

# Council Strategy 2023-2027



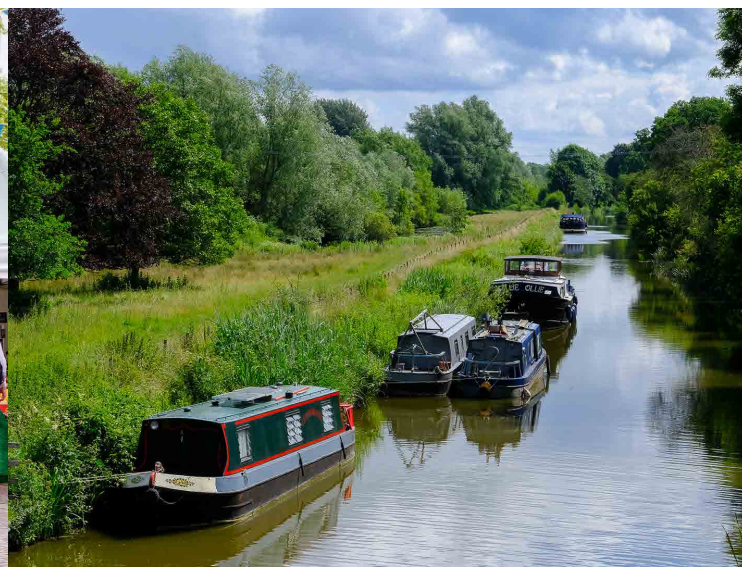
**Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of**







## Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of



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# Foreword



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Dillon'.

**Lee Dillon**  
Leader of the Council

I am delighted to introduce the new Council Strategy for 2023-2027. This strategy takes on board feedback from the consultation carried out earlier in the year and also reflects the manifesto commitments that saw the Liberal Democrats win 29 of the 43 council seats on offer and become the new administration.

This strategy lays out what we want to achieve and, for the first time for West Berkshire Council, includes specific, measurable goals and a clear timeline for the objectives that underpin our priorities – all in one document for clarity and

transparency. This new approach will clearly signal to you, our residents and local businesses, how we will work to improve the Council and deliver outcomes that matter.

As you will see in the timelines, I'm proud to say that we have already implemented some key changes: Council meetings are more open than ever before, we have asked the Opposition councillors to take over chairing the main scrutiny committee, so we don't mark our own homework, and we have re-introduced Community Forums so we can get your input and feedback directly on issues that are important for the district.

As we proceed over the next four years we do so with a commitment to bring change, but we also understand the limited resources we are working with. This Administration will deliver change, but we will also ensure we get the Council back onto a secure financial footing. The long-term future of the Council will always be our biggest priority as that secures the services that are delivered within our community. By transforming the way we work we can deliver more for less and can embrace new technologies to support us on our journey.

West Berkshire is a beautiful place to live and work in, and over the next four years we work hard everyday to make it **greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of.**



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Lynn'.

**Nigel Lynn**  
Chief Executive

Welcome to the New Council Strategy 2023 to 2027, setting out the strategic direction for the Council's services. It defines our priorities over the next four years and our contribution toward the aspirations of the West Berkshire Vision 2036. The strategy ensures that all services are working together to deliver these priorities, whilst ensuring that all the mandatory services are also being provided.

A statistical analysis of the evolving environmental, economic, health and social care needs of our residents has been used to inform our priorities. It confirmed, once again, that West Berkshire has a wonderful environment,

strong economy, an overall healthy and affluent population. We should be proud that the district has shown strong resilience to unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic challenges, delivering essential services, whilst supporting residents to save lives and livelihoods. The impacts of the pandemic and international humanitarian crises, and the rise in the cost of living, have informed the approach for this strategy, which focuses on exciting new projects to enhance the lives of local people.

We have given particular attention to capture the feedback from our residents to fully understand their needs. This included a Covid-19 survey, a representative residents' survey and engagement with residents that are not usually taking their opportunities to make their voices heard. In addition, we have consulted on the draft priorities and outcomes, and ensured it reflects the agenda of the new Liberal Democrat's administration. As a result, over the next four years, we will strive for operational excellence, while delivering the Council priorities. The priorities have equal importance, as we recognise that we need to ensure a balanced and integrated approach.

Our progress will be assessed against measures and targets included in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan, which will be updated annually and reported quarterly to the Council's Executive. I know that a strategic plan directs the organisation for the future. It also helps us establish realistic and stretching goals that are in line with the vision and mission of the Council's new administration. This strategy will help empower our staff to continuously improve our services to our residents.

# What the Council Does and Role of the Strategy

West Berkshire Council provides over 700 statutory services for our residents and businesses. Our residents rely on us to:

- ensure older people and vulnerable adults are looked after and supported to live independently
- maintain our roads and transport infrastructure, parks, open spaces and buildings
- offer housing services
- support education, early years and children with special educational needs
- keep children safe and families together
- encourage economic development
- provide planning services
- support culture, museums and libraries
- provide benefits and collect council taxes and business rates
- collect bins and provide recycling services
- work with communities to support public health and wellbeing

This is what we do every day, and the way we do it is mapped out in our Service Plans. Some parts of the Service Plans are about what we do now and some are about areas that the Council, based on the evidence base and the consultation with residents, wants to prioritise as part of the Council Strategy.



The Council Strategy is about the future, improvements and/or change:

- improving or changing what we do or how we do it
- the introduction of new services or amenities

The strategy sets out what key changes we want to make, what key actions we will take to implement the changes and when, and when the changes will be introduced. As we implement this strategy, the Council will become better at delivering the services you need and will also provide some of the additional things you have asked for.

Having a clear strategy is important because:

- it shows what our priorities are and therefore helps with decision-making
- it gives direction to everyone in the organisation, ensuring all services are working together towards the priorities set in the strategy
- it provides the context and key themes for a range of more specific strategies within the Council, such as the Adult Social Care strategy or the Environment strategy
- it provides focus for the Executive and Senior Leadership
- it provides a framework for evaluating the Council's performance

The strategy is supported by the Delivery Plan which contains more detail on the actions we will take and when, and what improvements we expect as a result. **The link to the Delivery Plan, including a QR code for easy access, are provided at the end of this document.**



**The rest of this document highlights the key goals, outcomes and actions which are further detailed in the [Delivery Plan](#). To make the strategy clearer and easier to understand, each section starts with a visual summary showing what we plan to do each year from 2023 to 2027. These summary plans are then supported with more detailed explanations.**

# Council Strategy Framework

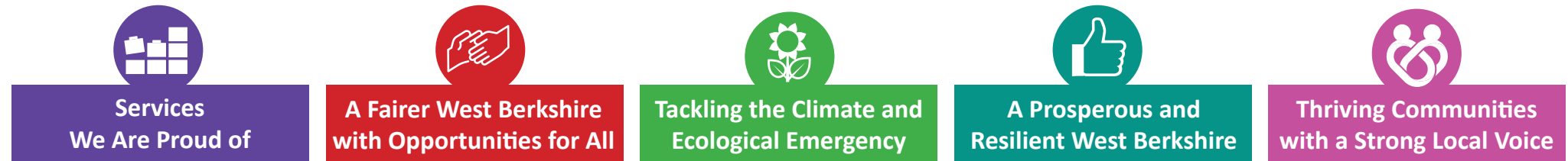
## The Purpose of the strategy:

**Making West Berkshire greener, fairer and more prosperous, with thriving communities and services we are proud of**

## Overarching values:

-  **Integrity**  
'we act with integrity ensuring all decisions are lawful, transparent and impartial'
-  **Customer focused**  
'we listen to our customers and do our best for them'
-  **Fairness**  
'we will always treat everyone fairly'

## The Priorities of the strategy:



## The Goals for each priority:

- Services We Are Proud of**
  - Ensure West Berkshire Council continues to offer good customer service to our residents and businesses
  - Transform the way the Council works
  - Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making
  - Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice
- A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All**
  - Prioritise support for those who need it most
  - Deliver more homes that people can afford
  - Support our Local Authority maintained schools to drive up standards
- Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency**
  - West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and improves biodiversity
  - Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment
  - Help to make the whole of West Berkshire net zero
- A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire**
  - Proactively engage with and support businesses to grow and thrive
  - Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium
  - Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport
  - Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities
- Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice**
  - Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them
  - Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives
  - Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages
  - Help our villages to remain vibrant long term

## The Council Strategy Delivery Plan:

Detailed actions, measures and timescales to deliver the goals and outcomes are included in the [Council Strategy Delivery Plan](#) which will be reviewed at least annually and for which progress will be reported as part of the quarterly performance management report to the Executive.



## Priority: 1. Services We Are Proud of – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>1.A. Ensure West Berkshire Council offers good customer service to our residents and businesses</b>				
	Support all our customers through ongoing delivery of our service plans			
1. Introduce strong budgetary control	1. Peer review to drive best practice	Take actions to improve following Peer Review		
	Improve digital access for our customers Increase reach of our resident communications			
<b>1.B. Transform the way the Council works to deliver operational excellence</b>				
1. Identify areas for Transformation 2. Agree Transformation Plan with resources and deliverables	Ongoing implementation of Transformation Plan			
		1. Renew Vision for West Berkshire		
<b>1.C. Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making and accountable for our actions</b>				
1. Scrutiny chaired by opposition 2. Advisory Group open to public 3. Initial response to ≥ 80% of Petitions & Motions in ≤4 months 4. Planning notification letters 5. Respect for Public questions	Regular updates on progress and performance. Update Council policies and processes to underpin transparency, accountability and respect			
	2. Review the CIL process			
<b>1.D. Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice</b>				
1. Begin switching agency staff to permanent 2. Simplify the application process for jobs at WBC	Reduce staff turnover. Reduce number of agency workers. Increase staff engagement and % staff who would recommend working at WBC			
	1. Staff Engagement Survey 2. Develop Employee value proposition & review how we recognise staff 3. Deliver WBC apprenticeship & work experience scheme	Changes based on survey	1. Staff Engagement Survey	Changes based on survey 1. Staff engagement >73% 2. % staff recommend WBC >50% 3. Staff turnover down to < 13.5%



## Services We Are Proud of – details about goals, outcomes and actions

### 1.A. Ensure West Berkshire Council offers good customer service to our residents and businesses

- 1.1. Good quality public services for all (compared to similar local authorities in England)
  - 1.1.1. Support all our customers through ongoing delivery of our service plans
- 1.2. Continually improving customer experience and enable digital access to services for the residents that want and can access them
- 1.3. Increase the reach of Council communications to residents and explore new channels to better engage
- 1.4. Ask other councils to review our policies and processes (a peer review) in 2024 to highlight our strengths and show where we need to improve
- 1.5. Strong budgetary control, use of resources and initiatives to maximise financial efficiency
  - 15.1. Always aiming for investments that save money / generate revenue and provide a benefit to our community. For example saving money and the environment by investing in solar panels
  - 1.5.2. Considering the social, environmental and ethical impact of West Berkshire Council investment
- 1.6. Maintain cleanliness of our streets and other public spaces



### 1.B. Transform the way the Council works to deliver operational excellence

- 1.7. The Council continues to deliver our statutory services to our residents and businesses in the face of economic uncertainty and increasing demand, by transforming the ways of working (and Council infrastructure) to achieve operational excellence. By the end of 2023, we will agree a plan to transform the following six priority areas:
  - Business support review- bring together and simplify administrative functions into a central support unit
  - Strategic asset and locality service delivery model review - rationalisation of corporate buildings and co-location of Council Services
  - Place Service Improvement Plan- improve efficiency and customer service in the Council's Planning Service
  - Corporate review of recruitment- considering ways to improve our recruitment processes whilst reducing agency costs
  - Review of Care Home provision- development of in-depth business case for the future role of the Council in local residential care provision
  - Review of Home to School Transport- review of the service delivery model for home to school transport to identify efficiencies
- 1.8. Implement the Transformation Plan starting in 2024
- 1.9. Renew the Vision for West Berkshire, starting in 2025



## 1.C. Treat our residents with respect, be transparent in our decision making and accountable for our actions

- 1.10. Residents more engaged through more transparent decision-making processes about the services that impact them
  - 1.10.1. Ensure an Opposition Party Councillor chairs the Council's scrutiny committee and change the Council constitution / standing orders to make this a requirement in future
  - 1.10.2. Reduce the amount of information being considered in private by West Berkshire Council, including opening advisory groups to public scrutiny
- 1.11. Residents are more aware of the Council's services and how well we are performing
  - 1.11.1. Make clear, measurable commitments and regularly review and publish our progress against them
  - 1.11.2. Keep residents informed of changes in their local area by re-introducing neighbour notification letters for planning applications in 2024
- 1.12. Our residents and partners feel they are treated with respect
  - 1.12.1. Listen carefully to questions from members of the public during our meetings, allow reasonable follow-up questions and provide written answers within five working days
  - 1.12.2. Ensure the Council provides at least an initial response to at least 80% of motions and petitions within a maximum of four months, and seek to reduce this response time further
  - 1.12.3. Carry out a full review of West Berkshire's Community Infrastructure Levy process (2024)

## 1.D. Make West Berkshire Council an employer of choice

- 1.13. West Berkshire Council is an employer of choice
  - 1.13.1. Increase staff engagement to above average for the public sector and carry out employee attitude surveys (2024 and then 2026)  
Take improvement actions following the results of each survey, benchmark, and increase the proportion of staff who would recommend West Berkshire as a great place to work
  - 1.13.2. Deliver an effective apprentice and work experience programme to offer opportunities to residents and to help develop our own talent pipeline
  - 1.13.3. Staff turnover reduced to < 13.5% by 2027
  - 1.13.4. Develop an Employee Value Proposition, to ensure we are as competitive and attractive as possible (2024)
  - 1.13.5. Carry out a review of how we recognise staff performance and make changes accordingly (2024)
  - 1.13.6. Switch agency staff to become permanent employees of the council
  - 1.13.7. Simplify the application process for jobs at West Berkshire Council



## Priority: 2. A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>2.A. Prioritise support for those who need it most</b>				
Drive standards in Adult Social Care and Children’s Care. Increase the number of foster carers. Reduce poverty related hunger.				
1. Prioritise funding for mental health services	1. Review early intervention options 2. Identify solutions for homelessness 3. Review SEND provision 4. Create housing forum for tenants 5. Adult Social Care provision review	Reduce wait time for children’s mental health support Reduce homelessness Improve SEND provision Give voice to tenants		1. ASC & CFS services Good/Excellent 2. Foster carers up 12% since 2022 3. Wait time for children’s mental health down by 40% vs 2022
<b>2.B. Deliver more homes that people can afford</b>				
Deliver ≥ 125 affordable homes per year. Bring more empty homes back into use.				
1. Review how many dwellings are Affordable vs Social Rent, and link to policy	1. Deliver more houses for Social Rent and Affordable Rent ourselves and JV - create plan to deliver			1. > 500 new affordable homes delivered since May 2023
<b>2.C. Support our local authority maintained schools to drive up standards</b>				
Good / excellent education attainment, exceeding national levels. Work to retain current schools within the Local Authority.				
1. Endeavour to retain current schools within the Local Authority rather than becoming academies / joining multi academy trusts	1. Review WBC education support 2. Create plan to close attainment gap; focus on early years & deprivation 3. Create plan for targeted additional support for staff & governors pre-Ofsted	Improve education support and structure Reduce the attainment gap Better support staff and governors pre-Ofsted		1. Attainment gap reduced vs 2022 2. All LA Maintained schools rated Good or Excellent



# A Fairer West Berkshire with Opportunities for All – details about goals, outcomes and actions

## 2.A. Prioritise support for those who need it most

- 2.1. Good or better (with ambition for excellent) Adult Social Care and Children and Family Services (Ofsted and Care Quality Commission ratings)
- 2.2. Vulnerable children and families supported at early stages to prevent the need for more critical or statutory social services
  - 2.2.1. Ensure care packages are in place as early as possible through earlier initial care assessments
  - 2.2.2. Work with families and stakeholders to keep children safe in their homes. If children do have to go into care, we will increase the number of successful Children in Care placements
- 2.3. Solutions are identified to prevent homelessness and avoid rough sleeping
  - 2.3.1. Offer accommodation to verified rough sleepers in West Berkshire and support households at risk of homelessness
- 2.4. Improved enforcement of good standards in rented and supported housing
  - 2.4.1. Create a housing forum to take place in public (to include registered providers of housing and licensed houses for multiple occupancy within West Berkshire), to give tenants a greater voice
- 2.5. Residents are supported to access the mental health services that they need
  - 2.5.1. Prioritise funding to reduce wait times for children's mental health services
  - 2.5.2. Conduct a full review of Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) capacity and model in West Berkshire
- 2.6. Residents facing the greatest challenges are prioritised by wellbeing and social care services
  - 2.6.1. Increase the number of foster carers
  - 2.6.2. Tackle hunger-related poverty in young people
- 2.7. Review the way that we provide services for those requiring Adult Social Care to ensure that we provide the highest quality services, in the most sustainable way, in the medium and long term. The review and the resulting strategy to be published by March 2024



## 2.B. Deliver more homes that people can afford

- 2.8. Increased number of homes that people can afford
  - 2.8.1. Deliver over 1000 affordable new homes by 2030
  - 2.8.2. Work with housing providers to develop local home ownership models
  - 2.8.3. Bring more empty homes back into use
  - 2.8.4. Deliver more social rent and affordable housing ourselves and with housing associations through joint ventures with partners
  - 2.8.5. Review the share of dwellings that are affordable rent (versus social rent) and consider changing the policy



## 2.C. Support our local authority maintained schools to drive up standards

### 2.9. Good education attainment results, exceeding National levels

2.9.1. Work hard to close the attainment gap across the district in our Local Authority maintained schools, as we believe that education is the key to future life-chances. We will focus on early years attainment especially in areas of deprivation. We will develop a clear plan in 2024 and start to implement it in 2025

2.9.2. Review the way the Council provides support to our Local Authority maintained schools in 2024, and start to implement improvements from 2025

### 2.10. Good and Outstanding schools (Ofsted rating)

2.10.1. Strive for all our Local Authority maintained schools to be Ofsted rated 'good' or 'outstanding', and supporting academies to do the same. We will support school staff and governors with additional preparation and checks prior to their Ofsted inspections. In 2024, we will develop a clear plan with agreed targets and start to implement it in 2025

2.11. Endeavor to retain all current Local Authority maintained schools within the Local Authority, rather than becoming academies or part of a multi academy trust



## Priority: 3. Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>3.A. West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030</b>				
Reduce CO2 emissions from Council assets & activities year on year including installation of solar panels, efficient lighting & heating and proper insulation; and converting fleet to EVs				
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update Environment Strategy to include improving biodiversity</li> <li>Agree environmental standard for all WBC buildings to meet</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grazeley solar farm switch on</li> </ol>	Implement updated Environment Strategy (ongoing to 2030)	
<b>3.B. Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment</b>				
Group purchasing schemes to enable residents to switch to greener energy, install solar panel and improve insulation				
Increase the number of on-street EV charge points by > 40 p.a. Ensure all suitable Council car parks have EV charge points				
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow EVs to be charged overnight in Council-owned car parks</li> </ol>			All Car Club vehicles to be electric by end 2027
<b>3.C. Help to make the whole area of West Berkshire Net Zero</b>				
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a new West Berkshire Sustainability Hub</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review kerbside recycling &amp; plan</li> <li>Start phase out of green bin charge</li> <li>Create an Active Travel Plan</li> <li>Use Council procurement processes and terms to drive lower / carbon neutral projects</li> <li>Work with our transport providers to convert their fleets to EVs</li> <li>Trial extended pedestrianisation</li> </ol>	Implement updated kerbside recycling plan. Continue phase out of green bin charge. Implementation of the Active Travel Plan. Continue to use Council procurement to drive down CO2. Our transport providers continue to convert fleets to EVs.		



## Tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency – details about goals, outcomes and actions

### 3.A. West Berkshire Council to achieve net zero by 2030 and improve biodiversity

- 3.1. West Berkshire Council achieves net zero by 2030, with clear targets and regular independent audits
  - 3.1.1. Install solar panels, proper insulation and efficient lighting and heating systems in council-owned buildings and other assets
  - 3.1.2. Grazeley Solar farm going live by the end of the 2024 /25 financial year
  - 3.1.3. Ensure the use of low/ zero carbon energy tariffs wherever possible
  - 3.1.4. Convert the Council 'light' vehicle fleet to Electric Vehicles
  - 3.1.5. Review and update the Council Environment Strategy and plans in 2024, so that we can confirm further initiatives with timescales and their expected impact. The new strategy will include increasing biodiversity
- 3.2. Over time, Council properties are enhanced to meet a newly agreed environmental standard
  - 3.2.1. Agree an environmental standard for Council properties to meet, and then develop a pipeline of assessments and upgrades to meet this new standard. The standard to be agreed in 2024, and then investigate funding options



### 3.B. Help our residents and businesses to save money and the environment

- 3.3. Residents have opportunities to switch to greener energy providers at lower cost, through group switching schemes
- 3.4. Residents have opportunities to install solar panels and other clean energy systems, through group purchasing schemes
- 3.5. Support the move to electric vehicles by expanding the number of Electric Vehicle charging points where needed, and allowing residents to use council car parks to charge their cars overnight
- 3.6. All Car Club vehicles to be electric by end 2027



### 3.C. Help to make the whole of West Berkshire net zero

- 3.7.** Residents and businesses contribute to achieve net-zero carbon emissions for the District
  - 3.7.1.** Use West Berkshire Council's purchasing power to encourage the reduction of carbon emissions in the wider community, updating all our procurement policies to reflect this. The future carbon impact will become a key aspect of tender assessments, with bidders being encouraged to aim for carbon neutrality, and required to report the actual levels achieved. Implement in 2024
- 3.8.** Increased level of waste reused, recycled or composted at home, from public spaces and through our recycling centres
  - 3.8.1.** Conduct a full review of kerbside recycling with the aim of increasing what can be collected. Providing grants and officer support to set up recycling clubs, for items not recycled at the kerbside
- 3.9.** The green bin charge to be phased out
- 3.10.** Increase education around recycling and its benefits, by working with schools and communities
- 3.11.** More opportunities for Active Travel in the district
  - 3.11.1.** Trial an extension to pedestrianisation hours in Newbury town centre
  - 3.11.2.** Create an Active Travel Plan in 2024 with clear vision and annual targets. This will subsequently form part of the updated Local Transport Plan
  - 3.11.3.** Focus on walking and cycling in transport plans
  - 3.11.4.** Create a plan with annual targets, to provide new / additional secure bike storage at key locations, e.g. bus stations and busy high density residential areas and flats
- 3.12.** Our transport providers are converting their fleets to Electric Vehicles
  - 3.12.1.** Work with our transport providers to convert their fleets to Electric Vehicles
- 3.13.** Create a West Berkshire Sustainability Hub, to help deliver communications between residents, communities, environmental groups and businesses on how everyone can do their part in helping West Berkshire on its path to a healthier future whilst also improving outcomes for the ecology
- 3.14.** Protecting and enhancing West Berkshire's natural beauty (e.g. our Area Of Outstanding Natural Beauty), working collaboratively with the Government and other local authorities and organisations
  - 3.14.1.** Fulfill our legal responsibilities to the watercourses in the Council's ownership
  - 3.14.2.** Using the power of the Council, wherever possible, to hold Thames Water to account over continued sewage discharges into our watercourses, blocked sewers and leaks in our district



## Priority: 4. A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>4.A. Proactively engage with, attract and support businesses in West Berkshire to grow and thrive</b>				
Annual Rural Business Forum & Annual Business Conference. Support our rural business clusters. Work with the Newbury BID. Attract new businesses to West Berkshire. Support start-ups.				
Support ongoing skills development by working with partners to deliver lifelong learning opportunities, apprenticeships, work clubs, mentoring and on the job training.				
		1. Pilot first landed Estate Plan	Deliver at least one new landed Estate Plan per year	
<b>4.B. Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium</b>				
	1. Complete Bond Riverside Regeneration Programme review 2. Work with the local sporting community to finalise plans for new Community Sports Stadium at Faraday Road	Regeneration of Bond Riverside. (Will continue beyond 2027)		
		Commission and build new Community Sports Stadium		1. Our ambition is to open a new Community Sports Stadium in Faraday Road in 2027
<b>4.C. Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport</b>				
Primary & secondary road network maintained in good state of repair. Expand flood prevention schemes.				
	1. Potholes strategy and plan 2. Public Transport Plan	Implement Potholes Plan and incorporate into new Highway Asset Management Plan		
		Implement Public Transport Plan and incorporate into new Local Transport Plan		
<b>4.D. Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities</b>				
Amend Local Plan to ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities				



## A Prosperous and Resilient West Berkshire – details about goals, outcomes and actions

### 4.A. Proactively engage with, attract and support businesses in West Berkshire to grow and thrive

- 4.1. Routes to employment are enhanced, including through lifelong learning, apprenticeships and further education
  - 4.1.1. Work with local education providers, the Local Enterprise Partnership and Chambers of Commerce to create work clubs and programmes to gain skills while in work
  - 4.1.2. Launch a mentoring programme for children with local businesses
- 4.2. Businesses continue to invest in West Berkshire to remain competitive through a mixed economy
  - 4.2.1. Attract businesses to move to West Berkshire, and encourage and support new businesses to start up
- 4.3. Continued support for rural-based jobs by working with our existing rural clusters and supporting the environment around centres of excellence
  - 4.3.1. Hold an annual Rural Business Forum, to enable better support for farmers, land owners and rural businesses
  - 4.3.2. Regular meetings and working with our existing rural clusters (viticulture, horse racing, technology, traditional farming, etc) and supporting the environment around centres of excellence
- 4.4. Landowners supported to develop (landed) Estate Plans that deliver clear community benefits in terms of employment and environmental and biodiversity gains, as well as affordable housing for their key workers
  - Pilot first Estate Plan in 2025, and aim for at least one per year from 2026 onwards
- 4.5. Better engage with local businesses and help make West Berkshire more attractive for businesses to create more jobs for residents
  - 4.5.1. Hold an annual Business Conference with local businesses
- 4.6. Local economic growth supported by infrastructure developments



### 4.B. Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium

- 4.7. The Bond Riverside regeneration programme is progressed
  - 4.7.1. Bond Riverside regeneration programme review completed by early 2024
  - 4.7.2. Work with local businesses, leaseholders, developers and Newbury Town Council, to start the regeneration of Bond Riverside in 2025 and make it an attractive place for businesses and their employees



#### **4.C. Continue to invest in key infrastructure and public transport**

- 4.9.** Our primary, secondary and local road networks are maintained in a good state of repair
  - 4.9.1.** Potholes strategy and plan ready in 2024. This will then be incorporated into the updated Highway Asset Management Plan in 2025
- 4.10.** Increase resilience to climate change by expanding flood prevention and minimising impacts of droughts
- 4.11.** Better travel options available to our residents, including in rural areas
  - 4.11.1.** Work with transport providers and local businesses to develop a Public Transport Plan in 2024, which will investigate more evening bus services. This will feed into the updated Local Transport Plan in 2025

#### **4.D. Ensure new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities**

- 4.12.** Local plan revised to make sure that major new housing developments come with suitable infrastructure and enhanced amenities to properly support them



## Priority: 5. Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – goals and key milestones/initiatives

2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<b>5.A. Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-establish Community Forums</li> <li>2. Town Councils to chair Masterplan steering groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with local communities on plan to fund local youth workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement plan on local youth worker provision</li> </ul>		
<b>5.B. Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives</b>				
Continue Members' Bids to enable councillors to work with their ward communities to make improvements.				
Work with partners to maintain a safe District and improve Health and Wellbeing. Increase visits to Council leisure and cultural facilities.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Open new Newbury Lido</li> <li>2. Return football to Faraday Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Update Playing Pitch Strategy</li> <li>2. Plan renewal and reprovision of Leisure Facilities</li> <li>3. Plan to reduce social isolation, especially in rural areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start implementing the playing pitch strategy</li> <li>Begin phased update of our leisure facilities</li> <li>Deliver plan to reduce social isolation</li> </ul>		
<b>5.C. Work with the local communities and partners to enhance our main towns and large villages</b>				
Implement Masterplans in partnership with local communities and funder organisations. 20mph zones where communities want them.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Re-establish Kennet &amp; Avon Canal Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Targeted packages of lower cost parking</li> <li>2. System to link public transport and local attraction tickets</li> <li>3. Commission Lambourn Masterplan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commission Theale Masterplan</li> </ul>		
<b>5.D. Help our smaller villages to remain vibrant long term</b>				
Help ensure villages remain vibrant by supporting local communities with their local plans				
Support village halls. Increase the number of EV charge points in our villages				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Plan a refreshed Home to School Transport offer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver refreshed Home to School Transport offer</li> </ul>			



## Thriving Communities with a Strong Local Voice – details about goals, outcomes and actions

### 5.A. Encourage and support our local communities to take the lead in driving what is important to them

- 5.1. Closer and more effective working with our communities and partner organisations (including Town and Parish Councils and the private sector commissioned service providers) so residents achieve the outcomes that they need
  - 5.1.1. Re-establish community forums to pro-actively invite residents' input and feedback at in-person meetings, committing to report back on our resulting action plan within four weeks of each meeting
  - 5.1.2. Town Councils will be offered the chair of the steering group that determines the priorities for implementation within their Town Centre Masterplans
  - 5.1.3. Continue to support local communities in developing their own Neighbourhood Development Plans
  - 5.1.4. Work with Town and Parish councils to fund youth workers in their areas.
- 5.2. Enable the seldom heard, including young people, to have a voice in local issues, including by involving the new Youth Council and holding a Community Forum for Young People



### 5.B. Help our residents lead fulfilled and active lives

- 5.3. Improved health and wellbeing of our residents, including those with long-term conditions, through our own actions and working with partner organisations
- 5.4. West Berkshire continues to be a safe place, through our own actions and working with partner organisations
  - 5.4.1. Deliver initiatives with partner organisations to prevent and reduce crime
  - 5.4.2. Enable 20 mph limits for residential streets where residents want it
- 5.5. Increased number of visits to Council-owned culture, arts and heritage facilities
- 5.6. More people enabled to be physically active supported by the sports and leisure opportunities available in the District
  - 5.6.1. Begin a programme of renewal and re-provision of our Council-owned leisure facilities. Plan with annual objectives in 2024
  - 5.6.2. Open the refurbished Newbury Lido and look to expand opening times even further
  - 5.6.3. Re-open the grass football pitch at Faraday Road in 2023
  - 5.6.4. Refresh the playing pitch strategy by early 2024

- 5.7. Reduced social isolation, especially in rural areas and for young people
  - 5.7.1. Plan a programme to tackle social isolation (in 2024)
  - 5.7.2. Start implementation in 2025
- 5.8. Valued improvements delivered by residents working with Members by continuing the successful Members Bid Programme
  - 5.8.1. Continue the successful Members Bids programme, to enable Members to work with residents and community groups in their wards, to deliver improvements they value

### 5.C. Work with partners and the local communities to enhance our main towns and large villages

- 5.9. Town and village centres prioritise enhancements outlined in their respective Masterplans
  - 5.9.1. Work with the town councils, the local communities and stakeholders in Hungerford, Newbury and Thatcham to first prioritise the potential enhancements outlined in their respective Masterplans, and then begin implementation in 2024
  - 5.9.2. Commission Masterplans for Lambourn in 2025 and Theale in 2026
- 5.10. Kennet & Avon Canal maintained and enhanced as an important asset of the district
  - 5.10.1. We recognise the canal as an important part of West Berkshire life and will resurrect the Kennet & Avon Canal partnership (in 2024) to ensure we can effectively maintain and enhance this wonderful asset
- 5.11. Our town centres remain vibrant and accessible, by working with our partner organisations
  - 5.11.1. Introducing a local ticketing systems (in 2025) that links to discounted bus / train travel
  - 5.11.2. Create a fund starting (in 2025) to offer a package of targeted lower cost / free parking, in consultation with town & parish councils

### 5.D. Help our villages to remain vibrant long term

- 5.12. Villages remain vibrant in the long term by working with local communities, as they develop their local plans
  - 5.12.1. As our villages develop their local plans, make sure they are clear what their village needs, in the medium and long term, so that local amenities like schools, shops, pubs and local businesses can be sustained, and that their plans reflect these needs
  - 5.12.2. Plan a refreshed offer for Home to School Transport in 2024, and begin to implement in 2025
  - 5.12.3. Support ongoing viability of local village halls with grants for solar panels and better digital connectivity, starting in 2024
  - 5.12.4. Increase the number of Electric Vehicle charge points in our villages



# Key Facts About West Berkshire



In 2019 West Berkshire had an estimated population of

**161,400**

which is an increase of 4.9%, from around 153,800 in 2011. This is lower than the overall increase for the South East (7.5%) and England (6.6%).



The total number of households (in 2022) is estimated as

**66,700**

an increase of 7% since 2011. It is expected that households will become smaller, with one person households increasing by an estimated 21.9% by 2043.



In 2020, for every resident aged 16-64, there were on average

**1.1 jobs**

jobs in West Berkshire. This is higher than the South East and Great Britain.



**Nearly three quarters**

of West Berkshire is classified as part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



In 2021,

**56%**

of our households were not deprived in any of the four dimensions (Employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding) compared to 48.3% average for England.



Highly qualified workforce, **71.5%**

of 16 – 64 year olds living in the area qualified at level NVQ3 and above or general education equivalent. Better than South East (63.8%) and Great Britain (61.5%) (Dec 2021).



**85.2%**

of 16 to 64 year olds are economically active (people that are not retired, a student, a carer or unemployed). This is higher than the South East and Great Britain averages (June 2022).



**20.85%**

the rate of violent crime per 1,000 population for 2021/22, is below that for Thames Valley overall (27.74).



Access to Heathrow Airport in less than **60 minutes**

and good connectivity North to South (A34) and East to West (M4).

Healthy life expectancy at birth at 70.1 years for females and 69.4 for males are



**higher**

than the England average (2018-20).



Similarly, life expectancy at birth, at 84.4 for females and 80.2 for males is higher than the national average (2018-20).



West Berkshire has

**1,900 listed buildings, 90 scheduled monuments, 53 conservation areas, 39 locally listed heritage assets, 14 registered parks and gardens and 1 registered battlefield** – all these heritage assets contribute to the sense of place of West Berkshire

As of 2021, West Berkshire is the ninth **least densely**

populated of the South East's 64 local authority areas, with around two people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

West Berkshire has **27.7 miles** of motorway, **78.5 miles** of A roads and **782.4 miles** of minor roads



**1,792**

older people and vulnerable adults accessing long term support (Sep 2022)



A vibrant economy with

**8,345 businesses,**

an increase of **6.9%** since 2012.



**1251**

Children in Need (including those subject to a CP or in LA Care) were supported, which is slightly above the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).

West Berkshire covers an area of

**272 square miles**

which is over half of the geographical area of the county of Berkshire.

**166**

Children in Care were receiving services, which is below the England average (as a rate per 10,000 children) (Mar 2022).



West Berkshire has

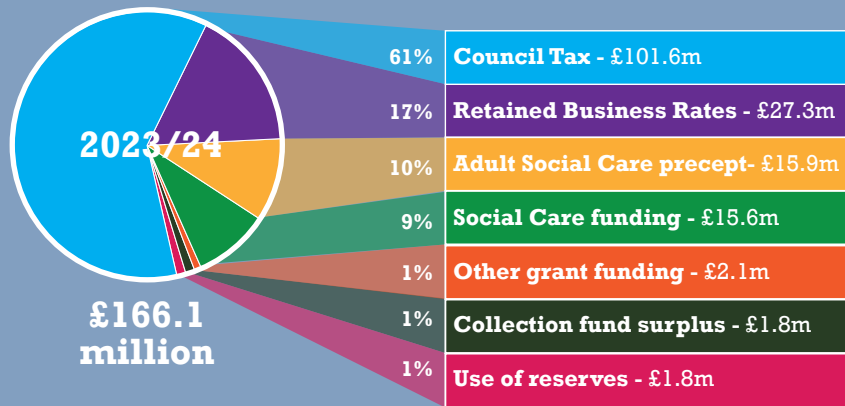
**51 Sites**

of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which are of national importance for animal and plant life.

# Where the Council's Money Comes From and How it is Spent

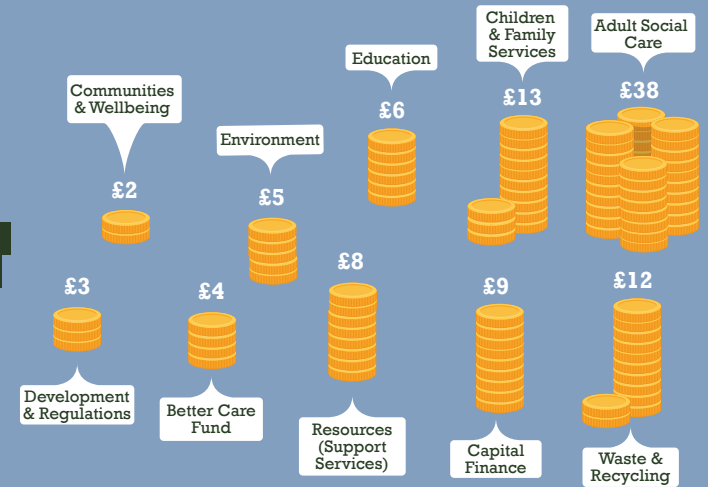
## Our sources of funding, and our expenditure as a council

### Where does our funding come from?



### How the money is spent

In 2023-24 our budget for all the services we provide is £166.1m. For every £100 we receive this is how it is spent.



# Council Strategy Delivery Plan

Progress in delivering the priorities, goals and outcomes included in the Council Strategy will be measured and reported against performance measures and milestones which are detailed in the Council Strategy Delivery Plan.

As progress is made, the Delivery Plan will be updated annually in order to ensure it remains relevant to the changing economic, environmental and social context.

The first version of the Delivery Plan is available from the following link or by scanning the following QR code:



[www.westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance](http://www.westberks.gov.uk/strategy-performance)

Annual updates of the Delivery Plan will be accessible from the same link.





[www.westberks.gov.uk](http://www.westberks.gov.uk)

WBC/SG/CB/0923