



Council Report for July 2025

Written by your local Conservative team to keep you up to date.

Councillor Clive Hooker, Downlands Ward

West Berkshire Council

Council

Council met on 17 July to discuss:

- Local Transport Plan 4
- Monitoring Officer's Annual Report 2024/25 - Conduct and Ethics
- Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2024/25
- Annual Scrutiny Report 2024/25

Papers and a recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).

The next meeting is on 16 October.

Executive

Executive met on 3 July to discuss:

- Capital Financing Report Outturn Financial Year 2024/25
- 2024/25 Revenue Financial Performance: Provisional Outturn
- 2024/25 Performance Report Q4
- Voluntary and Charitable Sector Memorandum of Understanding
- Motion Adopting Open Space in New Development
- Healthcare in New Developments
- Contract for Award: 9 Month Block Beds 'Bupa UK'
- Commercial Property Disposal - Units 1 and 2 Cleveland Gate Retail Park, Guisborough

There was also a special Executive meeting on 17 July to discuss:

- A contract award for critical services

Papers and a recording of the meetings can be found [here](#).

The next meeting is on 25 September.

Environment

Free Soil Conditioner – now available by delivery

In partnership with Veolia, WBC are launching a one-month pilot to offer free deliveries of locally produced soil conditioner to eligible community groups and councils. This is a fantastic opportunity to enrich green spaces while supporting sustainability and the circular economy.

What's included?

- Free delivery of approx. 1.5 tonnes of soil conditioner
- Made from recycled household food and garden waste
- Available to Town and Parish Councils and community gardening groups in West Berkshire

How it works:

- Drop-and-go service – no on-site handling provided
- One delivery per organisation
- First-come, first-served basis
- Pilot runs 1 - 29 August (weekdays only)
- Site must be accessible to a flatbed vehicle and have a named contact to receive the delivery

This is not the same as the usual public giveaways, which will continue at Padworth when advertised.

To request a delivery, simply email: recycle@westberks.gov.uk

Electrical reuse scheme launches at recycling centres

WBC have teamed up, in partnership with Veolia, with Green Machine Computers to launch an exciting new electrical reuse scheme at both Household Waste Recycling Centres in Newtown Road and Padworth.



Residents can now drop off used mobile phones, tablets, laptops and desktop computers at dedicated collection points at either site, giving their old devices a new lease of life.

Once collected, Green Machine Computers will securely remove any data before passing reusable items to The Tech Hub in Hungerford. From there, they will be made available free of charge or at low cost to charities and

people in need, ensuring technology reaches those who need it most.

Garden Waste Subscriptions

A promotional banner for the Garden Waste collection service. The top half has a light blue background with the text 'Garden Waste collection service' in large green letters. Below this is a dark green button with 'Subscribe now for 2025/26' in white. Underneath is a purple button with 'Do it online by Direct Debit or Credit/debit card' and a Direct Debit logo. The bottom left of the banner has text: 'The next subscription period runs from Monday 25 August 2025 to Sunday 23 August 2026'. On the right, there is an illustration of a man in a green shirt and brown trousers using a rake to fill a green garden waste bin. A speech bubble from the bin says 'House name/number can be placed on the bin'. The bottom of the banner is a solid teal color with the West Berkshire Council logo and name on the right.

Garden Waste
collection service

Subscribe now for 2025/26

Do it online by Direct Debit or Credit/debit card 

The next subscription period runs from Monday 25 August 2025 to Sunday 23 August 2026

House name/number can be placed on the bin

 **West Berkshire**
COUNCIL

Subscriptions are now open for the 2025/26 garden waste collection service, which runs from Monday 25 August 2025 to Sunday 23 August 2026.

Sign up [here](#).

Instead of a flat fee for the first bin, the charge will now be based on the property's Council Tax band.

- Households in bands A - C will pay less than last year
- Households in band D properties will see the charge stay the same as last year
- Households in bands E - H will contribute a little more than last year.

Direct Debit Renewals

In June, WBC sent subscription renewal information by email or letter to garden waste subscribers with an active Direct Debit. This included details about the 2025/26 subscription period, the new charging structure, and specific information about renewal. Unless they've cancelled the subscription, it will automatically renew for 2025/26 using existing Direct Debit details and current subscription numbers, including any updates submitted. Renewal payments will be collected on 1 August 2025, unless notified otherwise.

No further action is needed, and residents can simply continue to place the green bin out for collection on the scheduled recycling collection days.

Health

Calling Berkshire residents passionate about improving access to healthcare

The University of Reading, in partnership with the NHS and local organisations, is launching the SHARE study - Surveying Health Access and Resource Equity, in Berkshire to better understand the obstacles people face when trying to get the care they need.

The online survey looks at digital access, food security, and the personal and social factors that may impact health and wellbeing and contribute to health inequalities. It's quick to complete, and insight as a resident is vital.

As part of stage two of the study, residents are invited to join a Community Roundtable - interactive sessions where residents can share their lived experiences to help find real solutions. Roundtable participants will receive a £15 thank-you voucher, refreshments, and the chance to make a lasting impact.

Take the survey [here](#).

Transport

Thatcham Connect

The Thatcham Connect is more flexible than a traditional bus as it does not operate to a fixed route or timetable. Residents choose where and when they'd like to go within the on-demand zone, and a journey will be planned to suit you!

Thatcham Connect is an environmentally friendly travel option, operated with a fully accessible zero emissions minibus, giving even more reason to not use the car.

Thatcham Connect provides connections between certain villages surrounding Thatcham to Thatcham Broadway, Thatcham Station and the A4 Bath Road between Thatcham and Theale. The latter allows for connections to be made with Reading Buses Jetblack bus service to Newbury or Reading.



Why not use the service over the summer:

- Travel to Thatcham to catch onward buses/trains to Newbury and Reading spending the day meeting up with friends and family.
- Access Bucklebury and Crookham Common and West Berkshire countryside (Maps- walking, cycling and horse riding).

Residents can book a trip using the passenger app available to download from the Apple or Google Play stores or by calling 01635 519650 or emailing communityconnect@westberks.gov.uk.

Sports and Leisure

Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge is underway and Chief Executive, Joseph Holmes was at Newbury Library last week to sign children up to the challenge.

Developed by national charity The Reading Agency, the theme of this year's challenge is 'Story Garden', which is all about nature and storytelling. It aims to encourage children to read during their summer break.

Children aged 4-11 can visit their local library to sign up for the free challenge to read up to six library books between 1 July and 15 September. As usual, children will be able to collect free incentives for their achievements as they read, with medals and certificates for everyone who completes the challenge.

We have a mini challenge for pre-school children too and an adult challenge so that parents can read along with children!

Bikeability

West Berkshire Council, through its team of instructors is running a range of Bikeability cycle training courses across the district this summer. Check out the Active Travel Portal to find a suitable Child or Adult course [here](#).

Public Protection

BBQ Disposal

Last week, a waste collection crew responded swiftly to a smouldering incident caused by charcoal placed in a refuse bin. As the waste was compacted into the rear of the vehicle, it began to smoulder; posing a serious fire risk.

Thanks to the vigilance and quick action of the crew, the waste was safely removed, preventing a potential vehicle fire.

Help us keep everyone safe by ensuring BBQ or firepit ashes are completely cool before putting them in the bin. Even warm embers can reignite and cause fires in bins or collection vehicles.

Top tips to avoid a bincident:

- Allow ashes to cool for at least 48 hours after the fire has gone out.
- Rake through the ashes to check they're fully cold.
- Pour water over the ashes to help cool them down faster.
- Only dispose of ashes in rubbish bins once they're 100% cold.



Care and attention help protect crews and community.

Buying pets from licensed breeders matters

While owners may choose to adopt or rehome animals, many prospective owners do opt to buy their pets directly from a breeder. Ensuring that the breeder is licensed is a vital step in promoting animal welfare and responsible pet ownership.

Licensed breeders are inspected regularly and are held to strict standards that ensure animals are raised in safe, clean, and humane conditions. They prioritise the health and wellbeing of their animals, providing proper veterinary care, socialisation, and ethical breeding practices.

Unlicensed breeders, often operating as part of the illegal pet trade or in 'puppy mills', may neglect these standards, leading to serious health and behavioural issues in pets. Animals from such sources are frequently bred in overcrowded, unsanitary environments, with little regard for genetic health or temperament.

By purchasing from a licensed breeder, you not only gain a healthier, well-adjusted pet, but also support practices that protect animals and discourage exploitation. Reputable breeders also offer transparency, allowing you to meet the parents, view living conditions, and receive guidance on caring for your new companion.

If you think someone may be breeding or selling pets without a licence, please contact: licensing@westberks.gov.uk

Countryside

Extension to Eling Way

WBC are carrying out work to extend the Eling Way shared-use route through Hermitage.

February 2020 saw the opening of the first section of Eling Way, a traffic-free link for cycling, horse-riding, walking and wheeling between Hampstead Norreys and Hermitage. Eling Way is now well-established and well-used by residents, with a recent daytime count of 185 pedestrians and 40 cyclists enjoying the route.

The first section was initiated by West Berkshire Spokes and delivered in partnership by the Council, National Highways, Eling Estate, Sustrans and Hermitage and Hampstead Norreys Parish Councils.



The 1km extension via upgraded paths and some quieter roads is being delivered with assistance from Hermitage Parish Council, Eling Estate and other local landowners. It will initially be signed between Hermitage Village Hall, Yattendon Road and Marlston Road.

The scheme reflects a desire within the adopted Hermitage Neighbourhood Plan and includes:

- Path widening and upgrading
- Installation of tactile paving
- New line marking, direction and safety signing

WBC is conscious of local aspirations for Eling Way to link and increase vibrancy of villages including Hermitage, Curridge and Compton and ultimately connect Newbury with Didcot.

Current Consultations

- [Springfield Primary School - School Streets Scheme](#) - Closes 2nd December 2025
- [Extension of pedestrianisation hours for Newbury Town Centre from 10am-5pm to 10am-11pm](#) - Closes 19th November 2025
- [West Berkshire Bus Service Survey 2025](#) - Closes 31st August 2025

Cllr Clive Hooker

clive.hooker@westberks.gov.uk

07798 920981