

West Berkshire Council Report to Theale Parish

5th October 2026

Local Government Reorganisation

No sooner had I issued my report last month, but the government paused local government reorganisation. This is thought to be because two county councils had gone to Judicial Review for the proposals in their area.

The local elections next May will now be for West Berkshire Council.

Planning Committees

Currently planning applications in West Berkshire will be determined by an area planning committee if:

- There are ten or more objections, and the officer recommendation is for approval
- The committee chairman approves a request by the ward councillor, or councillor for an adjoining ward, for the application to be “called in” to the committee.

The government has, from the end of this month, greatly restricted the type of applications that can go to committee. Only major housing (10 or more homes) or commercial applications can be and only if they are agreed between a nominated councillor and a nominated officer. Householder (e.g. extensions), reserved matters, and many other application types can only be determined by officers. There is no interim arrangements, so “called in” applications that have not been determined by committee by 31st October will be determined by officers unless they comply with the new rules.

This will greatly reduce the number of applications determined by the area planning committees and it is likely that we will have just one planning committee in the future.

Local Plan

Alan Macro

Councillor for Theale

West Berkshire Council

4th October 2026

