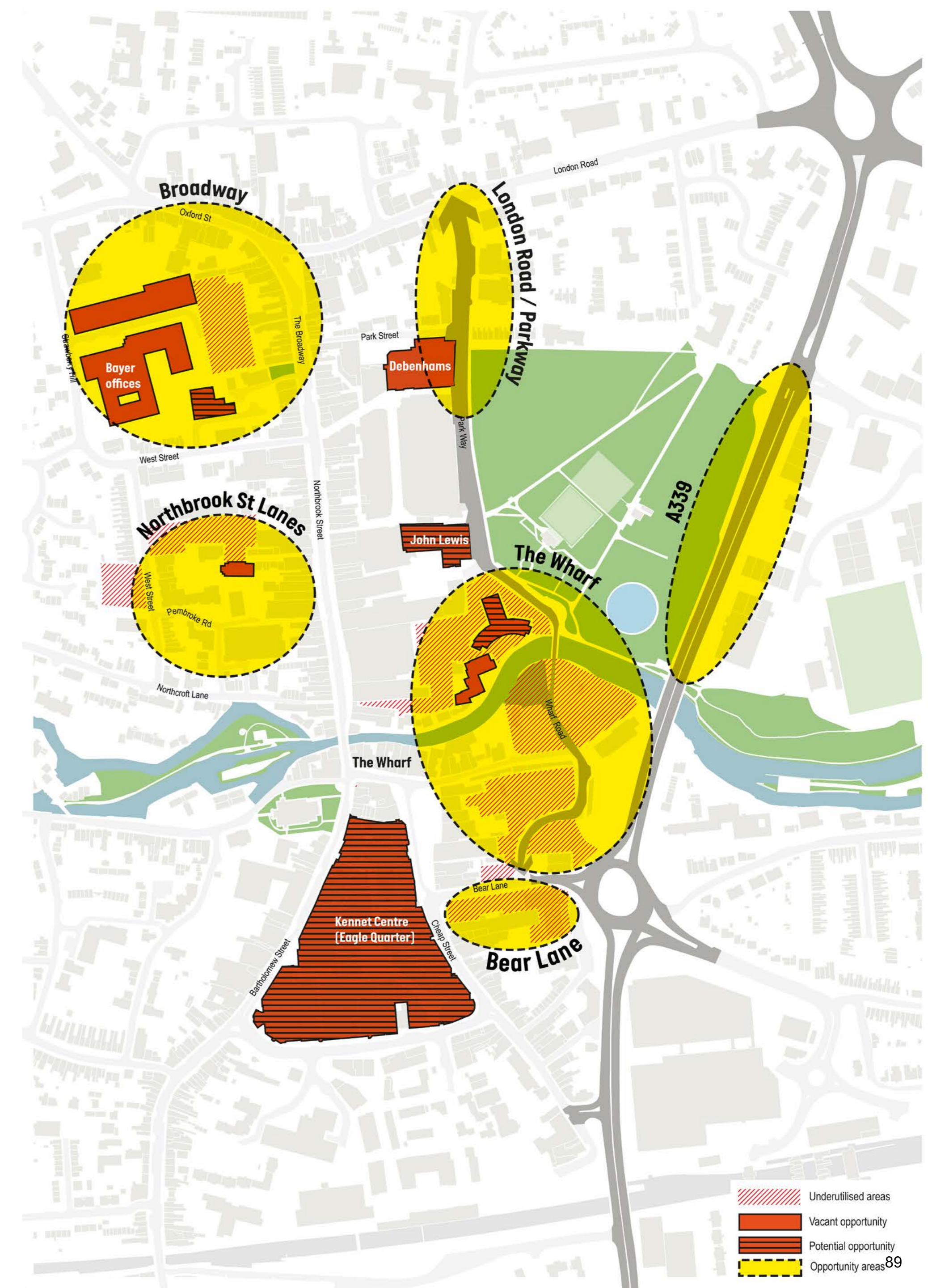
There are vacant buildings and underutilised land to the rear of Broadway, including the Bayer offices and associated car park. There is an opportunity to enhance connections to Broadway and should be considered comprehensively with potential public realm improvements in this area.

Northbrook Street Lanes

There is an opportunity to improve connections from Northbrook Street, via Weavers Walk and other lanes, to residential areas to the west. This could include consideration of the surrounding surface car parks the area around the United Reform Church and Northbrook Multi-storey car park.

Kennet Centre / Eagle Quarter

There are proposals to redevelop this area, as noted in the baseline reports. The principle of the new street structure is to be welcomed but consideration will need to be given to the massing and heights of replacement buildings.



3

A VISION FOR NEWBURY

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.



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.

4

MASTERPLAN STRATEGY

This section of the report describes the principles which underpin the masterplan, and which will help deliver the objectives identified in the Newbury Vision. There are 10 principles:

Principle 1: A 'broader' town centre

Principle 2: Celebrating 'The Crossroads'

Principle 3: A more 'walkable' town centre

Principle 4: A more 'welcoming' town centre

Principle 5: A 'greener' town centre

Principle 6: A more 'sociable' town centre

Principle 7: A more 'cultural' town centre

Principle 8: A more 'independent' town centre

Principle 9: A more 'entrepreneurial' town centre

Principle 10: A more 'balanced' town centre community

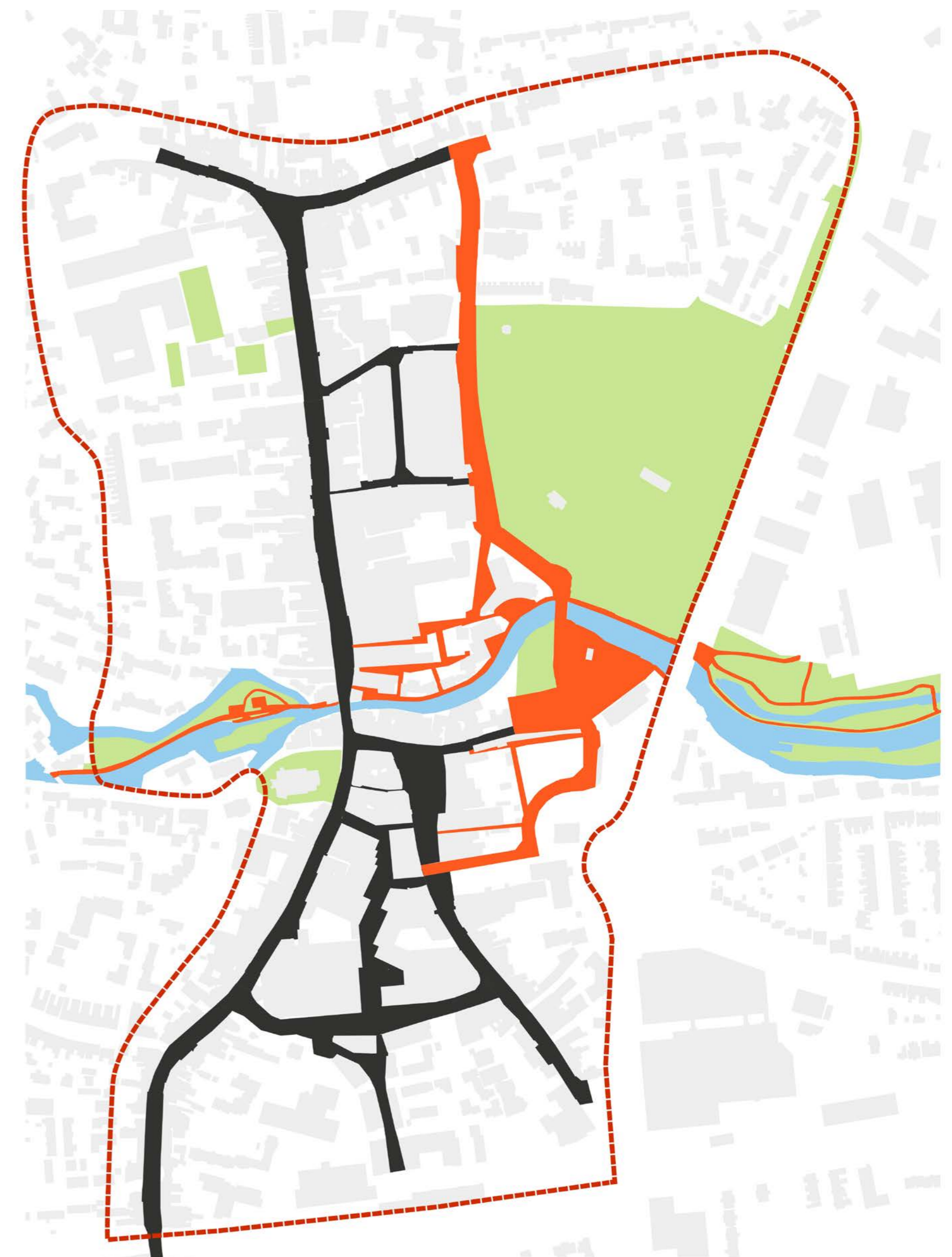
Principle 1: 'Broadening' the town centre

The masterplan for Newbury town centre has been prepared in the context of a national decline in demand for retail floorspace, most visibly demonstrated in the closure of the Debenhams department store. But it is also prepared in the context of Newbury being a relatively prosperous and successful market town that has the opportunity to respond positively to the current social and economic changes.

The key structural objective of the masterplan is to expand the perceived extent of Newbury town centre. This may seem counterintuitive in the face of declining retail demand, but by broadening the leisure, community and cultural 'experience' Newbury can attract more visitors, encourage them to stay longer and use the town centre differently. The key opportunities in this respect are considered to be Victoria Park, Kennet & Avon Canal and the Wharf, alongside the Museum, Library and Waterside Centre.

By making the town centre more 'walkable', and enhancing permeability north-south and east-west, the masterplan can assist Newbury to achieve this by making the most of its existing spaces, buildings and other assets, and with relatively limited need for investment in new floorspace.

- Current perceived town centre street network
- Opportunity to extend the network



Principle 2: Celebrating the ‘crossroads’

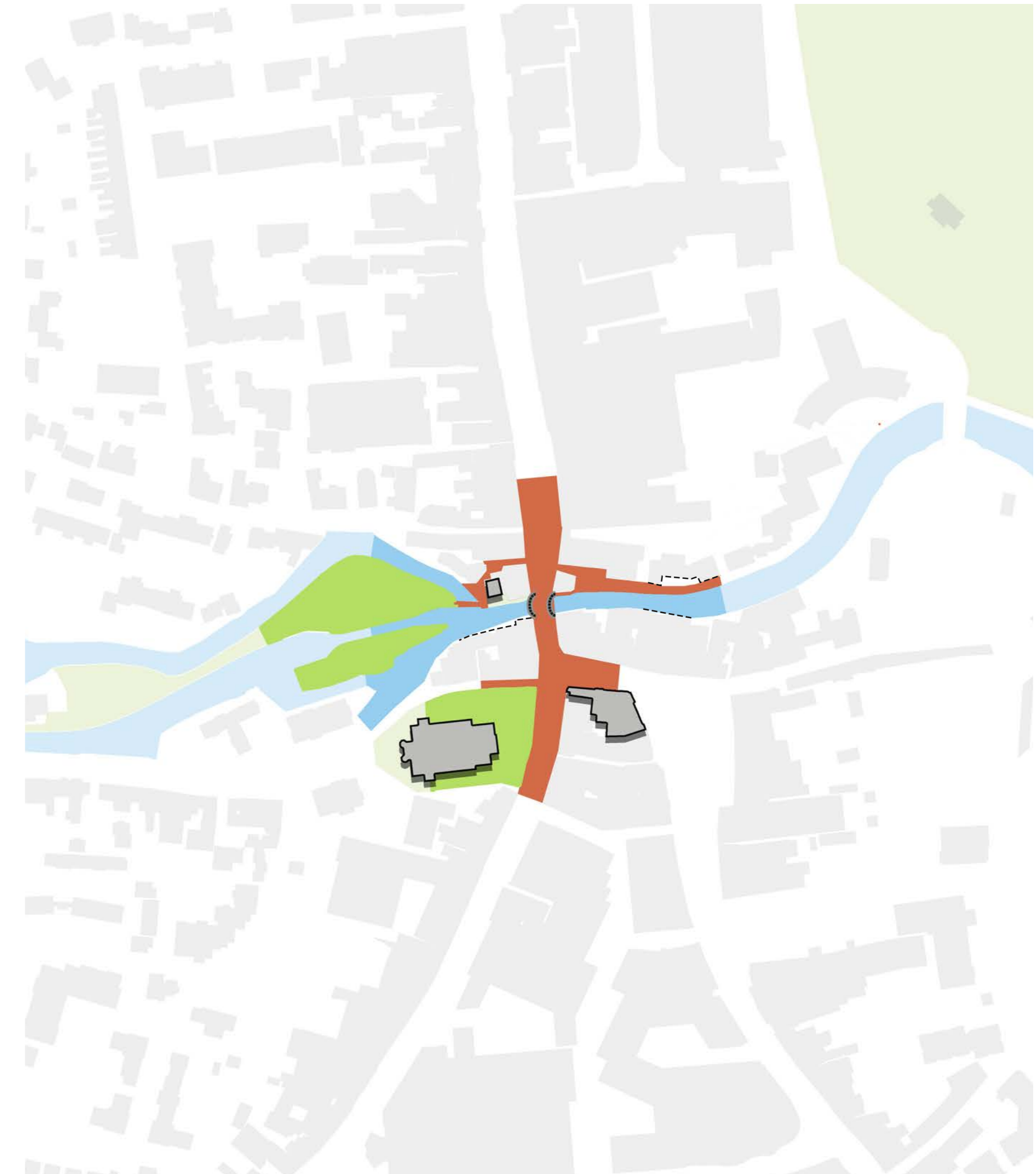
The masterplan marks the meeting point of Newbury town centre’s most important north-south route, Northbrook Street/Bartholomew Street, and its most important east-west route, the Kennet & Avon Canal.

The public realm strategy reinforces the Newbury Crossroads. Reducing traffic on Bridge Street, and making it one-way allows for traffic signals, signage and vehicular ‘infrastructure’ to be significantly simplified, improving pedestrian enjoyment of the Bridge and improving the setting of St Nicolas Church. Enjoyment of the canal can be enhanced by:

- improving signage and visibility of the lanes which provide access to the canal,
- improving the physical environment of the towpath at those access points,
- improving views from Bridge Street along the canal, and
- improving arrival into Bridge Street from the towpath.

The masterplan places more activity and destinations along the canal, both east and west of Bridge Street. It encourages more pedestrian flow along the towpath and more people to arrive into the town centre via the canal. The masterplan therefore puts Bridge Street and the Canal firmly at the heart of the town centre.

There is currently very limited activity along the towpath. The Waterside Centre will provide opportunities for café/restaurant and leisure activity to front the towpath and the masterplan proposes that this should also be considered as part of the uses for the Camp Hopson building. Further east the proposed extension to the Library should create a new destination at the Wharf. And west of Bridge Street there is potential to promote safe access to the water for small scale recreational uses such as canoeing and paddle boarding.



Principle 3: A more 'walkable' town centre

By making the town centre more 'walkable', and by enhancing permeability north-south and east-west, the masterplan can assist Newbury to 'broaden' its appeal by making the most of its existing spaces, buildings and other assets. This strengthens the historic character of the town centre and reduces the need for investment in new floorspace.

Newbury should be a highly 'walkable' town centre. It has a compact form with many of its core attractions within a potential 5-minute walk from Bridge Street. But there are a number of barriers which deter pedestrians from visiting these areas.

The main barriers to east-west integration are the qualities of Park Way, Wharf Street and the towpath. The main barriers to north-south movement are the limited opportunities to cross the water, with only Bridge Street providing a high quality pedestrian environment. The public realm strategy therefore includes proposals for:

- improving Park Way as a street for pedestrians and cyclists
- connecting Parkway shopping centre (and Northbrook Street) more effectively to Victoria Park

- improving 'wayfinding' to the towpath from Northbrook Street
- improving pedestrian and cycle crossing of the water.

Removing the traffic from Market Place increases its attractiveness for outdoor eating and drinking and the flexibility for markets and events. The public realm and movement strategy reinforces Market Place as the social and cultural focus of Newbury. The expanded pedestrian network increases the variety of routes into Market Place. The masterplan also increases the concentration of activity east of Market Place. Alongside creating a new events and social space at the Wharf (see below) and improvements to Wharf Street, the masterplan proposes to improve the space to the rear of the Corn Exchange and adjacent public houses. The strategy therefore strengthens footfall into Market Place by increasing the activity around it and improving the pedestrian connections into it.

- Streets to benefit from reduced traffic
- Improve environment
- Integrate lanes
- Streets to benefit from improvements through existing projects
- Potential for public realm improvements



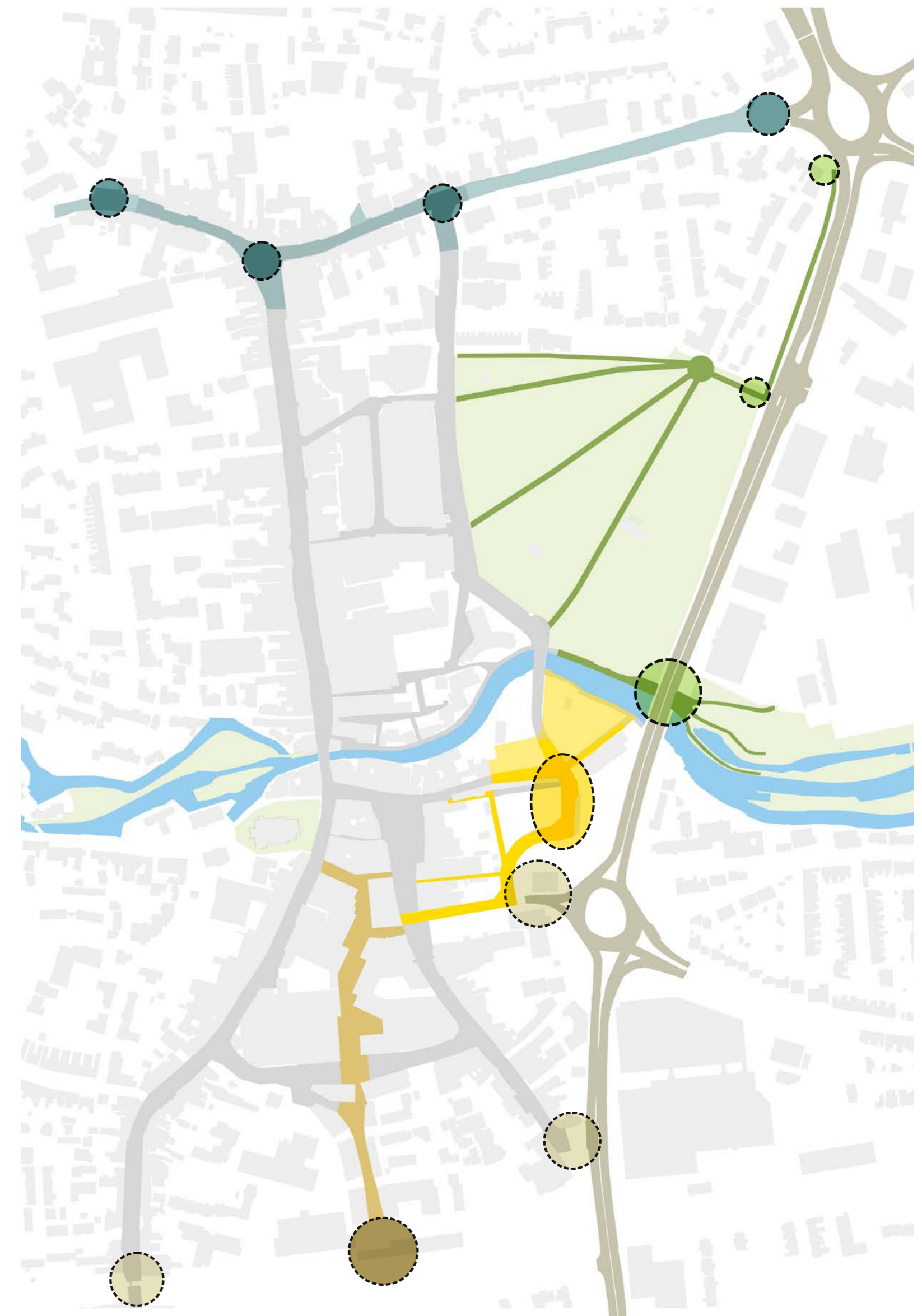
Principle 4: A more 'welcoming' town centre

Arrival into the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists, rail passengers, bus passengers and motorists needs improving. This was highlighted in the baseline study and in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

The masterplan proposes enhanced arrival spaces at the rail and bus station. The Kennet Centre proposals, together with the Market Street redevelopment, create stronger links from the rail station to the town centre. The masterplan proposals for the Wharf area will help integrate the bus station into the town centre, making it a more pleasant place to wait and to arrive.

The A339 and London Road are key arrival points. Key arrival spaces should be improved along London Road, from Robins Hood roundabout. Routes for pedestrians and cyclists are proposed to be improved across and underneath the A339, with a particular focus on arrival into Victoria Park.

In the longer term, the A339 should feel more like a town centre 'street' than a bypass. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the impact of the 'noise, smells and vibration' from the A339 traffic on Victoria Park. Improvements to the A339, including reducing traffic speeds, can help address this and ensure that the future mixed-use community on the London Road Industrial Estate feels part of the town centre.



○ Enhanced arrival spaces

Principle 5: A 'greener' town centre





Victoria Park is a large green space close to the town centre but the only other green space of any quality is associated with St Nicolas Church. The masterplan proposes to enhance Victoria Park but also to enhance the small area of green space at the Wharf, immediately west of the American Bridge and opposite the new Waterside Centre. This would then form part of a stronger network of green spaces along the canal, from the marina in the east to Monkey Bridge in the west.

The green space at the Wharf can be made more usable and more attractive as a 'pocket park'. Removing the car parking would enable a larger public space to be created improving the physical setting of the Museum building, and providing spill out space for events and exhibitions. Restructuring the planting would enable views between the Museum and the Waterside Centre, improving the sense of connection north and south of the Canal.

East of the A339 there is a potentially attractive green space along the canal and close to the marina. Redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate provides an opportunity to

create a higher quality park for residents and visitors, and to enhance the arrival into the town centre from this direction. This is particularly important in maximising the commercial and community benefits of the new housing and employment proposed.

The canoe club is also located east of the A339 (south of the canal) but discussions with the Canal & River Trust indicate that it would be difficult to increase public leisure use of the canal here or adjacent to the Wharf. The masterplan therefore proposes that consideration be given to increasing informal leisure use of the water at the green space further west, between Bridge Street and Monkey Bridge. This would give paddleboarders or kayakers potential access to a longer and safer stretch of water and would link the town centre more actively with the countryside to the west. If successful it could also encourage visitors to explore as far as Northcroft and Goldwell Parks, which provide important recreational space for residents but do not currently feel part of the town centre.

-  Network of green spaces
-  Improved green routes incorporating new planting
-  Streets with improved greenery (above ground planting)
-  Car parks to benefit from tree planting



Principle 5: A ‘greener’ town centre cont.

The masterplan also identifies opportunities to bring additional planting into the town centre streets and surface car parks. The priority is to provide additional planting along Park Way. A higher quality ‘gateway’ space at its junction with London Road would create a strong sense of arrival into the town centre, and enhance the environment for the two hotels. More greenery and tree planting along Park Way would create a more appropriate route south to Victoria Park.

The potential exists to bring additional planting (permanent or mobile) into West Street. This would help soften the shopping centre environment, but also help draw visitors from Northbrook Street towards Victoria Park. Any redevelopment or repurposing of the former Debenhams store should take the opportunity to improve the ‘green connection’ across Park Way to Victoria Park. The potential could be considered for a ‘green wall’ to improve the appearance of the adjacent car park. If space is created through the redevelopment of Debenhams then consideration could also be given to additional planting along Park Street, linking Park Way to Northbrook Street.

West of Northbrook Street the former Bayer offices site, together with the Council’s West Street offices has the potential to create a small ‘pocket park’ in the town centre. Any potential reuse of the Bayer offices should consider this, together with improved pedestrian links to Northbrook Street and The Broadway via the identified Lanes and to the green space in front of Newbury Methodist Church.

Within Northbrook Street the potential for significant planting is constrained both by the need for vehicular and service access but also by the qualities of the Conservation Area and listed buildings. There are however opportunities for smaller scale, removable planting and parklets along Northbrook Street which can be coordinated with outdoor seating for cafés and restaurants.

Survey Response:

45% of survey respondents would like the town centre to have more green spaces

66% would like Victoria Park to be more integrated with the town centre.

“Add more planting and green space to the (town) centre, perhaps incorporated with flexible seating spaces”

“Open up more green space and pedestrianise more of the town centre.”

““Integrate the river more. There is wasted space between the white bus bridge and the small northbrook street bridge that could be turned into eating places and shops - and the library car park area towards the river. We have a lovely river and no one would even know it exists”



Principle 6: A more 'sociable' town centre

The masterplan proposes additional open space at the Wharf and looks to provide improved leisure and recreation facilities at Victoria Park and along the Canal. The new space at the Wharf, in conjunction with Market Place would significantly increase the flexibility of the town centre to host events and activities, as well as being a social space in its own right, increasing access to the water.

The masterplan also recognises the increased demand for outdoor eating and drinking. The focus for this remains Market Place which provides an attractive space and a critical mass of bars and restaurants and acts as a destination for the town centre, but it is considered that there is potential to extend provision into the streets, lanes and waterfront areas around Market Place, and for some additional provision at the Wharf.

Many of the operators on the eastern sides of Market Place rely on space to the rear for outdoor eating and drinking. The masterplan seeks to support this by creating a series of attractive lanes and small spaces between the rear of the Corn Exchange and the Museum.

There are opportunities to increase spill-out space available to existing cafes and restaurants on Northbrook Street, in conjunction with measures to reduce the amount of traffic using the street in the evenings. Making Northbrook Street one-way only for traffic would create potential space for small 'parklets' with bespoke seating and planting. By defining these areas it allows for the layout of market stalls to be coordinated to create attractive seating areas to support street food vendors. This has the potential added advantage of extending the length of the market stalls further north, drawing pedestrians along Northbrook Street towards Broadway and London Road and supporting independent food and drink operators within the Lanes.

Survey Response:

"Encourage the use of the canal as a backdrop for eating and socialising."

"Pedestrianise the town centre and utilise the space to create spaces for socialising and play, animating the high street."



Principle 7: A more 'cultural' town centre

The masterplan seeks to reinforce the cultural importance of Market Place and create a complementary cultural and leisure destination at the Wharf. The masterplan proposes the removal of car parking at the Wharf to allow for the creation of a new cultural event space for the town.

The new 'cultural' space at the Wharf should be considered to extend north and south of the Canal. The masterplan proposes that opportunities be explored to make better long term cultural use of the Library and create a focus for leisure and cultural activity around the Waterside Centre and Camp Hopson. Improved pedestrian crossings over the canal would create a more integrated cultural hub that also includes event spaces and activities within Victoria Park.

The masterplan seeks to strengthen the connection between Market Place and the Wharf by improving Wharf Lane and creating a series of attractive lanes and small spaces between the rear of the Corn Exchange and the Museum.

Removing some parking in this area would create additional spill out space for both these cultural facilities, and potentially provide an opportunity for small scale exhibition or gallery space. This would strengthen links between the Corn Exchange and the Wharf and significantly improve arrival at the bus station.

Survey Response:

Better open space to hold public events and festivals and more cultural space are amongst the top 5 priorities for survey respondents.

"Add space for a variety of events to draw people in."

"Bring lots more variety of activities in the High Street for young and old alike. It needs to be much more lively and the Wharf area needs to be a place people want to go to rather than a place to get from A to B (or the library)."

- Central sociable spill out spaces
- Wider spill out spaces
- Cultural destinations
- Cultural spaces



Principle 8: A more ‘independent’ town centre

The masterplan seeks to promote the heritage of Newbury as an “independent” market town, and the focus on the Newbury ‘Crossroads’, The Wharf and the Kennet & Avon Canal will all help to achieve this.

A key part of the strategy is to support the concentration of independent businesses in the Lanes as well as those in Broadway, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street, recognising that the proposals for the Eagle Quarter also propose to increase the space available for small, independent businesses.

The masterplan and public realm strategy look to improve the prominence and the connectivity of local and independent businesses, particularly within the Lanes. This is a combination of public realm improvements, wayfinding and a coordinated ‘branding’ strategy for these areas. Along Northbrook Street potential ‘loops’ are identified whereby the rear of individual Lanes can be connected, creating more interesting pedestrian routes and additional arrival points into the Lanes from car parks or residential areas. This is all designed to encourage exploration of the Lanes, increase pedestrian flow and make them less reliant on the entrances

from Northbrook Street. In the shorter term the main entrances can be made more prominent and distinctive, with coordinated signage and treatment of the public realm to mark the Lanes and draw visitors along Northbrook Street.

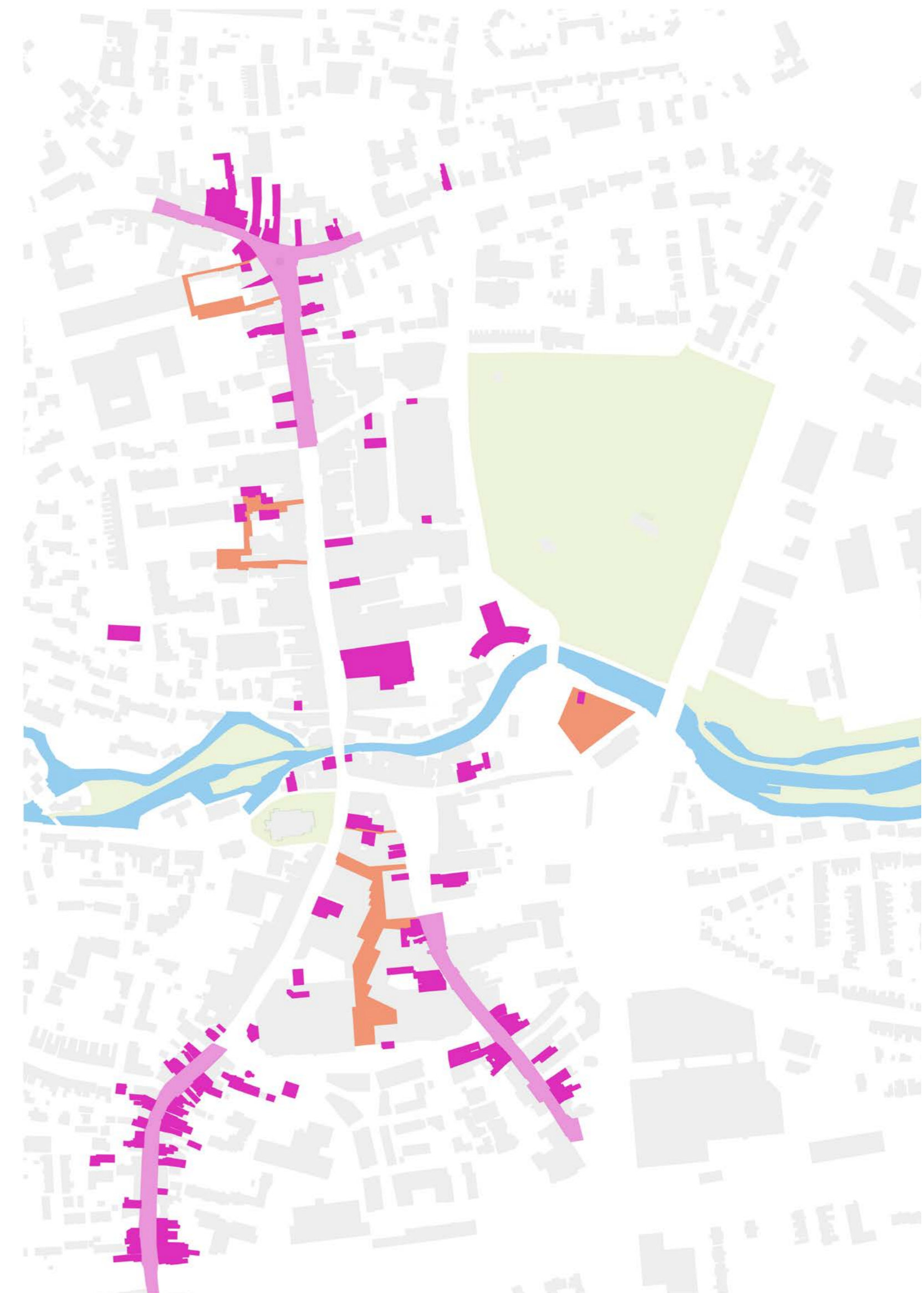
Outside the ‘core area’ of Newbury town centre, Broadway/London Road, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street have their own distinct character which the masterplan seeks to support and reinforce through small scale public realm and associated shopfront improvements.

Survey Response:

Over two thirds of survey respondents wanted more local and independent shops in Newbury town centre, whilst over 45% would like to see more local, independent cafes and restaurants.

“Encourage independent cafés, shops etc. through rate drops etc.”

“Lower rents for independent shops so it encourages entrepreneurs to be in the town.”



Principle 9: A more ‘entrepreneurial’ town centre

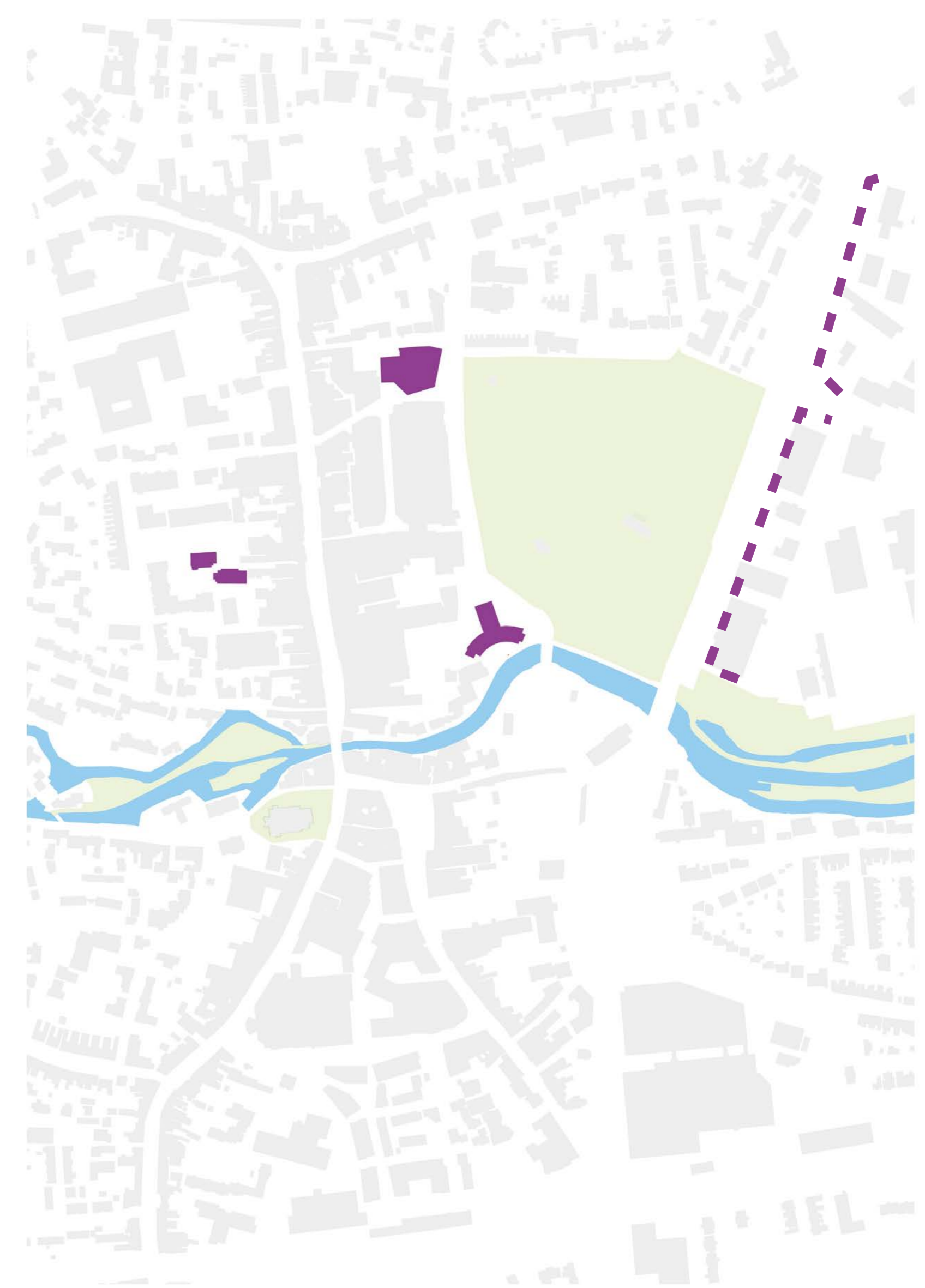
Opportunities for new office space are available through potential conversion/redevelopment of the former Debenhams store and through the proposed redevelopment of the Eagle Quarter. Such space is a vital element of any successful town centre, and should be supported with smaller scale flexible office space for small businesses and start-ups, as well as for the increasing number of people working ‘flexibly’ at home with reduced levels of commuting to larger cities.

Across the country vacant department stores are being repurposed for a mix of interesting cultural, leisure and community uses, promoting local craftspeople, encouraging start-up businesses or providing space for a range of NHS treatment centres. The Debenhams store is a key location within Newbury town centre and needs to be ‘curated’ accordingly. It has the potential to ‘anchor’ the northern end of the town, to reinforce the professional office ‘quarter’ on London Road as well as supporting the hotels, fitness facilities, pubs and restaurants in that area.

Larger office space is also proposed as part of the London Road Industrial Estate redevelopment. It is important that any such offices present a positive ‘face’ to the A339, creating a high quality town centre environment. Excellent pedestrian links from these new offices across the A339 are critical in maximising the benefits of these new jobs for town centre businesses.

Survey Response:
“Think outside the box to fill Debenhams and John Lewis - co-working spaces, market stalls etc.”
“Newbury needs to embrace the demand for satellite offices and co-working hubs in a post pandemic world. This will reduce the number of people jumping on a train to London or Reading 5 days a week. Keep them in Newbury for 2-3 days a week.”

Workspace opportunities





Principle 10: A more 'balanced' town centre community

The recent Parkway development, on-going Market Street development and proposed Eagle Quarter redevelopment bring a significant increase in town centre living. The former Bayer offices also have Permitted Development Rights (PDR) for conversion to residential. All these schemes, alongside the growth in later living apartments, will benefit retail, leisure and cultural activity in the town centre. Provision in the town centre has however focussed very heavily on apartments and there is a need to balance this with a wider range of housing.

There are limited development opportunities within the town centre study area which have the scale to deliver a significant level of family housing or more innovative housing schemes. In the longer term redevelopment of the BT site or relocation of the Civic Offices could provide such a site, or consideration could be given to acquisition and redevelopment of the former Bayer offices.

The major opportunity site lies just outside the town centre boundary and is the London Road Industrial Estate. The masterplan supports the principle of redeveloping this for a mix of employment and residential and in the longer term it is suggested that improvements to the crossing of the A339 that would make it easier for those living and working on the site to walk into the town centre. It is also important that the London Road Industrial Estate strikes the right balance in terms of housing provision in the town centre, complementing the scale of smaller scale apartments already provided.

-  Workspace opportunities
-  Housing opportunities



5

PUBLIC REALM AND MOVEMENT STRATEGY


Public Realm and Movement Strategy

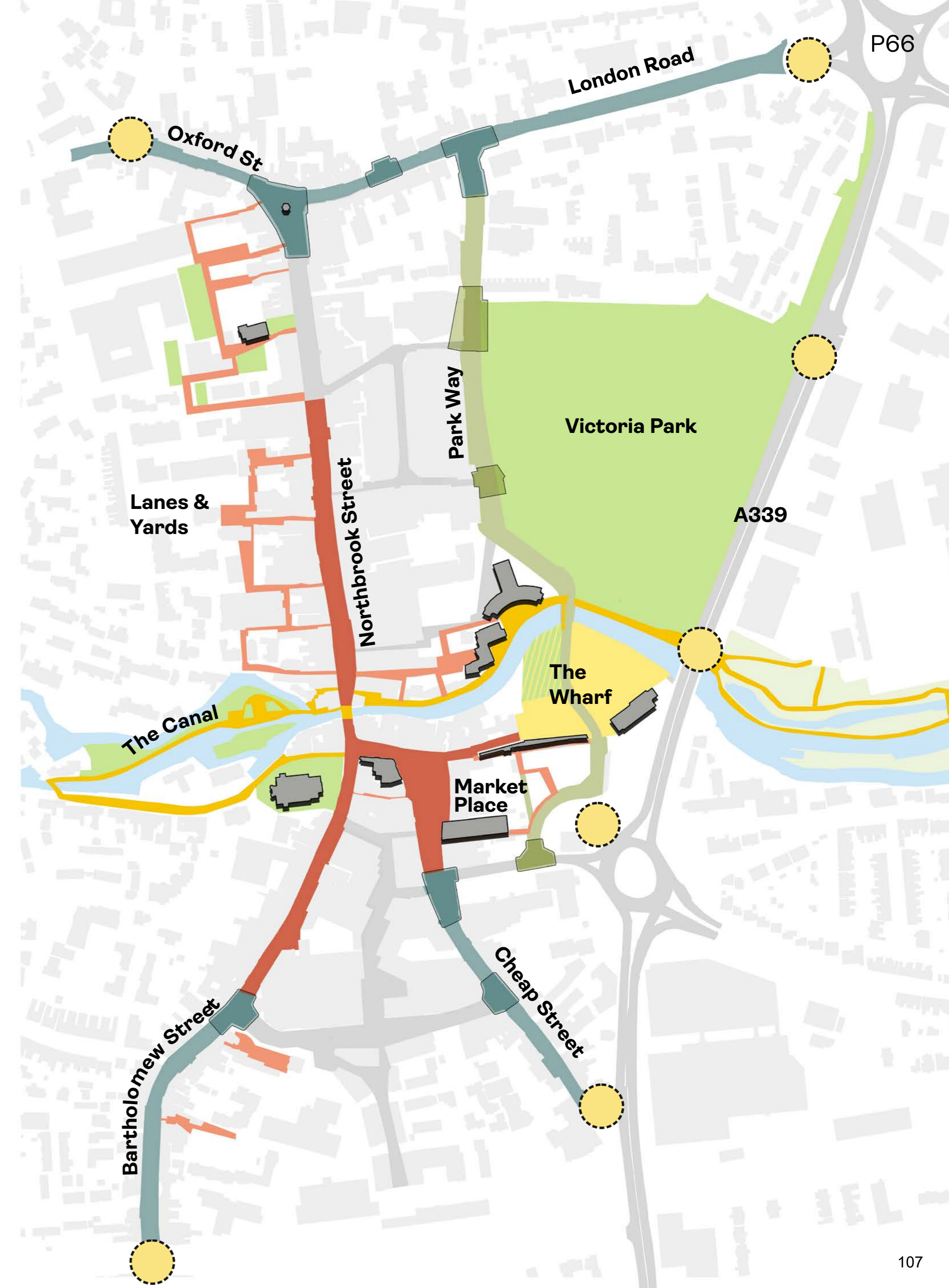
Pedestrianised Core

The masterplan creates an improved environment for pedestrians by reducing vehicular access and restricting traffic to one-way working. This will reduce the amount of space required to be kept free for vehicles and create opportunities for planters, seating and parklets to create attractive areas for external eating and drinking. The need to introduce one-way working is critical to this as retaining the existing two-way working, even if vehicular traffic is reduced, will result in no new permanent space available for other uses.

The switch to one-way working would enable the width required to be kept clear on Northbrook Street for the passage of vehicles to be reduced to a single lane (with occasional loading bays) and the traffic signals either side of the bridge of the Kennet to be removed. So, whilst the benefits of removing general traffic from the area will be most obvious between the hours of 5pm and 10am, the significant reduction in traffic flows and the potential to reduce the amount of space that must be kept clear for vehicles will benefit the town centre at all times.

Perhaps most importantly, further engagement is required. Consultation with businesses, residents and market traders is necessary to better understand if and how they might take advantage of the space that could be created and whether these might outweigh people's concerns. It is then recommended that a trial is conducted (using an Experimental Traffic Order), potentially using temporary installations of street furniture and planting to help demonstrate the possible implications of the change.

-  Gateways & Arrival
-  Pedestrianised Core
-  Lanes & Yards
-  Distinctive Neighbourhoods
-  Canal Edge
-  The Wharf
-  Parks & Greenspace
-  Park Way



Lanes & Yards

A coordinated programme of signage and public realm improvements is proposed to mark the entrances to the Lanes & Yards from the main shopping streets across the town centre. Improved paving and signage can also improve the arrival from the 'rear' of the Lanes and improve connections between them.

Distinctive Neighbourhoods

A coordinated Shopfront Improvement Strategy for Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street South can enhance the independent qualities of these shopping areas, improve arrival into the town centre and address some of the concerns of the Conservation Area Appraisal. Improved paving and junction design (at the Market Street areas in particular) can create a more welcoming pedestrian environment and secure better integration with the proposed Eagle Quarter redevelopment.

Along Oxford Street and London Road the public realm strategy proposes a series of improved spaces at the key junctions (particularly with Broadway and Park Way) and to improve the settings of key buildings. This would enhance

the coaching inn character and heritage of this important street. It would also bring a stronger civic quality to the entrance into Park Street and create opportunities for outdoor eating and drinking alongside existing hotels, public houses and restaurants. This corridor, particularly where it meets the A339, also presents an opportunity to improve bus journey times and variability by introducing bus priority measures.

Furthermore, there is the potential for the hotels, restaurants and bars around Oxford Street to hold an annual festival by temporarily closing the carriageway to through-traffic between the junctions with Broadway and Oxford Road. Such an event would be likely to help encourage more people to explore the northern extents of the retail core and provide a new cultural dimension to the town's offer.

The Wharf

Removal and relocation of car parking would allow for the creation of a new social space and event space at the Wharf. The space would be comparable in size to the existing event space in Market Place giving more flexibility for Newbury to hold events and markets at the same time. It will create a strong network of spaces from Market Place to the Wharf and Victoria Park.

A new space is also proposed immediately north of the Museum, to enhance its setting and provide a prominent location for external events and seating for the cafe.

Canal Edge

Improved signage to the towpath is proposed, particularly from Bridge Street, and removal of car parking and refuse storage to improve the environment for pedestrians. Small public spaces would create opportunities for cafes along the waterfront, green spaces for visitors to enjoy the canal environment, and opportunities for leisure uses to encourage more active use of the water. Improved crossings of the canal for pedestrians are identified as a priority between Bridge Street and the A339.

Parks & Greenspace

Improvements to Victoria Park are proposed to create a stronger arrival into the Park and to make more productive use of some of the less attractive areas. A series of improvements are proposed to the green spaces along the canal and to smaller pocket parks across the town centre. Increased planting within existing streets and surface car parks should also be part of a wider commitment to greening the town centre wherever possible.

Park Way

Additional planting can create a stronger 'civic' feel to this important street and encourage pedestrians to visit the park. The priority is to improve east-west connections across the street from Parkway shopping centre to Victoria Park

Gateways & Arrivals

The public realm strategy and the Conservation Area Appraisal highlight the importance of improving arrival into the town centre by all modes. Improvements are proposed to the arrival at the rail and bus stations, and to pedestrian arrival along the canal and across the A339 into the park. Key vehicular arrival points include the railway bridge (Bartholomew Street south), Robin Hood roundabout, and the public car parks, which can be a focus for additional tree planting and greening.

Train Station

With the introduction of two new Cycle Hubs, the possible extension of the Jet Black 1 and Bus routes 1A and 1C to the station and the completion of the Market Street development immediately to the north, better connecting the station to the rest of the town centre, there is a renewed focus on Newbury train station. This is also being complemented by a scheme to redevelop the south side of the station, led by Great Western Railway in partnership with West Berkshire Council and the Local Enterprise Zone. The proposals include the introduction of three business growth units as well changes to improve the customer experience. Where it had once felt slightly outside the town core, it is likely to be far better integrated. However, the public realm on the approaches to the station are relatively poor, with the southern forecourt (the natural arrival point for those arriving by train from London) providing a particularly underwhelming arrival experience with limited options for interchange.

It is recommended that a detailed review of the station environs is carried out with the aim of increasing the range and attractiveness of travel choices for the town and improving the arrival experience at the station.

A339

Whilst the A339 is unlikely to ever feel like a core part of the town centre, and is part of the reason why it does not formally form part of this masterplan, it should still act as an important gateway. Rather than being just another part of a bypass that connects the M3 with the M4, the section that passes through Newbury should articulate to drivers the presence of the town as well as hint at its heritage and scale. The Council have already made improvements to the Bear Lane junction with more changes planned at the Robin Hood junction. The Masterplan encourages further enhancements to this corridor.

The A339, between its junctions with St. John's Road to the south and the A4 Western Avenue to the north, has the potential to be a grand, tree-lined, civic avenue that, whilst continuing to carry significant volumes of traffic, better knits together the urban fabric to either side. With a number of current and future development sites likely to be progressed in the coming years, there is the opportunity to change the relationship between the town and the A339 with more active frontage and better infrastructure for those on foot or travelling by bicycle.

6

SPATIAL MASTERPLAN

Spatial Masterplan
Masterplan Proposals

This section of the report provides more detail on key areas of public realm and masterplan proposals. These concentrate on the following areas:

- The Wharf
- The Canal
- Victoria Park & Park Way
- Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Market Place
- The Lanes & Yards
- Broadway, Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street (South)



The Wharf

The Wharf proposals would help it become a stronger destination for the town centre. It is considered the only opportunity to meet the identified need for additional public space and event space in Newbury town centre. It is also an ideal location for improved cultural and leisure facilities, close to the water and Victoria Park but also close to the Museum and Corn Exchange.

It is therefore proposed that the existing car parking be removed, and that it be kept relatively clear of new buildings, consistent with Conservation Area Appraisal guidance on the historic and cultural sensitivity of the area. Bus access will be retained but consideration may need to be given to relocation of the taxi rank*.

The Wharf would be considered as three distinct areas, partly due to retention of the north-south bus route that bisects the space.

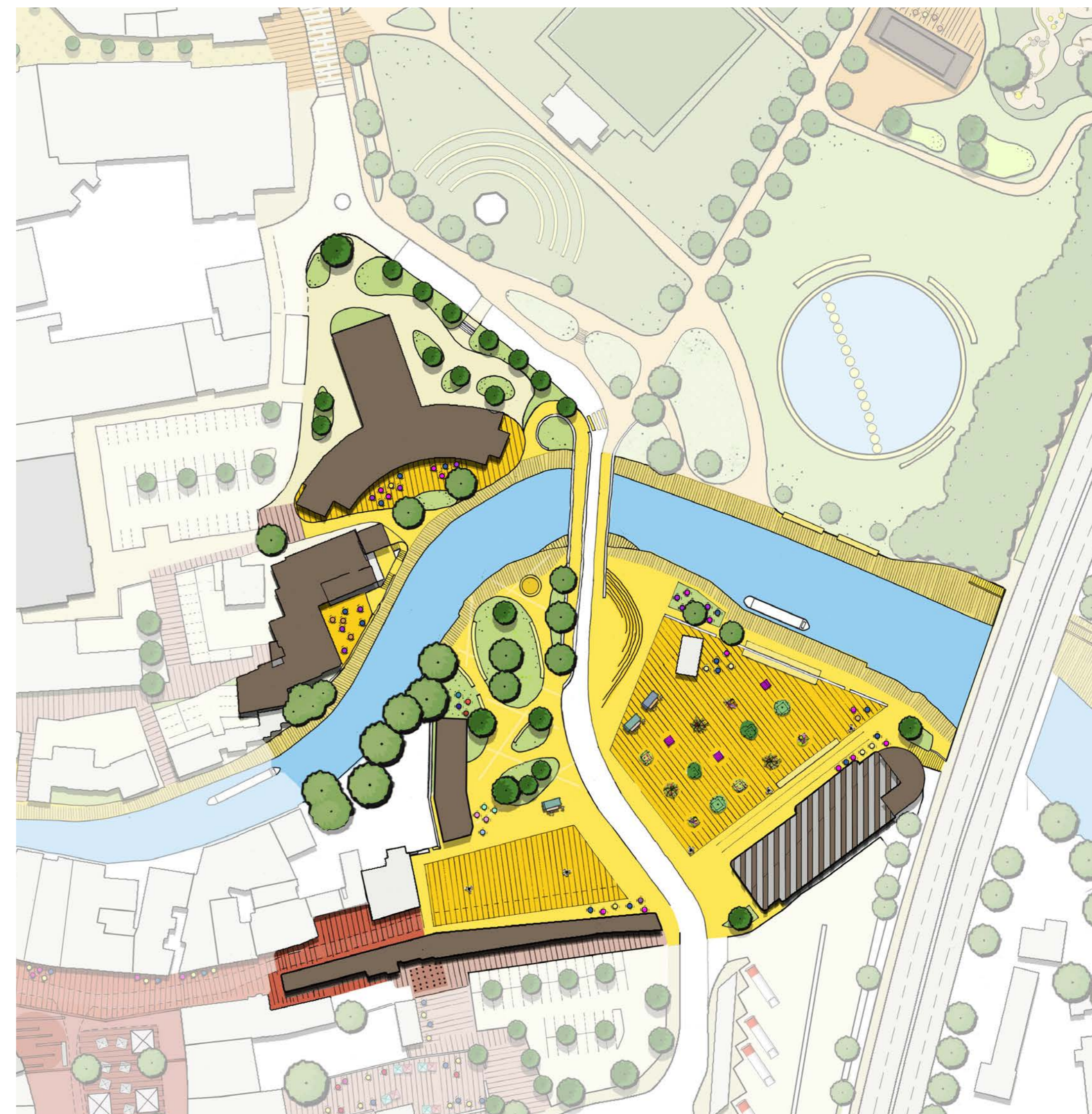
The new event space is to the east, bounded by the American Bridge, the canal and the library. Although the area would be kept largely free of new buildings, to maximise the space available for events, any public space must be enclosed and animated by the uses that surround it. Opportunities for livelier ground floors and spill-out activity into the public realm should be considered for the library. A small extension to the library would also provide the opportunity for additional leisure/café/restaurant facilities

along the waterfront. These buildings would enclose the space to the south-east. To the north the space would remain open to improve the connection with the canal (as recommended in the Conservation Area Appraisal). Space would be available for temporary street traders which can bring a greater sense of enclosure when there are no events proposed.

It is anticipated that Wharf Street would remain clear for emergency access at all times. Reducing overall traffic would however enable space to the north to be available for the Museum to 'spill out' into, whether for events or for its café. The new space would significantly enhance the setting of this important building and the attractive office elevation to the west. It is proposed that the unattractive public toilets be improved with a more appropriate structure that can also function as a piece of 'public art'.

The existing green space alongside the canal can be enhanced as a natural green space for the town. Some thinning of the vegetation and planting along the canal edge may be necessary to achieve visual connection with the outdoor space and activity proposed within the Waterside Centre, giving this important building more prominence and encouraging young people to visit the Wharf.

* relocation of the taxi rank will be subject to detailed feasibility work and appropriate consultation.



Survey Response

The Wharf proposals are amongst what survey respondents feel to be the highest priority for Newbury town centre. Respondents feel that the Wharf area is currently underutilised, and would like to see more made of the museum and library. Better links to Market Place and Northbrook Street, and to ensure that it is kept as a public space for events or just to 'hang out'.

"The Wharf's current use as a car park is a missed opportunity to provide an exemplar for good waterside placemaking and we believe that the opportunities mentioned in the Vision could, if carefully designed, achieve this."

"100% agree with the vision. There's so much more I think Newbury could do with such a picturesque part of the town. With careful planning to accommodate parking for places such as the library, that area could be a really nice place to play, eat and socialise. It could almost be an extension of Victoria Park for families and groups."

"Finding a new purpose for the Wharf that is not just a big, tarmacked parking- this area is a missed opportunity to connect with the park and create a large, dynamic and peaceful 'lung' for the centre of Newbury and doing this will help make Newbury feel 'grounded and centred' and stop it feeling so 'bitty and disconnected'."



Kennet & Avon Canal

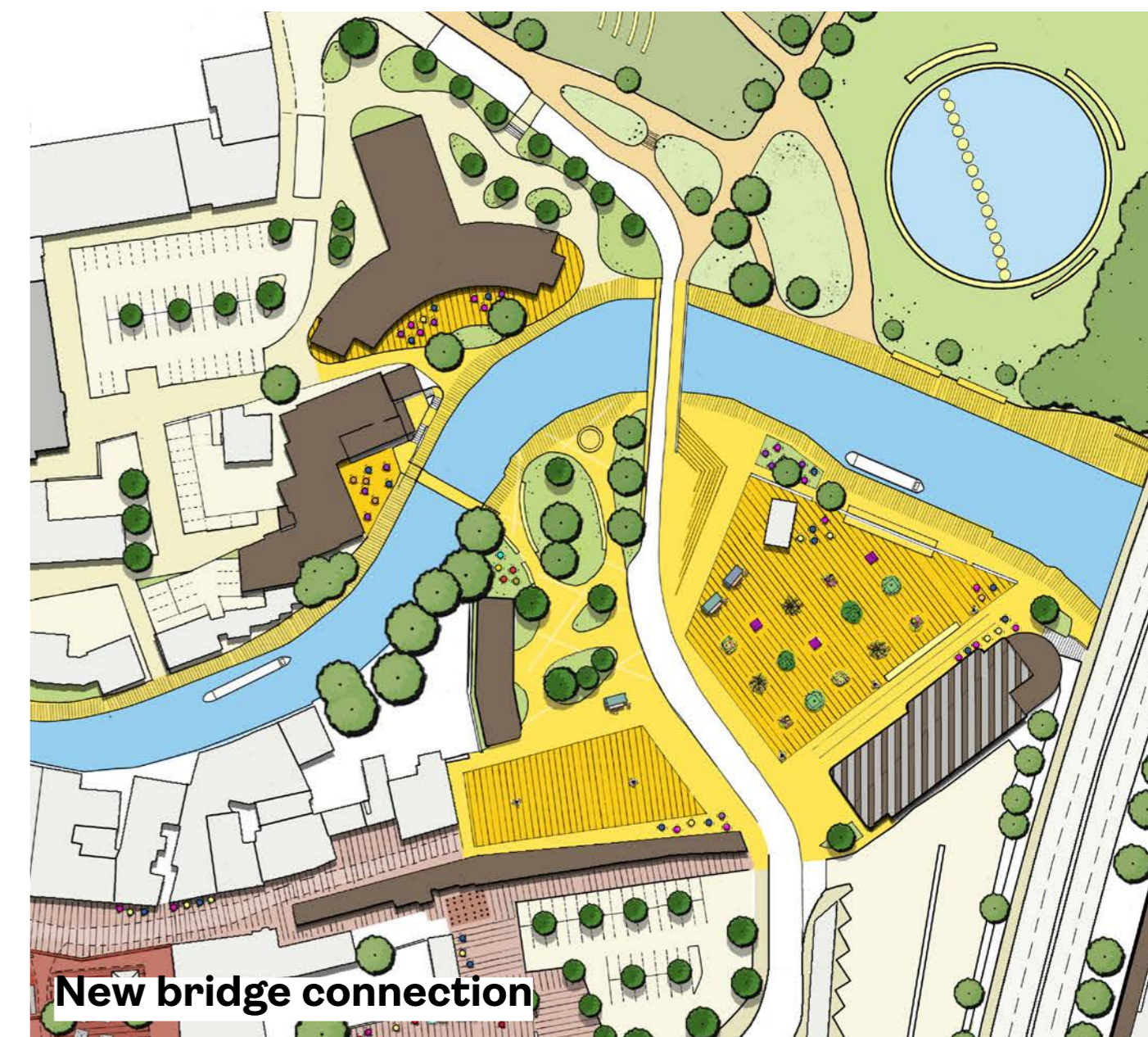
To be a successful destination, and 'broaden' the town centre, the Wharf needs to be better connected to the water and to Victoria Park. The new 'destination' at the Wharf must feel like it extends both sides of the water, incorporating the southern edge of the park, the new Waterside Centre and the Camp Hopson building.

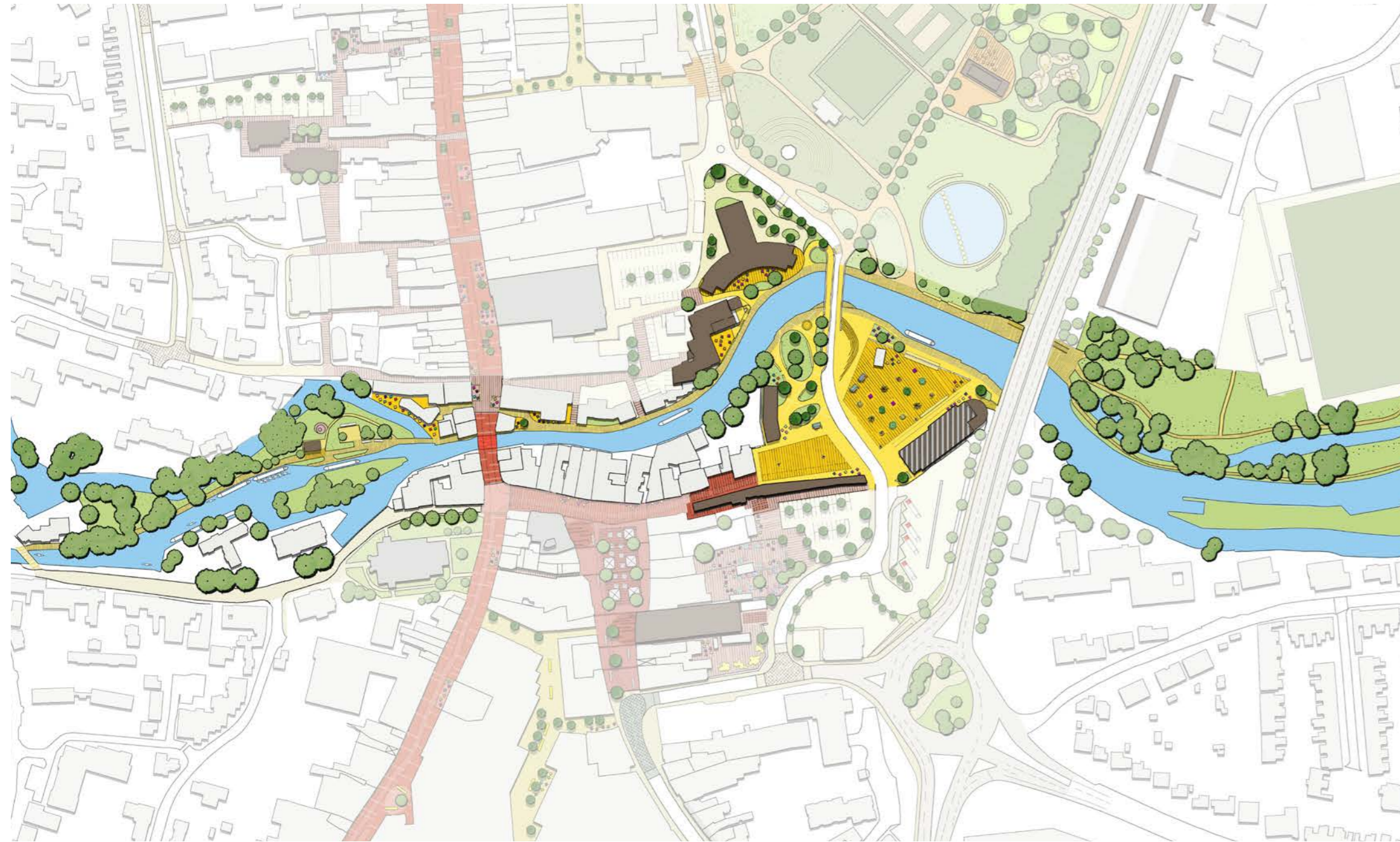
The masterplan identifies improving the pedestrian crossing of the canal in this area as a priority. The delivery of improved crossings would be complex and require more detailed design investigation but the principles are that the designs should be a piece of public art and a visitor 'attraction' in their own right, and that any new crossing seeks to keep pedestrians close to the water.

Two options are identified. The first option is for a new crossing, connecting the Wharf to the Waterside Centre. This would be a relatively small scale bridge, similar in operation to the existing crossing west of Bridge Street. Any such crossing would require investigation of land conditions and require detailed discussions with the Canal & Rivers Trust. The objective however would be to create a strong pedestrian desire

line between a new space at The Waterside Centre and a new space north of the Museum, via an enhanced green space south of the canal.

The second option is that pedestrian improvements are made to the 'American Bridge'. Again this would require more detailed design consideration. Widening the bridge, and increasing the space available to pedestrians, could help to reduce the existing dominance of buses and taxis. On the west side new steps and additional space would strengthen connections between the Wharf and Northbrook Street, via the Waterside Centre. On the eastern side a new pedestrian space could be created, overlooking the Park and the new event space at the Wharf, and improving views from the A339.





Survey Response

Respondents agree with the need for clearer access points to the waterfront, and improvements to the towpath for pedestrians and cyclists. Promoting an increase in activity overlooking the central section of the canal between Northbrook Street and the Wharf is supported.

Respondents would particularly like to see water-based activities such as paddleboarding and canoeing, as well as more places to sit, eat, drink, and socialise.

“Camp Hopson should do something more positive with the homewares building that makes the most of facing the canal.”

Victoria Park & Parkway

The key objective is to make Victoria Park feel less peripheral and more of a 'town centre destination'. This can be achieved by enhancing the routes through the park and improving links across Park Way to Northbrook Street, and across the canal to the Wharf and Market Place. The key focal point for connecting to Northbrook Street is the (former) Debenhams store. A stronger pedestrian route can be made through the park, with better sight lines into the Parkway shopping centre and an improved pedestrian crossing of Park Way.

The public realm strategy promotes a new public space at the junction of London Road and Park Way. A greener space with additional planting would create a stronger 'civic' feel to Parkway, and a stronger connection to the north-west corner of Victoria Park. It would also enhance the historic character of London Road.

Future uses of the Debenhams store (whether redeveloped or repurposed) should create a livelier use along the ground floor facing the park to bring life to this area, potentially extending across to a small scale café or other attraction in this corner of the park. It is considered that this would complement the existing proposals to enhance the existing café in the centre of the park.

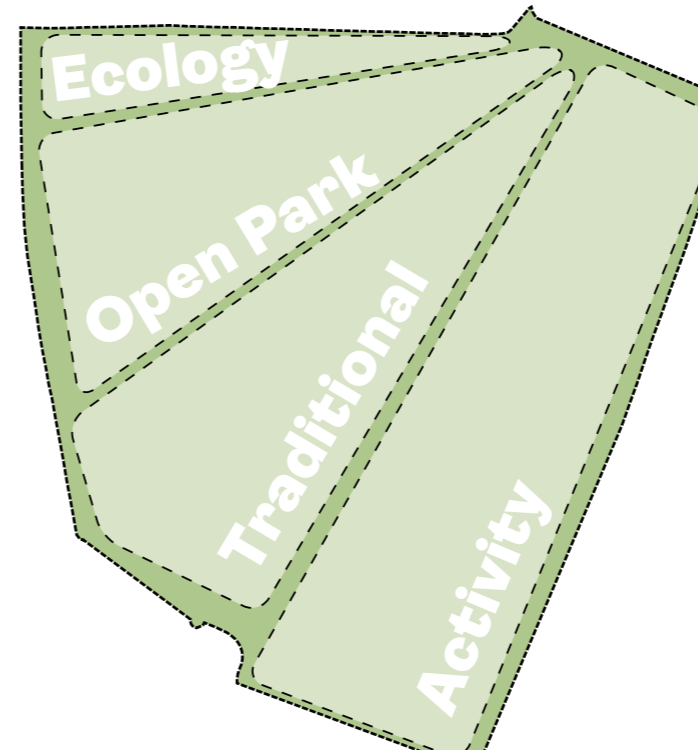
There are also other opportunities to make the park a stronger destination. This could include the creation of four zoned areas to support a more diverse range of uses in the park such as:

1. 'Activity': Improved leisure offer for younger children and teenagers. Area to be supported by increased tree planting
2. 'Traditional': Improvements around band stand to allow for seating to view performances retention of more traditional uses such as tennis, bowls.
3. 'Open park area': Retain open area of grass to hold events and allow for park setting with improved seating
4. 'Ecology zone': Additional tree planting and wildlife friendly planting to edge of park

Finally, improved 'gateways' into Victoria Park from London Road and the A339 would create a stronger sense of having arrived in the town centre, and would have the added benefit of encouraging walking and cycling into Newbury.



Zoned location areas



Survey Response

Respondents agree that Park Way currently creates a barrier to the park and would like this to be made more attractive and permeable.

Respondents would like to see the park used more frequently as an events space with space for local bands to perform. Additional comments include for the park to have more facilities such as public toilets, a year-round cafe offer, landscaping to create different zones and wilder areas, and updates to the children's play area.

“Could the park be used for more events e.g., open air concerts during the Spring festival, theatrical/arts events curated by the Corn Exchange. Tie such events in with local retail themed events/evenings to encourage later shopping/dining, and tie in with the Wharf and market square”

“Victoria Park needs to be brought up to modern standards and have more amenities and places to rest and enjoy nature.”

“(The park) Needs somewhere for the young adults to hang out which is cool, entertaining, and interesting to them.”



Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Market Place

The public realm strategy is based on the recommendation that traffic be one-way only, which is only made possible by the removal of through traffic. The movement analysis has highlighted the feasibility of limiting the type of vehicles that can access Northbrook Street, Bartholomew Street and Market Place to just those that require local access and servicing. If this measure is implemented, the space required for vehicles could be reduced to a single lane.

The key economic (and social) benefit of this is that it provides additional space, a more attractive physical environment and greater flexibility for spill-out space, markets and events in these areas. The public realm strategy proposes that the demand for such space be tested on a 'trial' basis, introducing temporary, but high quality, planting and seating ('parklets') along Northbrook Street and Bartholomew Street. The priority locations would be those associated with operators currently promoting outdoor eating and drinking, and those units which are considered potentially suitable for such activity.

The 'spill out' areas and 'parklets' should also be located to avoid hiding or blocking routes to connecting streets, to the Lanes or to the

canal towpath. The Lanes should be marked by coordinated paving, signage and lighting to complement the branding/marketing strategy for the Lanes.

Survey Response

Respondents are supportive of the proposals to provide space for cafés and restaurants to spill out, creating alfresco style dining. Many feel it is essential that Northbrook Street is pedestrianised for this to be successful.

Respondents highlighted the importance of retaining Northbrook Street's historic identity.

Many respondents would like to see Market Place permanently pedestrianised, allowing cafés, pubs, and restaurants to have an increased amount of outdoor seating.

Respondents support proposals for public realm improvements, providing flexibility for larger and more regular events. Many would like Market Place to become the centre of culture and entertainment in Newbury.



Survey Response

“Pedestrianise the whole street (Northbrook) which will then give space for breakout seating from cafés, pubs etc. Without this the current proposal is pointless as traffic ruins any vibrant feeling the street has.”

“(Market Place) is a great space which we need to try to use more in the daytime as well as for the evening economy. How can the markets expand, hold additional special themed markets etc? How can we make it easier for the Corn Exchange or Spring Festival to use this space for events to draw in people who will then use restaurants etc?”

“Market Place needs full pedestrianisation rather than the current uncomfortable compromise. With this it starts to become one of the best town squares in the country. Avoiding excessive fixed street furniture would facilitate more events and the movement of the market to Northbrook St would create greater flexibility for these.”

“Really showcase the coaching inns.”



Lanes and Yards

Proposals are to promote Newbury's Lanes and Yards as a distinctive area for local and independent businesses, utilising them to attract visitors along Northbrook Street and into Broadway, and improve north-south permeability.

Public realm enhancements including new street furniture, street planting, feature entrances, and wayfinding signage should create points of interest, improving visibility from Northbrook Street, and connections to residential areas and car parks, creating attractive routes for shoppers into the town centre, and increasing footfall along the Lanes. Where possible lanes should connect to each other to create loops, encouraging further exploration.

Reuse of the vacant Cromwell Place School building, to support the local artistic community and start-up businesses, could provide an opportunity to further establish the Lanes and Yards as a creative, independent destination within Newbury town centre.

Survey Response

"I love the Lanes and Yards. They create such a unique experience. More should be done to lure visitors in so they can enjoy the unique set-up."

"Considering the role of Lanes and Yards is an excellent insight to improve the culture and experience of the town centre."

"The problem with some of the Lanes and Yards is that they don't offer a reason to go along them, they are narrow and don't go anywhere. Compare Newbury's lanes with Bright-on's for example where the latter provides attractive jour-neys of exploration and experiences."



Bear Lane

Arrival from Bear Lane is particularly poor. The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights the detrimental impact of the A339, the Telephone Exchange and the 'retail park' style uses which it has recommended be removed from the Conservation Area. These are longer term objectives and are not addressed within this document. However there are measures which can improve this area, and create a stronger connection between Market Place, Bear Lane, Wharf Street and the Canal.

The masterplan proposals give more prominence to the existing pub gardens and eating areas to the rear of the pubs and restaurants fronting Market Place. Improving entrances and arrival from this area can also give a more prominent profile to the Corn Exchange and the Museum. A reduction in parking would enable a new series of lanes to be created, linking Wharf Street and the Museum to the Corn Exchange, creating the space for complementary cultural space. In the longer term this would help stimulate higher quality redevelopment proposals for the Telephone Exchange and the retail park. Ideally this should be considered alongside a reconfiguration of the A339 roundabout to remove the subways and further improve crossings for pedestrians and cyclists.



Local Neighbourhoods

The measures for the proposals at the Wharf, and improvements to the majority of the town centre streets have been set out above. In addition, a programme of public realm improvements are also proposed to promote the independent identity and the local ‘neighbourhood’ character of the important historic streets of Broadway/London Road, Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street (south).

Broadway/London Road

Broadway/London Road can make more of its ‘coaching inn’ heritage, emphasising the quality of the pubs and restaurants, improving the setting of its hotels and supporting the smaller scale professional office provision. A coordinated approach should be taken to enhancing arrival from the west (at Oxford Road/Oxford Street mini-roundabout) and from the east (at the London road/A339 junction / Robin Hood roundabout) and enhancing the junctions with Park Way and The Broadway as the two key spaces along the route.

The events strategy suggests potential for occasional closure of Oxford Street to encourage festivals and events which would promote the independent character of the London Road corridor, and promote the food and drink offer in this area.



Cheap Street & Bartholomew Street (south)

South of Market Street, Bartholomew Street and Cheap Street have a more local character.

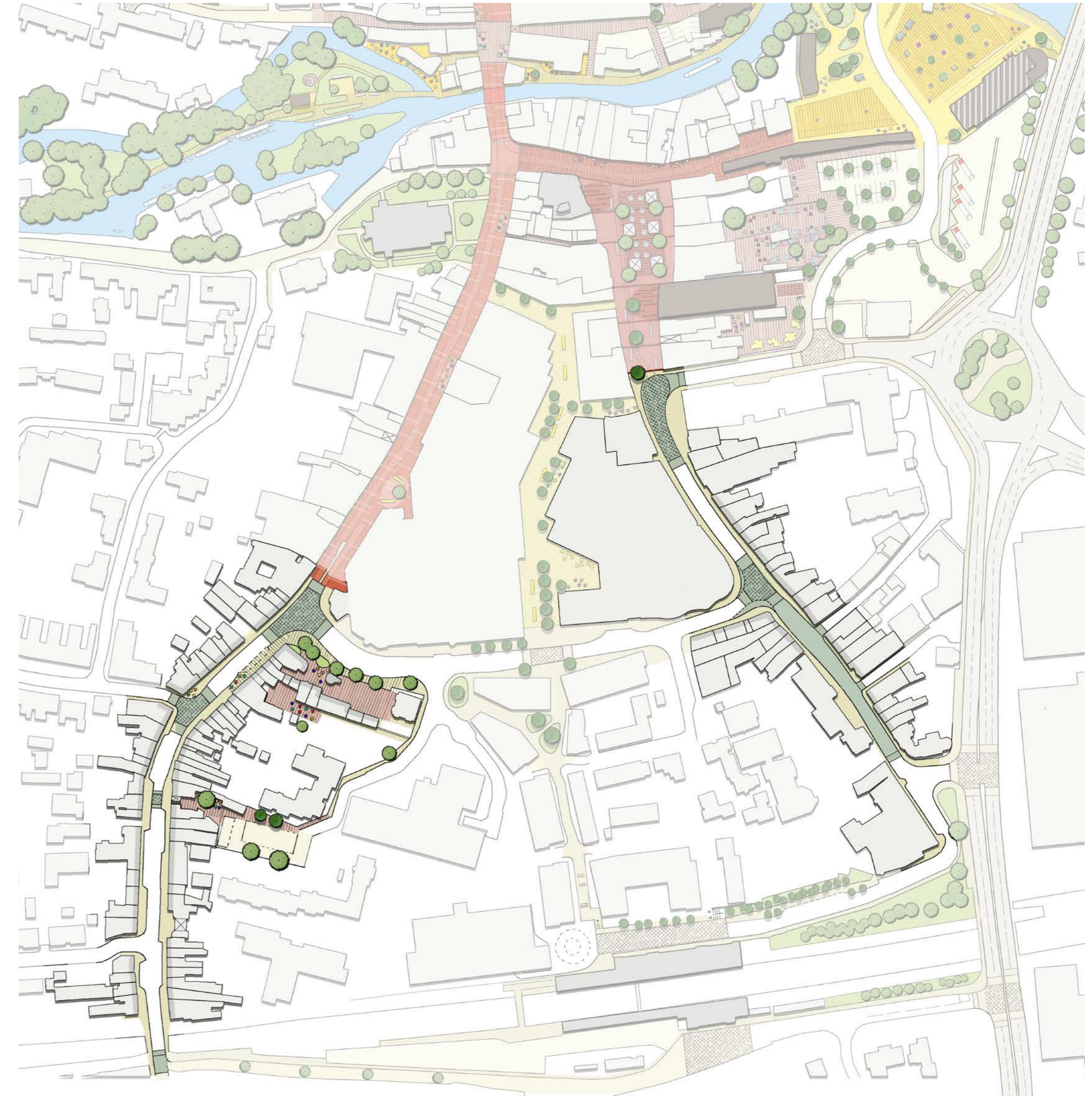
Bartholomew Street has an attractive, independent local neighbourhood quality supported by the availability of on-street parking and the increasing number of people living and working within easy walking distance. These factors should continue to ensure that this remains a successful local centre, and no strategic masterplanning interventions are considered necessary.

Improvements should be made to the railway bridge which is basic in its design and choice of materials. This would significantly improve arrival into this area from the south. From the north, extension of the paving and 'pedestrian priority' character across the junction with Market Street would help to attract visitors south and promote the qualities of Inch Yard.

The opportunity is also identified for a coordinated shopfront improvement scheme to promote the independent character of the area. This can create a strong sense of community amongst traders and local residents, as well as

addressing some of the concerns raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal regarding modern insensitive shopfronts.

Cheap Street has a variety of interesting and attractive buildings, and is less of a 'local centre' than Bartholomew Street. It would benefit from improved streetscape and parking design in a similar manner to Bartholomew Street. The Eagle Quarter proposals should also ensure that care is taken with the public realm to encourage visitors to the leisure facilities to visit the independent pubs and restaurants in Cheap Street.



7

BRAND, MEANWHILE & EVENTS STRATEGY

Brand, Meanwhile and Events Strategy

Brand & Identity

Newbury town centre has a 'brand' already – all places do. That brand is the mental image that people hold about the place – the instant connotations that spring to mind when you hear 'Newbury town centre'. And just like a commercial brand, places are in competition with each other. Because of this, there's a growing realisation that brand strategy applies to places as much as anything else:

- To influence how places are perceived and positioned to drive positive engagement with target markets
- To generate civic pride through communicating better about your place
- To attract the right mix of people, business, and activity
- To confidently become and be known as the place its own community wants and needs it to be

Newbury town centre impacts on the quality of life of tens of thousands of people – not just in traditional economic terms but modern measurements of life – happiness, health, mental wellbeing and social capital. The town centre Vision and masterplan can provide a steer in navigating these vital factors.

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

This masterplan aims to help position Newbury as a modern market town that “remembers its market town heritage, and remains a focus for social interaction, economic growth, civic engagement and community activities”

Newbury town centre can embody its values, shape perceptions, and start to build its brand by prioritising the actions that emerged from the Vision and masterplan project, and developing a series of quick wins to elevate the brand signifiers that its community wants:

- Broadening the shopping offer and focusing on independents
- Improving the leisure offer
- Improving access to and the quality of open space
- Improving the cultural offer
- Creating opportunities for businesses
- Creating a liveable town centre
- Demonstrating purpose and environmental conscience by protecting Newbury's heritage and market town identity

Whilst the marketing tool 'Visit Newbury' has been successfully established, this should not be considered as the 'brand' for Newbury.

Should Newbury choose to go through a full placebrand process at any time in the future, then it is the aims and the outputs of the masterplan that will create actions by which a brand is judged. After all a brand is not a logo but a set of values embodied by its actions.



Case Study

Incredible Edible Todmorden – An unofficial placebrand

Incredible Edible is a local food movement that originated in Todmorden in 2008 when residents of the town were becoming increasingly worried about young people leaving due to a lack of employment opportunity, rising food prices, and climate related events. Residents looked for a way to get people to come together to create a stronger, greener, healthier town and came up with an idea to plant fruit and vegetables in public places throughout the town centre for residents to share.

Incredible Edible Todmorden (IET) now has over 70 sites around the town centre. Raised planters have been sited within the Police Station grounds, and on rail station platforms. Grass verges throughout the town centre have been turned in to herb gardens, and all local schools are involved in food production.

The movement has attracted visitors from around the UK and abroad, and there are now as many as 500 community food growing groups across the world using the Incredible Edible name.

In recent years, and as a direct result of these actions, Todmorden has seen an influx of new residents. The town has become a gastronomic focal point, with the cafe and restaurant economy being a substantial draw. In 2021 Todmorden was voted by The Sunday Times as the best place to live in the North/Northeast.



Brand, Meanwhile and Events Strategy

Events

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

Events bring colour, serendipity, excitement, diversity, independent retail, eye candy, art, culture, and so many more positive human experiences to town centres. They are vital in bringing the local community together and help to create identity, visitor satisfaction and increased footfall.

A [report](#) commissioned by Arts Council England, based on independent research, shows that arts and culture are as important as good schools when people make their decisions about where they live. There is not only tangible value in investment in arts and cultural events, but also huge public demand for it. Of those surveyed, 44% said the local arts scene is an important factor, compared with 43% saying the same about schools. Performances, exhibitions, markets, and festivals can arrest decline and help to make town centres attractive places to visit and socialise. The figures in the report support this, with 68% of people saying that arts and cultural events are very important for fostering community feeling. [Source](#)

Newbury Business Improvement District have established a programme of well attended public events and markets including the monthly Newbury Artisan Market. The masterplan strategy and proposals provide opportunity for this events programme to expand, activating town centre streets and spaces to a greater extent.

The masterplan proposals are to ‘unlock’ and enhance the Wharf and Victoria Park providing opportunity to animate these spaces more often with public events and festivals. Furthermore, proposals to reduce traffic in Northbrook Street and Market Place, should enable increased use of these spaces, along with the Lanes and Yards, for market day activities and town centre events.

For these spaces to function successfully as events spaces, they need to be flexible enough to support a wide range of events, markets, and ‘pop-up’ placemaking activity. Public realm upgrades must consider these uses from the outset, for example by ensuring public seating and planting is positioned to allow adaptable use of the space or is moveable at reasonable cost. Infrastructure that supports the range of events and activities should also be provided e.g. ‘pop-up’ power sources.

For events to have the best possible impact, it is essential that they are carefully curated, promoted, and continually benchmarked against best practice events from across the country. Every experience that a visitor has at an event, they will associate with their experience of Newbury as a whole.

Case Study - The Frome Independent

The Frome Independent is an award winning, destination street market that ‘reclaims’ Frome’s high street once a month to showcase the best independent craftspeople, designers, makers, food producers and vintage traders in the Southwest region.

The event activates the entire town centre, including core retail streets, public spaces, and surface car parks with live music, DJs, performance, creative workshops, activities, and market stalls.

The initial aim for the market was to bring footfall to Frome’s independent businesses. Within a decade the event has grown to be one of the most significant public events in the region’s calendar attracting over 80,000 visits each year, not only from the local region but also from larger towns cities such as Bath, Bristol, and London.

Between events The Frome Independent runs ‘Night School’. A series of evening sessions, workshops and supper clubs that provide opportunity to learn new skills under the guidance of the Frome Independent traders and local businesses.

The Frome Independent brand is recognisable, and consistent through curation, marketing,

promotion, event infrastructure and merchandising. This cohesive brand strategy has enabled the event to gain over twenty-four thousand followers on Instagram.

Whilst the Frome Independent itself is non-profit making business, the event helps generate an estimated £2.5 million in revenue for its traders and Frome’s independent retailers and hospitality businesses. The town has frequently been voted ‘Best place to live in the Southwest’.





Engaging with Newbury's youth

Public survey analysis indicates that, at present, young people are more likely to visit the town during the day to eat and drink but are less likely to visit for a specific cultural activity. This is likely a result of a lack of cultural events and activities currently, as their desire for improved cultural space and importantly their desire for more 'spaces for young people to hang out' was nearly 50% compared to 22% of the wider population.

It's important that events actively draw in as many of Newbury's young population as possible

both in participation and attendance. This can be achieved through thoughtful programming and curation, to careful communication and marketing. To assist with this, events should be as 'free' as possible whilst being economically viable, and 'profitable' for all businesses involved. Selected elements (e.g. workshops, certain performances) can be paid entry, but these should be positioned as optional up-sells as part of a primarily free-to-attend event.



Case Study - The FOLD

In 2020, [Deco Publique](#) were commissioned to produce a programme of events and activities that engaged and supported young people to become creatively empowered in their towns. Funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England, the programme ran for three consecutive weeks in three locations in the Lake District and North Yorkshire and included a range of activities such as drop in and bookable art workshops, live music sessions, performances, talks and debates, each tailored to be specific to the location.



The event programme included several 'co-design' workshops, where the attendees' discussed ideas for the towns' future, and creative & political ways in which young people could have more say in their town. One outcome of these events is a bold mural in Settle town centre. An idea that came from the young people in the co-design sessions, and where young people gave their input on artist selection, style, colour scheme and words for the mural.

Brand, Meanwhile and Events Strategy

Events

Newbury Town Centre Masterplan

Events rooted in Newbury

For events to create real value in terms of economic impact, civic pride, placemaking and place-marketing, and to ensure these benefits are long-lasting, it is crucial for them to be pertinent, distinctive, and to engage local residents and businesses, as well as being of a calibre to draw in visitors from further afield.

Newbury town centre, at present doesn't have a regionally significant event. Thus, there is opportunity to develop an event that is 'distinctly Newbury'. An event with a narrative that is embedded in Newbury, with connections to the town's history, geography, and communities (residents, businesses, cultural organisations etc). An event that cannot be found or replicated elsewhere.

The following events are examples that really put places on the map and help to embed brand distinctiveness.



Case study – Ludlow ‘The food town’

Ludlow, Shropshire, through its established events and markets has become known as the ‘the food town’.

In 1995 members of Ludlow and District Chamber of Trade and Commerce came up with several ideas to help boost the business image of Ludlow and the surrounding area. The main idea was to create a festival, which would both promote the area's small food and drink producers and encourage visitors to explore Ludlow's shops, restaurants, and pubs. The inaugural event was a resounding success, and the event has grown year on year since. Ludlow Food Festival now hosts three events taking place over weekends in spring, summer, and autumn. Combined these events attract over 30,000 visitors to the town.



Case study – First Light Festival, Lowestoft

[First Light Festival](#) is a truly unique, 24 hour long multi-arts beach & beach front festival that, as the sun rises, celebrates the UK's ‘First Light’ of the day as it touches Britain on the seafront of its most easterly town, Lowestoft. The event took place for the very first time over 24 hours of midsummer weekend on 22nd/23rd June 2019 on Lowestoft's South Beach and seafront. With free access and 160 + innovative and engaging events. It is estimated that 30,000 people were in attendance over the course of 24 hours. Its economic impact was considerable, specifically, an investment of £90,000 of business rates retained by East Suffolk Council was converted into between £700-£900k of direct spend at the festival. This is in addition to wider financial benefit to local hotels, restaurants, and bars, which all sold out.



Case Study - Festival of Making, Blackburn

[The National Festival of Making](#) reinforces Blackburn being a “making town “ with the highest proportion of a workforce in manufacturing / making of any town in the UK.

Taking place over two festival days in June, with long-term projects running throughout the year, The National Festival of Making takes over the streets of Blackburn with music, markets, street food, art, performance, tours, talks and above all, an eclectic mix of making experiences for everyone to enjoy.

Meanwhile Uses

'Meanwhile use' refers to the short-term use of temporarily empty buildings such as shops and offices, or the temporary use of a space. Meanwhile uses can take place for as little as a few weeks, or for as long as several years, whilst long-term plans for the buildings or spaces are finalised. They allow for constant positive change, evolution, and meta-morphosis. They ensure town centres feel exciting, giving residents and visitors the gift of surprise and entertainment.

Temporary initiatives can include small to large scale participative public events, pop-up shops, workspaces, markets, outdoor activities that bring people together, enable networking, play, and help to create a people centred place that people want to visit again and again.

By allowing disused and underutilised spaces to be used as 'meanwhile hubs', councils can unlock space for the benefit of creative and cultural activity, as well as start-up and scale up entrepreneurs, which in turn facilitates community activity, cohesion and enterprise.

West Berkshire Council, with its pre-existing relationships with local developers and landlords, can be instrumental in enabling spaces to be used for 'meanwhile purposes'. Key spaces within Newbury town centre for meanwhile initiatives include vacant shops, the Wharf surface car parking, former Debenhams building, and disused buildings such as former school on Cromwell Place.



Meanwhile Uses



Case Study - Oxford Broad Meadow

During the summer 2021 Oxford City Council transformed Broad Street in to ‘Broad Street Meadow’ with the aim to “give all of Broad Street back to people in the long-term”. The main purpose of Broad Meadow was to promote the safe use of the centre post-COVID-19, to support Oxford’s economic recovery and to inform the development of longer-term options for creating better civic spaces on Broad Street and in other parts of Oxford in the future.

Vehicle access was restricted between 08:00 and 21:00 and the temporary outdoor public space saw wildflower meadows, lawns and seating made by local makers.

Cost: £120,000 (excluding on-going running costs)

Case Study - Central Parade, Walthamstow

Delivered in partnership with the London Borough of Waltham Forest, the former council direct centre, left unoccupied for years, is now home to over 20 businesses of different scales and uses, a public bakery/ café, incubator retail opportunities for start-ups and desks for freelancers.

[Meanwhile Space](#) worked to transform the space into a mixed-use creative hub, with a variety of retail; workspace and studio space, and bakery cafe, initially open for two years, this has since been extended for a further 3 years, whilst the long term future of the site is being decided.

Case Study - Queens Parade, Willesden

Queens Parade opened in March 2012, as an Outer London Fund project, offering local entrepreneurs and start-up businesses, who were given business rate relief by the borough, the chance to occupy and run their own shop on the High Street. After 2 months of opening its doors, Queens Parade was voted by Time Out readers as one of nine best shopping locations in London.

1 Markets and market content

Market activities extending to the Lanes, Yards, Market Place and town centre green spaces, and surface car parks.

2 Small - Medium sized event space

More frequent programme of small - medium sized public events in Market Place.

3 Annual / biannual event

See Oxford Street Party proposal (Quick Wins)

4 Medium - Large sized event space

Opportunity for Victoria Park to host a handful of medium-large scale outdoor events such as music concerts and contemporary fêtes.

5 Flexible events space

Monthly, fortnightly, or weekly events at the Wharf could include:

- Street food markets
- Jumble sales
- Performances (coinciding with Corn Exchange and Market Place events programme)

6 The Wharf meanwhile space

Meanwhile opportunities include:

- Pop-up theatre/performance space
- Urban community garden ~ A temporary garden with mobile planters and public seating.
- Urban play ~ skate ramps, scooter tracks etc.

7 Former Debenhams Store meanwhile space

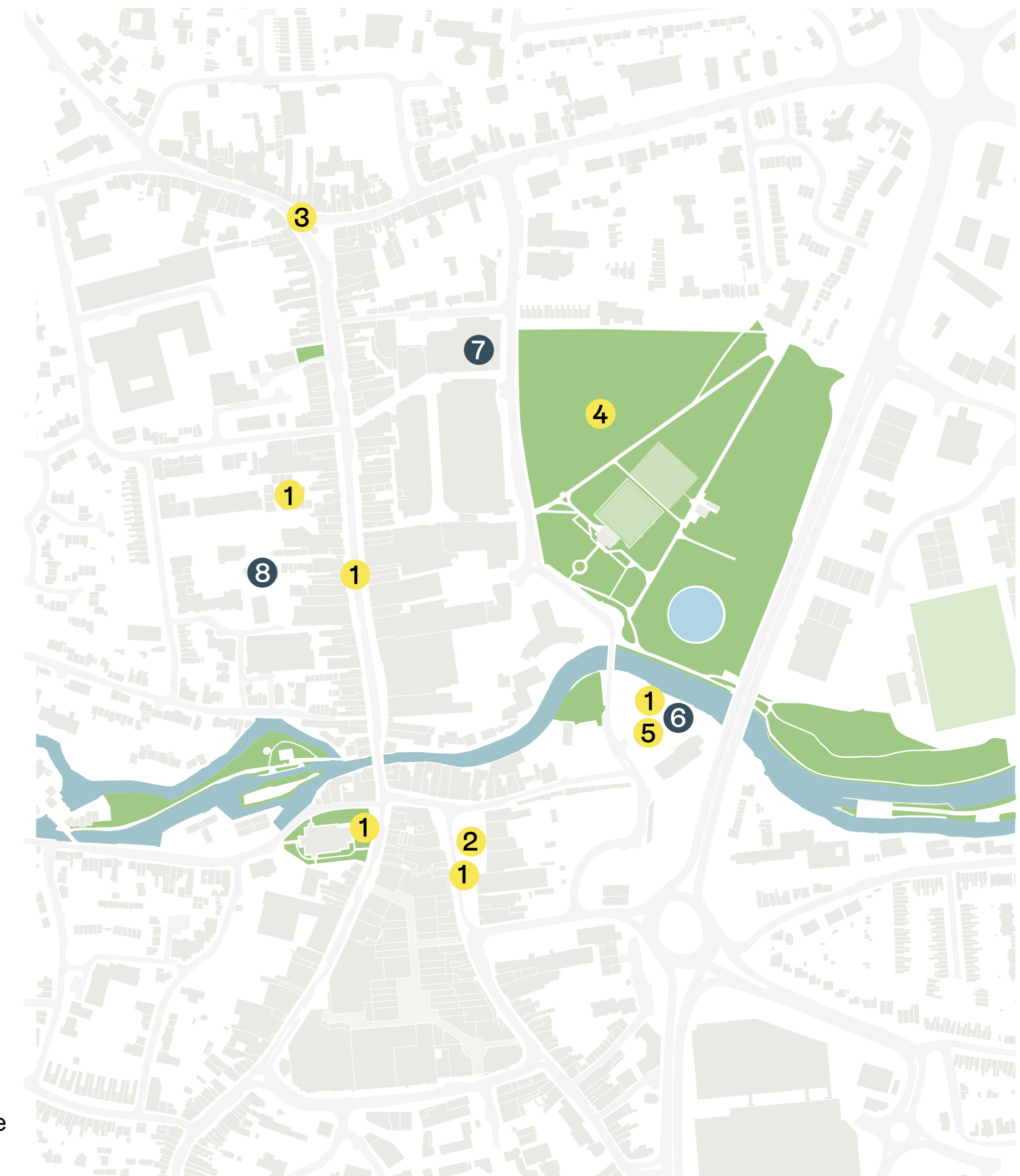
Opportunities include:

- Co-working provision
- Rehearsal rooms
- Maker spaces
- Indoor markets

8 Cromwell Place school building meanwhile space

Opportunities include:

- Art/Creative studios
- Maker spaces



The Wharf Meanwhile & Events Space options

KEY

Delivery cost

£ £1k - £50k

££ £50k - £100k



Street Food Market
Year Round
£



Pop-up Garden
Year Round
£



Urban Play
Year Round
££



Performance Space
Temporary
££



Urban Sports (Skatepark)
Year Round
£



Outdoor Cinema
Seasonal
££

Quick Wins

Quick Wins

Too few masterplans come to fruition soon enough, and many not all. In order for the 'Newbury Town Centre Masterplan' to start to deliver on the desires of the thousands of people who spoke purposefully through the surveys and engagement sessions over the past year we are proposing some 'quick wins'. Quick wins are a relatively low-cost way of easing the masterplan into action and demonstrating the art of the possible. They can act as 'tests' for some of the masterplan principles and are able to create the noise and visibility sometimes needed to attract central government and private sector investment in the town centre.

1. Northbrook & Bartholomew Street Parklets

High Streets across the UK have shown how they can quickly adapt with great examples of pop-up outdoor seating for cafés and restaurants in the form of 'parklets'. Parklets not only provide opportunity for small F&B outlets to grow by increasing seating capacity, but they also animate our streets, add greenery, provide shade, create socialising opportunities, and increase dwell time, reaping rewards for retail and F&B businesses and bringing vibrancy back to high streets.



2. Design-led wayfinding and lighting to the lanes and yards

The masterplan strategy is designed to encourage exploration of The Lanes, supporting the local, independent businesses that occupy them. A design/art/led wayfinding/signage/branding strategy will support this, helping to create a high-quality and attractive environment, that supports independent businesses and community activity.



Quick Wins

3. Event Activation – Oxford Street Party

Temporary closure of Oxford Street for one evening (or a Sunday in the run-up to Christmas), enabling the pubs, inns, and restaurants to spill out on to the street, alongside further activations such as live entertainment and curated market stalls. There is opportunity for this to coincide with a late-night shopping event in the town centre.



4. Vacant shop strategy

Opportunity to diversify the retail offer in the town centre through making vacant shops available to local, start-up businesses using incubator rent models. Additional uses for vacant town centre spaces could include community venue, makerspace, rehearsal spaces.



5. Wharf Events Space

Creating a ‘meanwhile’, flexible events and social space at the Wharf. A place for pop-up events, performances and temporary installations, mobile food traders, with low-cost, but artistically designed seating, planters, etc. encouraging people to sit and linger, and children to play.



8

DELIVERING THE VISION

Delivering the Vision

Masterplans are of no value unless they can be delivered. Whilst the masterplan provides the blueprint for a set of deliverable proposals across the town centre, grand ideas are no more than that if they cannot be funded.

The following section identifies the strategy for delivering each proposal identified within the masterplan, how each can be delivered and funded, and the timescales for delivering them. Where partners, such as the Town Council, Newbury BID and LSD Promotions are referenced within the strategy, this is subject to their confirmation and agreement.

The delivery strategy includes:

- Priorities and phasing;
- Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery;
- Policy Interventions; and
- Next steps

It is anticipated that in the period up to 2036, in line with the Council’s level of ambition for change and development, Newbury town centre will see the delivery of significant regeneration and public realm schemes based on the proposals detailed within this masterplan.

West Berkshire District Council recognises the need to deliver change early and as a result, the strategy identifies a number of ‘quick wins’, to be implanted within the next 18 months, to establish early momentum and deliver visible improvements to the town centre, particularly on publicly owned land, which is fundamental to retaining the strong sense of community support and enthusiasm gained throughout the consultation process. The majority of these ‘quick wins’ would be directly delivered by West Berkshire District Council via internal and external funding streams including Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106, subject to availability.

The strategy also identifies proposals to be delivered in the short term, in the next 18 months - 3 years; medium term 3 years - 5 years; long term 5 years plus, and identifies appropriate

delivery and funding mechanisms for each.

Whilst the strategy provides a recommended programme in terms of early wins, short, medium and long term actions, the phasing plan needs to be fluid and able to adapt to changing priorities and circumstances, available funding and changes to the baseline. The strategy will therefore need regular review and offers the potential to bring forward medium/long term and new projects where required. Furthermore, considering the vital role the masterplan will have in delivering economic growth for Newbury’s town centre, any opportunities to proactively accelerate the provision of proposals identified for the medium to long term should be considered.

Quick Wins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create Parklets along Northbrook & Bartholomew Street • Design-led wayfinding and lighting to the Lanes & Yards • Event Activation along Oxford Street • Vacant shop strategy • Partial or full closure of the Wharf car park and the temporary installation of large scale planters and street furniture ahead of a fully designed remodelling of the Wharf • More spill out space for businesses at the northern end of Park Way • Local Neighbourhood improvements
Short Term Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of green space alongside the canal at the Wharf • Support to business owners in Cheap St & Bartholomew St
Medium Term Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of paving and ‘pedestrian priority’ character across the junction with Market Street and Bartholomew Street • Extension of the Library • Enhancing routes through Victoria Park & improving links across Park Way to Northbrook St & across the canal to the Wharf & Market Place • Redevelopment/reuse of Debenhams building for a mixed-use scheme • Improvements to Victoria Park • Pedestrianisation of Northbrook St, Bartholomew Street and Market Place • More prominence to existing pub gardens and eating areas to the rear of pubs and restaurants fronting Market Place. • Emphasising the quality of pubs & restaurants & supporting the small scale office provision at Broadway/London Road. • Improvements to railway bridge • Replacement of the existing toilets at the Wharf with a new structure that incorporates new public toilets
Long Term Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved canal crossing of the Kennet & Avon Canal • Arrival from Bear Lane

Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery

Action	Strategy	Delivery & Funding	Timeframe	Phasing
Create Parklets along Northbrook & Bartholomew Street	Appoint landscape architect / designer to create outdoor spaces for F&B outlets adding greenery & increasing seating capacity.	Direct delivery by WBC. Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources, including CIL and Section 106.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Design-led wayfinding and lighting to The Lanes & Yards	Appoint designer to create design/art led wayfinding, coordinated paving and signage coupled with branding strategy developed by the BID team.	Direct delivery by WBC. Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources, including CIL and Section 106.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Event Activation – Oxford Street Party	Apply for temporary road closure and WBC to work with Town Council to create outdoor spaces for daytime/evening/Christmas event.	WBC and Town Council Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Vacant shop strategy	Create and run advertising campaign to use vacant shops to offer incubator rent model to start ups or use the space for community venues, rehearsal spaces etc.	WBC and Town Council Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Partial or full closure of the Wharf car park and the temporary installation of large scale planters and street furniture ahead of a fully designed remodelling of the Wharf	Appoint designer to produce layout of space to be used as flexible event and social spaces. Review car parking policy and potential relocation of taxi rank.	Direct delivery by WBC. Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	0-18 months	Quick Win

Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery

Action	Strategy	Delivery & Funding	Timeframe	Phasing
More spill out space for businesses at the northern end of Park Way (this would be in addition to the spaces provided under the Northbrook St programme)	WBC, with the help of the BID Team, to support businesses with licenses and permits. Appointment of a designer may be required to increase spill out space for these businesses	Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Local Neighbourhood improvements – Broadway/ London Road, Cheap Street and Bartholomew Street (south)	Set out a programme of public realm improvements e.g. planting, removal of unnecessary street furniture, to promote the independent identity and character.	WBC direct delivery Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	0-18 months	Quick Win
Support to business owners in Cheap St & Bartholomew St	BID team to work with local business owners to agree a coordinated shopfront improvement scheme.	BID and local businesses Pump prime funding to be sought from WBC with match funding from private businesses.	18 months - 3 years	Short Term
Enhancement of green space alongside the canal at the Wharf	Agree and produce programme of works with Canal & River Trust to vegetation to create visual connection with the outdoor space and activity proposed with the Waterside Centre.	To be delivered by WBC & Canal & River Trust Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	18 months - 3 years	Short Term
Replacement of the existing toilets at the Wharf to include a cafe or other community use as well as public toilets	Run competition to find designer to create a more attractive toilet structure which can also function as ‘public art’.	Delivery by the Town Council with input from WBC Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Extension of paving and ‘pedestrian priority’ character across the junction with Market Street and Bartholomew Street	Scope out works to carry out paving and improvement works, requiring a reorganisation of the junction, to attract visitors and promote the qualities of Inch Yard.	Direct delivery from WBC Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term

Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery

Action	Strategy	Delivery & Funding	Timeframe	Phasing
Enhancing routes through Victoria Park & improving links across Park Way to Northbrook Street & across the canal to the Wharf & Market Place	Appoint engineer and landscape architect to produce plan of enhanced routes and planting design.	Direct delivery by WBC. Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Redevelopment/reuse of Debenhams building for a mixed-use scheme involving pulling back the building lines onto Parkway and West Street to create more public realm and allow the Park to spill over the Parkway .	WBC to agree how this area should be improved and then engage with the building leaseholders or Standard Life Assurance Ltd. the freeholder of the site. However, the building’s redevelopment may be constrained by WBC not owning this site.	Private funding by current or future owner.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Improvements to Victoria Park , including: Eastern zone of the park - more of an ‘activity’ zone connected by cycle routes; Central zone – different arrangements to the bandstand; North zone – keep open space. More trees and garden type area to the far north of the park; Enhanced fitness / play areas Parkway – car park could have a green wall.	Appoint landscape architect to map out spaces and design green wall.	WBC and Town Council. Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term

Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery

Action	Strategy	Delivery & Funding	Timeframe	Phasing
Pedestrianisation ¹ of Northbrook St, Bartholomew Street and Market Place	Tying in with WBC’s wider initiatives to promote alternative modes of transport, review post Covid traffic modelling, assessment of impact of alternative travel initiatives, use of technology to enable cost effective management and full public consultation.	WBC direct delivery Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
More prominence to existing pub gardens and eating areas to the rear of pubs and restaurants fronting Market Place.	Carry out parking review to determine if a reduction in parking could enable a new series of lanes to be created. However, this proposal may be constrained by the different land ownerships to the rear of these pubs and restaurants.	WBC direct delivery Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Improvements to railway bridge	Engage with Network Rail to determine if an improvement to design and materials would be acceptable.	Network Rail and WBC Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Extension of the north side of the library to better address the waterside and the A339 at the Wharf	Appoint architect to design extension to provide additional leisure/café/restaurant facilities along the waterfront	Direct delivery by WBC Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term
Emphasising the quality of pubs & restaurants & supporting the small scale office provision at Broadway/London Road.	Promotion of local businesses and support to employers to be led by BID Team and Town Council	WBC direct delivery Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.	3 years - 5 years	Medium Term

¹ Allowances made for servicing, emergency vehicles etc.

Delivery Strategy and Mechanisms for Delivery

Action	Strategy	Delivery & Funding	Timeframe	Phasing
Improved canal crossing of the Kennet & Avon Canal	<p>Appoint consultant to determine best place for pedestrian crossing and then appoint designer and engineer to create a crossing that will become a piece of public art and a visitor attraction.</p> <p>Locations to be considered: new crossing connecting the Wharf to the Waterside Centre and improved pedestrian option at the 'American Bridge'.</p>	<p>Direct delivery by WBC</p> <p>Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources including CIL and Section 106.</p>	5 + years	Longer Term
Arrival from Bear Lane	<p>WBC to agree how they would like to see the Telephone Exchange and the retail park redeveloped along with a reconfiguration of the A339 roundabout.</p> <p>Carry out scoping exercise & engage with business owners.</p>	<p>WBC direct delivery for scoping exercise</p> <p>Funding to be sought from WBC and external sources.</p>	5 + years	Longer Term

We have considered the different funding streams available to WBC to move forward with the proposals in the masterplan. Some may not be relevant to Newbury town centre but we recommend that further investigation into the funding criteria is made.

Public Work Loan Board (PWLB) Borrowing

The terms and arrangements for borrowing are determined by HM Treasury and set out in the Lending Arrangements for PWLB loans with interest rates being determined by HM Treasury. Many local authorities can take out the PWLB loans with major local authorities being responsible for their own financial decision making. They are ‘free to finance capital projects by borrowing, provided they can afford to service their debts out of their revenues’. Loans are secured on the revenues of the authority rather than by reference to specific revenues, assets or collateral.

Funding streams -Levelling Up Fund

Announced as part of the 2020 Spending Review to support communities realise the vision of the most impactful infrastructure projects. The fund will support capital investments to local infrastructure having a visible and tangible impact on people and places and supporting economic recovery.

Any bid to this fund will require local MP support and bids can be made under the headings of; Transport, Regeneration and town centre investment and Cultural investment.

Successful bids have been announced for the first round of funding and there will be future opportunities to bid in subsequent rounds. Spending of any funding awarded will have to be by 2024.

Towns Fund

The Towns Fund was launched in 2019 and proposed a partnership between communities, businesses and local leaders. Much of this funding has been allocated and it’s unlikely that Newbury would qualify as it was directed towards struggling towns.

Future High Streets Fund

The aim of the fund is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets to drive growth, improve experience and ensure future sustainability. The fund will support local areas to prepare long-term strategies for their high streets and town centres and will provide co-funding with local area projects including:

- investment in physical infrastructure, including improving public and other transport access, improving flow and circulation within a town / city centre, congestion-relieving infrastructure, other investment in physical infrastructure needed to support new housing and workspace development and existing local communities, and the regeneration of heritage high streets; and
- investment in land assembly, including to support the densification of residential and workspace around high street in place of under-used retail units.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

To be launched in 2022 to replace EU Structural Funds. The prospectus advises that this will focus on:

A place-based portion which will target places most in need across the UK, such as ex-industrial areas, deprived towns and rural and coastal communities. It will support people and communities, opening up new opportunities and spurring regeneration and innovation. It will enable joined-up, holistic investment to support local communities and people; and

A second portion of the Fund will be targeted differently to people most in need through bespoke employment and skills programmes that are tailored to local need. This will support improved employment outcomes for those in and out of work in specific cohorts of people who face labour market barriers.

Details are to be provided later this year and WBC is recommended to review the details when they are announced.

Development of Commercial Strategy

To develop a long term funding stream which is not reliant on government funding, WBC could look to develop its own commercial strategy looking at such activities as: the improvement of internally delivered services; establishing new delivery models along with; diversification through income and trade. This is of course not a short term fix and will require the political will and an understanding of the council's risk appetite to succeed.

Arts Council

Our suggestion to redevelop the existing unattractive toilets at the Wharf to include a cafe or other community use as well as public toilets, which also functions as a work of public art could attract grant from The Arts Council and WBC is recommended to research the criteria around funding applications.

One Public Estate

OPE partnerships are run across the country and have shown the value of working together across the public sector. The masterplan aims to meet two of the three core objectives of creating economic growth and delivering more integrated customer focused services.

Planning Policies

The proposals to increase space to socialise, better spaces for eating and drinking and more ability to be involved in cultural events to support Newbury's tourism sector fall under Policy CS 14 Design Principles and Area Delivery Plan Policy 2 of the Core Strategy as well as the Council's Cultural and Heritage Strategy making sure that Newbury continues to be a place that people want to live, work and visit.

The masterplan proposals seek to consolidate, protect and enhance the important role of retail in the shopping centre at Northbrook Street and Parkway, whilst embracing proposals that support independent retailers within a revitalised Eagle Quarter. However, given the changes in the retail market, the masterplan recognises that creating a 'multi-functional' town centre that supports a range of uses is key to ensuring the future success of the town centre.

Recent Government changes to the Use Class Order, and the introduction of Class E covering commercial, business and service uses reflect

these ambitions, by supporting the change of use of retail premises to diversify the offer within the town. These uses must serve to protect the town centre's vitality, in accordance with the Saved Policies of the Local Plan as well as the Core Strategy.

The town's defined primary retail frontage comprises Northbrook Street and Bridge Street (from the junction of Northbrook Street with West Street to the bridge crossing of the canal); and frontages along part of Bartholomew Street and within and around the Kennet Centre, including the northern section of Cheap Street and Market Place. Within this area, the saved policy indicates that planning applications for change of use away from retail will be refused, but these Use Classes Order changes have weakened the effect of this policy. However, any application to change the use of a Listed Building, of which there are a considerable number within the town centre, will require planning permission.

There is the potential for the Council to put in place an Article 4 Direction to require any proposals for a change of use to be sought as part of a planning application. The Government has issued advice to the effect that any such

proposals for Article 4 Directions should only be pursued where there is robust evidence to show that they are necessary and justified. The Council are therefore advised to prepare an up-to-date retail analysis of the town centre which may then be used to inform or justify any proposed Article 4 Direction(s) that the Council may wish to impose.

Transport Policies

Transport in all its different forms is also at the heart of the masterplan, be it ensuring that the town presents a more 'welcoming' entrance, potentially amending traffic flow to Northbrook Street or increasing the walkability across the town and encouraging more people to explore Victoria Park which meets the Council's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

As part of our proposals, we have suggested the removal of car parking and this element will form part of an overall car parking review undertaken across the town by the Council. The proposals within the masterplan will in turn need to be assessed against the Local Transport Plan and may influence future iterations of the plan, subject to the outcome of the car parking review.

Economic Delivery

The public realm improvements, strategic branding exercise and the works to The Lanes to increase awareness and interest will all help to encourage a more independent town centre and help to support the Economic Delivery Plan.

The adopted Core Strategy directs new office provision towards town centres. In accordance with this, the vision supports the creation of new serviced office space through conversion of existing buildings and the masterplan identifies the former Debenhams building as a suitable site for a mixed-use scheme, incorporating co-working office space to support start-ups and small businesses.

Changes to permitted development rights have made office spaces vulnerable to change of use. We have seen this with the vacant Bayer offices being granted permission for conversion to flats. The Council should continue to try and resist future conversion of office premises to residential or other uses, to support the town's economy and encourage businesses to set up in Newbury.

It is essential that the momentum generated during the masterplan process continues with the endorsement of the proposals by the Council and key stakeholders as the basis for their delivery.

Delivery should be in accordance with the Phasing Plan, with the identified early wins requiring immediate consideration.

Following the endorsement of the masterplan, the next step actions include:

Quick Wins

- Secure funding and implement the identified Quick Wins
- Preparation of detailed public realm and streetscape design briefs, associated cost estimates and programmes
- Provide support to business owners within the town centre, through the help of Newbury BID
- Implement a Vacant Shop Strategy to reduce retail vacancies in the town centre

Short Term

- Identify available funding and prepare funding applications and bids as appropriate
- Preparation of design guide for shopfront improvements
- Create a Business Case for the larger proposals, including the Wharf
- Undertake a car parking review of the existing parking facilities in Newbury town centre

Medium to Longer Term

- Preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document for Newbury town centre including the masterplan area
- Trial the implementation of the proposed changes to the existing pedestrianisation scheme for the town centre
- Preparation of development briefs, including for the Wharf, Victoria Park and the existing Canal crossing

WEST BERKSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP PLAN AND SCHEME (EP Plan and EP Scheme)



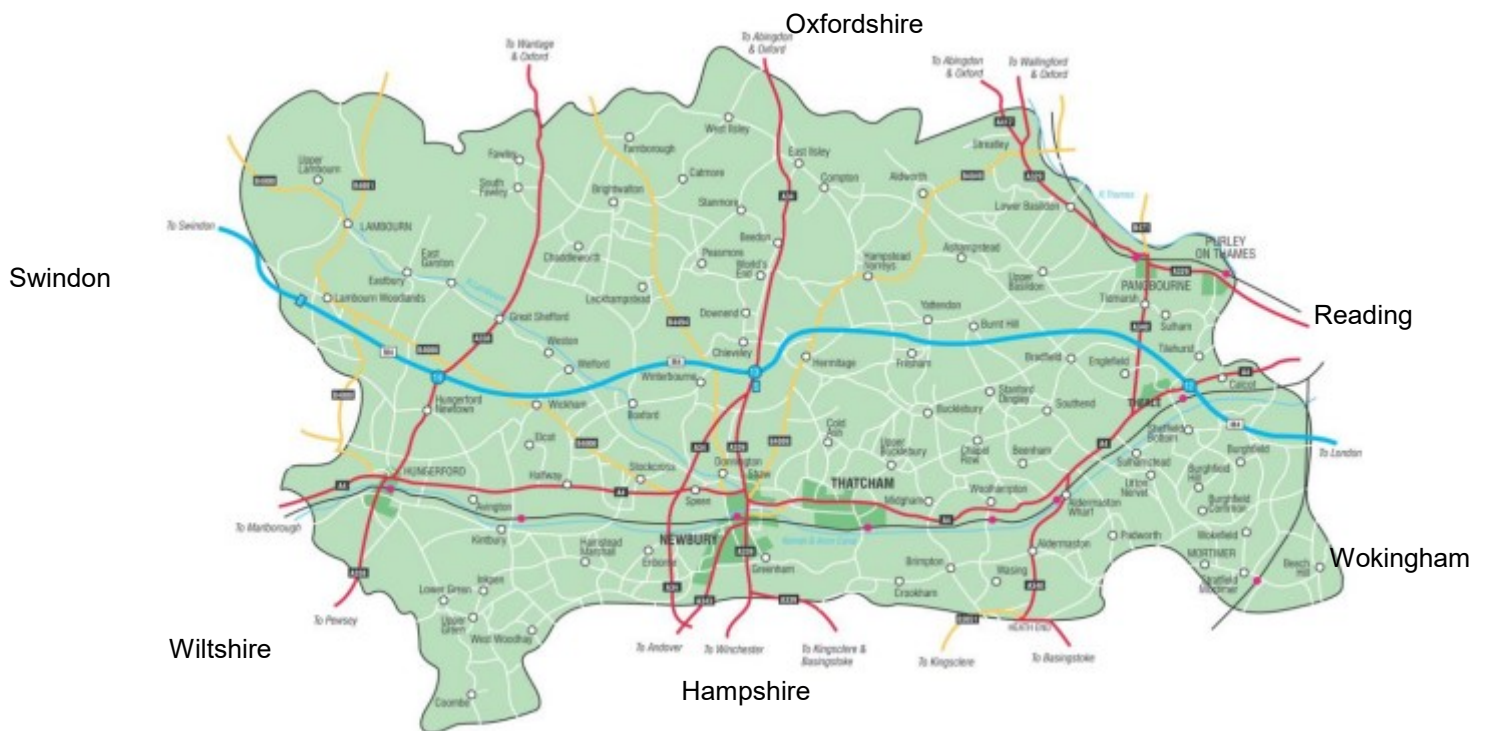
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Part A: Enhanced Partnership Plan

1. Introduction

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council published its first [Bus Services Improvement Plan \(BSIP\)](#) in October 2021, in accordance with the National Bus Strategy [Bus Back Better](#). The BSIP sets out the ambitious plans of the Council and bus operators to improve bus operation in the district, and increase bus patronage.
- 1.2 This West Berkshire Enhanced Partnership (EP) is made in accordance with section 138G (1) of the Transport Act 2000. An EP Plan [Plan] and EP Scheme [Scheme] will cover all relevant local bus operations in West Berkshire. A Plan and a Scheme are co-dependent, although additional Schemes could be introduced.
- 1.3 The purpose of the Plan is to implement the improvements detailed in the BSIP via the Scheme(s). It will place binding commitments on both the Council and bus operators in West Berkshire. Enforcement action can be taken by the Traffic Commissioner if any bus operator fails to abide by its commitments. Under section 138C (11) of the Transport Act 2000, this excludes operation of services using section 22 permits, although such operations are encouraged to comply with the requirements as far as possible.
- 1.4 Like the BSIP, the Plan, and the initial Scheme, covers the whole of the West Berkshire District Council area.



- 1.5 The following tables outline the BSIP objectives, how the EP seeks to implement these, and the anticipated benefits. They take account of the current state of the network, other factors that affect the market, passenger views, and the need to rebuild following the pandemic. The interventions required, and the outcomes ultimately delivered will be hugely dependent upon additional external funding, such as the £3 billion Government funding to support the National Bus Strategy. Targets that will measure the Scheme, are included in the BSIP.

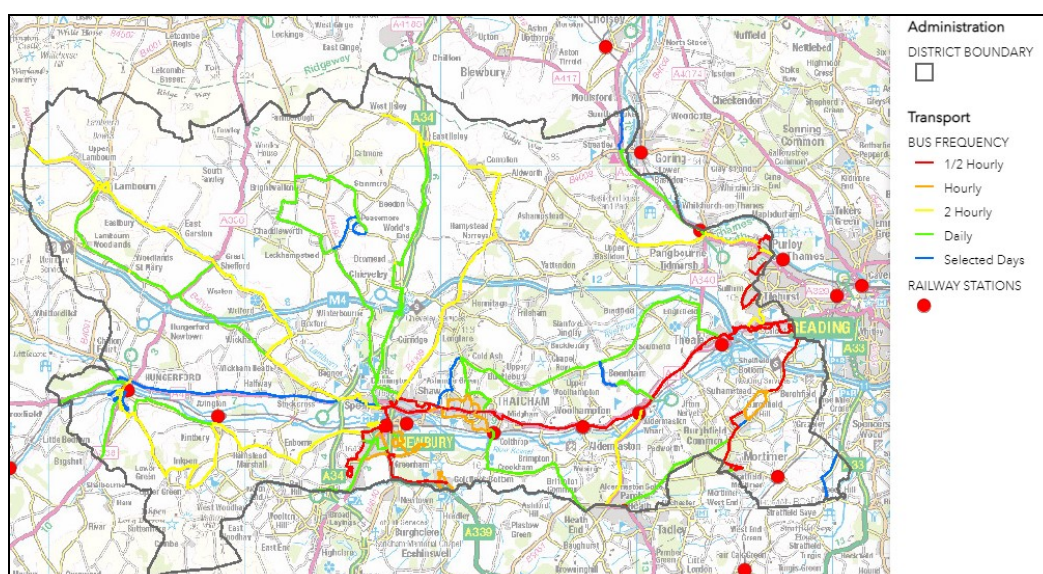
BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
1. Improved bus services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Base bus network to be October 2021 position. ➤ Improve service frequencies and journey times. ➤ Additional evening and weekend services. ➤ Examine new links, including Demand-Responsive solutions. ➤ Examine facilities that can be implemented.
2. Buses prioritised in traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Maintain current bus gates. ➤ Mitigate the impact of roadworks and road closures. ➤ Address bottlenecks impacting services. ➤ Identify the opportunity for bus priority measures.
3. Passenger comfort and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Buses have working next-stop audio-visual announcements, on-board CCTV, Wi-Fi and USB charging. ➤ Level boarding possible at all urban stops, and the most well-used rural stops. ➤ Pursue provision of bus shelters at more locations, subject to adoption by Town and Parish Councils. ➤ Continue to provide a bus station in Newbury, and seek improvements to passenger facilities. ➤ Increase the number of bus stops with lighting, especially in remote areas.
4. Affordability of bus travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tap-on, tap-off technology used for multi-operator fare-capping. ➤ Multi-operator ticketing covers all services in any location. ➤ Comprehensive range of period tickets. ➤ Fares for contracted services reviewed, and zonal fares introduced. ➤ The cost and definition of young people's travel harmonised across services. ➤ Continued acceptance of cash, whilst utilising new payments methods.

BSIP Objectives	EP Approach
5. Improved image of bus travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Simple passenger charter covering all bus services. ➤ Whilst allowing individual identities, promote an overarching bus branding. ➤ Easily accessible bus information through a comprehensive Travel Guide, accurate at stop timetables, and enhanced Real Time Information. ➤ Marketing to increase use, including encouraging modal shift from the car. ➤ West Berkshire towns, villages and countryside promoted as accessible by bus.
6. Integration with other modes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Better connectivity between bus and rail. ➤ Newbury bus station incorporates coach bays, and nearby bicycle racks and taxi ranks. ➤ Community transport and not-for-profit solutions seen as integral to the transport network. ➤ Car travel accepted for some journeys, with car clubs and parking used to complement rather than compete with public transport.
7. Environmental improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Vehicles operate with improved environmental efficiency. ➤ Zero-emission technology promoted and supported for buses

BSIP Objective	Improvements sought through EP Scheme					
	Journey Time	Reliability	Passenger Growth	Customer Satisfaction	Environmental Improvements	Access to Services
1. Improved bus services	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
2. Buses prioritised in traffic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
3. Passenger comfort and safety			✓	✓		✓
4. Affordability of bus travel	(✓)	(✓)	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Improved image of bus travel			✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Integration with other modes			✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Environmental improvements			(✓)	(✓)	✓	

2. Network overview

- 2.1 Bus services in West Berkshire are currently operated by four companies (or their subsidiaries) and four section 22 community bus permit providers.
- 2.2 Services operated without any direct subsidy (with the exception of temporary grants to offset the effects of the pandemic) make up around 36% of the bus routes, 78% of bus journeys, over 85% of passenger trips, and over 80% of bus mileage. In addition to these services there are a few registered commercial local school services, predominantly in the Eastern Area. Vodafone also has buses for the use of its employees, provided by Reading Buses, but which are not open to the general public.
- 2.3 All Reading Buses services operate from early morning to late evening, and seven days each week, with service 26 operating 24-hours. These, together with Stagecoach's The Link from Newbury to Basingstoke, form the commercial backbone in West Berkshire thanks to the more densely populated areas which they serve. The Jet Black 1 operates later than other (non-Reading Buses) services, but only throughout the evening between Theale and Reading. Patronage on Reading Buses' services had increased by almost 40% prior to the pandemic.
- 2.4 Consideration was being given to the additional local services between Newbury and Thatcham becoming supported services prior to the pandemic, despite the best efforts of Reading Buses and Newbury & District to develop the 1a and 1c as commercial operations to supplement the core Jet Black 1 service. The reasons for this are believed to be manifold - the relatively short distances involved (Thatcham is only 3 miles from Newbury), the lack of bus priority and heavy car dominance between the towns, the cost of using the bus and the relatively low frequencies of the 1a and 1c.
- 2.5 With the exception of Reading Buses, all services operate, at best, Mondays to Saturdays between 7am and 7pm. Services in the Newbury / Thatcham area tend to operate hourly, with those extending into the North Wessex Downs being two-hourly at best, and largely timed around school movements. This can be seen on the Council's [online map](#).



- 2.6 Some West Berkshire villages no longer have any bus or rail service, following gradual decline over the last few decades. These villages include Aldworth, Ashampstead, Englefield, Fawley, Frilsham, Stanford Dingley, Tidmarsh, Winterbourne and Yattendon,

all within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); and Padworth, Sulhamstead and Ufton Nervet in the East Kennet Valley. There is no bus service to Mortimer Station.

- 2.7 The 75 is the only demand responsive service in the district, operating on Fridays. West Berkshire Council have previously subsidised demand-responsive transport (DRT), being an early-adopter in 2000. However ambitions have outweighed results, and the services have ceased in the intervening years. We are keen to explore this type of solution further with advances in technology and higher expectations of instant solutions in recent years. Bids for the DfT's Rural Mobility Fund, for DRT serving the lost links mentioned in the previous paragraph, were unsuccessful in 2020.
- 2.8 With limited resources, many bus services are inter-worked with the same vehicles, thus potentially building delays throughout the day. Services based in Newbury have been retimed from September 2021 to try and address this.
- 2.9 On schooldays most morning peak buses continue through Newbury to serve St Bartholomew's and Park House secondary schools, and Newbury College two miles south of the centre. This does require a number of codes and footnotes in timetables which we strive to present as clearly as possible. This is difficult because each service operates a slightly different route to reduce congestion outside each of the educational establishments.
- 2.10 Many services operate into neighbouring local authority areas of Oxfordshire, Reading, Wokingham, Hampshire, Wiltshire and Swindon. Most operate as a result of subsidies paid by those local authorities. Services into Reading tend to be commercial. Requirements of the initial Scheme will not impose onerous requirements on bus services whose impact in West Berkshire is relatively minor unless this accords with neighbouring authority ambitions.
- 2.11 In recent years, and in particular since 2016, the Council has found that it has had to start operating a number of services itself using accessible minibuses, as the cost of provision from bus operators would have meant that these services were unaffordable.

3. **Factors affecting the local bus market**

The area

- 3.1 West Berkshire is very much characterised by beautiful countryside and villages, with 74% of the district falling within the North Wessex Downs AONB. This is reflected in the dispersed and low density population pattern in West Berkshire.
- 3.2 The West Berkshire population was estimated at 158,500 in 2020. ONS figures suggest that almost 31% of the population is over 55, including 17% at pensionable age, with this number rising. 43% live in Newbury and Thatcham; 18% in the Eastern Area; and 7.5% in Burghfield and Mortimer. The population density is approximately two people per hectare.
- 3.3 High levels of personal wealth, coupled with high levels of car ownership and car use overall exacerbate the difficulties in sustaining local bus services, particularly in rural areas. Notwithstanding the District's general prosperity, there are a number of small pockets of deprivation. [Census](#) data highlights that whilst only 12% of households in West Berkshire have no access to a car, compared to the national average of 26%, this rises in some parts of Newbury / Thatcham to more than 30%.

- 3.4 The pandemic has established the widespread practice of working from home for those who are able to do so, having an adverse effect on passenger numbers at peak times. A high percentage of the workforce in West Berkshire are employed in the Information and Communication sector, including at Vodafone in Newbury, and these workers seem readily able to work from home. Therefore, together with a rising population age, and homes spread widely across the district, commercial bus operation is difficult.
- 3.5 With retail, employment and education focussed predominantly in the urban areas, and larger rural settlements, bus services tend to radiate from either Newbury or Reading. Positive retail and residential planning have contributed towards Newbury, the administrative and main retail town in the district, remaining relatively robust in recent years. The Park Way retail and residential development opened towards the end of 2011 in the town centre, although anchor stores John Lewis and Debenhams have recently closed. Similarly the Market Street 'urban village' development to the south of the Town Centre is well under way. A [Newbury Town Centre Masterplan](#) has also been commissioned and consulted on. However, the rise in online and telephone shopping has also reduced travel demand.

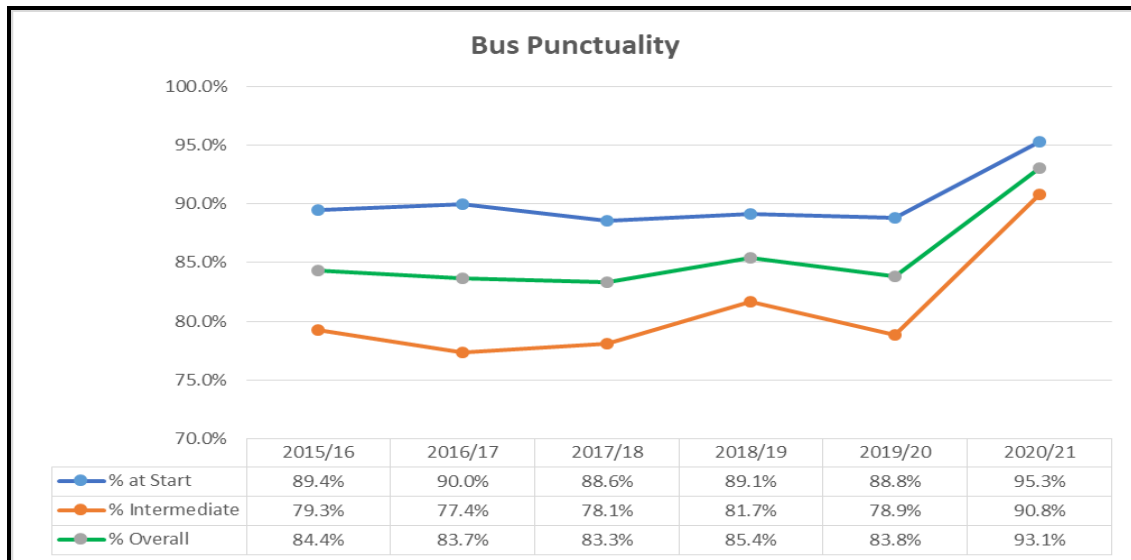
Congestion

- 3.6 The Council keeps a log of congestion hotspots which have a disproportionate effect on bus services which are discussed regularly both internally and with bus operators. Some of these can be predictable, and particularly affect the peaks. Others are intermittent, for example caused by inconsiderate parking or issues on the M4 motorway. The nature of the road network in West Berkshire can make it difficult to introduce solutions that promote reliable bus services without causing worse problems elsewhere. A list of the current hotspots is shown in the BSIP.
- 3.7 Bus priority measures are limited in West Berkshire, and have historically been managed with bus gates, located at four sites, enabling more direct routes for bus services, and preventing through car traffic.



Bus gate at Park Way Bridge, Newbury © Google

- 3.8 Bus punctuality in West Berkshire since 2015 has been better than average when compared to other non-metropolitan areas in England over recent years. It has remained fairly consistent at around 83% to 84% until rising during the pandemic as a result of less traffic and fewer passengers.



Key: % shown are classed as 'On time', defined as between 1 minute early and 5 minutes 59 seconds late).

Air Quality and Climate Change

3.9 There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in West Berkshire. Both are due to road traffic and exceed the Annual Mean NO₂ objective. Newbury AQMA also exceeds the one-hour NO₂ objective:

- A339/A343 (“Burger King”) Roundabout and the adjoining Greenham Road in Newbury
- A4 (Chapel Street) in Thatcham

3.10 West Berkshire’s 2020 [Air Quality Annual Status Report](#) recognises key elements in the LTP that can contribute towards improving air quality in the district by making the bus more attractive and reducing car usage. These are more frequent and reliable bus services with modern low or zero emission buses. In July 2019, the Council unanimously declared a climate emergency and sought to reach a net carbon neutral position by 2030. In particular, the Council acknowledged the importance of sustainable transport.

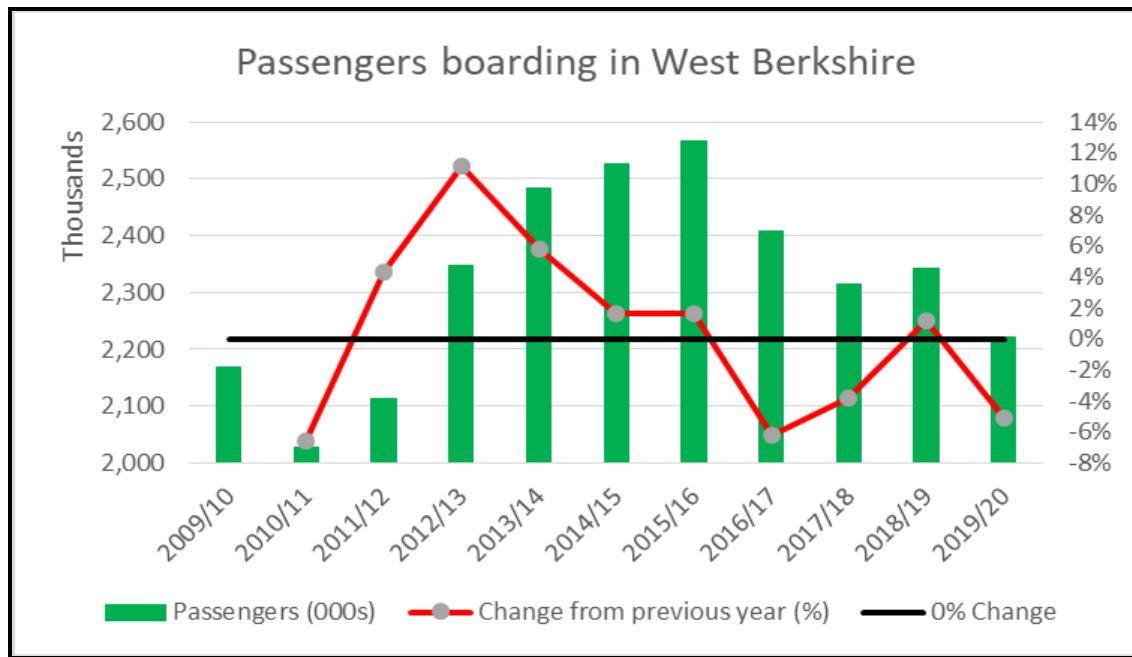
Car parking provision

3.11 The Council is responsible for 2,737 spaces in 24 off-street car parks (in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford, Lambourn, Theale and Pangbourne), and 307 spaces in 11 on-street parking areas (in Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford). It also manages 16 resident parking zones covering 98 roads. There is limited other paid-for parking with the main exception being the 550 space Parkway Shopping Centre car park in Newbury. Free parking is available at supermarkets in Newbury, Thatcham, Hungerford and Calcot, and other out-of-town retail areas including Newbury Retail Park and IKEA in Calcot. Parking charges vary to suit the purpose at each car park.

3.12 Parking charges, similar to bus fares, have remained at the same rates for a few years. Some short-term parking is available and cheaper than the bus, however generally it is priced more expensively than a single person’s return bus fare. A new Parking Strategy will consider the balance between the need for parking and the implications for developing bus travel in the district.

4. Passenger views

4.1 The number of passengers boarding local bus services is relatively positive, with drops in recent years attributable to reductions in bus services, and most recently the pandemic. Even so, the number of trips in 2019/20 was still almost 10% higher than in 2010/11, compared to a national drop of [12% \(or 16% outside London\)](#). Passenger numbers dropped to 827,782 in 2020/21, some 60% below the previous year (not shown in the graph).



4.2 In August 2021, the Council conducted a [survey](#) to identify current satisfaction with a range of issues, as well as gain insight into what people would like in order to use bus services, or use them more often. 712 submissions were validated as full responses, far exceeding those from previous consultations.

4.3 A third of respondents use the bus at least weekly, although 24% never use them, with 45% of users travelling at least as often as, or more so than, before the pandemic, although this is not borne out by operator data. Two thirds of users catch the bus in the morning, dropping to 40% in the afternoons. A further 36% travel at differing times. The bus is most used for shopping (71%), appointments (54%), seeing friends (49%) and days out (39%). The relatively low figures for work (21%) and education (9%) are likely caused by changing working habits during the pandemic, and the very low response rate amongst under 18s (1.5%).

4.4 One question asked why people do not use the bus, or do not use it more regularly, the highest results were:

- 68% - buses are not frequent enough / do not run when I need them
- 60% - easier / more convenient by car
- 48% - buses do not go (directly) where they want to go
- 43% - quicker by car
- 25% - journeys take too long by bus

4.5 Two questions asked what would encourage more use, and any suggestions for improvements. Unsurprisingly, the same issues were common to both. The most

popular call for a new route was between Lambourn and Hungerford, which stopped in 2016.

Issue identified	Encourage More Use	Suggested Improvements
More frequent services	47%	-
More regular service	-	32%
Being on a bus route	18%	-
More destinations	16%	22%
Cheaper services	11%	5%
Later / evening buses	8%	8%
Know the times of buses	7%	4%
Better bus / rail connections	-	4%
Weekend services	4%	4%
Pandemic over	4%	-
More direct routes	4%	4%

- 4.6 A surprising number of current users wanted buses to rail stations for onward travel (61%), with favoured stations being Newbury (56%), Hungerford (22%), Thatcham (21%), Theale (16%), and Mortimer (11%).
- 4.7 On the subject of a day ticket valid on all buses, 62% thought this would be a good idea. Although most did not give an opinion on the cost of such a ticket, 17% did not want to pay more than £4, with a further 14% willing to pay up to £7, and 3% believing it should cost even more.
- 4.8 A further question, aimed specifically at current bus users, asked about satisfaction with a range of factors. The net satisfaction ranged from 72% positive for drivers' customer care skills, to 18% negative for current bus timetables, although this was the only factor that had a negative net satisfaction.

Attribute of Current Bus Services	Net Satisfaction
Drivers' customer care skills	72.2
Cleanliness of the buses	65.9
Comfort on the buses	60.1
Time keeping / reliability of the buses	58.3
Time on bus to complete journey	53.0
In journey information (e.g. next stop announcements)	44.2
Choice of ways to buy ticket	43.7
Facilities at your usual bus stops	34.1
Provision of bus information (printed / online / at stop / apps)	32.9
Choice of ticket types available	32.8
Environmental friendliness of the buses (fuel type)	31.3
Cost of bus fare	24.7
Current bus routes	21.8
Response to road closures / works	20.6
Current bus timetables (times / days of operation / frequency)	-18.0

Note: Net satisfaction is the difference between those that were satisfied or very satisfied, and those that were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

- 4.9 From this, it is clear that the current times of buses, including how often they run, is the biggest issue. This is not unexpected due to the rural nature of the district and its low population densities, especially outside of the towns.
- 4.10 One of the misgivings we have with the survey results, is that we had a poor response rate from younger people. Those aged up to 24 only accounted for 4.1% of the

responses, and those aged 25 to 34, a further 5.4%. In contrast, those aged 66 and over made up over 43% of the responses. A couple of positives though, is that two-thirds of respondents would recommend bus use, and 20% would like to join a user group focussing on bus travel.

- 4.11 Each year, the Council will consult on its BSIP. It will use this consultation to assess how well users believe the Plan and Scheme(s) are working. This consultation is wider than just users, and can be responded to by any interested party. From the initial BSIP survey, 128 individuals agreed that they would like to join a user group focusing on bus travel and public transport, and their opinions will be canvassed directly.

5. Strategic Context

- 5.1 The [Council Strategy](#) contributes towards the [West Berkshire Vision 2036](#), setting out the Council's priorities for improvement. It contains six priorities, all of which benefit from effective public transport. Supporting this Strategy are the [Local Transport Plan \(LTP\)](#), which covers the period to 2026; and the [Environment Strategy](#), introduced in 2020, and which runs until 2030.

- 5.2 In 2014, a [Passenger Transport Strategy](#) was produced as part of the LTP, with three aims:

- To increase the market share for public transport services by making those services a more attractive choice for existing and potential customers;
- To build upon prior initiatives and tally with future development proposals, so as to better integrate the provision of passenger transport services, and;
- To help achieve an accessible and safe public transport network.

- 5.3 The Environment Strategy builds on the [UK's 2050 net zero target for greenhouse gas emissions](#), and the Council's decision to declare a Climate emergency in July 2019. It commits the Council to deliver carbon neutrality by 2030. It also supports the national [Transport Decarbonisation](#) plan.

- 5.4 This BSIP and EP support all of these documents, and follow from the [National Bus Strategy](#), which was launched in March 2021. It is also complementary to other Council strategies, including the [Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan](#), the [Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy](#), and the AQMAs.

6. Review and governance

EP Plan and Scheme length, review and revocation

- 6.1 The Plan and Scheme will commence on 1 April 2022 and have no end date. The Plan will be reviewed at least every five years. Following any change made to the Plan as a result of any variation, the next review may take place up to five years after such change. The Scheme(s) will be reviewed at least every three years. Following any change made to a Scheme, the next review may take place up to three years after such change.
- 6.2 A Scheme can only exist if a Plan is in place. If, for any reason, the Plan is revoked, it would automatically mean that the Scheme would cease. Equally, if all Schemes ceased, the Plan would be revoked.

- 6.3 If for some reason it becomes necessary for the Plan or a Scheme to be revoked, the same process will be used as for a variation to a Plan under paragraph 6.16. If at any point in the future the Plan area is included in a Bus Franchising Area, the relevant requirements set out in this Plan will cease to apply from the commencement date of the Franchising Scheme.

Governance

- 6.4 An Enhanced Partnership Forum [Forum] will be used to oversee and direct the work of the Plan, Scheme(s), and the BSIP. It will be chaired by the Council's manager for transport or delegate, and will consist of officers from the Council, bus operators, representatives of users and non-users, and neighbouring local authorities. The number of attendees may be capped if the meetings become unwieldy. It will meet approximately every three to four months throughout the year. Meetings may be in person or using video technology.

Voting

- 6.5 Operators of bus services that are not exempt will be the only parties able to vote on decisions. They will have five votes.
- 6.6 Based on patronage in the preceding quarter prior to the meeting:
- 6.6.1 One vote will be allocated for any operator with at least 30% of the total patronage;
 - 6.6.2 If any operator has at least 50% of the total patronage, they will be allocated an additional vote.
 - 6.6.3 If patronage for the preceding quarter is deemed not sufficiently complete by the Forum Chair, votes will be based upon the previous quarter for which it is complete.
- 6.7 Any remaining votes should be allocated based upon agreement between the operators present, irrespective of previous patronage.
- 6.8 If there is more than one subsidiary of a parent company within the Enhanced Partnership Plan area, as defined by section 1159 of the Companies Act 2006, those subsidiaries and their parent company are treated as a single bus operator for voting purposes.
- 6.9 A quarter is defined as 1 January to 31 March, 1 April to 30 June, 1 July to 30 September, or 1 October to 31 December.
- 6.10 Voters at each meeting must be declared at the start of the meeting, or they will be allocated by the Forum Chair. Those not present will be unable to vote.

Variations to the EP Plan or EP Scheme(s)

- 6.11 Consideration will be given to potential variations to the Plan or any Scheme. The proposer of a variation should demonstrate how this might contribute to achieving the objectives of the Plan. Such requests can be made by any party, and should be submitted in the first instance via email to the Council at transport@westberks.gov.uk

and be titled Proposed Variations to the Enhanced Partnership Plan (or Scheme as appropriate). Requests will be circulated by the Council to the bus operators and considered at the next Enhanced Partnership Forum, providing that is at least 14 days after the request is submitted, to enable participants to consider the proposed variation in advance.

- 6.12 Voting on the proposal will take place in accordance with paragraphs 6.5 to 6.10.
- 6.13 Any variation rejected, other than on the grounds of paragraph 6.18, may be resubmitted. No rejected variation will be considered again until at least six months after the request is rejected.
- 6.14 All variation requests, and the decisions made will be published on the Council's dedicated webpage: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/enhancedpartnership>.

Changes to the EP Plan or creation of a new EP Scheme

- 6.15 The Plan may be changed, or a new Scheme created in the following circumstances:
 - 6.15.1 Following review of the Plan or Scheme in accordance with paragraph 6.1.
 - 6.15.2 Following consideration of a request to vary the Plan or create a new Scheme, which receives a unanimous vote at the Forum.
- 6.16 Any proposed change to the Plan or new Scheme will be subject to both the Council approval process, and to following the formal variation process under section 138K of the Transport Act 2000.

Changes to existing EP Scheme(s)

- 6.17 An existing Scheme may be varied in the following circumstances under section 138E of the Transport Act 2000:
 - 6.17.1 Following review of the Scheme in accordance with paragraph 6.1. This will trigger submission of a proposed variation.
 - 6.17.2 Following consideration of a request to vary the Scheme, which receives a unanimous vote at the Forum.
 - 6.17.3 In circumstances where the variation to the Scheme will not affect all operators, following a unanimous vote of all operators affected.
- 6.18 Any proposed change must meet the criteria set out in sections 138K (4) and 138K (5) of the Transport Act 2000.
- 6.19 If a unanimous vote under paragraphs 6.17.2 or 6.17.3 is received, the Scheme will be varied providing that there is no adverse impact on the Council, and with no mechanism for objections. If the Forum Chair deems that the variation could have an adverse impact on the Council, it will be subject to the Council approval process before introduction.

Competition Statement

- 6.20 West Berkshire Council has undertaken an assessment of the impacts of the Plan and Scheme, launched on 1 April 2022, on competition, for the purposes of Part 1 of Schedule 10 of the Transport Act 2000. It believes it will not or is unlikely to have a significantly adverse effect on competition.
- 6.21 The implementation of a Plan and associated Scheme is aimed at delivering improvements to bus services for passengers in a deregulated environment. The EP will not impact on competition as operators remain free to amend and introduce new services in the area, provided that the standards that apply to operators are met. The Competition and Markets Authority has also been consulted on the proposals as required by section 138F of the Transport Act 2000.

Part B: Enhanced Partnership Scheme

7. Context

- 7.1 The Scheme has been jointly developed by West Berkshire Council and those operators that provide local bus services in the Scheme area. It sets out obligations and requirements on both the Local Authority and operators of local services in order to achieve the intended improvements, with the aim of delivering the objectives of the associated Plan.
- 7.2 The Scheme will support the improvement of local bus services operating in West Berkshire.

Exempted Services

- 7.3 All registered local bus services are included except as stated in paragraph 1.3, or exempted below.
- 7.4 The following services are exempt from all the requirements of the Scheme:
- Long-distance coach services that are required to be registered with the Traffic Commissioner because they have boarding and alighting stops that are less than 15 miles apart, but where the primary purpose of the service is not to meet local travel needs.
 - Services operated because of the historical interest of the vehicle.
 - Services which are defined as an excursion or tour under section 137 (1) of the Transport Act 1985.
- 7.5 The following services are exempt from some of the requirements of the Scheme:
- Services operated primarily for the purposes of travel to or from an educational establishment.
 - Services operated primarily for the purposes of travel to or from a sporting event.
 - Cross-boundary services where less than 10% of the registered mileage of journeys entering West Berkshire is within the area.

8. Facilities, Measures and Requirements

- 8.1 Facilities, measures and requirements are detailed in Annex A.
- 8.2 All obligations on the local authority with respect to facilities and measures apply to West Berkshire Council. The Council will liaise with Town and Parish Councils with regards to bus shelters as they are responsible for ownership and maintenance of these.
- 8.3 All obligations on local bus operators are detailed under Operator Standards of Service, and apply to any registered local bus service, provided that it is not exempted from obligations under the Plan or Scheme, unless otherwise stated in the list of requirements.

Definitions

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area
BODS	Bus Operator Data Service
BSIP	Bus Service Improvement Plan
Council	West Berkshire District Council
DfT	Department for Transport
DRT	Demand Responsive Transport
EP	Enhanced Partnership
Euro IV	}
Euro V	} European standards on vehicle emissions
Euro VI	}
Forum	EP Forum
ONS	Office for National Statistics
Plan	EP Plan
RTPI	Real Time Passenger Information
Scheme	EP Scheme
Section 22	The Transport Act 1985 allows not-for-profit organisations to operate without the need for a full public service vehicle operator's licence. They are not subject to many of the normal licensing or legislative requirements.

WEST BERKSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

ANNEX A – OBLIGATIONS ON COUNCIL AND BUS OPERATORS

All of the following apply to registered local bus services that are not excluded or exempt. If a registered local bus service is exempt from only parts of the scheme, those services are only included if specifically mentioned in the following tables.

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Existing services	Any local bus service operating will continue to operate at a similar frequency or better than that operated at the commencement of the Scheme subject to demand, and to commercial operation or sufficient funding being available.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.	Council funding for supported bus services will not be reduced in the absence of consultation. The Council will follow available procurement routes to maintain appropriate service provision, subject to sufficient funding being available.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.
Service frequencies	The Council will seek to facilitate enhanced service frequencies as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	As soon as practicable subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to improve service frequencies, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
Hours of operation	The Council will seek to facilitate wider hours of operation as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to improve hours of operation, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
New services	The Council will seek to facilitate new services as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan, or where new developments occur.	Subject to sufficient funding being available, including developer contributions.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to introduce new services, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
		Developer contributions are subject to arrangements on timescales outside of the Scheme.		
Demand-responsive transport	The Council will seek to facilitate demand-responsive services as set out in the current Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.	The Council will follow available procurement routes to introduce demand-responsive services, including negotiation with bus operators regarding enhancements that can be operated commercially.	Subject to sufficient funding being available.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Services	Any commercial local bus service operating will continue to operate at the same frequency to that operated at the commencement of the Scheme, or can be amended if it will improve the overall bus offer, subject to the following proviso.		From commencement of the Scheme.	
	Commercial services or journeys can be reduced or withdrawn if the operator is able to demonstrate to the Council that (a) the need no longer exists; (b) it is no longer commercially viable; or (c) or for any other appropriate reason providing justification is given to the Council.		Three months' notice to be given to the Council to allow time for alternatives to be considered, and for publicity and marketing to be amended.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the total scheduled distance, in miles or kilometres, covered by each service within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentage of total distance that is within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a specified period to be agreed with operators.		If section 6.16 is required to enable the Council to calculate qualifying objections.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on how and when a local service is used by passengers for each service within West Berkshire, in a format specified by the Council, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentages of the totals for passengers boarding within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a calendar month specified by the Council.		Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.	

OBJECTIVE	1. Improved bus services	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
	Operators will submit monthly or four-weekly statistics to the Council regarding the total number of passengers boarding each service, with sufficient detail for annual and quarterly statistics to be calculated per service. This includes those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	Before the next monthly / four-weekly period finishes.
	Any new registration, variation or cancellation of a registered local bus service, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan, will be submitted to the Council in advance of the proposed change.	In line with Traffic Commissioner timescales.
	Operators will submit all live data to BODS as required by the DfT, including those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	In accordance with DfT requirements.
	Operators will submit monthly or four-weekly statistics to the Council regarding % of journeys operated and their reliability, in line with former National Indicator 178a and current DfT statistics Table BUS0902, with sufficient detail for annual and quarterly statistics to be calculated.	Before the next monthly / four-weekly period finishes.
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the time taken for journeys, or parts of journeys, covered by each service within West Berkshire. For any cross-boundary service, they will also provide the percentage of total time taken that is within West Berkshire for qualifying journeys. Data will be provided for a calendar month specified by the Council.	Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.
Service frequencies	Operators will be proactive in looking to enhance frequencies of bus services operated. They will work with the Council to determine if this can be done commercially, or to determine what level of funding would be required to achieve this. If enhancements cannot be done commercially, enhancements will only be made if additional funding is available.	From commencement of the Scheme.
	Operators will work with the Council to ensure that all buses on each corridor are spaced evenly unless demand dictates otherwise.	Applies to any new or amended local bus service registration.
Demand-responsive services	Should the Council be in a position to procure or operate demand-responsive services, operators will ensure that connections are maintained at agreed interchange points subject to legal obligations on operators.	When demand-responsive services are available.

OBJECTIVE	2. Buses prioritised in traffic			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus gates	Newbury – Park Way Bridge, Wharf Road, over River Kennet.	Existing infrastructure which will not be removed whilst still required and not considered unsafe.	Maintenance, management and enforcement of the current measures, which are a combination of CCTV, rising bollards and “sump-busters”. The Council will consider extending use of discretionary powers granted in the Traffic Management Act 2004 to enforce these measures.	Existing. To be considered as part of Parking Strategy.
	Thatcham – Between Urquhart Road at Borderers Gardens and Braemore Close.			
	Calcot – Between Pollards Way at Ledbury Drive and The Chase at Calbourne Drive.			
	Calcot – Between Underwood Road and Carters Rise.			
	Calcot – Sainsbury’s, allowing buses to exit stop to gain access to Pincents Lane.			
	Further bus gates will be investigated, for example as part of new developments.			
Roadworks and road closures	Notification to the public on bus stop closures and service diversions where this affects subsidised services. Provision of temporary bus stops.	Existing.	Co-ordination of works (except for emergency closures) on the public highway to minimise disruption to all road users, including notification to bus operators.	Existing.
			Mitigate the impacts on bus services by seeking to recover any additional costs incurred.	
Bottlenecks on the network	Solutions will be implemented that reduce the impacts on bus services of congestion hotspots.	Subject to available funding, and approval and resources of the Council.	The Council maintains a list of congestion hotspots that impact on reliable bus operation. These are discussed regularly between Transport and Highways teams to identify resolution.	Existing. Subject to available funding.
			Some hotspots may require feasibility studies to identify suitable solutions.	

OBJECTIVE	2. Buses prioritised in traffic			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus priority	Bus priority measures identified in the Bus Service Improvement Plan will be implemented.	Subject to available funding, and approval and resources of the Council.	Bus priority measures are likely to require feasibility studies to identify suitable solutions.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Roadworks and road closures	Operators will seek to mitigate the effects of roadworks and road closures on their commercial services, and services that are operated without direct subsidy from West Berkshire Council. This may include dealing with bus stop closures, providing temporary bus stops and diversions, subject to this not adversely impacting on the financial viability of the service. Advance notice of these measures must be relayed to passengers.			Existing.
Bottlenecks on the network	Operators will notify the Council regarding bottlenecks on the network, including where these would only impact those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.			Existing.
Bus priority	Operators will notify the Council of potential locations for bus priority works, including where these would only impact those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.			Existing.

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Boarding	Level boarding is already provided at many stops in West Berkshire. It will be expanded to more stops.	Existing infrastructure will not be removed whilst still required and not considered unsafe.	The Council maintains an asset register of facilities available at bus stops. Council funding for bus stop infrastructure will not be reduced until all suitable stops have level boarding.	Existing. From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.
	Additional stops will be provided with level boarding (a) as other highway works take place in the location of the bus stop; (b) at more popular stops; or (c) following requests from users.	Subject to available funding, including developer contributions, and feasibility.		
Bus stops	Over 1,000 bus stops or shelters with various combinations of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poles • Flags • Timetable cases • Hardstanding • Level boarding (Kassel Kerbs) • RTPi displays. 	Existing.	Maintenance, repair and replacement of bus stops.	Existing.
	Lighting at more bus stops.	Subject to available funding, including developer contributions.		
Bus shelters	Bus shelters are owned / organised by Town and Parish Councils and are therefore outside the direct responsibility of the Scheme.	Existing.	Maintenance and cleaning of bus shelters is the responsibility of the Town and Parish Councils and therefore outside the direct responsibility of the Scheme.	Existing.
	The Council will encourage installation of further bus shelters which may include grants for installation and maintenance of new shelters.	Subject to available funding.		

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus station	A bus station in central Newbury with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least eight departure bays or stops in the immediate vicinity. • At least five waiting bays for vehicles that are required to take layover time. • Bus service departure information. • Passenger waiting infrastructure. • CCTV to monitor vehicle and passenger safety. 	Existing.	A guide for safe and appropriate use of the bus station, which all operators (including those not part of the Scheme) must sign up to, and which allows the Council to enforce the rules. Cleaning and maintenance of the bus station, including the passenger infrastructure, funded in part by charges for using the facility.	Existing.
	Improvements to cater more easily for increased vehicle and passenger movements, including better passenger facilities.	Subject to available funding.		
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Vehicles	Any vehicle used must meet the following standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro VI equivalent standards or better. • CCTV installed to provide images inside the vehicle for safety and security. • Free Wi-Fi. • Automatic Vehicle Location equipment installed that will feed into a real time information system. • Heating and cooling for customer comfort. • USB charging available. • Audio visual announcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Next stop audio announcements. ○ Next stop visual announcements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Take all reasonable steps to alert passengers to route diversions through audio announcements and visual displays on the vehicle. • Low floor to enable level boarding. 		Any registered new vehicle used from commencement of the Scheme. All vehicles used by 31 March 2030. All vehicles used on services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan by 1 April 2033.	
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the vehicles typically used within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. This will include the age of the vehicles, emissions and types of fuel or power. Data will be provided as a snapshot within a defined time period specified by the Council.		Within one month of request. This will not be asked for more than twice during each April to March period.	

OBJECTIVE	3. Passenger comfort and safety	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
Boarding	Operators to notify the Council of any difficulties accessing level boarding at bus stops.	Existing.
Bus station	Operators, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan, will comply with the rules for using Newbury Bus Station.	Existing.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Bus fares	The Council sets the fares charged on services that it contracts.	Existing.	The Council will review fares charged on these services. Subject to the outcome of this review, a simplified fare structure may be implemented.	By September 2022.
Young people			The Council will work with operators to harmonise the terms under which reduced fares are offered to young people.	Not defined.
Payments	Payments on Council-contracted services will be able to be made by cash, contactless bank card, or phone app.	Existing.	The Council will work with operators to encourage a range of payment options, including cash for as long as this is used.	Not defined.
Ticketing	A range of tickets are in place which allow travel on most buses outside of the Eastern Area (as defined in the Bus Service Improvement Plan) or those heading east from Hungerford or Lambourn. These allow for daily, weekly, 10-trip, and monthly travel.	Existing.	Revenue for these tickets remains with the operator who sells them.	Existing.
	The Council will review the price and scope of these tickets in line with its review of fares charged on its contracted services.	By September 2022.	The Council will set the price of these tickets taking account of normal commercial ticket prices. Any new tickets introduced will be priced no lower than operator-set commercial ticket prices, and no ticket price will be permanently reduced to make it cheaper than a commercial equivalent. Short-term price reductions may be agreed with participating operators as part of a promotional or marketing campaign.	By September 2022.
	All bus services operated within the area of these tickets must participate in the ticketing scheme.	By September 2023.		
	Services operated in the Eastern Area will allow joint ticketing between operators travelling along similar routes, or between similar places.	By September 2023.	The Council will assist the introduction of multi-operator ticketing in the Eastern Area.	By September 2023.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Fare capping	n/a	n/a	The Council will work with operators to introduce multi-operator fare capping.	Following the introduction of a national mechanism, and subject to funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Bus fares	For bus services not contracted by the Council, bus fares are set by either the operator or the contracting party. Operators will submit information to the Council on the fares charged to and from stops within West Berkshire, including those otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan. Data will make clear all of the different fares that may apply to different users. Prior notification will not need to be given for promotional fares but would be appreciated.			At commencement of the Scheme, and then at least two weeks before any change in fares is applied.
Young people	Where bus fares are outside of the Council's direct control, operators will work with the Council to harmonise the terms under which reduced fares are offered to young people.			Not defined.
Payments	Where payment mechanisms are outside of the Council's direct control, operators will work with the Council to retain a variety of payment options, including cash for as long as this is used.			Not defined.
Ticketing	All vehicles must use an Electronic Ticket Machine capable of reading English National Concessionary Travel Scheme cards, and accepting contactless payments using a credit or debit card.			Any services from commencement of the Scheme. All services otherwise exempt under the third criteria of section 7.5 (cross-boundary) of the Plan by 1 April 2026.
	Operators will, in cooperation with other operators as necessary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow tickets from other services that either travel along similar routes, or between similar places to be used on their services; and/or • Take part in a multi-operator ticketing scheme. Any fare which is more than 15% different from the equivalent fare on the service used may be excluded from this arrangement, or otherwise a premium may be charged, at the discretion of the operator on whose service the ticket is sought to be used.			By September 2023.

OBJECTIVE	4. Affordability of bus travel	
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE	TIMESCALE
	Operators will submit information to the Council on the types of tickets used by passengers, and by particular types of passenger within West Berkshire in a format agreed between the Council and the operator, and in such a way as to maintain commercial sensitivity as far as practicable. This will include those services otherwise exempt under section 7.5 of the Plan.	Within one month of request. This will only be requested to support specific projects.
Fare capping	All operators will use tap-on, tap-off technology to enable passenger fare capping to take place, and will co-operate in a multi-operator fare capping scheme.	Subject to available funding and any clarity on national arrangements.

OBJECTIVE	5. Improved image of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Identity	The Council use the <i>Connect</i> branding to highlight connectivity in the bus network. It is used in publicity, ticket products, and on Council-operated section 22 vehicles.	Existing.	The Council retain ownership of this overall brand, but will review it to ensure it meets its desired aims.	Ongoing.
Passenger charter	A simple standard passenger charter will be produced to inform passengers of their rights and expectations and any recourse for failure to meet these. It will be available on the Council website.	By October 2022.	n/a	n/a
Passenger awareness	Under sections 139 and 140 of the Transport Act 2000, and therefore outside the scope of the Scheme, the Council will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a Travel Guide giving information on all local bus services. It will be updated following significant changes to the bus network. • Ensure bus stops provide information on services and departure times. 	Existing.	Under section 140 of the Transport Act 2000, and therefore outside the scope of the Scheme, the Council may recover reasonable costs from operators where such information is not provided by the operators.	Existing.
	RTPI screens are in place at eleven locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calcot: Beansheaf Stores, Charrington Road (x1), Swanholm Gardens (x1), Sainsbury's (x1) • Newbury: Park Way (x2), The Wharf Bus Station (x1) • Thatcham: Broadway (x2) • Theale: The Crown (x1) • Tilehurst: Overdown Road / Tring Road (x1) • West Berkshire Hospital (x1) 	Existing. Where it is not cost-effective to maintain an existing screen, or where multiple screens exist, a screen may be removed.	The Council will follow available procurement routes for new infrastructure and maintenance of existing infrastructure, subject to sufficient funding being available.	Subject to available funding.

OBJECTIVE	5. Improved image of bus travel			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
	Installation of RTPi screens at key stops in line with Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.		
Marketing	Marketing of bus services will be improved to make people aware of what is available and encourage use, using a variety of different initiatives and techniques.	Subject to available funding.	We will seek to measure the effectiveness of different marketing strategies and campaigns.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE		TIMESCALE	
Passenger charter	Operators will make available a passenger charter, which will inform passengers of their rights and expectations and any recourse for failure to meet these.		By October 2022.	
Passenger awareness	Operators will manage RTPi systems.		Existing.	
Marketing	Operators will support the Council in marketing initiatives which aim to encourage greater bus use. They will provide information to the Council in a timely manner that helps to measure the success of such initiatives.		Following marketing campaigns.	

OBJECTIVE	6. Integration with other modes			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Community transport	The Council will continue to provide the same overall level of revenue grant funding to support community transport operations. It will also seek to provide capital funding to enable groups to replace essential assets.	From commencement of the Scheme for a period of at least 10 years.	<p>The Council will monitor use of community transport activities.</p> <p>The Council will promote community transport for those unable to use public transport.</p>	Existing.
Rail	The Council will look at improved links between buses and trains in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will work with rail companies to ensure better information and coordination when feasible for interchange between buses and trains.	Subject to available funding.
Other modes	The Council will support integration between buses and other modes of transport in line with the Bus Service Improvement Plan.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will develop and publish a Parking Strategy that will take account of environmental considerations.	By March 2024.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Other transport modes	Bus operators will work with the Council to encourage seamless public transport journeys, including through ticketing.			Subject to available funding.

OBJECTIVE	7. Environmental Improvements			
DESCRIPTION	FACILITIES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE	MEASURES PROVIDED	TIMESCALE
Engine emissions	All future Council bus contracts will be provided using environmentally-friendly vehicles.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will include options for improved engine emission standards in all future tenders.	Subject to available funding.
	The Council will introduce, or facilitate the introduction of, a fuelling station for zero-emission vehicles.	Subject to available funding.	The Council will support operators in upgrading fleets to reduce environmental impacts.	Subject to available funding.
DESCRIPTION	OPERATOR STANDARDS OF SERVICE			TIMESCALE
Engine emissions	Operators will use environmentally-friendly vehicles.			Engine emissions of all vehicles will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Euro IV or higher from commencement of the Scheme. • Euro V or higher by 31 March 2025, subject to available funding. • Euro VI or higher by 31 March 2030, subject to available funding.

**Minutes of a meeting of Newbury's Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)
Steering Group
Held via Zoom
22/02/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00**

Present:**Newbury's NDP Steering Group:**

- A) Newbury Town Council (NTC): Councillors Nigel Foot (Chairperson), David Marsh, Gary Norman, and Martha Vickers
- B) Members of the public: Ian Blake, John Brownell, Paul Millard, Anthony Pick, Louise Sturgess (Deputy-Chairperson), and Kim Whysall-Hammond (Joint Project Manager)

Other Attendees:

Darius Zarazel (NDP Secretary and Democratic Services Officer, Newbury Town Council)

30. Apologies

Apologies received from Councillor Vaughan Miller.

Paul Millard and Councillor Martin Colston registered apologies for being late to the meeting.

31. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

32. Minutes

Proposed: Anthony Pick

Seconded: Councillor Martha Vickers

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the NDP Steering Group held on 08/02/2022, be approved.

33. NDP Vision

Proposed: Anthony Pick

Seconded: Kim Whysall-Hammond

Resolved: That the following Vision be adopted for Newbury's NDP:

"We will strengthen Newbury's economic and historical position as the Crossroads of Southern England by protecting the heritage, architecture, and culture of our market town, whilst continuing to develop a sustainable, innovative, vibrant, and friendly community,

where people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities are welcomed and included.”

34. NDP Objectives

The Steering Group discussed potential Objectives for Newbury’s NDP and agreed upon a set of Objectives, set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

These minutes will be sent the Bluestone Planning for their advice, and to ensure their conformity with the requirements of NDP Objectives, in advance of their confirmation by the Steering Group at their next meeting.

35. Forward Work Programme

It was agreed that the next meeting will confirm the Objectives with Bluestone Planning and discuss the how this can go to the public in the form of a questionnaire.

The NDP Joint Project Managers Kim Whysall-Hammond and Councillor Vaughan Miller, and the Steering Groups Deputy-Chairperson Louise Sturgess, to produce some draft questions and a proposed way of conducting the first round of public consultations in advance of the next meeting.

The Chairperson to contact the planning consultants behind the Town Centre Masterplan to see what questions were used in their public consultations.

36. To fix the date of the next meeting

The next meetings were agreed to be held on 22/03/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00 via Zoom.

There being no other business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 21:22 hrs.

Newbury's NDP (Draft) Objectives

HERITAGE AND DESIGN

Goal:

To preserve the historic, market town character of Newbury, while creating a center for modern, innovative working and living.

Objectives:

- DH1 Keep the Town Centre vibrant with a mix of retail, leisure, residential and business.
- DH2 Encourage the highest sustainability standards for new developments, aiming for carbon neutral and net gains.
- DH3 A balanced residential mix of housing and flats, including appropriate affordable and social housing.
- DH4 To encourage the use of design, materials, and detailing sympathetic to the character of Newbury's Heritage and support good contemporary design rooted in an understanding of its context.
- DH5 Identify and conserve historic buildings of Newbury and adopt a flexible approach to their future use and occupation to ensure their preservation and enjoyment.
- DH6 To preserve and enhance our existing garden suburbs & their context.
- DH7 To preserve & protect important views and open spaces across town and the suburbs.

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Goal:

To achieve zero carbon and aim for net carbon gain for Newbury by 2030.

Objectives:

- SU1 Mandating high standards in building practices that promote and aspire to passivhaus standards.
- SU2 Promote retrofitting and reuse of existing buildings above redevelopment and unnecessary demolition - as a sustainable alternative.
- SU3 As a minimum, to ensure that major refurbishments confirm to contemporary building standards.

- SU4 Increase EV charging points.
- SU5 Plan for increase in biodiversity in all future developments.
- SU6 To promote tree planting, community orchards, and community gardens.

BIODIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE

Goal:

To enhance biodiversity and wildlife in Newbury.

Objectives:

- BW1 To preserve, improve and where possible, increase our green spaces.
- BW2 To preserve and improve our blue spaces (canal and rivers).
- BW3 To facilitate and where possible, create wildlife corridors.
- BW4 Increase wildlife habitat through creative planning processes and land use.
- BW5 To promote the inclusion of public open green and blue spaces in developments.

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Goal:

Reduce car dependence and increase and facilitate active transport.
Public transport that is attractive to use, affordable and green.

Objectives:

- TA1 To remove all but essential traffic from the Town Centre.
- TA2 Improve and prioritise the walking and cycling routes and infrastructure into Newbury and throughout the town.
- TA3 Facilitate improved green public transport in town and into town from outlying areas.
- TA4 Strategically plan car parking that removes the need for car use within the Town Centre.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Goal:

To create in Newbury an inclusive, cohesive, and resilient community for all ages and backgrounds.

Objectives:

- CF1 To promote increased diversity in the Town's offering with particular emphasis on a broad range of offerings for young people, as well as for families, the elderly, and disabled.
- CF2 To promote increased access for NHS healthcare, both medical and dental, within the planning process.
- CF3 To actively encourage leisure and cultural facilities in the Town Centre.
- CF4 To keep community facilities in Newbury's suburbs.
- CF5 To promote Newbury as a sporting destination.
- CF6 To promote Newbury's Market place and Wharf.

ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE**Goal:**

To facilitate vibrancy, innovation and resilience in business through the planning system.

Objectives:

- EE1 To restrict permitted development rights in order to maintain office space within the Town Centre – an Article 4 directive.
- EE2 To encourage the use of co-working spaces across the town.
- EE3 Facilitate the creation of incubator and accelerator hubs and high-quality offices.
- EE4 To promote Newbury as a business destination.

Newbury Town Council

Forward Work Programme for Planning and Highways Committee: 7th of March 2022.

Standing Items on each (ordinary meeting) agenda:

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interests and Dispensations
- 3.1 Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- 3.2 Officers report on actions from previous meeting
4. Questions/Petitions from members of the Public
5. Questions/Petitions from Members of the Council
6. Schedule of Planning Applications
7. Schedule of Prior Approval Applications (if any)
8. Schedule of Licensing Applications (if any)
9. Schedule of Appeal Decisions (if any)
10. Neighbourhood Development Plan – Update (if any)
11. The Western Area Planning Committee – Update
12. Sandleford Park Joint Working Group – Update
13. Newbury Community Football Ground – Update

To be confirmed	Follow-up discussion on footpath recommendations.
	Paths that have Cycle ban signs to be reviewed.
	Consider additional signage to countryside paths and open space within the parish of Newbury or immediately adjacent to it.
	Property of the Essex Wynter Trust at Argyle Road, Newbury.
	Presentation: Great Western Railway on the Newbury Station Redevelopment
March 28 th	Presentation: WBC Streetworks on the recent Permit Scheme Variation Consultation.
June/September/December/March (Quarterly)	Updates on Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Acts.
	Updates on ongoing items.
Each November	Review of KPI's for Planning and Highways Committee
	Send Budget and Strategy proposals to RFO