

**Dedicated to the memory
of
Chris Jones
WBC Arts and Leisure Manager
2nd September 1959 – 27th April 2014**

Vision 2026

Foreword

Much has been achieved since 2003 to deliver some of the aspirations of the original Vision and there have also been some achievements that were not included in the document. Notable achievements include the development and opening of Parkway Shopping Centre, the pedestrianisation of Northbrook Street and the opening of Vue cinema. However, things have moved on since then, including significant shifts in the local and national economy, changes to the planning framework and our future housing provision. It has been decided to extend the life of the Vision from 2025-2026 to bring this in line with the timeframe of the West Berkshire Core Strategy.

It is now an appropriate time to plan for the next 12 years. Written in 2003, “Newbury 2025” set out our long term aspirations for Newbury Town Centre. Just as in 2003, our new Vision seeks to build on the inherent strengths of Newbury Town Centre and the surrounding areas, maximise the new opportunities arising within non town centre developments to enhance the offer and set out a sustainable vision that will help create new opportunities for residents, businesses and visitors. Key to our long term success is the need to continue to reduce the amount of expenditure leaving the area to other town centres. We also need to support and encourage economic growth, facilitate tourism and maximise the benefits from the new developments at Sandford Park and Newbury Racecourse.

At the heart of every successful town is a strong local economy that provides an exciting experience for everyone. While any town centre, large or small, is underpinned by retailing, the range of other attractions and experiences is what adds value and creates a unique offer and which will encourage repeat trips.

One of our ambitions is to create a more vibrant town centre which will be a place of all year round cultural, leisure and retail activity for residents, businesses and visitors.

Taking this Vision forward is a major step in securing a sustainable future for the area. It sets out ideas and initiatives that will transform the town and provide lasting improvements to the way the town functions - from the shopping and leisure offer to the way people travel to, from and around the town centre.

I hope that you will share this new Vision as we move forward in the remaining years until 2026 and beyond.

Gordon Lundie

Leader, West Berkshire Council

October 2014

Background

Since the Newbury Vision was first published in 2003, we have seen significant progress which has enhanced Newbury as a great place to live, work and visit – a place to grow. This has taken energy and commitment from the community as a whole. Residents and visitors have seen the successful completion of the new retail and residential provision in the Parkway development, the new residential plans for the Market Street redevelopment are moving forward, and Newbury Racecourse is being redeveloped, with significant residential provision. The West Berkshire Museum, a central source for the heritage of the area, has been restored with Lottery funding and is due to open this year.

The centre of Newbury has been enhanced with a number of new schemes. Licensing and pedestrianisation of the town centre have been delivered, enabling the historic market to develop and improving access to local trade. The construction of a Cinema and the provision of a pedestrianised Market Place with its café culture, alongside the focus for theatre and the arts provided by the Corn Exchange make the centre of Newbury a hub for entertainment and culture. The introduction of Newbury BID (Business Improvement District) in May 2012 has provided benefits to businesses in the centre of Newbury.

The above schemes have enhanced the physical environment of Newbury Town Centre as well as providing new facilities and greatly boosting the retail offer that has hugely benefited the wider community, businesses and visitors to the town. We have seen, as a result, a level of unemployment for the area which is lower than the regional average and a bustling town centre with shoppers using the retail and other facilities.

Some schemes from the original Vision are not yet complete and will be taken forward through the revised Vision. These include a number of exciting potential developments including a mixed use (residential and commercial) re-generation of the London Road Industrial Estate together with the landscaping potential for enhancing the Wharf with water features and pedestrianisation of the area around the newly restored Museum, placing this at the centre of one of the heritage areas of the Town.

Newbury has many strong points and is a town that is greater than the sum of its parts. It offers a broad range of cultural activities; it is surrounded by beautiful countryside and landscapes; it has excellent restaurants to choose from; it is geographically well located with good connectivity; it has great places to stay such as the renowned Vineyard Hotel at Stockcross; it has the Kennet and Avon Canal at its centre and is home to many diverse and thriving businesses such as Vodafone, Bayer and Stryker. Newbury offers all of these things and more.

In the period of 2001-2011 Newbury saw an increase in population of 11% (4000 people). More development is planned to 2026, including 2 large developments at Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park, which will change the existing geography of Newbury, extending it to the south and the east and bringing new infrastructure, facilities and services. This will increase the local population by over 10,000 from 2006 to 2026. It is important to embrace the exciting changes which are coming, in order to maximise the benefits of growth and to have a Vision which will inspire future developments. This Vision also embraces the assets surrounding the town such as the built heritage of Shaw House and wider linkages from the town out to the beautiful countryside which surrounds it.

The 2003 Vision helped move Newbury from an average town to a good town by showing the ways in which we needed to improve the physical environment and the range of facilities and services available. Much of this work has been done but more needs to be developed so that by 2026 Newbury will be a really great town which everyone is proud to be a part of – a place to live, to grow and to thrive.



The Vision

Newbury - freedom to grow and to thrive.



The Newbury Vision has broadened its horizons – it is now about the growing town and not just its centre. The Vision sets out how the town, a small place with big aspirations, can and should grow and at the same time retain its identity and personality. It is also extending the timeline to 2026 to fall in line with the Local Plan to ensure a joined up approach in moving forward.

At the heart of this new Vision lies a desire to respond positively to the growth of Newbury over the coming years. Newbury is likely to grow by about a third in the lifetime of this Vision. This growth brings new opportunities and must not be feared. Instead it should be embraced and managed.

By welcoming and actively responding to growth, Newbury will provide increased economic, social and cultural opportunities for existing and new residents, workers and visitors. New residents and visitors will not only benefit from the existing high quality features of town life - a beautifully built historic environment, a pleasant place to live, work and visit with good retail, cultural and social opportunities – but also from Newbury’s immediate access to some of England’s finest countryside and to the rest of southern England with quick access to Europe.

In all its guises Newbury is a good place; the overarching aim of the Vision is to ensure that it becomes a great place.

For those already living in Newbury and for those we hope to attract, the town must provide:

Space to grow:

- Ensure good quality design for all development.
- Provide more high quality and architecturally sympathetic housing throughout the town, including the town centre;
- Provide a greater variety of housing types reflecting changing habits of work and lifestyles;
- Provide more housing in such a way as to ensure increased affordability in order to attract and retain young residents.

A place to grow:

- Ensure that Newbury's existing good North – South, East - West connections are maintained and improved upon.
- Emphasise the benefits of the Town's unique mid southern England location which gives it both national and international reach.
- Preserve and enhance existing areas of open space and public realm and also create new open space opportunities through development schemes.
- Provide the right type of business space to enable new start ups and retain existing businesses as well as to encourage inward investment.
- Enhance the Gateways to the North and the South of Newbury and the linkages between them.

Opportunities to grow:

- Provide varied and modern leisure, recreational and sporting opportunities and facilities;
- Ensure a wide range of cultural opportunities and partnerships that build on the strong and established programmes but which also provide new opportunities, whether they are festivals based on music, food or technology.
- Continue to provide a good standard of education both at school and at post school young adult education and vocational training.
- Enable real travel choices to encourage as many journeys as possible to be made by rail, bus, walking and cycling.



Outcomes and Actions

Introduction

This document sets out a Vision for how Newbury will look and feel by 2026.

This is a shared Vision with the community, developed through consultation and partnership working. Wide ranging discussions and focus groups have taken place, involving a range of key stakeholders including young people, representatives from the business community, leisure and cultural providers, education and training providers, community organisations and members of the public; a shared undertaking will be required to achieve results.

The Council will provide leadership to energise and review the Vision throughout its life and will work in partnership with key players in the Newbury community whose combined resource, influence, creativity and abilities will deliver the actions set out here and help to shape Newbury and make the Vision a reality.

Discussions so far have resulted in an outcome of a number of key ambitions and aspirations about how Newbury should change by 2026 and what needs to be done to achieve this change. This is set out below as a set of six priority outcomes which will deliver the Vision by improving the quality of life for those who live, work or visit the Newbury area. We show how these outcomes will be delivered, what activities will need to be undertaken and who will be responsible for their delivery. More detailed actions are set out in the Delivery Plan that will be reviewed annually.

Housing – Space to Grow.



Outcome: *Newbury's housing offer is maximised by positively responding to local needs and providing a range of housing opportunities in terms of type and tenure.*

Affordability and accessibility of housing are key issues which can be addressed over the life of the Vision through the opportunities offered by the growth of Newbury. Consultation on the Vision has identified young people in particular as a group who are concerned about their future ability to access the housing market.

House prices are forecast to rise over the next few years as part of the economic recovery. The Vision must set

aspirations and facilitate the delivery of housing to respond to identified needs.

It is important to make sure that information is available to respond to the needs of local people and those wanting to move to Newbury for work. Having the right type of residential offer is a key factor in helping economic performance. This helps support local recruitment and retention.

Actions

- **Understand the future need for housing.**

Understanding the housing market means being better able to respond to the long term requirements for housing in the District including size, type and tenure.

This will be taken forward through undertaking research in the form of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which will inform the development of policies in local plans on housing numbers, size, mix, tenure and type.

- **Manage the type of housing that is delivered.**

Keeping up to date information about housing needs in the Newbury area will lead to planning policies being developed to manage the type of homes that are built to ensure that the developments are responsive to identified needs, including the needs of the local economy. This will include policies on housing type, size and mix to meet the housing needs of all sectors of the community, including family homes, small units and the needs of those with specialist requirements such as mobility issues.

The population is ageing, and more people are living alone for longer. There may be a need for additional care homes and retirement villages in and around Newbury, as well as for lifetime homes which can be easily adapted to meet the changing needs of residents. The Council can work with developers to bring specialist types of housing forward.

As part of regeneration schemes there may be opportunities for the Council to enable private rented accommodation to meet local needs, for example at London Road Industrial Estate.

An option to respond to the identified need for accommodation for young people is to provide some form of hall of residence in Newbury, potentially on the Newbury College site. Opportunities to take this forward will be sought over the Vision period.

- **Managing the supply of housing**

Implementing the large scale developments at Sandleford Park and Newbury Racecourse, and ensuring that other sites are brought forward through the planning process will increase the supply of housing of all tenures. Providing decent homes in well managed, safe, inclusive and attractive communities helps to inspire confidence in an area and these should be welcoming and accessible for people of any age, ability or background.

Managing the supply of housing will help to meet housing need, reduce the long term upward trend in house prices, improve affordability and achieve a more stable housing market to provide better conditions for economic growth. This may, in some cases, mean reviewing land allocations to ensure that they are still appropriate, for example, it may be possible to re-use some land that is currently in employment use for mixed use/residential.

Business and the local economy- a place to grow

Outcome: *Businesses are developed and retained and new businesses relocate to, or are set up, in Newbury across a range of sizes and sectors with access to a strong local skills base.*

Newbury in 2014 is operating in a very different economic context than in 2003 when the original Newbury Vision was written. Whilst some large businesses are based in Newbury (e.g. Bayer, Vodafone, Stryker, Quantel), the majority of businesses are Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and cover a diverse range of sectors. This avoidance of a single point of failure provides a relatively resilient jobs market overall.

The retail offer of Newbury plays an important role in the local economy and we have had very positive footfall trends, particularly since the opening of Parkway, that have not followed the recent national trend of declining footfall. The areas of Bartholomew Street South and Cheap Street also make an important contribution to the vitality of the centre through the provision of premises for smaller independent businesses that provide a wide range of services that benefit the population of Newbury. These areas should continue to provide opportunities for a range of uses to support the core Town Centre and local residents.



Local economic development is all about improving the economy of Newbury, by attracting new businesses and retaining existing ones, encouraging inward investment, increasing employment opportunities and having the right skills in the local workforce, promoting leisure and tourism, and identifying areas for sustainable growth and development. It is important to strengthen links between planned housing development and local employment as a range of skills and levels will be needed across the workforce.

Effective economic development plays a central role in enabling Newbury to rise to the financial challenges of the present day at the same time as equipping our community for future well being and prosperity.

Actions

- **Ensure modern town centre business space to meet 21st century requirements**

There is a need to address the quality of business space, particularly office space. There is much office space in the Town Centre but to provide even better facilities that are fit for 21st century business requirements, new modern accommodation will need to be developed at relevant employment sites such as London Road Industrial Estate. Future business requirements will be addressed by evidence including Economic Assessment work which will advise how much office space is required in the longer term, feeding into the development of relevant Planning Policy.

- **Encourage new investment and support existing businesses by being “open for business”**

This will include continuing to encourage and support local opportunities for business mentoring to help support SMEs, matching new investment enquiries to available land, premises and development opportunities. The Council will also continue to provide guidance where appropriate to pre-start, new and existing businesses and ensure that services and information for business are accessible within the local authority. The Council will also continue to provide high quality, responsive support and information for businesses considering relocation, expansion or development.

- **Work with partners to ensure that local skills are relevant to local employment need**

There is a great skill set in Newbury but we need to ensure that we continue to ensure that our young people are well-equipped and work ready for both the current and future needs of employers through initiatives such as “Elevate West Berkshire”, part of the Government’s City Deal initiative¹. We will also encourage greater involvement from local businesses in developing future skills and training offers. We need to further enhance the understanding of links and outcomes between business needs and education outcomes to improve mutual understanding and future employment ‘fit’

- **Provide “pop-ups” / start-up businesses in unused retail / office space and/or the market.**

This gives entrepreneurs an opportunity to try out their business idea on a small-scale with minimal risk and will add to the vibrancy and diverse offer of Newbury.

- **Develop Skills and Employment Plans to support key infrastructure developments e.g. Sandleford, the redevelopment of Market Street and London Road Industrial Estate.**

By working with developers at the planning stage, the aim is to encourage them to use Skills and Employment Plans to provide job opportunities to local people, provide Apprenticeships and also work placement opportunities

¹ City Deal is a government initiative that aims to improve skills and outcomes of young people aged 16-24 by addressing local needs. West Berkshire is part of the Berkshire-wide project where we are particularly focussing on career progression for young people as well as youth unemployment in general.

- **Promote the National Apprenticeship Scheme with employers, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**

An Apprenticeship is a way for young people and adult learners to earn while they learn in a real job, gaining a real qualification and a real future. Hiring apprentices helps businesses to grow their own talent by developing a motivated, skilled and qualified workforce.

The business benefits of Apprenticeships include:

- Motivated and satisfied employees
- Improved skills in your workplace
- Increased productivity and effectiveness of staff
- More diverse workforce
- Higher staff retention
- Increased competitiveness
- Fresh way to recruit talented individuals

The aim is to increase the number of employers in Newbury, particularly in SMEs through more intensive and regular local employer engagement and through events such as the annual Newbury Jobs Fair held at Newbury College and initiatives such as Elevate West Berkshire.

- **Develop an Enterprise Centre encourage businesses to seek help to start, expand and develop**

There is a need to facilitate the supply of different sizes and types of business space to ensure there are opportunities for start-up businesses as well as scope for businesses to grow and develop. This could be provided by flexible “easy-in, easy-out” office accommodation. There will also be an opportunity for Newbury businesses to access support from the local provision of the Business Growth Hub developed by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. The Business Growth Hub is a focal point for ambitious businesses who are seeking the relevant information, guidance, support, expertise, finance, knowledge and experience they need to scale up and grow, boost performance and find new ways of working. For business owners or managers looking to grow their business, the Growth Hub can help them achieve their goals with business support for growth. They can access a wealth of information, advice and useful links through the Growth Hub website and receive regular updates. Businesses can search for funding available, both locally and nationwide, and if they’re an ambitious high growth business, they can complete a client application form to receive the help they need to reach the next level. The Business Growth Hub helps ambitious business people to realise their growth potential by offering access to a range of practical services, from assessing growth options to unlocking finance or accessing experienced business mentors.

Improving Travel Choice – opportunities to grow

Outcome: People living, working and visiting Newbury have opportunities to make travel choices to reduce reliance on the car.

Newbury has a very strong location in terms of accessibility – its links from the wider area by road and rail are good and supported locally by bus, walking and cycling routes. It benefits from limited traffic congestion and a good supply of car parking, making car use an attractive option.



Newbury's planned growth will lead to increasing demand for travel

throughout the Vision period. It is important to encourage as many journeys as possible to be made by rail, bus, walking and cycling.

The right infrastructure needs to be put in place to enable this to happen, including linkages from the new developments to the town centre and other key locations. There is a need to take opportunities to improve access between Newbury Racecourse and the town.

There are further opportunities to improve and enhance connectivity. There is a real opportunity to increase the number of journeys made by bike and on foot due to the topography and compactness of Newbury. Cycling and walking maps are already available and will be kept updated and promoted throughout the Vision period. Initiatives such as developing a cycle hub will help to encourage sustainable travel to the railway station, and combined with the benefits of electrification will make rail travel a more attractive option.

With the car remaining an important way of accessing and moving around Newbury, reduced journey times and greater reliability for road users will be sought through ongoing improvements to the road network, including the A339 corridor, the Robin Hood roundabout and the A4 corridor.

Increasing travel choice and minimising local congestion is essential to benefit the economy and the environment, as well as encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Actions:

- **Increasing participation rates in walking and cycling; increasing bus patronage**

Walking and Cycling Routes

Walking and cycling routes will be improved and missing links filled in where possible. Opportunities for additional safe cycle and walking routes including from new development sites will be sought.

The cycling and walking maps will be kept updated throughout the Vision period. Opportunities will be taken to raise awareness of the walking and cycling routes through maximising the use of technology such as apps.

Hire bikes are now being provided by Newbury Tourist Information Centre and this initiative will be supported and will be expanded where possible to increase access to cycling.

A Wayfinding project is underway, a joint project between WBC, Newbury BID (lead organisation), Newbury Town Council and the Business / Retail community. This will lead to better signage within the town centre and linking to key attractors within walking and cycling distance of the town centre such as Shaw House and Vodafone HQ. Phase 1 has taken place, and further phases will be carried out during the life of the Vision to extend the project to wider Newbury.



Cycle Hub

Developing a Cycle Hub with space for storing bikes and equipment, showers, lockers, bike maintenance provision and an information point will be an excellent way of encouraging sustainable travel to the railway station and to other locations within Newbury Town Centre. There are opportunities to take this forward through the Market Street development.

Bus Links

To increase the attractiveness of the bus service, improvement of, and promotion of bus links is essential. Real Time information for buses will be expanded, and services improved, wherever possible, to bring people into Newbury town centre from the wider Newbury area and beyond. New developments in Newbury may mean that bus routes can be expanded or improved.



● **Personalised Travel Planning**

Personalised travel planning involves targeting individuals and talking to them on a one to one basis about their travel needs and the different options available to them. This is also an opportunity to incentivise them to take part in sustainable travel on a trial basis. A pilot is being carried out in 2014, which will be rolled out across Newbury if successful. The project is taking place in the southern part of Newbury, where there is traffic related pollution which has resulted in an Air Quality Management Area being put in place. It is an initiative which aims not only to reduce congestion and air pollution, but will have additional benefits to public health.

▪ **Implementing a Car Club for Newbury**

One way of providing local residents with additional travel choices, whilst reducing congestion, saving energy and improving air quality is putting in place a car club for the Newbury area. Car clubs provide a way of using a car without having to own one. Car club members typically drive fewer miles, which in turn helps to reduce congestion.

A car club for Newbury will be a joint private/public sector initiative, with a pilot project due to start in 2014. If successful this will be rolled out more widely, involving the developments of large housing sites such as Newbury Racecourse and Sandford Park.

- **Electrification of the Railway**

Electrification of the railway to Newbury is due to be in place by 2016. This will include faster and more reliable journey times, new trains and environmental improvements. It is important to fully utilise the benefits of this, to increase patronage of the railway as much as possible for commuting and business use.

To take this forward, opportunities will be sought to improve Newbury Railway Station (for example through providing lifts, increased car and cycle parking) and its linkages with Newbury Town through the Vision as well as taking measures to implement improvements at Newbury Racecourse Station.

- **Park and Ride/Shuttle Bus Service**

Whilst there is not currently a business case for Park and Ride in Newbury, this will be kept under review during the Vision period as the town continues to grow. There may be an option for a Park and Ride facility near to junction 13 of the M4 together with other growth opportunities in this area. Any Park and Ride scheme would provide linkages via buses between the north of Newbury, the town centre and the developments and facilities to the south of Newbury including Newbury racecourse, Sandford Park and Newbury College.

Electric Charging Points

Charging points for electric vehicles should be encouraged in residential, retail and employment uses. This will maximise opportunities for electric vehicle ownership and usage.

Rejuvenation – A Place to Grow

Outcome:

“Newbury is a desirable and attractive location enhancing the lives of those who already live in the town and appealing to those thinking of coming to Newbury”



As a prosperous and historic former market town, Newbury has many fine buildings set within a well preserved and yet at the same time convenient urban landscape that serves the population effectively. In order to preserve this historic environment and at the same maintain and improve the convenience and attractiveness of the built environment, urban regeneration must be by thoughtful design and good quality construction. The redevelopment of Parkway has delivered good architecture, retail convenience, new vistas and areas of pleasing public realm. Parkway is the exemplar that will be used for all future Newbury regeneration projects.

Actions:

▪ London Road Industrial Estate

This important 10 hectare light industrial site, on the edge of the town centre and adjacent to Victoria Park, is a product of piecemeal development since the war and is now no longer fit for purpose. In its present state the London Road Industrial Estate does not provide a positive gateway to Newbury off the Robin Hood roundabout. In partnership with a developer, the Council will redevelop the Estate over a ten year period protecting employment and securing new employment and providing high quality town centre family and small residential units adjacent to the beautiful Kennet and Avon Canal. This will create a visually exciting and welcoming entrance to Newbury from the Robin Hood roundabout and an attractive and accessible location on the edge of the town centre for future Newbury residents to live in.

- **Wharf**

The Wharf Area, centred between Newbury Museum and the Kennet & Avon Canal and at the heart of the town, is a beautiful underutilised heritage zone. At present the area is given over entirely to public parking thus preventing the opportunity to create new public realm. It is proposed to clear the Wharf area of all parking and redevelop it with an art gallery, restaurant, new boat mooring and soft landscaping in order to provide the highest quality public open space at the centre of the town and increase the use of an important and stunning town centre water feature. This process has begun with the refurbishment of the Museum.

- **Market Street**

For those visiting Newbury or commuting to Newbury, the route North from the railway station through the Market Street council car park will be redeveloped to provide an area that creates an impressive sense of arrival into the town. In partnership with a developer, the area between the station and Market Street will be cleared and redeveloped over five years to provide high quality public realm, town centre residential accommodation, small scale arcade type retail units and replacement parking within a new sympathetically scaled and designed multi-storey car park. The aim is to provide a new zone with its own sense of self and yet provide an exciting gateway to the heart of the town. The existing bus interchange will be cleared as part of the redevelopment and replaced by an appropriately designed and scaled new bus interchange to the south of the library.

- **Outdated Buildings**

Prominent within Newbury Town are major buildings that do not enhance the environment either through their poor condition or inappropriate design in the context of the town today and which detract from the town's sense of vibrancy and economic well being. Some of these buildings are outside of authority control (e.g. the BT Tower and Newbury Police Station), however, where these buildings are outside of authority control, the Council will actively seek ways, in partnership with building owners, to improve the visual aspect of prominent but visually poor buildings (lighting, screening, simple surface mounted details to break up facades) and thus improve the amenity value of areas in which these structures stand.

- **Racecourse**

Over the next 10 years 1500 new homes will be provided at Newbury Racecourse. Not only will this provide a good mix of much needed high quality housing in an outstanding and exciting location, 30% of which will be affordable housing and 'tenure blind', the development will secure the future of the racecourse and its pre-eminent position within the UK racing industry. The development will generate substantial contributions to education, road network, enhanced nursery school facilities and health and leisure facilities. The development generally will ensure the vibrancy and prestige of a major Newbury cultural attraction.

- **Hambridge Road**

This is an area of light industrial land North and South of Hambridge Road which lies immediately north of the racecourse; in its present state it is an inappropriate entry point into the racecourse, which is now emphasised after the racecourse refurbishment. Through careful site allocations, opportunities will be sought to provide where possible a mixed use development which will enhance the gateway into the racecourse. The racecourse refurbishment allows for a new access bridge to be built over the railway and to connect to Hambridge Road. A combination of this and high quality redevelopment in this area will provide a prestigious alternative access onto the racecourse.

Infrastructure – A Place to Grow

Outcome: *“New infrastructure will ensure Newbury remains an accessible location within which to live and work but will also enhance connectivity to ensure future residents as well as existing benefit from these improvements”.*

The location of Newbury makes it one of the best places to live and work in southern England.

Equally the town is well served by both the road and rail network. In

order to take advantage

of these existing attributes and improve upon them, new ways must be found to further enhance Newbury as a place to live and work and thereby hold existing residents and encourage new ones. Opportunities will be sought to secure infrastructure alongside new development. These improvements must not be limited to just the travel network, but other elements that make up modern urban living – IT connectivity, new high quality housing, good education, leisure & sport opportunities, retail convenience and generally a well serviced environment within which residents can thrive.

Actions:

▪ **Link Road off A339 into London Road Estate**

By 2016 it is proposed that a new link road will be provided off the A339 into the London Road Industrial Estate. This road is being fully modelled now in order to ensure that it not only opens up the Estate, thus facilitating new development including high quality riverside accommodation, but does so without impacting the town during weekday commuter time traffic. The new link road will open up this important area of Newbury which is otherwise serviced by one point of entry and is bound on three sides by the river, A339 and A4.



- **Broadband**

In October 2013 contracts were signed between Superfast Berkshire, the Local Enterprise Partnership and BT to deliver improved broadband speed and cover across the county. Before embarking on Superfast Berkshire, the District was at 65% coverage for superfast access. By the end of 2017, the District is expected to be at 95% coverage for Superfast Broadband and everybody will have basic Broadband by the end of 2015.

This represents 14,000 premises and will be of enormous benefit to Newbury, many of whose residents are employed in flexible home working arrangements. Likewise improved connectivity between Newbury and its large outlying rural population will help secure and improve Newbury's economy.

- **Railway Electrification**

By 2016 Great Western's planned electrification of the railway line will have reached Newbury. This major improvement will greatly enhance Newbury as a place to work, live and visit. A resilient economy, increased high quality housing opportunities, good schools and now railway electrification means that Newbury's desirability as a place to live will continue to increase. Similarly Newbury's profile as a high quality retail and cultural visitor destination will be well supported by electrification.

- **Western Link**

It is accepted that the North South connectivity of the town is limited by the number of vehicular crossing points over the river. The Newbury Vision includes the assumption that a new vehicle accessed bridge crossing will need to be constructed over the river / canal/railway in Western Newbury. This could become more desirable as more town centre residential accommodation is provided and specifically within areas such as Strawberry Hill and Northbrook Street where regeneration will include some housing. A Western link would maximise opportunities for growth and open up the town centre.

The Council will consider site options for a new crossing both to ensure deliverability of future growth, but also to ensure that possible crossing points are not sterilised by future development areas. The status of much of the area of western Newbury as a registered and at risk battlefield site will be a key consideration in this work.

- **Car Parking**

Whilst there are currently sufficient car parking spaces in Newbury as a whole, given the level of growth of the wider town over the years to 2026, it may be necessary to seek land for a car park to the south of the town centre during the Vision period.

- **Green Infrastructure**

It is essential the Vision holds onto 'green' aspirations and delivers sustainable infrastructure despite commercial challenges. Present commitments to this philosophy include:

Provision of 'country parkland facilities' within the Sandleford development including cross country cycle routes, new rural walking routes and generally high value amenity land that will provide a 'lung' and enhanced landscape in which the new residents can live and thrive.

The proposed redevelopment of the London Road Industrial Estate includes the possibility of delivering an estate energy hub for all new and existing estate occupants. The aim will be to provide biomass energy from a centralised estate location from which all residents, buying into an energy supply deal, will secure cheap energy through local economies of scale.

Newbury has an extensive network of pedestrian and cycle routes. There is much scope to provide greater connectivity between these existing routes thus further increasing their capacity to support a 'green' environment.

- **Improvements to the east Newbury road network**

Some significant changes will be delivered to improve the network in the Boundary Road / Kings Road / Hambridge Road area. By the end of 2015 the single lane Boundary Road bridge over the railway will be replaced with a new two-way bridge. The bridge needs to be reconstructed as part of the Network Rail Electrification project and the Council is taking the opportunity to ensure that the new bridge is two-way to help address this pinch point in the road network.

Also in this area a new road linking the roundabout at the SCATS and Sainsbury's stores with Kings Road will be delivered. The route has been protected for a number of years and will provide benefits in terms of improved access to the Hambridge Road industrial areas and the new housing at the Racecourse. It will also improve the quality of life for residents living on the existing, sub-standard route along Kings Road. This route is due to be delivered by 2018.

Improvements to the network for pedestrians and cyclists will also be delivered in this area through schemes associated with new developments, in particular addressing the lack of crossing facilities at the Boundary Road / Kings Road / Hambridge Road crossroads.

Culture, Leisure and Sport – Opportunities to grow

Outcome: *Newbury will be a place that provides high quality events, leisure and sporting activities together with a range of leisure, arts and heritage facilities and a built and natural environment that makes Newbury a great place to live, work, learn, visit and enjoy.*

The growing population of Newbury will aspire to a broader range of culture, leisure and sporting experiences over the next 10 years. Newbury has a unique character that has been created by its history. This character needs to be protected whilst enhancing and promoting its offer, adding to the opportunities that already exist to provide more choice and opportunities to grow for both residents and visitors across a range of activities and venues.



Newbury is already recognised as a base for a variety of sporting activities with The Racecourse, Newbury being recognised throughout the world of horse racing. Victoria Park is the largest area of public open space in Newbury Town Centre and is a valuable resource which will be further enhanced in the future. The use of the Market Place as a venue for events can be increased. Other opportunities include developing a stronger night-time economy and encouraging more use of the Kennet and Avon Canal which is a key asset, and improving and promoting access to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Work is also being undertaken to provide Wi-Fi access across Newbury town centre and this should be in place by December 2014.

Opportunities to broaden the offer will also include taking advantage of the new strategic development at Sandleford Park to provide a new sports area and to open up access to the countryside of southern Newbury. Opportunities will also be sought to provide a multi-purpose concert hall.

A strong cultural infrastructure not only provides a recreational experience but by contributing to the wider offer of the Town, an activity or event contributes to the local economy by: encouraging increased footfall and visitors to stay longer; influencing urban design; providing an exciting place to live making the town more attractive to business investment and graduate returners; supports health and well being outcomes and encourages cross sector partnerships and benefits between the commercial, creative and leisure sectors and provides a strong sense of place for established communities as well as growing new communities.

Actions

▪ Improved and new sporting and recreation areas.

A centre of excellence for outdoor sport will be created through the development of Sandleford Park to the south of the town. This will be achieved by drawing together a number of facilities and providers to develop a co-ordinated outdoor sports campus to support a range of sporting activities. The southern aspect of the town fringe provides the opportunity for the existing learning campuses of Newbury College, Park House School and the Rugby Club to form the core of a specialist outdoor sports area which could also include the relocation of Newbury Town Football Club within this scheme.

A Country Park will be created as part of the Sandleford Park development to provide public access for the first time to a beautiful area for recreational walking and cycling.

Opportunities will be taken through development schemes to engage with commercial leisure providers to try and bring an ice rink facility to the town.

Newbury's streetscene will provide the spaces for temporary art installations and exhibitions to improve our landscapes and support the growth of innovative visual arts in the town. Guerrilla galleries which 'spring up' to provide temporary large scale art exhibition 'platforms' will be introduced to enhance our gateways and urban highway verges such as the A339. These will not only provide additional colour to our approaches but will also mask commercial sites and improve the approaches to the town centre.

▪ Maximise the role of Victoria Park for supporting the health and well-being of residents and encouraging more visitors.

Victoria Park provides a focus for young peoples' activities through the provision of skating and BMX facilities as well as providing a venue for a range of outdoor events which compliment the Town Centre offer and continue to provide the maximum recreational and landscape benefits possible for the Town. These activities will continue to develop with the provision of temporary venues, art installations and other activities, for young and old to enjoy. The amount of public open space in the centre of the Town will be maintained and, if possible, increase

- **Wider and more extensive promotion of Newbury events and venues with a packed annual Events Calendar**

Alongside wider coverage and marketing of the excellent events that Newbury has to offer, retailers will be encouraged to link in with events, festivals, markets with relevant promotions and extended opening times, giving even more of a “buzz” to Newbury.

- **Promote Newbury further as a weekend or day destination, developing stronger links with surrounding areas and attractions.**

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is easily accessed from Newbury and there are many other attractions nearby, such as Highclere Castle, which can be used as part of a package to promote Newbury to visitors. Newbury itself has a rich history through the centuries including important periods such as the English Civil War and the Cold War. Much more will be made of this history to give Newbury both a national and international relevance which in turn will raise Newbury’s profile as a good visitor destination.

The enhanced museum building provides a new and exciting visitor hub which will be supported through the development of a high quality art gallery as part of the wharf development. Through the “Visit Newbury” website, high quality information about attractions and places to visit and stay will be available for both residents and visitors. This provision of visitor information will be supported by information also available at the Museum, thus guiding visitors to places such as Shaw House and its surrounding grounds.

- **Increased use of the Market Place for cultural and recreational activities**

The Market Place is a great asset to Newbury and has a twice weekly Charter Market with a wide variety of produce and goods on sale. This asset will be further developed as a venue for events and other leisure activities with further enhancements through architectural statements such as a central feature and more seating installed.

- **Encourage more use of the Kennet and Avon Canal**

The Kennet and Avon Canal, remains one of the Town's principal aesthetic and environmental attributes. The Canal provides a recreational facility for local clubs and visitors as well as the visual attractiveness of the waterway supporting Canal based businesses linked to the visitor economy. The international Devizes-Westminster Canoe race, held every Easter weekend, uses Newbury as the first night stop off point for junior competitors and this could be further exploited for the benefit of Newbury.

With the potential of the Wharf Development come opportunities for increasing the levels of leisure development along the Canal. Opportunities will be taken to maximise and co-ordinate water based activity such as paddle sports and canoe based events to build on the success of the Devizes-Westminster race. Similarly, there could be opportunities to seek increased boat moorings making Newbury a 'must stop' destination for recreational craft and canal boats at the heart of the town centre.

Enhancing and strengthening the canal side and walks with mosaics, signage, public art and environmental and heritage interpretation will provide a more vibrant and safe environment which complements recreational use and provides stronger links with surrounding areas and attractions.

- **Development of a stronger night-time economy (NTE)**

Generally the night-time economy (NTE) is taken to be economic activity that occurs between the hours of 6pm to 6am and covers a wide range of activity in town and city centres, including; pubs and bars, cafes, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, events and retail which combine to create a centre offer 'after dark', manifesting an economy that has its own unique qualities and is distinct from the 'day-time'²

The Night Time offer needs to be high quality and diverse – not driven by the pubs and clubs but offering a safe mixed economy for young people, families and older people alongside revellers.

In support of this, Newbury will aim to retain "Purple Flag" status, the accreditation scheme that recognises excellence in the management of town and city centres at night. Entertainment areas that achieve the standard will be those that offer *a better night out* to visitors. Purple Flag aims to raise standards and improve the quality of towns and cities at night.

² | Civic Trust (2006), Night Vision: Town Centres For All