

Investing in the Future

As your Council, we want to deliver value for money services and the infrastructure our district needs.

Every March, we set an annual budget which is split in two.

Money from our revenue budget has to be spent on delivering services such as social care. Money from our capital budget is used to pay for long term projects, such as constructing new school buildings and maintaining our roads.

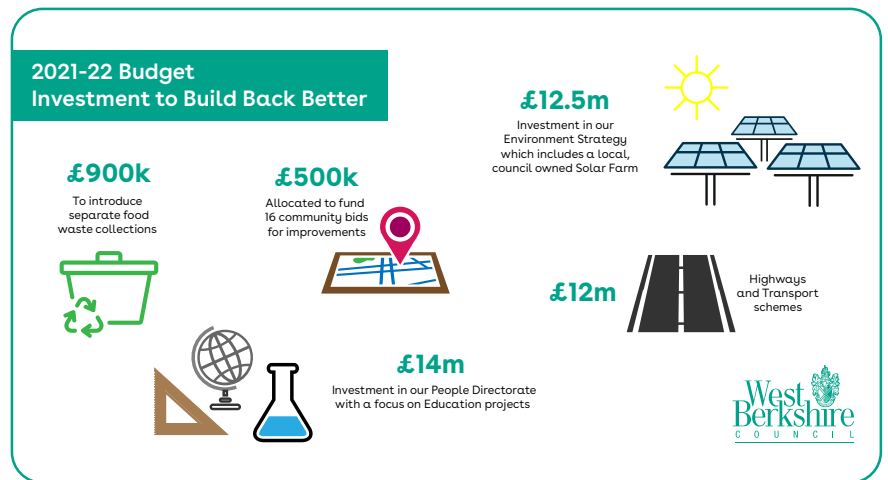
From schools to solar farms, from roads to care homes, we've made all sorts of improvements over the last year, targeting funding where it's needed most.

These improvements will help us deliver our strategic priorities; helping local businesses thrive, ensuring we're carbon neutral by 2030 and securing better outcomes for everyone in the district.

We made a great start on green projects, raising £1 million to support our Environment Strategy with the UK's first Community Municipal Bond. We continue to look at affordable ways of borrowing so important environmental projects are taken forward.

We're proud of the investment we are putting into the district. Through careful financial stewardship we will continue to invest so that West Berkshire continues to be a great place to live, work and learn.

Here are a few examples of the investments we have made and will continue to make to ensure we reach those goals.



**Councillor Lynne Doherty ,
Leader of the Council**

"We are focussed on getting our local economy back on track. Working with our local partners we intend to restore what we have lost during the pandemic, build on what we have gained and to galvanise West Berkshire's position as a great place to live, work and do business."



Our priorities

Support businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire

A strong local economy has always been one of West Berkshire's biggest assets and investing in its future is more important than ever as we recover from the impact of Covid-19. We've been working with local businesses throughout the pandemic to keep their customers safe, distributing £5 million in grants to keep them going when restrictions were at their most severe. We want local people to have access to good jobs, infrastructure and connectivity and have earmarked £50.7 million for our Capital Programme taking us up to 2024.



- Like all councils, we get money from builders to help cope with the extra pressure their development puts on the local infrastructure, such as roads. On top of the 15%-25% we give parish and town councils, through the money we bring in from this Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) we've also handed out almost £1 million in grants for local infrastructure projects proposed by community groups. That money has been used to renovate village halls and clubs, as well as helping to improve sports and playground facilities.
- We've helped local businesses bounce back through our £140,000 Welcome Back Business Grant scheme, funding events and equipment to get them back on their feet.
- Since 2012/13, the Superfast Broadband Project has expenditure of £8.7m up to 31st March 2021. This project is Berkshire wide, so expenditure amount stated is for all 6 Berkshire Unitaries



"We want local businesses to succeed and it's vital that we put the right support and infrastructure in place to help make that happen."

**Councillor Ross Mackinnon,
Executive Member for Finance and Economic Development**

Develop local infrastructure, including housing, to support and grow the local economy

We're continuously working to improve our infrastructure. Although some of these projects are for things we all take for granted, such as road and rail networks, they are essential to support and boost local business and economy. They are often large scale improvements which are carefully planned and implemented to connect our district.



£4.5 million on flood defence schemes in Thatcham to protect around 600 homes from the risk of surface water flooding. The schemes at Dunston Park and South East Thatcham form part of a flood defence strategy that already includes reservoirs at Cold Ash Hill and Tull Way.

Both Theale and Newbury Railway Stations have benefited from significant investment. Working with Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership we've helped improve accessibility for passengers at Theale, alongside vehicle charging points and a new footbridge. At Newbury Station, a new multi-storey car park, additional cycle parking and a refurbished station building is helping residents and businesses adopt greener modes of transport.

Road improvements including widening the A339 and a new junction at Sandleford to the new Highwood Copse School along with significant investment in maintaining our 1200km of highway infrastructure.



"We have a vast highways network to maintain and a strong record of keeping our roads in good condition. We're always investing and planning new schemes to make sure that West Berkshire is well connected."

**Councillor Richard Somner,
Executive Member for Planning and Transport**

Maintaining a green district

As a Local Authority, we see ourselves and our residents at the heart of the Government's plans to cut the country's carbon emissions.

In our district we have already felt some of the impact of climate change, most notably during the floods of 2007 and 2014, which saw parts of West Berkshire under water, with many homes damaged.

In 2019 we declared a Climate Emergency. Our comprehensive Environment Strategy will bring about real change. It includes a number of exciting projects, which we are funding through our Capital Strategy.



These include:

- A £10m solar farm which will see more than 45,000 solar panels installed on up to 75 acres of council-owned land. This would generate enough electricity each year to power the equivalent of approximately 4,400 homes.
- Working with the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, we have planted wildflowers on many verges across the district. This has created new habitats for wildlife, including bees, and also contributes towards our carbon neutral aspirations.
- Installing energy efficient lighting in our buildings. A recent project at Newbury Library will save more than 15 tonnes of CO2 and more than £2,500 in energy bills each year.



"The fight against climate change is one for us all. Our investment in green projects at a local level is one of many ways we are protecting the district's future."

**Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter,
Executive Member for Environment**

Supporting everyone to fulfil their potential

In West Berkshire, education is a key priority. We're working to make sure that our children receive a first class education, in an inspiring learning environment.

We've earmarked £35.7 million for our Education Capital Programme taking us up to 2024 and have invested right the way through the pandemic.



- £8 million to build Highwood Copse, working with the Newbury College Academy Trust on a brand new primary school on the College Campus.
- We're spending a further £1.6 million remodelling and refurbishing Parsons Down Partnership of Schools in Thatcham so that the Infant and Junior Schools can be on the same site.
- Around £1.8 million on Education related care facilities in the district, with new equipment and services for children with special educational needs and disabilities, including new facilities at Speenhamland School.
- A year after the new Primary School opened at Theale, our £8.8 million investment is already giving hundreds of children a great start in life.
- We spent more than £400,000 on the kitchen at Hungerford Primary School so children can enjoy healthy, nutritious meals cooked on site.
- At Newbury's Falkland Primary School, we repaired the roof and replaced ceilings and windows. We have further plans for a £3.5 million investment which includes replacing modular classrooms. The toilets are a lot nicer now too!



"We continually invest in our schools and nothing gets in the way of that commitment."

Councillor Dominic Boeck,
Executive Member, Children, Young People and Education

Securing better outcomes for vulnerable children and adults

Adult Social Care is a key priority in West Berkshire and our teams work hard to ensure that vulnerable people in our communities are supported and safe.

We take time to listen to what people want. We look for ways they can remain independent and encourage them to make their own decisions about the care they receive.

We've earmarked £3.9 million for our Adult Social Care Capital Programme taking us up to 2024 and are continually investing to expand and improve our facilities. We also invested in infection control measures throughout the pandemic to keep people safe.



£600,000 has been invested to maintain, develop and improve our Care Homes and Resource Centres. This has included kitchen and bathroom refurbishments and exterior works. We've also enhanced the Walnut Wing at Birchwood Care Home with dementia friendly adaptations and installed indoor and outdoor 'bus stops' at Willows Edge Care Home which are designed to help people living with dementia, creating talking points to prompt memories, reduce frustrations and help them cope in their day to day lives.

We spent £20,000 on installing wooden chalets in the gardens of Birchwood and Willows Edge Care Homes, creating fresh new spaces where families and residents can meet whilst being COVID safe, whatever the weather.

A further £130,000 has been committed for additional garden works at our Care Homes to create attractive, safe spaces where residents can enjoy the benefits of being outdoors.

We've allocated £1.2 million for specialist equipment for adults to use in their own homes. Having the right equipment helps people are able to remain safely and independently at home, reducing reliance on carer support. From simple items like walking sticks and perching stools to high-tech care devices and sensory needs equipment, our teams work with people to find individual solutions to promote independence and safety.



"We strive to provide the best possible care to residents who need our support to ensure that they are safe and well looked after now and in the future."

Councillor Joanne Stewart
Executive Member, Adult Social Care