

Item 12: Notice of Motions

Motions submitted for debate at the Council meeting on the 16 October 2025

- (a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Adrian Abbs:

Modify the Experimental Traffic Order for Newbury Town Centre -
Amendment and trial of alternative traffic flow model for Newbury Northbrook Street,
Park Way and Wharf Road

This Council notes the ongoing experimental traffic order restricting vehicle access to Newbury High Street from 10:00am to 11:00pm. While intended to foster pedestrian safety, economic support of business and environmental benefits, the current closure may inadvertently limit accessibility for key demographics and constrain local trade, particularly during evening hours.

This motion proposes an alternative trial scheme that:

1. **Permits One-Way Vehicular Flow:**

Allow traffic to enter Newbury Bartholomew St in a single south-to-north direction via Northbrook Street, with return access facilitated through Park Way. This flow maintains a controlled environment while improving connectivity and reducing congestion on feeder roads.

2. **Alternative of traffic return via A339**

If for some reason it is not possible to use Park Way and Warf Road as the North to south route then the A339 can be designated as the route from North to south in the town.

3. **Introduces Short-Stay Parking Incentives:**

Establish free short-stay parking bays—limited to 15-30 minutes—along designated sections of the Bartholomew Street and Northbrook Street. These locations would be monitored via time-discs or possibly digital enforcement mechanisms to ensure turnover.

Rationale and Community Benefit:

- **Economic Revitalisation:**

Offering limited-time free parking encourages brief shopping visits and supports “in-and-out” transactions critical to retailers.

- **Cultural and Nightlife Engagement:**

Enhanced evening access and short-stay flexibility promote casual dining, entertainment, and spontaneous engagement with nightlife—key to nurturing a vibrant town centre.

- **Inclusion and Accessibility:**
Facilitates visits by older residents, families with young children, and individuals with limited mobility, who may be disadvantaged under the current arrangement.
- **Better correlation with Time of Year**
As winter comes pedestrian traffic is likely to fall and easier access to shops, restaurants and event locations gains greater value.
- **Environmental Monitoring:**
The trial should run concurrently with environmental and traffic flow assessments to ensure impacts remain within sustainable thresholds.

This Council urges officers to explore feasibility, consult stakeholders including residents and local businesses, and prepare a report outlining implementation logistics, costs, and KPIs for review within three months.

(b) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Justin Pemberton:

Making a clear commitment to communities in the east of the district and seek to protect them from being moved to the neighbouring Reading Borough Council

Council notes that the wards of Pangbourne, Theale, Tilehurst and Purley, Tilehurst Birch Copse and Tilehurst South and Holybrook have historically always been part of West Berkshire or its predecessor Authorities. Council Members believe that West Berkshire Council must make clear its commitment to the communities of the above-mentioned wards and seek to protect them from being moved to neighbouring authorities, as Reading Borough Council is currently seeking to do.

Council notes that the affected wards contain individual communities and villages with unique characteristics. Several are self-sufficient in that they contain shopping centres, hospitality services, leisure facilities and centres of employment. Council notes that the areas affected by Reading Borough Council's proposal have never been part of Reading Borough Council, and that our eastern communities have long been part of West Berkshire – with links which date back to 1894, when Council came together under Bradfield Rural District Council. Council does not believe that these areas will be served well by becoming part of a more metropolitan-focused local authority.

Council also recognises that many of the services provided to these residents by West Berkshire Council are of higher quality than those provided by Reading Borough Council to their residents, and that residents value this. But in any event, Council does not agree with Reading Borough Council's proposal to absorb the above-mentioned wards and therefore reaffirms its commitment to these wards and to resist any such attempts – in the strongest possible terms.

Council therefore resolves to request that:

- The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Local Government Reorganisation write to the Leader and Chief Executive of Reading Borough Council to inform them that we strongly oppose Reading Borough Council's proposal and to ask them not to press on with their proposal to incorporate any part of West Berkshire into Reading Borough as part of the reorganisation process.
- The Leader and Portfolio Holder write to the MP for Reading West and Mid Berkshire informing her of the Council's strong opposition to Reading's proposal to extend their boundary to include any part of West Berkshire.
- The Leader write to the Deputy Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Local Government and Homelessness (MHCLG) to seek assurance that the current geography of West Berkshire will remain intact in whatever new Unitary Authority area is decided upon at the end of the reorganisation process.

(c) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Jeff Brooks:

For Council to commit to the installation of sprinklers or other Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) in the Council's own building stock when constructing new buildings, significant extensions and relevant refurbishment of existing buildings

This Council:

Recognises that sprinklers and other Automatic Fire Suppression Systems (AFSS) save lives, protect property, reduce the impact of fire on the environment, reduce interruption to business and improve safety for individuals in the community in general and firefighters.

Supports the National Fire Chiefs' Council position on sprinklers and will write to Central Government to express support for the creation of a legal requirement to fit sprinklers or AFSS in buildings.

Commits to the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS within its own building stock when constructing new buildings, significant extensions and relevant refurbishment of existing buildings or as a retrofitted solution when undertaking major refurbishments of existing buildings where the extent of the refurbishment makes the fitting of sprinklers viable.

Promotes and supports the installation of sprinklers or other AFSS for all new or refurbished buildings and particularly those that present the most significant risk to the occupants, public and firefighters and will do this through planning application and building control processes.

(d) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Ross Mackinnon:

That where a decision is made contrary to the majority of residents' opinions via a public consultation, then an explanatory statement should be made explaining the reasons for doing so

1. This Council considers that individual members, the Executive, and the Council itself should always be honest and transparent with, and accountable to, the residents of West Berkshire.
2. This Council notes with approval that the foreword to the Liberal Democrats' manifesto for the 2023 West Berkshire Council elections included the following commitment:

“A Liberal Democrat administration will be one that listens to you, and gives you a real say in the decisions that affect our area.”

3. This Council recognises that in the event that:
 - i. residents are asked for their views on a particular proposal or policy via a public consultation, and
 - ii. residents' responses indicate a majority either for their approval or for their disapproval of that proposal or policy, and
 - iii. following the consultation process the relevant decision-making body (Council, Executive or Individual Executive Member) makes a decision not in accordance with the majority of residents' responses, then

there is a risk that public trust in the Council, the public's feeling that they are listened to, and the public's feeling that they have a real say in the decisions that affect our area, will be diminished.

4. This Council therefore considers that in the event a decision is made contrary to the majority of residents' opinions expressed via a public consultation, then a statement should be published on the Council's public website no more than 14 days after the making of the decision, written by:

the Chairman of Council in respect of a Council decision, or

the Leader of the Council in respect of an Executive decision, or

the relevant Individual Executive Member in respect of an Individual Executive Member decision,

clearly informing residents that a decision has been made contrary to the majority of residents' opinions expressed via a public consultation, and explaining the decision-maker's rationale for making that decision not in accordance with that majority of residents' opinions.

(e) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor David Marsh:

That Council resolves to review its own investments and request that those of the Berkshire Pension Fund are reviewed to identify any direct or indirect holdings in companies that are supplying arms, military technology, or logistical support which enable breaches of international law in Gaza

West Berkshire Council recognises its responsibility to ensure that public money, including its own investments and those of the Berkshire Pension Fund, is used in a manner consistent with our values of peace, human rights, and respect for international law.

Council notes with grave concern the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the verdict of the United Nations commission of inquiry that a genocide of the Palestinian people, as defined by international law, is taking place (“killing members of a group, causing them serious bodily and mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions calculated to destroy the group, and preventing births”).

Council notes that a number of local authorities in the UK are supporting the divestment of pension funds from companies which are facilitating serious breaches of international law by, for example, supplying military technology to Israel or financing illegal settlements in the West Bank.

Council therefore resolves to:

Review its own investments and request that those of the Berkshire Pension Fund are reviewed to identify any direct or indirect holdings in companies that are supplying arms, military technology, or logistical support which enable breaches of international law in Gaza.

Work with its asset managers to take steps to end such investments and strongly request, through its representative, that the Berkshire Pension Fund does the same.

Report back to Council within three months on progress made.