

# Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2022

Employment, Town Centres and the Environment

West Berkshire Local Plan



West Berkshire  
COUNCIL

# Authority Monitoring Report 2020-2022: Employment, Town Centres, and the Environment

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) deals with economic and environmental issues and covers the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022. It provides commentary and examines the success of Local Plan policies in meeting objectives and targets. Contextual indicators describing the wider social, environmental and economic background are presented, together with output indicators, which measure the implementation of planning policies for employment, town centres and the environment.

This document is divided into two sections. Section 2 'Business Development and Town Centres' looks at the implementation of the Local Plan policies relating to business development and town centres. Section 3 'The Environment' looks at policies relating to the wider environment including biodiversity, green infrastructure, historic environment and renewable energy.

This AMR should be read in conjunction with the Housing AMR which covers the housing elements of plan monitoring.

## Monitoring the Key Elements of the Local Plan 2019/20 - 2021/22

### Main highlights of the monitoring exercise :-

**Business Development** – A total of 44,776 sq.m. gross employment floorspace was developed between 2019/20 and 2021/22. There were a limited number of gross employment floorspace completions within Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area, instead the majority of gross employment floorspace were within wider Newbury/Thatcham area. They also show a continual net loss of office floorspace completions within Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area as well as within the wider Newbury/Thatcham area. The loss of office floorspace to residential continues to be an observed trend, with most of the changes of use being within Newbury.

On average over 85% of employment completions and commitments were on previously developed land between 2019/20 and 2021/22.

In 2021/22, 122,791 sq.m. gross floorspace for B/Eg class uses remained outstanding across the District.

**Town Centres** – Retail completions across West Berkshire over the period 2019/20 to 2021/22 have continued to decline. There were only 861 sq.m. (gross) of retail floorspace completions between 2019/20 and 2021/22, this may be due to the impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour and the growth of online shopping.

# Executive Summary

## Background

**1.1** Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by Part 6 Section 113 of the Localism Act 2011) the Council is required to publish a regular monitoring report which monitors and reviews the progress made with the Local Plan and the extent to which its planning policies are being successfully implemented. Part 8 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the exact details of the requirement for the content of these 'authorities' monitoring reports.

**1.2** The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) monitors the remaining policies of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 (Saved policies 2007 as amended in July 2012 and May 2017) as well as the policies in the West Berkshire Core Strategy, which was adopted in July 2012 and the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) which was adopted in May 2017.

**1.3** Due to resource issues, an AMR that covers employment, town centres and the environment has not been published since 2020. However this AMR covers the period of 3 years from the end of the last AMR ie. from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022. A separate AMR covers the housing elements of plan monitoring.

## Planning Context

**1.4** The Development Plan for West Berkshire is currently made up of a number of different documents:

- [Core Strategy Development Plan Document \(2006 - 2026\)](#) adopted July 2012
- [Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document](#) adopted May 2017
- [West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991 - 2006 \(Saved Policies 2007\)](#) as amended in July 2012 and May 2017
- [Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) adopted June 2017
- [Compton Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) adopted February 2022
- [Minerals and Waste Local Plan](#) adopted December 2022
- [South East Plan Natural Resource Management Policy 6](#) relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

**1.5** The Development Plan for West Berkshire is being replaced in stages by Development Plan Documents within the Local Plan Review. The programme for production of this is set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS shows that the Council is intending to produce the following DPDs, which will form part of the Local Plan, between 2017 and 2024:

- West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039
- West Berkshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan

**1.6** [The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act \(2004\)](#), [the Planning Act \(2008\)](#), [the Localism Act \(2011\)](#) and [the Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012 \(as amended\)](#), set out the legislative framework and statutory procedures for the current system of plan making for local authorities. The system of producing Development Plan Documents as part of a Local Plan allows for a number of statutory planning documents to be produced. Together, these documents will provide the spatial strategy, policies and guidance for the District and they will replace the saved policies in the current West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-2006, the Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire Incorporating the Alterations adopted in December 1997 and May 2001 and the Waste Local Plan for Berkshire adopted in December 1998.

**1.7** Planning policies for the District need to be prepared in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Policy for Waste (NPPW), National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), other National Policy Statements and Regulations (e.g. [Community Infrastructure Levy \(CIL\)](#)), and with regard to other local plans and strategies produced by the Council and other organisations.

## Key Characteristics of West Berkshire

**1.8** West Berkshire is located in the south east of England, within the county of Berkshire. It is a Unitary Authority and covers an area of 704 square kilometres, extending from Hungerford in the west to Calcot in the east. The area is predominately rural in character, with approximately 74% of the land area making up part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Newbury, Thatcham, Purley on Thames, Tilehurst and Calcot are the largest settlements in the area.



# 1 Introduction

**1.9** The District occupies a strategic position where the east-west M4 corridor intersects the north-south route of the A34. There are mainline railway services to London and good road connections to nearby larger centres such as Reading, Oxford, Swindon and Basingstoke. These factors, combined with the high quality urban and rural environment within the District, have contributed to a thriving economy, making the area a popular place to live and work.

**1.10** The general high standard of living in the District is reflected in many social and economic indicators. Levels of economic activity are higher than the national average. People in West Berkshire enjoy better health and lower crime rates than the national average. Levels of educational attainment are high. The high level of affluence in the area is however tempered by pockets of deprivation and exclusion in both urban and rural areas.

**Map 1.1 West Berkshire**



**1.11** West Berkshire is located in the Thames Valley sub region which is a world class business region and one of Europe's fastest growing economies. West Berkshire has a strong commercial base characterised by new technology industries with a strong service sector and several manufacturing and distribution firms. Unemployment levels in West Berkshire have recovered post-recession and remain significantly lower than the national average. The areas that have the highest concentrations of employment are Newbury Town Centre and the industrial areas and business parks in the east of Newbury, the business parks at Theale, Colthrop industrial area east of Thatcham and the Atomic Weapons Establishments at Aldermaston and Burghfield.

**1.12** A significant issue in West Berkshire is the cost of accommodation in the area. Compared to the region, West Berkshire is a relatively expensive place to buy a property. This highlights the increasing need for affordable housing for local people and key workers. The generally high affluence of the region and of West Berkshire masks pockets of deprivation and exclusion. There are communities with individuals and families who experience particular difficulties as a consequence of being poor within a generally wealthy region. West Berkshire has a higher than average proportion of people with higher qualifications however significant numbers of the working population have no qualifications and poor literacy and numeracy skills.

**1.13** 74% of the District is part of the North Wessex Downs AONB which is characterised by the quality of its chalk landscape which ranges from remote open downland, dramatic skyline escarpments, contrasting wooded downland, and the small scale intimate settled river valleys of the Lambourn and Pangbourne. Outside the AONB, the River Kennet, from Newbury to Reading, lies within a distinctive broad corridor of an open lowland landscape characterised by a variety of wetland habitats including wet meadow, reed bed, and flooded gravel workings. Further south there are small areas of remnant heath.

**1.14** Aside from the nationally important landscape of the North Wessex Downs AONB, the authority area has numerous designated statutory and non-statutory areas which aim to protect and enhance sites of international, national, regional and local nature conservation importance. The historic environment is also of great value to West Berkshire and consists of listed buildings, conservation areas, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and a Registered Battlefield.

## Key Issues Facing West Berkshire

**1.15** Research and evidence base work for the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2036, including public consultation, has highlighted a number of key issues affecting West Berkshire.

- **Employment Land.** The supply of modern good quality industrial accommodation of the right mix is limited with much of the existing stock needing re-furbishment. In rural areas the demand for rural employment space is limited and will need stimulating to encourage rural and home based businesses.
- **Employment and affordability.** The availability of skills suited to the local employment need and the high cost of housing means that some sectors such as agriculture, residential care and elementary occupations may be faced with staff recruitment and retention problems and pockets of relative income deprivation in and around Newbury, Thatcham and the fringe of Reading.
- **Biodiversity.** Population growth requiring more housing and infrastructure and consumption of natural resources, along with changes in agricultural land use and climate change, will continue to place pressure on the wildlife and ecosystems in West Berkshire. Without positive protection, conservation and enhancement, existing species and habitats will decline in quality and extent, and the value of nature for people's appreciation and enjoyment, will be diminished.
- **Historic Character and Features.** The conservation of historic, sites and commons, monuments, battlefields, parks, buildings and Conservation Areas has contributed to the historic, cultural, economic heritage of West Berkshire and helped to sustain the distinctive communities in the District. Without sensitive restoration, conservation and enhancement above and below ground, the quality, connectivity and accessibility of these historic assets can easily deteriorate, particularly with respect to those heritage assets at risk. However, conservation and mitigation needs are not necessarily incompatible with building development for local needs, if care is taken over form and design.
- **Climate Change.** The Council has declared a climate change emergency. There is a need to continue to be proactive in responding to the threat of climate change by including a robust set of policies to achieve carbon emission targets. We must also plan for incorporating more sustainable designs to mitigate against the physical, social and economic impacts of flooding.
- **Green Infrastructure.** The delivery of new green infrastructure will depend on meeting the need created as a consequence of new development so that it contributes to effective spatial planning and place shaping by taking account of its relationship to existing and proposed green spaces within the district and their connections to it. Focusing and prioritising Green Infrastructure investment on economic growth points where the majority of people will be located in the future, will maximise the multiple benefits it can provide.
- **Resource efficiency.** Lifestyle and consumption trends in the UK and more widely have generally resulted in increased demands on energy and material resources. While many of the driving factors are outside the influence of the Council, others can be influenced in the direction of sustainability. Waste minimisation and recycling, high standards of water and land use efficiency plus energy efficiency including renewables, will require particular consideration, being areas where planning can have a direct role.
- **Sustainable transport.** The high dependency on private transport combined with forecasted increase in traffic flows and the need to cut emissions and improve air quality are drivers for addressing the key issue of slowing down the rate of increase in traffic and encouraging more sustainable modes of transport and alternatives to travelling. Provision needs to be integrated with other sustainability issues and solutions such as access to services in more remote areas and promoting healthy active living. The capacity of the road network, particularly around Newbury and Thatcham, the A34 and A339 is also a key issue.



# 1 Introduction

## Monitoring Development Plan Policies

**1.16** Monitoring is an essential part of the continuous planning process. Monitoring enables the examination of trends and comparison against existing targets and policies, indicating where a review of these policies may be needed. The Core Strategy sets out the indicators that will be used to monitor its policies.

**1.17** Monitoring follows an objectives - policies - targets - indicators approach. Within this AMR the Core Strategy objectives and policies and saved Local Plan policies are presented. Objectives and policies in the Housing Site Allocations DPD are included in the Housing AMR so it will not be covered in this report. Targets, whether local or national, are given where possible along with the indicator used to evaluate the policy effectiveness. Actions required, whether in terms of additional monitoring requirements or review of policies, are outlined, together with the significant sustainability effects of the policies.

**1.18** There are two types of indicator against which the policies in the Development Plan are monitored: contextual and output.

**1.19** Contextual indicators are indirectly related to the policies: they are aimed at providing a better understanding of the wider environment (economic, environmental and demographic).

**1.20** Output indicators are measures of the quantifiable, physical activities that are related to implementation of the policies. Although the Government no longer specifies which indicators should be included, some of them continue to be used in the preparation of this monitoring report because they are still relevant to West Berkshire and because it means that the data is consistent and can be compared over time. Some 'local' indicators have been added to the former government ('core') ones, which specifically relate to monitoring the Core Strategy policies and objectives, or the local impact of government policy (e.g. amendments to permitted development rights).

## Explanatory Notes

### The definitions and nature of commitments

**1.21** A commitment is defined as an amount of development, which has been approved for a particular use. Each commitment is expressed both in terms of the gross and net floorspace involved in a particular scheme:

- Gross floorspace is calculated as the total internal area (up to and including walls) of the proposed development. It includes the floorspace devoted to corridors, toilets, storage etc. It does not include any area external to an existing or proposed building. In other words, it shows new floorspace provided plus any gross gains through change of use or conversions.
- Net floorspace is calculated by reference to the gains and losses of gross floorspace in development. It shows any new floorspace minus any demolitions and also adding or subtracting any net gains or losses from change of use or conversions.

**1.22** For the purposes of this report, floorspace figures are expressed in square metres. Developments are only recorded in this report if the gross or net floorspace is greater than 100 sq. m. They are classified into one or a combination of the land uses explained below, by using the definition or development given on the planning application forms and decision notices.

### Relevant land uses

**1.23** The land use categories in the survey are based on the uses contained in the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended 2005, 2006, 2010, 2015 and 2020). The current Use Classes were last updated on 1 September 2020

**1.24** An outline specification for each use is given below:

- **E(a)/A1 Retail** - Display or retail sale of goods, other than hot food.
- **E(b)/A3 Restaurants and cafés** - Sale of food and drink for consumption (mostly) on the premises, such as restaurants, snack bars and cafes.
- **E(c)/A2 Financial and professional services** - Financial services such as banks and building societies, professional services (other than health and medical services) and other appropriate services in a commercial, business or service locality such as estate and employment agencies.

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- **Sui Generis/A4 Drinking establishments** - Public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments (but not night clubs) including drinking establishments with expanded food provision.
- **Sui Generis/A5 Hot food takeaways** - For the sale of hot food for consumption off the premises.
- **E(g)/B1 Business** – this class is formed of three parts:
  - E(g)(i)/B1(a) Offices to carry out any operational or administrative functions.
  - E(g)(ii)/B1(b) Research and development of products or processes.
  - E(g)(iii)/B1(c) Industrial processes (which can be carried out in any residential area without causing detriment to the amenity of the area).
- **B2 General industrial** - Use for industrial process other than one falling within class E(g)/B1 (excluding incineration purposes, chemical treatment or landfill or hazardous waste).
- **B8 Storage or distribution** - Use for storage or as a distribution centre.
- **C1 Hotels** - Hotels, boarding and guest houses where no significant element of care is provided (excludes hostels).
- **E(d), F2(c) & F2(d)/D2 Assembly and leisure** - Indoor sport, recreation or fitness, areas or places for outdoor sport or recreation, indoor or outdoor swimming pools or skating rinks.

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

### Business Development

#### Context

**3.1** West Berkshire shares in the overall affluence of the South East region. The District has a strong commercial base characterised by new technology industries with a strong service sector and several manufacturing and distribution firms.

**3.2** Table 3.1 presents indicators of economic activity in the District. Activity rates are higher than regional and national rates, while unemployment rates within West Berkshire are lower than average.

**Table 3.1 Economic Activity 2021-22**

	West Berkshire	South East	GB
<b>Economic Activity Rate</b> (percentage of working age population in employment or unemployed)	85.2%	80.9%	78.6%
<b>Unemployed</b> (unemployed of working age as percentage of economically active)	2.7%	3.3%	3.8%

Source: Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics: ONS annual population survey (July 2021 – June 2022)

**3.3** According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), at December 2021, West Berkshire has a skilled labour force with 51.5% of working age population educated to HND, Degree and Higher Degree level, compared to 43.6% nationally<sup>(1)</sup>.

**Table 3.2 Business and Town Centres: Objectives**

#### Core Strategy Objective:

To provide for a range of sizes and types of employment land and premises in the right locations to respond to the forecast changes in economic activity, the location of new residential development and the specific needs of the rural economy, including the equestrian and horseracing industries.

**Table 3.3 Business Development and Town Centres: Indicators and Policies**

Indicators	West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies)	West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policies
Total amount of additional employment floorspace - by type  Total amount of outstanding commitments - by type	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas	ADPP2: Newbury ADPP3: Thatcham ADPP4: Eastern Area ADPP5: North Wessex Downs AONB ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley CS9: Location and type of business development CS10: The rural economy CS11: Hierarchy of centres CS12: Equestrian/racehorse industry
Employment floorspace by type on previously developed land	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas	ADPP1 - Spatial Strategy

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

Indicators	West Berkshire District Local Plan (Saved Policies)	West Berkshire Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policies
Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas ECON.6: Future of the former Greenham Common Airbase	ADPP2: Newbury ADPP3: Thatcham ADPP4: Eastern Area ADPP5: North Wessex Downs AONB ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley CS9: Location and type of business development CS10: The rural economy CS11: Hierarchy of centres CS12: Equestrian/racehorse industry
Amount of employment land lost to residential development	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas	ADPP2: Newbury ADPP3: Thatcham ADPP4: Eastern Area ADPP5: North Wessex Downs AONB ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley CS9: Location and type of business development CS10: The rural economy CS12: Equestrian/racehorse industry
Total amount of floorspace for 'town centre uses'	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas SHOP.1: Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages SHOP.3: Retail Areas and Retail Warehousing SHOP.5: The Encouragement of Local and Village Shops	ADPP2: Newbury ADPP3: Thatcham ADPP4: Eastern Area ADPP5: North Wessex Downs AONB ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley CS9: Location and type of business development CS10: The rural economy CS11: Hierarchy of centres
Amount of vacant retail units in town centres	ECON.5: Town Centre Commercial Areas SHOP.1: Non-retail Uses in Primary Shopping Frontages	ADPP2: Newbury ADPP3: Thatcham ADPP4: Eastern Area ADPP5: North Wessex Downs AONB ADPP6: The East Kennet Valley CS11: Hierarchy of centres

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

### Employment Completions and Commitments - An Overview

#### Indicators

- Total amount of additional employment floorspace - by type
- Total amount of outstanding commitments - by type

**Table 3.4 Summary table: employment floorspace completed (sq.m) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year		Office		Industrial			Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total	
		B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) R&D	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution			B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*
2019/20	Gross	395	0	730	4,773	8,880	3,519	0	<b>18,297</b>
	Net	-6,062	0	730	572	-225	3,519	-1,085	<b>-2,551</b>
2020/21	Gross	6,032	0	77	0	3,436	0	10,853	<b>20,398</b>
	Net	-3,589	0	-1,429	0	3,436	0	10,853	<b>9,271</b>
2021/22	Gross	3,974	0	390	510	1,207	0	0	<b>6,081</b>
	Net	-3,883	0	135	122	1,207	0	0	<b>-2,419</b>

**Table 3.5 Summary table: employment commitments (sq.m) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year		Office		Industrial			Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total	
		B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) R&D	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution			B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*
2019/20	Gross	22,644	0	127	21,345	21,986	2,570	17,278	<b>85,950</b>
	Net	-29,654	0	-1,811	19,196	19,704	560	17,278	<b>25,273</b>
2020/21	Gross	17,466	0	976	19,337	23,883	4,248	8,640	<b>74,550</b>
	Net	-27,370	0	355	17,176	21,601	-958	8,640	<b>19,444</b>
2021/22	Gross	13,692	0	1,234	21,630	55,812	21,714	8,709	<b>122,791</b>
	Net	-31,350	0	436	18,888	52,380	16,508	8,709	<b>65,571</b>

\*Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

#### Commentary

**3.4** This section of the report relates to business, industrial, storage and distribution uses as well as other employment related development. In September 2020 the new Use Classes Order re-labelled some of these use classes as follows:

- Office - Eg(i) (previously referred to as B1a up to September 2020)
- Research and development - Eg(ii) (previously referred to as B1b up to September 2020)
- Light industrial - Eg(iii) ((previously referred to as B1c up to September 2020)
- General Industrial - B2
- Storage or distribution - B8



## Business Development and Town Centres 3

**3.5** The table above and those throughout this section outline the breakdown for office (B1a/Eg(i)), research and development (B1b/Eg(ii)) and light industrial (B1c/Eg(iii)), along with general industrial (B2) and storage or distribution (B8). In addition, the breakdown of the B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 floorspace shows those sites which are defined on the planning application as flexible industrial use. For some development proposals, it has not been possible to disaggregate a mix of office and industrial uses, so it is shown in the column 'mix of B/Eg classes'.

**3.6** Table 3.4 and Table 3.5 illustrates the total amount and type of completed employment floorspace and the total amount and type of outstanding commitments. The amount of employment floorspace completed in 2021/22 (6,081 sq.m gross) is less than that in 2020/21(20,398 sq.m gross) and 2019/20 (18,297 sq.m gross ). This variation is predominantly due to a 10,853 sq.m mixed-use business development that was completed in 2020/21 and a 6,087 sq.m B8 storage and distribution development that was completed in 2019/21, both located at Colthrop Estate, Thatcham.

**3.7** There was a continuing net loss of B1a office floorspace between 2019/20 and 2021/22. It is also worth noting that there were several change of use completions from B1a office to C3 residential use in Newbury and Greenham which contributed to the 7,540 sq.m net loss of office floorspace in 2021/22, 8,294 sq.m net loss of office floorspace in 2020/21 (predominantly Overbridge Square at Hambridge Lane) and 2,379 sq.m net loss of office floorspace in 2019/20. Table A.2 sets out the total amount and type of completed employment floorspace since 2006/07 (the start of the plan period).

**3.8** Table 3.5 also indicates 122,791 sq.m (gross) floorspace and 65,571 (net) floorspace with planning permission for business uses (B/Eg class uses) in 2021/22 which contributes to the employment land supply in the Local Plan Review. There has also been a reduction in office net floorspace available and an increase in industrial net floorspace available in 2021/22 when compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20.

**Table 3.6 Employment floorspace completed (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) R&D	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>								
2019/20	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	66
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area)</b>								
2019/20	329	0	0	4,773	6,580	0	0	11,682
2020/21	5,802	0	0	0	671	0	10,853	17,326
2021/22	3,105	0	0	343	0	0	0	3,448
<b>Rest of West Berkshire</b>								
2019/20	0	0	730	0	2,300	3,519	0	6,549
2020/21	230	0	77	0	2,765	0	0	3,072
2021/22	869	0	390	167	1,207	0	0	2,633
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	395	0	730	4,773	8,880	3,519	0	18,297
2020/21	6,032	0	77	0	3,436	0	10,853	20,398
2021/22	3,974	0	390	510	1,207	0	0	6,081

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

**Table 3.7 Employment floorspace completed (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) R&D	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>								
2019/20	-619	0	0	0	0	0	0	-619
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	-2,766	0	0	0	0	0	0	-2,766
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area)</b>								
2019/20	-2,268	0	0	1,858	6,580	0	-1,085	5,085
2020/21	-2,969	0	-1,506	0	671	0	10,853	7,049
2021/22	-1,669	0	0	343	0	0	0	-1,326
<b>Rest of West Berkshire</b>								
2019/20	-3,176	0	730	-1,286	-6,805	3,519	0	-7,018
2020/21	-620	0	77	0	2,765	0	0	2,222
2021/22	552	0	135	-221	1,207	0	0	1,673
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	-6,062	0	730	572	-225	3,519	-1,085	-2,551
2020/21	-3,589	0	-1,429	0	3,436	0	10,853	9,271
2021/22	-3,883	0	135	122	1,207	0	0	-2,419

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use classes

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

### Commentary

**3.9** The tables above refer to the 'Newbury/Thatcham' area. To implement the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy, a delivery strategy is set out which divides the District into four main geographical areas. Newbury/Thatcham is one of these geographical areas. The extent of the area that it covers is illustrated on the CIL differential rate map which can be found on the Council's [interactive map](#).

**3.10** Table 3.6 and Table 3.7 shows there were a limited number of gross employment floorspace completions within Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area, instead the majority of gross employment floorspace were within wider Newbury/Thatcham area. They also show a continual net loss of office floorspace completions within Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area as well as within the wider Newbury/Thatcham area. The loss of office floorspace to residential continues to be an observed trend, with most of the changes of use being within Newbury.

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

### Employment Land Available

Table 3.8 Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>								
2019/20	816	0	0	0	0	0	0	816
2020/21	816	0	0	0	0	0	0	816
2021/22	816	0	0	0	0	0	0	816
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area)</b>								
2019/20	18,934	0	127	343	15,053	2,570	10,853	47,880
2020/21	13,254	0	517	343	19,141	2,570	0	35,825
2021/22	2,372	0	127	586	15,544	13,929	287	32,845
<b>Rest of West Berkshire</b>								
2019/20	2,894	0	0	21,002	6,933	0	6,425	37,254
2020/21	3,396	0	459	21,209	4,742	1,678	6,425	37,909
2021/22	10,504	0	1,107	21,044	40,268	7,785	8,422	89,130
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	22,644	0	127	21,345	21,986	2,570	17,278	85,950
2020/21	17,466	0	976	21,552	23,883	4,248	6,425	74,550
2021/22	13,692	0	1,234	21,630	55,812	21,714	8,709	122,791

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/21, West Berkshire Council

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

**Table 3.9 Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>								
2019/20	-15,231	0	0	0	0	0	0	-15,231
2020/21	-16,098	0	0	0	0	0	0	-16,098
2021/22	-15,635	0	0	0	0	0	0	-15,635
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area)</b>								
2019/20	-12,485	0	-1,429	-1,044	13,828	560	10,853	10,283
2020/21	-9,787	0	278	-1,044	17,916	560	0	7,923
2021/22	-16,983	0	-144	586	14,319	11,919	287	9,984
<b>Rest of West Berkshire</b>								
2019/20	-1,938	0	-382	20,240	5,876	0	6,425	30,221
2020/21	-1,485	0	77	20,435	3,685	-1,518	6,425	27,618
2021/22	1,269	0	580	18,302	38,061	4,589	8,422	71,222
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	-29,654	0	-1,811	19,196	19,704	560	17,278	25,273
2020/21	-27,370	0	355	19,391	21,601	-958	6,425	19,444
2021/22	-31,350	0	436	18,888	52,380	16,508	8,709	65,571

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

**3.11** Outstanding commitments are those which have grant of planning permission, but have not yet to been built out. Table 3.8 shows outstanding commitments (gross floorspace in sq.m.) and Table 3.9 shows outstanding commitments (net change in floorspace in sq.m.) for business uses between 2019/20 and 2021/22.

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

**Policy Effectiveness:** There is no evidence to suggest that policies have been ineffective in encouraging a diverse employment base. There was a decrease in B/Eg-use class completions in 2021/22 (the reasons for which are outlined in paragraph 3.6 above) compared to 2020/21 and 2019/20, whilst outstanding commitments continue to be high.

However, the loss of B1a/Eg(i) office floorspace to residential continues to be an observed trend, with most of the conversions located within Newbury.

The Council is preparing an Employment Land Review (ELR) that will form part of the evidence base for the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039. The objectives of the ELR are threefold:

- An assessment of the future demand of employment floorspace;
- An assessment of the existing and committed future supply; and
- Identification of a floorspace / land requirement to address unmet need.

**Actions Required:** The West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039 is required to encourage a diverse economic base to meet existing and future requirements.

The current Local Plan outlines through policy CS9 of the Core Strategy that West Berkshire has a sufficient supply of employment land to meet demand to 2026, and thus there is no need to plan for a net increase in employment land stock. However, the employment land requirement needs to be reviewed to look longer term in order to ensure the provision of sufficient employment land to support future growth in the district through to 2039.

The ELR, which is currently being prepared, will inform the preparation of the economic development and employment land policies that will be included in the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** A strong diverse economy with a focus in the existing employment and urban areas is important for maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and development.



## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

### Employment completions and commitments on previously developed land

Indicator

Employment floorspace by type on previously developed land

**Table 3.10 Employment floorspace completed on previously developed and greenfield land (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year		B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Employment floorspace completed on previously developed land</b>									
<b>2019/20</b>	Gross	395	0	730	4,773	8,880	0	3,519	18,297
	%	100	0	100	100	100	0	100	100
<b>2020/21</b>	Gross	3,064	0	77	0	3,436	10,853	0	17,430
	%	51	0	100	0	100	100	0	85
<b>2021/22</b>	Gross	3,274	0	390	510	0	0	0	4,174
	%	82	0	100	100	0	0	0	69
<b>Employment floorspace completed on greenfield land</b>									
<b>2019/20</b>	Gross	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	%	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>2020/21</b>	Gross	2,968	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,968
	%	49	0	0	0	0	0	0	15
<b>2021/22</b>	Gross	700	0	0	0	1,207	0	0	1,907
	%	18	0	0	0	100	0	0	31

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

**Table 3.11 Employment commitments on previously developed and greenfield land (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year		B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace on previously developed land</b>									
<b>2019/20</b>	Gross	18,797	0	127	21,345	20,505	2,570	11,286	74,630
	%	83	0	100	100	93	100	65	87
<b>2020/21</b>	Gross	16,587	0	976	21,552	22,402	4,248	433	66,199
	%	95	0	100	100	94	100	7	89
<b>2021/22</b>	Gross	13,513	0	1,234	21,630	45,157	21,714	2,717	105,965
	%	99	0	100	100	81	100	31	86
<b>Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace on greenfield land</b>									
<b>2019/20</b>	Gross	3,847	0	0	0	1,481	0	5,992	11,320
	%	17	0	0	0	7	0	35	13
<b>2020/21</b>	Gross	879	0	0	0	1,481	0	5,992	8,352
	%	5	0	0	0	6	0	93	11
<b>2021/22</b>	Gross	179	0	0	0	10,655	0	5,992	16,826
	%	1	0	0	0	19	0	69	14

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

### Commentary

**3.12** Table 3.10 and Table 3.11 illustrate the total amount and type of completed employment floorspace. They also show outstanding commitments (gross floorspace) on previously developed land. The figures illustrate that on average over 85% of employment completions and commitments were on previously developed land between 2019/20 and 2021/22.

**Policy Effectiveness:** Majority of employment completions and commitments are developed on previously developed land suggests that that policies are effective.

**Actions Required:** The West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039 is required to continue the emphasis on prioritising development on previously developed land.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** The emphasis on re-use of previously developed land will reduce the pressure for developing on greenfield sites and assist the revitalisation of built-up areas.

### 3 Business Development and Town Centres

#### Employment completions and commitments in Protected Employment Area

##### Indicator

Amount of floorspace developed for employment by type, in employment or regeneration areas

Table 3.12 Employment floorspace completed within Protected Employment Areas and Greenham Business Park (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Total completed employment floorspace within PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	329	0	107	4,773	6,580	3,519	0	15,308
2020/21	5,802	0	0	0	132	0	10,853	16,787
2021/22	3,105	0	390	343	0	0	0	3,838
<b>Total completed employment floorspace outside of any PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	66	0	623	0	2,300	0	0	2,989
2020/21	230	0	77	0	3,304	0	0	3,611
2021/22	869	0	0	167	1,207	0	0	2,243
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	395	0	730	4,773	8,880	3,519	0	18,297
2020/21	6,032	0	77	0	3,436	0	10,853	20,398
2021/22	3,974	0	390	510	1,207	0	0	6,081

\*Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Table 3.13 Employment floorspace completed within Protected Employment Areas and Greenham Business Park (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Total completed employment floorspace within PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	-1,674	0	107	1,147	-2,417	3,519	-1,085	-403
2020/21	-3,667	0	-1,506	0	132	0	10,853	5,812
2021/22	-1,669	0	151	243	0	0	0	-1,275
<b>Total completed employment floorspace outside of any PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	-4,388	0	623	-575	2,192	0	0	-2,148
2020/21	78	0	77	0	3,304	0	0	3,459
2021/22	-2,214	0	-16	-121	1,207	0	0	-1,144
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	-6,062	0	730	572	-225	3,519	-1,085	-2,551
2020/21	-3,589	0	-1,429	0	3,436	0	10,853	9,217
2021/22	-3,883	0	135	122	1,207	0	0	-2,419

\*Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

**Table 3.14 Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace within Protected Employment Areas and Greenham Business Park (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Total amount of outstanding commitments for employment floorspace within PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	18,151	0	127	343	14,514	2,570	17,063	52,768
2020/21	12,672	0	517	343	19,141	2,570	6,210	41,453
2021/22	6,759	0	127	586	15,544	13,929	5,992	42,937
<b>Total amount of outstanding commitments for employment floorspace outside of any PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	4,493	0	0	21,002	7,472	0	0	33,182
2020/21	4,794	0	459	21,209	4,742	1,678	215	33,097
2021/22	6,933	0	1,107	21,044	40,268	7,785	2,717	79,854
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	22,644	0	343	21,345	21,986	2,570	17,278	85,950
2020/21	17,466	0	976	21,552	23,883	4,248	6,425	74,550
2021/22	13,692	0	1,234	21,630	55,812	21,714	8,709	122,791

\*Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

**Table 3.15 Outstanding commitments for employment floorspace within Protected Employment Areas and Greenham Business Park (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	B1a/Eg(i) Office	B1b/Eg(ii) Research & Development	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Industrial	B2 General Industrial	B8 Storage & Distribution	B1c/Eg(iii), B2 & B8 Industrial*	Mix of B/Eg classes (Office / Industrial)*	Total
<b>Total amount of outstanding commitments for employment floorspace within PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	-2,485	0	-1,429	-1,044	13,289	560	17,063	25,954
2020/21	1,388	0	278	-1,044	17,916	560	6,210	25,308
2021/22	-4,590	0	-144	586	14,319	11,919	5,992	28,082
<b>Total amount of outstanding commitments for employment floorspace outside of any PEAs and Greenham Business Park</b>								
2019/20	-27,169	0	-382	20,240	6,415	0	215	-681
2020/21	-28,758	0	77	20,435	3,685	-1,518	215	-5,864
2021/22	-26,760	0	580	18,302	38,061	4,589	2,717	37,489
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>								
2019/20	-29,654	0	-1,811	19,196	19,704	560	17,278	25,273
2020/21	-27,370	0	355	19,391	21,601	-958	6,425	19,444
2021/22	-31,350	0	436	18,888	52,380	16,508	8,709	65,571

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

### Commentary

**3.13** Table 3.12 and Table 3.13 show the amount and type of completed employment floorspace within the Protected Employment Areas (PEAs) that are designated in the Local Plan. Whilst Greenham Business Park is not a designated PEA, saved policy ECON.6 of the West Berkshire District Local Plan 1991-1996 supports proposals for industrial, distribution, and storage space, therefore development at this location is also monitored.

**3.14** Table 3.12 show that although there was an decreasing trend to develop employment floorspace within PEAs and Greenham Business Park between 2019/20 and 2021/22, there were still more than half of total gross employment completions within these areas (average of 76% between 2019/20 and 2021/22) compared to the rest of West Berkshire District (an average of 24% between 2019/20 and 2021/22).

**3.15** Table 3.14 and Table 3.15 show the amount and type of outstanding employment commitments both within and outside of PEAs and Greenham Business Park.

**3.16** Table A.5 of Appendix A lists the employment areas designated in the Local Plan. The total area of land within protected employment areas is 317.9 hectares. A further 54.4 hectares of land at the Greenham Business Park is designated for industrial, distribution and storage uses, with some sporting and recreational use.

**Policy Effectiveness:** The current policy allows for some economic development on existing employment sites, particularly on those sites seen as strategically important for the District's economy including Greenham Business Park, Vodafone HQ and the Atomic Weapons Establishment, outside of designated Protected Employment Areas.

**Actions Required:** The West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039 will need to continue the emphasis of focusing business development within PEAs, as well as continuing to encourage a diverse economic base. A review of the role and function of PEAs as part of the Employment Land Review (one of the evidence base documents for the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039) will assist in strengthening the role and status of these areas.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** A focus on existing employment areas enables diversification in the local economic base within established areas.



## Business Development and Town Centres 3

### Losses of Employment Land

#### Indicators

- Amount of employment land lost to residential development.

**Table 3.16 Losses of office (B1a/Eg(i)) floorspace to residential (C3) use through Prior Approval Process 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	Number of prior approval applications approved or not required			Completions			Outstanding		
	No. of sites	No. of units	Net losses of employment floorspace (sq.m.)	No. of sites	No. of units	Net losses of employment floorspace (sq.m.)	No. of sites	No. of units	Net losses of employment floorspace (sq.m.)
2019/20	0	0	0	2	30	2,379	14	694	35,503
2020/21	3	18	1,150	7	151	8,992	9	559	27,534
2021/22	5	29	2,305	4	198	7,540	9	364	20,395

Source: Employment Commitments and Housing Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

#### Commentary

**3.17** The Government can, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, grant deemed planning permission for specific types of development or changes of use. This is known as a permitted development right and it means that a developer in these instances would not be required to have express planning permission for such development or change of use.

**3.18** A temporary permitted development right for the change of use of offices (B1a/Eg(i)) to residential (C3) was granted in May 2013. It became permanent in May 2016. Such a change of use is subject to 'prior approval' meaning that an application is required to assess the impacts and risks of the proposal, namely contamination, flood risk, transport and highways impacts.

**3.19** As set out in paragraph 3.7, much of the office floorspace losses in the District have been to residential. It is notable that this trend has accelerated since the office to residential permitted development change became permanent in May 2016. Between 2019/20 and 2021/22, a total of 18,911 sq.m. (net completions) of office floorspace was lost as a result of the changes to permitted development. There was also 20,395 sq.m. (net outstanding) of office floorspace with prior approval for change of use from office to residential use in 2021/22.

**3.20** From 2019/20 to 2021/22, a total of 15,769 sqm (net completions) of office space has been lost to residential use within Protected Employment Areas, mainly at Hambridge Road and Lane and Newbury Business Park.

**Policy Effectiveness:** The Employment Land Assessment highlights the need to protect the District's quantity of employment land, particularly office space and provides a picture of future employment land supply and demand. The changes to permitted development will impact on the effectiveness of these local policies and their effect will need to be monitored.

**Actions Required:** Production of Local Plan Review to protect employment provision, particularly within town centres and facilitate the upgrading of lower quality office space.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Conversion of office accommodation in town centres has potential to harm the employment base of the town centre and undermine the requirement to ensure there is sufficient office accommodation to meet identified need.

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

### Town Centres

#### Context

**3.21** The Core Strategy identifies six town and district centres: the major town centre of Newbury, which is the principal shopping and leisure destination in the District, the smaller town centres of Thatcham and Hungerford, and the three district centres of Lambourn, Pangbourne and Theale. The Core Strategy seeks to encourage mixed uses in existing town and district centres (within the defined town centre commercial boundary) and protect the vitality of the primary shopping areas. Core Strategy policy CS11 sets out a hierarchy of centres which defines each centre according to their scale, character and role within the District.

**3.22** At present Lambourn, although defined as a district centre given its role and function, does not have a town centre commercial boundary, and is therefore not recorded in Table 3.18 and Table 3.19. The designation of town, district and local centres will be reviewed through the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039.

**3.23** The completion of the Parkway scheme in 2011/12 has significantly boosted the retail offer within Newbury town centre. The Newbury Vision document 'Newbury 2026', published in October 2014, sets out the long term vision for Newbury and its role in supporting business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy. The retail offer of Newbury plays an important role in the local economy particularly since the opening of Parkway in 2011. 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. These areas should continue to provide opportunities for a range of uses to support the core Town Centre and local residents.

**3.24** Over recent years the retail industry has faced a number of challenges and is continuing to experience a period of unprecedented change as the country emerges from the COVID19 pandemic and establishes its position after exiting the EU. This is evident in our town centres as consumer shopping behaviours have dramatically shifted with the growth of online shopping and 'click and collect', and retailers are having to adapt and respond to these macro-economic 'shocks' as well as the changes in shopping trends. The nature of retail and our high-streets continues to adapt, and the commercial leisure sector is becoming an increasingly important contributor to the vitality and viability of town centres.

**3.25** The Western Berkshire Retail and Commercial Assessment 2016 sets out the need for retail and commercial leisure uses. For West Berkshire, it identifies the following:

**Table 3.17 Summary of quantitative 'need", 2026 and 2036**

Comparison goods need		Convenience good need	
2026 (sq.m net, rounded)	2036 (sq.m net, rounded)	2026 (sq.m net, rounded)	2036 (sq.m net, rounded)
6,400	25,600	-2,700	-2,100

**3.26** In respect of leisure, the study identifies that there is the potential in West Berkshire for a small-scale 'boutique' cinema provision in Newbury and/or Hungerford.

**3.27** However, since this evidence was published the retail industry is experiencing an unprecedented period of change as outlined above. Given the challenges being faced and the need for the sector to take time to adjust and adapt it has not been possible to update the retail evidence in a meaningful way to feed into the Local Plan Review to 2039. The Council is therefore committed to a review of the District's retail needs in the first five year review of the emerging Local Plan.

**3.28** The National Planning Policy Framework defines main town centre uses. In September 2020 the new Use Classes Order re-labelled some of these use classes. The main town centre uses, with their use classes and their new labels are as follows:

- retail - E(a) (previously referred to as A1 up to September 2020)
- restaurants and cafes - E(b) (previously referred to as A3 up to September 2020)
- financial and professional services - E(c) (previously referred to as A2 up to September 2020)
- drinking establishments and takeaways - Sui Generis (previously referred to as A4 and A5 up to September 2020)
- offices - Eg(i) (previously referred to as B1a up to September 2020)

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

- hotels - C1
- assembly and leisure - E(d), F2(c) and F2(d) (previously referred to as D2 up to September 2020).

**3.29** The tables throughout this section outline the breakdown for main town centre uses.

### Indicator

Total amount of floorspace completed for 'town centre uses'

**Table 3.18 Floorspace completed for town centre uses (gross, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	E(a) / A1 Retail	E(c) / A2 Financial & Professional Services	E(b) & Sui Generis / A3&A4&A5 Food and Drink	Eg(i)/B1a Offices	C1 Hotels	E(d), F2(c), F2(d) / D2 Assembly and Leisure	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	359	0	750	66	0	0	1175
2020/21	0	0	572	0	0	0	572
2021/22	322	0	0	0	0	0	322
<b>Thatcham Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	143	0	0	0	0	143
<b>Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	180	0	0	0	0	0	180
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Pangbourne Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Theale Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	127	0	0	0	127

**Table 3.19 Floorspace completed for town centre uses (gross, sq.m.) 2019/2020 - 2021/22**

Year	E(a) / A1 Retail	E(c) / A2 Financial & Professional Services	E(b) & Sui Generis / A3&A4&A5 Food and Drink	Eg(i)/B1a Offices	C1 Hotels	E(d), F2(c), F2(d) / D2 Assembly and Leisure	Total
<b>Total floorspace for town centre uses completed within Town Centre Commercial Areas</b>							
2019/20	539	0	750	66	0	0	1355
2020/21	0	0	572	0	0	0	572
2021/22	322	143	127	0	0	0	592
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Town Centre Commercial Areas)</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	329	124	0	453
2020/21	0	0	180	5802	0	589	6571
2021/22	0	0	347	3105	1524	0	4976
<b>Rest of West Berkshire District (excl. Town Centre Commercial Areas)</b>							
2019/20	0	0	304	0	0	0	304
2020/21	0	0	0	230	0	152	1288
2021/22	0	0	0	869	0	713	1582
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>							
2019/20	539	0	1054	395	124	0	2112
2020/21	0	0	752	6032	906	741	8431
2021/22	322	143	474	3974	1524	713	7150

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

**Table 3.19 Floorspace completed for town centre uses (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	E(a) / A1 Retail	E(c) / A2 Financial & Professional Services	E(b) & Sui Generis / A3&A4&A5 Food and Drink	Eg(i)/B1a Offices	C1 Hotels	E(d), F2(c), F2(d) / D2 Assembly and Leisure	Total
<b>Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	-391	-119	-45	-618	0	0	-1173
2020/21	-3602	0	164	0	0	0	-3438
2021/22	322	0	0	-2766	0	0	-2444
<b>Thatcham Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	-284	0	0	-284
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	-143	143	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Hungerford Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	-127	-180	180	0	0	0	-127
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	-107	0	0	0	0	0	-107
<b>Pangbourne Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	-241	0	0	0	0	-241
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Theale Town Centre Commercial Area</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2020/21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2021/22	-127	0	0	-127	0	0	-127

**Table 3.20 Floorspace completed for town centre uses (net, sq.m.) 2019/20 - 2021/22**

Year	E(a) / A1 Retail	E(c) / A2 Financial & Professional Services	E(b) & Sui Generis / A3&A4&A5 Food and Drink	Eg(i)/B1a Offices	C1 Hotels	E(d), F2(c), F2(d) / D2 Assembly and Leisure	Total
<b>Total completed town centre uses within Town Centre Commercial Areas</b>							
2019/20	-518	-540	135	-902	0	0	-1825
2020/21	-3602	0	164	0	0	0	-3438
2021/22	-55	143	0	-2893	0	0	-2678
<b>Newbury/Thatcham Area (excl. Town Centre Commercial Areas)</b>							
2019/20	0	0	0	-1984	124	0	-2945
2020/21	0	0	-505	-2969	0	589	-2885
2021/22	-1161	0	347	-1669	1524	0	-959
<b>Rest of West Berkshire District (excl. Town Centre Commercial Areas)</b>							
2019/20	-602	0	-195	-3176	0	0	-1887
2020/21	0	-142	-230	-620	825	152	-15
2021/22	0	0	-273	679	0	713	1119
<b>West Berkshire Total</b>							
2019/20	-1120	-540	-60	-6062	124	0	-6657
2020/21	-3602	0	-571	-3589	825	741	-6196
2021/22	-1216	143	74	-3883	1524	713	-2518

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## Business Development and Town Centres 3

### Commentary

**3.30** Retail completions across West Berkshire between 2019/20 and 2021/22 have continued to decline, and there has been a continuing net loss of office floorspace within Town Centre Commercial Areas, particularly in Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area. All of the 861 sq.m. (gross) of E(a) retail floorspace completed between 2019/20 and 2021/22 was within Town Centre Commercial Areas.

**3.31** There has been a net increase in the amount of floorspace completed for hotels, and of assembly and leisure uses.

**3.32** Table 3.20 sets out the level of development activity for town centre uses within Newbury town centre since the start of the Core Strategy plan period (2006/07 - 2021/22).

**Table 3.20 Floorspace completed for town centre uses within Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area 2006/07 - 2021/22**

Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area		E(a)/A1 Retail	E(c)/A2 Financial & Professional Services	E(b) & Sui Generis / A3&A4&A5 Food and Drink	B1a Offices	C1 Hotels	E(d), F2(c), F2(d) / D2 Assembly and Leisure	Total
2006/07	Gross	362	840	N/A	471	N/A	0	1,673
	Net	0	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	0
2007/08	Gross	367	704	N/A	0	N/A	0	1,071
	Net	-1,828	704	N/A	-1,023	N/A	0	-2,147
2008/09	Gross	250	0	N/A	0	N/A	231	481
	Net	-2,457	0	N/A	-2,305	N/A	231	-4,531
2009/10	Gross	234	0	N/A	0	N/A	2,000	2,234
	Net	197	0	N/A	-3,157	N/A	2,000	-960
2010/11	Gross	114	131	N/A	0	N/A	0	245
	Net	-269	131	N/A	-544	N/A	0	-682
2011/12	Gross	27,809	0	N/A	0	N/A	105	27,914
	Net	27,809	-381	N/A	-98	N/A	105	27,435
2012/13	Gross	3,622	128	N/A	0	N/A	0	3,750
	Net	3,074	24	N/A	-235	N/A	0	2,863
2013/14	Gross	78	0	N/A	0	N/A	2,048	2,126
	Net	-1,184	-398	N/A	-1,423	N/A	1,880	-1,125
2014/15	Gross	218	499	174	353	0	0	1,244
	Net	-434	-576	174	-1,237	0	0	-2,073
2015/16	Gross	0	0	0	1,864	1,356	154	3,374
	Net	-154	-418	0	-5,835	1,356	154	-4,897
2016/17	Gross	0	0	211	600	0	0	811
	Net	-422	0	211	-1,664	0	-300	-2,175
2017/18	Gross	0	0	134	0	3,636	204	3,974
	Net	-139	-338	134	-5,603	3,636	204	-2,105
2018/19	Gross	371	0	1,128	124	0	0	1,623
	Net	-2,609	-124	333	-1,559	0	0	-3,959
2019/20	Gross	359	0	750	66	0	0	1,175
	Net	-391	-119	-45	-618	0	0	-1,173
2020/21	Gross	0	0	572	0	0	0	572
	Net	-3,602	0	164	0	0	0	-3,438
2021/22	Gross	322	0	0	0	0	0	322
	Net	322	0	0	-2,766	0	0	-2,444
<b>Total</b>	<b>Gross</b>	<b>34,106</b>	<b>2,302</b>	<b>2,969</b>	<b>3,478</b>	<b>4,992</b>	<b>4,742</b>	<b>52,589</b>
2006/07 -								
2021/22	Net	17,913	-1,495	971	-28,067	4,992	4,274	-1,412

\* Unable to disaggregate floorspace by use class

Source: Employment Commitments Data 2019/20-2021/22, West Berkshire Council

## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

**3.33** Entertainment uses (A3 food and drink, A4 drinking establishments and A5 hot food takeaways) and tourism development (C1 hotels) have only been monitored since 2014/15, so figures for previous years were not available in this report.

**3.34** It is evident from Table 3.20 that Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area has seen an overall net loss in town centre uses of -1,412 sqm. There has been a net loss of 28,067 sqm of office floorspace within the Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area since the start of the plan period. To ensure that the vitality and viability of Newbury town centre is maintained in the longer term and in accordance with national policy guidance, new office development should be promoted in town centre locations. The effect of changes to permitted development allowing conversion of offices to residential use without the need for planning permission will need to be monitored regularly.

**Policy Effectiveness:** Current economic conditions have seen office development decrease over the plan period. With the development of Parkway, Newbury Town Centre Commercial Area remains vibrant.

**Actions Required:** Encourage the retention of office floorspace in town centres through the West Berkshire Local Plan Review to 2039.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Additional retail and leisure floorspace enhances consumer choice and promotes competition within the retail and leisure sector. The promotion of retail, leisure and office development within town centres helps ensure business and community needs are accessible and helps promote and strengthen the vitality and viability of centres.

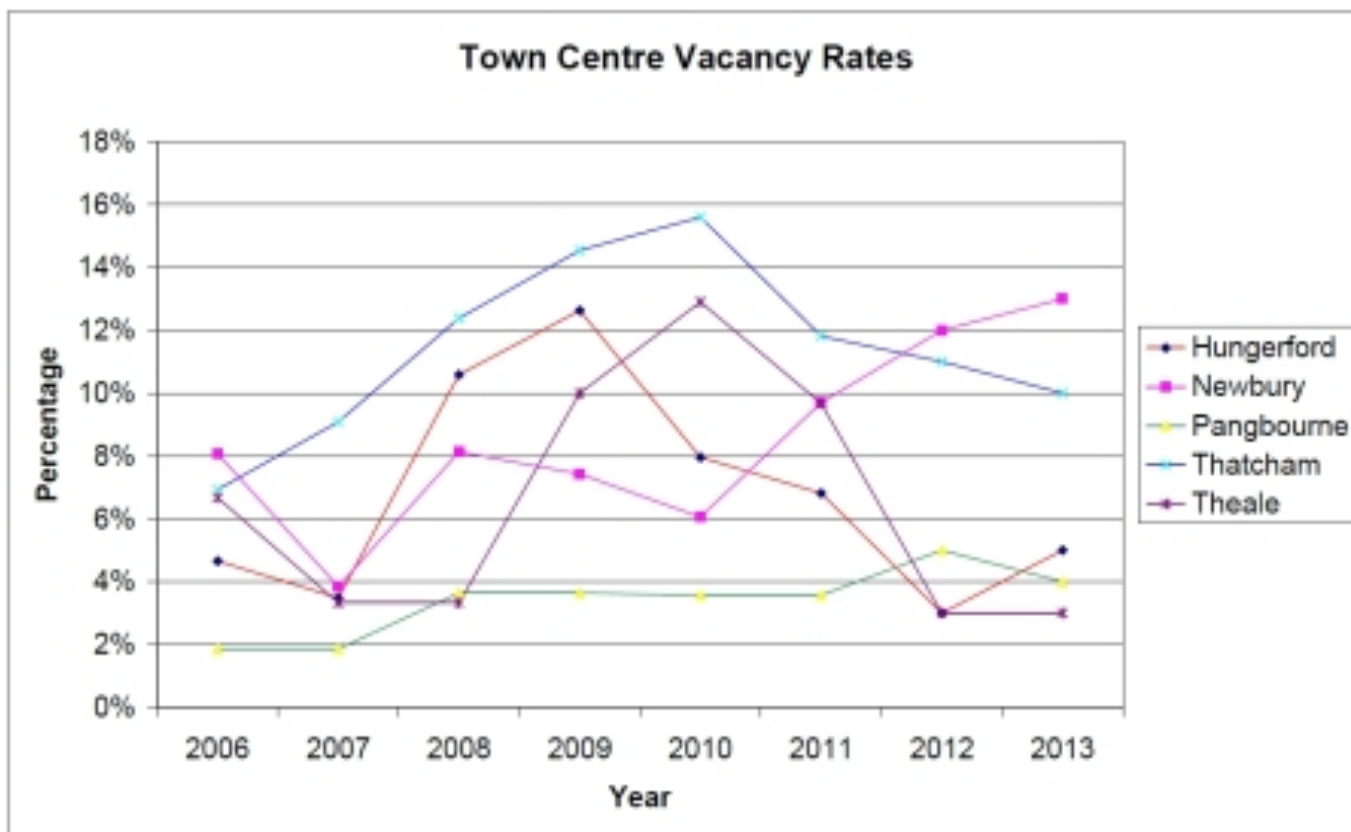
## Business Development and Town Centres 3

### Vacant retail units in town centres

**Indicator**

Amount of vacant retail units in town centres

Figure 3.1



**Commentary**

**3.35** The graph above shows vacancy rates in the retail centres of the District with town centre commercial area boundaries from 2006 to 2013. Due to resource issues, the Council has not been able to monitor the town centre vacancy rates since 2013.

**3.36** Vacancy rates within these centres have continued to be low over the past year. The slight increase in the percentage of vacant units in Newbury is partly due to the development of approximately 40 units in the 'Parkway' development.

**3.37** Vacancy levels are widely recognised as providing a good indication of the relative health of a centre, although they should be used alongside other indicators such as the mix of uses, pedestrian counts and customer satisfaction and retailer demand in order to give a more accurate indication of a centre's health.

**3.38** Vacancy rates for Lambourn, Mortimer and Kintbury over the period 2006 – 2013 are set out in Appendix B of this document. Vacancy rates in these centres are low but are based on only a small number of units.

**3.39** Vacancies recorded are for retail units (use classes A1 to A5) plus other appropriate town centre uses (such as use classes D1, D2 and sui generis).



## 3 Business Development and Town Centres

**Policy Effectiveness:** The policies reflect one strand of a strategy to maintain and enhance the vitality and viability of West Berkshire's town centres. The relatively low vacancy levels suggest the policies are effective.

**Actions Required:** Continued monitoring of vacancy rates within the town centre should be supplemented by regular monitoring of other indicators of town centre health.

Policies to be reviewed through the Local Plan Review should reflect the NPPF and the role of town centres as a focus for 'town centre uses' which are wider than just retail.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Promoting and strengthening the vitality and viability of town centres helps support successful and inclusive communities.

## The Environment

**Table 4.1 The Environment: Objectives**

<p><b>Core Strategy Strategic Objectives:</b></p> <p>To exceed national targets for carbon dioxide emissions reduction and deliver the District's growth in a way that helps to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>To ensure that West Berkshire contains a strong network of well-connected and multi-functional green infrastructure which provides an attractive environment to live, work and spend leisure time, providing benefits for health and opportunities for formal and informal recreation.</p> <p>To ensure that development to 2026 is planned, designed and managed in a way that ensures the protection and enhancement of the local distinctive character and identity of the built, historic and natural environment in West Berkshire's towns, villages and countryside.</p>
<p><b>WBDLP Objectives:</b></p> <p>To conserve resources and minimise the impacts of development.</p>

**Table 4.2 The Environment: Indicators and Policies**

Indicators	West Berkshire District Local Plan Policies	West Berkshire adopted Core Strategy (July 2012) Policies
Change in areas of biodiversity importance Condition of SSSIs Distribution and status of selected species		<b>CS17:</b> Biodiversity and geodiversity
Number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, battlefields and registered parks and gardens at risk The total number of conservation areas with an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal		<b>CS19:</b> Historic environment and landscape character
Amount of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award Standards	<b>RL.1:</b> Public Open Space Provision in Residential Development Schemes <b>RL.3:</b> The Selection of Public Open Space and Recreation Sites	<b>CS19:</b> Green infrastructure
Renewable Energy Generation		<b>CS16:</b> Renewable, low and zero carbon energy

### BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

#### Context

**4.1** West Berkshire supports both a rich and diverse range of biodiversity and geodiversity which make a positive contribution to the overall quality of life and sense of place for residents and visitors in both urban and rural areas.

**4.2** The most important sites for biodiversity and geodiversity receive statutory protection under international and national legislation. The District also has a large number of sites designated for their local conservation importance.

## 4 The Environment

**4.3** This section of the report takes into account the latest available public data from related bodies i.e. Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) , Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Natural England.

### Indicator

Change in areas of biodiversity importance

### Changes in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value

**Table 4.3 Areas Designated for their Intrinsic Environmental Value**

	No. of Sites	Area in hectares (2019/20)	Area in hectares (2020/21)	Area in hectares (2021/22)	Details of change
<b>Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)</b>	3	154.04	154.04	154.04	None - stable
<b>Special Protection Areas (SPAs)</b>	0	0	0	0	Not applicable
<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)</b>	50	1406.31	1,406.31	1406.31	None - stable
<b>Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)</b>	467	6101.42	6101.28	6159.47	Increase in hectares
<b>Local Geological Sites (LGS)</b>	12	155.03	155.03	154.74	Decrease in hectares
<b>Local Nature Reserves (LNR)</b>	3	67.31	67.31	67.31	None - stable

Source: TVERC Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

**4.4** There has been no change in the area of sites of international and national significance i.e. SACs, and SPAs since 2008. The area of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) has increased by 58.19 hectares since 2021 and Local Geological Sites have decreased slightly by 0.29 hectares since 2021.

### Commentary

**4.5** The purpose of this indicator is to show losses or additions to biodiversity habitat. Areas of biodiversity importance should be recognised in the Development Plan for their intrinsic environmental value in the form of an analysis of sites of international, national, regional and local significance.

**4.6** There are three SACs in West Berkshire these are:

- Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain
- River Lambourn
- Kennet Valley Alderwoods.

**4.7** Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC is ecologically important as it contains a cluster of sites which supports one of the most extensive known populations of Desmoulin's whorl snail in the UK and is one of two sites representing the species in the south-western part of its range in the important chalk stream habitat. Integrity of the population is being maintained by taking measures, including habitat creation, to safeguard populations.

**4.8** The River Lambourn SAC is an example of a water course of plain to montane levels with submerged or floating vegetation known as Ranunculion fluitantis and Callitriche-Batrachion. It is identified as being sub-type 1 of this type of habitat and this variant is found on rivers on chalk substrates and has limited distribution in the UK, being found only in those areas where chalk is present, and is therefore restricted to southern and eastern England. It is one of the least-modified rivers of this type, with a characteristic flora dominated by pond water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus peltatus*) which is then replaced in the downstream perennial sections by stream water-crowfoot (*R. penicillatus* var. *pseudofluitans*).

**4.9** The Kennet Valley Alderwoods SAC is characterised as a Broad-leaved deciduous woodland and identified as being an alluvial forest with Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) trees. It contains the largest fragments of alder-ash woodland on the Kennet floodplain and lie on alluvium overlain by a shallow layer of moderately calcareous peat. The wettest areas are dominated by alder over tall herbs, sedges and reeds, but dryer patches include a base-rich woodland flora with much dog's mercury (*Mercurialis perennis*) and also herb-Paris (*Paris quadrifolia*). The occurrence of the latter is unusual, as it is more typically associated with ancient woodland, whereas the evidence suggests that these stands have largely developed over the past century.

### Change in area of UK BAP Priority Habitat

**Table 4.4 UK BAP Priority Habitats in West Berkshire**

UK BAP priority habitat type	Area (ha) 2019/20	Area (ha) 2020/21	Area (ha) 2021/22
Arable field margins	Not known	Not known	Not known
Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh	1272.75	1272.10	1271.25
Eutrophic standing waters	459.95	462.41	470.37
Hedgerows	Not known	Not known	Not known
Lowland beech and yew woodland	239.35	239.35	239.35
Lowland calcareous grassland	184.40	193.88	211.04
Lowland dry acid grassland	21.81	21.81	20.22
Lowland fens	30.47	30.47	33.61
Lowland heathland	159.31	159.31	159.31
Lowland meadows	126.17	125.20	119.57
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	4921.28	4928.14	4924.54
Lowland wood pasture and parkland	466.27	466.27	466.17
Mesotrophic lakes	3.29	3.29	3.29
Oligotrophic and dystrophic lakes	Not known	Not known	Not known
Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land	8.85	10.89	10.89
Ponds	2.35	0	0
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	Not known	Not known	Not known
Possible Priority Grassland Habitat	90.28	90.28	90.28
Reedbeds	38.22	38.22	37.96
Rivers	29.23	29.81	29.81
Traditional orchards	42.55	42.55	42.55

## 4 The Environment

UK BAP priority habitat type	Area (ha) 2019/20	Area (ha) 2020/21	Area (ha) 2021/22
Wet woodland	292.60	302.76	304.05
Remnant Lowland Calcareous Grassland	0	0	1.24
<b>Total area of BAP priority habitat</b>	<b>8389.13</b>	<b>8416.74</b>	<b>8435.52</b>

Source: TVERC Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

**4.10** The total area of UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat in the District has been calculated at 8,435.52 ha in 2021/22. The extent of individual BAP priority habitats in West Berkshire is given in Table 4.4. The changes largely represent an improved understanding of the habitat resource in West Berkshire, rather than the creation or loss of habitat.

### Commentary

**4.11** As in previous years, changes to last year's figures generally represent improvements in our knowledge of the existing habitat resource rather than an actual, on the ground change in the extent of the habitat. Tabulated data represent a refinement of the baseline position as new mapping of site survey data is undertaken and the re-interpretation of existing mapping (based on expert knowledge and technical mapping methodology issues) has taken place. This has resulted in relatively minor changes in some of the habitat resource both at a local and a county level.

### Proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

**Table 4.5 Proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented**

West Berkshire	Total of sites	Sites qualifying under Criteria				Total	SDL 160
		1	2	3	4		
2020/21	470	44	299	15	4	315	67%
2019/20	470	45	306	16	5	320	68%
2018/19	470	57	312	22	14	329	70%
2017/18	467	61	309	25	13	325	70%
2016/17	467	73	352	37	13	364	78%
2015/16	474	43	321	36	17	332	70%
2014/15	473	42	291	34	18	303	64%
<b>Berkshire total 2020/21</b>	<b>749</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>64%</b>

Source: Single Data List 160 Improved Local Biodiversity in Berkshire 2017/18 - 2018/19 and 2019/20 - 2020/21 from TVERC (most recent revisions available from TVERC)

The qualifying criteria is listed below which is derived from DEFRA 2008 guidance:

1 = site management plan

2 = management schemes - agri-environment or conservation management agreement or scheme

3 = relevant Biodiversity Action Plan (including habitat action plan, species action plan or local biodiversity action plan). Where a site is designated primarily for its geological features, the recommended management activity may be defined within a site specific management plan or, more broadly, within a Local Geodiversity Action Plan

4 = management guidance and advice

### Commentary

**4.12** This indicator calculates the number of Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites that can be said to be in or have been in positive conservation management from 2014/15 to 2020/21. In Berkshire, a site was considered to be in positive management if at least 50% of the site was being managed in a way that protected or enhanced the biological or geological interest of that site.

**4.13** There was an decrease of 3% from 2017/18 to 2020/21 in the proportion of sites in positive conservation management in West Berkshire from 70% to 67%. The number of Local Wildlife Sites decreased from 2017/18 to 2020/21, as did the number of qualifying sites which decreased by 10. The proportion of sites in positive conservation management in West Berkshire is ranked third across Berkshire as a whole and is 3% higher than the Berkshire average of 64%.

**4.14** Appendix C contains further detail on the criteria for qualification and information sources for this information.

## 4 The Environment

### Indicator

Condition of SSSIs

**Table 4.6 Condition of SSSIs**

Condition	Ha. in 2020	% in 2020	Ha in 2021	% in 2021
Area of favourable or unfavourable recovering	1239	90.8	1,312.95	96.19
Favourable	782	57.3	784.73	57.49
Unfavourable - recovering	457	33.5	528.23	38.7
Unfavourable - no change	122	9.0	48.08	3.52
Unfavourable - declining	4	0.2	3.96	0.29

Source: Natural England - Thames Solent Area Team

**4.15** There are 50 SSSIs wholly or partly within West Berkshire, representing approximately 2% of the land area. Data on condition of SSSIs is derived from work by the Thames Solent Area Team at Natural England. The data shows that 96% of the area of SSSIs is considered to be in either a favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. There has been an increase in the percentage of SSSI's being identified as an area of favourable or unfavourable recovering. This change has mostly occurred in the unfavourable recovering classification with an increase of around 5%, with only a 0.2% increase in favourable condition. The major change in coverage is due to the upgraded condition of the River Kennet SSSI, with all units moving from 'unfavourable – no change' to 'unfavourable – recovering'. Whilst there is still a lot of work to do within the SSSI and the catchment, there is enough evidence of positive change and proactive measures from partners across West Berkshire to justify an upgrade in condition for the river.

**4.16** The River Kennet SSSI - change in condition summary sets out the following: 'A review of the condition of the SSSI was undertaken using data and information from a range of sources including Environment Agency monitoring. When the river was designated as SSSI it was suffering from a number of significant issues, including low flows, impoundments, channel modification, water quality problems, poor habitat quality and conflicts with fishing interests. Other issues have arisen since that time. However, there has been a significant amount of activity and investment in a range of actions, both at local and strategic level, to improve the condition of the river. This review identifies those areas where good progress has been made and highlights where further work is required. The previous condition assessment found that all four monitoring units were in unfavourable condition. At this time many of the attributes monitored to assess the condition of the SSSI failed to meet the targets set and there was uncertainty about the rate or scale of recovery. Indeed, it was difficult to say with certainty that meeting all of the targets was likely to ever be achieved. However, progress has been made in addressing most key issues. As such the River Kennet SSSI can now be reported as being in unfavourable but recovering condition. It must however be acknowledged that the river still faces many threats and pressures. Continued and sustained effort (with political will and funding) is required to maintain progress. A full report is available which sets out the detail of this assessment but the summary information is provided here. To achieve favourable condition, it is necessary for all the mandatory attributes listed in the SSSI Favourable Condition Tables to meet the targets. This means that the SSSI would continue to be regarded as being in an unfavourable condition even if only one key target has not been met.'



**Indicator**

Distribution and status of selected species

**4.17** The distribution and status of water voles and of farmland birds have been selected as local indicators because of their value as monitoring tools and relevance to local biodiversity and planning issues.

**Table 4.7 Water vole records in West Berkshire**

Year	Number of sites surveyed in West Berkshire (per 500m stretch)	Number of sites with positive signs
2020/21	131	63 (48%)
2019/20	55	15 (27%)
2018/19	57	12 (21%)
2017/18	130	46 (35%)
2016/17	66	22 (33%)
2015/16	136	64 (47%)
2013/14	68	19 (28%)
2012/13	105	48 (46%)
2011/12	73	40 (55%)

Source: TVERC Biodiversity Annual Monitoring Report 2021/22

**Commentary**

**4.18** In 2020/21, of the 131 known potential sites for water vole that were surveyed, 63 sites still had water vole present. 68 had no further evidence of their presence.

**4.19** Surveys for 2021 along the Kennet catchment yielded many positive sightings, increasing over the short and long term. Other surveys along the Lambourn were negative.

**4.20** Information for this indicator is entirely from survey work carried out by trained volunteer surveyors and coordinated by the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) as part of a wider water vole project. The survey method records presence or absence of water voles within 500m stretch of water course, not population size.

**Distribution and status of farmland birds**

**4.21** 17 of the 19 farmland bird species were recorded with the tree sparrow being excluded from the assessment in Berkshire and Oxfordshire due to a lack of data and turtle dove failing to be observed. Specialist farmland bird species such as the Goldfinch, Linnet, Skylark and Starling were recorded in higher numbers in 2020/21 compared to the previous monitoring. A number of other species seen a decline in their numbers however there had been a change in the index which could result anomalies in this reporting year.

**Commentary**

**4.22** Farmland still supports large numbers of birds, but great changes have occurred to the management of farmland over the past 30 years. 19 bird species have been identified as being particularly associated with farmland and are utilised at a national level to assess changes in farmland ecology. This Farmland Bird Index can be broken down into two groups: specialists and generalists. Over the years in the national data set there have been increases or steady populations in the generalists and decreases in the specialists. Specialists such as corn bunting, grey partridge, turtle

## 4 The Environment

dove, tree sparrow and lapwing rely solely on farmland for their breeding and feeding requirements and are therefore more susceptible to habitat change. Generalists such as wood pigeon, rook, greenfinch and goldfinch can use many different habitats to breed and feed in and are therefore less affected by changes in agricultural land.

**4.23** The data for West Berkshire shows that the specialists are generally in decline during the survey period. Appendix C contains further information on these indicators.

**Policy Effectiveness:** Policy has been effective in ensuring there has been no change in the area of sites of international and national importance. There is a recorded change in habitat resource, but this is a result of improved understandings and data collection rather than any ecological factors or threats.

Inconsistent survey effort for the distribution and status of selected species makes it difficult to establish trends.

**Actions Required:** Continual update of sites of environmental value by TVERC.

Distribution and status of species requires resource investment to ensure continued monitoring and improved accuracy (water voles) and as many field survey records as possible (farmland birds).

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Protection of our key environmental assets and conservation of the natural environment are critical to sustainability.

## HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

### Indicator

Number of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, battlefields and registered parks and gardens at risk

**Table 4.8 Number of sites identified on the Heritage at Risk Register 2019-22**

Designation	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of listed buildings at risk (Grade I and Grade II*)	4	4	4
Number of listed Places of Worship at risk	3	3	3
Number of Registered parks and gardens at risk	3	3	3
Number of Scheduled Monuments at risk	4	5	5
Number of Registered Battlefields at risk	0	0	0

**Table 4.9 Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments and Registered Parks and Gardens on the Heritage at Risk Register in 2022**

Site Names	Designation	Condition in 2022
Former Chapel of St Leonard, east of Manor Farmhouse, Brimpton Road, Brimpton	Listed Building grade II*	Fair
Pair of gate piers and approximately 2 metres of wall to east and west of piers on edge of Park Lane 162 metres west of entrance to church yard, Park Lane, Hampstead Marshall	Listed Building grade II*	Poor
Pair of gate piers 204 metres east of entrance to Home Farm, Park Lane, Hampstead Marshall	Listed Building grade I	Poor
Three pairs of gate piers and walls around gardens and terrace at Home Farm, Park Lane, Hampstead Marshall	Listed Building grade I	Very bad
Church of All Saints, Station Road, East Garston	Listed Place of Worship grade II*	Poor
Church of St James, Leckhampstead	Listed Place of Worship grade II*	Very bad
Church of St Gregory, Welford	Listed Place of Worship grade II*	Poor
Moated site and three fishponds at Ufton Nervet	Scheduled Monument	Generally satisfactory but with minor localised problems
Long barrow on Sheep Down, 1km north of East Ilsley, East Ilsley	Scheduled Monument	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems
Membury Camp, Lambourn	Scheduled Monument	No condition recorded
Two bowl barrows 500m north-east of Stancombe Farm	Scheduled Monument	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems

## 4 The Environment

Site Names	Designation	Condition in 2022
Remains of St John the Baptist church at Ufton Green Farm	Scheduled Monument	Generally satisfactory but with significant localised problems
Aldermaston Court, Aldermaston	Registered Park and Garden grade II	Generally unsatisfactory with major localised problems
Shaw House, Shaw cum Donnington	Registered Park and Garden grade II	Extensive significant problems
Sandleford Priory, Greenham	Registered Park and Garden grade II	Extensive significant problems

Source: Historic England (2022) [Heritage at Risk Online Register](#)

**Table 4.10 Heritage Assets by Type in West Berkshire 2019-2022**

Heritage Asset	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Total number of Listed Buildings	1893	1893	1893
Total number of Registered parks and gardens	13	13	13
Total number of Scheduled Monuments	90	90	86
Total number of Registered Battlefields	1	1	1
Total number of Conservation Areas	53	53	53
Total number of Heritage Assets on the Local List	35	35	35

Source: National Heritage List for England

**4.24** In the monitoring year 2021/22 the decrease in number of Scheduled Monuments is due to data cleaning rather than an actual decrease. For completeness, there are no World Heritage Sites or Protected Wrecks within West Berkshire.

**Indicator**

The total number of conservation areas with an up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal

**Table 4.11 Conservation Areas**

	No. of Conservation Areas		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Conservation Areas with an adopted Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA)	2	2	2
CAA in preparation	0	1	4
No CAA	51	50	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>53</b>

**4.25** There are 53 Conservation Areas in West Berkshire. Conservation Area Appraisals (CAAs) have been completed for Streatley and Peasemore. Work commenced on the Newbury Town Centre CAA in 2021 and in 2022 work commenced on the following CAA's: Aldermaston; Bucklebury; and Knitbury.

**4.26** West Berkshire Council is currently working on a project to encourage community involvement in the production of CAA's. The project will provide local communities with an understanding of how and why conservation area status is appraised, designated, and applied in future development and conservation management decisions. This will help communities better engage with the management of change in their area, allowing them to more effectively champion the significance and values of local heritage.

**4.27** The project has involved the setting up of a Conservation Area Working Group, which is a partnership between West Berkshire Heritage Forum and West Berkshire Council. Together the group have developed a 'Toolkit', which contains a variety of guidance, list of resources, and an appraisal report template, to assist parish councils and volunteers in undertaking a Conservation Area Appraisal. The Conservation Area Working Group are also offering all parish and town councils, and any volunteer groups working with them, free training sessions to help them understand how to carry out the appraisal, and complete the template.

**4.28** Parish and Town Councils can join in by forming an Appraisal Group (where a Heritage Working Group already exists, or the parish is working on a Neighbourhood Development Plan, such a group may already exist in embryo). Support, including training and practical support from the Conservation Area Working Group, will be available throughout.

**Policy Effectiveness:** Conservation Area status has undoubtedly contributed to the conservation of the historic character of West Berkshire but is difficult to quantify.

**Actions Required:** The continued production of Conservation Area Appraisals and management proposals.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets has helped to protect and enhance the local distinctive character and identity of the various towns and villages across the District.

## 4 The Environment

### OPEN SPACE

#### Indicator

Amount of eligible open spaces managed to Green Flag Award Standards

**4.29** The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, and a way of recognising the best green spaces in the country. 3 parks within the District have won the Green Flag Award: Northcroft and Goldwell Park and Victoria Park in Newbury and Linear Park in Calcot.

#### Commentary

**4.30** The NPPF recognises the benefits of having access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity in regards to the health and well-being of communities, and how it can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change. The Council will appraise the open space, sports and recreation facilities assessment and explore opportunities for new provision in West Berkshire through the Local Plan Review process.

**4.31** The Planning Practice Guidance on Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space defines open space as 'all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure, as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development, and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development'.

**4.32** The Council has set out its strategic approach towards Green Infrastructure through the Core Strategy. More detailed standards for open space provision will be defined through the Local Plan Review.

**Policy Effectiveness:** No indication that policies are proving ineffective.

**Actions Required:** Completion of an up to date assessment of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision in West Berkshire in accordance with the NPPF. Detailed standards will be defined through the Local Plan Review.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Protection of existing open space and provision of new open space to meet development demands helps maintain and promote health, well being, social inclusion and community cohesion and supports other sustainability objectives such as creating attractive urban environments and fostering nature conservation and biodiversity.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY

### Indicator

Renewable energy generation

**4.33** The data reported in [Renewable Electricity Generation \(MWh\) 2014-2020](#) below are derived from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, <sup>(2)</sup>

**4.34** The Government's requirement to report on core output indicators has been removed. However, the level of renewable energy generation is a priority for the Council in conjunction with reducing the District's carbon footprint and tackling climate change, outlined in the Council's Environment Strategy 2020-2030.<sup>(3)</sup>

**Table 4.12 Renewable Electricity Generation (MWh) 2014-2021**

Year	Estimated number of households	Solar photovoltaics (PV)	Onshore Wind	Offshore Wind	Hydro	Biomass						Total	
						Anaerobic Digestion	Landfill gas	Sewage gas	Municipal solid waste	Co-firing of biomass with fossil fuels	Animal biomass		Plant biomass
2021	65,100	32,380	1,061	0	[X]	[X]	[X]	0	0	0	0	[X]	33,441
2020	64,248	36,281	1,401	0	379	1,048	1,121	0	0	0	0	256	40,489
2019	64,248	33,698	1,127	0	302	1,049	1,163	0	0	0	0	214	37,552
2018	64,248	34,189	1,053	0	305	1,049	1,245	0	0	0	0	0	37,841
2017	64,248	30,249	1,147	0	330	1,049	1,169	0	0	0	0	0	33,943
2016	64,248	26,530	1,027	0	196	1,051	584	0	0	0	0	0	29,388
2015	64,248	22,604	1,292	0	114	1,049	511	0	0	0	0	0	25,570
2014	64,248	6,780	35	0	120	1,049	654	0	0	0	0	0	8,638

**[X] means there was some generation in this local authority but it has been suppressed to prevent the output of individual plants being revealed, according to the dataset from Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy .**

**4.35** There has been a significant increase in the level of renewable energy generated through solar photovoltaic (PV) installations since 2015. This could be linked to several planning permission being approved since 2015 for solar farms, including Land north of Goring Lane, Grazeley Green, Land north of Pingewood Road South, Burghfield, Land east of Kennet Wier Business Park, Theale, Land to the west of Membury Services Westbound, Hungerford and Land West of Gravel Works, Station Road, Woolhampton.

**4.36** The introduction of the Feed in Tariff (FiT) by the Department of Energy and Climate Change on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 also allowed people to invest in small-scale low-carbon electricity. The scheme closed for new applicants on the 1 April 2019. The purpose of FiTs was to encourage the installation of additional small-scale (less than 5MW) low-carbon electricity generation. In return for a guaranteed payment from an electricity supplier for the electricity they generate and use, as well as a guaranteed payment for unused surplus electricity they export back to the grid.

**4.37** In 2019, plant biomass was first recorded as a source of energy generation in West Berkshire. Biomass is organic, meaning it is made of material that comes from living organisms, such as plants and animals. The most common biomass materials used for energy are plants, wood, and waste. The energy from these organisms can be transformed into usable energy through direct and indirect means. Biomass can be burned to create heat (direct), converted into electricity (direct), or processed into biofuel (indirect).

### Commentary

**4.38** The Council is committed to encouraging the incorporation of high standards of energy efficiency in future development. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) series 'Quality Design – West Berkshire' was adopted in June 2006. This document encourages developers to incorporate sustainable design techniques into their developments. The newly adopted Environment Strategy 2020-2030 also sets out a number of initiatives to encourage the use of renewable energy and to provide low and zero carbon heat for residential dwellings and offices.

2 Details can be viewed online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics>.

3 Details can be viewed online at: <https://info.westberks.gov.uk/environment>



## 4 The Environment

**Policy Effectiveness:** Difficult to ascertain at this stage whether policies are proving effective in encouraging energy efficient technology.

**Actions Required:** Improved monitoring through planning applications and building control data.

**Significant Sustainability Effects:** Increased energy efficiency and installation of renewable energy capacity will reduce emissions contributing to climate change.

## Monitoring Framework 8

**8.1** West Berkshire Council recognises the importance of monitoring to spatial planning. Monitoring enables the examination of trends and comparison against existing targets and policies, indicating where a review of these policies may be needed.

**8.2** Current arrangements for monitoring include the annual monitoring of housing and employment commitments carried out by the Council.

**8.3** Some indicators rely on surveys and, where practicable, these will be carried out on an annual basis. For some, notably the biodiversity indicators, updating the baseline data will be less frequent and may take place on a rolling programme.

**8.4** Policy drafting of documents in the Local Plan Review will include consideration of monitoring requirements. Some policy areas do not lend themselves to effective monitoring in quantitative terms but, where appropriate, policies will set measurable targets.

## A Business Development

**Table A.1 Employment Structure – Employee Jobs by Industry 2021**

	West Berkshire percentage (%)	South East percentage (%)	GB percentage (%)
Mining And Quarrying	0.0	0.1	0.1
Manufacturing	12.0	5.8	7.6
Electricity, Gas, Steam and Air Conditioning Supply	0.7	0.4	0.4
Water Supply; Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation Activities	0.8	1.0	0.7
Construction	5.4	5.7	4.9
Wholesale And Retail Trade; Repair Of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles	15.2	15.9	14.4
Transportation and Storage	2.7	5.1	5.1
Accommodation and Food Service Activities	5.4	7.3	7.5
Information and Communication	14.1	5.5	4.5
Financial and Insurance Activities	1.1	2.8	3.6
Real Estate Activities	1.4	1.7	1.8
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	7.6	9.0	8.7
Administrative And Support Service Activities	10.3	9.2	8.9
Public Administration and Defence; Compulsory Social Security	3.3	3.3	4.6
Education	8.7	9.6	8.8
Human Health And Social Work Activities	5.4	13.0	13.7
Arts, Entertainment And Recreation	2.4	2.3	2.3
Other Service Activities	3.3	2.1	1.9
<b>Total employee jobs</b>	92,000	-	-

Source: *Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics: ONS annual business inquiry employee analysis (2021, latest information available)*

## Business Development A

Table A.2 Summary Table for Employment Completions (Gross and net floorspace in sq.m.) 2006/07 - 2021/22

Year		B1a/Eg(i) Offices	B1b/Eg(ii) R&D	B1c/Eg(iii) Light Ind.	B1*	Total B1 (B1a/b/c)	B2 General Ind.	B8 Storage & Dist.	Mix of B/Eg classes (Ofsted)	Total	Mix of B-class uses & other uses*
2006/07	gross	4723	0	5417	0	10140	7875	853	0	18868	0
	net	1890	0	-2266	0	-376	2095	634	-3302	-949	0
2007/08	gross	22519	0	2338	515	25372	439	9704	29552	65067	0
	net	19795	0	1298	-2979	18114	-4427	8799	29552	52038	0
2008/09	gross	25549	0	2528	0	28077	7068	2975	0	38120	0
	net	22395	0	2424	0	24819	5967	-7525	0	23261	0
2009/10	gross	870	2406	214	0	3490	3034	2686	0	9210	0
	net	-2651	2406	-3006	-621	-3872	2512	1245	-1213	-1328	0
2010/11	gross	1553	0	778	2807	5138	23796	4109	0	33043	0
	net	-2203	0	89	2807	693	23103	3408	0	27204	0
2011/12	gross	3831	0	2130	17845	23806	1936	4680	0	30422	0
	net	1132	0	1696	11254	14082	1936	3182	0	19200	0
2012/13	gross	6180	11100	593	1300	19173	2448	988	3436	22609	0
	net	3057	10878	-844	1300	14391	2341	-695	1646	17683	0
2013/14	gross	186	0	118	215	519	5358	3421	0	9298	485
	net	-1997	0	-482	-4049	-6528	511	3319	0	-2698	485
2014/15	gross	993	4250	1698	0	6941	11459	4583	0	22983	0
	net	-2157	4250	-152	0	1941	1391	662	0	3994	0
2015/16	gross	3855	5880	569	388	10692	1425	4260	0	16377	0
	net	-12294	5880	-3716	388	-9742	1169	2566	0	-6008	0
2016/17	gross	600	0	1044	0	1644	370	4979	0	6993	0
	net	-2321	0	809	0	-1512	370	4979	0	3837	0
2017/18	gross	4550	0	3083	1387	9020	6756	6273	0	22049	995
	net	-6866	0	-129	1387	-5609	-85	1190	0	-4503	995
2018/19	gross	1070	2698	1073	0	4841	948	5338	0	11128	0
	net	-2265	2698	-1300	0	-867	545	5338	0	5017	0
2019/20	gross	395	0	730	0	1125	4773	8880	3519	18279	0
	net	-6062	0	730	0	-5332	572	-225	-2434	-2551	0
2020/21	gross	6032	0	77	0	6109	0	3436	10853	20398	0
	net	-3589	0	-1429	0	-5018	0	3436	10853	9271	0
2021/22	gross	3974	0	390	0	4364	510	1207	0	6081	0
	net	-3883	0	135	0	-3748	122	1207	0	-2419	0
Total 2006 - 2022	gross	86880	26334	22780	24457	160451	78196	68372	47360	350943	1480
	net	1981	26112	-6144	9487	31436	38123	31520	35102	141049	1480

## A Business Development

**Table A.3 Protected Employment Areas (Areas where policy CS9 of West Berkshire Core Strategy applies)**

	Area (hectares)		Area (hectares)
<b>Newbury</b>		<b>Aldermaston</b>	
Hambridge Road and Lane Newbury	64.6	Calleva Park Aldermaston	7.1
London Road Estate Newbury	13.4	Paices Hill Aldermaston	6.4
Newbury Business Park	10.9		
Turnpike Estate Newbury	4.6	<b>Beenham Industrial Area</b>	21.4
Castle Estate Newbury	1.8		
		<b>Lambourn</b>	
<b>Thatcham</b>		Membury	21.9
Green Lane Thatcham	0.7	Lowesdon Works	2.7
Colthrop Estate Thatcham	88.7		
		<b>Theale</b>	
<b>Hungerford</b>		Arlington / Station Road Theale	50.4
Smitham Bridge Road	1.3	Sheffield Bottom Theale	1.7
Charnham Park	9.8		
Station Road	5.3	<b>Hermitage - Red Shute Hill</b>	4.0
		<b>Pangbourne - Horseshoe Park</b>	1.2

# Town Centre Vacancy Rates B

Figure B.1



### Commentary

Unlike the town centres which appear in Fig 3.1, the settlements measured in the graph above do not have designated town centre boundaries. Whilst percentage changes appear to be extreme in some instances, this may be caused by the change of a small number of retail outlets, even down to an individual unit. Due to resource issues, the Council has not been able to monitor the town centre vacancy rates since 2013.

Table B.1 Percentage of vacant retail units in West Berkshire Town Centres 2002-2013

Year	Newbury	Thatcham	Hungerford	Theale	Pangbourne	Lambourn	Motimer	Kintbury
2002	7		4	7	2			
2003	7	8	5	7	2			
2004	5	3	4	3	0			
2005	9	7	5	3	2			
2006	8	7	5	7	2	0	0	0
2007	4	9	3	3	2	0	0	0
2008	8	12	11	3	4	9	5	11
2009	7	14	13	10	4	9	5	0
2010	6	16	8	13	4	9	5	0
2011	10	12	7	10	4	5	5	0
2012	12	11	3	3	5	5	0	0
2013	13	10	5	3	4	9	6	0

## C Biodiversity

### Changes in area of biodiversity importance

#### Information sources

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) / Special Protection Area (SPA) - Data on SACs and SPAs are derived from the digitised site boundaries layers obtained from Natural England

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - Data on SSSIs are derived from the digitised site boundaries layers obtained from Natural England

Local Nature Reserves (LNR) - Figures on areas of Local Nature Reserves are derived from the Natural England web site.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) - TVERC maintains the Local Wildlife Site boundary information on GIS - alterations are made to these boundaries as decisions are made by the site selection panel during the course of the year, or as any remaining boundary errors are corrected.

Local Geological Sites (LGS) - Site information was digitised by TVERC using site documentation provided by the Berkshire Geoconservation Group. The data are the result of site selection panel meetings.

#### Proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented

##### Local Sites Qualifying Criteria

DEFRA guidance issued in 2008 stated:

To show that positive conservation management is being undertaken on a Local Site, there must be documented evidence of management that contributes to maintaining or enhancing the features of interest for which a site has been selected and designated. The nature of the management activity appropriate to interest features of a site will commonly be defined within one, or more of the following:

1. site management plan
2. management schemes - agri-environment or conservation management agreement or scheme
3. relevant Biodiversity Action Plan (including habitat action plan, species action plan or local biodiversity action plan). Where a site is designated primarily for its geological features, the recommended management activity may be defined within a site specific management plan or, more broadly, within a Local Geodiversity Action Plan
4. management guidance and advice
5. for Local Geological Sites the monitoring process and guidance provides a basis for judging whether appropriate management is being undertaken.

##### Information sources:

- Countryside Stewardship (CSS). Data provided by DEFRA
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas Scheme
- Environmental Stewardship (GIS dataset provided by DEFRA). To qualify as in positive management only LWS under EL3, EL4, EK3, EK4 and HLS schemes were included.
- Woodland Grant Scheme
- England Woodland Grant Scheme
- Site management plans from by Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, National Trust, BBOWT or Local Authorities for the conservation of the features of that site
- Local Authority ecology contacts supplied ad hoc information on sites where known positive management has been undertaken in the last 5 years.



## Distribution and Status of Water Voles

### Information Sources

Information for this indicator is entirely from survey work carried out by trained volunteer surveyors and co-ordinated by the Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) as part of a wider water vole project. The survey methodology records presence or absence of water vole within a 500m stretch of water course and not population size.

### Quality of the information

More detailed survey that makes estimates of population size would give a more accurate picture of the trends in status of water voles in the County. The resources to do this sort of work are not currently available.

## Distribution and Status of Farmland Birds

This indicator uses an established list of 19 species, identifiable as farmland birds, compiled by the RSPB. Records associated with these species generated through British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) breeding bird surveys in specific 1km x 1km squares are then used to determine a farmland bird index. TVERC has obtained these records and followed the RSPB methodology to plot the trend in changes in the index over time. This indicator remains an important one for assessing the general ecological health of the largely rural areas of the District.

**Table C.1 Farmland Bird Species**

Farmland Bird Species			
Kestrel	Yellow Wagtail	Reed Bunting	Jackdaw
Grey Partridge	Starling	Corn Bunting	Rook
Lapwing	Tree Sparrow	Stock Dove	Greenfinch
Turtle Dove	Linnet	Woodpigeon	Goldfinch
Skylark	Yellowhammer	Whitethroat	

Survey data was generated in the field by BTO survey volunteers and compiled by BTO officers in Thetford. These records were then made available to TVERC for processing at a district specific level, using the methodology established by the RSPB.

### Quality of the information

There are several limitations with this indicator. The methodology is based on surveying a number of 1 km grid squares chosen on a stratified random basis and the quality of information associated is dependent on as many field survey records as can be obtained. This varies from year to year. As a consequence, the reliability of the resulting farmland bird figures could be open to debate.

As records are obtained from BTO volunteer surveyors, BTOs ability to improve on county survey coverage will determine whether more records can be generated.

## Glossary

Acronym	Term	Explanation
<b>AONB</b>	<b>Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty</b>	Area with statutory national landscape designation, the primary purpose of which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty
<b>AMR</b>	<b>Authority Monitoring Report</b>	A report that presents an analysis of existing policies and progress on the Local Development Scheme (see below)
<b>BAP</b>	<b>Biodiversity Action Plan</b>	A strategy aimed at conserving and enhancing biological diversity
<b>CAA</b>	<b>Conservation Area Appraisal</b>	CAA helps everyone to understand the history of a particular area and why it is special. Once a CAA has been adopted by the council it then acts as a framework that guides future development in the Conservation Area.
<b>MHCLG</b>	<b>Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government</b>	The job of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is to help create sustainable communities, working with other Government departments, local councils, businesses, the voluntary sector, and communities themselves.
<b>DPD</b>	<b>Development Plan Documents</b>	A statutory element of the Local Plan. DPDs are subject to independent examination and include the Core Strategy.
<b>LDD</b>	<b>Local Development Documents</b>	Local Development Documents comprise both Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. LDDs are likely to include core policies, area action plans, proposal maps, site specific policies, etc.
<b>LDF</b>	<b>Local Development Framework</b>	A folder containing a number of documents including LDDs setting out a local authority's policies for meeting the economic, environmental and social aims of its area. The NPPF makes no reference to the LDF and development plan documents now form part of the Local Plan.
<b>LDS</b>	<b>Local Development Scheme</b>	A timetable and project plan for the production of all the LDDs relating to the Local Plan.
<b>NPPF</b>	<b>National Planning Policy Framework</b>	Planning guidance issued by the MHCLG in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and updated in Feb 2019. It sets out the government's planning policies and how these are expected to be applied.
	<b>Natural England</b>	Natural England is working to conserve, enhance and manage the natural environment. It is responsible for agreeing National and Local Nature Reserves, identifying SSSIs (below) and proposed special areas of conservation and advising the Government.
<b>PDL</b>	<b>Previously Developed Land</b>	Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings). The NPPF contains a detailed definition of it.
<b>RIGS</b>	<b>Regionally Important Geological &amp; Geomorphological Site</b>	A non-statutory regionally important geological or geomorphological site designated to protect important earth science and landscape features.
	<b>Saved Policies/Saved Plans</b>	Policies within development plans that are saved for a time period during replacement production of Local Development Documents.
<b>S106</b>	<b>Section 106 Agreement</b>	A legal agreement under section 106 of the 1990 Town & Country Planning Act. Section 106 agreements are legal agreements between a planning authority and a developer, or undertakings offered unilaterally by a developer, that ensure that certain extra works related to a development are undertaken.

Acronym	Term	Explanation
<b>SAC</b>	<b>Special Areas of Conservation</b>	Designated to protect the habitats of threatened species of wildlife under EU Directive 92/43.
<b>SCI</b>	<b>Statement of Community Involvement</b>	Sets out the Council's policy by which the community will be engaged in the preparation and revision of LDDs and in the consideration of planning applications.
<b>SPA</b>	<b>Special Protection Areas</b>	Designated to protect rare and vulnerable birds under EC Directive 79/409.
<b>SPD</b>	<b>Supplementary Planning Documents</b>	A Supplementary Planning Document is a Local Development Document that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provides further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' Development Plan Document.
<b>SPG</b>	<b>Supplementary Planning Guidance</b>	Supplementary Planning Guidance may cover a range of issues, both thematic and site specific and provide further detail of policies and proposals in a development plan
<b>SSSI</b>	<b>Sites of Special Scientific Interest</b>	Defined protected areas of nature conservation and scientific value identified by English Nature as being of national (and sometimes international) importance.
<b>TVERC</b>	<b>Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre</b>	TVERC is a not for profit organisation run by a partnership and are one of a national network of local records centres that collect information about the natural environment in Berkshire and Oxfordshire.
<b>WBDLP</b>	<b>West Berkshire District Local Plan</b>	Sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the development and use of land within the district. It includes detailed policies and specific proposals to guide planning decisions
<b>WHS</b>	<b>Wildlife Heritage Sites</b>	Designated sites of nature conservation value. These are non-statutory, and defined by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum.

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation,  
please contact Planning Policy on Telephone 01635 519 111.

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