



Thatcham Town Council Strategy 2021-2025

Profile

Environment

Community

Local Business

Heritage

Thatcham Town Council, the
Council that cares about its...

Local Infrastructure

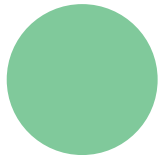
Young People

Facilities

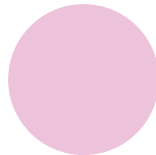
Adopted 26th July 2021



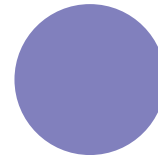
CONTENTS



PAGE 02
1. Introduction

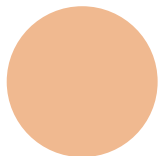


PAGE 03
2. Purpose

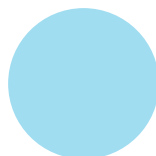


PAGE 04
3. Local Context

Development of the Town
Employment
Community Safety
A Greener Thatcham
Recreational facilities
Highways
Raise the profile of Thatcham
Community Relations



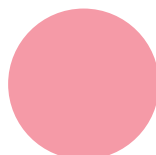
PAGE 05
4. Our Aims
and Values



PAGE 06
5. Our Main
Themes



PAGES 07-10
6. The Detail
Community
Young People
Facilities
Local Infrastructure
Environment
Businesses
Heritage
Profile



PAGE 11
7. Review
of Strategy



I. INTRODUCTION

This Strategy sets out the broad vision of Thatcham Town Council for the period 2021-2025, detailing what we want to achieve and how we will accomplish it.

This is a living document which will be reviewed and developed throughout the four years, and will evolve to changing circumstances.

Section 2 of this strategy sets out our purpose for the next four years.

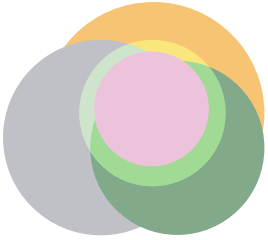
Section 3 describes the local context in which we live.

Section 4 sets out our philosophy as a Council and how we will bring this to life in the way that we work.

Section 5 identifies the main themes for our work in the next four years: the heart of our strategy.

Section 6 describes our plans in more detail.

Section 7 sets out how we will monitor progress towards our vision and how we will review this strategy.



2. PURPOSE

Thattham Town Council's values are to always deliver value for money for Thattham residents and work to the highest standards of integrity and openness and strive to be effective and efficient in all we do, throughout the running of the Council.

The Council provides a number of services to the local population, alongside partner agencies. The Council will, where possible, work with West Berkshire District Council, as well as the business community, voluntary bodies, and other local associations to work for the benefit of our community.

The Council will work to improve local services to ensure they meet the needs of our residents, encouraging investment of both time and resources by other agencies to help the Council achieve its objectives.

Thattham Town Council will seek sponsorship and source grant funding to support community projects and services.



3. LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 Development of the Town

It is widely recognised that Thatcham infrastructure has not kept pace with development of the town. Thatcham Town Council will strongly oppose further development of the town whilst there continues to be a shortfall of investment in local infrastructure.

The Council accepts that improvements will only be achieved by working in partnership with other bodies and, to this end, will actively lobby West Berkshire District Council to ensure the Local Plan reflects the needs of the town, to improve Thatcham town centre, and meet our residents' aspirations.

3.2 Employment

Thatcham offers a diverse range of employment opportunities within its local business community. Thatcham Town Council will actively support opportunities that provide employment prospects within the town.

3.3 Community Safety

The Council commits to continue to provide CCTV coverage of the town centre and will work with partner agencies to address local issues and provide an environment that supports the safety of all our residents.

3.4 A Greener Thatcham

Having declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, the Council will promote measures that protect the environment, support biodiversity, natural ecology, alternative low-carbon energy, and seek to reduce its carbon impact.

3.5 Recreational facilities

The Council is committed to providing quality recreational facilities for all ages and abilities, with a particular emphasis on increasing activities for young people.

The Council will promote existing recreational facilities and assess potential for enhancement through preparation of a detailed leisure strategy and implement its conclusions.

3.6 Highways

Although not a Highways Authority, the Council recognises that highways issues are of considerable concern to local residents. The Council will support and develop ways of reporting issues, such as potholes, uneven footpaths, overgrown vegetation and other highway irritants, to the relevant authority, West Berkshire District Council.

The Council will ensure that highways capacity is considered in future development and will call upon West Berkshire District Council for remedial action if capacity is insufficient.

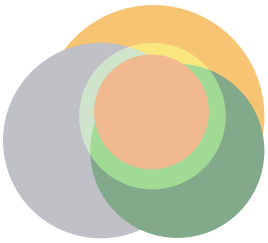
3.7 Raise the profile of Thatcham

The Council will raise the profile of Thatcham and promote awareness of what the town has to offer, to residents and visitors, embracing its individuality and strong community spirit.

3.8 Community Relations

The Council will develop strong communications with local residents, via regular newsletters and by disseminating information through its website and social media platforms and through the local media.

The Council will continue to appoint Town Council representatives to a wide range of community organisations in order to fully understand their needs and help support their objectives.



4. OUR AIMS AND VALUES

Our aims and values, as a Council, are to:

4.1 Serve the people of Thatcham

We see the role of the Council as one to support and provide local services that enhance the town for all residents, without discrimination. We will support and champion causes that enhance the resilience of the town.

4.2 Engage, listen, act

We will encourage everyone to get involved and to share their views on how we can improve the Town. Participation and engagement are central to the thinking of the Council. We will remain dedicated to expanding and improving how we do this. We will continue to listen to Thatcham's residents and businesses and to bring forward those voices that are not usually heard. We will be transparent, open and accessible with good communication at the heart of everything that we do.

4.3 Be radical and innovative

We will be bold, responding to identified needs and making decisions on the basis of what is best for Thatcham. We will embrace opportunities as they emerge. To do this we will ensure our staff and Councillors have the range of skills and experience that they need. Where particular expertise is required, we will appoint specialists to conduct project work to fulfill our objectives.

4.4 Demonstrate and share environmental good practice

We will practice what we preach. The Council will continually review its environmental policies in order to enhance our approaches. We are committed to minimising our own environmental impacts and to supporting local businesses and residents to do the same.

4.5 How we work together

We are committed to ensuring that our own processes, as a large group of Councillors, exemplify this commitment to engagement and participation, embracing diversity and allowing debate and challenge. We will not stifle discussion nor conceal dissent. We will work together effectively, be fair and participative and allow space for enthusiasm, learning and initiative in order to make positive change for our residents.

We will not allow Political differences to stifle our mission and objectives as a Council. We will evaluate every opportunity on its merits.



5. OUR MAIN THEMES

The main themes for our work over the next four years are:

Community



Environment



Young People



Businesses



Facilities



Heritage

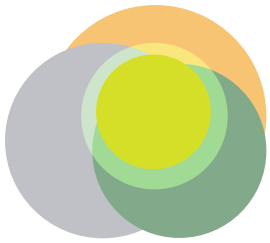


Local Infrastructure



Profile





6. THE DETAIL

6.1 Community

Despite its size, Thatcham retains a distinct community feel. Thatcham Town Council recognises this and commits to maintain and enhance the distinctiveness of Thatcham, and will be an advocate for the community of Thatcham.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Improve community access to local information through development of a multi-channel communications strategy

Continue to support volunteering and voluntary organisations that support those in need in the town

Continue to work closely with, and support, a wide variety of community organisations

Re-introduce Thatcham In Bloom to promote the appearance and respect for the local area

Improve the cleanliness of the Town Centre and surrounding area to deliver a Tidier Thatcham

Work with West Berkshire District Council to ensure future availability of the library service in Thatcham, with accessible facilities

Maintain support for charitable schemes that bring benefit to the local area through our Grant support programme

Continue to make Thatcham a safe and pleasant place to live

Continue to provide an engaging and inspiring calendar of fun, cultural and festive events throughout the year

Encourage residents to use active travel through a safe network



6.2 Young People

Thatcham Town Council recognises the important role young people play in our town, both now and in the future. The Council will engage young people through a variety of means, in order to listen to their views and work with them to provide an environment that makes young people feel engaged, and have a voice, in their community.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Conduct a survey of young people to understand their recreation needs and work with them to implement the key outcomes of the survey

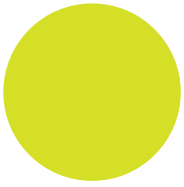
Work with partner organisations to improve recreation facilities for young people and improve those facilities under our direct control

Continue to provide a Detached Youth Service that provides high quality support to young people

Continue to commit expenditure to support and enhance the provision of youth services in the town

Seek to promote democracy to young people and participate in local democratic activities





6. THE DETAIL

6.3 Facilities

Thatcham Town Council owns, or manages, a wide variety of community facilities, including community halls, cemetery, allotments, recreation spaces and street furniture and understands that these facilities are valuable to residents and visitors.

The Council commits to maintaining its facilities to a high standard and seek to maximise usage of community spaces.

For facilities outside of Town Council control, the Council will lobby partners to maintain their facilities to equally high standards, to ensure all community facilities are preserved for the enjoyment of the local community.

The Council, together with community groups and voluntary organisations, will seek to balance the competing demands of recreation and conservation.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Make it easy for residents to report issues through Town Council Surgeries and Social Media platforms

Continue to invest in our Play Areas to provide high quality, accessible play equipment with high play value

Invest in The Broadway Green to enhance this valuable green space in the centre of the town

Refurbish The Broadway public conveniences and maintain to a high standard

Ensure that all West Berkshire public site assets are developed in agreement with Thatcham Town Council

Commit to providing award winning facilities for our Town and our residents



6.4 Local Infrastructure

Thatcham Town Council recognises that local infrastructure is vital for everyone's enjoyment of the area in which they live.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Revitalise the appearance of the town centre in conjunction with partner organisations including West Berkshire District Council

Make sure that the Town Council is involved in future planning decisions affecting the town

Make sure that developer contributions improve local infrastructure in all cases

Work with partners to ensure Thatcham has adequate sports facilities, maintained to a high standard

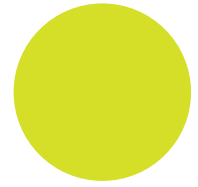
Work with partner agencies to ensure smooth traffic flow in the Town that reduces engine idling and congestion hot spots

Demand that any future development delivers infrastructure and services that support the needs of the Town and its residents, and alleviates the harm of development

Promote exhibitions and performances in our venues

Protect open spaces which are at risk of development, working with partners as necessary





6.5 Environment

Thatcham Town Council recognises the urgency associated with the Climate Emergency and voted in June 2019 to support a motion to support and promote a wider programme of activities to help Thatcham, as a whole, become more sustainable with the ambition of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 and minimising our impact on the environment.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

- Deliver an Environmental Action Plan and identify key objectives for the period of the Plan – achieving every one of those objectives that we can in the period
- Commission a Carbon Footprint of the Town Council as a guide to implement carbon saving policies for the Council which will deliver savings to the local taxpayer
- Support behavioural change required across the community towards transitioning to zero carbon
- Implement measures at Town Council owned/managed properties that aid carbon reduction; including installation of solar panels, efficient lighting etc
- Put the environment, ecology, biodiversity and carbon reduction at the heart of all Town Council decisions by reviewing them against such criteria
- Promote and encourage sustainability when providing feedback as a third-party consultee
- Work with West Berkshire District Council to help fulfil the common goal of net zero carbon, particularly on building standards and integrated transport policy
- Take steps to protect the natural environment and ecology within the Thatcham parish boundary
- Continue to protect the strategic gap between Thatcham and Newbury and preserve settlement boundaries that exist with neighbouring parishes



6.6 Businesses

Thatcham Town Council recognises the crucial role businesses play in supporting the local community, through provision and employment, and also the green agenda.

The Council will keep local business, both in the town centre and the wider town area, at the forefront of its decision making and, in particular, in its role as a consultee on local planning matters. When responding to planning, and related, applications, the Council will actively support employment opportunities that offer significant benefit to the town.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

- Support economic development in the town centre, through initiatives such as Newbury West Berkshire, and press West Berkshire District Council to promote economic opportunities offered by the Town
- Strengthen business relationships by working with Thatcham Chamber of Commerce in order to hear the views of local businesses and respond to their needs
- Continue to run a vibrant market in The Broadway and seek opportunities for further growth
- Support and promote initiatives that embrace greater interaction between residents and local businesses and taking their views into account in our decision making
- Work with partner organisations to encourage a diversity of employment opportunities in the town
- Work with partners to ensure Thatcham has well connected





6. THE DETAIL

6.7 Heritage

Thattham has a long and rich history, stretching back to the first known human settlement in the area during the Mesolithic Period.

The Council recognises that the town's history should be celebrated and promoted.

IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Work to preserve and promote the town's heritage for the inspiration, education and enjoyment of residents and visitors

Support the work of the local historical society in order to record the important historical richness of Thattham

Make recommendations and submissions for assets to be added to Heritage Local Listings

Work to influence the preservation of historic features of the town through reviewing existing Conservation Areas



6.8 Profile

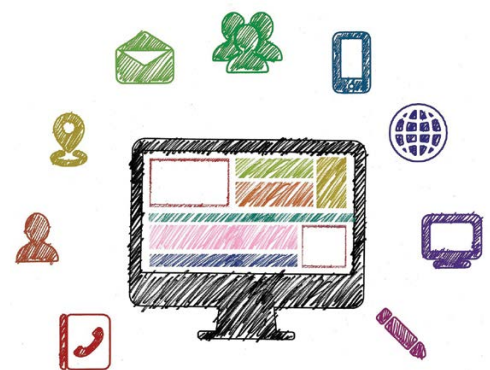
Thattham Town Council is proud of its Community and Town and will seek to maintain this.

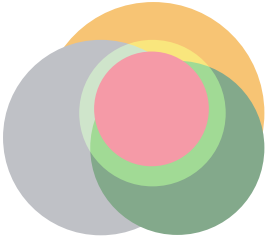
IN SUPPORT OF THIS THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL:

Develop a Thattham "Brand" thereby making sure that our Town is seen as an entity that residents and the country can recognise as a welcoming area/town and one that people/businesses are drawn towards

Undertake a social media health check and adopt a standardised approach to our social media presence and make sure that we connect with our residents and provide a forum for feedback and continuous review

Develop and implement a Community Engagement Strategy so that we understand how our residents want to communicate with us and identify our hard-to-reach communities





7. REVIEW OF STRATEGY

The Council will conduct quarterly progress reviews in order to ensure that it is delivering this Strategy and will review the Strategy annually.

The Council will keep residents involved with progress of this Strategy and when it is refreshed.



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