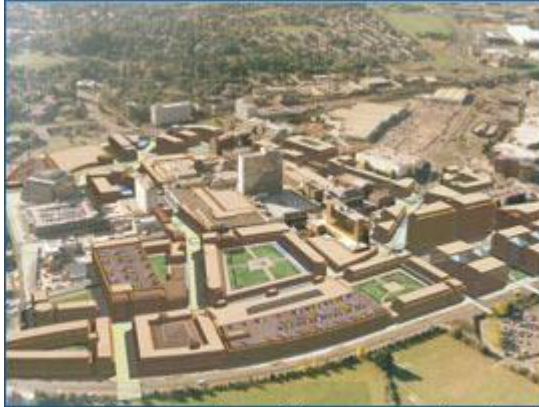


Renew Towns

29 Aug 2003



Aerial perspective of the new Bracknell Town Centre.

Source: Bracknell Masterplan, September 2002

Many of Britain's new towns such as Stevenage in Hertfordshire and Harlow in Essex could be significantly redeveloped if a £500 million renewal of Bracknell town centre proves successful.

Bracknell, a first generation new town designated in 1949, now has a population of approaching 60,000. As were all new towns, it was designed to be a self-contained and balanced community for work and living. Bracknell residents in the 1960s enjoyed good quality housing and amenities across the income range, a spacious and green environment (to contrast the high-rise blocks in the large cities), and, schools and community centres were linked to well-defined neighbourhoods close to the new emerging industries. However, since the 1960s employment has changed from manufacturing to distribution, research and service industry, with particular emphasis on the

computer industry. By the 1990s Bracknell was claiming to be the Leisure Centre of the South-East but despite a Water World and a 10-screen cinema this claim was not borne-out by a town starved of investment since its construction. Today, Bracknell is suffering like many other new towns from crumbling infrastructure, crime, empty shops and vacant office blocks. It has been unable to regenerate itself because, unlike the Garden Cities of Letchworth and Welwyn, the community no longer controls the land and the assets. Owing to the new town dream falling out of favour with the two main political parties from the 1980s much of the land and buildings have been sold off.

This new plan aims to:

Transform the environment:

- Encourage a distinctive identity for the town centre.
- Integrate the town centre with the wider area.
- Improve movement for pedestrians, disabled people and cyclists.
- Enhance existing public spaces and create new public spaces as a focus for activity and events.
- Provide a mix of open and covered streets.
- Promote sustainable development, including energy efficient building design, recycling and renewable energy.



Bracknell's new town centre should be green and have state-of-the-art buildings

Source: Bracknell Masterplan, September 2002

Create a vibrant and mixed-use town centre

- 56,000 m² of additional shopping.
- Create a lively 18-hour economy with new leisure uses, cafés, restaurants and bars.
- Promote the town centre as a place to live with over 800 new homes developing a mixed and sustainable community.
- 43,000 m² of new office space.
- A striking civic and community focus in a new state-of-the-art building.
- New food store, hotel, new indoor market and new accommodation for Bracknell & Wokingham College.

Promote sustainable access

- Encourage local people to choose to visit Bracknell rather than travel elsewhere for shopping and leisure.
- Make Bracknell town centre accessible to all.
- Provide a public transport interchange and improved bus services.
- Improve access and facilities for disabled people including Shopmobility.
- Additional car parking, well managed to ensure the most efficient use of spaces and minimise environmental impacts associated with vehicular traffic.