



Refreshed 2023

West Berkshire Vision | 2036



A West Berkshire  
where everybody  
has what they  
need to fulfil  
their potential



A West Berkshire  
with a housing  
mix with  
something  
for everyone



## WEST BERKSHIRE

A West Berkshire  
with beautiful,  
historic and diverse  
landscapes and  
a strong  
cultural  
offering



A West Berkshire  
that welcomes  
business,  
enterprise and  
industry into  
a productive,  
growing and  
dynamic  
local  
economy



# 2036

A West Berkshire  
where the health  
and wellbeing of  
residents of all  
ages and  
backgrounds  
is good



# Foreword

When we came together as partners to begin to develop the West Berkshire 2036 Vision back in 2017, we used our understanding of our community's needs as well as a wide range of data to identify the challenges and opportunities the district was likely to face over the next two decades. We also committed to refreshing the Vision at regular intervals in response to changes to local need and this revised version is the first such refresh since the publication of the original document.

It is fair to say that the events of the years since the adoption of the Vision have not been what we expected, with a global pandemic, increases to the cost of living and a series of international humanitarian crises fundamentally shifting many aspects of daily life.



Our commitment to collaborative working to improve outcomes for local people not only remains, but has been strengthened by our experiences in recent years. Our communities have come together in a way we never would have expected; whether it be by supporting those who were unable to leave their homes during lockdown or, more recently, welcoming displaced people into local homes. It is this joint working which will ensure that our shared ambition for the district is delivered.

We look forward to continuing to work together to overcome the challenges ahead and to make West Berkshire an even better place to live, work and learn.



**Councillor Graham Bridgman**  
Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board

West Berkshire should be a place where everyone is given the chance to thrive



# Introduction

The West Berkshire 2036 Vision, which was first published in 2017, contained a series of commitments that the partners of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board subscribed to which we felt would facilitate our ambition of making West Berkshire a better place for local people. These commitments were to deliver:

- A West Berkshire where everybody has what they need to fulfil their potential
- A West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone
- A West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy
- A West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good
- A West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering

In spite of the challenges emerging since the original Vision was published, West Berkshire continues to offer the economic advantages of the South East and the excellent lifestyle opportunities of the South West. It remains a great place to live, with residents benefiting from good educational, health and employment opportunities and outcomes. It is also well-connected, has world-class digital infrastructure, as a result of significant targeted investment over the past decade.

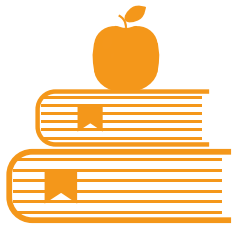
Back in 2017, we reflected in our evidence base that while these advantages are enjoyed by many local people, there are clear disparities within the district. As a result, the difference in wealth, health, educational outcomes and employment prospects can vary, with some parts of West Berkshire falling behind others.

Unfortunately, the events of the past few years have exacerbated many of these issues as the economic and long term health impacts become clearer.

Good progress has been made in some areas, with additional investment being made into projects to support a successful recovery from the pandemic including the Greenham Trust/West Berkshire Council Surviving to Thriving Fund and enhanced community engagement work. However, more will need to be done to restore what has been lost. For this reason, we have reviewed all of the commitments made in the original Vision and considered whether they are still appropriate in our new context. Where they are, we have renewed our aspiration and will continue to work together to meet them. Where they are not, we have developed new, evidence-based commitments which will enable us to better face the challenges ahead.

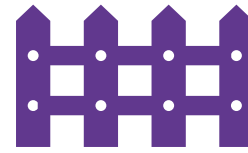
Our shared goal of inclusive growth: where everyone sees the advantages of our economic success in every aspect of their lives; whether it is in their health outcomes, their educational opportunities, their job prospects or their quality of life; remains the key tenet of this Vision. Together as partners we recommit to facilitate the change that West Berkshire needs to grow, both economically and socially, at a rate that benefits all of its residents, regardless of age, socio-economic status, health, gender or race.

# Where are we now



**95%**  
of schools **good**  
or **outstanding**

In **bottom half** of Local Authorities for barriers to housing and services



Newbury is the **'top tech'** town



Part of Thames Valley **'Turbo Economy'**



Less than **an hour's** drive from Heathrow



**4** working age people per retired person

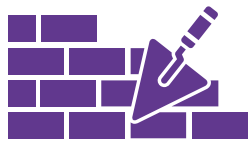


**51.5%**  
educated to degree level



**Best** residential care in England

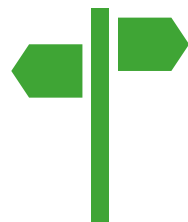
**74%** Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



**12,300** homes built 2000-2022



One of the best places to be a **woman**



Strategic **crossroads** of Southern England

Population of **161,400**



One of the **happiest** places



**Best** rural broadband



**Life expectancy**  
for women **84** for men **80**



Average house price **£396,372**



A West Berkshire  
where everybody has  
what they need to  
fulfil their potential

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The first theme of the original Vision was the commitment to ‘A West Berkshire where everybody has what they need to fulfil their potential’.

West Berkshire continues to benefit from the low levels of unemployment and very well-qualified workforce it did when the original Vision was published. The performance of local schools remains strong, with almost all schools being found to be good or better by Ofsted; levels of young people not in education, employment or training are lower than the national average and over half of residents have a qualification at degree level or higher. It also remains a safe place to live, with crime rates below the national average and very favourable local conditions in the areas proven to drive positive wellbeing. The legacy of the pandemic and the international humanitarian crises we have experienced have also strengthened our community in many ways, and evidence suggests that many feel closer to their local area and more inclined to volunteer their time to help others.

As with all areas and as was the case in 2017, however, there is need for improvement to ensure that all residents, regardless of their background, are given the same educational, technological and employment opportunities as well as the right to feel safe and nurtured in their communities. It is this that will drive growth and deliver the outcomes our communities need.

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# Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

The below considers each of the individual commitments in the original vision and suggests where changes may be made if necessary.

## Commitment

West Berkshire's communities will decide together what services they see as a priority and will, where they wish to, participate in how they are delivered.

## Commentary

Links within the community and between partners have been strengthened by our experiences during the pandemic. This has given us a broader foundation on which to build joint working arrangements.

## Review of commitment

We will co-design local services, using qualitative and quantitative data to ensure that what we deliver meets local need.



## Commitment

We will monitor technological change and give the district's young people the skills and equipment they need to compete in our changing world.

## Commentary

The market for highly skilled tech jobs has only gained momentum, with flexible working rising in prominence.

The opening of the University Centre at Newbury College has increased our capacity to provide teaching within the district and to expand our skills base.

## Review of commitment

We continue to provide the district's young people with the skills and equipment they need here in West Berkshire to compete in our changing world

## Commitment

We will seek to improve attainment in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) subjects and will explore the use of different educational models, including T Levels and apprenticeships, to meet demand.

## Commentary

The impact of the pandemic on educational attainment has been evident globally. In West Berkshire, significant investment has been applied to mitigate this however it is felt that this aspiration should remain unchanged.

## Review of commitment

We will seek to improve attainment in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) subjects and will explore the use of different educational models, including T Levels and apprenticeships, to meet demand.





### Commitment

We will seek to become a national exemplar with the best opportunities for social mobility of any local authority area.

### Commentary

We have expanded our working with community organisations to increase our reach to groups of residents that need support to access available opportunities.

### Review of commitment

We will seek to become a national exemplar with the best opportunities for social mobility of any local authority area.

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### Commitment

We will renew the focus on equality of opportunity and ensure that those who want to are given the chance to enter, or re-enter, the workplace.

### Commentary

As partners we are committed to ensuring that one's background or circumstances should not determine their prospects.



The work of our Skills and Enterprise Partnership and with our Diverse Ethnic Communities Support Agency, Educafe, has seen progress but it is important to ensure this aspiration remains.

### Review of commitment

We will champion equality of opportunity and ensure that those who want to are given the chance to enter, or re-enter, the workplace.

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### Commitment

We will help to facilitate an environment in which the older generation are encouraged to stay in the work place longer, allowing them contribute to the local economy and their local communities supported and enabled through the use of the best technology.

### Commentary

The link between remaining in the workplace and wellbeing is clear. With evidence suggesting there is a declining workforce supply and that skills are being lost from the workplace, we must renew our commitment to ensuring those who wish to remain in employment can do so.

### Review of commitment

We will facilitate an environment in which the older generation are encouraged to stay in the work place longer and given scope to build on their skills, allowing them to contribute to the local economy, supported and enabled through the use of the best technology.



### Commitment

We will educate residents as to how they can spot, prevent and discourage crimes as well as taking all necessary action when they do occur. We will put further measures into place to protect communities, should a threat arise, and ensure that residents are aware of potential threats and how to act accordingly.

### Commentary

Crime prevention activities are provided by organisations that make up the Building Communities Together Partnership as part of their statutory duties.

### New commitment

West Berkshire is a low crime area and crime prevention is a business as usual activity therefore whilst it remains a priority, it is not necessary to retain this as an aspiration.

### Commitment

We will work together to confront the root cause of drug and alcohol abuse specific local concerns to promote better outcomes for those affected.

### Commentary

Substance abuse remains a concern, particularly among some demographics. We built a Combating Drugs Partnership and we are coordinating, on a wider geographical area with Reading and Wokingham, needs assessments and actions to address any concerns in this area. It is therefore proposed that this commitment is retained.

### Review of commitment

We will work together to confront the root cause of drug and alcohol abuse specific local concerns to promote better outcomes for those affected.



### Commitment

We will ensure that all residents are given the opportunity to participate in their communities and can access the services they need.

### Commentary

Links within the community have been strengthened since the publication of the original Vision and significant progress has been made on social prescribing, dementia friendly and community mapping initiatives, to name a few. This combined with the popularity of this work suggests this commitment should remain unchanged.

### Review of commitment

We will ensure that all residents are given the opportunity to participate in their communities and can access the services they need.

These renewed commitments will ensure that we as partners can deliver a West Berkshire where everybody has what they need to fulfil their potential





## A West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone

The second of our aspirations related to the availability of suitable housing within the district to ensure we have a supply that provides for the needs of all. We know that West Berkshire is a desirable place to live, which is why housing delivery has broadly matched household growth in recent years. It is clear, however, that further housing of a variety of types and tenures, will need to be made available to ensure we can keep up with demand in the years to come and that those on lower incomes are not prevented from living within the district.

There are, however, significant constraints preventing development relating to our natural environment and major employment sites in the East of the district. As such, planning where to place new housing so that we can fulfil our aspiration will be a challenge, and one we must face with creativity and honesty.

To deliver our aspiration for the future, partners must work together to ensure that the homes built in West Berkshire, as well as the accompanying infrastructure, are the ones its residents want and can afford.

# Our opportunities, our challenges and our aspirations

The below considers each of the individual commitments in the original vision and suggests where changes may be made if necessary.

## Commitment

We will explore, and subsequently deliver, the types of homes and tenures required to address skills shortages as well as to encourage younger residents to remain in West Berkshire.

## Commentary

The West Berkshire Council Housing Strategy, as well as work done as part of the Local Plan Review and the Census 2021, have provided new insight into the needs of our population, which we will use to decide which types of homes to deliver.

## Review of commitment

We will deliver the types of homes and tenures required to address skills shortages as well as to encourage younger residents to remain in West Berkshire.

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## Commitment

We will work together to establish delivery vehicles for appropriate housing for residents on lower incomes.

## Commentary

Overcoming the constraints on development that remain in the district will require creativity and partnership working, so this aspiration retains its relevance.



## Review of commitment

We will work together to establish delivery vehicles for appropriate housing for residents on lower incomes.

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## Commitment

We will consider where existing buildings can be refurbished to create modern homes and business units.

## Commentary

With the declaration of the climate emergency and the challenges that exist in identifying sites for new development, maximising the use of existing buildings remains important.

## Review of commitment

We will refurbish out of use buildings to create modern homes and business units.

## Commitment

We will monitor and review population profile and household size changes and ensure planning and delivery of housing responds to shifts in demand and need.

## Commentary

A significant amount of analysis has been undertaken since the publication of the original Vision. We will respond to these insights and use them to plan housing delivery.

## Review of commitment

We will ensure planning and delivery of housing responds to shifts in demand and need.

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## Commitment

We will widen choice and opportunity to access housing that supports continued independence, such as cohousing or home sharing.

## Commentary

Choice Based Lettings went live in West Berkshire in 2020 which has facilitated positive change. We will continue to work towards this aspiration in the interests of those who require support to live independently.



### Review of commitment

We will widen choice and opportunity to access housing that supports continued independence, such as cohousing or home sharing

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### Commitment

We will look to achieve a safe rebalancing of resources from in-hospital to community based care, carrying out adaptations where necessary, and will encourage innovative approaches to meeting the housing and support needs of older people.

### Commentary

The Process for hospital discharges is changing in the light of NHS funding. West Berkshire Council's Housing team works closely with Adult Social Care teams to carry out the necessary adaptations where needed for people leaving hospital. This aspiration remains relevant in light of the continuing need to support transfers of care between hospital and home.

### Review of commitment

We will look to achieve a safe rebalancing of resources from in-hospital to community based care, carrying out adaptations where necessary, and will encourage innovative approaches to meeting the housing and support needs of older people.

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### Commitment

We will continue to work together to alleviate rough sleeping as soon as possible and to eliminate it within timeframes laid out nationally.

### Commentary

As of the start of 2022/23 we have achieved zero rough sleeping in the district ahead of the national timeframe to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end rough sleeping by 2027.

### Review of commitment

We will ensure that the district's record of preventing rough sleeping is retained.

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### Commitment

We will understand what facilities new neighbourhoods require to be truly 'age friendly' whilst supporting our naturally occurring retirement communities. We will also prioritise access to services essential to the health, wellbeing, education and employment for all residents.



### Commentary

This is being progressed through the evolving health inequalities taskforce action plan, linking access to services including housing, health, wellbeing, education and employment. It remains relevant as an aspiration as we must ensure housing supply meets the needs of our ageing population.

### New commitment

We will understand what facilities new neighbourhoods require to be truly 'age friendly' whilst supporting our naturally occurring retirement communities. We will also prioritise access to services essential to the health, wellbeing, education and employment for all residents.

These renewed commitments will ensure that we as partners can deliver a West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone.



A West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy

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The original Vision spoke repeatedly about the strength of West Berkshire's local economy and the strong platform it provided for the future success of the district.

Back in 2017, we said that the district was home to a high number of SMEs, excellent digital infrastructure, a skilled and creative work force, low unemployment and many locational advantages. This remains the case in spite of the challenges associated with the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. West Berkshire must continue to be competitive and to maximise our assets. In doing so, however, we should also appreciate that the number of jobs in the area outstrips the working population and seek to mitigate this, while recognising the importance of in-commuting. In short, we must take advantage of the opportunities that come our way and focus on delivering infrastructure and economic development initiatives in a sustainable way that both meet the demands of modern life and reflect our shared values and heritage.

By ensuring we commit to the recovery and development of West Berkshire's local economy, we will help to create lively neighbourhoods and a strong and diverse sustainable economic base with the required employment land and flexible office space to meet demand. This in turn will attract investment in cultural and recreational attractions, skills, training and sustainable infrastructure which allows residents to remain economically active and, by extension, to enjoy better health and wellbeing outcomes.

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# Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

The below considers each of the individual commitments in the original vision and suggests where changes may be made if necessary.

## Commitment

We will attract funding for transport links and harness technological advances to ensure that West Berkshire is one of the top destinations of choice for international companies setting up in the UK.

## Commentary

Supported improvements in sustainable transport, e.g. station redevelopments, railway electrification, walking and cycling infrastructure, electric cycles and cargo-bikes, reduced-carbon staff travel and car-sharing etc. This area is more relevant than ever and closely linked to WBC's carbon-zero ambitions and Environment Strategy. The emphasis will be on continuing to attract new sustainable businesses and ensuring they can network efficiently using low- and carbon free-technologies.

## Review of commitment

We will attract funding for transport links and harness technological advances to ensure that West Berkshire is one of the top destinations of choice for international companies setting up in the UK.



## Commitment

We will focus on high quality, sustainable builds in which companies are proud to do business.

## Commentary

This aspiration is facilitated by policies within the new Local Plan so is no longer needed.

## Review of commitment

None

## Commitment

We will make the best possible use of technology while monitoring the potential impact on the workforce.

## Commentary

No evidence has emerged to suggest that automation is creating a problem for the workforce in West Berkshire.

## New commitment

None

## Commitment

We will actively engage with and support STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) industries in locating premises, employees and partnerships.

## Commentary

STEAM industries remain a vital, and growing, part of our local economy and continuing to strengthen relationships with key employers, including the ones in the 'green' economy, will attract inward investment to the district.

## New commitment

We will actively engage with and support STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) industries in locating premises, employees and partnerships.

### **Commitment**

We will consider our role in facilitating the creativity potential enable by new funding options (crowdfunding / other alternative funding streams) so that those with ideas can work within an environment that enables them to succeed.

### **Commentary**

Our successful contribution in this area, through initiatives such as the distributing the Additional Restrictions Grant Challenge Fund or supporting the Berkshire Film Office, evidence the need to focus on this area.

### **Review of commitment**

We will consider our role in facilitating the creativity potential enable by new funding options (crowdfunding / other alternative funding streams) so that those with ideas can work within an environment that enables them to succeed.

### **Commitment**

We will invest in infrastructure that will make it the best-connected, as well as one of the most desirable, business locations in the South East.

### **Commentary**

Completion of the West Berkshire Superfast Broadband project and ongoing work to increase full fibre, 5G and broadband coverage highlight

that this remains an important aspiration as remaining competitive is crucial to our economic success.

### **Review of commitment**

We will continue to invest in infrastructure that will make it the best-connected, as well as one of the most desirable, business locations in the South East.

### **Commitment**

We will invest in training and will consider developing low cost housing available for social rent to enable employees to locate themselves within West Berkshire.

### **Commentary**

We facilitated the Kickstart programme that provided 18-24 year olds with 6 month work placements and advised businesses to help them apply to the scheme to create more jobs. We have also facilitated 'skill swaps' for young people at the Job Centre to support employability.

Low cost housing available for social rent is already established with our Registered Providers who develop in the district to encourage employees to locate themselves within the West Berkshire. Through our Local Plan, we will deliver the housing mix needed to meet the needs of our population.

### **Review of commitment**

We will work with registered providers to ensure sufficient availability of low cost housing for social rent to enable employees to locate themselves within West Berkshire.

### **Commitment**

We will support West Berkshire's businesses at every stage, from start-up advice, to location sourcing to ongoing engagement.

### **Commentary**

The need to continue to support businesses to establish themselves in West Berkshire remains relevant to our economic success and investment in the Economic Development team as well as partnership working will facilitate this.

### **Review of commitment**

We will support West Berkshire's businesses at every stage, from start-up advice, to location sourcing to ongoing engagement.





### Commitment

We will do all we can to boost the size of the workforce, encouraging people from all demographics to remain economically active and attracting those with the skillsets we need to fill vacancies. We will also concentrate on retaining our talent, so that people who were born in West Berkshire and study elsewhere will aspire to return to live and work here.

### Commentary

The Health and Wellbeing Board Skills & Enterprise Partnership works with the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Economic Partnership and the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to maximise employer engagement to identify and address skills needs across the district. West Berkshire Council is also developing a Partnership Agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions which will set out our joint offer leading to increased opportunities and support for unemployed West Berkshire residents to move into sustained jobs.

### Review of commitment

We will do all we can to boost the size of the workforce, encouraging people from all demographics to remain economically active and attracting those with the skillsets we need to fill vacancies. We will also concentrate on retaining our talent, so that people who were born in West Berkshire and study elsewhere will aspire to return to live and work here.

### Commitment

We will be pro-active and explore every single opportunity to expand the district's business offering.

### Commentary

This remains relevant and additional resourcing in West Berkshire Council's Economic Development team will further enable this.

### Review of commitment

We will be pro-active and explore every single opportunity to expand the district's business offering.



### Commitment

We will start a meaningful conversation about how we can develop, the district, in a sensitive, landscape-led way to meet demand.

### Commentary

The Local Plan review has achieved this.

### New commitment

This is no longer required as engagement through the development of the Local Plan has facilitated this aspiration.

### Commitment

We will work together to enable residents to take advantage of technological innovation in car use, prioritising the installation of the requisite charging points.

### Commentary

There is now an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy for the district which plans for the necessary supply charging points.

### Review of commitment

We will continue to ensure there is strong (Ultra Low Emission Vehicle) ULEV charging infrastructure in the district to meet demand.





### **Commitment**

We will monitor the transport modal shift away from single use car journeys and, where necessary, will influence changes that promote environmental sustainability.

### **Commentary**

The district's Environment Strategy was adopted in 2020 and will see significant strides in terms of mitigating climate change.

### **Review of commitment**

We will support the work towards carbon neutrality for the district by 2030, through the Local Plan Review and the Local Transport Plan so that policies support sustainability.

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### **Commitment**

We will work together to ensure that supporting infrastructure around our train stations allows all of our residents and businesses to access new markets so that they compete internationally

### **Commentary**

This remains important. In recent years, we have successfully bid for funding for projects from government with the support of local transport bodies and the Berkshire Local Economic Partnership. This has led to developments at stations such as Newbury and Theale.

### **Review of commitment**

We will continue to facilitate joined up travel links, particularly in areas where significant strategic development is being undertaken.

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### **Commitment**

We will forge closer links with neighbouring areas where this stimulates growth in the district.

### **Commentary**

Partnership working with neighbouring authorities will continue to be important as we seek to attract inward investment and government funding to the district.

### **Review of commitment**

We will continue to work with neighbouring areas where this stimulates growth in the district.

### **Commitment**

We will put the pedestrian and the cyclist at the heart of spatial planning, creating modern walkable and cycleable communities.

### **Commentary**

Our LCWIP has provided the policy and direction for investment in cycling and walking infrastructure. Policy support is provided so that Active Travel is prominent in the Local Plan Review and the Local Transport Plan revision.

### **Review of commitment**

We will continue to plan and invest in active travel options across the district.

These renewed commitments will ensure that we as partners can deliver a West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy



A West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good

In spite of the challenges of recent years, West Berkshire remains generally a healthy, happy place to live. The district's life expectancy, at 81.4 years for men and 85.2 years for women, is above both the regional and national averages. The difference between healthy and overall life expectancy is also notably lower than across the South East and England. These good outcomes should be expected for all residents in a prosperous area such as West Berkshire.

However, we know that many people are not living as long as the wealthiest in society and spend longer in ill-health. This needs to change, and we have identified a number of issues and trends which will help address this inequality and ensure that all of our people are not merely living longer, but are living well for longer. The pandemic has exacerbated some of these issues and we must continue to review evidence of the longer term impacts of Covid-19 and respond accordingly.

# Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

The below considers each of the individual commitments in the original vision and suggests where changes may be made if necessary.

## **Commitment**

We will empower individuals and communities to take greater responsibility for their health and provide support for those who need it at all stages of life.

## **Commentary**

Initiatives such as the 'Let's Get Active Fund' support community organisations to run their own physical activity projects. Further initiatives are needed to support individuals and communities.

## **Review of commitment**

We will empower individuals and communities to take greater responsibility for their health and provide support for those who need it at all stages of life.

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## **Commitment**

We will work with children, families, schools and nurseries to support every child to have the best start in life so they become healthy, resilient adults.

## **Commentary**

'Cooking and nutrition' programmes at Family Hubs, living well workshops for year 3 classes, breastfeeding support, parental emotional regulation courses are examples of work

supporting young people, families, nurseries and schools regarding the importance of healthy lifestyle choices from an early age.

## **Review of commitment**

We will work with children, families, schools and nurseries to support every child to have the best start in life so they become healthy, resilient adults.

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## **Commitment**

We will create a stigma-free West Berkshire where people have the tools they need to manage their mental wellbeing, while ensuring high quality services are there to help those who need more support.

## **Commentary**

A range of organisations have signed up to the Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health to support the prevention of mental health problems and promoting good mental health. Other work in this area include: signposting information on local organisations that support mental health, physical health, counselling and bereavement and support for young people; progressing a needs assessment; New Wellbeing Bags which can be borrowed from our libraries; mental health first aid training. Greenham Trust and West Berkshire Council created a Surviving

to Thriving Fund for organisations to help to mitigate the impacts of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing.

## **Review of commitment**

We will maintain the focus on creating a stigma-free West Berkshire where people have the tools they need to manage their mental wellbeing, while ensuring high quality services are there to help those who need more support.

## **Commentary**

We adopted a zero tolerance to suicide in 2017 and since then the sub group The West Berkshire Suicide Prevention Action Group has been steadfast and focussed on providing good quality information, advice and training to workers, volunteers, small business owners and voluntary sector organisations providing the necessary tools to assist everyone to notice signs and behavioural changes in people which could lead to suicidal thoughts. The training teaches people how best to respond and support individuals.

## **Review of commitment**

To continue work to uphold a zero tolerance to suicide by supporting the West Berkshire Suicide Prevention Action Group and to adopt policies and procedures within the authorities' control that supports the zero tolerance policy.

### **Commitment**

We will invest in the wellbeing of our elderly residents ensuring that individuals, carers and families take an active role in their health and wellbeing with greater choice and control over their care.

### **Commentary**

Carers Survey results showed carers' general satisfaction and being listened to by service providers. Safeguarding data shows high levels of involvement by service users in the decision-making process. Demand levels have been high and is managed through additional investment.

### **New commitment**

We will continue to invest in the wellbeing of our elderly residents ensuring that individuals, carers and families take an active role in their health and wellbeing with greater choice and control over their care.

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### **Commitment**

We will reduce health inequalities where we can by delivering interventions for everybody, but focussing on those who need more help.

### **Commentary**

To broaden the reach of assessment and signposting work we have implemented 'Healthy Living kiosks' in Hungerford, Thatcham and Newbury libraries. The reduction of inequalities remains important, particularly as the pandemic has exacerbated some of them.

### **New commitment**

We will target the reduction of health inequalities where we can by delivering interventions for everybody, but focussing on those who need more help.

### **Commitment**

We will work with our communities as equal partners to make the most of existing strengths and facilities to grow social networks and inclusion.

### **Commentary**

Relationships between partners and the local community have been enhanced as a result of greater engagement during the pandemic. Work to retain this has begun through the Council's Communications and Engagement Strategy, including a framework for community co-production, to assist with the delivery of this aspiration.

### **Review of commitment**

We will work in partnership with our local communities to make the most of existing strengths, support social networks, empower residents and shape inclusive communities.

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### **Commitment**

We will put health at the heart of all we do and promote healthy schools, towns and workplaces to enable people to make healthy choices.

### **Commentary**

Health impacts are considered in all policy making decisions and new policies within the Local Plan also consider how development can support wellbeing e.g. through active travel and landscaping.

### **Review of commitment**

We will ensure that health impacts are considered when developing new policies, initiatives and infrastructure.

### **Commitment**

We will educate young people and support them and their families where they feel vulnerable, both on and offline.

### **Commentary**

Through schools, we ensure young people are taught about the importance of online safety and protecting themselves online.

### **Review of commitment**

We will educate young people and support them and their families where they feel vulnerable, both on and offline.

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### **Commitment**

We will work with all partners to raise awareness of the importance of antibiotic resistance.

### **Commentary**

The Council's newly formed Health Protection Cell is leading on the Antibiotic/Antimicrobial resistance work stream, in-line with national policy and Berkshire West strategy.

### **Review of commitment**

We will work with all partners to raise awareness of the importance of antibiotic resistance.

These renewed commitments will ensure that we as partners can deliver a West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good.



A West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering

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It is perhaps in this priority area that our collective aspirations have shifted most fundamentally as the local declaration of a Climate Emergency and subsequent development of a new Environment Strategy to work towards carbon neutrality by 2030. The scale of this challenge is felt keenly in the district with flood risk, carbon emissions and other impacts of climate change already changing elements of our daily life. For this reason, investment in a wide range of projects and initiatives to mitigate the effects of climate change have been developed since the publication of the original Vision.

West Berkshire's diverse landscapes and historic environment remain among the reasons why West Berkshire is a popular place to live and continue to have an important role in promoting the health and wellbeing of residents. Our duty to protect these remains important and will shape much of the work we do as partners.

Similarly, West Berkshire's rich cultural offering remains important both, in terms of lifestyle and wellbeing, but also in terms of the local economy. Arts and culture organisations have undoubtedly been affected by the pandemic, as visitor numbers fell to virtually zero and are still recovering. As partners we will need to continue to work to assist these industries to recover to their former strength.

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# Our opportunities, challenges and aspirations

The below considers each of the individual commitments in the original vision and suggests where changes may be made if necessary. It also proposes some new aspirations taking into account the additional commitments made by partners in recent years.

## Commitment

We will protect the district's precious historic, landscape and wildlife assets and work in partnership to enhance our landscape and wildlife and the opportunity for people to enjoy them.

## Commentary

We already do so and will continue through the Local Plan Review which has been updated with the latest evidence.

We have established a Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership which will help to protect and enhance our countryside through projects aimed at addressing the biodiversity and climate crises.

## Review of commitment

It is suggested that through the implementation of the Local Plan, this aspiration will be tracked and monitored, so it is not necessary to do so within the Vision.

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## Commitment

We will look to create a forum through which we can develop a comprehensive, crowd-sourced strategy about our cultural and arts offering to ensure its sustainability and to increase participation from everyone in our community.



## Commentary

A co-design strategy has now been developed and delivery is being monitored by West Berkshire Council.

## Review of commitment

We will continue to work together to support and enhance our cultural and arts offering in order to increase participation from everyone in our community.

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## Commitment

We will commit to using renewable energy where possible, thereby reducing our carbon footprint.

## Commentary

The Environment Strategy makes this commitment on behalf of West Berkshire Council and builds on it in terms of energy generation.

## Review of commitment

We will commit to using renewable energy where possible, thereby reducing our carbon footprint.

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## Commitment

West Berkshire partners will play their role in reducing CO2 emissions and will introduce specific mitigation measures in problem areas.

## Commentary

West Berkshire Council and its contractors have already begun to implement such initiatives through the delivery of the Environment Strategy and are engaging with the community to support them to do so, too. The Council launched the UK's first Community Municipal Investment (CMI) offering our residents and community groups a unique way to invest in West Berkshire, funding green projects to help the district become carbon neutral by 2030.

### New commitment

We will reduce our own CO2 emissions and will introduce specific mitigation measures in problem areas. We will also support our communities to reduce their own emissions.

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### Commitment

We will monitor the issue of residents being exposed to road, rail or air transport pollution and take reactive measures where necessary.

### Commentary

We are better equipped to prevent traffic congestion following the completion of the A4 Thatcham Intelligent Transport Journey Time Measurement System. We have updated the Urban Traffic Management Control system to an intelligent system to maintain traffic flow and reduce CO2 and other pollutants' emissions.

### Review of commitment

We will continue to monitor the issue of residents being exposed to road, rail or air transport pollution and take reactive measures where necessary.

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### New commitment

We will consider as partners how the use of materials harmful to the environment, including plastics, can be kept as low as possible.

### Commentary

The implementation of the Environment Strategy as well as the use of the Council's Social Value Policy in its procurement are key to delivering this aspiration.

### Review of commitment

We will minimise our use of materials harmful to the environment in our operations and encourage our community to do so, too.

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### Commitment

We will, through education and incentivisation, encourage residents to make the most environmentally sound choices available and to eliminate unnecessary waste and will also look to use new technology to facilitate recycling where we can.

### Commentary

The Environment Strategy contains a number of initiatives which will do just this so it is suggested that the aspiration be amended slightly to reflect that delivery of the strategy will help to achieve this.

### Review of commitment

We will, through the implementation of the Environment Strategy, encourage residents to make the most environmentally sound choices available and to eliminate unnecessary waste and will also look to use new technology to facilitate recycling where we can.

### Commitment

We will look beyond our borders and, in doing so, will play our part in supporting national and international change through its policies and actions on CO2 emissions

### Commentary

The Environment Strategy Delivery Plan includes actions in relation to engaging with national consultations and lobbying government on key issues. A record is being kept of when we engage in this way. We also look to reflect or go further than national environmental policies through our work on the Local Plan Review and also through being innovative in our work with partners.

### Review of commitment

We will look beyond our borders and, in doing so, will play our part in supporting national and international change through its policies and actions on CO2 emissions.





### **Commitment**

We will do all we can to manage demand while maintaining integrity of our supply of fresh water.

### **Commentary**

As we are experiencing warmer temperatures, this remains relevant and we will continue to work with partners to ensure supply integrity.

### **Review of commitment**

We will do all we can to manage demand while maintaining integrity of our supply of fresh water.

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### **Commitment**

We will work together to provide meaningful protection to our waterways, preserving them for generations to come.

### **Commentary**

We continue to work with the Environment Agency and Canal and Rivers Trust on key waterways projects.

We have also formed a Natural Solutions Delivery Partnership which will look at biodiversity opportunities and investment across the District.

### **Review of commitment**

We will work together to provide meaningful protection to our waterways, preserving them for generations to come.

### **Commitment**

We will consider how we can further develop our cultural assets to maximise the number of people who are able to enjoy them.

### **Commentary**

The progress of the Cultural Heritage Strategy and the Libraries review show that this remains relevant as these assets are important community facilities that all in the community should be able to enjoy.

### **Review of commitment**

We will consider how we can further develop our cultural assets to maximise the number of people who are able to enjoy them.

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### **Commitment**

We will ensure that all of our parishes continue to be empowered to run their libraries in a way that works for them so that become multi-functional hubs, at the heart of the community.

### **Commentary**

This proposed model has been effective in Hungerford and a review is being undertaken to consider the future operating model of libraries within the district.

### **Review of commitment**

We will ensure that all of our parishes continue to be empowered to participate in how local library services are managed and run.



### **Commitment**

We will consider how to boost the appeal of our centres, focusing on place-making, and ensure they are desirable to residents and visitors alike.

### **Commentary**

West Berkshire Council has begun carrying out masterplanning exercises in its towns to fulfil this aspiration and will now move to the delivery phase.

### **Review of commitment**

We will deliver the recommendations of masterplanning exercises in Newbury, Thatcham and Hungerford in order to secure the future of our town centres.

These renewed commitments will ensure that we as partners can deliver a West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering.

# Conclusion

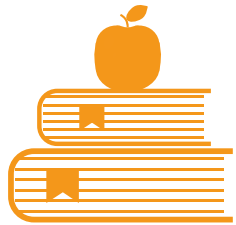
As we have reflected throughout this document, there have been some fundamental shifts at national and international level which have led to changes we would not have been able to foresee when the original Vision was published. The pandemic, geopolitical events, and the impact of climate change have in many ways fundamentally changed how we live and we have had to respond to this; reframing some of our aspirations in the process.

That said, we have shown that progress has been made towards achieving many of the aspirations we set out in the original Vision. Our relationships with the community, our progress in mitigating the impact of climate change and our work in addressing health inequalities have been among these successes. In these areas we have been able to amend or supplement our original aspirations. In other areas our aspirations remain relevant and unchanged as we continue to work together to consider how best to deliver our shared ambition.

Just as they have done since the publication of the original Vision, factors in and outside of our control will affect the scale and nature of the challenge ahead of us. We will continue to work together to respond to this, paving the way for an inclusive, prosperous, thriving West Berkshire. This may include further amending parts of this Vision to reflect new challenges and new aspirations for our shared future. Our commitment to inclusive growth, sustainability and better outcomes for all of the people of West Berkshire will remain, cementing our district's future for generations to come.

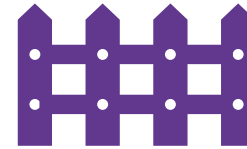
Together we will continue to work towards our shared aspirations and, in doing so, will make West Berkshire a better place to live, work and learn.

# Where we hope to be in 2036



**ALL**  
schools good or  
outstanding

Housing and services  
**accessible to all**



Newbury is an  
**internationally**  
recognised tech hub



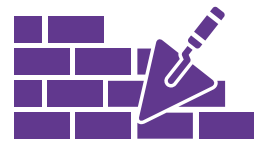
Part of  
Thames Valley  
**'Turbo Economy'**



Less than  
**an hour's**  
drive or train ride  
to Heathrow



**3**  
working age people per  
retired person



**A range**  
of housing types  
and tenures



A workforce  
with a **wide**  
**range** of skills



**Best**  
residential  
care in  
England

**74%**  
Outstanding  
Natural Beauty

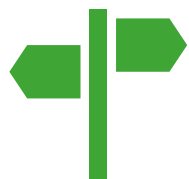


The best  
place to be a  
**woman**



Population of  
**167,000**

One of the  
**happiest**  
places



Strategic  
**crossroads**  
of the South East



**High Healthy**  
**Life expectancy**



**Best**  
rural broadband



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Produced by West Berkshire Council's Graphic Design service.

The partners of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board include:

