

3 Site in Context

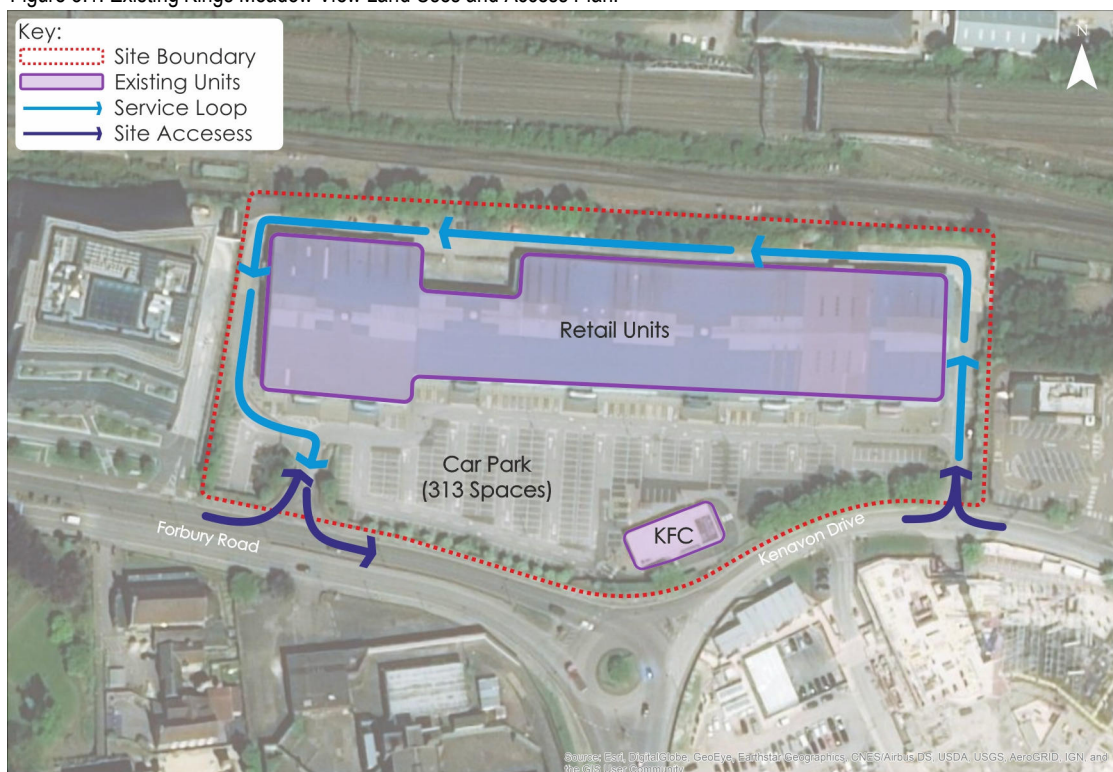
3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 This section describes the current Kings Meadow View site, Forbury Retail Park, in the context of the existing land uses, access, car parking, delivery and servicing, and the context of the site in the RBC Local Plan.

3.2 Existing Land Uses

- 3.2.1 The Kings Meadow View site covers c.6.99ha and comprises 9,700sqm of large-scale retail units (predominantly furniture stores), a 390sqm drive-thru KFC, a car parking area, and a servicing loop around the rear of the units. The existing site in context with its land uses, and access points are shown in **Figure 3.1**.

Figure 3.1: Existing Kings Meadow View Land Uses and Access Plan.



3.3 Access

- 3.3.1 The site has two access points, one located to the southwest of the site boundary on Forbury Road and the other to the southeast of the site boundary on Kenavon Drive.
- 3.3.2 The Forbury Road access at the southwest of the site forms a left-in-left-out priority junction arrangement with a central pedestrian refuge island and a drop-kerb. The junction provides access and egress from the retail car park for cars, pedestrians and cyclists and also forms an exit for the servicing loop around the rear of the retail units.
- 3.3.3 The Kenavon Drive access southeast of the site is an access-only junction and does not provide egress from the existing retail park. The junction provides access to the car park for vehicles and the entrance to the servicing loop. No formal pedestrian and cycle provision is made at this location, but a drop-kerb is present.

3.4 Parking

- 3.4.1 There are 313 car parking spaces at the site which serve as unallocated spaces for customers of the retail park and the drive-thru restaurant. Of the total spaces, 17 are disabled, and 8 are parent/toddler spaces. In addition there are 4 stands for motorcycles.
- 3.4.2 There is a total of 21 cycle racks situated across the site, which provide cycle parking for 42 bikes. There are 17 Sheffield Stands outside the retail units, with 4 Sheffield stands outside the KFC that are sheltered.

3.5 Delivery & Servicing

- 3.5.1 The existing retail units are serviced along the northern boundary of the sites with a servicing loop provided around the rear, which is accessed through the Kenavon Drive access, and the egressed at the Forbury Road access. The KFC unit is serviced via a nearby parking area.

3.6 Existing Third Party Access

- 3.6.1 The site is subject to a number of covenants to provide a right of access to key infrastructure, which is located either within or adjacent to the site. The site is subject to the following rights of access:
- **Network Rail** – Current right of access through the site to the gated trackside compound located at the site's northeast corner. The covenant specifies that Network Rail has a right of access to the servicing loop around the rear of the units and could therefore be accessed via either Forbury Road or Kenavon Drive;
 - **SSE** – Existing substation located at the site's northeast corner, which has the right of access for maintenance vehicles to access and park. The covenant specifies there is a right of access to the servicing loop around the rear of the units and could therefore be accessed via either Forbury Road or Kenavon Drive; and
 - **Thames Water** – A sewer runs below the existing car park area, which will be diverted to the north of the site as part of the proposals. Thames Water has a right of access to undertake maintenance. This can be accessed via either the Forbury Road or Kenavon Drive access, depending on the location of the required maintenance.

3.7 Local Committed Developments

Huntley Wharf

- 3.7.1 Huntley Wharf is located south of Kings Meadow View on the former site of Toys-R-Us and Homebase. Huntley Wharf is bound to the north by Kenavon Drive, to the east by Berkshire Rooms (Serviced apartments), the south by Blakes Wharf, which runs parallel to the River Kennet and to the west by Forbury Road.
- 3.7.2 Huntley Wharf is nearing completion with a total of 765 residential units along with retail units, a restaurant and café and a nursery.

Reading Prison

- 3.7.3 The former Reading Prison is located south of Kings Meadow, bound to the north and east by Forbury Road, Reading Abbey Ruins to the west and the River Kennet to the south, with the Huntley Wharf residential development also to the east of Reading Prison.
- 3.7.4 The former prison is on a plot of 1.44 ha and is a Grade II listed building owned by the Ministry of Justice. It is allocated under Policy CR13a for the conversion of the prison into 65-90

dwellings. The Local Plan states that the that the building should be “*used for a use compatible with its heritage, which might include residential or student accommodation, commercial offices or a hotel, and should include some cultural or heritage element or related retail and leisure that draws in its significance*”.

Forbury Business Park & Kenavon Drive

- 3.7.5 The Forbury Business Park and Kenavon Drive are outlined in the Reading Local Plan as Policy CR13, located on the eastern boundary of Kings Meadow View. The potential size of the site would be 2.07 ha, with indicative potential residential units between 190-285. The development should provide an open space close to the River Kennet, connecting to the pedestrian link under the railway to Napier Road.

Gas Holder

- 3.7.6 The Gas Holder is a residential development 750m to the east of Kings Meadow, under Policy CR13d in the Reading Local Plan. The site has an indicative potential for 46-70 dwellings on a site of 0.71ha.
- 3.7.7 It gained planning permission for 130 residential units with a mixture of private and affordable housing, utilising the existing connection at Alexander Turner Close for access to the site.

4 Sustainable Access

4.1 Overview

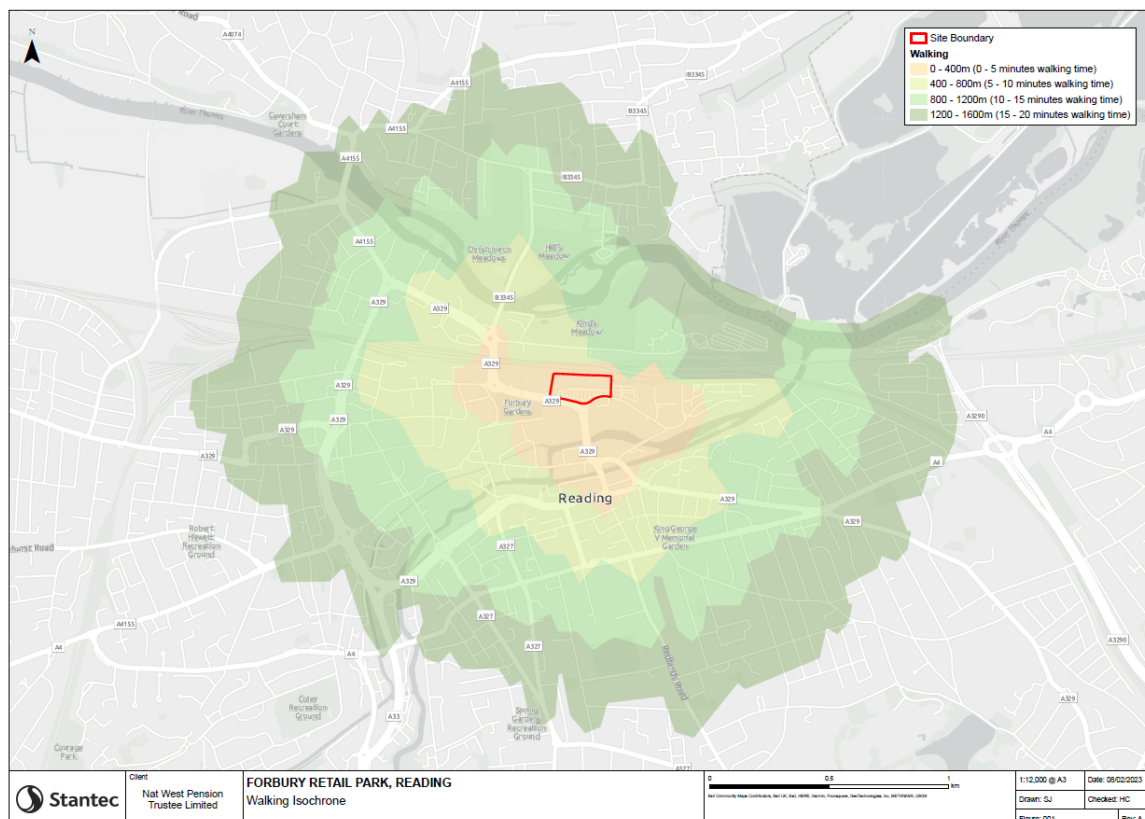
- 4.1.1 This section considers existing accessibility for the site across sustainable modes of travel, such as access for pedestrians and cyclists, public transport services, including bus and rail routes, and the local amenities in the surrounding area.

4.2 Active Travel

Pedestrian Network

- 4.2.1 The site is situated in a sustainable and accessible area on the edge of Reading Town Centre. The site is ideally located to encourage walking for the residents due to employment centres in the area, shown in **Figure 4.1**. There will be commercial units included within the Kings Meadow development, one large on the western section of the site and small units on the ground floor of the southern blocks which provide additional activity and services. Within a 20-minute walk, residents can access the whole of Reading Town Centre, including Broad Street Mall and The Oracle areas, as well as Caversham and transport nodes such as Reading Railway Station and multiple town centre bus stops. Included within the Huntly Wharf development are proposals for a restaurant, retail & commercial spaces along with a co-working studio and nurse's office.
- 4.2.2 Additionally, there are several schools and employment areas, such as Thames Valley Park, Reading Berkshire Hospital and the University of Reading, which are just beyond the 20-minute walking distance.

Figure 4.1: Walking Accessibility Isochrone

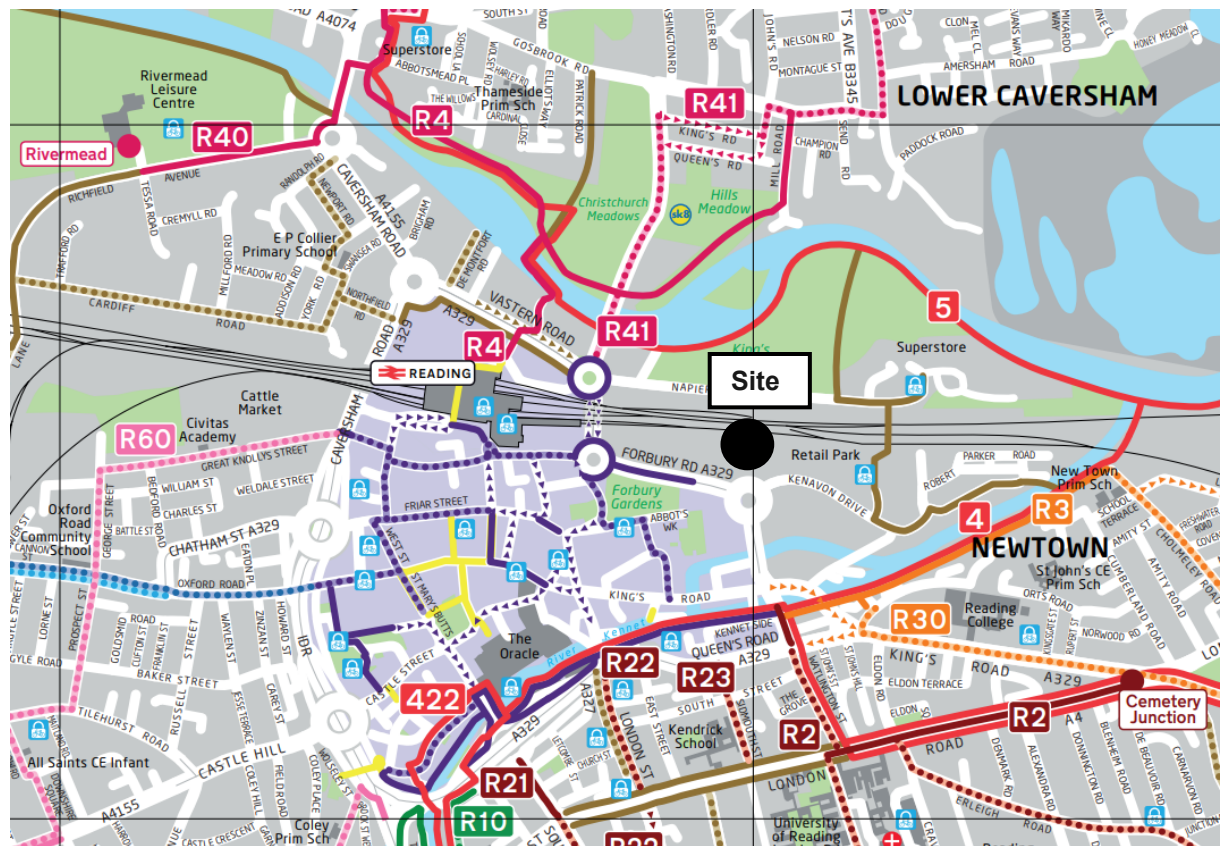


- 4.2.3 There are footways on both sides of Forbury Road and Kenavon Drive; these lead to the extensive network within the town centre and along both the River Kennet and Thames. The Napier Road underpass runs under the railway to the north of the site, reducing severance between the two sides of the railway; access to this from the site is provided along a footpath along the site's eastern edge.
- 4.2.4 There are informal drop-kerbs at both access points to the site, with a median island in the centre of the western access point. Across the entrance to the SSE building has a formal drop-kerb crossing point with tactile paving, a median island and directions to look for pedestrians on the floor.
- 4.2.5 One hundred metres west of the western entrance is a staggered pelican crossing with a central island and tactile paving to allow passage across Forbury Road. 100m east of the western access point at the junction with Forbury Road and Forbury Road / Kenavon Drive roundabout, there is an informal drop kerb crossing with a central island to allow passage across the dual carriageway. There is another informal drop kerb crossing point, at the junction with Kenavon Drive and Kenavon Drive / Forbury Road roundabout.

Cycle Network

- 4.2.6 The site is situated on the edge of Reading town centre and near the Town Centre Cycle Route (shown in purple below), which provides wider access to the cycle routes in the town, including routes 3, 4, and 60. Route 3 allows access to Woodley, Route 4 provides access to Caversham and NCN 5 and Route 60 runs to Southcote and connecting to Route 50 connecting to multiple parks. National Cycle Network's NCN 4, which runs along the River Kennet, providing a route to the South of Reading and Sonning and NCN 5, which runs along the River Thames to the north of the site and into Caversham. These routes connect to the extended cycle network of Reading, which consists of a mixture of traffic-free cycle routes and on-road cycle routes. This network connects the site to Reading Town centre and key destinations, including Reading Railway Station. These routes can be seen in **Figure 4.2**.

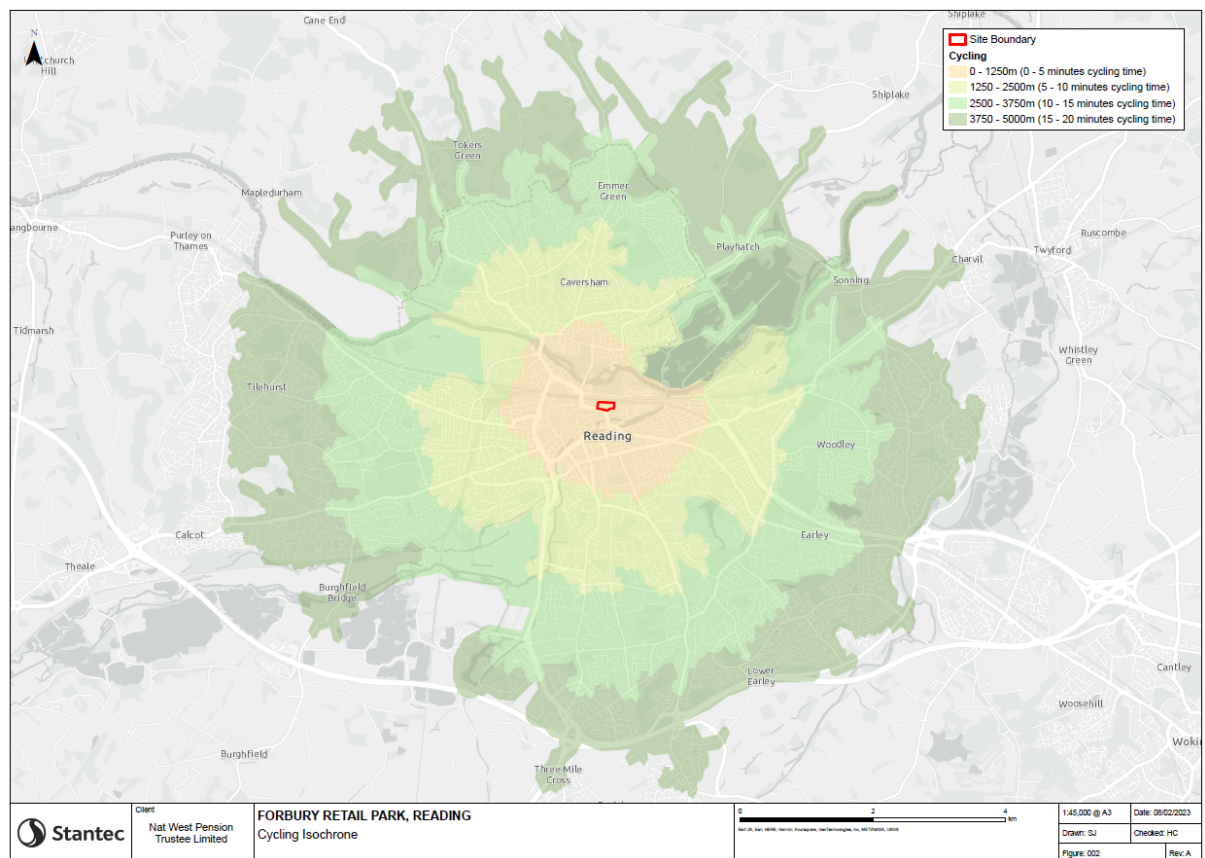
Figure 4.2: Extract from Reading Borough Councils (RBC) Cycle Network – Strategic Route



Source: [Cycling - Reading Borough Council](#)

- 4.2.7 The site's location means that within a 20-minute cycle, the site can access Caversham, Sonning, Whitley Wood, Woodley, and the employment centre within Reading. Multiple different types of schools are within the 20-minute cycling distance, including primary, secondary, grammar and the University of Reading. Major employment centres are included in **Figure 4.3**, including the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Thames Valley Park, Green Park and Winnersh Triangle.

Figure 4.3: Cycling Accessibility Isochrone



4.3 Public Transport Network

Bus

- 4.3.1 Kings Meadow View is within a short distance of strategic bus routes that connect the site with destinations across Reading Borough and beyond. There are bus stops within walking distance of 650m, including those on Blagrave Street, Forbury Road, , Kenavon Drive, Kings Road and Station Road. These services provide access to the wider region, including Bracknell, Newbury and Wokingham.
- 4.3.2 A summary of the local bus services serving these bus stops and other bus stops in a 650m radius of the site is provided in **Table 4.1**. As numerous bus services are accessible by the site, this will encourage residents and visitors to use a bus service detailed in **Table 4.1**.

Table 4.1: Summary of Local Bus Services

Service	Destinations (to/from)	Weekday services per hour	Saturday services per hour	Sunday services per hour
1	Newbury to Reading via Thatcham and Theale	2	2	1
2	Central Reading to Mortimer via Burghfield	1	1	1
3	Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) / Arborfield / Wokingham	2	2	2
4 / 4X	Reading – Bracknell via Wokingham	3	3	3
9	RBH / University of Reading (UoR) / Whitley Wood / Mere oak	1	1	-
11	Coley Park / Reading	3	3	1
13/14	Reading Station – Woodley (Circular)	4	4	2
17	Wokingham Road – Tilehurst Via Central Reading	5	5	4
19a / 19c	RBH / UoR / Earley / Woodley	2	2	-
19b	RBH / UoR / Beech Lane / Lower Earley	1	1	-
22	Central Reading – Caversham Heights	1	1	-
23	Central Reading – Caversham Park	2	2	1
24	Central Reading – Emmer Green	2	2	1
25	Central Reading – Peppard Common	1	1	-
127/128/129	Wokingham Town Centre – Reading Town Centre	1	1	-
X39 / X40	Oxford to Reading via Benson, Wallingford and Caversham	2	2	1
42	Kenavon Drive / St Marys Butts	2	2	-
50	Central Reading – Green Park	4	1	-
600	Central Reading – Spencers Wood/Mere oak P&R	4	3	-

Source: [Routes & times - Reading Buses \(reading-buses.co.uk\)](https://www.reading-buses.co.uk/routes-times)

National Rail

- 4.3.3 The Kings Meadow View development is close to the Reading Railway Station, a national transport hub. Reading Railway Station is used by approximately 17 million passengers annually (2019) and is the ninth busiest station outside London and the second busiest interchange station outside of London. Reading Railway Station underwent expansion and

modernisation between 2009 and 2014, adding five new platforms and improving the station facilities and interchanges.

4.3.4 Rail services from Reading Railway Station provide connections to the regional and national rail network, where the following train companies offer services to various destinations.

- **First Great Western** operate trains to destinations which include London Paddington, Slough, Basingstoke, Guildford, Gatwick Airport, Oxford, Hereford, Worcester, Bristol, and the South West of England;
- **Cross Country Trains** operate trains to destinations including Bournemouth, Southampton Guildford, Banbury, Coventry, Birmingham, the North of England, and Scotland; and
- **South Western Trains** provides services to Wokingham, Staines, Richmond, Clapham Junction, London Waterloo, Basingstoke, Winchester, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Brighton.

Elizabeth Line

4.3.5 Reading Railway Station is the western terminus for the Elizabeth line (Crossrail) services. The service opened its full route in November of 2022, providing four trains per hour during peak hours. The route connects to railway stations and key interchanges in central and east London, including Bond Street, Farringdon, and Canary Wharf.

4.4 New Infrastructure

Rail

4.4.1 Reading Green Park Station is a new railway station located south of Reading on the Basingstoke to Reading line. This railway station improves the accessibility to Green Park Business Park and the surrounding area, including Madejski Stadium. The station opened on the 27th of May 2023.

4.5 Local Facilities and Amenities

4.5.1 Kings Meadow View is located in an accessible and sustainable location on the edge of Reading Town Centre, which allows residents of the site to access a wide range of amenities, including entertainment, healthcare and retail, the location of which can be seen in **Figure 4.4** and a summary listed below:

- Transport Nodes (Bus stops and Reading Railway Station)
- Retail Parks
- Supermarkets
- Restaurants
- Shops (The Oracle Shopping Centre)
- ATM
- Parks
- River Kennet and the Thames