



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

A number of West Berkshire organisations, working under the umbrella of the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Board, have decided that at this time of major national and international change it is timely to start a fresh discussion about what we all want West Berkshire to look like in 2036.

2036 has been chosen for this purpose because it aligns with the timetable for the review of the West Berkshire Local Plan and also because it sets a realistic time period over which an agreed long term ambition can be realised. Aside from setting out an inclusive aspiration for West Berkshire in 2036, the Vision also has a role in setting a framework within which other strategies and plans will be developed. These include the West Berkshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the West Berkshire Economic Development Strategy.



The first draft of this document was developed through discussion and debate between a wide range of stakeholders from across the District. This draft was subject to a public consultation which revealed broad support for the ambitions articulated in the document. Amendments have been made as necessary in order to incorporate ideas raised as part of the consultation.

Accompanying this Vision are two other documents. One of them is a fully-referenced base of evidence which links every challenge or opportunity we have identified in **bold** to its source. The other will be an outcomes framework, which we will develop with interested partners and complete together in recognition of the collective nature of the Vision.

It is through collaborative working that we will achieve our aspiration that West Berkshire is a place where everyone is given the chance to thrive, regardless of their background.



Rick Jones

Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board

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



Introduction

Today, West Berkshire is a **thriving district** in Southern England which, it has been said, boasts both the economic advantages of the South East and the excellent lifestyle opportunities of the South West. It is seen as a fantastic place to live by its residents, who benefit from good educational, health and employment opportunities. It has also received, in recent years, significant investment which has allowed it to flourish as a **well-connected, prosperous and desirable** local economy with world-class digital infrastructure.

That isn't to say it is without its problems. Evidence, which will be explored later, suggests that these good outcomes are not being enjoyed by all residents across West Berkshire. When travelling a relatively short distance within the district, it is possible to encounter significant inequalities in wealth, life expectancy and health as well as education and employment prospects.

In the years to come, West Berkshire, and the world around it, will change significantly. Of course, some of this change will be planned, but much of it will be based on national and international trends and events. Regardless of how this change manifests itself, we must ensure that **we are ready** for it and we take every opportunity available to harness the best possible outcomes for residents.

This Vision contains evidence which sets out the sort of place West Berkshire is now and the sort of place we, as partners, aspire for it to be. As such, it encourages partners to focus very clearly on how they can continue to develop West Berkshire's existing attributes whilst embracing the change the future brings. It is hoped that this focus will bring about an **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.

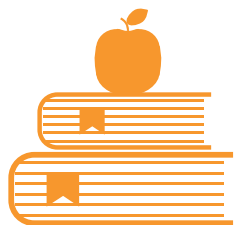
At the heart of this first draft is a meaningful commitment to **future-proof** West Berkshire across five key areas. Together, we will deliver:

- 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

These priorities demonstrate a **collective aim** of maintaining West Berkshire's status as a great place to live, work and learn whilst rising to the challenges we will face in the years to come.

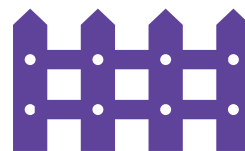
This will not be a Vision created by a small number of people. Instead, it is hoped that this initial document will start a conversation which will enable West Berkshire's communities to decide where the district goes next. Together as partners we will facilitate the change that West Berkshire needs 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



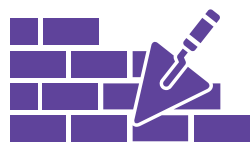
Part of
Thames Valley
'Turbo Economy'



Less than
an hour's
drive from Heathrow



4
working age people per
retired person



10,000
homes built
2000-2018



50%
educated to
degree level

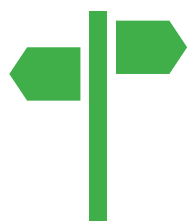


Best
residential
care in
England

74% Area of
Outstanding
Natural Beauty



One of the best
places to be a
woman



Strategic
crossroads
of Southern
England

Population of
156,000



One of the
happiest
places



Best rural
broadband



Life expectancy
for women **84** for men **81**



Average house price
£338,316

Our hopes for the future



We will have delivered a West Berkshire where everybody has what they need to fulfil their potential.

All of our young people will be well-educated and the wealth of their parents will no longer be a major determinant of their educational outcomes and, by extension, their prospects for the future. We will have addressed the gaps in our employment market, so that the workforce has the skills it needs and that anyone, regardless of their age, health or ability is given a chance to participate in the workplace. West Berkshire's communities will be safer and residents will be more invested in the lives of those around them, as well as their own. Fundamentally, we will have ensured that everyone living in West Berkshire has the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to thrive.



We will have delivered a West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone.

The evidence in this Vision quite clearly suggests that our demographics are projected to shift significantly, with only two working age people per retired person instead of four, as we have now. This will have implications for the number of care beds we require in West Berkshire and may also mean that adaptations will need to be made to homes and neighbourhoods to ensure our ageing population can access services. Our approach to housing will also, however, have sought to redress this generational imbalance and the concerns of our residents that their children would be priced out of the area where they grew up. There will be more affordable housing so that younger people and those on lower incomes can benefit from all that West Berkshire has to offer and so that their children after them will enjoy better outcomes as a result. In short, we will have focussed on providing a range of housing types and tenures that reflects the needs of the future population of West Berkshire.



We will have delivered a West Berkshire that welcomes business, enterprise and industry into a productive, growing and dynamic local economy.

West Berkshire will be even better-connected, with excellent transport links to London, Heathrow and other major locations. It will have become a hub for creativity, which encourages the entrepreneurial ideas of its people. The district will be known as a pro-business area, attracting the jobs and investment that we need to grow. Recruitment issues for our key industries will have been addressed, with significant investment in the skills of our people to meet demand. Through the provision of infrastructure we will have helped our residents to take up the latest and, where applicable, greenest technology that will enhance their lives and allow West Berkshire to compete internationally. In summary, we will have done all we can to secure the economic development the area needs to improve outcomes for all residents.



We will have delivered a West Berkshire where the health and wellbeing of residents of all ages and backgrounds is good.


We have discussed the fact that our population is ageing. By 2036 we will have committed to the principle that our residents should not merely be living longer, but living well for as long as possible. The importance of both mental and physical health will be recognised, as we know that it can often be difficult to have one without the other. We will also have reduced the health inequalities within West Berkshire, so that where someone is born does not predetermine their health. In doing so, we will improve the wellbeing of our young people, giving them a strong foundation for their lives.



We will have delivered a West Berkshire with beautiful, historic and diverse landscapes and a strong cultural offering.

West Berkshire's cultural and historical assets will have been protected for generations to come but, in reflection of modern life, the way in which they are delivered will have changed. They will have become true community assets, so that the people of West Berkshire are given the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to their future, so that the role of the past is integral part of what is to come. We will have also done all within our power to mitigate the impact of climate change on our natural environment, making responsible choices in our own energy use and encouraging our residents and visitors to do the same in theirs. In short, we will have retained and enhanced our offering so that it can be enjoyed by as many people as possible. West Berkshire will be, as it is now, a beautiful place to live. Its status as a living landscape will have been protected so that generations to come can appreciate it, just as those before them have done.



A close-up, side-profile photograph of a young boy with short, light brown hair. He is wearing large, silver and black over-ear headphones. He is looking off to the side with a neutral expression. He is wearing an orange and white patterned shirt. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

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

West Berkshire is a well-connected, thriving district with low levels of unemployment, a very well-qualified workforce and, in many areas, a keenly-felt sense of community. Almost all of its schools have been judged 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 is also 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.

As with all areas, 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.

Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

Local authority budgets are facing significant pressures, with historically low central government grants leading to reductions in council budgets. Meanwhile, communities are becoming more engaged with their local services.

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.

With each generation more technologically capable than the last, there will be a growing demand for online learning as well as a need to acquire new skills, such as coding, that previous generations did not experience.

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

Engineering, technology, science and finance are among the areas that are likely to see high employment demand in the future.

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.



In some ways, West Berkshire's levels of social mobility are significantly lower than other areas of the country. There remains a wide gap between the attainment of those on free school meals and those who are not.

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

There are relatively low employment rates for certain vulnerable groups including those with mental health illness and learning disability when compared with other areas.

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.

There will be a significant shift in West Berkshire's age groups and is estimated that by 2036, there will be one retired person for every two working age people.

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.



There has been an upward trend in crime levels in recent years, with the nature of crime changing. Child sexual exploitation, modern slavery, cybercrime and domestic abuse are among the increasingly significant issues.

We will educate residents as to how they can spot, prevent and discourage these crimes as well as taking all necessary action when they do occur.



Extremism has also become more prevalent nationally in recent years, with radicalisation now an increasing issue across the UK.

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.

Drug and alcohol abuse also remain a local concern in West Berkshire and are significant contributing factors to crime and poor health.

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

Social isolation, particularly rural isolation, is a growing concern and is proven to adversely affect personal wellbeing.

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

West Berkshire's
compassionate
commitment to equality
of opportunity and
safe, happy
communities
will remain



By 2036, there is a significant chance that education and training will look very different to the way it does today as a result of emerging technology, a changing job market and a shift towards internationalism in both the workplace and the classroom.

The profile of the population and its communities will change over time, as will attitudes and values, as economic and political events exert their influence. Regardless of this likely change, however, West Berkshire's compassionate commitment to equality of opportunity and safe, happy communities will remain, shaping every decision made by its partners.

We commit to creating a skilled West Berkshire where communities work and grow together.



A West Berkshire with a housing mix with something for everyone

Throughout this document, a recurring theme is that West Berkshire is a desirable place to live. In recent years, almost 10,000 homes have been built in the district, closely matching household growth. It is no wonder that this increase has been necessary, given the district's desirability, and that further homes will have to be built to meet demand in years to come.

With this desirability comes house prices that are significantly higher than those in many other areas of the country and issues of affordability, particularly for those on low income. This is further exacerbated by the low level of homes available for affordable rent as well as a lack of social housing stock. 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

In recent years, there has been a focus on affordable housing within West Berkshire, as well as indications from central government that local authorities will face tougher requirements on housing delivery or risk losing delegated powers. With changing demographics, high house prices and recruitment challenges, we risk workers and young people being priced out of the district.

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.

It is estimated that significant investment in homes available for social rent is necessary across the UK, particularly in areas with high rental values and house prices.

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



Building an energy efficient new two bedroom home creates 80 tonnes of CO₂, which would take many years to cancel out through energy efficient living. Whilst new energy efficient buildings need to be built, it makes sense to modernise our existing stock as well.

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

The changing profile of the local population and in particular changing household size and formation will mean that a range of suitable homes will need to be provided for different stages of life and ability

We will monitor and review these changes and ensure planning and delivery of housing responds to shifts in demand and need.

Although the majority of those with learning disabilities wish to live either alone or with friends, there is limited suitable housing available.

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

With the number of elderly residents requiring care set to increase by 60%, it is estimated that more residential care bed spaces per annum will be needed. Those who choose to stay in their home will be spending more time in their homes, thus requiring adaptations to their accommodation.

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.



Homelessness, including rough sleeping, has increased in recent years across West Berkshire.

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

Together we will look to ensure that every household can afford to have a safe home and that the homes that are built reflect the future needs of our residents

The index of multiple deprivation indicates that access to services, particularly in our rural areas, can be challenging.

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.

Through the Local Plan Review, together we will plan for every household to have access to affordable and safe homes built to reflect the future needs of our residents with respect to care, education, health and employment, rather than more of the same. In doing so, we will allay residents’ concerns that West Berkshire’s communities will become unsustainable as when their children leave home, they will have no option other than to move away as they are priced out of their own area.

In turn, this will contribute to the establishment of communities that are secure, happy and have good standards of wellbeing. This will allow our biggest asset, the people of West Berkshire, to support our economic development objectives and deliver the growth the district needs.

We commit to creating a West Berkshire where residents are properly housed.





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

Situated in the Thames Valley ‘turbo economy’, West Berkshire is, at its core, an ambitious and entrepreneurial district. It is home to over 9000 SMEs and is particularly renowned for its skilled and creative work force, low unemployment and its many locational advantages. Its infrastructure, both in highways and digital, contribute to make the district one of the best-connected areas of the country in terms of access to employment, technology and commercial markets, with excellent- and improving- services.

To sustain this, West Berkshire must cement its status as a dynamic district; one that recognises that it cannot stand still in an increasingly competitive world and that using its natural assets well is essential for the future. 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 look for a way to take advantage of the opportunities that come our way and renew our focus on delivering infrastructure and economic development initiatives in a sustainable way that both meet the demands of modern life and reflect our values, heritage and the values of residents, for it is this that will deliver the inclusive growth needed for the future.

By ensuring we commit to the development of West Berkshire’s 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.

Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

International markets will be opening up with evidence suggesting that 70% on international companies setting up in the UK will look to do so within 1 hour's drive of Heathrow.

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 these companies.

In line with an increasing recognition of the importance of Corporate Social Responsibility, companies will want to occupy greener buildings with lower emissions.

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



Automation is likely to transform the way in which goods are delivered and transported.

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

Future demand, based on contribution to the local economy and job growth, will likely be in STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and maths) areas including digital, engineering, science, business and construction. There will also be increasing demand in hospitality, care and sales.

We will actively engage with and support these industries in locating premises, employees and partnerships.

With the democratisation of entrepreneurship via crowdfunding platforms and alternative funding streams, it is likely that opportunities for creativity will increase.

We will consider our role in facilitating this creativity so that those with ideas can work within an environment that enables them to succeed.

The workforce will become increasingly mobile, with traditional business delivery models making way for more at home and online working.

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.



Recruitment issues in care, hospitality and education will pose problems in West Berkshire because of high housing costs and skills shortages.

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.

Recruitment issues for West Berkshire's 7000 small businesses will continue.

We will support these businesses at every stage, from start-up advice, to location sourcing to ongoing engagement.

Employment projections for the years to 2036 suggest that there will not be enough workforce supply.

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.

Local authorities are expected to raise and spend more of their business rates locally. With this comes increased competition between neighbouring authorities, as business rates collection becomes an even more integral part of delivery of local services. To take advantage of these new powers, West Berkshire must do it all it can to be open for business.

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

One of West Berkshire's biggest assets is its location within the Wessex Downs AONB. However, this also poses it challenges as one of the district's most marketable locations- the crossroads of the M4 and A34- lies within this area and may not be able to be developed.

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



Use of electric cars is likely to increase exponentially, bringing with it a need for supporting infrastructure, while driverless vehicle technology may become more common.

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

There is likely to be a transport modal shift away from single use car journeys which may, in some areas, decrease demand on our roads.

We will monitor this shift and, where necessary, will influence changes that promote environmental sustainability.

Our major roads are improving, with significant central government investment planned to increase capacity on the M4, addressing demand. Meanwhile, rail electrification will open new markets, with Reading, Heathrow and London more accessible than ever before.

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



The DfT's Oxford to Cambridge Expressway Strategic Study will include the A34 between the M4 and M40, which will see significant investment in the region.

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



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

There are strategic issues with roads managed by the local authority, including the A339 in Newbury, which must be addressed.

We will work together to both pro-actively and reactively address these issues.

Obesity levels, which are likely to increase, may dictate the public's appetite for journeys on foot or on bike.

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

We will consider
the need for economic
development in
all we do, we will
embrace technological
change and we will
support strategic
investment choices

In other areas of this document, the challenges facing West Berkshire have been discussed. We aspire to meet these head on, developing our economy in a way that is inclusive and sustainable. By implementing a comprehensive economic development strategy, West Berkshire will be well-placed to grow in a way that benefits all of its people and will also have the levels of connectivity that are essential to compete on the international stage. It will also make West Berkshire as attractive as possible to younger workers, those who are highly skilled and the digital tech industry.

West Berkshire is ambitious and must be well prepared for the future. As partners, we will consider the need for sustainable economic development in all we do, we will embrace technological change and we will support strategic investment choices, thereby future-proofing the district for generations to come.

We commit to creating a high tech, well-connected West Berkshire that is open for business.



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

West Berkshire is generally a healthy, happy place to live. The district's life expectancy, at 81 years for men and 84 years for women, is above both the regional and national averages. By 2036, this is expected to increase by a further four years. 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.

Our challenges, our opportunities and our aspirations

Many people engage in unhealthy behaviours (physical inactivity, poor diet, smoking, high alcohol consumption) leading to illness and early death related to chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity and type 2 diabetes.

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.



An increasing number of children are not able to achieve their potential for example due to being overweight or obese from an early age and experiencing poor emotional wellbeing.

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.

Mental health problems represent the largest single cause of disability in West Berkshire affecting people of all ages.

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.

There will be an increase in age-related diseases and conditions, putting pressure on our health and social care services.

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.

There are significant health inequalities within West Berkshire, with a life expectancy gap of up to ten years within the district.

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

Loneliness and social isolation will become increasingly common which can be damaging to both mental and physical health. Being cut off from social interaction affects people of all ages, especially young people and older adults.

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

The environment we live in is a key determinant of health and it is increasingly important that we ensure it enables our ability to lead healthy and active lives.

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.

Social media has contributed to an increase in mental health issues and body dysmorphia among young people.

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

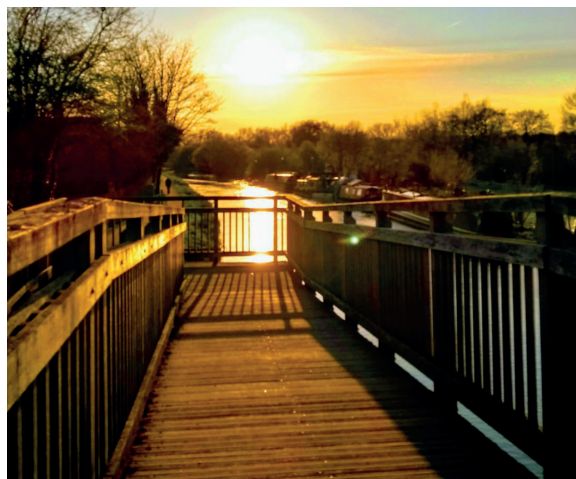
Antibiotic resistance will make it harder to prevent and treat infection.

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

By 2036, good health and wellbeing will not be a fringe issue or a 'nice to have'. It will be at the heart of everything we do and will be woven carefully into the framework of all of West Berkshire's partners. To achieve this we will adopt a 'health in all policies' approach that will ensure that the decisions we make consider the health of our residents and reducing inequality.

Everyone will be given the opportunity to live a healthy lifestyle and experience the best physical health and emotional wellbeing. A successful, healthy district will, in turn, become a prosperous one. We must protect the health and wellbeing of our people as they are our biggest resource.

We commit to creating a West Berkshire where all residents are healthy and wellbeing is high.



We must protect the
health and wellbeing
of our people as
they are our biggest
resource





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

West Berkshire's diverse landscapes and historic environment are among its strongest assets. They are the reasons why West Berkshire is a popular place to live and have an important role in promoting the health and wellbeing of residents. They are highly valued and we wish to ensure their sustainability so that they may be available for generations to come. This is particularly important as unlike many of our assets, our historic environment is irreplaceable, having evolved over many hundreds of years to create the West Berkshire we know and appreciate today.

Similarly, West Berkshire has a rich cultural offering as it is home to world-class arts venues as well a diverse calendar of fantastic cultural events. It is no surprise, therefore, that the district attracts a high number of visitors every year who seek to enjoy the many amenities that residents are fortunate enough to enjoy year-round.

It is clear, however, that conserving and enhancing these assets will require action, as financial constraints and environmental concerns will become increasingly prevalent.

Our opportunities, challenges and aspirations

West Berkshire's rich, historic and diverse landscape and wildlife will be subject to further pressures from more development, consumption and climate change.

We will protect these precious assets and work in partnership to enhance our landscape and wildlife and the opportunity for people to enjoy them.

Ensuring residents have access to cultural facilities and are able to participate in local events that promote the importance of the arts will continue to be a priority.

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.

There is likely to be a further shift towards renewable energy, as alternatives to fossil fuels become cheaper and more accessible.

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



Greenhouse gas emissions, particularly CO₂ AND NO_x, will continue to have an adverse effect on health and the natural environment and climate.

We will play our role in reducing CO₂ emissions and will introduce specific mitigation measures in problem areas.

Around 4.4% of the West Berkshire population are exposed to road, rail or air transport pollution during the day and 8.8% are exposed at night. To date, this has not been a source of complaints but should be considered in the future.

We will monitor this issue and take precautionary measures where necessary.

There is a growing awareness of the impact of plastic use on our natural environment and our wildlife.

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



West Berkshire produces a relatively large amount of household waste compared to the regional and national averages, which may increase still further as economic productivity grows. The area does, however, recycle more than the regional and national average.

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.

Reducing high CO2 production and working towards a carbon-neutral way of working will be essential.

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.

Water availability may be an issue, which may have an economic impact on businesses and residents within West Berkshire, with the South East projected to be highly susceptible to supply-demand deficits

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

Our water ways will continue to be important as a habitat for our wildlife as well as an important part of both trade and tourism in the district.

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

Our local government-owned cultural assets, such as Shaw House and the West Berkshire Museum, will remain as an important part of the community.

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

Our libraries have gone through a period of significant change and are increasingly being run by community-based volunteers.

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.

Online shopping is likely to outstrip high street retail, leading to further changes in our town centres.

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.

By 2036, we want to have ensured that the decisions we have made have contributed to a district with a low carbon footprint and one where people are empowered to make the most environmentally-conscious decisions available.

We will also have the best possible cultural offering, which reflects on our shared past and our optimism for the future of West Berkshire, and will have protected our beautiful historic environment so that generations to come can enjoy it as those before them have done. Furthermore, we will have delivered a West Berkshire where conservation and management of our natural capital and heritage is embedded in everything we do.

All of this will be incredibly important for our future as participation in and enjoyment of our cultural assets, our historic environment and our beautiful landscapes are key to ensuring the health and wellbeing outcomes that we aspire to throughout this document. We genuinely feel that through partnership working, we will be able to maintain and enhance this offering so that as many residents as possible are given the opportunity to take advantage of it.

We commit to sustaining an environmentally-conscious West Berkshire with a strong, historic and cultural offering.



Conclusion

In the coming years, a range of factors, both within our control and otherwise, will influence the future course of West Berkshire. Demographics will change, the implications of the biggest political change in generations will be manifested and trends will come and go. As partners, we are well-positioned to ensure that this course benefits all of our residents.

Throughout this document, we have identified the challenges facing West Berkshire in years to come, as well as our aspirations for 2036.

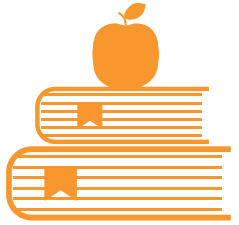
We will continue to work together over time to monitor these shifts to pave the way for an inclusive, prosperous, thriving West Berkshire. This may include amending parts of this Vision to reflect new challenges and new aspirations for our shared future.

At the heart of West Berkshire 2036 is our vision for **inclusive growth**. This must be driven by the outcomes of all of the people of West Berkshire and- above all else- it must be sustainable. It is precisely this commitment that will cement the district's status as a fantastic place to live, work and learn for generations to come.

We are ambitious for the future.

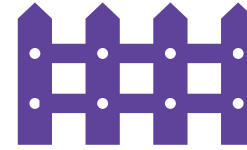
We are ambitious for West Berkshire.

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



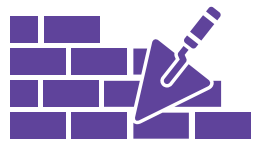
Part of
Thames Valley
'**Turbo Economy**'



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



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