



This document represents the desire and passion of the people of Thatcham to improve their town. Thanks entirely to their enthusiasm and long dedication, this plan offers a rich and detailed analysis of the state of the town today and a vision of the future it could have, written by people who live here.

# Thatcham Vision

2015 Edition

Final version for endorsement by  
West Berkshire Council on 18 October 2016

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# *Thatcham Vision*

## *2015 Edition*

This draft for presentation to West Berkshire District Council for approval  
January 2016

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

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V1.2 January 2016. This edition has been prepared by Thatcham Vision for the sole purpose of consideration for approval by West Berkshire District Council (WBC).

Enquiries should be addressed to:

Project Manager  
Thatcham Vision  
Thatcham Town Council Offices  
Brownsfield Way  
Thatcham  
Berkshire  
RG18 3HF

[pm@thatchamvision.net](mailto:pm@thatchamvision.net)

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# *Introduction*

## **1. PREFACE**

This document represents the desire and passion of the people of Thatcham to improve their town. With that aim, Thatcham Vision was formed in 2005 to regularly produce the Parish Plan. The long process to write the second edition started in 2012, involving the recorded opinions of over two thousand local people and the direct contributions of over one hundred local volunteers and experts. They include the Topic Team members and chairs, town and district councillors, officers from Thatcham Town and West Berkshire District Councils, the Vision Project Manager, the Vision Steering Group and many others such as police officers, child-minders and charity organisers who gave their time, advice and expertise.

Thanks entirely to their enthusiasm and long dedication over many months, this plan offers a rich and detailed analysis of the state of the town today and a vision of the future it could have, written by people who live here. In their words is found a plain and simple necessity to improve the environment and services where they live for the sake of themselves and their families. They all deserve the gratitude of the people of Thatcham.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### 2.1. Introduction

Thatcham has changed significantly since the mid-twentieth century. The 1951 census recorded a population of just 5,000 whereas in 2011 it stood at 25,000. What was once an ancient village is becoming a modern-day bustling town. There is a diverse population who live here for many reasons: the picturesque village-style centre, the excellent schools, the surrounding countryside and the community spirit. However, while many benefits have come from progress some major issues have also appeared. The town has spread in all directions and developed several neighbourhoods, but the wider infrastructure to support them is out of balance with the new requirement. Without a strategic view the town risks eroding its identity and becoming informally merged with Newbury. National issues such as an aging population and a shortage of affordable starter-homes also need to be addressed at local level. West Berkshire District Council and Thatcham Town Council are of course working on all these issues, but there is still space for a community-led group to propose innovative solutions that can either be run in partnership with the councils or successfully operate outside local government.

In this plan Thatcham Vision outlines 65 separate actions that aim to improve the environment, services, economy and leisure facilities of Thatcham. Delivery partners have been identified for each one and in many cases provisional agreement on plans has already been reached.

### 2.2. Community Consultation

A great deal of effort has been spent to ensure that this plan is truly based on community opinions. Firstly, a large survey was undertaken over several months to gauge residents' views on many subjects. The response was phenomenal – 1,870 people (or 7.8% of the population) responded, showing how strongly people feel about the future of their town. The full results of the survey can be downloaded from the Thatcham Vision website [www.thatchamvision.net](http://www.thatchamvision.net).

The actions in the plan were produced by six teams of local volunteers – over 100 people in total – over several months. Their decisions were guided by the survey results, census data, and data from other official sources and of course local knowledge.

Once the draft actions had been produced, they were published on the Thatcham Vision website, posted up on the Broadway for one month and announced at the Thatcham Festival 2014. A further consultation was then undertaken to get feedback on each draft action with over 200 responses, the results of which are included in this plan.

Thatcham Vision intends to conduct regular ongoing community consultation to ensure that the actions remain relevant and have the support of local people.

### 2.3. Methodology

The task of producing the plan was too much for a small group, so six working groups (known as Topic Teams) were formed of local residents and experts in each field. Each team had a Chair and was co-ordinated by the Thatcham Vision Project Manager, Mrs Mireille Willan. The teams were 'Population, Development and Infrastructure', 'Community Safety', 'Childcare and Early Years Learning', 'Senior Citizens', 'Travel and Transport', and 'Sports, Leisure and Culture'. Each team consulted with officers from West Berkshire District Council (WBC) and met with other relevant organisations such as the emergency services, schools and public transport companies.

The teams were each given a scope of work and briefed to produce a list of actions which had to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely), have identified delivery and funding partners and be prioritised. After many iterations and deliberations, 65 actions in total were produced. Many of these actions have already been debated with the delivery partners and have an execution plan agreed in principle.

Thatcham Town Council officially adopted the actions in early 2015.

### 2.4. Summary

In this plan are the ideas and ambitions of the people of Thatcham for their town, which started as a collection of recorded opinions and were fashioned into achievable actions. They range from simple noticeboards to community organisations to major projects. Some actions have already been planned by West Berkshire Council, while others will need to find funding from outside normal local government budgets. Thatcham Vision, as a community organisation, can apply for funding and grants from any source to deliver its actions.

Many of the participants from the Topic Teams have expressed a desire to continue with their work for Vision and see their actions through to completion. One group, Thatcham Sports Network, has already been born from their Topic Team and is a fantastic example of how the model can operate. Thatcham Vision is therefore exploring ways to turn the 'Topic Teams' into 'Action Teams' and facilitate their work.

There is immense enthusiasm within the community to drive forward improvements for Thatcham to create a better life for residents. This plan is their plan.

David Conquest

Chair, Thatcham Vision

July 2015

# Population, Development and Infrastructure



# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE POPULATION, DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE TOPIC TEAM***

## **3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **3.1. Document Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Population & Development Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and sets out the remit of the Topic Team and the membership of the team.

### **3.2. Team remit**

The Population & Development Topic Team was formed in 2013 as part of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Action Plan with a remit to consider 3 separate areas:

- Population growth and how in turn that would affect housing development and the rural landscape
- Thatcham's current infrastructure issues including flooding, housing and utilities, etc.
- The local economy and the town's businesses with particular focus on the Town Centre, its look and feel and how to reverse the current trend of reducing footfall.

### **3.3. Team Composition**

The team was chaired by Vision member Jason Collis, assisted by Vision's Treasurer Colin Heslop and current Chair of Vision and marketing expert David Conquest. Chris Watts kindly volunteered his planning expertise as did Leo Pieri from Thatcham Flood Forum with his knowledge of local flooding. Rev. Mark Bennet of St, Mary's Church, Thatcham volunteered with his experience of community development and knowledge of the town. Simon Pike, Ann Dykes and Mark Thomas also provided much input as local residents. Steve Mason and Peter Gough from Waitrose provided input from local businesses along with Cllr Bob Morgan who went on to restart the Thatcham Chamber of Commerce. Sally Wallington provided knowledge and information on all environmental issues. Chris Watts and Colin Heslop provided continuity as volunteers from the first action plan.

## **4. APPROACH**

During the pre-refresh consultation, when population and housing, infrastructure, the town centre, business and employment were combined this broad topic received more than a quarter of the votes cast. When the community was asked for two things to start, stop and continue the topic accounted for more than 50% of the results.

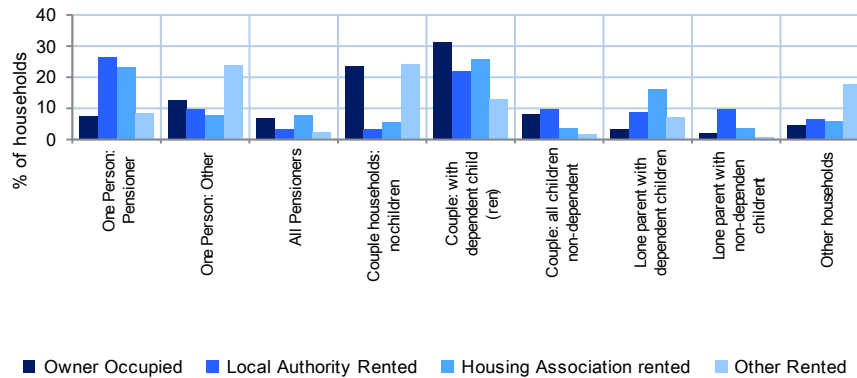
## **5. POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

2011 Census data showed that the total population of Thatcham stood at 25,265 people, 66.7% of which are of working age. This is a little higher than the national average of 64.7% and due to the development of predominantly family homes in the area.

### 5.1. Housing stock status

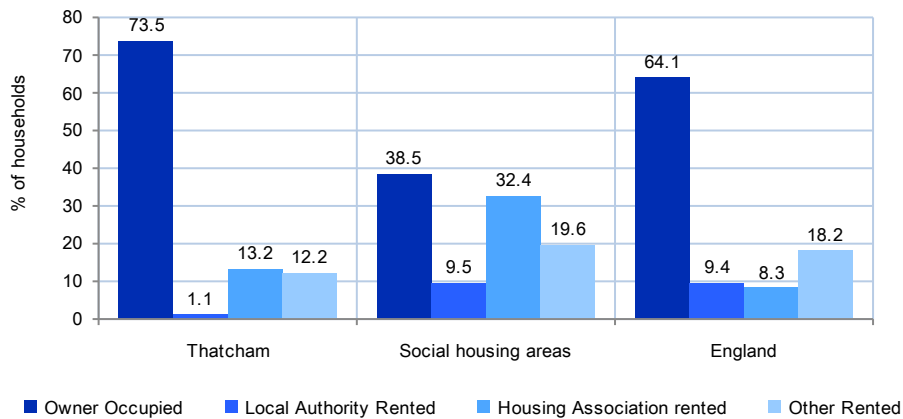
The census went on to show that whilst social housing was available for older people and families the majority of single occupants or couples with no children had little alternative but to rent privately.

Household composition by tenure



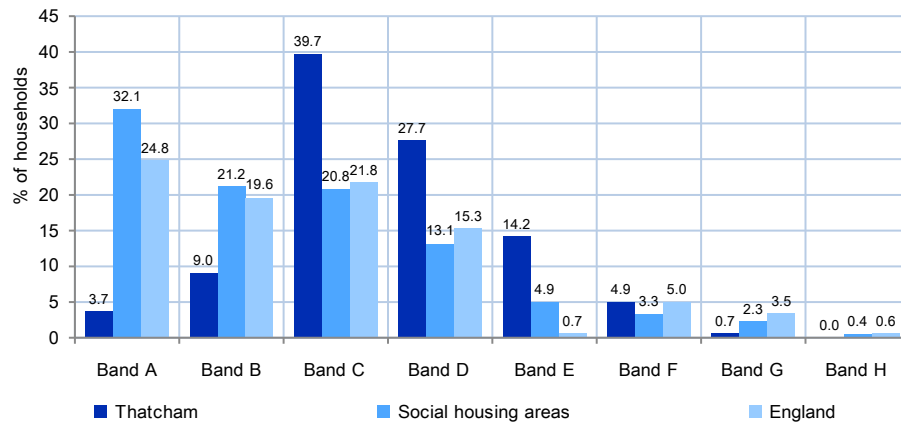
In addition, the number (and therefore availability) of smaller residences (terraced homes and flats) is well below the national average. The level of owner occupied housing stands at 73.5% above the national average of 64.1%.

Housing tenure breakdowns



The number of homes falling into Council Tax Band A stands at 3.7% whereas the national average is 24.8% and the stock in Band B accounts for 9% of the residences in Thatcham, against a national figure of 19.6%. This gives credence to the fact that 30% of those who responded in Vison’s major consultation indicated that someone in their household was unable to find affordable housing, with a third of this group identifying their grown up children as the ones struggling to set up home.

Dwelling stock by council tax band



More than 50% expressed a preference for 1 & 2 bed starter homes confirming demand even though the 2011 census data shows that Thatcham is well below the national average for affordable housing of this sort. The preference to rent, buy or share ownership was split equally with each option receiving circa. 30% of the votes. These facts show that smaller and/or social accommodation would best meet local demand which in turn points to smaller brownfield sites in the area being the best fit for Thatcham.

Additionally, of those who expressed an opinion, 79% would prefer a number of small developments rather than a few large developments. The fear is that Thatcham’s infrastructure is currently unable to cope with the current population and that any large development (even one that provides additional infrastructure) would exacerbate the problem. For example, with 17.5% of people registered with a doctor outside of Thatcham and only 60% registered at a Thatcham dentist the issues range across the board and cannot be solely remedied by an additional school or community centre.

In Vision’s consultation of 1,870 residents, 83% expressed a preference to keep the green space separating Thatcham from its neighbours, with the rural outlook of the town being a particularly emotive issue among residents. 78% communicated their preference for unused industrial land to be reassigned for housing in order to preserve green field sites.

Utilising these facts and more from the consultation the team went about creating a plan for Thatcham.

## 6. INFRASTRUCTURE REPORT

### 6.1. Executive Summary

In the last fifty years, Thatcham has experienced a major transformation that has seen fundamental changes in its size, profile and character. There are many residents who remember it as a small, peaceful village surrounded on all sides by open fields, but now it has developed into a fully-fledged town with growing industry, an active, dynamic community and is the second largest population centre in West Berkshire

However, the services and facilities supporting the town have not been developed in a balanced or comprehensive fashion. Whilst the basic infrastructure of roads, etc. may have developed in pace with the population, many other vital facilities are still more suited to the old village than the modern town. This lack of resources will restrict further growth and is already leading to social problems that are severely affecting the quality of life of residents in ways that are unacceptable if Thatcham is to be a vibrant and cheerful place to live.

This report has been carefully compiled based on data supplied by West Berkshire Council, census results, a large community survey of residents and submissions from other appropriate authorities. It has been collated and presented by Thatcham Vision in order to focus attention on the needs of Thatcham at local and District levels and to justify funding and resources.

In the census of 1951, Thatcham had a reported population of 5,000; in 2011 it was 25,000, second only to Newbury in the District. This five-fold growth has not been matched by the services necessary for a healthy, functional town. In particular, Thatcham Vision has identified that services are lacking in its youth provision, affordable housing, flood defences, the town centre environment, fire and rescue, policing, schools, further education, the railway station, leisure facilities and senior citizen care and support. As a result, there are problems arising of anti-social behaviour, youth crime, lack of child-care, road congestion, families living in overcrowded or unsuitable housing, older people suffering loneliness, etc.

The residents of Thatcham have clearly said in the community survey that they like living in Thatcham and want it to be a healthy, happy place to bring up a family and live into old age. Thatcham's village style-town centre is seen by many as a very positive, desirable asset but while many may want it to look like a village, Thatcham must think and act like a modern town providing comprehensive modern services. Only then can Thatcham live up to its potential, socially and economically.

David Conquest

April 2014

## 6.2. Infrastructure Report Structure

This report combines information gathered from the Thatcham Vision Refresh process (which included an in-depth public consultation) enhanced by 2011 census results and supported with information from the latest comprehensive statement on infrastructure (Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2010 - IDP) prepared by West Berkshire Council.

The following six topics have been selected, by way of a public consultation of Thatcham residents in 2012, as being the most important to be investigated and have formed the structure for the refresh of Thatcham's Parish Plan.

1. Population & Development
2. Community Safety
3. Travel & Transport
4. Childcare & Early Years Learning
5. Senior Citizens
6. Sports, Leisure & Culture

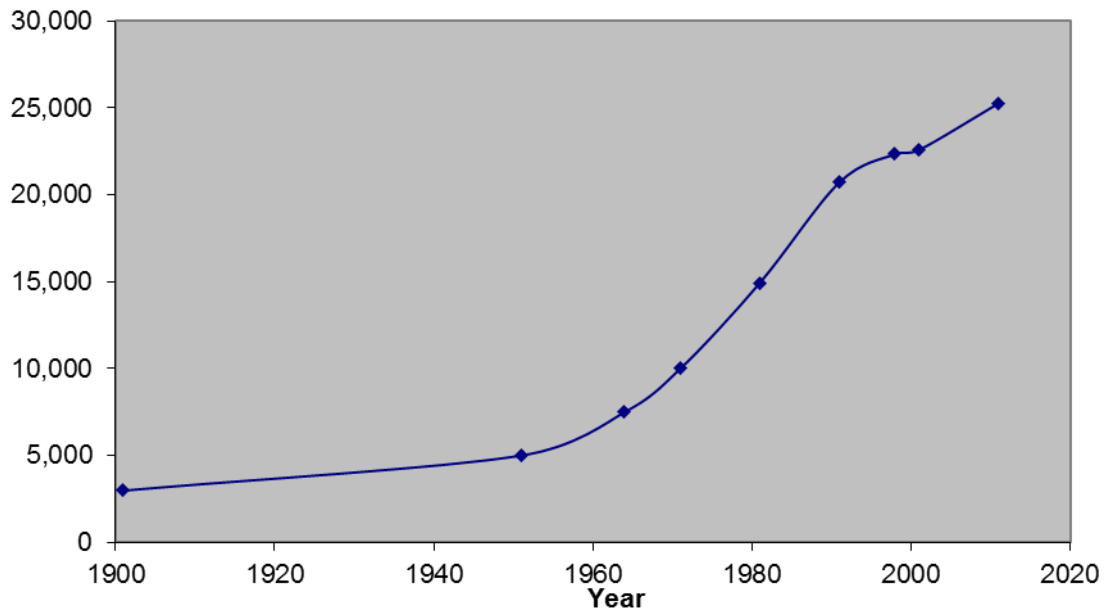
A seventh section has been included in this infrastructure report for completeness:

7. Public Services

## 6.3. Population & Development

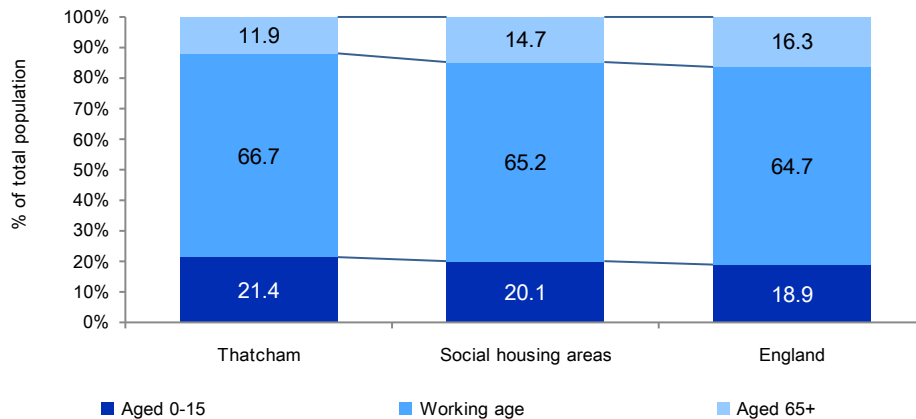
Thatcham is a parish in Berkshire, England located 3 miles (5km) east of Newbury and 15 miles (24km) west of Reading. It covers approximately 8.75 square miles (2,300 hectares/23 square kilometres) and has a population of approximately 25,000 people (census 2011). This number has grown rapidly over the last few decades from 5,000 in 1951 and 7,500 in 1961.

### Population of Thatcham



The recent rapid growth of the population has led to the town being described as an “overgrown village”. Growth in population has not been matched by equivalent growth in services and infrastructure – and correcting this is a key issue for the parish. Substantial areas of housing were built during the 1970s to 1990s and few basic services, other than essential access roads, green space and schools were provided.

Population by age



**A. Affordable Housing\*** Please see note on p.27

- i. As at March 2014, there were 2,179 applicants on the housing register for West Berkshire.
- ii. According to the 2011 census 73.5% of housing in Thatcham is owner occupied with only 14.3% of housing rented from the local authority or housing associations. This compares to 70.8% in West Berkshire and 64.1% across England. The greatest need in Thatcham is for affordable accommodation.
- iii. The census also shows that the area has fewer smaller dwellings than other areas with only 15.9% of properties being purpose built flats compared to 19.2% in West

Berkshire and 28.2% nationally. A large proportion of these are homes for older residents thus making it very difficult for most people to access a smaller and therefore more affordable property.

- iv. 30% of people who completed Vision's community survey are currently unable to find affordable housing whether this be social housing, starter homes or low cost family homes.

## **B. Utility Services**

### **i. Energy.**

*No specific strategic issues have been identified with regard to the town's energy supply (gas, electricity & renewable energy) other than a current failure to meet renewable energy targets. (Source: IDP 2010)*

### **ii. Water and Waste Water.**

*Thames Water is working closely with the developer of Newbury Racecourse to ensure that the wastewater can be accommodated by the network by upgrading the main terminal pumping station in Newbury.*

*Thames Water has advised that wastewater capacity does not exist to serve the proposed development at Sandford and that upgrades will be necessary to the system. This may affect the Sewerage Treatment Works at Lower Way in Thatcham, the impact of which has not yet been identified.*

*Developers should be required to submit a Site Waste Management Plan alongside planning applications for larger proposals.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- iii. It has not been confirmed whether the Thatcham sewage treatment centre is currently working at capacity and what effect development in Newbury will have on the site in Lower Way.

## **C. Telecommunications**

### **i. BT**

*There are no specific telecommunication infrastructure requirements identified by BT Openreach. (Source: IDP 2010)*

## **D. Flood Defences**

- i. In response to the severe floods of July 2007, an initiative by Thatcham Town Council resulted in the creation of Thatcham Flood Forum run by volunteer residents from Thatcham and Cold Ash. The Forum identified the need for 7 attenuation ponds to prevent further flooding.
- ii. The Cold Ash Hill flood alleviation scheme was completed in 2014. This was the first of a series of proposed flood attenuation basins in Thatcham identified in the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan, which was produced in 2010. Funding has also been secured for the design and construction of flood attenuation basins at Tull Way and Dunston Park (Floral Way). Applications for grant funding have

been submitted for providing two more flood defence schemes at the Memorial Playing Fields and near Francis Baily Primary School.

- iii. For all development proposals, whether allocated sites or 'windfalls', flood risk is considered as an integral part of the planning process. Any necessary flood prevention measures or works will be secured through planning consents and should be implemented and funded by the developer.

## E. The Town Centre

The town centre is vital to the community of Thatcham. Making the town centre better for local businesses and people who use it has been identified as a major priority.

- i. **The Turley Report.** The need to enhance the townscape was identified in Vision's Action Plan of 2006 and a town design plan was prepared. Implementation of this plan has been minimal whilst other areas in West Berkshire have seen their town plans fully implemented and reaped the benefits for their community, local businesses and visitors alike. Although this is still on the agenda the work has yet to be allocated a start date.
- ii. Thatcham's town centre has 19 empty shops (November 2013) and no centrally located community facility. It has been found that the results of the parish plan survey in 2005 (below) still hold strong with the community today.

Results of the Thatcham Survey 2005: % positive responses	
Develop a plan for improving the town centre:	86%
Build a community facility in the town centre:	78%

- iii. **Car parking.** The town centre is served by several car parks but inadequate car parking remains a common complaint. There are spaces in several locations close to (within 100-200 metres) of the centre and car parks are rarely full during the week. There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the lack of parking is more than often not related to driver perception and behaviour (including unwillingness to pay to use the main car park) rather than lack of parking.

It has been suggested by local businesses that parking charges create a barrier to the usage of Town Centre shops.

Many drivers prefer to park close to the shop they are going to rather than pay and walk a distance of at most 100-200 metres. Parking charges are levied at the Kingsland Centre car park although Waitrose may be prepared to formalise subsidising two hours parking (rather than on an ad hoc basis through their refunds scheme as at present) as they are aware that this will substantially increase their footfall. There are other car parks which are free. The small central parking area in the Broadway is time limited (60 minutes) but a vital facility for "dropping-in".

Free parking in Thatcham is seen as imperative to help the town centre survive. The town centre should also be given prominence from the A4. (Please see note from WBC Traffic Services Manager in the supporting WBC Officer Comments document).

## 6.4. Community Safety

### A. Emergency Services

#### i. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services (RBFRS)

*The level of growth proposed in the Core Strategy (both housing and an extended road network) is considered by RBFRS to be significant enough to require and justify an increase in the level of service provided in the area. Response times will be provided on a case by case basis as developments progress.*

*The RBFRS stated that the overall level of development in Newbury and Thatcham area may necessitate the upgrade of the Newbury Fire Station to two 24 hour crewed appliances. In addition, there may be a requirement to make physical alterations to Newbury fire station and/or build a new fire station at Thatcham.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

There are currently no regular visits from the Fire Safety Bus arranged for the Thatcham area although the local Fire Service are looking at outreach projects in the locality.

#### ii. Thames Valley Police Authority

TVPA advised that improvements are likely to be required to enable an effective local policing service including a new drop in facility in Newbury town centre. No such plan has been made for Thatcham.

The police have a small office in the Hub in Thatcham with no police station or drop in facility available to the public. There are few opportunities for Thatcham residents to meet their local police team.

In response to Thatcham Vision's draft action plan (March 2014), as well as the local Neighbourhood Action Group, Thames Valley Police are planning to hold a number of police surgeries at the Hub to increase their presence in the community. These are "drop-in" sessions where residents can discuss their concerns with uniformed officers.

#### iii. Ambulance & Paramedics

Thatcham is served by a station in Hawthorn Road, Newbury, next to the Fire Station. They have paramedics and emergency care assistants (ECAs) who man the ambulances and the rapid response cars. Doctors, if required on scene, are dispatched from (1) the local surgeries if non-urgent, (2) from a hospital or (3) via the air ambulance if an emergency.

There is also a Community First Responder (CFR) scheme whereby trained, local volunteers respond to an emergency. There is also a local charity, Thatcham Heartstart, who provide free training in CPR techniques to local residents.

### B. Anti-social behaviour

For years Thatcham has had a problem with several types of anti-social behaviour. These include intimidating groups taking over public spaces, vandalism and under-age drinking. Frequently these are inter-related. According to police statistics, 36% of all crime in Thatcham during 2011 could be attributed to anti-social behaviour. In 2012 this figure rose to 39% and reduced to 30% in 2013.

Public property, especially buildings, are frequently the target of petty vandalism. It is difficult to assess the total annual cost to the taxpayer. As well as the capital



cost of replacing damaged equipment, windows, etc., there is also the cost of labour involved in carrying out repairs, dealing with litter and cleaning graffiti.

Thatcham Neighbourhood Wardens are employed by Sovereign Housing to respond to a wide range of issues which affect the quality of life for people living in West Berkshire including helping to reduce crime and the fear of crime, challenge anti-social behaviour, report suspicious behaviour, discourage drug dealing and resolve neighbourhood disputes. In the financial year 2013/14, Thatcham Town Council contributed £68,000 towards the scheme as well as additional costs directly related to vandalism of circa £5,000.

The survey reveals that the majority of incidents are related to groups of young people congregating in the Broadway. There is a lack of local entertainment for their age-group and no centrally located community facility which includes provision for youth-oriented space and activities. The re-development of the Broadway into a multi-use space for all age groups has also been identified as a solution.

A consultation for a dispersal order will be carried out in spring 2014. The order will potentially cover the Broadway and surrounding areas to enable police to prevent persistent offenders returning.

## 6.5. Travel & Transport

### A. Road Network

#### i. Congestion

*Improvements to the highway network will be crucial in facilitating the development included in West Berkshire Council's Core Strategy. These will take place alongside the promotion of sustainable means of travel, minimising congestion and emissions. This will support the economy of West Berkshire whilst also protecting quality of life and air quality and improving accessibility and road safety.*

*Various studies have identified improvements and upgrades to the highway network necessary to deliver the Core Strategy. This includes the A4 Corridor Study that identifies a number of improvements required for both traffic management and road safety for all road users along the A4 corridor between Newbury and Theale. The key improvement for the Core Strategy is the improvements to the Hambridge Road / A4 / Fir Tree Lane crossroads.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

There is particular concern from residents regarding the current congestion hot spots in Thatcham. The most controversial of these is the increasingly long waits at Thatcham's level crossing.

Another source of road traffic, creating significant aggravation to Thatcham residents is the increasing number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on the A4 through Thatcham which results in noise pollution and exhaust fumes.

There is also significant congestion on a daily basis around Thatcham's schools (Kennet & Francis Baily in particular). This is in part due to parents parking on the A4 to collect children creating a bottleneck for HGVs

#### ii. Maintenance

The current infrastructure will only remain viable if it is properly maintained. Due to recent exceptional, bad weather, significant deterioration has occurred in the condition of the local roads.

**B. Local residents are becoming increasingly aware of the need to report pot holes and other road surface issues to Streetcare before the Council will respond Rail Network**

*WBC's planned provision includes improvements to level crossing safety in rural areas. Improvements to level crossing efficiency by minimising the period when gates are closed are also under discussion with Network Rail and First Great Western.*

*WBC will seek to improve the general facilities at rail stations in West Berkshire, including the Market Street Bus/Rail Interchange Improvements in Newbury which are likely to come forward in the medium term as part of the delivery of the Newbury Vision.*

*Infrastructure schemes to support rail travel will focus on improving customer facilities at stations, the accessibility of stations and the quality of the interchange (level of parking for cars and cycles, links with buses, taxis, etc.).*

*Schemes will be identified through existing study work, liaison and planning with Network Rail, First Great Western, and working with local groups and stakeholders such as Parish / Town Councils and Parish Planning Groups.*

*Specific schemes already identified to improve and encourage rail travel and support the sustainable implementation of the Core Strategy include:*

- 1. Improvements to Newbury Racecourse Station as part of measures associated with the proposed Newbury Racecourse development totalling £150k*
- 2. Redevelopment and improved interchange facilities at Newbury Rail Station - £20million*

*Source: IDP 2010*

Thatcham station is located to the south of the town, 1.5miles by road from the town centre, and consequently suffers from a lack of access by those living to the north or west of the town with no regular bus service to correspond with daily commutes.

Car users can generally get to Thatcham Railway station with little difficulty. However parking on arrival is not always so easy. The larger of the two available car parks is on the south side of the level crossing. If the barriers are down then drivers need to wait for the train to arrive and the barriers re-open before they can park and then get to their train. There is a smaller car park to the north of the station but this is often quickly filled by commuters forcing other drivers to seek alternative parking arrangements.

Disabled access at the station is poor with some Thatcham residents travelling to Newbury in order to access the rail network.

There are no toilets facilities at the station.

**C. Other Transport**

**i. Buses**

*WBC's Core Strategy Implications:*

- 1. A4 Corridor Study: improved customer facilities, including the quality of bus stops and to introduce Real Time Passenger Information at bus stops. These improvements will support the delivery of the strategic site at the Racecourse by improving facilities for the bus link between Thatcham and Newbury.*
- 2. Provision arising from Strategic housing development at Newbury Racecourse: Newbury/Thatcham high frequency shuttle bus service linking with Newbury Racecourse strategic site (Please see Peter Walker, WBC's Transport Services Manager's comments in the WBC Officers Comments document)*

3. *Integration of Vodafone buses as part of wider bus network serving all areas of Newbury.*
4. *Building bus priority where appropriate as part of wider highway improvement proposals (e.g. as part of future reallocation of road space on key routes in Newbury & A4 duelling at Calcot)*

*Source: IDP 2010*

There are no direct bus services from Thatcham to some significant local destinations such as New Greenham Park, Newbury College, Newbury Retail Park and Basingstoke. All entail a change at Newbury Bus Station and require a significant and unacceptable additional travel time compared to private car.

## **ii. Cycling & Walking Infrastructure**

*WBC plans the following In addition to general statements regarding improvement to facilities:*

1. *Improvements to create a continuous cycle route along the A4 from Newbury to Reading.*
2. *Improvements to the Kennet & Avon Canal towpath for pedestrians and cyclists.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

National Cycle Route 4 is a nationally recognised route that runs through Thatcham Parish to Newbury. Discussions were held to consider how this cycle route could be effectively promoted to potential local users. However, after a survey (from Thatcham Station to Newbury) was undertaken it was, with regret, concluded that Cycle Route 4 was unsafe in its present condition and accordingly cannot be promoted as a viable option for cyclists.

As with the local roads in Thatcham Parish, it has been noted that the state of footpaths within Thatcham has been steadily deteriorating and requires attention.

## **6.6. Education**

### **A. Nursery Education**

*West Berkshire Council will ensure that 25% of 3-4 year olds in the district receive 15 hours of free entitlement to childcare and early education. The target to deliver 10 Children's Centres across West Berkshire was achieved ahead of the March 2010 deadline.*

*School infrastructure needs to be sufficient to cope with the proposed increases in population due to the level of housing growth that is required to deliver the Core Strategy. The Council considers that it is likely that the development at Newbury Racecourse will require additional early years' provision. This could be a nursery class at a maintained school or voluntary provision in a community centre. If new provision was developed at the Racecourse, it could also serve the proposed development at Sandleford.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

In Vision's community survey, 40% of people who expressed an opinion did not believe that there was enough affordable childcare in Thatcham. Low cost childcare for pre-school children during school holidays does not exist in Thatcham.

### **B. Primary and Secondary Education**

*There is currently limited capacity across the primary phase in Newbury and secondary phase in Thatcham (2010).*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- i. A number of primary schools in Thatcham have been extended to accommodate an increase in the population. Head teachers surveyed believe that there is a limit

to the amount of expansion that can take place within a school before its effects become detrimental.

*Newbury Racecourse (1500 houses) – the expansion and remodelling of existing provision at the catchment primary school (The Willows) and the secondary school (Park House) will be required.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- ii. There is only one secondary school in Thatcham. Kennet School. This is the most oversubscribed school in West Berkshire. Around half of secondary school aged children in Thatcham attend a school 3 miles away on the outskirts of Newbury, Trinity School. There is no parental choice of which school children may attend for families in Thatcham.
- iii. For those families in Thatcham who are not in the catchment area of the local school an additional expense for travel is incurred. This is currently £500 per child per school year. This is substantially more if a place on Trinity's School bus cannot be allocated. As this provision focusses on those who are entitled to free transport many parents use cars or pay the full cost of the public bus.

### **C. Further and Higher Education**

*There is currently limited capacity in Thatcham for further/higher education. WBC state that improvements will be required to Kennet School.*

*Newbury Racecourse (1500 houses) – the expansion and remodelling of existing sixth form provision at the secondary school (Park House) will be required.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

Further education outside secondary schooling is served locally by Newbury College. There is no direct public transport system between this higher education centre and Thatcham.

### **6.7. Senior Citizens**

Central government provides: state pension and sundry benefits, health provision (through the local Primary Care Trust/PCT and health centres). West Berkshire Council provides some support to elderly needing care through Social Services. There are a number of residential homes in the area and Walnut Close Care Home provides support to individuals with frailty and Dementia.

Many voluntary organisations provide support to senior citizens. They include: Age Concern, Help the Aged, Thatcham Volunteer Bureau, RNID, RNIB, U3A, local faith communities, Red Cross and McMillan Cancer Care Trust.

The private sector and housing associations play an important part in the provision of housing and care homes. In addition a considerable amount of support to senior citizens is provided by family members or friends living in the community. Many of these are themselves senior citizens. Additional carer support is needed as well as housing availability for our aging population.

Most of the work being done by the various organisations is palliative and attempts to relieve or treat problems after they have arisen. Studies show that it is more cost effective to try and seek preventative solutions.

Frequently, low-level community based services can achieve more, and be more rewarding, than high dependency institutional ones which all too frequently initiate a downward spiral. Therefore there is a local requirement in Thatcham to create a seniors centre, where senior citizens of all ages, not just the frail and infirm, could

meet and fulfil many of the needs in their lives. Such centres are widely in use outside this country, particularly in the USA and Australia.

## 6.8. Sports, Leisure & Culture

### A. Community, Arts, Culture and Leisure

*Major housing developments (approximately 200 dwellings or more) may be expected to make on-site provision for community facilities in the form of community and youth centres, often as part of a neighbourhood centre. Developers may be required to undertake a community needs assessment to assess the scale and nature of facilities required.*

*For smaller developments improvements to existing community facilities will be expected, enabling facilities to serve the needs of the additional residents occupying the new development.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- i. In Thatcham, community facilities are provided for in a number of public halls situated around the Town, many of which are owned and managed by Thatcham Town Council. These, and other sites (such as the Scout Hut and church halls) provide the location for many activities including pre-schools, exercise classes and uniformed children's activities. Thatcham Children's Centre provides a unique drop-in facility for parents and their young children.
- ii. Thatcham lacks a centrally located community building
- iii. Facilities for young people are available at the Moorside Youth Centre and The Pavilion (Lower Way), as well as through other organised clubs and activities. A private bowling alley provides an additional facility.
- iv. A big complaint of young people and the public in general is the lack of any local entertainment facilities within Thatcham. Residents have expressed a need for additional skating, swimming, team sports, climbing and music/theatre facilities.

### B. Sports Centres and Pitches

- i. No specific improvements to Sports Centre provision identified in Thatcham in the IDP.

*In respect of sports pitches, additional provision will be required over the plan period to accompany new development. The Council, in line with PPG17, is currently undertaking an assessment and audit of the District's open space. For playing pitch provision and specialist activity areas, the minimum standard of provision is currently set at 1.60 ha per thousand population, in line with the NPFA (National Playing Fields Association) recommended levels.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- ii. In Thatcham, there is a single public leisure centre (Kennet) with gym, racquet courts and swimming pool. This is managed under contract on behalf of the local councils and is a shared facility with Kennet School.

This facility does not cater for the current population levels in Thatcham. It has one sports hall that is frequently double booked with groups sharing the space and only one dry side toilet available for each gender. The racquet courts are also oversubscribed.

Parking at this site is also limited and overflowing on a daily basis.

- iii. There is also a formal sports field at Henwick, which is the home of Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club and used by local football and rugby clubs.

Club members from all sports utilising the ground at Henwick have identified a need for additional sports pitches. They have all been unsuccessful to date in acquiring additional pitches anywhere in Thatcham.

- iv. There is a cricket club ground at Brownsfield Road and Thatcham Town Football Club have premises at Waterside Park, south of the river.
- v. Formal sports are also provided for by a running track at Thornford Park. This club holds a long waiting list as the demand exceeds capacity.
- vi. West Berkshire Therapy Centre is a specialised gym, equipped with power-assisted exercise equipment, for the benefit of disabled people from the local community. Research has shown that this facility will help people from all over West Berkshire who suffer from a wide range of disabling conditions: This Centre is in need of a hydro pool to complete its facilities.

### **C. Parks, Open Space and Play Areas**

*WBC, in line with PPG17, reviewed in 2010 its standards for provision of open space and associated planning policies, and is to prepare a new SPD on the provision of Green Infrastructure. The Site Allocations and Delivery DPD will highlight specific deficiencies in the District and will identify where improvements or additional capacity may be required to deliver the planned growth set out in the Core Strategy. Specific requirements identified for the strategic site allocation at Newbury Racecourse are set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- i. In Thatcham there are a number of areas of green space within the town, covering some 49 hectares, and the majority are formally managed by regular mowing with tree planting where appropriate. The majority of open spaces are used for informal recreation such as children's kick-about games and for dog-walking. Formal children's play areas (with play equipment) is installed on sites throughout the town. There are some residential areas which are not so well served by informal green space, such as housing in north Thatcham.
- ii. Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre, managed by West Berkshire Council, provides an education base and interpretation centre for the Council's countryside service. It has large children's playgrounds and access by footpaths to nearby lakes, the reed beds and canal. This, and the bird watching interest of the reed beds, attracts many visitors and groups from surrounding parishes and as far afield as Reading, Andover and Basingstoke.

This area of nature conservation is under pressure from development.

### **D. Local Heritage**

Thatcham is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in Europe although this fact is not publicised or marketed in anyway. This can be remedied by setting up a Heritage Centre with displays and features of local historic interest, identifying the sites of the workhouse and the turnery for example.

## 6.9. Public Services

### A. Adult Social Care and Supported Accommodation

*Known gaps in provision in West Berkshire (2010) included:*

1. *Extra care housing required across the district.*
2. *Move-on accommodation for people with mental needs.*
3. *Supported accommodation for people on the autistic spectrum and who have challenging behaviour.*
4. *Supported accommodation for people who have a learning disability*
5. *Supported accommodation for people with acquired brain injury.*
6. *Specific provision in Thatcham included Alice Bye Court which offers 51 units of extra care housing for older people with care and support needs.*
7. *Based on current service patterns WBC anticipate that the growth in population will lead to a requirement for more accommodation based care services comprising a mix of residential, nursing and extra care housing. Specialist dementia services will be incorporated as part of this. Further investment in staff resources, such as social workers and home care assistants will also be required.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

### B. Health Care

Thatcham has two doctors' surgeries who run independently of each other. Their combined lists include approximately 27,800 patients. This equates to just under 2000 registered patients per GP.

### C. Public Service Point

Thatcham's Town Council Offices are half a mile outside the town centre on the north side of the A4. Most residents are unaware of its location.

Thatcham does not have a centrally located facility for people to liaise with local public service providers. Access to a central contact point for local public services, including West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council and the police is required in the town centre.

### D. Libraries

*In 2008 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) launched the Library Service Modernisation Review. The review aimed to define the Government's vision for the public library service, which could then be delivered at a local authority level, building on the DCMS first ever national strategy for libraries – "Framework for the Future" (2003). This strategy sets out a national development agenda for library services for the next ten years. The four main areas identified for development are: books, reading and learning; digital citizenship; community and civic values; and delivering change. The report also stresses the need to develop access to digital information.*

*WBC's strategy for libraries (2005-2015) titled "Beyond Books" (2007) set out an action plan for libraries, identifying that library buildings need to be modernised and new libraries provided where possible as communities change. Other aims include providing joint library provision with local schools and increased access to computer services.*

*Source: IDP 2010*

- i. In Thatcham there is already an identified need to provide a centrally located library of a suitable size to meet the needs of Thatcham's residents and the surrounding villages. Any future development within the town will exacerbate

current problems and further support the need for an alternative site to be found for a new facility.

- ii. A new library is considered vital to Thatcham, as the current library provision is grossly inadequate for a town of 25,000+ people. The library is too small, in the wrong place and with limited scope to expand its activities. It needs to be accessible and larger (at least 700 square metres) and to have an enlarged mandate. It needs to retain present activities but also to expand them in a number of ways, such as becoming an information centre, the centre of a learning town provision and the heart of the networking of the town.

#### **E. Places of Worship**

- i. In Thatcham religious worship is catered for by churches representing the following denominations: Church of England, Anglican, Baptist, The Christadelphians, Free Church, Methodist, Roman Catholic & United Reformed.
- ii. The town is outgrowing its cultural spaces for art, music, drama and dance. Churches perform the traditional role, but when the community comes together - Remembrance Sunday, Christmas Eve; some funerals - they are overflowing. Also a side-effect of growing the primary schools is that the whole school doesn't fit in the church any more. This is just an example of how fixed infrastructure is affected by apparently unrelated decisions.
- iii. Churches also provide locations for community involvement. These buildings are used for classes, toddler groups, preschools, food banks, theatres etc.

#### **F. Cemeteries**

*West Berkshire Council confirm that they will continue to work closely with Town and Parish Councils. Any future requirement for additional land for burial space that is identified by Town and/or Parish Councils over the Plan period will need to be brought to the attention of WBC. Consideration will then be given to the role of LDF in assisting its delivery through the Site Allocations and Delivery DPD.*

*The main costs associated with cemeteries are the land and associated infrastructure (road network, footpaths).*

*Source: IDP 2010*

In Thatcham there is a privately owned and managed crematorium was opened in 2006 and there is a single public cemetery managed by Thatcham Town Council. A chapel is situated at the cemetery.

#### **G. Allotments**

Henleys Allotments are managed by Thatcham Town Council. The population has rapidly grown and new houses are being built with no or very small gardens. Therefore, interest in allotments has increased in recent years and Thatcham's quota of allotments is currently only about half of nearby Newbury's on a per capita basis.

The land currently in use for this purpose has been extended on two occasions to attempt to fill the demand of a growing population and full allotment sites are no longer available with half, third and quarter pitches offered to reduce the waiting list which currently stands at circa 80 residents (March 2014).



A new allotment site in a different part of Thatcham is required.

**H. Natural Environment**

*The key issue is the need for ongoing maintenance of and qualitative improvements to these existing assets as well as the adequate provision of multifunctional open spaces in new developments that link to the existing GI network.*

*British Waterways will also continue to seek improvements and upgrades to towing paths and waterways as a consequence of future development where this is likely to increase public usage. A financial contribution towards such improvements is to be secured via a S106 agreement following planning consent for development at the Newbury Racecourse Site.*

Source: IDP 2010

- i. The towpath between Thatcham and Newbury is currently in a poor state of repair with no funding currently identified for significant repair or improvements

*Likewise development within or close to the area designated as part of the Living Landscape Project (south of Thatcham and east of Newbury) may be required to make a similar financial contribution by way of mitigating the impact of development. Developer contributions towards the Project are again to be secured at Newbury Racecourse to mitigate the additional recreational pressure arising from that development.*

Source: IDP 2010

**7. TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**7.1. Action PDI001: Regularly review the need for a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NPD) for Thatcham.**

During the refresh process the Topic Team reviewed the need for a NDP to protect Thatcham’s right to decide on development (*Appendix A*). At this point in time it was considered that a Parish Plan would provide a greater benefit, although this should be reviewed regularly to ensure this remains the case.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Regularly review the need for a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	57.4%
Agree	37.7%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	4.9%

**7.2. Action PDI002: Protect the green gaps between Thatcham and its neighbouring communities.**

During Vision’s consultation of 1,870 residents, 83% expressed a preference to keep the green space separating Thatcham from its neighbours with the rural outlook of the town

being a particularly emotive issue among residents. It is an important concern to the community that the boundary to the town is static and therefore any housing development outside of the town remains a contentious issue.

Therefore Vision will seek to protect the rural outlook surrounding the town especially on hillsides. An example of such can be found in *Appendix B*.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Protect the green gaps between Thatcham and its neighbouring communities.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	70.5%
Agree	21.3%
Disagree	3.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	4.9%

### 7.3. Action PDI003: Protect and enhance Thatcham's nature reserves, commons and other environmental assets within and adjacent to the Parish.

Many of these are identified in *Appendix C*.

Many people have told Thatcham Vision's team that they like living in Thatcham because it is within easy reach of the countryside. They have demonstrated this through their positive responses in The Thatcham Questionnaire which showed 98% in favour of protecting the countryside in Thatcham. This was the question that had the most positive responses. The community wish to retain the rural nature and character of the Parish as well as to protect local wildlife. Ongoing BBOWT projects to enhance the nature reserves are already funded.

- Appendix C (i): Thatcham Biodiversity Register
- Appendix C (ii): Thatcham Environmental Assets (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas & West Berkshire Living Landscape Project Area)
- Appendix C (iii): Thatcham Environmental Assets (Designated Biodiversity Sites)
- Appendix C (iv): Thatcham Environmental Assets (Public Open Space)
- Appendix C (v): Thatcham's Countryside & Wildlife

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Protect and enhance Thatcham's nature reserves, commons and other environmental assets within and adjacent to the Parish.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	82.0%
Agree	16.4%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	1.6%

#### 7.4. Action PDI004: Protect Thatcham's appropriate historical buildings & other heritage sites from development.

Many locations of local historical importance are identified in Vision's Historical Heritage Asset Register (*Appendix D*).

Thatcham's community wishes to protect the historical character of the town. This has been demonstrated through their positive responses in The Thatcham Questionnaire which showed 96.7% in favour of protecting our historical building and heritage sites.

Many historical buildings are under threat due to the pressure of development. The West Berkshire Heritage Forum is identifying those buildings and sites in the area which are of great importance to local history and heritage for a Local Listing. The heritage importance of the building or site will be highlighted as a material consideration in the planning process at a higher level (see National Planning Policy Guidance Paragraph 139), thus ensuring that any heritage aspects should be considered as part of any proposed development. Applications to include Thatcham's key sites, which do not qualify for national listing.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Protect Thatcham's historical buildings & other heritage sites from development.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	67.2%
Agree	29.5%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	3.3%

#### 7.5. Action PDI005: Preserve and protect Thatcham's Public Rights of Way.

Thatcham currently has no organised scheme to protect its public rights of way. Many fun events could be established to ensure these routes are used, accessible and in appropriate condition.

A working party of local walkers or ramblers or members from Scouting or Girl Guiding may like to participate in regular walks, walking festivals or treasure hunts in the Parish. This will benefit health, promote less car use and ensure access to footpaths are not lost.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Preserve and protect Thatcham's Public Rights of Way.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	59.0%
Agree	39.3%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	1.6%

**7.6. Action PDI006: Ensure all developments in the Parish provide affordable homes.**

In Thatcham’s major consultation of 1,870 residents, 30% indicated that someone in their household was unable to afford to house themselves, with a third of this group identifying their grown up children as the ones struggling to set up home. More than 50% expressed a preference for 1 & 2 bed starter homes, and the 2011 census data shows that Thatcham is well below the national average for either affordable housing<sup>1</sup> or starter homes. The preference to rent, buy or share ownership was split equally with each option receiving circa. 30% of the votes.

If this action were successful it would result in the reduction of social housing waiting lists and overcrowding.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Work to ensure all developments in the Parish provide affordable homes for Thatcham residents.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	36.1%
Agree	49.2%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	4.9%

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<sup>1</sup> Please see a link to the definition of ‘affordable housing’ and ‘starter homes’ in the comments from Mel Brain – Service Manager – Housing Strategy and Operations at WBC

7.7. Action PDI007: Work to ensure all future developments do not reduce service and utilities provision to the population of Thatcham as a whole.

The rapid growth of the population in previous decades has led to the town being described as an "overgrown village". It is widely acknowledged that Thatcham's infrastructure and services have not kept pace with the town's growing population. Addressing this is a key issue for the parish. Some very substantial areas of housing were built during the 1970s (many "on appeal") and few basic services, other than essential access roads, greenspace and schools were provided. Some forty years later this issue has still not been addressed.

West Berkshire Council's Planning Strategy states, in relation to Thatcham "... despite considerable growth in its housing stock in the last 30 years, Thatcham contains far fewer and a lower level of facilities and infrastructure than its neighbour. It also has a smaller employment base. Education facilities are used to the full and additional development would place complex pressures upon them which would be difficult to satisfactorily resolve without considerable advance planning".

The need to develop services, infrastructure and facilities was expressed very strongly in all the consultation exercises completed during the project. High on the list of priorities of those consulted was provision of more shops. It is not possible to buy basic items like shoes or clothes in Thatcham (*Appendix E*). This means that every additional house built generates additional traffic on already overstretched routes. Better facilities for families (such as more family restaurants), another secondary school and an improved leisure centre were also mentioned frequently.

There are many other examples of the current inadequacy of Thatcham's infrastructure and services in many of the topic areas covered to date:

- Thatcham's library is far too small to meet the needs of Thatcham's population, being only about the quarter of the size it ought to be for a population of over 25,000;
- the only secondary school in Thatcham (Kennet), although it has increased in size, has a catchment which effectively excludes half of the population, giving many parents no choice but to send their child to secondary school outside Thatcham;
- young people want more places where they can socialise, access entertainment and pursue their interests;
- bus services are patchy and do not provide a viable alternative to car travel for most people;
- even in the down to earth area of allotment provision, Thatcham fares poorly.

The inclusion of this action reflects the need to ensure that Thatcham develops the services and infrastructure which will enable it to become a thriving market town again with a strong identity and not a poor suburb of Newbury.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Work to ensure levels of infrastructure keeps pace with all future developments.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	73.8%
Agree	21.3%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	4.9%

**7.8. Action PDI008: Support & develop the Turley design statement for the enhancement of Thatcham Town Centre and its environs.**

Maintaining and improving the appearance of the town – its look and feel – is relevant to a number of topics, including the town centre, the environment, health, anti-social behaviour and crime. The appearance of the town also affects how visitors, and those who pass through it, perceive Thatcham.

Thatcham's appearance is strongly influenced by the design and maintenance of its public and private buildings, the design of housing estates and business parks, signage on streets and other aspects of the physical environment. A priority project is for the Turley town centre design statement to be updated, and for streetscape enhancements to the town centre to be implemented.

This will in turn draw more people into the centre, increasing community cohesion, improving footfall and therefore helping businesses to thrive, also reducing anti-social behaviour by encouraging adults to use the Broadway in the evenings too.

Improvements will be made to the unsightly toilet block and the kebab vans would be re-sited. Picnic tables provided on the green and an entertainment/performance area added to enable community groups to perform in the heart of the "Town with a heart of a Village".

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Support & develop the enhancement of Thatcham Town Centre whilst retaining Thatcham's "village feel".	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	62.3%
Agree	27.9%
Disagree	8.2%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	1.6%

**7.9. Action PDI009: Provide a major centrally located community building, including community facilities such as an information point for the town.**

Currently there are no major community buildings or services in the town centre and it is felt that if there were this would create a new heart to the town centre and also increase use of its shops and other services by local people.

Although this is a major and costly project for the town the benefits are vast. The building could include the council offices, the local library (Please see WBC library services manager comments in the WBC Comments document), a local museum and heritage centre, an information point for citizen’s advice bureau, the police, etc., a lifelong learning classroom, offices for local volunteer groups, an internet café, meeting rooms for use by local groups and start-up businesses. Using such a centre as a base for senior citizens support and a place for teenagers to meet safely are other ideas.

Thatcham Vision has identified a number of projects for the benefit of Thatcham and its community that would be enabled by the provision of such a centre (*Appendix F*). This would do much to restore the lack of infrastructure that has blighted the town for the last 40 years.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Provide a major centrally located community building, including community facilities such as an information point for the town.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	35.0%
Agree	48.3%
Disagree	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	1.7%
No Opinion	10.0%

**7.10. Action PDI010: Review the provision of free parking within the town centre boundaries and its impact on the economic success of the businesses located in the town centre.**

Supporting local business was seen as vital to maintaining the character of Thatcham town centre and for providing local employment opportunities. One of the ways to encourage more visitors to the town centre may be the provision of free parking. As part of the review of the town centre particular attention will be given to the provision of free parking and its potential benefits. Thatcham Vision, the town council and the Chamber of Commerce working collaboratively will investigate the impact of free parking and different management structures for the town's parking provision.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Review the provision of free parking within the town centre boundaries and its impact on the economic success of the businesses located in the town centre.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	45.9%
Agree	37.7%
Disagree	8.2%
Strongly Disagree	3.3%
No Opinion	4.9%

**7.11. Action PDI011: Establish a regular Vision event to shape the future of Thatcham.**

Thatcham Vision and the town council recognise the importance of communicating effectively with the residents of the area and providing them with the opportunity to comment on future plans. To aid this it was felt that having a 'Future of Thatcham' event, bringing together all stakeholders in the town, would allow the residents to see the plans for education, health, housing and others areas affecting their lives. They would have the opportunity to comment and contribute to the formulation of future plans. It is also expected that by bringing all stakeholders together in one event it will encourage greater cooperation in the provision of services to the town. Some of the stakeholders would include the local clinical commissioning group, local schools, relevant councils, community groups and utility providers.

To encourage community involvement at all levels, events such as a writing/art competition will be run to see what people imagine to be the future of Thatcham.

The culmination of the event would be a public exhibition where each stakeholder would put on show their plans for the future of Thatcham, allowing residents to see the plans and ask any questions they may have.

A Future of Thatcham event would stimulate interest in the community and help to inform the next refresh of the town plan.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Establish a regular Vision event to shape the future of Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	25.0%
Agree	51.7%
Disagree	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	13.3%



7.12. Action PDI012: Develop a marketing plan for Thatcham.

Develop a marketing plan for Thatcham Town Centre in co-operation with the Town Council, WBC and the Chamber of Commerce. The results of the Vision survey support the idea of developing a stronger unique identity for Thatcham, separate and distinct from neighbouring towns. A strong identity will attract likeminded residents, visitors and organisations in order to group together and promote further economic and social growth. The identity will be built on the town’s existing strengths and opportunities in the district (see *Appendix H – SWOT Analysis*).

A comprehensive marketing plan can be built around this identity designed to encourage:

- economic and social growth of the town centre
- attracting people to the town who choose to come because they want to participate and make use of its facilities, rather than as the default option
- differentiation of Thatcham from its neighbours around the district
- more visitors to the town from the surrounding villages and wider district, turning Thatcham into a destination or hub
- more small/medium businesses into the town
- job creation for local residents

It would hope to aid continuous improvement and promotion of the town.

The marketing plan could for example include:

- promote Thatcham as a confident, modern, growing town, but also one that values its past and surroundings
- promote regular events
- actively promote retail and business opportunities
- develop signage for visitors from key points in the town e.g. the canal.
- develop an online presence aimed at visitors and relocating businesses
- develop a brochure promoting Thatcham as a destination for both residents and visitors

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Develop a marketing plan for Thatcham Town Centre taking into consideration active marketing of specific retail and business opportunities and any other possible means of attracting shoppers, visitors and businesses.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	41.7%
Agree	45.0%
Disagree	3.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	10.0%

7.13. Action PDI013: Build a calendar of events to take place in the Broadway to encourage people to visit the town centre shops & businesses.

Thatcham village centre suffers from a lack of footfall away from the main supermarkets and Post Office which is restricting wider retail activity and leaving the village deserted much of the time. A Saturday morning survey in 2013 commissioned by WBC showed 47% of visitors to the town centre only venture as far as Waitrose or the Co-op (*Appendix G*)

A set of measures is needed to encourage:

- More visitors to the village centre, both Thatcham residents and from out of town,
- More retailers, of a wider variety that will attract a wide range of demographics and extend the active time of the village throughout the day and evening,
- Establishment of a set of brand values for the village centre, so visitors will know what they can expect there and to give direction to further activities.

A calendar of regular events will contribute to these measures by giving people a reason to come into the village and spend time both at the event and then exploring the village retailers. The current events organised by Thatcham Town Council are very popular and show that people do attend. A variety of events aimed at different sets of people will encourage as wide a range of visitors as possible. These can include for example markets and performance. Establishment of eating areas will encourage visitors to stay both at lunchtime and into the evenings, and encourage retailers to cater to these people. A more diverse set of activities in the evenings will start to change the current after-hours feel of the village centre.

Goals

1. A regular (at least weekly) set of events in the village centre that is well publicised, caters for a diverse set of people and is executed in a professional way that will keep people coming back.

Initial events are likely to be ad hoc until the programme builds up.

For example:

- Community and farmers' markets
  - Community group activities and campaigning
  - Retailer promotions
  - Music performances: everything from classical and choir to jazz and pop. This could also provide a stage for upcoming young local bands
  - Plays, for adults and children
  - Sports
  - Circus
  - Dance
  - Outdoor cinema
2. Establishment of a seasonal or permanent performance area that also allows for current events such as the Christmas Tree
  3. Establishment of seasonal or permanent eating area suitable for lunchtimes and evenings

4. Website, social media and PR to publicise the events throughout the West Berks District

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Build a calendar of events to take place in the Broadway to encourage people to visit the town centre shops & businesses.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	43.3%
Agree	48.3%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	8.3%

7.14. Action PDI014: Review the "World Host" customer service scheme focusing on the feasibility of implementing it in Thatcham.

To support the town centre, schemes such as the "World Host" customer service award would be investigated. Thatcham Vision and the town council would support businesses in applying for such a scheme and subsequently help to maximise the advantage of any award. The town centre marketing strategy would be able to use whatever awards were achieved to add to the campaign to support local business.

Such a scheme would also encourage better training for staff and aid in their long term employment prospects.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate the feasibility of implementing the "World Host" customer service scheme in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	6.7%
Agree	26.7%
Disagree	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	3.3%
No Opinion	53.3%

7.15. Action PDI015: Encourage growth by supporting projects which give entrepreneurs an opportunity to try out their business ideas on a small-scale with minimal risk.

Opportunities will be investigated to facilitate and encourage young people or the long-term unemployed to develop entrepreneurial start-up projects. For example: 'pop-up' shops, new business ideas and apprenticeship schemes.

To increase the likelihood of project success, it may be decided that (preferably local) partners will need to be signed up to provide some services at favourable rates, such as mentorship, professional services, training, retail space, office space, etc.

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

Thatcham will benefit in various ways such as: as more housing brings in more people then they will need jobs; develop an entrepreneurial atmosphere in the town which will encourage other small businesses to move here; encourage more commercial diversity both in the town centre and throughout the town.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Encourage growth by supporting projects which give entrepreneurs an opportunity to try out their business ideas on a small-scale with minimal risk.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	36.7%
Agree	48.3%
Disagree	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	10.0%

## 8. POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

### PARISH ACTION PLAN - POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT (including INFRASTRUCTURE)

PARISH OF THATCHAM Date Plan Adopted

Ref.	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
<p>The household survey of 1870 residents showed that 63.7% would prefer lots of small developments rather than a few large developments. 74.4% disagreed that green space separating Thattham from its neighbours should be developed. 69.4 agreed that unused industrial land should be reassigned for housing. 30% of houses are overcrowded due to being unable to find affordable housing. The results of a further consultation, with a sample of 270 residents, provides the following justification for each action.</p>								
PDI001	STRONGER	Regularly review the need for a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Thattham.	M/L	2016	ongoing	TTC	TV, WBC	95.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). This scheme may enable Thattham to have a say on future development and the infrastructure it may bring.
PDI002	GREENER	Protect the green gaps between Thattham and its neighbouring communities.	H	2016	ongoing	WBC, TTC	TV, CACP	91.8% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 3.3% disagreeing). Also protect the rural outlook surrounding the town especially on hillsides.
PDI003	GREENER	Protect and enhance Thattham's nature reserves, commons and other environmental assets within and adjacent to the Parish. Many of these are identified in Vision's Environmental Asset Register.	H	2016	ongoing	TTC, WBC	TV, BBOWT, WBGE	98.4% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). Preservation of Thattham's Environmental Assets.
PDI004	GREENER	Protect Thattham's historical buildings & other heritage sites from development. Many of these are identified in Vision's Historical Heritage Asset Register.	H	2016	ongoing	TTC, WBC	TV, THS, URC, St. Mary's	96.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). Preservation of the character of the town.
PDI005	GREENER, HEALTHY	Preserve and protect Thattham's Public Rights of Way	H	2016	ongoing	TTC, WBC	TV	97.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). Contact the Ramblers' Association and other walking groups.
PDI006	PROSPEROUS	Work to ensure all developments in the Parish provide affordable homes.	H	2016	ongoing	Developers, Social L'lords, WBC	TTC, TV	85.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing).
PDI007	PROSPEROUS	Work to ensure all future developments do not reduce service and utilities provision to the population of Thattham as a whole.	H	2016	ongoing	WBC, Developers, Social L'lords,	TTC, TV	95.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). Special consideration should be given to: utility services, flood defenses, public services, emergency services, education, healthcare, parks and open spaces, adult social care and supported accommodation.
PDI008	PROSPEROUS	Support & develop the Turley design statement for the enhancement of Thattham Town Centre and its environs. Implement the streetscape enhancement whilst retaining Thattham's "village feel".	H	2017	2020	Turley Associates	WBC, TTC, TV	90.2% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 8.2% disagreeing). Improve the unsightly toilet block and resite the kebab vans. Provide picnic tables on the green. Provide an entertainment area or bandstand to enable local groups to perform on the Broadway Green.

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

PDI009	STRONGER	Provide a major centrally located community building, including community facilities such as an information point for the town.	H	2018	2020	TV	TTC	83.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 6.7% disagreeing).
PDI010	PROSPEROUS	Work to retain the provision of free parking within the town centre boundaries and its impact on the economic success of the businesses located in the town centre.	H	2016	2018	TV, CofC,, WAITROSE, TTC, WBC		83.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 11.5% disagreeing).
PDI0011	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Establish a regular Vision event to shape the future of Thatcham	H	2016	2020	TV	TTC, WBC, ALL	76.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing). A five yearly weekend long event in the centre of Thatcham where all organisations are invited to share their plans for the next five years
PDI012	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Develop a marketing plan for Thatcham Town Centre taking into consideration regular events, active marketing of specific retail and business opportunities and any other possible means of attracting shoppers, visitors and businesses.	H	2017	2018	TTC, TV, Cof C	WBC, ALL	86.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 3.3% disagreeing). The plan should work towards differentiating Thatcham from its neighbours in order to attract visitors to the town. It would hope to aid continuous improvement and promotion of the town.
PDI013	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Build a calendar of events to take place in the Broadway to encourage people to visit the town centre shops & businesses.	M	2016	2018	TV	TTC	91.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). To include performances as well as events held by community groups and a local farmers' market.
PDI014	PROSPEROUS	Investigate the "World Host" customer service scheme focusing on the feasibility of implementing it in Thatcham.	M	2016	2017	WBC, CofC, TTC	TV	33.4% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 13.3% disagreeing).
PDI015	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Encourage growth by supporting projects which give entrepreneurs an opportunity to try out their business ideas on a small-scale with minimal risk.	M	2017	2019	TV	GCT, CofC, TTC, WBC, L'LORDS	85% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 5% disagreeing). Participants could also include Newbury College, Kennet School, WBTC, EBPWB, EWB etc. who could work towards providing pop up shops in the town centre.

**Safer** (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)  
**Prosperous** (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)  
**Healthy** (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)  
**Greener** (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).  
**Stronger** (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).  
**ALSO - COMMUNICATION** (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).

## **9. APPENDICIES**

Appendix A:	Neighbourhood Development Plan Review
Appendix B:	Housing Development Objection
Appendix C (i):	Thatcham Biodiversity Register
Appendix C (ii):	Thatcham Environmental Assets (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas & West Berkshire Living Landscape Project Area)
Appendix C (iii):	Thatcham Environmental Assets (Designated Biodiversity Sites)
Appendix C (iv):	Thatcham Environmental Assets (Public Open Space)
Appendix C (v):	Countryside & Wildlife Report
Appendix D:	Heritage Asset Register
Appendix E:	Thatcham Retail Audit 2014
Appendix F:	Projects Supporting a Central Community Space
Appendix G:	Thatcham Town Footfall 2015
Appendix H:	Town SWOT Analysis 2013

### 9.1. Appendix A - Neighbourhood Development Plan Review

Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)

Help or Hindrance in implementing 'Thatcham Vision'

#### **Arguments**

For:

1. Preparation of a NDP is a significant tool for the local community to achieve a consensus on what is needed and promoting solutions with legal force to meet that need.
2. Once in place an NDP has legal force. Thatcham Vision is not a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It assists the local planning authority but does not have the statutory status of an NDP.
3. Early involvement in the planning / development process can enhance the chances of influencing an outcome acceptable to the community.

Against:

- a. The Local Development Framework 2011-2026 is still in preparation. Adoption of the Core Strategy in 2012 was subject to a review of the housing allocation for West Berkshire and the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD has yet to be published

for consultation. Substantive work on a Thatcham NDP may need to wait until the Core Strategy, as may be amended, has been adopted.

- b. The review of Thatcham Vision is required now to assist in the community's response to the Sites Allocation and Delivery DPD consultation due later this year. The Core Strategy, as adopted 2012, does not require further strategic allocations for development in Thatcham. The Core Strategy will need to be reviewed to consider the period 2016 to 2031. It is the appropriate means to influence the local planning authority in the current situation. An NDP for Thatcham may be the appropriate approach once the Core Strategy is reviewed.
- c. The Town Council is not the local planning authority. There is a danger of additional complexity, confusion and cost.
- d. Whilst the promoter(s) of a NDP may seek to address a specific issue such as housing, the wider community, WBC and/or an Inspector may require a more comprehensive approach beyond the resources currently available.
- e. Strategic allocation of housing at the Racecourse has received planning permission. Sandleford, whilst a commitment in the Core Strategy remains under challenge, particularly on extent and rate of development of the site by 2026. Careful timing of a Thatcham NDP submission is required to ensure potential 'advantages' to Thatcham which may arise from development proposals are not prejudiced.
- f. Identification in a NDP of a site for community use is unlikely to achieve a successful outcome if the Community does not have appropriately timed access to the resources to purchase and develop the preferred use.

CSJW 16 July 2013



## 9.2. Appendix B - Housing Development Objection



Thatcham Vision  
Council Offices  
Brownsfield Road  
Thatcham  
RG18 3HF

10/09/14 13:47

### Comment Receipt

<b>Event Name</b>	Housing Site Allocations DPD Preferred Options
<b>Comment by</b>	Thatcham Vision (Mrs Mireille Willan)
<b>Comment ID</b>	hsapo1746
<b>Response Date</b>	10/09/14 13:47
<b>Consultation Point</b>	Preferred Option 7 Lower Way (SHLAA site reference THA025) ( <a href="#">View</a> )
<b>Status</b>	Submitted
<b>Submission Type</b>	Web
<b>Version</b>	0.1
<b>Do you consider the preferred approach/option to be sound</b>	No

**Please give your reasons and, if objecting, please indicate what changes you are seeking or what would be your preferred alternative approach or option for allocation.**

**Thatcham Vision objects to this proposal.**

Vision is currently refreshing its Parish Plan and has conducted a consultation of circa 2,000 residents. With a population in excess of 25,000, statistically, this consultation accurately reflects the views of the people of Thatcham.

**Vision objects to the development of site THA025 based on the following findings from the above mentioned survey:**

83% expressed a preference to keep the green space separating Thatcham from its neighbours with the rural outlook of the town being a particularly emotive issue among residents. Although THA025 is situated in the centre of the Parish, Lower Way is seen as the boundary to the settlement and therefore the plot's location to the south of this border is a contentious issue.

78% communicated their preference for unused industrial land to be reassigned for housing in order to preserve green field sites. THA025 is not only a green field site but also part of the Thatcham Moors Nature Reserve. This is not supported by the community.

30% indicated that someone in their household was unable to find affordable housing, with a third of this group identifying their grown up children as the ones struggling to set up home. More than 50% expressed a preference for 1 & 2 bed starter homes and the 2011 census data shows that Thatcham is well below the national average for affordable housing of this sort. The preference to rent, buy or share ownership was split equally with each option receiving circa. 30% of the votes. These facts show

that smaller and/or social accommodation would best meet local demand which in turn points to smaller brownfield sites in the area being the best fit for Thatcham.

Additionally, of those who expressed an opinion, 79% would prefer a number of small developments rather than a few large developments. The fear is that Thatcham's infrastructure is currently unable to cope with the current population and that any large development (even one that provides additional infrastructure) would exacerbate the problem. For example, with 17.5% of people registered with a doctor outside of Thatcham and only 60% registered at a Thatcham dentist the issues range across the board and cannot be solely remedied by an additional school or community centre.

**Thatcham Vision is also able to agree and support points a) to f) below, submitted by Thatcham Town Council:**

a) The site identified as the 'preferred option' in Thatcham (THA025) together with all other undeveloped land south of Lower Way has been recognised in successive Local Plans as part of the Thatcham Moors Nature Reserve. It forms a key part of an important buffer to areas of protected local species and the countryside to the south.

b) The integrity of the entire area is dependent on a complex pattern of drainage both ground water and interconnected ditches. The site is identified as having High, Medium and Low risk zones on the 'Risk of Flooding from Surface Water' map on the Environment Agency website. No reference is made to this in the assessment of the site yet flood risk is mentioned for other sites.

c) Similarly there is no comment in the assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, despite it being adjacent to one of the oldest discovered location of human settlement in the UK.

d) Lack of emphasis on increased traffic congestion and consequential safety risks to pedestrians in Lower Way, despite Lower Way junctions with A4 being identified as at or over capacity in the West Berkshire Transport Assessment 2009 and elsewhere as one of the busiest and most congested roads in Thatcham and Newbury.

e) The site has an extensive network of regularly used pathways for public access to the surrounding parks, neighbourhoods and nature reserve facilities for at least 20 years. The pressure arising from this use of the land will transfer into the Reserve. Loss of such a major part of the buffer area, irrespective of the absence of particular species, threatens the entire Reserve.

f) Lower Way forms a clear and distinct boundary to the Settlement of Thatcham. Particular importance must be placed on those remaining sections which allow direct connection with and open views over countryside to the south. The elevated position of the site is of major significance in this regard.

**In summary, development of this land does not in any way correspond with the way the residents of Thatcham would wish to see their town grow. Residents support small housing developments on brownfield sites that provide additional infrastructure. They wish to protect the environmental assets of Thatcham which includes Thatcham Moors Nature Reserve. The need for smaller 'starter home' properties means that alternative brown field sites could house more people on smaller plots.**

**Conclusion: Identification of the site for development is not sound and should be withdrawn.**

9.3. Appendix C (i) - Thatcham Biodiversity Register

Designation	Habitat	Site Code	Grid ref
Special Area of Conservation SAC, (European designation)			
1. Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain SAC (Thatcham Reed beds)	Reed bed, fen, Desmoulin Whorlshail	UK0030044	SU509664
Site of Special Scientific Interest, SSSI (National designation)			
2. River Kennet	River and streams	2000164	SU501664
3. Thatcham Reedbeds	Reedbeds, alder wood, fen	1002762	SU523643
4. Greenham and Crookham Commons	Heathland, woodland, grassland	1003118	SU503645
5. Bowdown and Chamberhouse Woods	Heathland, ancient semi-natural woodland, grassland	1003103	SU509654
Local Wildlife Site, LWS (County designation)			
6. Hazel Grove Pond	Pond, Great crested newts	SU56E05	SU518681
7. Long Lake Marsh (part of Thatcham Reedbed)	Lake and fen	SU56D03	SU510665
8. Waterside Farm Reedbed	Fen, reedbed and wetland	SU56I01	SU525662
9. Bonds Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56M02	SU542653
10. Hanging Lands Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H09	SU538654
11. Longlane Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H02	SU523652
12. Kenton's Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56G03	SU532638

Thatcham Vision Report 2015

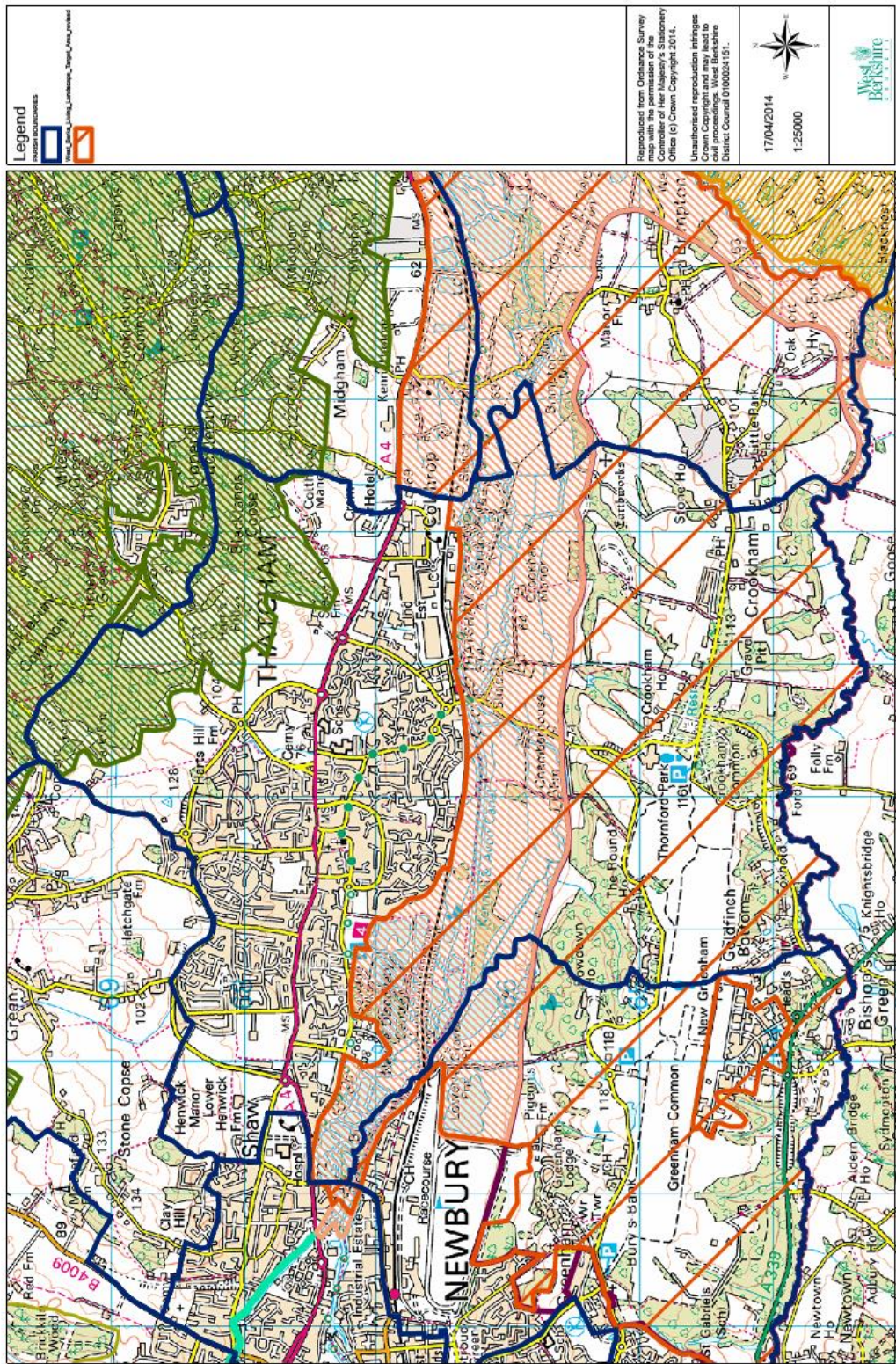
13. Hopgarden Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56M01	SU545649
14. Long Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56G02	SU530637
15. George's Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56G01	SU526646
16. Compton Wood	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H01	SU522640
17. Waterside Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H08	SU533654
18. Dog Kennel, Avenell's & Highfield Copses	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H06	SU528653
19. The Plantation	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56J01	SU520682
20. Blacklands and Berry Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56P01	SU542680
21. Long Grove Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56J10	SU538677
22. Big Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56J06	SU533681
23. Robin's Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56J02	SU523692
24. Hartshill Copse	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56J04	SU527690
25. New Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56H07	SU535652
26. Park Copse, Powell's Copse and Barn Gully	Ancient semi-natural woodland	SU56L01	SU540637

Thatcham Environmental Assets – Designated Biodiversity Sites  
 May 2014

9.4. Appendix C (ii) -

Thatcham Environmental Assets (Biodiversity Opportunity Areas & West Berkshire Living Landscape Project Area)

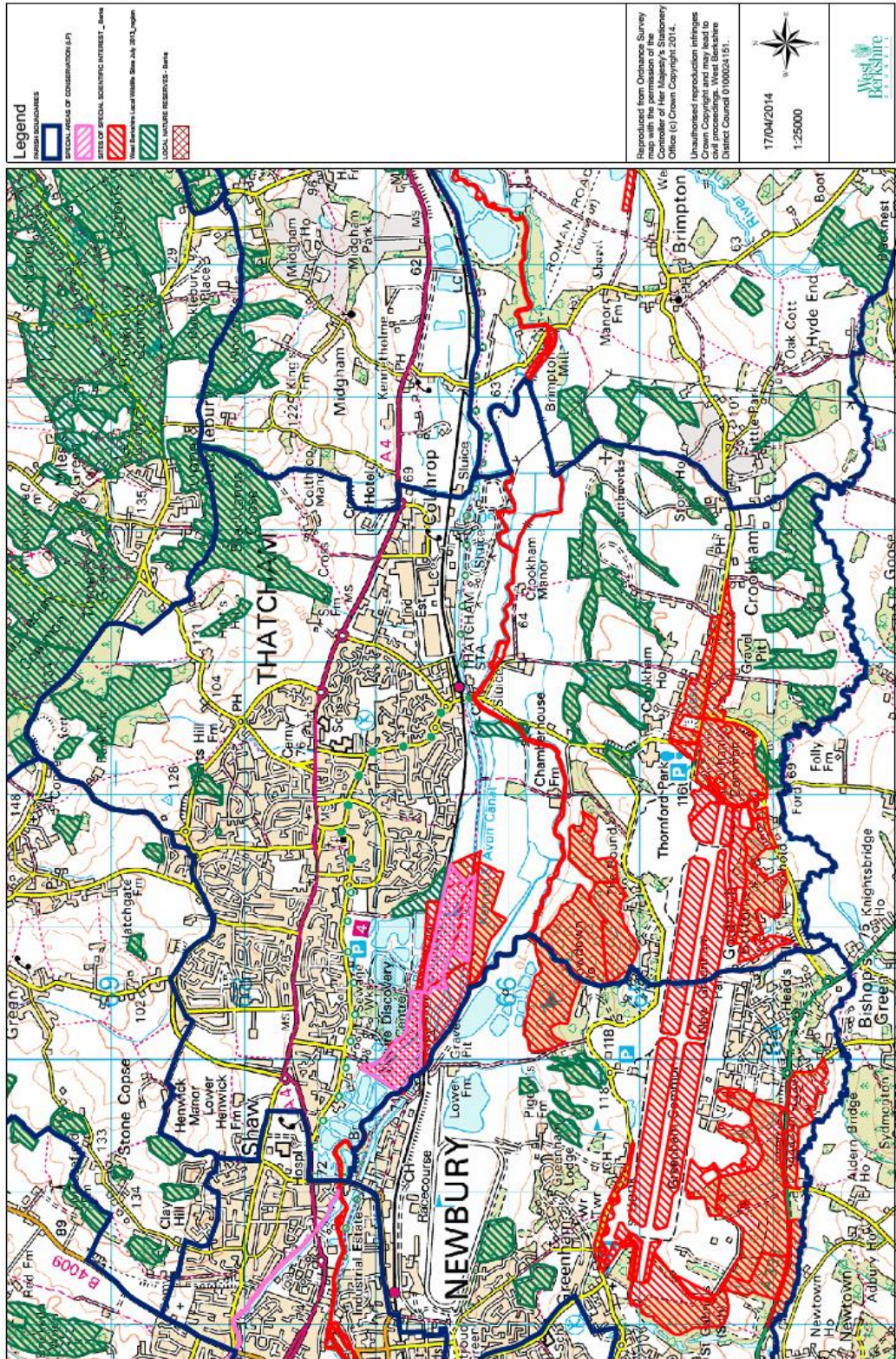
Thatcham Environmental Assets - Biodiversity Opportunity Areas & The West Berkshire Living Landscape Project Area



9.5. Appendix C (iii) -

Thatcham Environmental Assets (Designated Biodiversity Sites)

Thatcham Environmental Assets - Designated Biodiversity Sites





## 9.7. Appendix C (v) - Countryside & Wildlife Report

### Countryside and Wildlife

About 70% of the area of parish is countryside, while within the town the area of open green space is the size of nearly 40 football pitches<sup>2</sup> (including, of course, some actual football pitches).

#### Maps and designated land

See attached Environmental Asset maps and register for sites showing access, open space, and designated biodiversity areas.

#### Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

The land to the south sits within two of the 29 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) in Berkshire. These areas are recognised for their nature conservation importance and as areas to target funding and resources:

- Greenham and Crookham Plateau
- Kennet Valley East

Biodiversity is essential to our survival, wellbeing and livelihoods yet it faces many challenges. Along with development, habitat loss, pollution and inappropriate management, biodiversity is under pressure from the impacts of climate change with the result that habitats have become fragmented. So that while we have 'protected' areas such as nature reserves we need to continue working towards an integrated landscape approach across Biodiversity Opportunity Areas so that species and populations are not restricted and constrained to individual sites.

#### Landscape

Thatcham's rural hinterland includes the undeveloped part of the River Kennet floodplain, and land rising north and south of this.

To the south of the river, this land is mostly wooded with some permanent pasture, and meets the gravel ridge of Crookham Common (mainly open heath, grassland and birch woodland) at an altitude of 118 metres. The land then slopes away again southwards, again, much of this wooded, meeting the River Enborne at the southern boundary of the parish. Low-lying land on the Enborne floodplain is largely used to grow arable crops.

To the north of Thatcham's built up area, the land rises steeply, being under permanent pasture and arable land and meeting another gravel ridge at the edge of Bucklebury Common at 135 metres above sea level. Several large blocks of ancient woodland run south from this ridge, including Hartshill Wood and Blacklands Copse.

The River Kennet and Kennet and Avon Canal<sup>3</sup> run west-east through the centre of the Parish. All of the built up part of Thatcham lies to the north of the river, although a wide wedge of the floodplain consisting of pasture and reedbed north of the river is undeveloped (high risk of flooding)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> 49 hectares

<sup>3</sup> These share a course some of the time.

<sup>4</sup> Flood-risk areas are shown on the Environment Agency's website



<b>Common land</b>		
<b>Site name</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Area (ha)</b>
Dunstan Green	TTC	c.1
Marsh Meadows	WBC	2.2
Crookham Common	BBOWT	240
Broadway Green	TTC	<0.5

TTC: Thatcham Town Council  
WBC: West Berkshire Council  
BBOWT: Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

The majority of countryside is privately owned farmland and woodland.

South of the Kennet and Avon canal is mostly rural countryside. It falls within an area called the West Berkshire Living Landscape. The area is a mix of privately owned farmland and woodland; plus land owned by BBOWT or managed on behalf of West Berkshire Council.

This area includes ancient woodland where wild flowers such as bluebells thrive, and are designated as Wildlife Heritage Sites. It also includes areas of national importance for biodiversity, being scheduled as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These include parts of Greenham and Crookham Commons SSSI, Bowdown and Chamberhouse Woods SSSI, and Thatcham Reedbed.

**Gravel extraction in the Kennet Valley**  
Gravel was extracted from a substantial area of land to the north of the river between the 1950s and 1970s. Most of these now form small lakes surrounded by trees, shrubs and reeds, are rented to local fishing clubs and are managed as coarse fisheries. These provide a very important recreational resource for the community, especially as they are very close to the built up area.

The West Berkshire Living Landscape is an initiative of the local wildlife trust. The primary aims are:

- is to reconnect broken links in the landscape, creating stepping stones and corridors for wildlife to expand and thrive
- to inspire local people to make strong links with their natural heritage and take an active part in protecting and enhancing it.

Thatcham is very fortunate in that there are some large areas of public open space designated as Open Access land<sup>5</sup> or in the hands of BBOWT. All of these areas are of national importance for biodiversity, being scheduled as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These include Crookham Common, woodlands<sup>6</sup> on the north-facing scarp to the valley and Thatcham Reedbeds.

The **River Kennet is also an SSSI**. It is adversely affected by silt originating from the canal, which intertwines with the river, as well as suffering from the impacts of groundwater abstraction and nutrient enrichment. For these reasons it is considered in unfavourable condition<sup>7</sup>.

Part of Thatcham Reedbeds is a European Special Area of Conservation, as it holds populations of Desmoulin's Whorl-snail. It is also important for its floodplain, an Alder

<sup>5</sup> Open Access land - Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), the public can walk freely on mapped areas without having to stick to paths.

<sup>6</sup> Baynes & Bowdown Woods & the old bomb site

<sup>7</sup> Natural England is the government agency responsible for monitoring the condition of SSSIs

woodland. However, the latter appears to be succumbing to Alder phytopthera disease<sup>8</sup> – many Alders are dying.

**SSSI**

Thatcham Reedbeds  
 Crookham Common  
 Bowdown & Chamberhouse Woods  
 River Kennet

Most woodlands in the parish are mostly no longer managed for coppice or other timber products<sup>9</sup>. These are currently facing significant grazing pressure from deer, which is affecting their ground flora and reducing their capacity to regenerate.

Many people enjoy the **scenery and tranquillity** when they go **fishing at the lakes**, or on the **canal and river**. Children love feeding the ducks at the Nature Discovery Centre.

**The Nature Discovery Centre at Thatcham**, owned by West Berkshire Council and managed by BBOWT, provides a well-used **education and visitor centre**. This, and the birdwatching interest of the reedbeds, **attracts many visitors and groups from surrounding parishes and as far afield as Reading, Andover and Basingstoke**. The towpath and cycleways beside the Kennet and Avon Canal are also well used for informal recreation.

There is a good network of footpaths across and through the surrounding countryside easily accessed from both the Discovery Centre and Thatcham town centre.

Countryside adjacent to built-up areas is particularly under threat from development and **several Wildlife Heritage Sites have been targets of planning applications** in the past 15 years.

**Countryside at threat from development**

Location	Designation
Land to the east of Floral Way	None
Land to the north of Tull Way/ Bowling Green Road	None
Fields south of Lower Way	None
The Green Gap between Thatcham and Newbury	LDF
Pond at Hazel Grove	WHS
Long Lake Marsh	WHS

LDF: protected through local development framework policy  
 WHS: Wildlife Heritage Site

Note: all of these locations have been subject to speculative or actual applications for development in the recent past.

**Farming in the parish has experienced significant change** in recent years. Many **farm buildings on the outskirts of the town have been converted** to residential or business use and livestock-keeping, including dairying, has declined. There are constant pressures for development of land on the fringes of the existing built-up area and recent redevelopment of farm buildings to the north of Dunstan Park has pushed the northern

<sup>8</sup> A new disease that naturally arose from two species of microscopic fungi that had been introduced with imported fruit trees and strawberry plants.

<sup>9</sup> Thatcham used to be a centre for the manufacture of brooms and other small wood products, an industry served by the surrounding woodlands

boundary of the town further outside the previous development “envelope”. Coupled with future allocation of some farmland for gravel extraction, as a result there are **fewer farmers and fewer working farms**.

Also, **because farm buildings have been converted it will be difficult for farmers to return**; the infrastructure they may need to house livestock, machinery and indeed to live with their families has gone.

**Farmers and landowners are eligible for financial support if they undertake environmental improvement schemes**. It is not known how many farmers and landowners in Thatcham are engaged in such schemes, but there are many opportunities for improving the farmed environment in Thatcham and on land adjacent to the parish.

## Urban green space

Green space in the town is very important for the health and wellbeing of residents and may also be valuable for wildlife.

### Who owns greenspace in Thatcham?

Urban green spaces in the town are owned either by West Berkshire Council or Thatcham Town Council. They are currently managed under contract to ISS Waterers plc.

There are many areas of green space within the town, covering some 49 hectares approximately, and the majority are formally managed by regular mowing. A few have been made to look better by some tree planting but unlike Newbury there is no parkland. The majority of open spaces are used for informal recreation such as children’s kick-about games and for dog-walking. Formal children’s play areas (with play equipment) is installed on sites throughout the town. There is also a formal sports field at Henwick, which is the home of Newbury and Thatcham Hockey Club and used by local football clubs. There is a cricket club ground at Brownsfield Road and football pitches, also used by local teams such as Thatcham Tornados, and a cricket square at Lower Way Sports Field.

**Several of the larger open spaces are less formally managed**. These include Marsh Meadows (registered common land either side of Hartshill Road), land between the allotment and cemetery (Allotment Meadow) and Pound Lane Meadow. A woodland which was cut in two and isolated following construction of Floral Way and houses at Dunstan Park, is also owned by West Berkshire Council.

Land at the **Nature Discovery Centre**, is also an **important area of green space** in the town for residents to use. It includes a Community Orchard, a large grassy area as well as a circular walk accessible for disabled people around a lake. There are also excellent children’s play areas. Sited adjacent to Thatcham reedbeds the centre **attracts visitors from within and outside Thatcham**.

**Other green spaces** include Thatcham Churchyard, the Cemetery and Henleys Allotments (all managed by Thatcham Town Council). There are important “veteran trees” at Thatcham Cemetery, and Henleys allotments is used by a range of wildlife, from Green Woodpeckers, Little Owls and Foxes.

An issue constantly raised by residents is **dog-fouling** on green space and on footways in the town. Dog-walkers are much more conscientious on the whole than they were 10 years ago, and most green spaces have dog-bins. However, there is a need for better communication about the health risks associated with dog-fouling and it is considered that **more could be done to promote this aspect by using on-site information**.

## Allotment

**A second allotment site should be identified in Thatcham.** This is because the population of Thatcham has rapidly grown and new houses are being built with no or very small gardens. Interest in allotments has increased in recent years, and Thatcham's quota of allotments is currently only about half of nearby Newbury's on a per capita basis. **A new allotment site, in a different part of Thatcham, is required.**

## Light and noise pollution

This was an issue not addressed in any depth by the environment team. However, there are several hotspots of concern.

- **Security lighting at Thornford Park Hospital** has a very detrimental impact on the night sky and affects much of Crookham Common.
- **Lighting on warehousing adjacent to Pipers Way** is detrimental to the wellbeing of residents living close by. Residents are also affected by noise from this industrial site, which involves frequent heavy goods vehicle movement.
- **Residents living along the A4** are adversely affected by the increasing number of Heavy Goods Vehicle movements along this road at night and early in the morning.
- There is also an **increasing use of domestic security lighting**, which can adversely affect the amenities of neighbours if lights are incorrectly positioned, too bright or just inappropriate for dense developments.
- Managers of industrial units along the A4 into Thatcham have been undertaking management of the trees which means that some **industrial units are no longer screened from the road** resulting in a less green approach into Thatcham.

## 9.8. Appendix D - Heritage Asset Register

Please see the 4 main types of national heritage designation on land –which include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Registered Battlefields here: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/>

Please also see comments from Alex Godden - Archaeological Officer, Cultural & Environmental Protection, West Berkshire Council (supplied in separate document).

Data provided by West Berkshire Council 2015

### Thatcham Heritage Assets – Listed Buildings & Treasured Sites

Name	West Berks HER ref	Old English Heritage Ref No.
<b>National Grade I Listed</b>		
1. The Old Bluecoat School	DWB1773	39623
<b>National Grade II* Listed</b>		
2. Church of St Mary	DWB629	39627
<b>National Grade II Listed</b>		
3. LOWER HENWICK FARMHOUSE	DWB359	39652
4. 2 BARNs APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES TO EAST OF LOWER HENWICK FARMHOUSE	DWB360	39653
5. CART SHED APPROXIMATELY 60 METRES TO SOUTH WEST OF SIEGECROSS FARMHOUSE	DWB361	39655
6. MILESTONE AT SU50230 67601	DWB380	39600
7. MILESTONE AT SU5327 6721	DWB381	39601
8. LOW WALL AND RAILINGS APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES TO SOUTH OF NO 3 AND 3A BATH ROAD	DWB382	39603
9. No name for this Entry	DWB383	39605
10. No name for this Entry	DWB384	39606
11. No name for this Entry	DWB385	39608
12. THE OLD CHEQUERS PUBLIC HOUSE	DWB386	39611

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13. No name for this Entry	DWB387	39613
14. BUTTERCROSS	DWB388	39617
15. No name for this Entry	DWB390	39622
16. No name for this Entry	DWB391	39624
17. THE PLOUGH PUBLIC HOUSE	DWB392	39626
18. DIBBIN TOMB APPROXIMATELY 8 METRES TO NORTH OF VESTRY OF ST MARY	DWB393	39628
19. CHURCH GATE HOUSE AND QUADRANT WING WALL TO RIGHT	DWB394	39630
20. THE GRANGE	DWB395	39632
21. MANOR COTTAGES	DWB397	39637
22. FOUR WINDS	DWB399	39645
23. COOPER'S FARMHOUSE	DWB400	39646
24. CHAMBERHOUSE FARMHOUSE	DWB401	39650
25. No name for this Entry	DWB624	39610
26. No name for this Entry	DWB625	39614
27. No name for this Entry	DWB627	39620
28. MILESTONE AT SU 51777 67455	DWB626	39618
29. THE PRANCING HORSE PUBLIC HOUSE	DWB628	39625
30. MATHEWS TOMB APPROXIMATELY 8 METRES TO SOUTH OF SOUTH AISLE OF CHURCH OF ST MARY	DWB630	39629
31. MANOR FARMHOUSE	DWB631	39638
32. CROWN HOUSE	DWB632	39644
33. COMPTON WOOD	DWB633	39647
34. No name for this Entry	DWB646	39699
35. THORNFORD COTTAGE	DWB1879	39648
36. UNITED REFORMED CHURCH	DWB396	39635
37. No name for this Entry	DWB1873	39609

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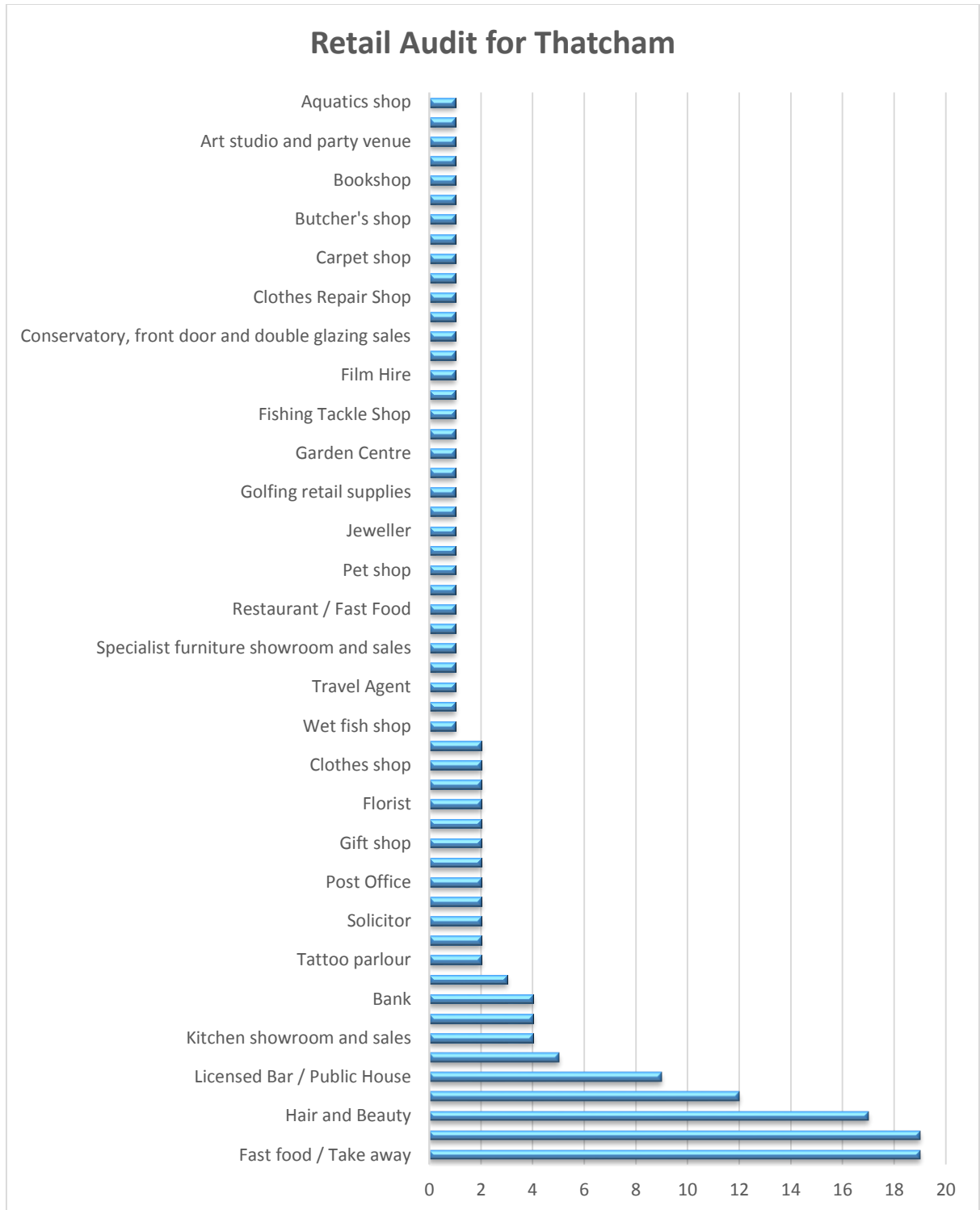
38. THATCHAM HOUSE	DWB1767	39649
39. MONKS CHAMBERS	DWB1768	39634
40. THE PRIORY	DWB1769	39636
41. ST MARY'S COTTAGE	DWB1771	39631
42. THE KINGS HEAD INN	DWB1772	39616
43. No name for this Entry	DWB1774	39612
44. THE POPLARS	DWB1870	39602
45. No name for this Entry	DWB1872	39607
46. No name for this Entry	DWB1874	39615
47. BARN APPROXIMATELY 5 METRES TO NORTH WEST OF NO 2 CHAPEL STREET	DWB1875	39619
48. GRANARY APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES TO NORTH EAST OF THE GRANGE	DWB1876	39633
49. BARN APPROXIMATELY 20 METRES NORTH EAST OF LITTLE PARK FARMHOUSE	DWB1877	39639
50. THE WIMBLES	DWB1878	39643
51. BARN APPROXIMATELY 15 METRES TO SOUTH WEST OF SIEGECROSS FARMHOUSE	DWB1900	39654
52. BARN AT COLTHROP MANOR	DWB1901	39656
53. CHAMBERHOUSE COTTAGES	DWB1899	39651
<b>National Scheduled Monument</b>		
54. MONKEY MARSH LOCK, KENNET AND AVON CANAL	DWB69	WB193
55. MOATED MANORIAL SITE 200M NORTH-WEST OF EAST FIELD COPSE	DWB16	12035
<b>Local List of Heritage Assets</b>		
56. Crookham House, Crookham Hill, Crookham Common, Thatcham	DWB2398	
<b>Local List Conservation Area</b>		
57. Kennet and Avon Canal East	DWB2379	

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58.Thatcham Centre	DWB2389	
<b>Unlisted – Apply for National and Local Listing</b> Please see comments from Alex Godden		
59. The Water Pumps		
60. Pill Boxes		
61. Barn close to Little Barn Farmhouse, Crookham		
62. The Old Police Station		
63. Francis Baily School		
64. Thatcham Reed Beds		



9.9. Appendix E - Thatcham Retail Audit 2014



September 2014

9.10. Appendix F - Projects Supporting a Central Community Space

PARISH ACTION PLAN								
Ref	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
PDI009	STRONGER	Provide a major centrally located community building, including community facilities such as an information point for the town.	H			TV	TTC	83.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 6.7% disagreeing).
PDI011	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Establish a regular Vision event to shape the future of Thattham.	H			TV	TTC, WBC, ALL	76.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing). A 5 yearly weekend long event in the centre of Thattham where all organisations are invited to share their plans for the next five years..
PDI012	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Develop a marketing plan for Thattham Town Centre taking into consideration regular events, active marketing of specific retail and business opportunities and any other possible means of attracting shoppers, visitors and businesses.	H			TTC, TV, Cof C	WBC, ALL	86.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 3.3% disagreeing). The plan should work towards differentiating Thattham from its neighbours in order to attract visitors to the town. It would hope to aid continuous improvement and promotion of the town.
PDI013	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Build a calendar of events to take place in the Broadway to encourage people to visit the town centre shops & businesses.	M			TV	TTC	91.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (0% disagreeing). To include performances as well as events held by community groups and a local farmers' market.
EYL007	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Support low cost out of school activities and events e.g. playdays and sports coaching.	M			Vision	WBC, TTC, SOVEREIGN, THATCHAM YOUTH, LOCAL CLUBS	85% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.5% disagreeing).

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CS001	SAFER, STRONGER & COMMUNICATION	Set up a Community Safety Information Noticeboard in Thatcham	H			Vision	TVP Neighbourhood Team, Fire and Rescue Service, TTC, WBSCP .	<b>70.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing).</b> Improve communication between police and community and vice versa.
CS002	SAFER, STRONGER & COMMUNICATION	Increase perceived Police presence in the town by encouraging them to engage more with our community.	M			TVP Neighbourhood Team	WBC	<b>89.8% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing).</b> Tackle perception of Thatcham being unsafe at night and add more opportunities for public to meet police.
CS003	SAFER, STRONGER & COMMUNICATION	Arrange visits by BURT (the Berkshire Unitary Resilience Transport bus) for 'Community Information Days' with representatives from the police and the Fire services.	M			TVP Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service	TVP, Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service, WBC, MP, WBSCP, TTC, NA	<b>78.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> Tackle perception of Thatcham being unsafe at night and add more opportunities for public to meet Police, Fire Service & other organisations.
CS004	SAFER, STRONGER & COMMUNICATION	Investigate the feasibility of a community-manned information desk	M			Vision Action Team	TTC, TVP, Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service, National Community Hub Scheme.	<b>73.2% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing)</b> Increase access between public and the information they need.
CS005	SAFER & STRONGER	Have a central community facility which includes youth-oriented space and activities	M			TTC	WBC, Youth Services, GCT, Neighbourhood Wardens and Sovereign.	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing).</b> The example of The Nightingales in Greenham shows ASB can be reduced dramatically by providing a Youth Centre.

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

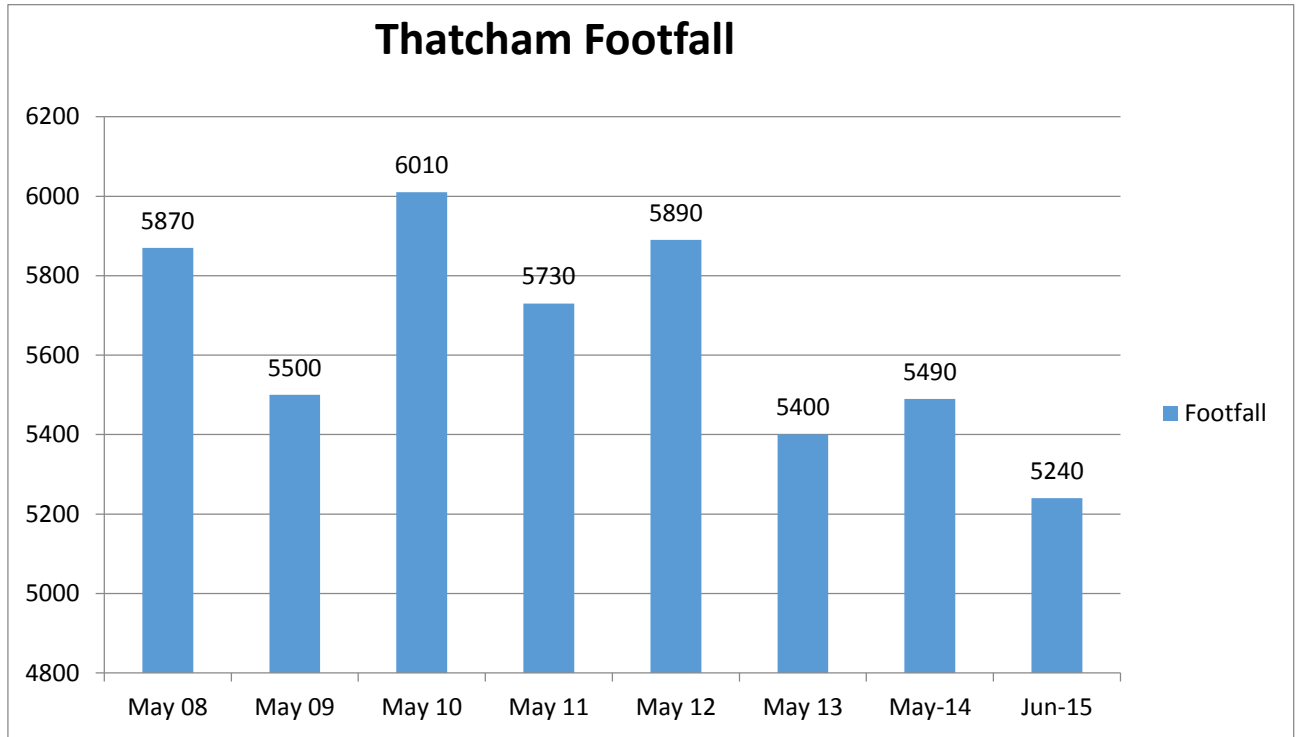
SC002	HEALTHY & STRONGER	Establish a senior citizens centre in the town	H			Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Sev	<b>87.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.2% disagreeing).</b> Provide a place to get advice/support. Also provide other services.
SC003	HEALTHY & STRONGER	Investigate and develop the concept of volunteer carers for older people.	M			Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv Thatcham Churches	<b>89.43% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.3% disagreeing).</b> There is a need for professional and volunteer support for the growing population of older people in the town. Such a scheme needs an advice centre to make it practical and the support of the churches who have a very active ministry to older people.
SC004	HEALTHY, STRONGER & COMMUNICATION	Improve publicity of activities for seniors with central and digital information	M			Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>85.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.3% disagreeing).</b> To give senior citizens more opportunities of involvement.
SC005	HEALTHY & STRONGER	Arrange more social activities in the town for older people – e.g. coffee mornings etc	M			Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>78.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 8.5% disagreeing).</b> To help the lonely & isolated.
SC006	HEALTHY & STRONGER	Encourage & support schemes and projects designed to improve the quality of life for our older residents. e.g. the Village Agent Scheme	M			Thatcham Vision Village Agents	WBC. TTC, Age UK, Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>91.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.1% disagreeing).</b> To help the lonely & isolated.

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SLC003	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Develop and install a series of heritage display and feature boards (accessible to all).	M			Vision	WBC/TTC & historical society	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 14.6% disagreeing).</b> Increase awareness of the rich history of Thatcham and how to find it.
SLC009	GREENER, HEALTHY	Support community gardening for food production, such as Edible Thatcham and the Community Orchard.	M			Vision	TTC, WBC	<b>80.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.7% disagreeing).</b> To meet increasing demand and support healthy living.
SLC010	HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS, STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Develop a campaign to encourage entrepreneurs to develop sports & leisure facilities in Thatcham that appeal to young people (especially teenagers). Establish and support activities, such as a climbing wall and/or roller disco	M			Vision	WBC, TTC, Thatcham Youth, Berkshire Youth/Get Berkshire Active, Chamber of Commerce	<b>78% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.3% disagreeing).</b> To support individuals/groups wishing to increase sports/leisure and cultural facilities in Thatcham.
SLC017	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Ensure sufficient range of facilities accessible for residents with disabilities, including a hydrotherapy pool	H			Vision	WBC/Get Berkshire Active	<b>78% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.4% disagreeing).</b> To increase and encourage participation in community activities by a target population.
SLC020	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Establish a museum and/or heritage display in That	M			TTC	Vision, Historical Society/WBC	<b>56.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 31.7% disagreeing).</b> To reinforce Thatcham's historically significant past.
SLC021	STRONGER	Investigate how to provide additional performance areas in Thatcham to cater for large community gatherings in the Town as well as supporting the arts	M			Vision	WBC, TTC, KATS	<b>77.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.5% disagreeing).</b> St. Mary's Church is no longer a big enough venue to hold those wishing to attend community functions

<b>Safer</b> (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)	<b>Greener</b> (e.g reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).
<b>Prosperous</b> (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)	<b>Stronger</b> (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).
<b>Healthy</b> (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)	<b>ALSO - COMMUNICATION</b> (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).

9.11. Appendix G - Thatcham Footfall May/June 2015



## 9.12. Appendix H – Town SWOT Analysis 2013

### Strengths

- Population and Development
- Strengths
- accessibility
- environmental quality
- community services and facilities
- general health
- balance of population age range
- employment opportunities
- low rates of crime

### Weakness

- high cost of housing
- commuting and weekday dormitory status
- town centre environment
- safety of cyclists and pedestrians – A4
- access to GPs and dentists
- availability of emergency services – police and fire/rescue
- limited investment in publicly accessible historic buildings
- sewerage capacity – potential impact on nearby residential and Thatcham Moors area
- limited range of town centre shopping facilities

### Opportunities

- tourism
- historical features
- Moors and Reedbeds – nature conservation and recreation
- Town centre community centre & resource
- More flexibility in town centre car parking management

### Threats

- speculative greenfield development pressure
- aging population
- further loss of traditional local shopping facilities
- flooding

# Childcare and Early Years Learning



# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE CHILDCARE & EARLY YEARS LEARNING TOPIC TEAM***

## **10. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **10.1. Document Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Childcare and Early Years Learning Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and sets out the remit and the membership of the team.

### **10.2. Team remit**

The Childcare and Early Years Learning Topic Team was formed in 2013 as part of the refresh of Thatcham Vision's Action Plan with a remit to consider current issues and the necessary requirements to overcome them. This is in order to provide a better quality of provision focussing on additional facilities that may enhance childcare and learning in Thatcham as well as looking at how the provision will need to be developed as the population grows.

### **10.3. Team Composition**

The Childcare and Early Years Learning Topic Team was formed in September 2013 as part of the Thatcham Vision's action plan refresh process. The team was fortunate to be made up of local volunteers who are all very experienced in the field of childcare and learning.

The team was chaired by Sheila Ellison who also previously chaired Thatcham Youth and works as a governor at Thatcham Park Primary School and Kennet Academy. Mandy Cole, Manager of the outstanding Pied Piper Pre-School and Marilyn Cornwell, Headteacher of Thatcham Park Primary School contributed with their knowledge of running a learning establishment. Chris Garner, local resident and grandmother provided a view for this normally unrepresented group and Zoe Hammond and David Morris, both local child-minders (Ofsted rated outstanding) represented the view of child minders and of local parents. The team were also fortunate to have the input of Debbie Rowe, Senior Children's Centre Manager in Thatcham; Richard Thompson, Governor at Parsons Down School and Jane Tubbs, Operations Manager at Tiger's Day Nurseries.

## **11. APPROACH**

This topic was not included in the first Parish Plan and although issues in this area did not feature heavily when the community was asked for two things to start, stop and continue in Thatcham, it came second only to Community Safety in the list of topics people most wanted Vision to review.

Overall the household survey of 1,870 residents that expressed an opinion showed that: 57% agreed that Thatcham has plenty of affordable childcare but 28% felt that the cost of childcare has prevented them from going to work. Residents who had a child/children currently in pre-school (37.7% of the whole) told Vision whether they had struggled to

get a pre-school place in Thatcham: of those 31.9% had, 21% due to lack of places and 7.5% due to cost. When asked whether children attending primary school were able to attend the school of their choice a resounding 79.4% received the 1<sup>st</sup> choice and 11.7% received their 2<sup>nd</sup> choice place. Only 11.7% were allocated an alternative with 6.5% of these being outside of Thatcham.

2011 Census data shows that pupil attainment in Key stages 1 and 2 for Thatcham are in line with the national average. Pupil attainment in key stage 4 however, are well below the national mean.

The topic team therefore considered how to maintain and improve the quality of the current provision for pre-school and primary education as well as provide additional activities in the locality.

## **12. TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **12.1. Action EYL001: Press the need for enhanced and additional facilities in Thatcham for secondary school children.**

The aim of this action is to provide all secondary school-age pupils with a choice of going to a school in their own town, also eliminating the financial burden of school transport costs for local parents.

Kennet School is the only secondary school in Thatcham. The alternative school is Trinity School, Shaw. Trinity School is 3 miles from Thatcham. There is school transport at a cost of £420 per child with 30% discount for any additional fare paying sibling. This is considered expensive by families in the town.

Walking or cycling to school was considered as an alternative. Trinity is within the 3 mile walk to school policy, set out by WBC's Education Department although this would mean travelling along the busy A4 and is considered by many to be unsafe.

Kennet Academy hosts approximately 1,700 pupils with a 6th Form. The school site is tight on size with limited parking spaces. WBC have no plans to change the catchment area at the present time but the Academy could do so should they wish.

Both schools are undoubtedly nearing "full" but the future of secondary education in West Berkshire is unclear.

#### **Options for Expansion**

1. To have a school on two different sites. One as a sixth form and the other without.
8. Provide a new site for Francis Bailey School and develop the site for Kennet School. (Francis Bailey Junior School backs onto Kennet School).
9. Purchase land at Thatcham Garden Centre, should it become available. (3,000 hectares)

WBC hold regular site selection meetings to consider possible sites for use.

Thatcham is unable to support any large scale housing development until this issue is resolved and therefore is unable to attract new funding from S106 contributions. Thatcham has undergone vast development previously and so it is suggested that funds are provided from monies already received.

This action requires the following:

1. Determine the future need for an additional senior school.

- 10. Liaise with WBC and local schools to agree and establish a plan for the future.
- 11. Engage with WBC, potential landowners and developers to ensure that the project is viable.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Press the need for another secondary school in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	37.5%
Agree	27.5%
Disagree	10.0%
Strongly Disagree	5.0%
No Opinion	20.0%

**12.2. Action EYL002: Discourage Primary Schools from expanding any greater than a three form entry.**

In recent years there has been a general growth in Primary school numbers across the county. To increase the intake of pupils at a school, consideration is taken from what the site can support, car parking, highways views and travel plans.

Thatcham Park school had increased from 1½ form entry to 2 form entry and an Early Years/Children’s’ Centre had been developed. There are development plans to increase Spurcroft School to 2½ form entry, which was considered as sufficient.

It is considered more cost effective to create more spaces in a current school rather than a new build although WBC are not planning to increase a school in excess of 3 form entry and consideration to expand schools would only be given, should they provide good quality education and teaching based on OFSTED reports. Current primary school plans are sufficient at the current time.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Encourage Primary Schools to limit their growth to three classes per intake.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	25.0%
Agree	30.0%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	5.0%
No Opinion	32.5%

**12.3. Action EYL003: Support a scheme to encourage/attract high quality teachers to work in Thatcham's schools.**

A larger proportion of schools in Thatcham have recently been rated as "requiring improvement". High quality teachers are required to help to bring these schools back on track.

The provision and promotion of affordable housing through local housing associations and the increased availability of shared-ownership with young professionals in mind is required to lure the best teachers to West Berkshire. Also, head hunting the UK's top teachers could be completed as standard procedure with training and 'fast track' opportunities for the best university graduates.

Previously, West Berkshire Council has promoted schemes to encourage more skilled workers to the area via publicity, key worker development schemes and mortgage incentives.

This is a West Berkshire wide problem and is currently being considered by WBC.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Support a scheme to encourage/attract high quality teachers to work in Thatcham's schools.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	60.0%
Agree	25.0%
Disagree	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	10.0%

**12.4. Action EYL004 - Investigate and report on road safety at each nursery, pre-school and school in Thatcham.**

As part of the School Safety Project, WBC investigate and introduce measures to improve safety outside a school and on identified routes to the school. There is an approved list of schools to be investigated, which is prioritised on a number of factors with the top schools being included in the annual Traffic & Road Safety programme approved by Individual Decision at the start of each financial year.

WBC also provide schools with a training booklet listing the road safety education training services available on request.

Local groups will enhance this work by independently assessing other local schools as well as additional childcare facilities not included in this project. This information would be shared with WBC. The group will also consider schemes for rectifying any issues found.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate and report on road safety at each nursery, pre-school and school in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	47.5%
Agree	37.5%
Disagree	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	7.5%

**12.5. Action EYL005: Encourage the further utilisation of Thatcham's children's centres to provide services in line with the size of the population.**

The Children's Centres are currently under financial pressure which has meant that although the centres remain available, opening hours have been reduced. Further people resources are needed to keep the children's centres open longer and to provide additional services for the community. Additional needs should be identified in order to plan future provision (access to birth data is important here) as well as to further encourage family learning and parenting courses. Community groups will also be sought to enhance the current provision with minimum cost.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Encourage the further utilisation of Thatcham's children centres to provide services in line with the size of the population.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	50.0%
Agree	37.5%
Disagree	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	7.5%

**12.6. Action EYL006: Introduce and promote a scheme to encourage local child minders to improve their Ofsted rating.**

Child minders are a commercial enterprise and outside the remit of the local authority. A new scheme should be set up at the Children's Centres where child-minders can meet regularly and share best practice. Outstanding Ofsted rated child-minders in the area should be invited to share their experiences. This may lead onto an opportunity to offer additional workshops for this skillset and therefore attract additional income from room hire.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Introduce and promote a scheme to encourage local child-minders to improve their Ofsted rating.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	27.0%
Agree	32.4%
Disagree	18.9%
Strongly Disagree	5.4%
No Opinion	16.2%

### 12.7. Action EYL007: Support low cost out of school activities and events e.g. playdays and sports coaching.

Previously, Thatcham Town Council had run a number of free play days in parks around Thatcham to celebrate the Queen's jubilee and the 2012 London Olympics. These events were incredibly popular which confirmed there was a local demand for low cost activities during the holidays.

Other activities during school breaks, as well as after school clubs, can be quite expensive and this excludes some children from taking part. It was therefore agreed that an action to support, initiate and acquire funding for free and low cost events for Thatcham's youth would be included in the Vision plan.

WBC Public Health support a number of schemes that may help support and/or fund local events, clubs & activities:

- The Green Bag Scheme  
WBC Physical Activity Coordinator, small scale sports equipment available FOC
- Get Berkshire Active - 'All Sports for All Sorts'  
An externally run scheme to encourage physical activity for 4-11 year olds through training local volunteers to deliver sports coaching.
- Berkshire Youth  
Help with establishing youth clubs and running sessions.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Support low cost out of school activities and events e.g. play days and sports coaching.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	35.0%
Agree	50.0%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	12.5%

**12.8. Action EYL008: Provide additional shade in play areas across Thattham.**

To provide families who use the parks and play areas the opportunity to stay longer and offer some protection from the sun it was agreed that more shade should be provided, perhaps planting or screening. It was noted that some of the play areas belong to WBC, others to TTC.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Provide additional shade in play areas across Thattham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	15.0%
Agree	50.0%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	27.5%

**12.9. Action EYL009: Invite all pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to take part in community events.**

The value to local schools and their children when taking part in the community events run by Thattham Town Council was discussed. As some were not aware of these events it was suggested that there was a need to make contact not only with all of the schools, pre-schools and nurseries but also their PTA's. This would in turn promote the events increasing their success and ensure they were more inclusive.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Invite all pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to take part in community events.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	30.8%
Agree	59.0%
Disagree	2.6%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	7.7%

**12.10. Action EYL010: Improve Thatcham Town Council's welcome pack by including information on facilities for children and their families.**

A welcome pack is available to all new residents to Thatcham although not many are given out as it is not widely marketed. The pack also requires regular updates. The pack includes a very useful Town Guide published by TTC. Other key items to include are details of the children's centre, pre-schools and child-minders and the Family Information Service.

Increased distribution of the packs could be made by providing them to local housing associations and estate agents rather than receiving the odd request from new residents.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Improve Thatcham Town Council's welcome pack by including information on facilities for children and their families.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	25.6%
Agree	51.3%
Disagree	2.6%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	20.5%



## **13. *CHILDCARE & EARLY YEARS LEARNING ACTION PLAN***

Thattham Vision Report 2015

PARISH ACTION PLAN - CHILDCARE & EARLY YEARS LEARNING								
PARISH OF THATTHAM								Date Plan Adopted
Ref	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
Overall the household survey of 1870 residents that expressed an opinion showed that: 57% agreed that Thattham has plenty of affordable childcare, 28% felt that the cost of childcare has prevented them from going to work								
The results of a further consultation, with a sample of 270 residents, provides the following justification for each action.								
EYL001	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS, HEALTHY, GREENER, SAFER	Press the need for enhanced and additional facilities in Thattham for secondary school children .	H	2016	ongoing	TV	TTC, KENNET, ACADEMY, TRINITY	65% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing). Provide all secondary school-age pupils with a choice of going to a school in their town. Reduce the financial burden of school transport costs for local parents.
EYL002	STRONGER	Encourage Primary Schools to limit their growth to three classes per intake.	H	2016	ongoing	WBC	TTC, TV, HEADS & GOVERNERS	60% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing). Not letting schools grow too big.
EYL003	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Support a scheme to encourage/attract high quality teachers to work in Thattham's schools.	H	2016	2017	WBC	HEADS & GOVERNERS	85% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 5% disagreeing). Examples include key worker development schemes and/or mortgage incentives
EYL004	SAFER	Investigate and report on road safety at each nursery, pre-school and school in Thattham.	H	2017	2018	WBC	TTC, TV, HEADS & GOVERNERS	85% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.5% disagreeing). Include the need for speed restrictions and railings
EYL005	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Encourage the further utilisation of Thattham's children's centres to provide services in line with the size of the population.	H	2016	2017	WBC	CHILDREN'S CENTRE STAFF, TTC, TV, THATTHAM YOUTH, ETC	87.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 5% disagreeing). Further people resources are needed to keep the children's centres open longer and to provide additional services for the community. Provide birth data to enable them to plan future provision and further encourage family learning and parenting courses.
EYL006	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS, SAFER,	Introduce and promote a scheme to encourage local childminders to improve their Ofsted rating.	M	2017	2018	WBC	CHILDREN'S CENTRE STAFF, TTC, TV	59.8% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 24.3% disagreeing). A scheme at the Children's Centres where childminders meet. Outstanding childminders in the area to attend and share good practice.
EYL007	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Support low cost out of school activities and events e.g. playdays and sports coaching.	M	Started	ongoing	Vision	WBC, TTC, SOVEREIGN, THATTHAM YOUTH, LOCAL CLUBS	85% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.5% disagreeing).
EYL008	SAFER, HEALTHY	Provide additional shade in play areas across Thattham.	M	2016	2017	TTC	WBC, TV, SOVEREIGN	65% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.5% disagreeing) Perhaps through planting or screening

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EYL009	STRONGER, HEALTHY, COMMUNICATION	Invite all pre-schools, primary and secondary schools to take part in community events	M	Started	ongoing	TTC	TV	<b>89.8% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.6% disagreeing)</b> Contact should be made to the schools and their PTAs
EYL010	STRONGER, COMMUNICATION	Improve Thatcham Town Council's welcome pack by including information on facilities for children and their families.	M	2017	2018	TTC	TV, FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE, CHILDREN'S CENTRES	<b>76.9% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.6% disagreeing)</b> Key items to include are details of the children's centre, pre-schools and childminders and the Family Information Service.
<b>Safer</b> (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)					<b>Greener</b> (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).			
<b>Prosperous</b> (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)					<b>Stronger</b> (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).			
<b>Healthy</b> (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)					<b>ALSO - COMMUNICATION</b> (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).			

## Senior Citizens

# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE SENIOR CITIZENS TOPIC TEAM***

## **14. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **14.1. Document Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Senior Citizens Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and details the remit of the Senior Citizen's Team and its membership.

### **14.2. Team remit**

The Senior Citizens Topic Team was formed in 2013 under the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Action Plan with a remit to review how well the current requirements of older people in the Parish are being met including their housing, daily care and transport needs. The team were also tasked with considering additional facilities that would provide a better quality of life and also how this provision will need to be developed as the population grows.

### **14.3. Team Composition**

The team was chaired by Professor Peter Jarvis who is Emeritus Professor of Continuing Education at the University of Surrey. He is also an internationally renowned author, editor and lecturer in adult and continuing education and lifelong learning. Peter is a resident of Thatcham and has been a member of Thatcham Vision since its inception. He is also the founding chair of Thatcham's University of the Third Age (U3A) and a Methodist Minister. Peter has provided the following details on his team.

It was a great pleasure to work with all the members of this group – especially those whom we do not meet at Vision meetings – namely Howard Fletcher, John Robinson, Carol Hoyle and Ann Walter. All had a great deal to offer and I hope that we can continue to work with them – especially if we try to develop a Senior Citizens forum

David Brazier's dedication and expertise is always useful in Vision meetings.

The two town councillors have a lot of expertise to offer but they are so busy – we will need all their support for future developments.

We had one or two occasional visitors, Mark from Carnation Care and Gillian Comely from the Village Agency scheme, who have a great deal to offer and I think that this expertise is something we need to tap in to as we develop our work in this area. Also, Mike Allen from Age UK Berkshire kindly provided us with details of the services currently available to Senior Citizens in Thatcham.

Stephanie Steevenson started with us but with all her commitments it was not surprising that she was forced to pull out of something and regrettably it was our working party. She also chaired the Vision Steering Group as well as the Community Safety Topic Team.

## **15. APPROACH**

This topic was part of the first action plan but limited resources had meant that progress had been slow. The Vision Steering Group therefore chose to again include the welfare of its senior residents in the Parish Plan.

The community survey asked three questions of its participants:

Survey Question	Agree/Strongly Agree
Does Thatcham need a Senior Citizen's centre in the heart of the town?	86%
Is there a need for specialist workers for older people?	89%
Is Thatcham a good place for older people to live?	73.5%

Additional data from the 2011 Census informed the group that there are more than 3,000 people aged over 65 living in the Parish, which computes to 11.9% of Thatcham's population (below the English average of 16.3%). There are 1,580 pensioner households of which 1,530 are one person households, of these 717 pensioner households have no car or van. The team also reviewed a disability and health analysis born of census data (*Appendix A*).

This led the team to consider actions and projects focussed on reducing isolation and loneliness as well as better care for those with disabilities and poor health.

The team reviewed the relevant sections of WBC's Health and Wellbeing Strategy which provided useful predictions on the likely increase of older people requiring care in the community (*Appendix B*). This was followed up with a very positive and supportive meeting with Patrick Leavey who is the Maximising Independence Manager of Adult Social Care at WBC (*Appendix C*).

## 16. TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 16.1. Action SC001: Establish a Senior Citizens Council/Forum

The Forum would represent all aspects of work with senior citizens – including the statutory services, workers and volunteers working with senior citizens, managers of residential homes, senior citizens themselves and the town council - bringing together all those public, private and voluntary organisations that influence the lives of our senior citizens. The Forum would seek to co-ordinate efforts and the impact of the work in order to maximize the outcome for their consumers.

The Forum would also give senior citizens a voice in the town and be a resource from which all other initiatives flow. It would enable space for all agencies to examine their work and co-operate in future developments.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Establish a Senior Citizens Council/Forum.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	34.0%
Agree	51.1%
Disagree	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	6.4%
No Opinion	4.3%

## 16.2. Action SC002: Establish a senior citizens centre in the town

The Centre would be a multi-functional unit providing a wide variety of services. These would include a social provision in order to provide seniors with a place where they can get advice/support as well as other useful services, thus making seniors feel part of the town as well as helping them to access available facilities.

The centre would also be a place where seniors could meet to socialise and share experiences, seek advice, learn, explore leisure pursuits, celebrate and enjoy many other activities.

It could be the focal point for all local organisations offering support to senior citizens:

- TTC,
- WBC,
- WBPCT,
- Help the Aged,
- Age Concern,
- U3A,
- the Legion,
- WI,
- the Police,
- local banks,
- local opticians,
- C.A.B.,
- local pharmacies,
- local faith groups,
- RNID,
- RNIB, etc.

The Thatcham Senior Centre should aim to provide activities and services to enrich, assist and stimulate its members in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. The centre should be a place where seniors can enjoy the pleasure and companionship of their peers.

It should offer:

- activities suited to a wide range of senior capabilities and interests, including meetings, parties, speakers, crafts, and clubs, games, and health programmes
- interesting and stimulating courses and visits
- a place where local service providers might offer their skills and advice to seniors who could benefit
- a venue for use by local charities and organisations
- a place where all age groups might meet
- a 'headquarters' where professional and volunteer workers may meet and plan their activities
- a venue for hire for private parties and other gatherings.

A study of other examples of civic amenities should be carried out.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Establish a senior citizens centre in the town.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	42.6%
Agree	44.7%
Disagree	2.1%
Strongly Disagree	2.1%
No Opinion	8.5%

### 16.3. Action SC003: Investigate and develop the concept of volunteer carers for older people.

The concept of this action is to provide services and facilities that meet the needs of senior citizens. It could become a paid scheme working in co-operation with statutory agencies and would require regular grant aid. WBC are considering a project that will link in with this action.

There is a need for professional and volunteer support for the growing population of older people in the town. Such a scheme needs an advice centre to make it practical and the support of the churches who have a very active ministry to older people.

Seniors' Workers, or as some choose to call them, Third-Age or Fourth Age Workers would provide a range of support and advisory services for senior citizens. Their function would be similar to the service provided for the young by Youth Workers. It was felt that a vulnerable and often neglected group in our society does not get the focused attention and support they deserve.

Some local health centres have a nurse or doctor, who in addition to their other demanding tasks, also oversee the health needs of the senior patients in the practice. Unfortunately, in their very busy schedule these designated health workers are unable to provide the guidance many need in fields like finance, the law, socializing, mobility, learning and leisure. Seniors' Workers could fill the gap.

If work with seniors is to develop in Thatcham along the lines envisaged by this project, or along any other professional lines, it is essential that a new professional group of seniors' workers – rather like youth workers and having their own professional qualification – be developed. Thatcham could be one of the sites from where this occupation emerges.



When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate and develop the concept of volunteer carers for older people.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	23.4%
Agree	66.0%
Disagree	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	6.4%

**16.4. Action SC004 - Improve publicity of activities for seniors with central and digital information**

As well as providing opportunities for senior citizens to meet and socialise with friends and other members of the community it is important to ensure that information with regard to services, provisions and activities is readily available, comprehensive and easy for everyone to obtain.

A newsletter or other form of publicity should be made available at central points, e.g. Library, community centres, Alice Bye Court, etc.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Improve publicity of activities for seniors with central and digital information.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	29.8%
Agree	55.3%
Disagree	4.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	10.6%

**16.5. Action SC005: Arrange more social activities in the town for older people – e.g. coffee mornings, mobility scooter walks, quizzes, walking football etc.**

The aim of this project is to enable senior citizens to use their time usefully and productively, playing a full role in the community by providing additional activities that are not currently available or open to them in the town. This could go some way to reducing loneliness as more people engage with activities that are more suited to their interests.

This can be linked with the existing provision which includes:

U3A, The Blind Club, library reading groups and library website training sessions, speaker meetings by Thatcham Historical Society and other societies and Thatcham Film Nights.

Provision should also be made to get people along to activities who otherwise could not attend

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Arrange more social activities in the town for older people – e.g. coffee mornings etc.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	29.8%
Agree	48.9%
Disagree	6.4%
Strongly Disagree	2.1%
No Opinion	12.8%

#### 16.6. Action SC006: Encourage & support schemes and projects designed to improve the quality of life for our older residents, e.g. the Village Agent Scheme

In order to help to reduce problems encountered by our older residents, and with the involvement of as many organisations as possible, it is hoped that additional services be provided for Thatcham's older population.

These services may include:

- Chiropody home visits
- Decorating and gardening services for elderly and disabled people at reasonable prices
- A Benefits Surgery (previously available and was well attended, therefore identifying a need).

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Encourage & support schemes and projects designed to improve the quality of life for our older residents, e.g. the Village Agent Scheme.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	42.6%
Agree	48.9%
Disagree	2.1%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	6.4%

## 17. SENIOR CITIZENS ACTION PLAN

PARISH ACTION PLAN - SENIOR CITIZENS									
PARISH OF THATCHAM									Date Plan Adopted
Ref	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments	
<p>Overall the household survey of 1870 residents showed that: 86% of those surveyed agreed that Thatcham needs a Senior Citizen's centre in the heart of the town and 89% agreed there is a need for specialist workers for older people.</p> <p>The results of a further consultation, with a sample of 270 residents, provides the following justification for each action.</p>									
SC001	Healthy & Stronger	Establish a Senior Citizens Council/Forum	High	2016	2017	Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	85.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10.7% disagreeing). To give senior citizens a voice in the town. A centre from which all other initiatives flow.	
SC002	Healthy & Stronger	Establish a senior citizens centre in the town	High	2016	2018	Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Sev	87.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.2% disagreeing). Provide a place to get advice/support. Also provide other services.	
SC003	Healthy & Stronger	Investigate and develop the concept of volunteer carers for older people.	Medium	2016	2017	Thatcham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv Thatcham Churches	89.43% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.3% disagreeing). There is a need for professional and volunteer support for the growing population of older people in the town. Such a scheme needs an advice centre to make it practical and the support of the churches who have a very active ministry to older people.	

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SC004	Healthy & Stronger & Communication	Improve publicity of activities for seniors with central and digital information	Medium	2016	2017	Thattham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>85.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.3% disagreeing).</b> To give senior citizens more opportunities of involvement.
SC005	Healthy & Stronger	Arrange more social activities in the town for older people – e.g. coffee mornings etc	Medium	2016	2018	Thattham Vision WBC TTC	Age UK Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>78.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 8.5% disagreeing).</b> To help the lonely & isolated.
SC006	Healthy & Stronger	Encourage & support schemes and projects designed to improve the quality of life for our older residents. e.g. the Village Agent Scheme	Medium	2016	2018	Thattham Vision Village Agents	WBC. TTC, Age UK, Age Concern CCG Village Agents Other community groups Soc Serv	<b>91.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.1% disagreeing).</b> To help the lonely & isolated.
<p><b>Safer</b> (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)</p> <p><b>Prosperous</b> (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)</p> <p><b>Healthy</b> (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)</p> <p><b>Greener</b> (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).</p> <p><b>Stronger</b> (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).</p> <p><b>ALSO - COMMUNICATION</b> (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).</p>								

## 18. APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Disability & Health Analysis for Senior Citizens

Appendix B: WBC Health and Wellbeing Strategy

Appendix C: Report on Meeting with Patrick Leavey

### 18.1. Appendix A - Disability & Health Analysis for Senior Citizens

<b>Data from Census 2011</b>				
Long-term health problem or disability by general health by age				
All Seniors	Age 65 to 74	Age 75 to 84	Age 85 and over	Total
Very good or good health	1,023	411	111	1,545
Fair health	464	391	152	1,007
Bad or very bad health	152	125	77	354
Totals	1,639	927	340	2,906
Numbers showing those without disabilities				
	Age 65 to 74	Age 75 to 84	Age 85 and over	Total
Very good or good health	902	273	53	1,228
Fair health	169	87	10	266
Bad or very bad health	8	5	1	14
Totals	1,079	365	64	1,508
Numbers showing those with disabilities where day-to-day activities are limited a little				
	Age 65 to 74	Age 75 to 84	Age 85 and over	Total
Very good or good health	107	113	32	252
Fair health	217	190	54	461
Bad or very bad health	31	4	6	41
Totals	355	307	92	754

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Numbers showing those with disabilities where day-to-day activities are limited a lot	Age 65 to 74	Age 75 to 84	Age 85 and over	Total
Very good or good health	14	25	26	65
Fair health	78	114	88	280
Bad or very bad health	113	116	70	299
Totals	205	255	184	644

18.2. Appendix B - WBC Health and Wellbeing Strategy


What do we know about older people in West Berkshire?

The West Berkshire population is **older than the national average** and one that will continue to **age more rapidly**.



There is a predicted rise in the number of older people who **will suffer from diabetes, dementia and depression.**

**2,000**  
people over  
65 years old  
**estimated to have depression.**



The modelled prevalence of cardiovascular disease, respiratory conditions, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease show us that **prevalence is higher** in West Berkshire.




There is a predicted rise in the number of older people who are **unable to perform at least one domestic or self-care activity** on their own.

**2,000**  
people were  
**diagnosed with cancer** in 2009.



The number of **older people with learning disabilities** is expected to rise.



**2,000**  
people **expected to have dementia** in their old age by 2025.

**Did you know?**

A Long Term Condition is a condition that cannot be cured but can be managed through addressing lifestyle behaviours detrimental to health such as smoking, obesity, lack of exercise and drinking alcohol above recommended limits.

Many of the key health behaviours significant to the development of chronic disease are more prevalent in lower socioeconomic groups. In addition to universal provision, programmes should be targeted at populations or groups known to be at increased risk of adopting lifestyles detrimental to health and wellbeing.

### Why is promoting independence and supporting older people to manage their long term conditions a priority?

People aged over 75 stay one and a half times longer in hospital than the average for all age admissions and people with a diagnosis of dementia stay on average four times longer.

The numbers of people requiring adult social care including services delivered in the community, and requiring residential or nursing home care in West Berkshire is predicted to increase at a more dramatic rate than the national increase.

Groups in particular need include older people living alone and those who are carers. In addition, there is predicted to be an increase in age-associated long term conditions. This includes a rise in the number of people with dementia and poor mental health in older people as well as in the number of older people with learning disabilities.

To improve health and wellbeing, health and social care services need to work together to be effective enough to support people and their carers.

By reducing barriers to increased levels of physical activity, mental wellbeing and social engagement particularly among excluded groups of older people, older people will experience a better quality of life.

### What we will do





### 18.3. Appendix C - Report on Meeting with Patrick Leavey

#### Report on Meeting with Patrick Leavey

West Berks Council Offices

13.2.14

The meeting took place in the West Berks Council offices between Peter Jarvis and Patrick Leavey – the purpose was to examine the recommendations of the Senior Citizens working party for the Refresh. The meeting was extremely positive as Mr Leavey said that some of our proposals were in line with the developments that the West Berks services were planning. He was particularly positive about the ideas of a:

- Senior Citizens Forum (Council) representing all aspects of the work with senior citizens – including the statutory services, workers and volunteers working with senior citizens, managers of residential homes, senior citizens themselves and the town council. The forum would provide space for all agencies to examine their work and co-operate in future developments. Mr Leavey thought that it might be a good idea for the present working party to form the basis of the Forum but that we should carefully plan (with his involvement) other people to invite to generate interest in the Forum.
- Senior Citizens Centre: the initial idea was to make the Centre a multi-functional unit providing a wide variety of services including a social provision.
- He wondered whether a start might be made using the Alice Bye facilities which were included in the original plan so that it could be both a centre and an outreach as well as a residential home. Mr Leavey said that he would speak to the manager of the Centre so that we would then follow it up with a meeting. The restaurant there might be made use of – for senior citizens' provision of coffee morning and even lunches.

Mr Leavey said that he had a planning meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March at which we would present our proposals. Since these proposals are in line with the Council's thinking – he wondered if Thatcham might be an ideal place to try out some of these ideas and provided that his meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March is successful – he would be happy to come and meet the working party in Thatcham to plan developments.

Following that meeting I subsequently had a meeting with Mr M Cole – Mayor of Thatcham – when we examined the idea that when the Priory becomes the civic centre for the town, the Council Offices might provide a centre for senior citizens developments in the town – amongst other things – and that such a development might attract grant aid.

Prof. Peter Jarvis  
Chair – Senior Citizens Working Party  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2014

# Community Safety

# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY TOPIC TEAM***

## **19. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **19.1. Document Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Community Safety Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and sets out the remit of the Community Safety Team and the membership of the team.

### **19.2. Team remit**

The Community Safety Topic Team was formed in 2013 as part of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Action Plan with a remit to review the current levels of actual crime as well as considering levels of perceived crime. Anti-social behaviour in the Parish was also included as well as ways to reduce it.

### **19.3. Team Composition**

Ten members of the community formed the topic team looking at Community Safety. The team consisted of two Thatcham Town Councillors, Brian Barnes and Dominic Boeck. Dominic was also the representative for WBC. David Nunn from the Neighbourhood Wardens was able to attend the first few meetings of the team and arranged a very useful visit to the Nightingales Community Centre in Newbury. Another member of the team was Roger Dykes, who has also been a long term member of Thatcham's Neighbourhood Action Group. We had contributions from Phil Brownlie who worked in a similar focus group for the first Thatcham Vision Action Plan so was able to bring his experience from that team to the new group. Four residents new to working with Vision were Jo McIntyre, Paula McAuley, Miriam Street and Lorri Stennet-Dow. With me, Stephanie Steevenson, as Chair we formed an amicable group bringing wide experience and views to our meetings.

## **20. APPROACH**

This topic had come up as a high priority in every survey carried out by Vision leading up to the refresh of the plan. Therefore, in order to ascertain the most important issues for Thatcham residents, a whole section of a substantial community consultation was given over to Community Safety.

The survey showed that although there was a widespread belief that Thatcham may be a safe place in the day time (81.2% agreed) it was felt that it ceases to be such a safe place in which to live as soon as dusk arrives with only 39% feeling safe. In comparison a national Neighbourhood Watch survey found that when respondents were asked about the perception of safety in their own local communities if they found themselves out and about between 21:30 and 05:30, 75% answered that they felt safe (*Appendix A*).

Additional data provided information on the possible causes for this stark contrast. 60% of those who answered disagreed with the statement that there is a sufficient police presence in the town, whilst more than 92% who answered believed that Thatcham needs

somewhere to report minor crimes and for people to find out about crime prevention (35.5% of those strongly agreed).

In November 2012, the Safer Communities Partnership sent out a community safety questionnaire across West Berkshire (*Appendix B*). Whilst overall the respondents across West Berkshire were happy that the level of crime/anti-social behaviour in their local area was 'not a very big problem' or 'not a problem at all', with only 3% viewing it as a 'very big problem' and 19% a 'fairly big problem'; Thatcham respondents seemed to perceive that there were a number of problems in the area as shown in the excerpts below:

*Overall, only 26% of all respondents to the questionnaire felt that 'people using or dealing drugs' was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. However, analysis of each area showed almost half (46%) of the respondents from the Thatcham area perceived it to be a problem compared to the next highest percentage of 30% in the Newbury area.*

*Overall, 77% of all respondents to the questionnaire felt that 'people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces' was a 'not a very big' or 'not a problem at all'. However, analysis of each area showed that 43% of the respondents from the Thatcham area perceived it to be a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem compared to the next highest percentage of 24% in the Newbury area.*

*Over a third of respondents overall (37%) felt that dog fouling was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. Again it was respondents in the Thatcham area (46%) who perceived it to be a greater problem than elsewhere. Although, the percentages for the rural area (38%) and Newbury (35%) were also comparatively high*

*Overall 74% of the total respondents felt that 'teenagers hanging around on the streets' was 'not a problem' or 'not a very big problem'. Analysis of the area results however, shows that over one-third (37%) of Thatcham respondents and nearly one-third of the Eastern area respondents felt it was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. Compared to the Newbury and rural areas where only 21% and 20% respectively felt there was a problem.*

2011 Census data shows that levels of recorded crime in Thatcham are all below the national average and actual Police crime figures from 01/04/2013 to 06/08/2013 (*Appendix C*) shows that crime in Thatcham only accounts for 6.95% of the total in West Berkshire.

The topic team wanted to confront these beliefs and see how they might be altered.

The Topic Team met on six occasions in The Hub and our meetings were productive and interesting. We were particularly keen to focus upon SMART targets and were not prepared to put vague ideals into the topic team outcomes. We are very pleased with the conclusions. To make sure of the realism of our targets I met with WBC and Thames Valley Police to be sure our aims were realistic. The team has produced a workable set of options to take forward into the refreshed Thatcham Vision and we firmly believe these targets will go towards the overall aim – that of making Thatcham residents feel their town is a safe place in which to live.

## **21. TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **21.1. Action CS001: Set up a Community Safety Information Noticeboard in Thatcham**

Ideally in the centre of Thatcham, perhaps in a community centre or the Library, the noticeboard needs to include an attached suggestion box. This will increase the opportunities for residents to communicate with the police and to read their notices and announcements – a two-way communication point. The noticeboard can include any relevant information leading towards greater community safety, e.g. from the Fire and Rescue Service.

It was felt that this would be very quick to implement with minimal cost implications as long as agreement from the Police, Fire Services, Neighbourhood Action Group and Neighbourhood wardens to update the board and empty the suggestion box was obtained.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Set up a Community Safety Information Noticeboard in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	26.8%
Agree	43.9%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	19.5%

**21.2. Action CS002: Increase perceived Police presence in the town with more Police Surgeries, door knocking events etc. with increased publicity.**

Thatcham needs a more visible police force with more opportunities for residents to speak to the police and to ask them questions. Previously many TTC and WBC councillors took part in police-organised public meetings. Although staffing resources are limited in the Neighbourhood Police Team, Inspector McKeown is very positive about starting Police surgeries in Thatcham. His Sergeant Caroline Harrison also understands the need for face to face communication with the public and promotes regular door knocking events enabling the Police to speak to the community in a particular area.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Start Police Surgeries.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	36.6%
Agree	51.2%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	2.4%

**21.3. Action CS003: Arrange visits by the BURT (Berkshire Unitary Resilience Transport) bus for 'Community Information Days' with representatives from the police and the Fire services.**

This would provide an increase in the number of opportunities for Thatcham residents to meet their local police and fire safety teams and for the public to ask questions and receive advice.

Residents in Thatcham have previously had many more face to face meetings with the Police than at present, and the mobile police bus used to regularly visit the town centre. The Topic Team were informed that unfortunately this bus was currently “off the road” and so the return of this service was not possible. Another bus utilised by WBC is available and can be used to bring representatives from the Police and the Fire Service together in order to spread safety messages to Thatcham residents.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Increase number of visits by the Mobile Police Station and the Fire & Safety Bus.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	36.6%
Agree	41.5%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	17.1%

#### 21.4. Action CS004 - Investigate the feasibility of a community-manned information desk

The idea of volunteers supporting the police within the Thatcham neighbourhood by manning a community information desk was met with some scepticism by the Police who voiced their concerns over how reliable a voluntary group of this kind could be.

Subsequently the Vision Manager found several examples of the successful use of volunteers by other police forces although it was agreed that more investigation should be completed in the form of a feasibility report first.

Also, the information desk would not be solely used for police purposes. Information provided on services provided by the Fire Brigade, West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council, Neighbourhood Wardens and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau etc. would also be included.

The Topic Team strongly believe that having a manned community desk in the middle of Thatcham brings members of the public opportunities to give and receive information helpful to them as residents without increasing the workload of the services themselves. This would release the local police team to be a more visible presence by not being needed in the volunteer roles at the information desk and would introduce another point of contact for Thatcham residents with the Police, Fire Services and the Neighbourhood Wardens. Volunteers would need to be trained to a specified level and a good location would need to be found in the centre of the town. This is a project that would need to be assessed before it can be put into practise.

Vision strongly support this and feel it will be something for the community at large to see and take part in. We understand that the familiarity with the Community building in The Nightingales (Greenham) led members of the public to enter the building to offer the police operational support when it was being used as a crime scene centre for a murder. The suggestion is that without that familiarity the police would not have received the same amount of public support.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate the feasibility of a community-manned information desk.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	48.8%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	2.4%
No Opinion	14.6%

**21.5. Action CS005: Have a central community facility which includes youth-oriented space and activities**

The Topic Team were aware of the problems in the Broadway from anti-social behaviour and believed that the answer is to provide the youths with activities instead of them committing ASB or simply being moved on. The success story of the Nightingales Community Centre in Greenham, i.e. a huge reduction in ASB by youths (*Appendix D*) has proved that keeping youngsters off the streets reduces youth crime and ASB and led the team to believe that a similar facility in Thatcham would possibly have the same results.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Have a central community facility which includes youth-oriented space and activities.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	39.0%
Agree	36.6%
Disagree	12.2%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	12.2%

**21.6. Action CS006: Advertise the 101 non-emergency police telephone number and the 111 NHS number.**

Raising public awareness as to the channel to use to communicate with the police and the NHS for non-emergencies is believed to be barely known to some members of the public. It was found that in surrounding villages, stickers and fridge magnets have been made available and circulated, advertising the numbers. It is felt that with appropriate funding there is an opportunity to replicate this in Thatcham on a rolling basis.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Advertise the 101 non-emergency police telephone number.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	34.1%
Agree	43.9%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	17.1%

**3.7 Action CS007: Communicate Police news, crime reports etc. on a local Facebook page and [www.streetlife.com](http://www.streetlife.com) and various community newsletters**

Raising public awareness of the work the police are carrying out and of their many successes would go a long way to reducing the fear of crime felt by the residents in Thatcham. Newsletters have previously been sent out to residents and although this service is no longer available it is believed that by incorporating information into the newsletters of other organisations and utilising social media it was possible to get messages distributed to a wider audience.

This action was added during the second Parish Plan surgery deemed necessary with WBC and the Police.



## 22. COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTION PLAN

PARISH ACTION PLAN - COMMUNITY SAFETY								Date Plan Adopted
PARISH OF THATCHAM								
Ref	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
CS001	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Set up a Community Safety Information Noticeboard in Thattham	High	2016	2016	Vision	TVP Neighbourhood Team, Fire and Rescue Service, TTC, WBSCP .	70.7% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing). Improve communication between police and community and vice versa.
CS002	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Increase perceived Police presence in the town by encouraging them to engage more with our community.	Medium	2016	2017	TVP Neighbourhood Team	WBC	89.8% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing). Tackle perception of Thattham being unsafe at night and add more opportunities for public to meet police.
CS003	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Arrange visits by BURT (the Berkshire Unitary Resilience Transport bus) for 'Community Information Days' with representatives from the police and the Fire services.	Medium	2016	2017	TVP Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service	TVP, Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service, WBC, MP, WBSCP,TTC,NAG	78.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing). Tackle perception of Thattham being unsafe at night and add more opportunities for public to meet Police, Fire Service & other organisations.

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

CS004	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Investigate the feasibility of a community-manned information desk	Medium	2016	2017	Vision Action Team	TTC, TVP, Neighbourhood Team and Fire and Rescue Service, National Community Hub Scheme.	73.2% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing) Increase access between public and the information they need.
CS005	Safer & Stronger	Have a central community facility which includes youth-oriented space and activities	Medium	2016	2018	TTC	WBC, Youth Services, GCT, Neighbourhood Wardens and Sovereign.	75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing). The example of The Nightingales in Greenham shows ASB can be reduced dramatically by providing a Youth Centre.
CS006	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Advertise the 101 non-emergency police telephone number .	High	2016	2016	Vision Action Team	TVP, WBSCP, TTC, NAG	78% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing) This telephone number is not widely known by members of the public.
CS007 NEW	Safer & Stronger & Communication	Communicate Police news, crime reports etc on a local Facebook page and www.streetlife.com and various community newsletters	High	2016	2016	Vision Action Team, NAG, Wardens	TVP, WBSCP, TTC, NAG	Linked to CS006. Improve communication between police and community and vice versa.

**Safer** (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)

**Prosperous** (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)

**Healthy** (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)

**Greener** (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).

**Stronger** (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).

**ALSO - COMMUNICATION** (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).

## **23. APPENDICIES**

Appendix A: Perceptions of Safety Survey

Appendix B: Hotspots Identified from the Public Safety Questionnaire 2013

Appendix C: Actual Crime Stats Thatcham & Newbury

Appendix D: Visit to the Nightingales

### 23.1. Appendix A – Perceptions of Safety Survey



# **STREET LIGHTING & PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY SURVEY NOVEMBER 2013 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**



**Executive summary**

15,786 people responded to the survey, and respondents were almost equally divided between male and female. Over half were in the 51-70 age group.

Around half of respondents had not noticed any changes to lighting conditions or rates of crime and anti-social behaviour in their area. The majority have street lighting in their neighbourhood and almost half said that it is not dimmed or turned off between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am.

Whilst 92.9% of participants said they feel 'very' or 'fairly' safe in well-lit areas, only 22% said they do in unlit or poorly lit areas. When broken down by gender, 83% of women said they feel unsafe, while 64.9% of men said the same.

The data shows that younger age groups perceive greater risk in areas where lighting is inadequate. As age increases, the perceived risk from badly-lit areas reduces.

Respondents were asked about the perception of safety in their own local communities if they found themselves out and about between 21:30 and 05:30. 75% answered that they felt safe. Broken down along gender lines, 59% of women felt safe in their local area compared to 68% of men.

The survey identified that 38% of respondents noticed changes in street lighting in their local communities in the last three years. However, through the question's use of the word 'change', it has meant that data incorporates positive changes to lighting as well as negative change. Many comments related to positive changes to lighting highlighted the installation of brighter LED street lamps. Despite the incorporation of both positive and negative answers, a high percentage, 46%, still perceived changes to lighting to be negative and have a negative consequence on their local community.

However, if we focus on the 22% of participants who explicitly said that lighting has been dimmed or switched off in their area, 52.8% of women and 38.8% of men said that their local community feels less safe. When comparing the data by age, a higher number of younger respondents felt their safety was negatively affected.

Asked how dimming or switching off lighting affects their behaviour, 40% of respondents considered going out less, 65% avoided unlit areas and 15% said that they would take taxis rather than walk. *(Participants were invited to choose more than one option meaning that the percentages add up to more than 100%)*

As well as concerns about crime, a small number of respondents raised other safety issues related to low lighting such as being unable to see trip hazards, which also caused them to modify their behaviour to deal with or avoid unlit or poorly-lit areas. Of those who commented (19% of all respondents) only a small minority of respondents said that low or no

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**Background & method**

NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust received anecdotal reports during 2013 of street lights being turned off or dimmed in some areas. This was taking place at a time when a lot of local authorities were making budget cuts, and street lighting was hit by reductions as a result. This survey is a joint piece of work by NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust, with the questions put together in collaboration. This analysis and report is by NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust based on the survey results standing alone. Suzy Lamplugh Trust undertook Freedom of Information requests to local authorities on the subject of budget cuts and reductions in street lighting. The results of the requests will be analysed alongside these survey results by Suzy Lamplugh Trust in a separate piece of work.

The survey was conducted online and was circulated by NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust to their networks. In the case of NHWN, 'networks' comprised 96,365 individuals registered on their database across England and Wales, 247 of whom forwarded the message on to another contact. Information about the survey, together with a link, was forwarded by a member of staff to contacts within 8 partner organisations, 4 of which promoted it to their networks and the other 4 supported on social media.

It was also promoted on social networks, receiving over 50 retweets via NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust Twitter accounts alone plus independent tweets (and subsequent retweets) from partner organisations. NHWN ran a news story on their website with a link to the survey; the news story received 334 unique pageviews.

In addition, NHWN emailed the survey information and link to its 43 force area and regional volunteer Neighbourhood/Home Watch contacts for further circulation, which may have captured some respondents not on the national NHWN database.

Because of the convenience sampling used, it must be acknowledged that the survey contains some exclusion bias. As the survey was circulated via NHWN and Suzy Lamplugh Trust, two not-for-profit organisations concerned with crime and safety, respondents have a higher likelihood than the general population of being interested or actively involved in related issues.

Although survey responses were accepted by NHWN via post and telephone, as the survey was hosted and publicised online there is a respondent bias towards those who have internet access which could also bias the sample towards certain demographic and socio-economic factors.



lighting meant that they avoided going out altogether, most continued with their normal activities with some modifications or precautions, even if they did feel nervous or unsafe. Of the 3,037 people who commented on question 13 (on how, if at all, they modified their behaviour in lower lighting conditions), the majority stated that their feelings about an area's safety depended more on other factors such as its reputation, location, geography, their knowledge of the area, and time-specific circumstances – such as pub closing times, whether an area is deserted or busy – rather than on levels of lighting. 54 people commented that they prefer lower lighting because they enjoy seeing the night sky and in some cases felt it gives them better 'night vision', avoiding the problem of patches of darkness between lights. The proportion of respondents who were victims of crime or anti-social behaviour did not appear to have changed significantly between 2012 and 2013 and it was not clear whether any changes related to changes in street lighting.

A small number of respondents expressed a preference for low lighting, feeling that high lighting levels constitute light pollution and prevent them from enjoying their local area to its best advantage at all hours.

The survey indicates that the majority of respondents perceive their personal safety to be more at risk in areas where dimming or switching off of street lights occurs, than in areas where lighting has been replaced or maintained throughout the night.

However, this is not totally reflected in their perception of crime or anti-social behavior in their neighbourhood. Just over half of the respondents believed that there has been no increase in crime or anti-social behavior in their neighbourhood over the last three years.

[Read the full analysis.](#)



**Analysis**

15,786 people responded to the survey. Almost a quarter (24.1%) of respondents were from the Thames Valley force area. Given some of the other areas with a high response rate, this could be due to circulation of the survey on the Neighbourhood Alert communication system, which has a high proportion of users from the Thames Valley area. It could also be because the Thames Valley force area comprises three geographical counties in an area of high population density.

Other areas with a relatively high response rate were North Yorkshire (12.1%), Cambridgeshire (9.1%), Nottinghamshire (7.4%) and Dorset (6.5%). Out of those areas, Cambridgeshire and Nottinghamshire are areas where the police also use the Neighbourhood Alert communication system alongside NHWN. ([Read more about respondents' areas.](#))

Respondents were almost equally divided between male and female. Over half (52.6%) were in the 51-70 age group. The next most common was 35-50 (22%) closely followed by 70+ (19.2%). ([View all statistics about gender and age.](#))

The largest number of respondents (41.8%) described their area as 'suburban'. 35.1% said they live in a 'rural' area and 19.1% in an 'urban' area. ([More details about type of area.](#))

Almost all respondents (98.6%) said that they feel safe 'always' or 'most of the time' when out and about in their neighbourhood during the day. This dropped to 75.6% between the hours of 9:30 pm and 5:30 am among those respondents who go out during those times. Among those respondents, there was also a significant shift towards a 'most of the time' rather than 'always' response. ([View the full statistics.](#))

The majority (90.1%) of respondents have street lighting in their neighbourhood. Almost half (48.2%) said that street lights are not turned off or dimmed between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am where they live.

Just over half (54.2%) of respondents said that they have not noticed any changes to their street lighting over the last three years; over one-third (37.6%) have. Out of those who have, almost half (47.4%) feel about the same in terms of safety but almost as many (45.6%) now feel less safe in their neighbourhood at night. ([Read the full statistics about street lighting.](#))

92.9% of respondents feel either 'very' or 'fairly' safe when walking in a well-lit neighbourhood compared with an unlit or badly-lit neighbourhood, where only 25.3% feel 'very' or 'fairly' safe. Over half (64.8%) of respondents said that they avoid walking alone in unlit or poorly-lit areas after dark and over one-third (38.2%) said that they go out less in the evenings due to lack of good lighting. However, some respondents (see Appendix A for details) stated that they were more likely to be influenced by the type of neighbourhood, its design and reputation than its levels of lighting. The majority of people who commented in the free text field stated that a lack of good lighting in their own neighbourhood had not caused them to modify their social activities, but instead that they had adapted their behaviour to enable them to continue with their usual social activities but with the addition of precautionary measures (such as using different routes or taking a hand-held torch). However it is important to note that the number of people (3,037) who commented in the



free text field only represents 22% of the total (13,736) who responded to the question as a whole. ([Click here to read more.](#))

Just over half of respondents feel like the rate of crime and anti-social behaviour has stayed about the same in their area over the last three years - 56.4% for crime and 53.3% for anti-social behaviour. However, 26.7% of respondents feel like crime has increased and 29.5% feel like anti-social behaviour has increased. ([View the full statistics.](#))

The majority (83.2%) have not been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour this year (2013); almost the same proportion (83.2%) were not victims of crime or anti-social behaviour in 2012 either. The number of people saying that they had been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour rose by 0.1% between 2012 and 2013 (from 14.7% to 14.8%). However, these figures do not distinguish between different types of crime. ([Read more details.](#))

People who said they had been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour this year and who had noticed changes to their street lighting in the last 3 years were more likely to say they felt less safe in their neighbourhood at night since the changes - 57% compared with 42.2% of those who had not been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour. They were also more likely to feel unsafe walking in either a well-lit or a badly-lit neighbourhood.

Respondents who had been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour this year were also much more likely to feel that rates in their area had gone up and much less likely to feel that they had gone down or stayed the same.

Over 1,200 respondents had been victims of crime or anti-social behaviour in both 2012 and 2013.

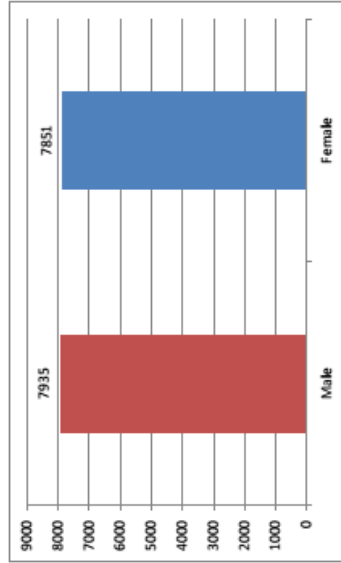
[Read the full statistics from the beginning.](#)



**Statistics**

**Question 1**

Do you identify as male or female?



Interestingly, more than twice as many people in the 70+ age group who responded to the survey were male (26.8% compared with 11.5%), and more of the younger respondents were female, which is surprising considering women tend to live slightly longer than men.

There was no significant male-female difference in how safe people tended to feel when out and about during the day, although women were slightly more likely to respond 'Most of the time' rather than 'Always'. Women were slightly less likely than men to be out on the street between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am and, when they were, they were less likely to feel safe 'Always' and more likely than men to feel safe 'Seldom' or 'Never'.

It was noticeable that out of those respondents who noticed changes to their street lighting during the last 3 years, 52.8% of women now felt less safe in their neighbourhood at night compared with 38.8% of men. Men were more likely than women to feel safer or about the same.

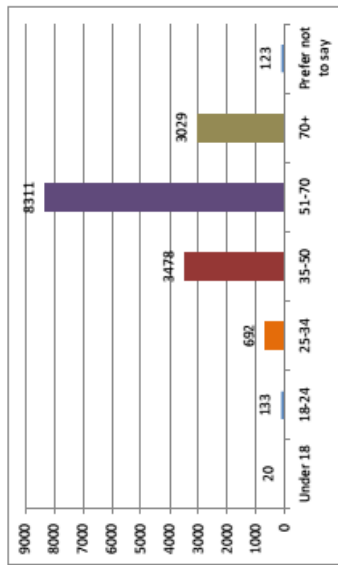
When walking in a badly-lit neighbourhood, women were much more likely than men to feel 'Very unsafe' - 48.3% compared with 18.7% of men. Women were also much more likely to take taxis instead of walking, or to avoid walking alone in badly-lit areas after dark, but only slightly more likely than men to go out less in the evenings.

In question 9, men were slightly more likely than women to have a negative response to brighter lighting and a positive response to dimmer lighting. For information about how men and women modify their behaviour in low or no lighting conditions please see [question 13](#).



**Question 2**

What is your age group?



Respondents likelihood of noticing any changes to their street lighting varied across age groups. 23.3% of those aged 18-24 were not sure whether there had been any such changes within the last 3 years compared with 5.4% of those aged 70 or over.

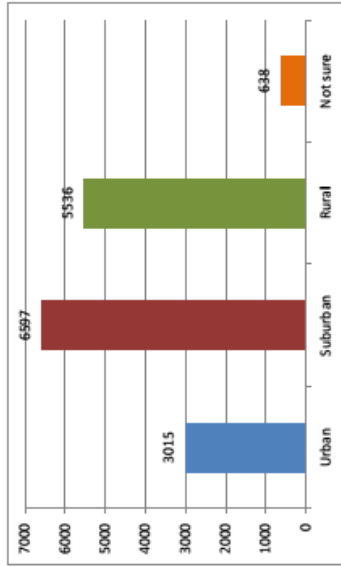
Older people were also more likely than younger people to feel that crime and anti-social behaviour had stayed the same or decreased in their area over the last three years. This could be connected with the fact that a higher proportion of older respondents lived in rural areas.

It appeared that respondents aged between 25 and 50 had been most likely to be victims of crime or anti-social behaviour in 2012 and 2013.



**Question 3**

How would you describe the area where you live?

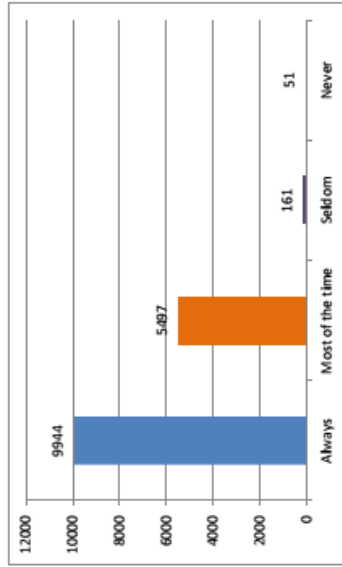


Younger people were more likely to live in an urban area, with 39.1% of 18-24-year-olds living in an urban area compared with 17.4% of those aged 70 or over. By contrast, 17.3% of 18-24-year-olds said that they lived in a rural area compared with 40.6% of those aged 70 or over.

**Question 4**

Do you feel safe when out and about in your neighbourhood during the day?

(133 respondents skipped this question.)

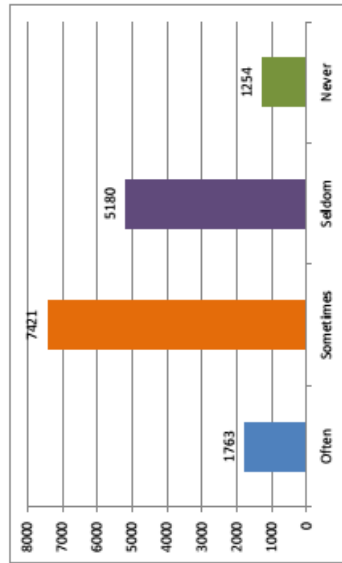


The probability of feeling safer 'Always' when out and about in your neighbourhood during the day seemed to rise slightly the older respondents got, and the proportion of people choosing 'Seldom' or 'Never' was also slightly higher in younger age groups, decreasing with age. However, the proportion of respondents selecting 'Most of the time' also decreased slightly with age.

**Question 5**

Are you ever out on the street in your neighbourhood at any time between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am?

(168 respondents skipped this question.)



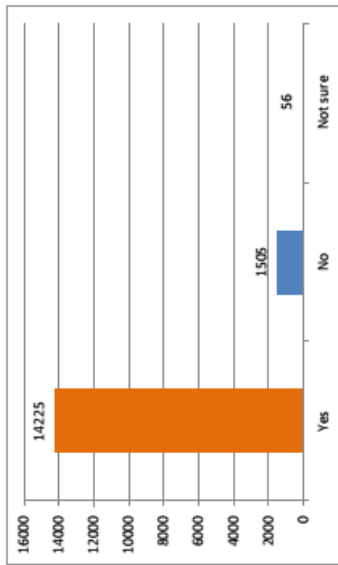
The link between these figures and age group was noticeable. Almost a quarter of people aged 18-24 were 'Often' out and about on the street between these times compared with just 7.4% of those aged 70 or over. Conversely, only 16.8% of 18-24-year-olds selected 'Seldom' compared with 39% of those aged 70 or over.





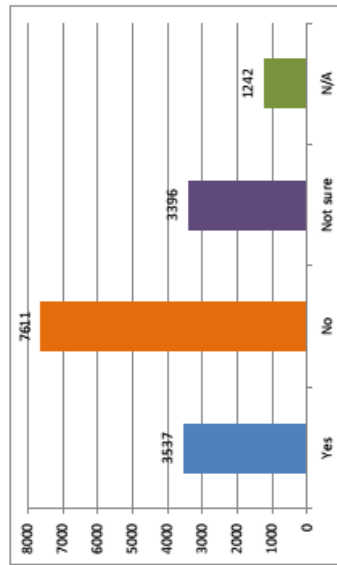
**Question 7**

Do you have street lighting in your neighbourhood?



**Question 8**

Are street lights switched off or dimmed at any time between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am where you live?

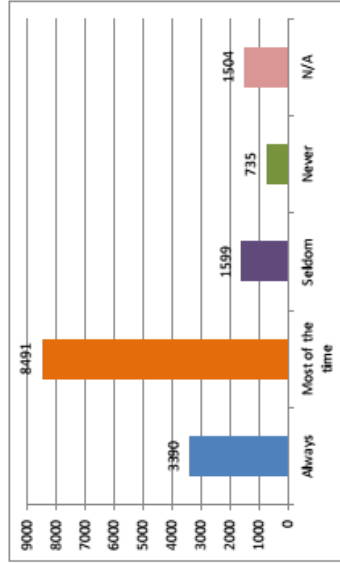


(N/A = "There is no street lighting where I live.")

**Question 6**

Do you feel safe when out and about in your neighbourhood between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am?

(67 respondents skipped this question.)



(N/A = "I don't go out and about in my neighbourhood between 9:30 pm and 5:30 am.")

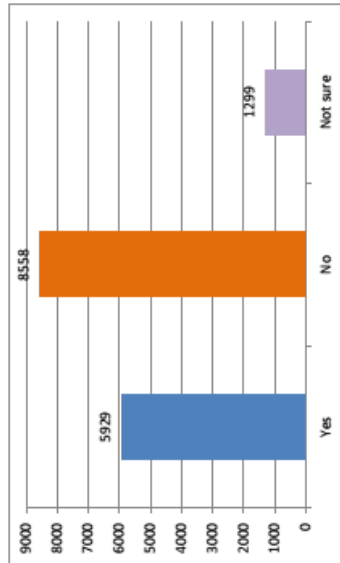
Perhaps surprisingly, 27.5% of those aged 70 or over selected 'Always' compared with 4.6% of those aged 18-24. 13.7% of 18-24-year-olds selected 'Never' compared with 2.8% of those aged 70 or over. However respondents in younger age groups were slightly more likely to feel safe 'Most of the time' when out and about during these times.

There is a stereotype of older people feeling more vulnerable, but statistically younger people are more likely to be victims of crime, so these figures make sense in that context. Also bearing in mind that more of the older people in this survey live in rural areas, that might contribute to their feelings of safety.



**Question 9**

Have you noticed any changes to the street lighting in your neighbourhood within the last 3 years?



Comments were open for this question. 5,993 respondents (38%) commented.

(The following figures are given in numbers rather than percentages as some responses fell into more than one category.)

2,249 people said that lighting had been reduced over the last three years in their area or nearby, either as a result of fewer street lights, dimmer quality of lighting, increased 'off' periods, use of motion sensors or any combination of those. 1,651 (73.4%) of these respondents did not express an opinion about whether the reduced lighting level was positive or negative for them. Of the 598 respondents who did express a view on reduced street lighting, 85.3% (510) expressed negative feelings and 14.7% (88) expressed positive feelings. Positive responses included words and phrases like 'better', 'improvement', 'perfectly safe', 'easier to sleep', 'beautiful', 'happy with the savings on electricity', 'fabulous', 'good for the environment', 'less light pollution', 'fantastic' and 'much more pleasant'. Positive comments focused on the benefit to the environment, the reduction in light pollution and the ability to see the night sky and stars better.

10 respondents specified that there had been no increase in crime as far as they were aware since lighting was reduced in their area. 4 said that they felt criminals actually benefit from higher levels of lighting. 3 people gave anecdotes about incidences in which reduced lighting helped to avoid crime, anti-social behaviour and accidents in their area.

Negative responses included words and phrases like 'scary', 'insecure', 'dangerous', 'disturbing', 'makes me feel less safe', 'unpleasant', 'horrible', 'difficult to see', 'vulnerable', 'nerve-racking' and 'intimidating'. Negative comments included concerns about crime and

other issues such as being unable to see underfoot clearly / pedestrian safety, traffic safety and being unable to see any suspicious incidents clearly.

48 of the respondents who felt reduced lighting was negative gave anecdotes of crimes or spates of crime taking place in their neighbourhood since the reduction, which they linked to the reduction in lighting. In addition 16 respondents said that they now avoid going out after dark while 6 reported that friends or neighbours avoid going out after dark. 2 have been involved in a traffic accident which they attributed to poor lighting, 3 had a 'near miss', 8 have had a fall or other pedestrian accident and 2 have a friend or neighbour who has fallen on the street in low lighting conditions.

352 (2.2% of total respondents) respondents said that the lights in their area have got brighter, or there are more of them. Of these respondents 62.7% (221) did not express any opinion about this. Of those 131 individuals who did express an opinion 57.3% (75) felt it was negative and 42.7% (56) felt it was positive. Negative comments included things like 'really irritating', 'give me headaches', 'intrusive', 'cannot sleep properly', 'over the top', 'horrific', 'waste of money', 'terrible' and 'annoying'. Positive comments included 'improvement', 'much better', 'pleasure to walk here', 'excellent', 'makes you feel more safe', 'very welcome', 'much better if you are on a bike' and 'I suddenly felt much happier'.

964 people commented that they had had new street lights within the last 3 years but did not state whether these were dimmer or brighter than the previous ones. 620 respondents simply stated neutrally that they had had new lights, posts or bulbs – in some cases commenting about a different type, style or colour of light without expressing an opinion about whether this was better or worse than the previous. 89 respondents felt negative and 255 felt positive about the new lights in their area.

Negative comments included 'positioned badly', 'harsh', 'very poor', 'inferior', 'less efficient', 'far too many', 'less effective', 'not as good as the old ones', 'dreadful', 'horrible', 'inadequate' and 'CRAP'. Positive comments included 'improved', 'more attractive', 'less intrusive', 'eco friendly', 'much nicer' and 'much better'.

A number of respondents commented that new lighting in their area seems to be 'whiter' than previously. Some people felt this was an improvement but there were also comments that although individual lights were whiter and brighter, they were now more widely spaced, resulting in darker shadowed patches between them. A smaller number of respondents said that their lights had been changed to a yellow/orange light, and some people commented on the new lights being 'more efficient', 'greener' or 'more eco friendly'.

348 respondents commented negatively on the maintenance of street lights in their area, saying things like 'no one mends them', 'light bulbs are not replaced', 'many lights do not work', 'it takes far longer now for faulty street lighting to be repaired', 'less maintenance', 'not repaired', 'stopped working for months before being fixed' and 'often faulty'.

29 people commented positively on street light maintenance, saying things like 'better maintained', 'fixed reasonably promptly', 'Council ensures they are in good condition', 'great service', 'repaired when reported' and 'repairs are carried out within 10 working days'.

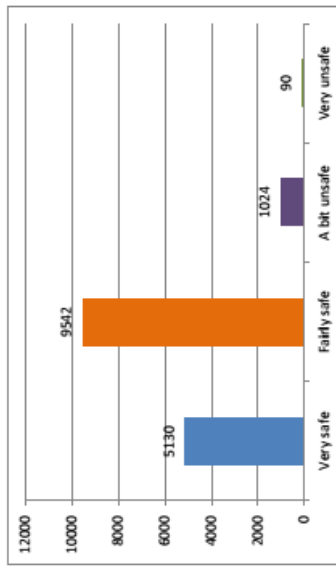


Feelings of safety varied noticeably by age group. A higher proportion of people aged over 50 felt safer or about the same at night after the changes, whereas respondents aged under 50 were much more likely to feel less safe in their neighbourhood at night. Younger people are statistically more likely to be victims of certain types of crime so this could explain why they appear to feel less safe on the streets at night. Also proportionally more younger people responding to the survey lived in urban, as opposed to rural, areas, which could also contribute to a feeling of being less safe at night.

For full free text responses see Appendix A.

**Question 11**

How safe do you feel when walking in a well-lit neighbourhood?



**Question 12**

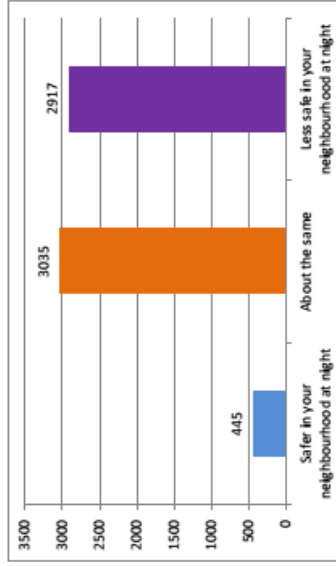
How safe do you feel when walking in an unlit or badly-lit neighbourhood?

1,085 respondents made other comments, which did not directly relate to changes in street lighting over the last 3 years, in response to this question. These were mostly comments about the street lighting which people currently have – some respondents would like more; others are happy with their present levels (including in cases where they do not have any lighting) and others would prefer less/lower lighting. One common thread among the comments seemed to be foliage – a noticeable number of people commented that trees were obscuring street lights and had not been cut back.

For full free text responses see Appendix A.

**Question 10**

If you answered yes to question 9, since you noticed these changes do you feel: (9,389 respondents skipped this question.)



Comments were open for this question. 2,472 respondents (39% of those who responded to this question) commented. The majority of respondents commented that they feel less safe following reductions in lighting levels, and some stated that there have been crimes committed in their area since these reductions which they attributed to the reduced lighting.

Some respondents stated that they did not think any reduction in lighting had made a difference to crime rates in their area.

A significant concern for respondents that commented was safety, as much as crime or anti-social behaviour. People stated that they found it difficult to see pavements and trip hazards. They were also concerned that it was difficult to see and identify people at night time, which could affect the reporting of crime or an anti-social behaviour as perpetrators cannot be so easily identified by sight.

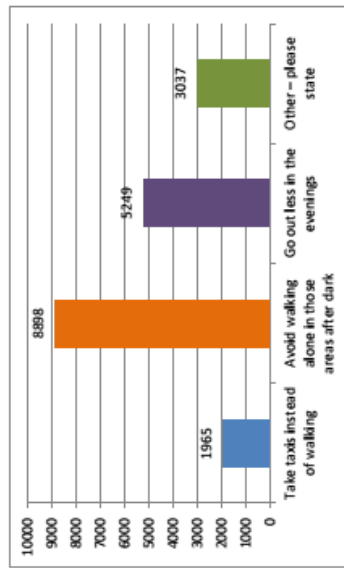
Respondents mentioned road and traffic safety. There were some comments that reduced lighting might contribute to an increase in traffic accidents.



**Question 13**

Does lack of good lighting ever make you (please tick all that apply):

(2,050 respondents skipped this question.)



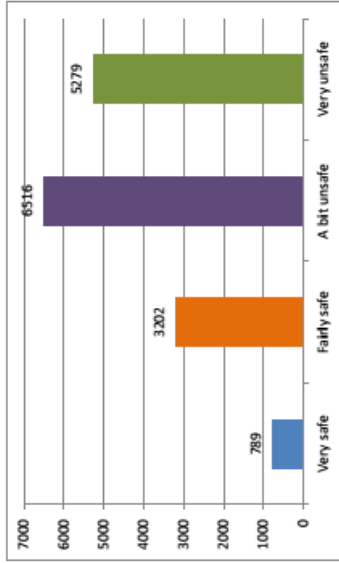
3,037 people commented under the 'Other' responses field.

Some of these stated that their feelings of safety and their actions would depend on the area they were travelling through to get to and from their activities. Their decision was likely to be affected by a number of factors such as the area's location, reputation and design as well as the amount of street lighting. See Appendix A for more details.

Based on the 3,037 comments, people who say they live in a rural area seem to be more used to the dark or having little street lighting where they live, and less likely for any reduction to affect their activities.

56.4% of respondents stated that they would avoid walking alone in areas with less street lighting after dark, whilst one third of people said they would go out less in the evenings. However 6.4% (1,012) of individuals said that they would not modify their behaviour patterns due to a reduction in lighting. Sometimes this was because they have no choice and have to go out for work or in order to walk dogs; sometimes they already do not go out much at night so a reduction in lighting would not affect their activities; however in many cases people found that taking some basic safety measures enabled them to carry on with their activities.

381 people stated that they often drive instead of walking, but almost as many, 377, said that they were not bothered by low lighting in their area. A number of these said that they prefer having low lighting as it enables them to enjoy the stars, and a small number of people feel safer without street lighting as their eyes adjust to the darkness and have better 'night vision'. Some respondents stated that the question does not apply to them as they are happy with the level of lighting in their neighbourhood and do not often travel outside of their neighbourhood after dark.

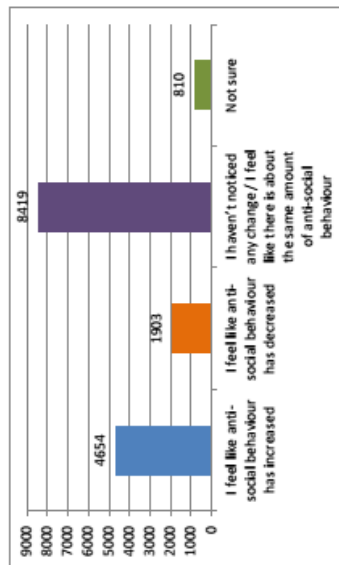


People in younger age groups were noticeably more likely to feel unsafe when walking in an unlit or badly-lit neighbourhood. This could be connected with their higher likelihood of living in an urban, as opposed to a rural, area.



**Question 15**

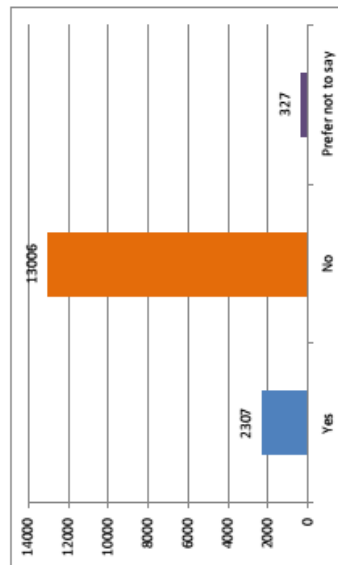
Which of the following statements best expresses how you feel about anti-social behaviour in your area over the last three years?



Women were slightly more likely than men to feel that rates of anti-social behaviour had gone up, and men were more likely than women to feel that they had gone down or stayed the same.

**Question 16**

Have you been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour this year (2013)? (146 respondents skipped this question.)



243 respondents use a torch, 200 say that they feel unsafe but continue with their usual activities anyway, 171 people plan or vary their walking route to avoid dark or badly-lit areas and 167 people do not modify their activities but make a conscious effort to be more aware of what is around them in low lighting conditions. 79 people make an effort to walk with a companion(s) and 75 people take increased security measures (such as carrying a personal alarm); 38 people take their dog on walks and feel that provides additional protection.

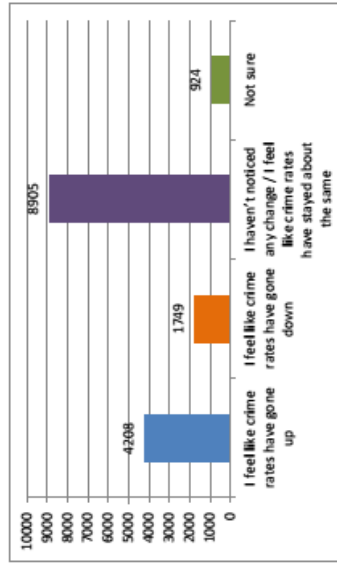
People take other precautions such as using the bus, cycling instead of walking or walking faster. 80 people say that they avoid walking or going out after dark; 52 people modify their activities in some way such as coming home earlier from social events.

Men and women were affected in different ways. Women were 4 times more likely to make efforts to be accompanied by someone. Almost twice as many men than women said that they were not bothered by low or no lighting and/or were happy with lighting levels as they are at present in their neighbourhood. More than twice as many men than women said they did nothing different as a result of situations/areas with low or no lighting. 3 times as many women said that they would modify their activities based on lighting levels, for instance avoiding staying out after dark.

For the full free text responses see Appendix A.

**Question 14**

Which of the following statements best expresses how you feel about crime rates in your area over the last three years?



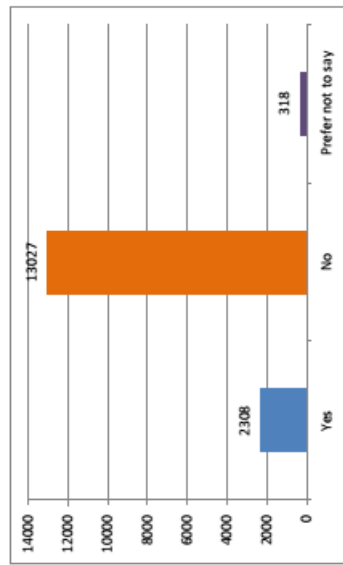
Women were slightly more likely than men to feel that crime rates had gone up, and men were more likely than women to feel that they had gone down or stayed the same.



Women were slightly more likely than men to have been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour during this period. People who had *not* been victims were also slightly more likely to live in areas without street lighting (10% compared with 6.8%).

**Question 17**  
(133 respondents skipped this question.)

Were you a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour in 2012?



Women were slightly more likely than men to have been a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour during this period but only by 0.1%.

**Question 18**

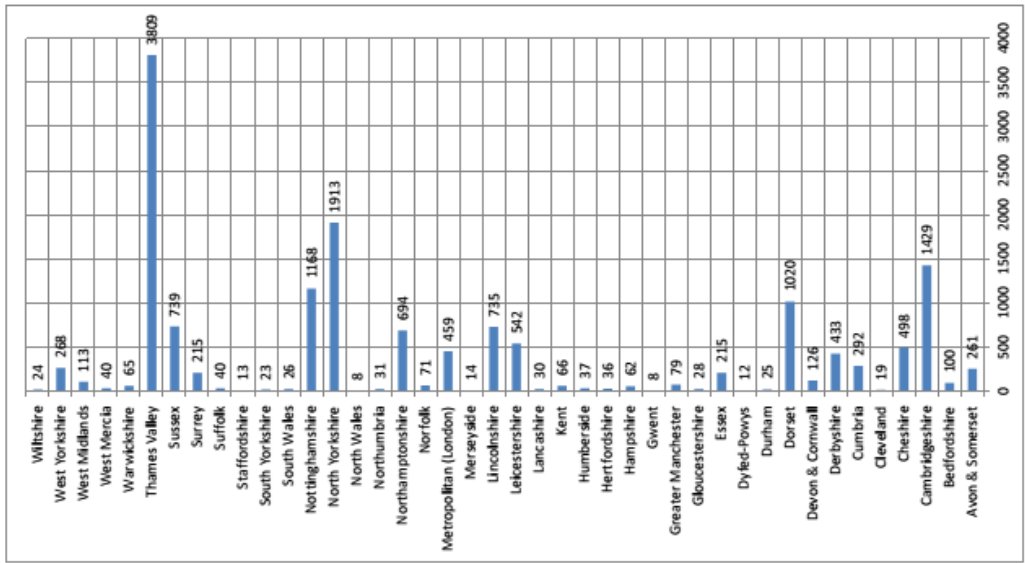
If you answered yes to question 17, you can tell us more about it here if you like. 2,168 respondents completed this field. See Appendix A for more details.



**Question 19**

Which police force area do you live in?





**Question 20**

Please tell us which town/city/village, county and local authority area you live in. (208 respondents skipped this question.)

See separate Question 20 document for more details.

**Question 21**

Do you have any more comments about the street lighting in your neighbourhood?

Opinion seemed to be divided between those respondents who would like more lighting and those who would prefer less, as well as those who are happy with current levels of lighting in their area and do not want them to be increased or decreased. The majority of people who have absolutely no street lighting in their neighbourhood do not want any as they feel it would destroy the rural character of their area. Please see Appendix A for further details.

Those people who do feel nervous or afraid of going out in the dark tend to, understandably, feel very strongly about it. Some people are afraid of having an accident (such as a fall or traffic accident) just as much as of crime.

Most people who commented were keen to find a solution to make cost savings while still retaining useful levels of street lighting. Suggestions included dimming, timer switches and motion sensors, as well as updating lights to a more modern and efficient technology where this has not already been done.

See Appendix A for more details.





23.2. Appendix B - Hotspots Identified from the Public Safety Questionnaire 2013

**Community Safety Questionnaire Analysis – Identified Hotspots**

Out of the 911 respondents that replied to Question 2 'Overall how would you rate the level of crime/anti-social behaviour in your local area', 77% felt that it was 'not a very big problem' or 'not a problem at all', with only 3% viewing it as a 'very big problem' and 19% a 'fairly big problem'.

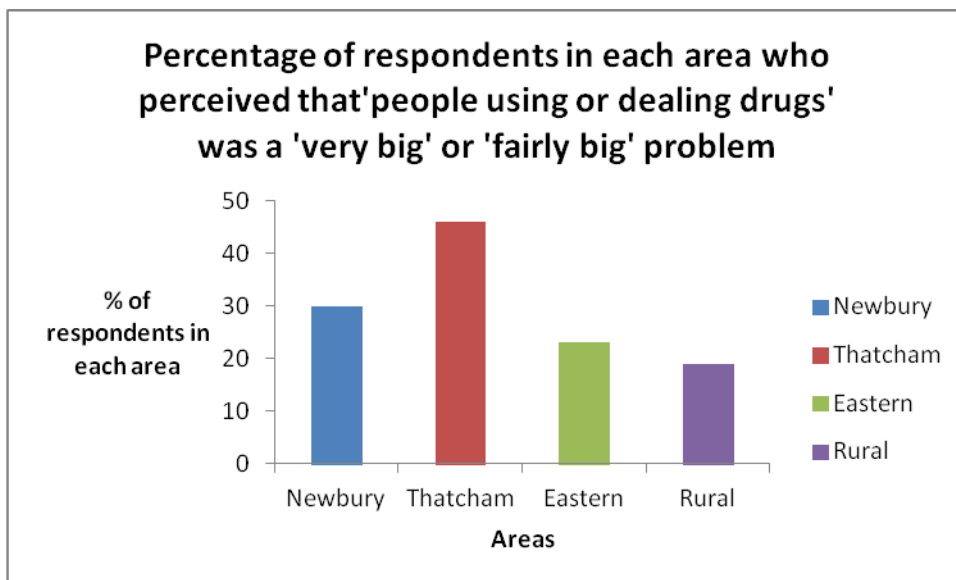
That said however, there were a number of hotspots identified.

**1. Thatcham**

Respondents from the Thatcham area perceived that there is a problem with the following issues compared to the other areas. This is supported by the fact that for Question 2 outlined above, 35% of the respondents for the Thatcham area felt crime and anti-social behaviour in their area to be a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem; compared to Newbury and the Eastern area respondents at 21% and 19% of respondents in the rural area. Further, for Q3 'Would you say the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in your local area has got better or worse over the past 3 years?', 'one third (33%) of respondents from the Thatcham area felt that had got 'slightly' or 'much' worse; compared to 27% of the respondents in the Eastern area, 26% in the rural area and 20% in Newbury.

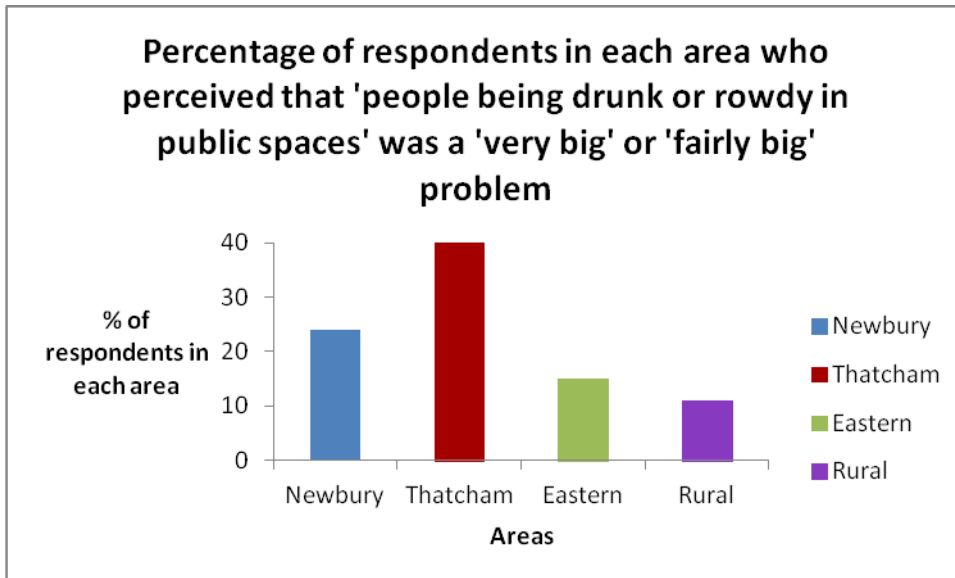
The areas of concern for the Thatcham respondents are:

**a) People using or dealing drugs**



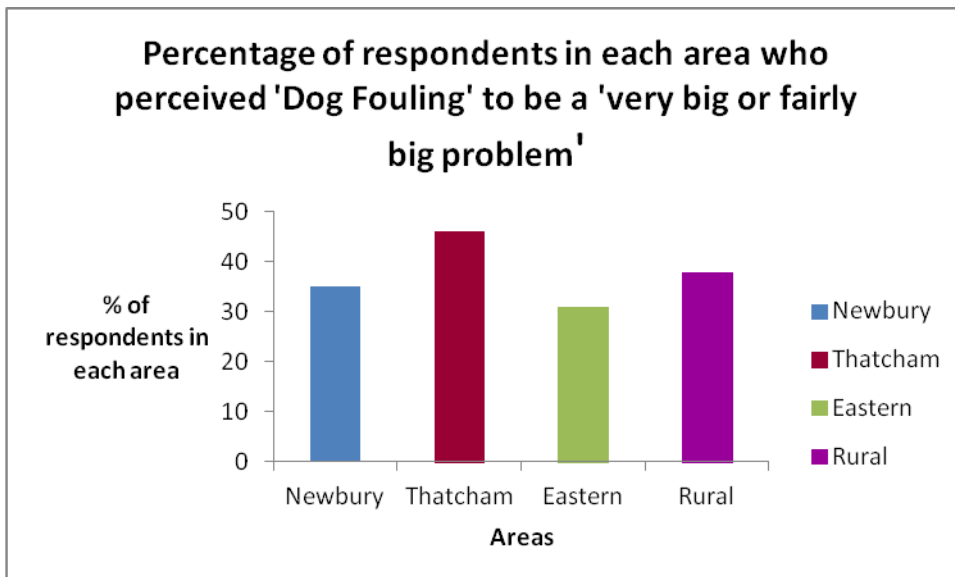
Overall, only 26% of all respondents to the questionnaire felt that 'people using or dealing drugs' was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. However, analysis of each area showed almost half (46%) of the respondents from the Thatcham area perceived it to be a problem compared to the next highest percentage of 30% in the Newbury area.

**b) People being drunk or rowdy in public spaces**



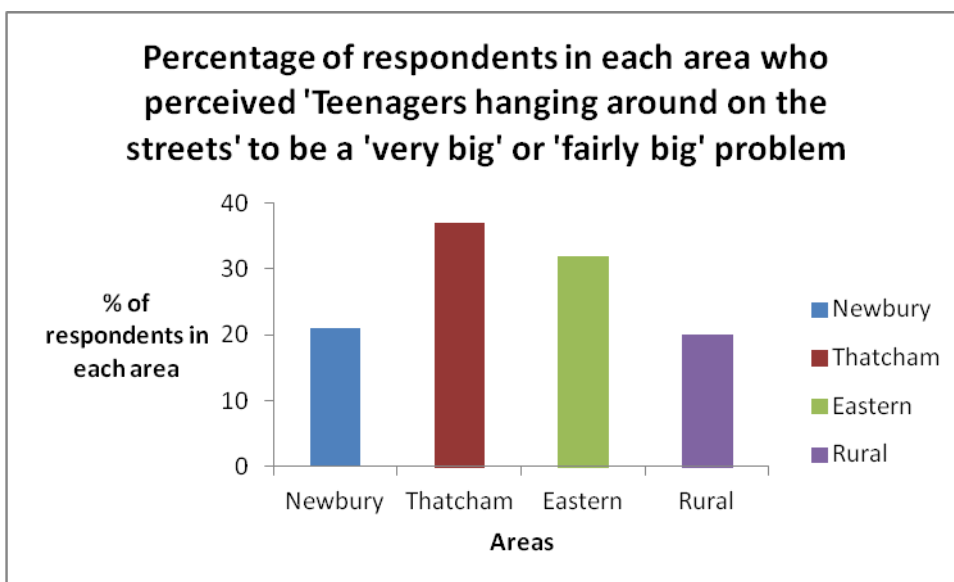
Overall, 77% of all respondents to the questionnaire felt that 'people being drunk or rowdy in public spaces' was a 'not a very big' or 'not a problem at all'. However, analysis of each area showed that 43% of the respondents from the Thatcham area perceived it to be a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem compared to the next highest percentage of 24% in the Newbury area.

**c) Dog Fouling**



Over a third of respondents overall (37%) felt that dog fouling was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. Again it was respondents in the Thatcham area (46%) who perceived it to be a greater problem than elsewhere. Although, the percentages for the rural area (38%) and Newbury (35%) were also comparatively high.

**d) Teenagers hanging around on the streets**

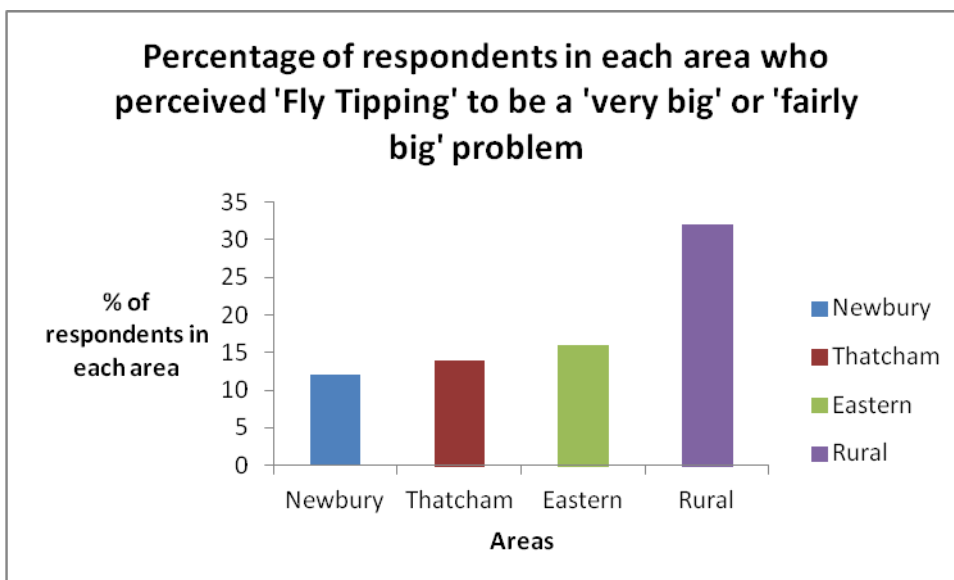


Overall 74% of the total respondents felt that 'teenagers hanging around on the streets' was 'not a problem' or 'not a very big problem'. Analysis of the area results however, shows that over one-third (37%) of Thatcham respondents and nearly one-third of the Eastern area respondents felt it was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. Compared to the Newbury and rural areas where only 21% and 20% respectively felt there was a problem.

## 2. Rural Area

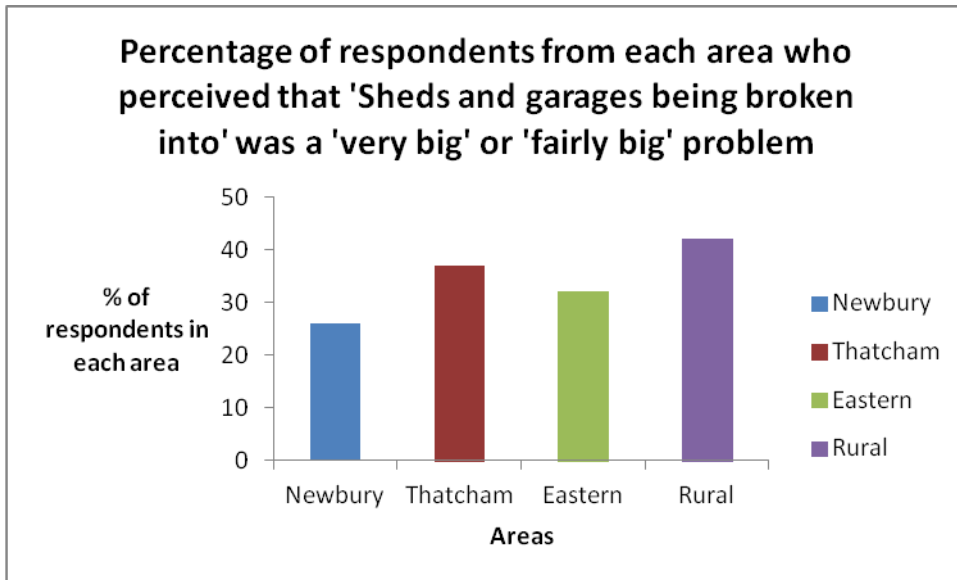
Respondents from the rural areas perceived that there is a problem with the following issues, compared to the other areas.

### a) Fly Tipping



73% of all respondents felt that 'fly tipping' was 'not a very big problem' or 'not a problem at all'. However, analysis of the area results show that nearly one-third (32%) of the rural area respondents perceived it to be a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem.

**b) Sheds and garages being broken into**

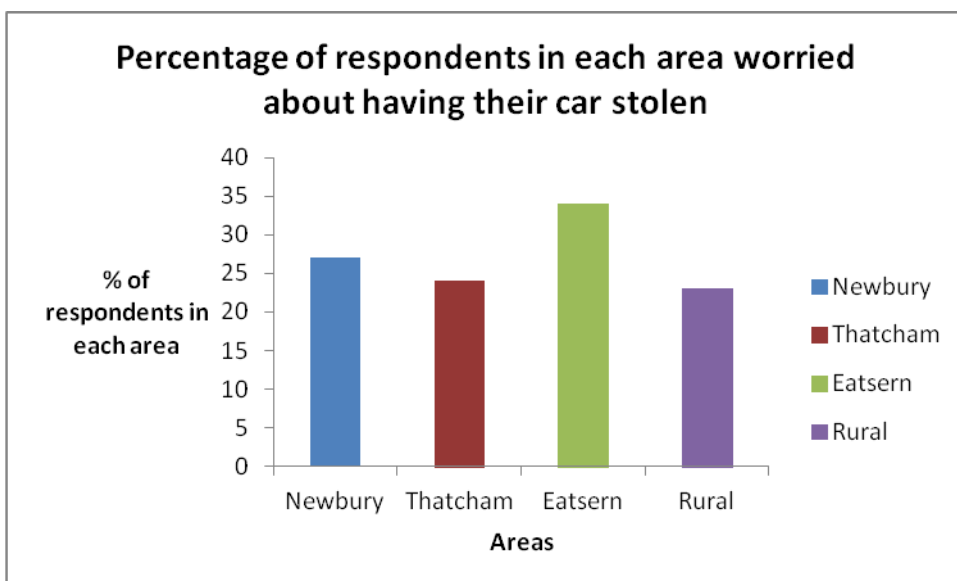


Overall, just over half (53%) of all respondents felt that 'sheds and garages being broken into' was not a 'very big problem' or 'not a problem at all'. Analysis of the areas however, shows that 42% of the rural area felt that it was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem. This is closely followed by Thatcham respondents at 37%, compared to Newbury respondents at 26%.

**3. Eastern Area**

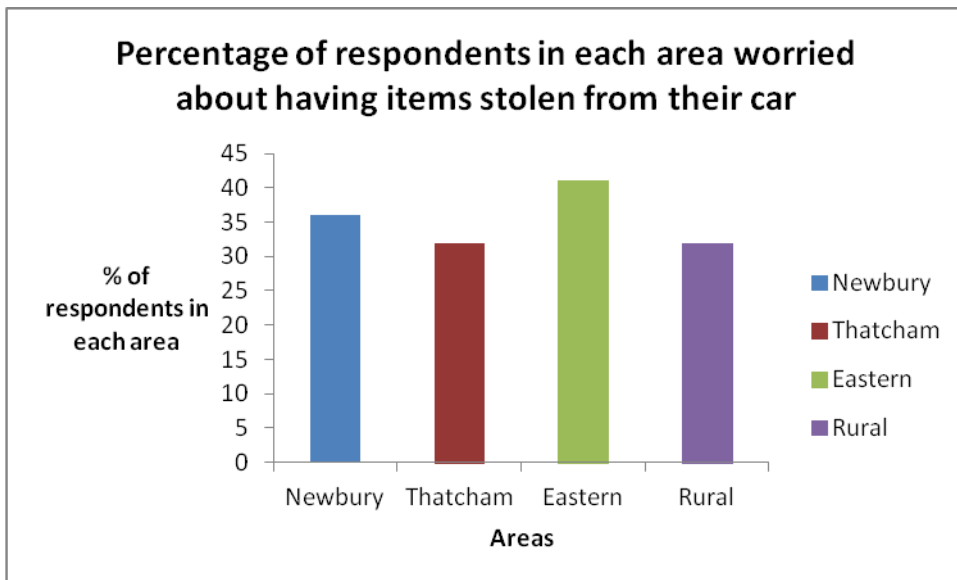
Respondents in the Eastern area were worried about the following happening, compared to other areas.

**a) Having their car stolen**



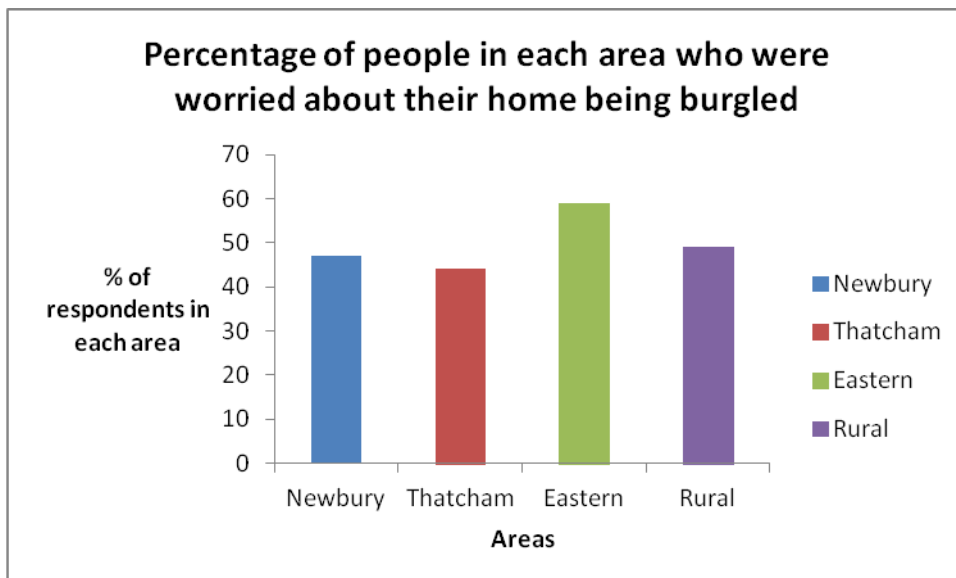
Whilst only 18% of Eastern area respondents perceived that 'vehicle theft' was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem; 34% of them were 'very worried' or 'fairly worried' that it could happen to them, compared to 23% in the rural area.

**b) Having items stolen from their car**



Whilst only 19% of Eastern area respondents perceived that 'items being stolen from vehicles,' was a 'very big' or 'fairly big' problem; 41% of them were 'very worried' or 'fairly worried' that it could happen to them. Around about one-third of respondents in the other areas (Newbury 36%, Thatcham 32% and Rural 32%) were also worried.

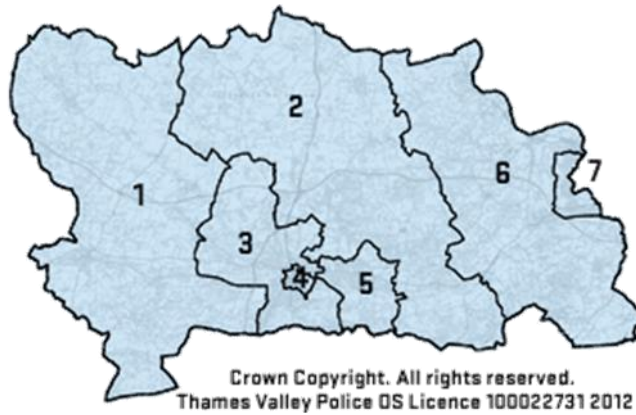
**4. Concerns About Burglary**



60% of all respondents felt that 'homes being burgled' was not a 'very big problem' or 'not a problem at all'. However, the percentages of respondents worried that this might happen was high in all areas (Eastern 59%, 49% rural, 47% Newbury and 44% in Thatcham).

23.3. Appendix C - Actual Crime Stats Thatcham & Newbury

## West Berkshire Local Police Area



### Neighbourhoods

- 1 Hungerford / Lambourn District
- 2 Bucklebury / Downlands
- 3 Newbury Outer
- 4 Newbury Town Centre
- 5 Thatcham, Aldermaston and Brimpton
- 6 Pangbourne / Burghfield
- 7 Calcot / Tilehurst

Year To Date: 01/04/2013-06/08/2013

	THATCHAM	NEWBURY TOWN CENTRE	NEWBURY OUTER
ALL Crime	354 (6.95%)	439 (11.14%)	633 (19.21%)
Violence with Injury	36 (44.00%)	44 (10.00%)	41 (-8.89%)
Violence without Injury	49 (16.67%)	48 (-9.43%)	71 (-1.39%)
BURG dwelling	13 (-13.33%)	2 (-83.33%)	35 (-23.91%)
BURG non dwelling	23 (-30.30%)	28 (16.67%)	55 (-3.51%)
TOMV	6 (-14.29%)	2 (-66.67%)	6 (-57.14%)
TFMV	42 (100.00%)	17 (54.55%)	94 (141.03%)
BIKE THEFT	7 (-12.50%)	8 (-46.67%)	22 (46.67%)
CD	79 (38.60%)	59 (20.41%)	123 (-3.15%)

() = comparison to same period last year

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

Here are some statistics for Thatcham and Newbury (above). These are for the period 01/04/13 – 06/08/13:-

- Newbury Outer includes Newbury SW, Greenham, Clayhill, Shaw, Speen & Donnington
- Burglary non-dwelling is sheds, garages and outbuildings etc
- TOMV = theft of motor vehicle
- TFMV = theft from motor vehicle
- CD = criminal damage
- The percentage figures are the change from the same period last year.

23.4. Appendix D - Visit to the Nightingales



**Community Safety Topic Team**

**Notes from a visit to The Nightingales Youth Centre**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2013**

**Contact details:**

Jenny McIntyre 07901 927210 or [jenny@communityyouth.org](mailto:jenny@communityyouth.org)

Alan Neighbourhood Warden: [newbury.wardens@sovereign.org.uk](mailto:newbury.wardens@sovereign.org.uk) or phone 01635 44387.

**Staffing:**

The Manager Jenny is paid by a combination of WBC, GCT, Sovereign and the Greater Greenham Project. She is employed for 37 hours a week but does far more hours.

The Centre has a paid Administrator for 10 hours a week, and she is paid by the Centre and by Sovereign and by the Greater Greenham Project, but she works for far more hours. The evening we visited a PCSO was off duty, doing voluntary work in the Café. Other volunteer adults were around too.

2 or 3 residents are on the Management Committee of the Centre.

There is a 15 strong Youth Council and many of these young people are turning into volunteers as they grow older.

**What goes on at the Centre?**

The Safer Communities Partnership run by Susan Powell organises Resolution panels and also offer training for residents and professionals in conflict resolution skills. These panels meet at the Centre.

Newbury College are delivering a 6 week I.T. course @ 2 hours a night, for only a one-off charge of £10.

The College are paid from 'adult learning' funds and the average age of attendees is 45 – 55 years. Sarah Hughes is the adult learning contact at Newbury College.

There was an adult class running the evening we visited, and the instructor had hired the main hall for £8 an hour, offering 'boot camp' exercises to a class of adult women.

Cub and scout groups, among others, hire the Centre. There are two scales of charges and non-profit making organisations pay less per hour.

Housing Officers hold surgeries with their residents at the Centre.

The Youth Management Committee pay £10 an hour to hire the main parts of the building, and this money goes back into the funds to help run the activities and the building itself.

The Café is open at varied times, e.g. 12 – 3 on a Tuesday. The Youth Club is open from 7 to 9 pm on a Tuesday and from 6 to 8 pm on a Wednesday, as two examples. The age of attendees is 8 – 19, but few attend after they are 17. The evening we visited we saw mostly 8 – 15 year old youngsters doing art and craft for Halloween, listening to music on headphones attached to computers, playing billiards/pool, doing computer games and using the Café. There is a meeting room that can be turned into a stage for performances.



Funding:

Sovereign has a Community Fund (which unfortunately is closed now but may reopen another year) and it held £42,000 this year for good causes, e.g. Christmas presents for over 100 children is one application already submitted by the Centre.

Greenham Common Trust bought the original lease of the building and has now sold it to the Management Committee for a 'peppercorn' payment. The Café equipment had to be purchased so there were set-up costs, e.g. the Slush puppy machine was free but the stock to serve the drinks cost £800. The grant scheme 'Awards for All' gave £14,000 and another group match-funded and this money was used for paint schemes and equipment such as the pool tables. **GTC spent £350,000 on refurbishing the building and a lot of this money went on putting in disabled toilets, refurbishing existing toilets and upgrading the kitchen. The toilets for the young people are of a very high standard in decoration and presentation.**

Outcomes:

The compelling information was that the YOT (Youth Offending Team) reported that there had been a substantive 75% decrease in ASB over the three year period of the operation of the Community Youth facility.

The Manager Jenny said she is on good terms with many of the residents as they now know her well. The Centre is very well used by all the community. She has three rules for the young people attending the Centre – Respect for themselves, for others and for the property. In the life of the Centre she has banned two young men, one for drugs and one for alcohol. They were banned for 4 weeks, and one took the opportunity to return after that time so long as he obeyed the rules.

The noticeboards contain lots of useful community information and there was a display board of 'drug paraphernalia' used for educational purposes.

The atmosphere was pleasant and relaxed. The young people barely noticed us.

We gained an impression of the Centre being a jewel for The Nightingales estate.

# Travel and Transport

# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT TOPIC TEAM***

## **24. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### 24.1. Document Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Travel and Transport Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and sets out the remit of the Travel & Transport Team and the membership of the team.

### 24.2. Team remit

The Travel and Transport Topic Team was formed by Thatcham Vision in 2013 as part of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Action Plan, with a remit to:

"Consider the current and perceived requirements for sustainable transport across the local area. This is defined as the provision (or ability to provide) adequate sustainable transportation infrastructure and services that will allow those residents or people who work within the Thatcham parish to have the ability to choose a viable option that will, in turn, allow them to make use of all facilities (both in their working or leisure activities) and that can be both **maintained** and **operated** in as environmentally friendly a way as possible".

### 24.3. Team Composition

Membership of the Travel and Transport Topic Team included local residents, representatives from Thatcham Town Council and Cold Ash Parish Council together with invited members from WBC. Specialist involvement was sought from locally based businesses where appropriate (e.g. Reading Buses, Vodafone, Southern Electric) as well as seeking input from residents of the area.

It was considered important to try to link the investigations and recommendations of the topic team with adjacent parishes, to ensure that the adjacent parishes could support whatever was recommended. Whilst there has been full and regular involvement with representatives from Cold Ash Parish, it is regretted that (despite invitations) no involvement was forthcoming from other nearby villages.

The members of the team were:

Paul Howell	Topic Team Chair & Vision Steering Group Member
Richard Avens	Chair of Cold Ash Community Partnership
Richard Foster	West Berks Green Exchange & Vision Member
Val Godson	Local resident & frequent user of public transport
Nina Hopkinson	Local resident & participant in the first action plan
Owen Jeffery	Thatcham Town Councillor & local resident
David Whiddett	Thatcham Community Transport
Jim White	Cold Ash Community Partnership

## **25. APPROACH**

In order to ascertain the most important issues for Thatcham residents, Vision conducted a community consultation which asked a number of key questions of local people. Of the

1,870 responses, it was found that a conclusive 73.8% agreed that green transport plans should be used to encourage the use of public transport, cycling etc. This, combined with information from the 2011 census that 12% of households in Thatcham do not have a car and that distances to key services (job centre, one of the two secondary schools, doctors and local public houses) are all above the national average, determined the direction the topic team should take.

The survey also showed that the majority were against car sharing and only a small minority were unable to use public transport although following a Vision report it was found that disabled accessibility to the train station required some improvement.

The team broke down their remit into the following areas:

- Public travel within Thatcham and to and from surrounding areas
- Travel by rail via Thatcham railway station
- Travel by bicycle
- Travel by road with a focus on:
  - Support of the existing road infrastructure, in particular whether current spending plans for repair work match the actual use of the roads;
  - Future infrastructure required to support electric vehicles (EVs) given the need to reduce carbon emissions by using alternative fuels to petrol and diesel;
  - Ideas for more efficient use of roads by reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles (SOVs) or encouraging travel by foot or bicycle;
  - Thatcham level crossing, at which waiting times are a source of irritation to vehicle users in Thatcham.

## **26. TEAM FINDINGS AND ACTION PLAN**

Please see Peter Walker, WBC's Transport services Manager's comments in the supporting WBC Officers Comments document.

### **26.1. Action TT001: To establish a Community Bus Service that will complement existing Reading Bus and First Great Western Services**

On-going discussions with local bus users, service providers (i.e. Reading Buses) and West Berkshire Council have confirmed personal observations made by the Travel & Transport Topic Team throughout 2014 that bus services are going through an extensive period of change which does not always help the passenger.

As a business, it is understood that Reading Buses must pursue those routes and services that can make the best possible return. To this end they have successfully introduced the Jet Black service that runs along the A4. At peak times the service is popular but other routes appear to have suffered (not necessarily as a consequence).

The services through north Thatcham and the spine of Cold Ash, which, together with the service through south Thatcham, are financially supported by West Berkshire Council and operate six days a week Mondays to Saturdays. These have been sustained (no changes to date since November 2010) and there are no present plans to make substantive changes. A 60-minute frequency mainstream bus service has been maintained linking the Broadway, north Thatcham (Park Avenue, Sagecroft Road, Westfield Road, Henwick Lane), West Berks Hospital and Newbury. One of the services which goes through north Thatcham also continues to provide the same 120-minute frequency service for the spine of Cold Ash (Cold Ash Hill and The Ridge). This is complemented by the 60-minute frequency service 102 through Kennet Heath and Lower Way - a service which shows potential for growth and possible commercial operation, which West Berkshire Council are seeking to capitalise on.

In a meeting with the topic group on 07/10/2013, Clive Tombs (of West Berkshire Council) put forward an outline of a community-led initiative to augment the existing pattern of Commercial and supported bus services – ‘delivering more journeys at peak times and potentially linking to the train station’. (Please see more details of this in the WBC officer comments document). He also said that ‘this community Led- initiative would have to be financially supported by Parish/ Town Councils or other means, although supported by WBC on such matters as timetabling and roadside publicity.

Initial assessments by the Travel & Transport Topic Team indicate that this is a viable option (especially as similar schemes have been successfully introduced elsewhere). The team accordingly recommends that a full feasibility study is put in place to continue with this initiative. If endorsed then the team would recommend that affected areas (i.e. Thatcham, Cold Ash, Bucklebury) should jointly organise a community bus scheme. It is also recommended that this proposal should include liaison with WBC, both to seek their professional advice and to facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned from such a scheme.

### Activities

Three activities are proposed in support of Action TT001:

1. To liaise with WBC and Reading Buses to confirm which desired routes will be supported e.g. Cold Ash via North Thatcham to Thatcham Railway Station;
2. To determine potential interest in a community bus service;
3. To engage with potential suppliers as well as other interested or affected agencies to ensure that a community bus service is viable and can be supported.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above actions the following results were returned:

To establish a Community Bus Service that will complement existing Reading Bus and First Great Western Rail Services.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	32.5%
Agree	42.5%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	15.0%

### 26.2. Action TT002: To increase the take-up of rail travel from Thatcham Railway Station

Thatcham is fortunate in having its own railway station, albeit located one mile south of the town centre and up to half a mile additional distance from housing developments to the north and west of the town. Whilst access is therefore possible, people are discouraged for the following reasons:

On foot - due to its location residents are faced with a walk of up to 1½ miles to the station

By bus - there are six departures daily from Thatcham Broadway to the station and seven in the return direction, at roughly two hourly intervals, none of which is

specifically timed to connect with a train service. Use of the bus service can therefore cause lengthy waits at the station which is manned six days a week in the mornings only, after which the waiting room is not available to passengers.

By car - access to the station by car is relatively easy except when queues build up due to the closure of the level crossing gates, which can exceptionally last up to 20 minutes when a number of trains pass through in quick succession. There are two car parks, the smaller on the north side which on weekdays is filled by commuters from an early hour, and the larger on the south side more distant from the town, which requires use of the level crossing. Exit from the south car park can be a lengthy process when a queue has built up and has to clear.

Level Crossing - the gates at the level crossing are controlled by the signalman at Colthrop box. The timing of the closure of the gates is determined by the type of train approaching and is designed to minimise disruption to road users, the period in advance of the train passing varying from two to three and a half minutes. Obviously this will be lengthened in the event of multiple trains passing in sequence. To the best of the Topic Team's knowledge there are no plans to make any changes to the current system and procedures within five years.

The introduction of electrification on the route through Thatcham may lead to an intensification of train services with a consequent effect of the level crossing closures. It did not prove possible to obtain information from any authority on this issue and the team will continue to pursue the question as appropriate.

### **Activities**

Three activities are proposed in support of Action TT002:

1. To arrange for contact to be made at an appropriate level with First Great Western (FGW) to discuss the signal operation at Colthrop and whether waiting times at the level crossing can be reduced during the electrification project;
2. To ask FGW to respond to the report submitted in 2012 and again in 2014 concerning lack of access for disabled residents to Thatcham Station as well as shortcomings in the existing infrastructure (*Appendix D*)<sup>10</sup>;
3. To investigate and find funding for a connecting bus service from Thatcham Broadway to Thatcham Station. (Please see Clive Tomb's comments on service 102 from the Broadway to Kennet Heath in the supporting documents containing WBC Officers' comments)

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<sup>10</sup> Since the work in Appendix D was completed, a new footbridge, new access ramp to Platform 1 and new cycle rack on the south side have been constructed. However these were without consultation and some of the concerns expressed in Appendix D remain

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above actions the following results were returned:

To increase the take up of rail travel from Thatcham Railway Station.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	15.0%
Agree	60.0%
Disagree	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	12.5%

26.3. Action TT003: To increase the number of people using or willing to use bicycles (or similar) in their daily travel plans by 5% over three years

**Cycleways and cycle routes**

Initial meetings of the Travel & Transport Topic Team favoured identifying three cycle routes through Thatcham that should be recommended for development, to include promotion as viable, safe routes and as important transport arteries in the region. However, discussions with various local residents as well as a survey carried out in August 2013 (*Appendix B*) strongly suggest that local residents are not happy with existing layout of cycle routes.

As may be seen from the responses recorded in *Appendix A* the majority of residents do not believe that the existing cycle ways are either safe or a practical alternative to other forms of transport. Given this situation, the Topic Team favoured promoting just one existing cycle route (National Route 4) in to which "feeder" cycle routes could be connected.

WBC's policy on cycling in the Local Transport Plan (Policy LTP SC2) states that the Council will, in partnership with the West Berkshire Cycle Forum, work towards increasing cycling in West Berkshire. There are a number of ways in which this can be done – infrastructure, good planning, training and promotion. WBC has funding in the capital programme for cycling and also uses revenue funding for training and promotion of cycling. Wherever there are opportunities WBC will bid for external funding to support cycling and use any other sources of funding available (such as Section 106 funding from new developments).

In comparison to the use of the car for journeys in the District, the proportion of West Berkshire's population travelling by bike is small but WBC is still committed to appropriate spending in order to seek to increase the number of people cycling (and support those who already cycle in order that they can continue).

**National Cycle Route 4**

National Cycle Route 4 is a nationally recognised route that runs through Thatcham Parish to Newbury. In line with the proposals outlined above, discussions were held to consider how this Cycle Route could be effectively promoted to local potential users. However, as concerns were raised about the consistent state of this Cycle Route, a survey (from

Thatcham Station to Newbury) was undertaken. The results are attached at *Appendix C* to this report.

It was with regret that the only conclusion that could be made from actually walking Cycle Route 4 was that it is below standard in its present condition and cannot be promoted as a viable option for cyclists.

The National Cycle Network was established by Sustrans, whose volunteers help to look after the route and highlight any issues. Sustrans do not agree that the route is not safe to use but acknowledge that it needs some attention in places and will work with WBC and other local groups to improve it. Specific concerns identified will be considered by WBC and Sustrans.

WBC considers bids for improving cycle links between Thatcham and Newbury, which then makes funding available which could be used to undertake detailed feasibility work and then recommend improvements. Elements of these bids are a result of the work of the Topic Team.

The suggested strategy of formally changing Route 4 to run along the canal towpath<sup>11</sup> and then develop feeder routes to link with the surrounding areas would need to be discussed with Sustrans and also the West Berkshire Cycle Forum. WBC would facilitate such discussions.

### Activities

Three activities are proposed in support of Action TT003:

1. To engage with WBC and support their work in this area;
2. To arrange either directly or through partner organisations for the complete re-assessment and refurbishment of National Cycle Route 4 where it runs through Thatcham;
3. To connect feeder cycle routes from outlying areas of Thatcham and Cold Ash to give greater accessibility to safe routes.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above Action the following results were returned:

To increase the number of people using or willing to use bicycles (or similar) in their daily travel plans by 5% over three years.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	27.5%
Agree	42.5%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	5.0%
No Opinion	17.5%

<sup>11</sup> Vision will also look at other possible routes to the tow path. At the time of writing the plan Vision is not suggesting that the towpath represents the best route



## 26.4. Travel by road

Local observations during 2014 have not identified any areas of grid-lock in the town to indicate that the current road system is unable to cope with existing traffic volumes. There are expected peak times such as the morning rush hour and school runs as well as the reverse in the late afternoon / early evening.

It may therefore be assumed that, so long as new developments take into account traffic impact assessments and allow for forecast increases in traffic, then the current network of roads will be adequate for the immediate future.

However, it should also be noted that the current infrastructure will only remain viable if it is properly maintained. Significant deterioration in the condition of the local roads was observed due to the bad weather in the winter of 2013-14.

Anecdotal feedback from local residents suggests that they are simply not sure about how to report issues with road surfaces. Pot-holes, etc, should be reported to the Street Care organisation within WBC. They will then assess and prioritise when (or if) appropriate repair work should be carried out. The onus in such matters is on the observer to report the issue and then the Council will respond. Accordingly, as residents do not seem to know this, matters are clearly not being reported to the appropriate authority.

By comparison Cold Ash residents report any issues with their local roads to the Cold Ash Parish Council who in turn report matters to WBC. This apparently works as WBC has reportedly responded very quickly to such notifications.

## 26.5. Action TT004: To review the impact of HGVs on Thatcham as a community (especially the degradation of existing road surfaces)

Although Thatcham is on a major A road (the A4) and it is expected that both light and heavy goods vehicles will use this route, a number of residents have expressed concern over the volume of goods vehicle traffic passing through the area (as opposed to those delivering here). At present, given that (as already stated) there have been no visible signs of grid-lock, the current infrastructure is coping with the traffic levels. However, the Topic Team considered that monitoring of such goods traffic should (if it is not already) be undertaken. It is accordingly recommended that Thatcham Town Council should co-ordinate with WBC to ensure that a mechanism is in place to monitor goods vehicle traffic and to take appropriate action when volumes start to reach unacceptable levels.

### **Activities**

One activity is proposed in support of Action TT004:

1. To arrange for an appropriate survey of HGV traffic.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above Action the following results were returned:

To review the impact of HGVs on Thattham as a community (especially the degradation of existing road surfaces).	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	45.0%
Agree	32.5%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	12.5%

## 26.6. Paths

As with the local roads in Thattham Parish, it has been noted that the state of footpaths within Thattham has been steadily deteriorating. A survey (*Appendix A*) carried out by a member of the Topic Team detailed a number of specific examples of the sort of problems currently being faced by pedestrians in the area.

## 26.7. Road Users

Current and typical road users include but are not limited to:

- family users (school runs, home to work, shopping, etc)
- public transport and related services
- light and heavy goods vehicles

Attempts have been made to interest local residents in car-sharing but the Vision Survey in 2013-14 showed that there is a significant reluctance on behalf of Thattham residents to car share. Accordingly it is considered that all available alternatives (such as Community Buses, Public Transport, etc) should be explored to try to reduce traffic volumes as far as possible. However, Vision note that a car sharing scheme in Newbury is about to be trialled and the Vision T&T team would appreciate information about this and, if it is successful, will consider whether a scheme could work in Thattham.

## 26.8. Car Clubs

Proposals have been made that Thattham could make use of a car club where "pool" vehicles are made available to residents to hire on an as-required basis. It was accepted by the Topic Team that this could potentially reduce the requirement for cars to be owned by Thattham residents. This in turn might encourage fewer car journeys. However, after considering the potential figures involved, the Topic Team is of the opinion that the benefits of such a scheme in the Thattham area are not proven.

In view of the above, it was considered that Thattham would be best served by observing the findings of car clubs in other nearby areas (i.e. Newbury, Hungerford, etc).

## 26.9. Action TT005: To introduce charging points for electric cars into car parks within Thatcham

Given their ecological benefit, the Topic Team considered that action should be taken to encourage the use of electric cars within Thatcham. Discussions have been opened with WBC with a view to encouraging the installation of charging points in the principal car parks within Thatcham. This might encourage additional shoppers to drive their electric vehicles in to Thatcham which would have the added benefit of encouraging spending with local businesses.

WBC are responsive to this proposal and have forwarded a copy of a news release (issued 5th February 2014) concerning vehicle charging points:

*West Berkshire Council and First Great Western are starting a special pilot scheme to increase local availability of electric charging points to begin to decarbonise the Council's internal transport fleet and staff vehicles.*

*In the next few months, Council staff using the Kennet Centre multi-storey car park will see the first of three charging points to be installed across the Council estate. It is hoped that by the end of 2014, electric vehicles maybe increasingly used as a viable alternative for council business. First Great Western have announced that Theale and Aldermaston stations are in their first round of public charging point installations, with Newbury following as part of the redevelopment project being planned for the railway station and Market Street.*

*The Council's installation has been funded by a grant from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) which covers 75% of the £8k cost and the hope is that it will encourage other businesses and households to follow suit and benefit from the low running costs of electric cars.*

*In addition, the Council is currently looking at the potential of using electric vehicles as pool cars for services so that routine journeys cause less pollution.*

*Dominic Boeck, West Berkshire's Executive Member for Cleaner Greener said: "This is another step towards a lower level of emissions from our day to day operations. It should be celebrated that the technology has become more mainstream and the possibility of more electric cars on the road is exciting. The longer term savings for the Council and our partners in reduced fuel bills and air pollution is worth the effort."*

*He added: "If these initial installations are well received, hopefully we will see even more public charging points across the district."*

It is suggested that Thatcham Town Council should continue to liaise with WBC to track the success of this initiative and to agree how it could be extended to Thatcham. However, the Topic Team notes that this initiative of WBC relates only to the council's need to reduce its own carbon emissions and does not address the council's wider responsibility to encourage and enable the general public to reduce their emissions. A natural extension of WBC's initiative for its own staff needs to be the provision of public charge points, as recognised in Dominic Boeck's statement above.

### **Activities**

One activity is proposed in relation to Action TT005:

1. To liaise with local supermarkets and other interested parties to see if they would be interested in sponsoring charging points

When the community was surveyed regarding their support of the above actions the following results were returned:

To introduce charging points for electric cars in to car parks within Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	17.5%
Agree	42.5%
Disagree	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	2.5%
No Opinion	25.0%

**26.10. Action TT006: To encourage local firms to consolidate travel plans and maximise the take-up of seats on business bus services**

A number of local companies have compiled travel plans to show how their staffing levels will not impact on the volume of traffic in the local area. In addition, due to the limitations of parking on some local company sites, these companies have been active in using their own bus services as well as promoting schemes such as car sharing amongst their workforce.

The Topic Team believes that such initiatives should be encouraged and expanded to companies within the same geographic area (i.e. expand such schemes to allow the staff of two or three companies to use the same company bus service. This could remove hundreds of single occupant car journeys each week in the local area. If agreed it is suggested that such a proposal should be co-ordinated through WBC. They are at an appropriately high authoritative level and have existing contacts with major firms in the area.

**Activities**

One activity is proposed in support of Action TT006:

1. Liaise with WBC to persuade local firms to collaborate when operating buses and maximise (between them) the take up of seats

When the community was surveyed regarding their support of the above Action the following results were returned:

To encourage local firms to consolidate their Travel Plans and maximise the take up of seats on business bus services.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	30.0%
Agree	35.0%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	7.5%
No Opinion	20.0%

26.11. Action TT007: To try to shorten time spent waiting in queues at Thatcham Level Crossing

Whilst technically an infrastructure issue, it should also be noted that extensive delays persist through the operation of the level crossing at Thatcham. Delays can be extensive due to the apparent early closing of the level crossing in advance of train arrivals.

Attempts were made repeatedly to engage with both Network Rail and First Great Western (to discuss this and other matters) but with no success. It is understood that the operation of the level crossing is geared to what is now an obsolete signalling system so until this is replaced then there is little likelihood that the delays can be improved upon. However, it would be courteous if either First Great Western or Network Rail would enter in to communications on this matter.

To try and improve on the relations with the local community, the Topic Team recommends that WBC should be asked to engage with these providers on behalf of the affected residents of the region.

It was noted that a private venture to launch a phone app which informs road users when the level crossing will be open appears to have been well-received and helpful to motorists.

**Activities**

One activity was proposed in support of Action TT007:

1. To liaise with FGW over possible options.

When the community was surveyed regarding their support of the above actions the following results were returned:

To try to shorten time spent waiting in queues at Thatcham Level Crossing.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	64.1%
Agree	17.9%
Disagree	5.1%
Strongly Disagree	2.6%
No Opinion	10.3%

## **27. TRAVEL, TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY (INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL) ACTION PLAN**

PARISH ACTION PLAN - TRAVEL & TRANSPORT								
PARISH OF THATCHAM								Date Plan Adopted
Category	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
Overall the household survey of 1870 residents showed that 73.8% of those surveyed agreed that green transport plans should be used to encourage the use of public transport, cycling etc The results of a further consultation, with a sample of 270 residents, provides the following justification for each action.								
<b>Safer</b> (reducing cars on roads), <b>Greener</b> (reduction in number of car journeys)	<b>TT001</b> <b>To establish a Community Bus Service that will complement existing Reading Bus and First Great Western Rail Services</b>	1. To liaise with WBC and Reading Buses to confirm which existing or desired routes are unable to be supported (i.e. Cold Ash via North Thatcham to Thatcham Railway Station).	High	2016	2016	TV	<b>West Berkshire Council, Reading Buses, Cold Ash Community Partnership</b>	<b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing).</b> There is a need for a community-led initiative to augment the existing pattern of commercial and supported bus services - delivering more journeys at peak times, covering difficult-to-serve areas such as the estates off Floral Way and potentially linking to Thatcham Station. Without this residents of outer lying areas not served by public transport will be obliged to find alternative transport (most likely by car) to make their journeys.
		2. To determine potential interest in a Community Bus Service	High	2016	2016	TV	<b>West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Vision, Cold Ash Community Partnership, Bucklebury Council</b>	<b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing).</b> Before a service as suggested could be put in place, there would be a need to confirm who would actually commit to using this facility.
		3. To engage with potential suppliers as well as other interested or affected agencies to ensure that a Community Bus service is viable and can be supported	High	2016	2018	TV	<b>WBC, Cold Ash Community Partnership, Bucklebury Council</b>	<b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing).</b> Whilst the service is being established, financial support will be essential.

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<p><b>Safer</b> (reducing cars on roads), <b>Greener</b> (reduction in number of car journeys)</p>	<p><b>TT002</b> To increase the take up of rail travel from Thattham Railway Station</p>	<p>1. To arrange for contact to be made at an appropriate level with First Great Western (FGW).</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>First Great Western, West Berkshire Council</b></p>	<p><b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b> Despite repeated attempts, FGW have not responded to correspondence from the Travel and Transport Group. First Great Western is going through a process of developing Masterplans for their stations. It is suggested that representatives from Thattham Vision and FGW are invited to a meeting facilitated by WBC. This could be used to consider the draft Masterplan for Thattham Station and to consider to what extent it addresses the issues raised by Thattham Vision and the accessibility issues highlighted in the Council's Station Accessibility Audit</p>
		<p>2. To ask FGW to respond to the report submitted in 2012 and again in 2014 concerning lack of access for disabled residents to Thattham Station as well as shortcomings in the current infrastructure</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>First Great Western, West Berkshire Council</b></p>	<p><b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b> Although FGW have taken action to make the station accessible to all then they are effectively barring many residents with mobility issues from using the station, forcing them to rely on other transport (most likely cars) for their relevant journeys.</p>
		<p>3. To establish a connecting service from Thattham Broadway to Thattham Railway Station.</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2018</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>WBC, Vision, Cold Ash Community Partnership, Bucklebury Council</b></p>	<p><b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b> Evidence suggests that a significant number of residents do not use Thattham Station as they do not find it easy to get to.</p>

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<p><b>Safer</b> (reducing cars on roads), <b>Prosperous</b> (an efficient cycle system will increase tourism as well as increase sales in supporting industries), <b>Healthy &amp; Greener</b> (reduction in number of car journeys)</p>	<p><b>TT003</b>  <b>To increase the number of people using bicycles (or similar) in their daily travel plans by 5% over three years</b></p>	<p>1. To engage with West Berkshire Council and support their work in this area.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>West Berkshire Council</b></p>	<p><b>70% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b>                  Significant promotion and encouragement of cycling would need to be made available for this initiative to work.</p>
		<p>2. To arrange either directly (given an appropriate mandate) or through partner organisations for the complete re-assessment and refurbishment of National Cycle Route 4 where it runs through Thatcham to Newbury</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2018</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>West Berkshire Council, Sustrans</b></p>	<p><b>70% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b>                  National Cycle Route 4 (where it runs through Thatcham to Newbury) is not safe to use in its current state. Recommending this as a "safe route" for cyclists would be to invite potential claims resulting from accidents or near misses.</p>
		<p>3. To connect feeder routes from outer lying areas of Thatcham and Cold Ash to Cycle Route 4 to give greater accessibility to "safe" routes</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p>TV</p>	<p><b>West Berkshire Council, Sustrans</b></p>	<p><b>70% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.5% disagreeing).</b>                  There is evidence to suggest that residents of out lying areas do not cycle as they do not feel that it is safe to do so. If a major cycle route could be made accessible by safe feeder routes then it is suggested that more people would use them.</p>



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<p><b>Safer</b> (reducing the potential for accidents), <b>Prosperous</b> (reducing potential claims for damages etc)</p>	<p><b>TT004</b> <b>To review the impact of HGVs on Thatcham as a community (including the degradation of existing road surfaces)</b></p>	<p>1. To arrange for an appropriate survey of HGV traffic</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p><b>TV</b></p>	<p><b>WBC</b></p>	<p><b>77.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 10% disagreeing).</b> Although the current infrastructure would be considered adequate, the incidence of pot-holes is being increased due to the observed effect of HGV and similar vehicles on them.</p>
<p><b>Greener</b> (encourage the use of electric cars in the area).</p>	<p><b>TT005</b> <b>To introduce charging points for electric cars in to car parks within Thatcham</b></p>	<p>1. To liaise with local supermarkets and other interested parties to see if they would be interested in sponsoring charging points</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p><b>TV</b></p>	<p><b>WBC, Waitrose, Co-op</b></p>	<p><b>60% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 15% disagreeing).</b> To introduce charging points in the main car parks in Thatcham that will conform to the policies of both Thatcham Town Council and the ethical policies of both Waitrose and Co-operative supermarkets</p>
<p><b>Greener</b> (reduce the number of cars journeys in the area).</p>	<p><b>TT006</b> <b>To encourage local firms to consolidate their Travel Plans and maximise the take up of seats on business bus services</b></p>	<p>1. Liaise with WBC to persuade local firms to collaborate when operating buses and maximise (between them) the take up of seats</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2018</p>	<p><b>TV</b></p>	<p><b>WBC, Vodafone, SSE</b></p>	<p><b>65% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 15% disagreeing).</b> Buses operated by local firms are often seen to be running with empty seats. Evidence suggests that a number of companies could collaborate to make better use of such services</p>
<p><b>Healthy</b> (reduction in stress)</p>	<p><b>TT007</b> <b>To try to shorten time spent waiting in queues at Thatcham Level Crossing</b></p>	<p>1. To liaise with FGW over possible options.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>2021</p>	<p><b>TV</b></p>	<p><b>WBC, TTC, FGW, Network Rail</b></p>	<p><b>82% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.7% disagreeing).</b> Now is an ideal opportunity to discuss the signal operation at Colthrop with FGW and whether waiting times can be reduced during the electrification project. Also, Vision will aid any other projects (e.g. the level crossing app) in order to improve this issue.</p>

## 28. APPENDICES

- Annex A: Pedestrians
- Annex B: Cycle Survey
- Annex C: Cycle Route 4
- Annex D: Disabled Access Report

### 28.1. Appendix A – Pedestrians

**From:** Paul Howell [mailto:Paulhowell460@virginmedia.com]  
**Sent:** 05 January 2014 17:22  
**To:** 'jgraham@westberks.gov.uk'  
**Cc:** 'valerie godson'; coldashcommunity; 'Jim White'; 'Mireille Willan'; Nina; 'Owen Jeffery'; 'Pam Foad'; Richard Foster; richardavens@talk21.com; thatthamvb@tiscali.co.uk; Bucklebury Parish Clerk; coldashcommunity; Glyn Davis; Graham Hunt  
**Subject:** Thattham Travel & Transport - Footpaths in Thattham

Hi Jenny,

I hope that you are well.

Please find attached a series of photographs taken by one of my team (Val Godson). Her brief was, as part of our assessment of the existing footpaths around Thattham, to note and photograph any areas that could be potential issues to Thattham residents. This she has done and the following text is an extract from her accompanying e-mail:

*"I hope my collection of photos from around Church Gate that follow on from no.4 cycle route are of use.*

*The crossing point to the middle of Church Gate where it meets The Moors roundabout is badly worn.*

*The photos of the High Street illustrating men "not at work" show what the pavement was like for nearly a week. Only a tiny gap for everyone to pass through so it appears that this was very poorly thought out. The problems were added to as the High Street is one way with buses coming from the village.*

*The crossings at the lights at the end of Park Lane are badly timed.*

*The pavement along the front of the shops on the High Street is also very worn."*

Val does not cover all of the Thattham area when she is out and about but, to find so many problems (or potential problems - i.e. trip and safety hazards) in what are busy areas of Thattham is alarming.

Whilst I appreciate that the West Berkshire Council only has limited funds and must prioritise them accordingly in terms of what needs to be done, I would be grateful if you will consider this e-mail and the attachments and let me know what you think. If necessary, could you please pass this e-mail and attachments on to a more appropriate area and ask them to comment?

Thank you for your help

All best wishes.

Regards

*Paul*

Paul Howell

Thatcham Vision Report 2015

Project Manager (Voluntary) - Thatcham Vision.

c/o Mireille Willan

Project Manager - Thatcham Vision

Part-time on 01635 863592

[www.thatchamonline.net/thatchamvision](http://www.thatchamonline.net/thatchamvision)





Thatcham Vision Report 2015



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## 28.2. Appendix B – Cycle Survey

Results of the Survey carried out over the period 23rd / 24th August 2013									
Serial No.	Do you ride a bike?	Daily?	Do you use cycle lanes?	Do you like cycle lanes?	Comment	If you cycle / cycled, would you use cycle lanes	Comment	Do you like shared footpaths (i.e. cycles and pedestrians) when no room for cycle lanes?	Comment
	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N	Y / N		Y / N		Y / N	
1	N	N	N	N	Cyclists not obliged to use them. Waste of money	N	Consider that should cycle on road.	N	Some cyclists very inconsiderate, forcing pedestrians to get out of their way
2	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	Y	They are there so why not use them	N	No comment
3	N	N	N	N	I do not ride a bike	N	No plans to ride a bike	N	Dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists.
4	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	None	N	No comment
5	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
6	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
7	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
8	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No plans to ride a bike	N	Dangerous
9	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	Cyclists usually inconsiderate
10	Y	N	N	N	Why should I use them? Am entitled to ride on the road same as when I drive a car	N	None	N	Pedestrians think they have right of way
11	Y	Y	Y	Y	Safe way to cycle	Y	They are there so why not use them	Y	It's just another form of cycle lane
12	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
13	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
14	N	N	N	Y	Anything that keeps cyclists off the road	Y	Cyclists should be separated from motorists where possible	Y	See previous
15	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
16	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	If they have to be there, should keep bikes separate from pedestrians
17	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
18	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
19	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
20	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Why should I?	N	No comment
21	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No plans to ride a bike	N	No plans to use a bike
22	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	No comment	N	No comment
23	Y	N	N	N	Why should I use them?	N	I am entitled to ride on the road	N	I am entitled to ride on the road
24	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No plans to ride a bike	N	No plans to use a bike
25	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
26	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
27	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
28	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
29	Y	N	Y	Y	Added safety to cyclist	Y	Added safety to cyclist	N	Should be more ordinary cycle paths
30	Y	N	N	N	Prefer to cycle on road	N	Prefer to cycle on road	N	Prefer to cycle on the road
31	Y	N	Y	Y	When I feel like it	Y	Useful for getting round cars	N	Pedestrians get in the way
32	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
33	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
34	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	No comment	N	No comment
35	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
36	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
37	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	Y	If they are there, why not?	N	Seem dangerous
38	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
39	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
40	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if not driving	N	Prefer to walk if not driving
41	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
42	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
43	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
44	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
45	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
46	N	N	N	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered	N	Not bothered
47	N	N	N	N	Walk if not driving	N	Walk if not driving	N	Walk if not driving
48	N	N	N	N	Bikes are dangerous	N	Bikes are dangerous	N	Bikes are dangerous
49	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
50	N	N	N	N	If not driving will walk	N	If not driving will walk	N	If not driving will walk - cyclists don't take enough care on shared paths
51	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
52	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them
53	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Would not want to	N	Would not want to
54	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving
55	N	N	N	N	Don't like bikes	N	Don't like bikes	N	Not enough room in many cases for bikes and pedestrians
56	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Think bikes are dangerous to pedestrians on shared routes
57	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Shared ways are often too narrow to be safe
58	N	N	N	N	Cyclists should cycle in the road	N	Cyclists should cycle in the road	N	I think they are dangerous
59	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
60	N	N	N	N	Don't use them	N	Don't use them	N	No comment
61	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
62	N	N	N	N	Don't like bikes - prefer to walk if not driving	N	Don't like bikes - prefer to walk if not driving	N	Think they are dangerous to pedestrians
63	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Shared ways are often too narrow to be safe
64	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Think they are dangerous to pedestrians
65	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Not enough room in many cases for bikes and pedestrians

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66	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Don't use them
67	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Don't use them
68	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Don't use them
69	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
70	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
71	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
72	N	N	N	N	Cyclists don't seem to use them	N	Why should I?	N	If not driving will walk - cyclists don't take enough care on shared paths
73	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Don't use them
74	N	N	N	N	Cyclists don't seem to use them	N	No comment	N	Don't use them
75	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	No comment
76	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	No comment
77	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	Think they are unsafe
78	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
79	N	N	N	N	Cyclists not obliged to use them	N	Why would I want to?	N	Think they are unsafe
80	N	N	N	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money	N	Think they are unsafe
81	N	N	N	N	Would like them better if cyclists were obliged to use them	Y	If I had to cycle then okay	N	Dangerous
82	N	N	N	N	Will walk when not driving	Y	If they are there then why not?	N	Think they are unsafe
83	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
84	N	N	N	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money
85	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
86	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
87	N	N	N	N	Think they are not as safe as they could be	N	Don't think that they are safe	N	Don't think that they are safe
88	N	N	N	N	Will walk when not driving	N	Will walk when not driving	N	Unsafe
89	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
90	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk if I am not driving	N	Prefer to walk if not driving	N	No comment
91	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
92	N	N	N	N	No comment	Y	No comment	N	No comment
93	N	N	N	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money
94	N	N	N	N	Cyclists don't seem to use them	N	Would not cycle	N	Think they are dangerous to pedestrians
95	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
96	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
97	N	N	N	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money	N	Waste of money
98	N	N	N	N	Prefer to walk	N	Prefer to walk	N	Prefer to walk
99	N	N	N	N	Cyclists don't seem to use them	N	Prefer to walk	N	Prefer to walk
100	N	N	N	N	No comment	N	No comment	N	No comment
<b>Summary includes the following:</b>									
100	People responded								
6	No who cycle								
1	No who cycle daily								
5	Cycle for recreation								
3	Use cycle lanes								
4	Like Cycle lanes								
2	Like shared cycle lanes								
19	Think shared cycle lanes are unsafe								
3	Think shared cycle lanes are a waste of money								
5	Think cycle lanes are a waste of money								
19	Have no comment about cycle lanes								
37	Have no comment when asked if you cycle / cycled, would you use cycle lanes								

### 28.3. Appendix C – Cycle Route 4

#### REPORT IN TO CURRENT STATE OF CYCLE ROUTE NO 4

As a result of the Travel and Transport Topic Team meeting, held on the 18th November 2013, I took an action to walk Cycle Route 4 from Thatcham to Newbury. The following is a report of my findings and observations whilst so doing.

#### INTRODUCTION:

National Cycle Route 4 is a route identified by the charity Sustrans and (according to their web-site) is:

"A long distance route between London and Fishguard via Reading, Bath, Bristol, Newport, Swansea, Carmarthen, Tenby, Haverfordwest and St. Davids.

The route is fully open and signed, although the route has not been finalised in central London between Greenwich and Putney Bridge.

The route is described here from London to Fishguard but is signed in both directions."

The purpose of this report is to report and comment upon the nature of that route from where it enters the main environs of Thatcham through to where it arrives in the middle area of Newbury. At the very least this report will show that Cycle Route 4 is not fully signed.

To try and assist the reader, I have broken this report in to sections and have inserted extracts from open source maps (available on-line) to illustrate where the route actually goes.

#### Thatcham Station:

Cycle Route No 4 enters Thatcham along the banks of the Kennet and Avon Canal. Cyclists travelling West from Reading will enter Thatcham from the Kennet and Avon Canal tow path just to the South of the Thatcham Station and associated level crossing.

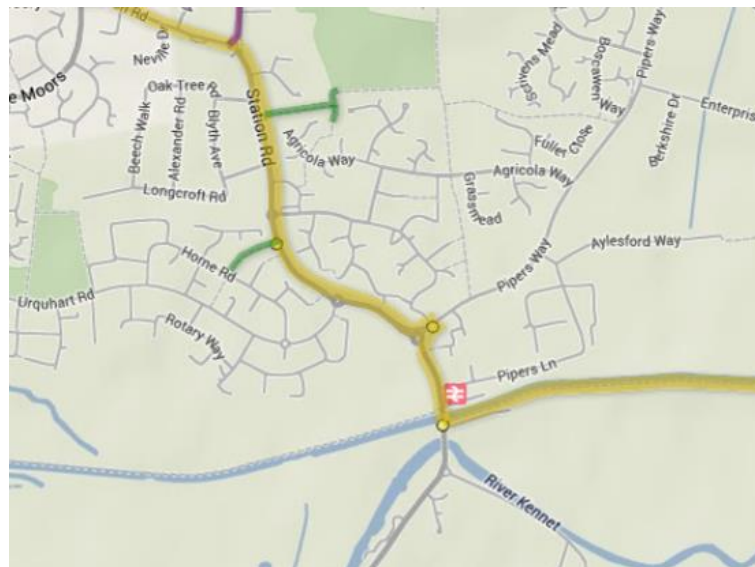


Figure 1: Thatcham Station



Although I did not walk this particular stretch of the tow path, I was able to stand on the bridge over the Kennet and Avon canal and could quite readily see that the path (the cycle route) was unmade for some distance and quite muddy.

Cyclists coming to the end of this path by the bridge over the Kennet and Avon Canal (where the cycle route meets Crookham Hill) then have to choose how best to proceed on the assumption that they are heading for Newbury.

There is no marked cycle route or path at this point. Cyclists must therefore decide whether to cross the traffic flow and turn right to cycle towards the level crossing along the main road or, alternatively, they could choose to turn immediately right and cycle on the pedestrian path as they cycle towards the station.

If they choose to stay on the footpath, when they reach the level crossing then they will be cycling against the flow of traffic and with no protection from any vehicles coming towards them. Theoretically, as this footpath / crossing point is not a cycle-way, if they are not cycling with the normal traffic flow then cyclists should dismount and walk their machines. However I have never observed any cyclist doing this during my time living in Thatcham (since 1999) but I have seen cyclists choosing to cycle on this path, swerving round pedestrians and very much taking their lives in their own hands.

At Thatcham level crossing, as already known to most users, the surface of the level crossing is both uneven and (for a standard bicycle tyre) slippery in wet weather.

Once the level crossing has been passed, although there is more room on the left of the road, indications suggest that it was intended that cyclists should be encouraged to stay on the right hand footpath although this is not a cycle route.

#### Station Road:

It is not until you get to the junction of Station Road with Pipers Way that the cycle route is re-identified.



*Figure 2: Station Road / Pipers Way*

This appears on the right hand side of the road as you head towards Thatcham along Station Road. Cyclists have therefore, if they have followed standard traffic rules and are cycling on the left in normal traffic flow, to cross the road before the roundabout and get on to the cycle path at this point.

Note: Cycle Route 4 signs are visible on various grey road sign posts, indicating that cyclists should bear left at this junction and cycle towards Thatcham along Station Road.

The cycle route at this point is clearly a split route with the potential for both cyclists and pedestrians to use this in separate lanes. The path is twice the width of the pavement opposite.

**Problem:** Pedestrian section overgrown in places for approx 50% of the way.

Urquart Road:

Signs for Cycle Route 4 still visible on right hand side pointing up towards Thatcham.

However markings on cycle route have disappeared. The general surface is metalled but has been subject to many different repairs that have not been finished to a common standard and are therefore potentially dangerous to a cyclist.

One cyclist passed me who, when asked about the cycle route, commented "it's crap".

Wheeler's Green Way:



Figure 3: Wheelers Green Way

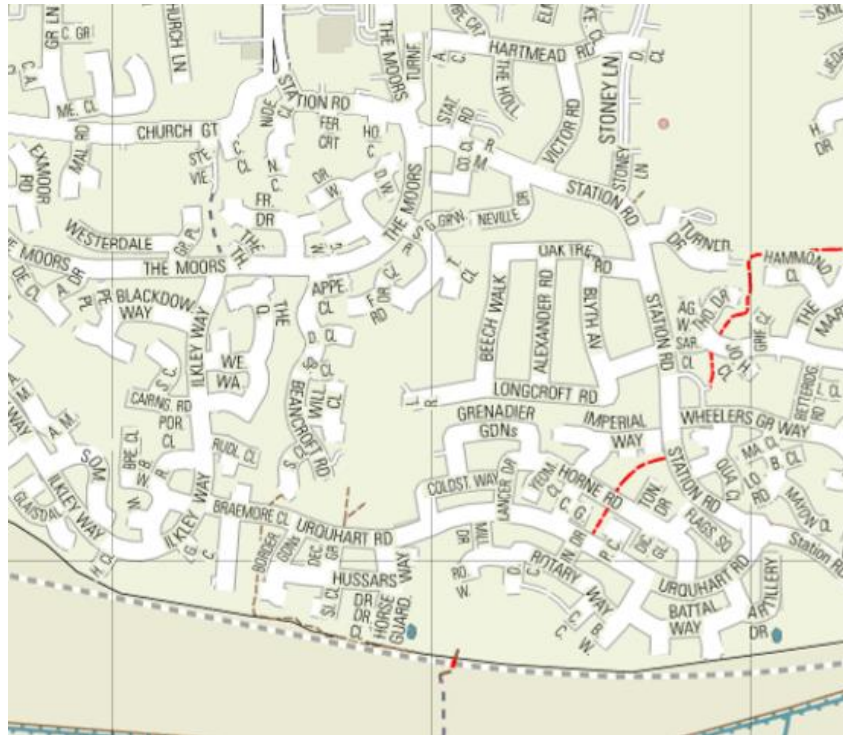
There are no signs at the junction with Wheeler's Green Way to show where the cycle route should go. However there is still a split cycle way / pedestrian way on the opposite side of the roundabout, still on the right as you continue up Station Road.

The path surface remains wide enough for two lanes but these are only re-instated back in place in the area of the Burdwood Community Centre.

Just before the junction with Oak Tree Road (on the left) the path reduces in width to that of a standard footpath. Cyclists and pedestrians are now required to share this route. It is approximately the same width as the footpath on the other side of the road which is for pedestrians only.

At this point I was also passed by second cyclist (just before Turner Drive) and he also was unimpressed with the standard of this route.

### Stoney Lane:



*Figure 4: Stoney Lane*

At the roundabout junction with Stoney Lane, the cycle route splits with cycle lane and footpath heading off towards the local school. It is not very apparent but the main cycle route bears left and continues towards Thatcham centre.

It is a shared cycle route along this stretch although the available path fluctuates in width, sometimes barely wide enough for two people to walk side by side.

At the head of Station Road (where it is crossed by The Moors), visible signs point Cycle Route 4 across the double roundabout in the direction of Thatcham Broadway.

Note: There is a cycle route bearing left along The Moors but this is assumed to be a local and not national Cycle Route.

After crossing the roundabouts, visible signs become hard to see. Some appear to have either been deliberately removed and at least one was obscured by a West Berkshire Council Planning Notice. Only one sign still visible but you have to be looking for it.

At the bottom of Thatcham Broadway, Cycle Route 4 signs are not easily to be seen. As I knew where I was going I was able to keep up with the route.



Figure 5: Station Road / Church Gate

Church Gate:

At the junction of the Broadway with Church Gate only one Cycle Route 4 sign was visible. This was on lamp-post number 1 outside the funeral directors. You had to look hard to see it.

At this point cyclists will definitely be cycling along the road. There is a varied road surface with speed bumps, raised man-hole covers and repairs not finished to a common standard. In my opinion it is not the safest of routes for an unwary cyclist.

Green Lane:

At the junction with Green Lane, cycle / pedestrian route signs are visible but on the opposite side of the road from Green Lane, heading towards Lower Way.

The footpath widens out to be able to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians in separate lanes but there are no markings to keep such users apart.

Junction Church Gate / The Moors / Lower Way:

Signs are clearly visible here for Cycle Route 4 going towards Newbury along Lower Way.

Note: The route is still on the Northern side of the road at this point.



Figure 6: Church Gate / Lower Way

### Lower Way:

As Lower Way opens out with fields to the South, the cycle route crosses from the North to the South of the road. At this point the route becomes two way cycle only and (if my information is correct) should not be used by pedestrians. However, as the fields are a popular area for dog walkers and walkers generally (as well as customers of fairs and boot sales held in the fields) this is often ignored and the route used by pedestrians.

Note: This is exposed where the route passes the fields -- cyclists would be buffeted by the wind.

Point of interest: On a two way cycle route such as this, one lane is adjacent to the road. As there are no barriers between this cycle path and the route, if a cyclist has an accident and falls in to the road then what is the legal position?

On passing the old waste ground to the south of Lower Way, I was wondering if this could be opened up to facilitate a cycle way through there?

As you approach the Leisure Park, the width of the inner cycle route is reduced due to lack of space as well as general debris.

Adjacent to the allotments as you approach the traffic lights at the end of Lower Way, the two way cycle lanes have both disappeared. Just one wide pavement.

### A4 to Hambridge Road:

When walking along the route on the South side of the A4 (London Road), opposite the entrance to the hospital, signs are down to stickers on lamp posts. These suggest that the route is a shared cycle route and footpath heading towards Newbury.

About halfway between Lower Way and Hambridge Road, first actual sign visible showing this to be a shared cycleway / footpath. However this is about eight feet up a lamp-post and partially overgrown.



Figure 7: A4 to Hambridge Road

The Cycle route bears left on to Hambridge Road. The pavement narrows at this point.

Approximately level with Clothing Warehouse signs, the footpath widens out in to two lanes but there are no visible signs showing this to be Cycle Route 4.

At the bridge over the river (although not clearly marked and currently obscured by a West Berkshire Council Road Traffic Regulations Act notice) Cycle Route 4 now turns to run alongside the river / canal towards Newbury.

#### Canal Path:

Initial conditions on this path (at the time that this survey was undertaken) were wet, muddy and very slippery. The path is not at all wide and is used by pedestrians and dog-walkers as well as cyclists. There is evidence that trees have come down in recent storms although these seem to have been cleared (in most cases) adequately to the side.

Dog mess was observed at several points on the path.

There are no safety barriers and the path does, in several places, have a surface that is slightly canted towards the canal.

At the first bridge across a section where it says "Deep and Fast Flowing Water" there are positive steps up and down where gravelled path has been eroded.

At the pedestrian bridge, approximately level with Tescos the cycle route crosses the bridge but has about a two inch step on approaches to the bridge where the path has again been eroded.

When following this route, Cycle Route 4 is signposted left towards Newbury but it is a very acute turn off the bridge ramp. Most cyclists will have to stop to man-handle their bikes around this.

Sign itself is already partially over-grown with brush and ivy.

In common with rest of tow-path width is not great. No wider than single pavement.

Route re-crosses canal on another footbridge. Well maintained and with no erosion causing potential problems (i.e. steps) for cyclists.

Quickly lost good surface of path have been eroded, leaving whole stretches under water.

Cycle Route 4 is then unexpectedly signposted across a footbridge going right. Once across there the path ran immediately in to deep puddles. The conditions became very slippery under foot. There were no visible signs but I turned left in anticipation that the route should head towards Newbury.

At this point the path became little more than a narrow dirt track barely wide enough for a cyclist (level with bottom of Faraday Road) with no signs to help.

After proceeding West a new sign was found at the corner of park below Faraday Road. However this was simply a blue sticky label adjacent to the bridge where the old A34 crosses the route.

From here the indicated route now points up through the park, passed the old wharf and the museum.

By Bridge 59 the route is sign posted as ending and "Cyclists dismount" although a black sign post near by does indicate Kennet and Avon Canal, Cycle Route 4 going on under the bridge.

Note: from Bridge 59 the surface of the path is a flat cobble type

Route enters Newbury adjacent to Costa Coffee shop on Northbrook Street. It looks to then dog leg right and immediately left to leave Newbury again along the Kennet and Avon canal.

Note: the bulk of route is not illuminated, even in Newbury.

### CONCLUSION:

Cycle Route 4 is not fully signposted although, according to Sustrans, it should be.

In places (especially in poor weather) the route is barely passable to cyclists with varying surfaces to ride on.

Rather than sticking to one side of particular roads, this route crosses and re-crosses roads. Taking this with the fact that the relevant surfaces are not always consistent makes the author of this report wonder at how physically safe this route actually is where it runs from Thatcham Station to Newbury.

It is therefore very difficult to imagine how this route, in its present state, could be recommended to commuters travelling between Thatcham and Newbury.

It is not the purpose of this report to recommend actions to the reader. This report is effectively a list of observations in to the state of Cycle Route 4 as it currently stands.

Any recommendations for improvements will be made separately to the appropriate authorities.

Paul Howell

Project Manager (Voluntary) - Thatcham Vision.

c/o Mireille Willan

Project Manager - Thatcham Vision

Appendix D – Disabled Access Report

**REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THATCHAM RAILWAY STATION|**  
**VISIT MADE ON WEDNESDAY 4TH JULY 2012 @ 11:30 HRS**

Written by Paul Howell on behalf of Thatcham Vision

**Present:**

Paul Howell	Thatcham Vision
Mireille Willan	Thatcham Vision
Sharon Jones	WBILN & local resident
Daniel Jones	Thatcham Resident
Mel Stevens	WBILN/AIM
A Stevens	Local Carer
Chris Smith	WBILN/access panel for WBC

All of Vision's guests above are local residents (either disabled or with practical experience of the requirements of less able residents).

**Introduction:**

Thatcham Vision has been asked by Thatcham Town Council to undertake a series of reviews relating to the expected increase in population over the next five years. Also, as part of Thatcham Vision's First Action Plan, it was found to be important to the community that adequate disabled access between Thatcham railway station and Thatcham Football Club was installed.

Thatcham Vision has therefore compiled this report with regard to its First Action Plan as well as the future viability of the transport infrastructure to support population growth.

In view of the above and without seeking to undermine the good works carried out to date, it was considered appropriate to visit Thatcham Station informally (with a group of local but disabled Thatcham residents) to assess the current facilities.

Duty staff at Thatcham Station were consulted on the day of the survey and expressed no problems with the survey being carried out.

**Initial impressions:**

On arrival it was commented on by those present that work had clearly been undertaken with a view to trying to make Thatcham Station a place that residents would be willing to use.

The area was clean and tidy and visible handrails had been painted in a distinctive, bright yellow.

**Approach to the station:**

When considering how disabled residents might approach the station (especially if they were not able to drive, be driven or afford a taxi), it was noted that busses from Thatcham could stop very close to the station itself. However, when passengers dismount from the bus they would then be faced with an area that is paved with a slab type arrangement. This, although not too bad at present, would need to be monitored to ensure that distortions (i.e. slabs rising or being damaged by whatever means) are dealt with promptly and efficiently.



Having crossed the initial area described above, potential travellers would then have to negotiate the small but generally busy road that runs across the station front. There are no crossing aids to assist them at this time.

Travellers leaving the station but intending to travel on by bus (if they had to travel towards Thatcham etc.) would have all of the above to contend with as well as having to cross the main road between the station and The Swan Public House.

Whilst it is appreciated that conditions outside the railway station are not the responsibility of either First Great Western (FGW) or their staff, it is suggested that FGW staff are ideally placed to spot problems or issues and to then report these to appropriate and designated authorities for action.

It is further suggested that the local authorities might wish to consider the installation of local crossing points to assist in facilitating the crossing of the roads adjacent to the station. This would allow a safer movement for potential rail travellers.

**Platform 1 (West bound):**



Access to Platform 1 for potential travellers who were obliged to use a wheel chair was considered to be both difficult and potentially very risky if those travellers arrived by bus at the station. The only way to reach Platform 1 in such circumstances would be by crossing the level crossing. Powered wheelchairs were able to do this (despite the very uneven surface) but it was considered a significant potential difficulty for manual wheelchairs (especially if being pushed by an elderly or frail relative).

It was also noted that, although there are lines on the crossing to try and mark a suitable route for foot traffic, vehicles were coming very close to the lines whilst continuing to move very quickly. This was found to be of concern to many of the individuals present.

Having crossed the level crossing, access to Platform 1 was by means of the ramp at the crossing end of the platform. Due to local subsidence, a minor dip had formed in the ground approaching the ramp. On the day of the survey, this had filled with rain water making an initially difficult approach to the platform ramp.

The ramp itself on to Platform 1 was found to be of a significantly steep angle which manual wheel chairs and travellers using walking sticks or crutches would have difficulty with. It was not helped by the fact that the surface was uneven as well as having a metal drain cover

approximately half way up. In wet or icy conditions this would become slippery, causing a potential slip hazard.

Efforts had clearly been made to keep Platform 1 in a clean and tidy condition. Much of the platform surface was finished with a material similar to tar macadam which provided a good non-slip area for travellers to move on.

The shelter on this platform appeared to be freshly painted and was installed with a visible CCTV camera. It was however noted that the bench type seats were too low to be of easy use to potential travellers who have little strength in their lower limbs (relying on walking sticks or crutches for support). It was therefore suggested that the type of bench type seats as seen in the shelter on Platform 2 (see relevant section later in this document) should be considered for use in this shelter.

Markings on Platform 1 were considered to be in need of repainting as many of these had effectively been eroded away over time.



It was also noted that there appeared to be no effecting chequered paving on the edge of Platform 1 to warn visually impaired travellers that they were approaching the edge of the platform.

**Bridge:**



One of the residents who walked with the support of walking sticks volunteered to try to move from Platform 2 to Platform 1 by using the foot bridge. This person was escorted by able bodied persons who walked both in front and behind the volunteer.

The crossing was made successfully by the volunteer but only by extending a lot of personal effort. In the subsequent discussions it was agreed that the bridge was fine for the able bodied traveller but was very impractical for any traveller who had anything more than minor mobility impairments.

It may be of note that the volunteer preferred to return to the Platform 2 side by crossing the level crossing (and braving the traffic) rather than go back across the foot bridge.

**Platform 2 (East bound):**

The disabled ramp adjacent to the booking office starts at street level where users would have to make a 90 degree turn before they can actually start to ascend the ramp. It was considered that many of the larger motorised wheel chairs would find this impossible to achieve as would some of the still popular manual chair designs.

Residents who were able to walk with the aid of walking sticks or crutches found that the angle of the slope was steep enough to cause them issues with balance, forcing them to move faster than they found comfortable.

As a result of this and subsequent discussions, it was suggested that the ramp was of too acute an angle and needed (for safety and ease of use) to be longer with a flat (or rest) area approximately half way up.

The ticket office for Thatcham station is located at the head of the ramp and steps accessing Platform 2. Both wheelchair users and those walking with the aid of crutches found difficulty in entering via the doors which currently swing inwards.

On attempting to leave the ticket office, with the doors swinging inwards, all disabled persons present found difficulty in using these doors. Whilst FGW staff were happy to help, at peak times FGW staff are not likely to be able to be in place at required times. It was therefore suggested that some form of automation should be considered for the doors to the ticket office.

Seats in the booking office were found to be too low to be able to be used comfortably by those people who rely on walking sticks or crutches for support. Whilst it is appreciated that the majority of travellers are able bodied, it was suggested that the introduction of appropriate hand rails might help to make these seats usable to all (by giving additional means of helping a less able person to pull themselves out of the seat).



On leaving the ticket office by the door opening directly on to Platform 2, two members of our party failed to notice the step and lurched on to the platform. Whilst no-one was injured, this was disconcerting and a prominent "Mind The Step" sign is recommended.

Platform 2 did have chequered slabs in place close to the edge of the platform which would be a good aid to the visually impaired potential traveller. However it was noted that these are starting to become uneven and could soon become significant trip hazards.

The shelter on Platform 2 (unlike on Platform 1) had a taller seat fitted that allows users to partially sit and or lean against them. These were found to be readily usable by less able bodied members of the party but again it was suggested that hand rails would be helpful to have in place as a means of further support. It was however noted that one of these seats appeared not to have been installed correctly and was loose when sat on.

As with the shelter on Platform 1, it was noted that a CCTV camera point had been installed. However, it was suggested that an alarm button might be a helpful benefit in the event that any passenger finds themselves in difficulty and needs to summon assistance.

It was also noted that the monitors displaying train information were not visible from the shelters on either platform. As disabled persons would find it difficult to keep getting up to check on the displays, it was suggested that consideration should be given to running an extension in to both shelters to relay such information.

Approximately two thirds of the way along Platform 2 is a ramped entry / exit leading on to the adjacent road. As with the ramp adjacent to the ticket office, this ramp (as installed) would be very difficult for potential wheel chair users to make use of. The angle of the ramp is too steep with a sharp increase in the head of the ramp as well as some tight turns at the top and bottom. It is also (at the date of the visit) overhung by a significant growth of vegetation which would give assisting carers a problem if they were trying to push wheel chairs up this slope.



### **General:**

Carers. A number of disabled travellers do require the assistance of carers who, because of the traveller's condition, need to be able to walk beside them for safety reasons. It was noted that, especially outside the ticket office, width allowances would make this very difficult.

Snack machines: Although effective journey planning should limit the requirement, it was identified that unforeseeable delays in rail travel could leave a potential number of travellers in urgent need of a snack to replenish blood sugar levels (i.e. those suffering from diabetic problems). Obviously there is a need to balance security concerns with safety but it was considered that a snack machine might be a viable proposal if installed in the ticket office or under direct CCTV surveillance. This would have the combined effect of dealing with a potential health and safety issue whilst providing a further source of revenue to FGW.

Toilets: No toilets were noticed anywhere within the Thatcham Station area. Whilst again it is agreed that toilets could present an issue with security, it was suggested that current technology could facilitate the controlled use of toilets if they could be installed.

Luggage Trolleys: A consistent number of less able passengers do have quantities of luggage with them when they travel. The provision of luggage trolleys would allow such travellers to move readily along the platform to an area where they could be met or escorted to their cars.

Disabled ramp: A disabled ramp was noticed in secure storage adjacent to the main building on Platform 2. The ramp appeared to be rusty and did not display the mandatory stickers that were expected to be seen under current Health and Safety legislation. However it is accepted that the ramp was of a folding type and the stickers may simply have been on a less visible area.

Information adjacent to the ramp explained that assistance would be able to be provided to less able travellers but only with 24 hrs notice and only between certain times (i.e. 0700 to 2200 hrs). Whilst it was appreciated that FGW need to maintain staff levels appropriate to the most cost effective means of operating a rail service, these limitations were thought to present difficulties for those travellers who may not have 24 hours notice. It was therefore suggested that FGW should, in company with relevant authoritative bodies, explore the possible use of local volunteers who would be happy (after having received appropriate training) to meet trains and assist less able passengers to either embark or disembark.

Emergency 'phones: Despite the plethora of mobile 'phones even now not everybody owns a mobile 'phone. It was therefore found to be of concern that no emergency 'phones were identifiable in places on either platform where they could be used by either able bodied or disabled travellers who needed to call for assistance.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion it was felt that a lot of good work had been carried out to make the Thatcham station appear user friendly and to try and encourage additional rail travellers. It was obvious that this is still on-going and will hopefully help to ensure greater use of the railway station by all.

However it was also suggested that the improvements for disabled access had been designed by staff with no comprehensive understanding of the needs of the average disabled traveller.

It is therefore recommended that the relevant stake-holders should contact local disabled access groups before further works are undertaken. In this way they would be able to draw on a wealth of practical experience which could help to deliver a much better design that is beneficial to all.

## Sports, Leisure and Culture

# ***REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES AND FINDINGS OF THE SPORTS, LEISURE & CULTURE TOPIC TEAM***

## **29. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### 29.1. Document Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the findings and recommendations of the Sports, Leisure & Culture Topic Team. It sets this in the context of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Plan and sets out the remit of the Topic Team and the membership of the team.

### 29.2. Team remit

The Sports, Leisure & Culture Topic Team was formed in 2013 as part of the refresh of the Thatcham Vision Action Plan with a remit to consider current issues in these areas and what is required to overcome them. The team were also briefed to consider how a better quality of provision could be acquired. Finally, the team looked at how the provision for sports, leisure & cultural activities would need to be developed as the population grows.

### 29.3. Team Composition

Ten members of the community formed the topic team looking at Sport, Culture & Leisure. The team was chaired by Janette Miranda, also a Thatcham Town Councillor and was ably assisted by Angela Bates both of whom donated a large number of hours to this project.

Mel Alexander volunteered as a local resident but was able to bring her extensive knowledge of play areas and open spaces from her employ at Thatcham Town Council. Mark Ranson represented Kennet Leisure Centre and Will Sewell, Chair of Thatcham Rugby Club, represented his sport and was able to provide information on Henwick Sports Ground where the club is based. Mike Cass and Jacqueline Scoins-Cass MBE gave continuity to the process as both took part in the original Parish planning activities as well as promoting sports for the disabled and able bodied. Mike Cole, a local councillor and member of Kennet Amateur Dramatics also attended. Nick Young assisted in an advisory capacity as "Thatcham's historian" as did Dave Seward in relation to youth.

## **30. APPROACH**

During the pre-refresh consultation Sports, Leisure & Culture ranked as the second most important topic that residents felt needed to be addressed in Thatcham (second only to ASB & Crime) with 10% of the votes cast. When the community was asked for two things to start, stop and continue the topic was still highly ranked in 3<sup>rd</sup> place (with 12% of the votes) behind Crime & Transport.

The main consultation therefore asked which sport and leisure activity they would like to see in Thatcham (*Appendix 1*). The results showed that skating activities ranked highest, followed by swimming and ball sports. The results support the facts as there is only one small sports hall and swimming pool in Thatcham and although there are sufficient sports clubs many are at capacity with long waiting lists.



### **31. TEAM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **31.1. Action SLC001: Establish a Thatcham Sports and Leisure Forum/Network.**

Thatcham Sports Network was conceived to improve communications and relationships amongst Thatcham’s sports club and sports providers, to encourage awareness, share facilities sharing and increase lobbying power. The group ought to actively seek to improve sports provision in Thatcham, to establish a list of Thatcham’s current infrastructure and identify the need for additional or improved provision. The network should actively work to encourage sports participation in the local community.

With volunteers eager to start work the Inaugural meeting was held in April 2014 where it was agreed to hold ongoing meetings on a quarterly basis. It has since organised the Junior Fun Run in the Field held at Thatcham’s Family Fun Day which encourages running for children and set up a website which provides a free webpage for every sports club in Thatcham should they wish/require it.

For the Network to remain successful it needs to been seen to achieve funding for significant projects identified by the network/forum and actively engage with West Berkshire Council and local developers.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Establish a Thatcham Sports Network to encourage awareness, facility sharing and lobbying power for Thatcham’s sports clubs.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	41.5%
Agree	34.1%
Disagree	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	2.4%
No Opinion	14.6%

#### **31.2. Action SLC002: Investigate the possibility of developing an off-road cycle track in Thatcham**

The idea of developing the old land-fill site into an off road mountain biking track was well received by the residents as there is no existing similar facility available in the wider area. A track would bring in visitors to Thatcham and aid the local economy. Examples of implementation elsewhere include the Croft Trail in Swindon; Nickey Lane at Hemel Hempstead and The Lookout, Bracknell or perhaps mirror something from another country park.

Grant and potential project neutral funding has already been identified as have environmental issues with the site (work with environmental officers will be required to resolve this.); WBC.

A survey would need to be undertaken to ascertain the level of gas from landfill and there is the possibility of remedial works required before use. This site is 'owned' by the 6 unitary authorities in Berkshire and would therefore need their agreement although the principle has been implemented in a similar site elsewhere.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate the feasibility of developing an off-road cycle track in Thattham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	29.3%
Agree	39.0%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	2.4%
No Opinion	19.5%

**31.3. Action SLC003: Develop and install a series of heritage displays and feature boards accessible to all in all media.**

A need to increase awareness of Thattham's historical significance as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in England was identified. Heritage displays possibly with electronic touch screen technology could be situated a centrally located point in Thattham.

This will appeal to visitors to the area and assist the local economy. It is thought that this could be funded through grants as well as sponsorship. Examples of implementation elsewhere include: Colchester and Kilkenny.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Develop and install a series of heritage displays and feature boards.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	26.8%
Agree	48.8%
Disagree	14.6%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	9.8%

**31.4. Action SLC004 - Develop a community website and other social media (accessible to all) to promote the wide range of clubs and activities in Thattham**

A place for Thattham to promote the full range of clubs, groups and activities already available in the town. Examples of implementation elsewhere include Hungerford (Love Hungerford) and many other examples.

This could be implemented as a single website or a small number of websites with thatthamvision.net at its core. For instance thatthamsportsnetwork.org providing sporting information, Lifelong Learning Forum with its local learning directory on its

website, the Chamber of Commerce promoting business etc. all linking to the Vision website that has links to all.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Develop a community website and other social media (accessible to all) to promote the wide range of clubs and activities in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	36.6%
Agree	46.3%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	7.3%

### 31.5. Action SLC005: Create enhanced, interactive Welcome Packs for Thatcham

Create a more comprehensive and interactive welcome pack for residents and increase distribution to include new, existing and potential residents in a more accessible and user-friendly medium. Include the promotion of a full range of clubs, groups and activities already available across all available media.

The Volunteer Centre may be able to provide a Flexiteer to develop a fresh pack or even a free mobile app to download.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Create enhanced Welcome Packs for Thatcham and ensure they are distributed more widely.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	22.0%
Agree	43.9%
Disagree	9.8%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	24.4%

### 31.6. Action SLC006: Redevelop and enhance the existing Thatcham Town Council website to mirror the revised Welcome Packs which should be accessible to all

The current website utilises outdated technology and has limited flexibility for content. The requirement is to re-develop the TTC website to allow for increased promotion of the full range of clubs and facilities available in the town alongside an enhanced welcome pack. It is hoped that the website could become far more interactive.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Redevelop and enhance the existing Thatcham Town Council website to mirror the revised Welcome Packs which should be accessible to all.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	17.5%
Agree	57.5%
Disagree	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	22.5%

### 31.7. Action SLC007: Provide more effective and informative signage around the town to assist pedestrians

Feedback from some residents and The Sports Network suggests that existing facilities are under promoted in the town. The benefit of increased awareness of the location of existing clubs and facilities will be to grow membership for clubs and the prosperity for the town.

This project will need the following partners working together to formulate an appropriate strategy for the overall success of the project: West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council, Thatcham Historical Society, Thatcham Sports Network, Chamber of Commerce.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Provide more effective and informative signage around the town to assist pedestrians.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	19.5%
Agree	61.0%
Disagree	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	4.9%
No Opinion	7.3%

### 31.8. Action SLC008: Provide at least one more allotment site to the West or South of the Town

This is required to meet increasing demand and promote healthy living amongst residents. There will be difficulty identifying an available, suitable site. If this is the case then there may be an opportunity to work with Age UK to identify sites which might benefit the wider community by initiating a garden share scheme. Woolhampton PC recently created new allotments and this would be an ideal place to begin researching the project.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Provide at least one more allotment site in the West or South of the Town.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	26.8%
Agree	48.8%
Disagree	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	4.9%
No Opinion	19.5%

**31.9. Action SLC009: Support community gardening for food production such as Edible Thattham**

Edible Thattham is a local organisation run by volunteers that plans to identify unused areas of land in the local area that have great potential to grow various fruit trees, vegetables, herbs and more, and turn them into free, fresh food sites for local people in the same way the foodbank provides support with dried and tinned goods, thus supporting healthy living for all in Thattham.

The group will need to work together with local councils to obtain permission to use available scraps of land for edible gardening projects.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Support community gardening for food production, such as Edible Thattham and the Community Orchard.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	56.1%
Disagree	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	2.4%
No Opinion	9.8%

**31.10. Action SLC010: Establish and support activities that would appeal to 13 year olds and above, such as a climbing wall and/or roller disco. To increase and encourage participation in community activities for teenagers.**

Examples of similar projects include <http://www.rockrollerdisco.com/> and <http://www.readingclimbingcentre.com/>. These projects provide a safe and friendly environment for people of all abilities and ages, to meet and climb.

By providing and supporting activities that would appeal to 13 year olds and above, anti-social behaviour will be reduced in and around Thattham. Supporting youth activities could

be implemented immediately, as it could just require the wider publicising of an already arranged event.

**Cost** could be a big barrier to establishing new activities, but entry cost to activities could help re-coup some of the initial outlay. Funding and grants could be sought from a number of organisations, especially as this area of providing activities to youth is traditionally well supported.

Establishing new facilities will be in the region of tens of thousands pounds, if existing premises cannot be used. There is currently a lack of **facilities/space** for activities to take place, but longer term planning for a growing population will require new facilities to be built and housing developers should be pushed to include new sporting facilities in their plans. There is also the possibility of opening up **existing facilities** to wider use, by organising, publicising and then running events. For example local halls aren't fully booked all the time and could therefore be used for youth group events through better planning of facilities use.

Organising events in existing local sporting facilities for youths, could also be explored.

**Existing local and national organisations** such as Berkshire Youth and Get Berkshire Active will be able to provide some guidance in establishing and running activities. In return they could receive support to increase and encourage participation in their own events.

**Local businesses** should also be encouraged to provide whatever support they can, even if it's just displaying a poster advertising upcoming youth events. As mentioned earlier, by providing and supporting activities that would appeal to 13 year olds and above, anti-social behaviour will be reduced in and around Thatcham. Complaints of anti-social behaviour within the vicinity of the Broadway have been raised by both residents and businesses.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Develop a campaign to encourage entrepreneurs to develop sports & leisure facilities in Thatcham that appeal to young people (especially teenagers). Establish and support activities, such as a climbing wall and/or roller disco.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	39.0%
Agree	39.0%
Disagree	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	14.6%

### 31.11. Action SLC011: Open up existing facilities at Moorside to provide youth band practice facilities

A unique set of music facilities which were funded by the community are housed at the Moorside Community Centre. These are not made available to the community. The benefit would be to make full use of existing community facilities and encourage participation by a target age group.

WBC is reluctant to open this facility to the community without having suitably qualified individual available on-site at required times and appropriate insurance in place. Local organisations e.g. Thatcham Youth could take ownership of the project to enable the facilities to be re-opened.

Requirement to train volunteers how to use the equipment to ensure supervision of general use is needed.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Open up existing facilities at Moorside to provide youth band practice facilities.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	17.1%
Agree	68.3%
Disagree	2.4%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	12.2%

**31.12. Action SLC012: Identify volunteers to support Play Days in the Park, Fun Days, Lifelong Learning and other community events.**

Ongoing recruitment drives are needed to support these popular free events and activities for residents to ensure their sustainability.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Identify volunteers to support Play Days in the Park, Fun Days, Lifelong Learning and other community events.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	58.5%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	12.2%

**31.13. Action SLC013: Ensure sufficient leisure centre facilities for the population of Thatcham with adequate car parking facilities.**

Thatcham has grown dramatically over the last 20 or so years, but the facility infrastructure has not kept pace. We need to ensure that Thatcham has sports/leisure facilities appropriate to the size of the population.

Sport England have some guidance to suggest the level of facilities needed for the population and any new facility will need to be commercially or grant funded.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Ensure sufficient leisure centre facilities for the population of Thatcham with adequate car parking facilities.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	51.2%
Agree	43.9%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	0.0%

**31.14. Action SLC014: Conduct a feasibility study for a new larger, centrally located library in Thatcham.**

Thatcham has grown dramatically over the last 20 or so years, but the facility infrastructure has not kept pace. Thatcham’s library provision is inadequate for a town of 25,000+.

Suitable sites are limited. Extending the existing library or combining a leisure centre and library into a combined plot/project should be investigated. WBC are able to provide guidance on size/capacity for population but WBC have no additional resources to support this and therefore alternative resources will need to be sourced.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Conduct a feasibility study into whether Thatcham needs a bigger library.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	56.1%
Disagree	17.1%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	2.4%

**31.15. Action SLC015: Identify and increase accessibility of the countryside and waterways for wildlife/heritage walks, cycling and water sports, for all abilities**

Thatcham has ample natural waterways. To make full use of existing natural resources available in and around Thatcham there is a need to attract and promote a wider variety of sporting and leisure opportunities that include disabled access and make these areas available to those with wheelchairs and Motability scooters. The Bruce Trust for example have canal boats with accessibility for wheelchair users and the Canal & Rivers Trust may provide funding for such a scheme. The canal tow path is a national cycle route although the fabric of the path is in poor condition.



When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Identify and increase the accessibility of the countryside and waterways for wildlife/heritage walks, cycling and water sports, for by all abilities.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	43.9%
Agree	41.5%
Disagree	7.3%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	7.3%

### 31.16. Action SLC016: Invite local organisations to establish water sports in Thatcham

There is an opportunity to increase the range of facilities/activities in Thatcham by making full use of the existing natural resources available. There is also a need to ensure that Thatcham has sports/leisure facilities appropriate to the size of the population. Local watersports clubs and canoeing & leisure boat trip companies should be contacted to see if they can expand into Thatcham.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Invite local organisations to establish water sports in Thatcham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	22.5%
Agree	25.0%
Disagree	17.5%
Strongly Disagree	5.0%
No Opinion	30.0%

### 31.17. Action SLC017: Development of a community hydrotherapy pool facility, alongside a relocated West Berkshire Therapy Centre rehabilitation gym.

This will provide a more mobile, active and engaged community, putting Thatcham at the forefront of Health and Well-being service availability.

A unique facility, combining best practice in hydrotherapy, as exemplified at the Thamesdown community pool, Swindon, combined with unique facilities for people with disabilities already in place at West Berkshire Therapy Centre in Thatcham. The health and well-being benefits of hydrotherapy are well published, with almost all acute hospitals in England having such facilities, provision of such services locally being well below known levels of need and demand.

Time scales may be reflected by the following: site acquisition 9 months, fund raising 12 months, design and specification completed, construction 18 months, total timescale from agreement to service delivery 3-4 years approx. at a cost of circa £1.5 million.

The Project Board is already in place (West Berkshire Therapy Centre). Other key members to involve are West Berkshire Neurological Alliance, West Berkshire Disability Alliance and numerous other interested local voluntary groups, Berkshire Healthcare Trust, Newbury CCG, Royal Berkshire Hospital Trust, West Berkshire Council, Thatcham Town Council, Greenham Common Trust and other interested Trusts and benefactors.

The project has received general backing from most of the above organisations, although the Board of Berkshire Healthcare Trust has been reluctant to release land from its large stock at Thatcham. The project Board would be pleased to brief in detail about the benefits to the Town and to explore some options to take forward this high profile initiative.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Ensure sufficient range of facilities accessible for residents with disabilities, including a hydrotherapy pool.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	26.8%
Agree	51.2%
Disagree	2.4%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	19.5%

**31.18. Action SLC018: Ensure there is a sufficient range of sports facilities for older residents**

To increase and encourage participation in community activities by a target age group in order to provide a more mobile, active and engaged community.

Projects may include Walking Football, Walking for Health, amongst others. There are many local organisations who could work together to increase the current activities open to the older members of our community e.g. Thatcham Sports Network, Get Berkshire Active etc.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Ensure sufficient range of sports activities for senior residents.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	51.2%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	19.5%

**31.19. Action SLC019: Identify Thatcham’s sports requirement and provide enough sports pitches, tracks & courts in Thatcham to cater for the current demand and identify expansion options for the future**

This task is required to ensure the sustainability of existing clubs and to meet the growing demand for sport in Thatcham. The main facilities at Henwick are already over-stretched and the existing clubs that are based there are successful and growing in membership. At present there are insufficient match and training pitches for the range of age groups within the clubs that wish to use the facilities.

The solution to the issues will need to be established although will potentially include land purchase and constructing club facilities. The problems would be alleviated by the use of pitches that can be shared by several different clubs, including all weather and synthetic pitches.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Provide enough sports pitches, tracks and courts in Thatcham to cater for the current demand and identify expansion options for the future.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	34.1%
Agree	48.8%
Disagree	4.9%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	12.2%

**31.20. Action SLC020: Establish a museum and/or heritage display in Thatcham**

A need to increase awareness of Thatcham's historical significance as one of the oldest continuously inhabited settlement in England was identified. This will appeal to visitors to the area and assist the local economy. It is thought that this could be funded through grants as well as sponsorship.

West Berkshire Museum have a number of exhibitions that would potentially be able to go "on tour" and are also keen to bring these exhibits to Thatcham. There would need to be a centrally located building to display these exhibits. Local historians in the area also hold a number of exhibits that are not currently on display.

The centre will act as an education centre for school children and members of the community as well as a potential tourist attraction. It will be difficult to establish a museum/heritage centre for a number of reasons not least of which are finances and a property to use. The best solution is to find a room that can have a temporary exhibition, such as the Old Bluecoat School or a central community centre. This could then be expanded on with the aim of raising funds towards a museum and heritage centre. It would be a VERY good idea to look at Wallingford Museum, this is how they did it and they now have a full museum operated as a charity by volunteers.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Establish a museum and/or heritage display in Thattham.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	24.4%
Agree	31.7%
Disagree	24.4%
Strongly Disagree	7.3%
No Opinion	12.2%

**31.21. Action SLC021: Investigate how to provide a theatre/auditorium in Thattham to cater for large community gatherings in the Town as well as support the arts**

This is another area where local infrastructure is not in line with the level of population. A centrally located community building could act as an arts centre for school children and members of the community as well as a potential tourist attraction. Productions could take place on the Broadway Green, or in the grounds of the community building.

Partnerships would include WBC, TTC, KATS, Corn Exchange, Watermill Theatre, Theatre Schools as well as connections with theatres in other towns. Cinemas are now streaming live theatre performances and this could be made available in Thattham.

When the community were surveyed regarding their support of the above action the following results were returned:

Investigate how to provide additional performance areas in Thattham to cater for large community gatherings in the Town as well as supporting the arts.	
Answer Options	Response Percent
Strongly Agree	27.5%
Agree	50.0%
Disagree	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	0.0%
No Opinion	15.0%

### 32. SPORTS, LEISURE & CULTURE ACTION PLAN

PARISH ACTION PLAN - SPORTS, LEISURE & CULTURE								
PARISH OF THATCHAM								
Date Plan Adopted								
Ref.	Objective	Actions	Priority H/M/L	Start Date	Planned Finish Date	Project Manager/Lead Partner	Other Partners	Justification & comments
Overall the household survey of 1870 residents showed that there are a number of activities that residents are unable to access in Thattham due to lack of provision or long waiting lists. Please see Appendix 1. The results of a further consultation, with a sample of 270 residents, provides the following justification for each action.								
SLC001	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Establish a Thattham Sports and Leisure Network	H	Apr-14	Completed	Vision	All sports groups	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.7% disagreeing).</b> Improve communications and relationships to encourage awareness, facility sharing and lobbying power.
SLC002	GREENER HEALTHY	Investigate the feasibility of developing an off-road cycle track in Thattham	M	2017	2019	TTC	WBC & local cycle groups	<b>68.3% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing).</b> On-going project that is considered still valid as no similar facility available.
SLC003	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Develop and install a series of heritage display and feature boards (accessible to all).	M	2016	2017	Vision	WBC/TTC & historical society	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 14.6% disagreeing).</b> Increase awareness of the rich history of Thattham and how to find it.
SLC004	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Develop a community website and other social media (accessible to all) to promote the wide range of clubs and activities in Thattham	H	Started	2017	Vision	all clubs/groups in Thattham	<b>82.9% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing).</b> Promote the full range of clubs, groups and activities already available.
SLC005	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Create enhanced Welcome Packs for Thattham and ensure they are distributed more widely.	H	2017	2018	TTC	TV	<b>65.9% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.8% disagreeing).</b> Promote the full range of clubs, groups and activities already available across all available media.

## Thatcham Vision Report 2015

SLC006	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Redevelop and enhance the existing Thatcham Town Council website to mirror the revised Welcome Packs which should be accessible to all.	H	2017	2018	TTC	TV	<b>75% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.5% disagreeing).</b> To increase the promotion of the full range of clubs and facilities available.
SLC007	PROSPEROUS, STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Provide more effective and informative signage around the town to assist pedestrians	M	2017	2019	Vision	WBC/TTC & historical society	<b>80.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 12.2% disagreeing).</b> Increase awareness of existing clubs and facilities.
SLC008	GREENER, HEALTHY	Provide at least one more allotment site in the West or South of the Town.	M	2017	2019	TTC	WBC	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> To meet increasing demand and support healthy living.
SLC009	GREENER, HEALTHY	Support community gardening for food production, such as Edible Thatcham and the Community Orchard.	M	2016	2017	Vision	TTC, WBC	<b>80.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 9.7% disagreeing).</b> To meet increasing demand and support healthy living.
SLC010	HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS, STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Develop a campaign to encourage entrepreneurs to develop sports & leisure facilities in Thatcham that appeal to young people (especially teenagers). Establish and support activities, such as a climbing wall and/or roller disco	M	2017	2019	Vision	WBC, TTC, Thatcham Youth, Berkshire Youth/Get Berkshire Active, Chamber of Commerce	<b>78% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.3% disagreeing).</b> To support individuals/groups wishing to increase sports/leisure and cultural facilities in Thatcham.
SLC011	STRONGER, SAFER	Open up existing facilities at Moorside to provide youth band practice facilities	H	2018	2019	Vision	Thatcham Youth, TTC, WBC	<b>85.4% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.4% disagreeing).</b> To make full use of existing community facilities and encourage participation by a target age group.
SLC012	STRONGER	Identify volunteers to support Play Days in the Park, Fun Days, Lifelong Learning and other community events.	H	2016	ongoing	TTC	Vision	<b>82.9% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> To support these popular free activities for residents to enable sustainability.
SLC013	HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS	Ensure sufficient leisure centre facilities for the population of Thatcham with adequate car parking facilities. Whilst Vision are aware of limited funds this still remains a need in Thatcham.	M	2018	2020	WBC	TTC, Vision	<b>95.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> Ensure that Thatcham has sports/leisure facilities appropriate for the size of population.

## Thattham Vision Report 2015

SLC014	STRONGER & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION	Conduct a feasibility study into whether Thattham needs a bigger library	M	2018	2019	Vision	WBC, TTC	<b>80.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 17.1% disagreeing).</b> Ensure that Thattham has library facilities appropriate for the size of population.
SLC015	HEALTHY	Identify and increase the accessibility of the countryside and waterways for wildlife/heritage walks, cycling and water sports, for all abilities.	M	2017	2020	Vision	WBC, TTC, BBOWT, Bruce Trust, other disability agencies	<b>85.4% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.3% disagreeing).</b> To make full use of existing natural resources available in and around Thattham to include disabled access.
SLC016	HEALTHY	Invite local organisations to establish watersports in Thattham	M	2017	2018	Vision	TTC, WBC, River and Canals Trust	<b>47.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 22.5% disagreeing).</b> To increase range of facilities/activities in Thattham.
SLC017	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Ensure sufficient range of facilities accessible for residents with disabilities, including a hydrotherapy pool	H	2016	ongoing	Vision	WBC/Get Berkshire Active	<b>78% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 2.4% disagreeing).</b> To increase and encourage participation in community activities by a target population.
SLC018	STRONGER, HEALTHY	Ensure sufficient range of sports activities for senior residents	M	2017	2019	Vision	TTC, WBC, Get Berkshire Active, TSN Residential Home, USA	<b>75.6% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> To increase and encourage participation in community activities by a target age group.
SLC019	HEALTHY, PROSPEROUS	Provide enough sports pitches, tracks and courts in Thattham to cater for the current demand and identify expansion options for the future	H	2016	ongoing	Vision	WBC, TTC	<b>82.9% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 4.9% disagreeing).</b> Ensure sustainability of the existing clubs to meet the growing sport demand
SLC020	STRONGER, PROSPEROUS	Establish a museum and/or heritage display in Thattham.	M	2018	2020	TTC	Vision, Historical Society/WBC	<b>56.1% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 31.7% disagreeing).</b> To reinforce Thattham's historically significant past.
SLC021	STRONGER	Investigate how to provide additional performance areas in Thattham to cater for large community gatherings in the Town as well as supporting the arts	M	2017	2018	Vision	WBC, TTC, KATS	<b>77.5% support/agreement from follow up survey (only 7.5% disagreeing).</b> St. Mary's Church is no longer a big enough venue to hold those wishing to attend community functions
<p><b>Safer</b> (e.g. Reducing anti-social behaviour, reducing speed on roads, emergency planning)</p> <p><b>Prosperous</b> (e.g. Supporting economy of villages, Tourism, Supporting employment in rural areas)</p> <p><b>Healthy</b> (e.g. fostering a sense of place and belonging, improving health and well-being of local people and young people, promoting independence of vulnerable people)</p> <p><b>Greener</b> (e.g. reducing carbon footprint in the community, reducing waste and increasing recycling, encourage consumption of local produce, increasing diversity of local wildlife).</p> <p><b>Stronger</b> (e.g. including everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and participation in community life, similar life opportunities - including accessible services for all).</p> <p><b>ALSO - COMMUNICATION</b> (e.g. what important messages should be shared with the community for the benefit of the community).</p>								





### 33. APPENDICIES

#### 33.1. Appendix A: Sport and Leisure Activities most needed in Thattham

