

4 The Spatial Strategy

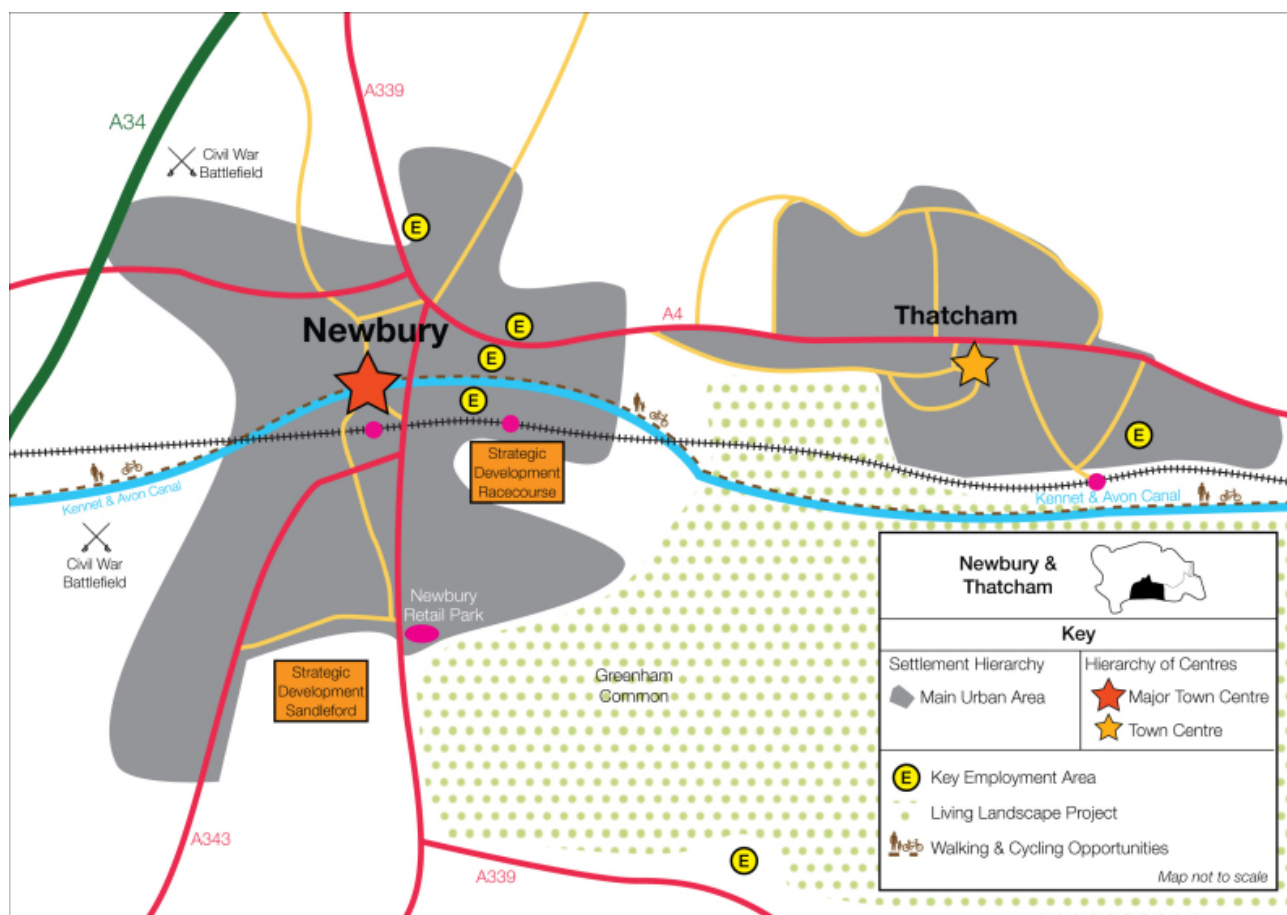
Thatcham - The Vision

4.26 Thatcham town centre will be a focus for regeneration, enabling the town to fulfil its role within the District’s Hierarchy of Centres⁽²⁷⁾ by improving the retail offer and enhancing the streetscape. The provision of leisure and community facilities for all ages will be improved and encouraged within the town centre. With the development of the new town centre, reflecting the historic heritage and responding to the needs of local people, Thatcham will become more self-contained providing a range of job opportunities and encouraging residents to shop and socialise locally.

4.27 Thatcham will be an accessible location, with improved access by public transport, walking and cycling and local traffic improvements increasing access and linkages to the town for residents and for visitors. Flood risk throughout Thatcham will be reduced and managed through surface water management schemes⁽²⁸⁾ and sensitive development.

4.28 The countryside and green infrastructure surrounding Thatcham, such as the Kennet Valley, the Nature Discovery Centre and the Living Landscape to the south, will be positively and proactively managed as assets for biodiversity. This will enhance health and well-being by creating more opportunities for residents and visitors to access and enjoy the high quality environment of the area.

Figure 1 Newbury and Thatcham



27 Policy CS 11 'Hierarchy of Centres'

28 [Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan](#), WSP on behalf of West Berkshire Council, 2010 available at www.westberks.gov.uk

Area Delivery Plan Policy 3

Thatcham

Housing

- Thatcham will accommodate approximately 900 homes of the total allocation for the District over the Core Strategy period in line with its role within the District Settlement Hierarchy. The majority of this planned growth, approximately two thirds, has already been committed or completed, for example through the Kennet Heath site to the south of the town. The rest will be delivered through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD and will include greenfield sites adjoining the settlement, with schemes contributing to the creation of mixed and inclusive communities and helping to address local housing need. A number of sites which have future development potential have been identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).⁽²⁹⁾
- Opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance the identity of Thatcham, separate to that of Newbury and the surrounding rural settlements.

Town Centre

- Thatcham's services and facilities will be improved allowing the town to fulfil its role within the District Settlement Hierarchy and the Hierarchy of Centres, serving the local population, not only within Thatcham, but also the surrounding rural areas.
- The town centre will be regenerated with the redevelopment of the Kingsland Centre driving this improvement, providing an attractive shopping environment and enhanced retail offer. This redevelopment is proposed to deliver approximately 17,200 sq.m of new floorspace in a mix of uses including, among others, retail, residential, office and community space.
- The town centre commercial boundary and primary shopping frontage will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

Employment

- Thatcham will continue to support local employment through the designated Protected Employment Areas at Colthrop and Green Lane, which will continue to sustain a strong employment base. The role, function and boundaries of these sites will be reviewed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.
- Thatcham town centre will accommodate small scale office development in keeping with the scale and character of the existing centre.

Accessibility

- Drawing on the conclusions from the Thatcham Town Centre Design Appraisal,⁽³⁰⁾ Thatcham will have recognisable gateways and better signage, improving connectivity and giving the town a stronger identity as a distinct and thriving settlement.
- The streetscape and public realm throughout the town will be improved, along with upgrades to the A4/Bath Road corridor, all of which are vital to enhancing Thatcham's image.
- Opportunities will be maximised to provide better connections and maximise accessibility linkages between the town centre and Thatcham railway station.
- The new shuttle bus service between Thatcham and Newbury will improve accessibility between the two towns.

29 [Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment](#) available at www.westberks.gov.uk

30 [Thatcham Town Centre Design Appraisal](#), Turley Associates on behalf of West Berkshire Council, 2009 available at www.westberks.gov.uk

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Environment

- The risk of flooding within the area will be reduced and managed through the implementation of schemes within the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan⁽³¹⁾ and in accordance with Policy CS16.
- Through new development opportunities will be actively sought to create a connected and multi-functional green infrastructure network, which links with the town centre and surrounding countryside.
- The Nature Discovery Centre will be positively managed by the Council to ensure it continues to act as a vital educational and recreational resource for the area, as well as attracting tourism.
- The landscape and recreational role of the Kennet and Avon Canal will be strengthened in conjunction with British Waterways, with improvements to the towpath between Newbury and Thatcham as set out within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP)⁽³²⁾ playing a key part over the plan period. The canal will continue to contribute positively to the character of Thatcham and the surrounding area.
- The Council will continue to implement strategic biodiversity enhancements in conjunction with Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), within the area covered by the Living Landscape project⁽³³⁾.
- Development will respect the historic environment of the town. A Conservation Area Appraisal will be undertaken for Thatcham Conservation Area.

Community Infrastructure and Services

- The range of leisure facilities within Thatcham will be expanded, utilising those at the existing Newbury Leisure Park on Lower Way, and optimising opportunities for leisure within the town centre through any future regeneration projects.
- Opportunities to implement schemes set out within the Thatcham Vision⁽³⁴⁾ will be taken, for example schemes relating to sustainable travel, or maintaining the historic character of the town centre.

Delivery and Monitoring

The strategy for Newbury and Thatcham will be delivered by implementation of the projects in the Newbury Vision 2025 and the Thatcham Vision and through the range of core policies identified in Section 5 'Core Policies'

Infrastructure requirements are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Monitoring will be through a range of indicators which are outlined in Section 6 'Monitoring Framework'.

31 [Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan](#) WSP on behalf of West Berkshire Council, 2010 available at www.westberks.gov.uk

32 [Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) available to view at www.westberks.gov.uk

33 [Living Landscape Project](#), at www.westberks.gov.uk and www.bbowl.org.uk

34 [Thatcham Vision](#), (2007) available to view at www.thatchamonline.net