

West Berkshire Council Report to Theale Parish Council

3rd November 2025

West Berkshire Council Financial Position

The projected end of year position as at the end of quarter 2 (end September) is £6.8M. This is a significant worsening from quarter 1 when the projected deficit was £800,000. The reasons for the increase include savings that will not be met, e.g. sale of care homes, and high costs of some adult and child social care placements (one of the latter was over £500,000 p.a)

Local Government Reorganisation

The proposal to create a Ridgeway council will be debated by West Berkshire Council at its meeting on Tuesday. The final decision to submit it to the government will be made by the Council's Executive. The submission will be a joint one between:

- Cherwell District Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Berkshire Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council

There will also be alternative proposals by Oxfordshire County Council and by Oxford City Council. The Oxfordshire proposal is for a single unitary council covering the county and would not affect West Berkshire. The Oxford City proposal is for an enlarged Oxford City, to include its green belt, a North Oxfordshire and a variant of Ridgeway without the oxford suburbs.

Whitehart Meadow Planning Application (25/02146/OUTMAJ)

I note that the consultation response from Thames Water contains the following:

Thames Water has identified an inability of the existing SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS infrastructure to accommodate the needs of this development proposal. As such Thames Water request the following condition be added to any planning permission. "No development shall be occupied until confirmation has been provided that either:- all sewage works upgrades required to accommodate the additional flows from the development have been completed; or - a development and infrastructure phasing plan has been agreed with the Local Authority in consultation with Thames Water to allow development to be occupied.

This suggests that, if planning permission is granted, there may be some delay before development could start. However, I have noticed some inconsistencies in the response and I have asked for clarification.

Alan Macro

Councillor for Theale

2nd November 2025