

5 Core Policies

Town Centres

Policy CS 11

Hierarchy of Centres

The vitality and viability of the District's town, district and local centres will be protected and enhanced. The existing network of town, district, local, and village centres will form the focal point for uses, services, and facilities serving the surrounding population. The scale, character and role of the centres defines their position within the hierarchy and network of centres within the District as follows:

- Major town centre Newbury
- Town centres Thatcham and Hungerford
- District Centres Pangbourne, Lambourn and Theale
- Local and Village Centres To be confirmed through Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

As no capacity for any additional retail convenience and comparison floorspace on top of that which is already committed has been identified through the 2010 Retail Study⁽⁶⁷⁾, any retail development during the Core Strategy period will be mainly focused on the implementation of current schemes such as the Parkway development in Newbury, plus regeneration and other qualitative improvements and schemes. Any scheme will be of an appropriate scale and character to reflect and respond to the role and function of the centre, and should promote the individuality of the centre, responding to any distinct features.

The significant new investment committed and planned for the District's main centres should not be jeopardised or harmed by additional out of centre retailing.

Some small amounts of new retail floorspace may be provided in the form of new local centres at the two strategic developments of Sandleford Park and the Racecourse in Newbury, to respond to local needs in these areas.

The detailed boundaries of the centres identified in the retail hierarchy and their primary and secondary shopping frontages will be defined in the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD as will the local shopping centres and parades that meet the day to day needs of local communities.

The main town centre uses identified by the NPPF will be directed to the town and district centres defined in this policy.

Explanation of Policy

Newbury Market Place



Newbury Cinema



5.67 The key aim of this policy is to promote a network of dynamic and successful town centres across the District. Health check assessments carried out as part of the Retail Study Update 2010 have identified that all of West Berkshire District's main centres remain vital and viable, with any identified weaknesses being addressed through committed schemes. Specific conclusions and recommendations about the future role of the District's retail centres are dealt with within Area Delivery Plan Policies 2-6. Newbury and Thatcham will undergo the most significant changes over the Core Strategy period. Newbury is attracting significant new investment through the implementation of the Parkway development and the opening of the 7-screen Vue Cinema (see Area Delivery Plan Policy 2 Newbury) which will considerably improve the range and quality of the town centre's comparison goods offer. As well as enhancing the retail offer of Newbury, this will help to retain a higher proportion of residents' expenditure within the District, some of which has been lost in the past decade to new investment in competing centres such as Reading and Basingstoke.

5.68 In terms of specific schemes, the Kingsland Centre at Thatcham (see Area Delivery Plan Policy 3) has been identified within the Thatcham Vision as needing regeneration and will strengthen the town centre's overall retail offer, status, and trading performance in the face of increased competition from out of centre shopping locations, and Newbury Town Centre.

5.69 A sequential approach to accommodating town centre uses (including retail, leisure, and office developments) will be taken with the sequence being existing town and district centres, followed by edge of centres, and then out of centre sites.

5.70 The village centres in West Berkshire will be a focus for facilities aimed at supporting sustainable rural communities. The role of village centres will be addressed through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.

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Hungerford Town Centre



Pangbourne Town Centre



5.71 Although no need for the provision of any additional capacity has been identified by the 2010 Retail Study, future retail demand is very difficult to predict beyond a 10 year horizon so it will be particularly important to monitor development and review requirements, particularly following the implementation of the Parkway development and other schemes set out within the Newbury Vision.

Delivery and Monitoring

The policy will be delivered through the development management process and through the review of commercial areas and primary shopping frontages in the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD.

The AMR will monitor the changes in retail floorspace and other town centre uses and the percentage of vacant retail premises.