

Report to Midgham Parish Council

Date: 17-07-2023

THA20 in the LPR

The Inspector agreed to this request on 23 June and also agreed that the Examination in Public should be rescheduled for early 2024.

This request for extra time to respond to these questions is to allow for all new Members of Council to gain a full understanding of the Local Plan Review, including the Inspectors questions and the proposed Officer responses. The National Planning Inspector will now begin his examination in “Early 2024”.

Waiting on the Council to produce the options papers to go to Council to be voted on. Will stay in close contact with Tony Vickers – planning portfolio holder, whose latest words on this to me have been that Officers have drafted a report on options for the LPR which Tony saw on the 14th July. They were meant to be published for debate at Council on the 20th July but is still not ready (very disappointing). A question on this will be raised at Council for Tony to report on. Tony goes on to say it is quite likely that WBC will withdraw the plan but we have until September to finally decide. Tony finishes that it is possible that the Minister Michael Gove could veto any withdrawal.

In my humble opinion I would recommend any parish council interested in this should lobby our MP Laura Farris to head off any political veto.

More details on the internet here <https://www.localplanservices.co.uk/westberkshirelpr>

Green Matters

West Berkshire Council has announced that it has appointed ubitricity, one of the UK's leading charge point operators, to supply, install and manage up to 250 electric vehicle (EV) charge points expanding its existing charging infrastructure network. I will be pushing Adrian Abbs the portfolio holder what that means for rural wards.

Adrian Abbs “Officers have already been tasked with reaching out to parish and town councils for community locations for EV charging.

If you have something in mind that you can champion let me know ?

We might be able to do things in parallel via the members bid / CIL bids that are coming up for later this year.

My message to the rural wards is please bring forward suitable locations”

West Berkshire Council and Solar Together Berkshire are working in partnership to help local homeowners turn sunlight into electricity by investing in to renewables through a group-buying scheme for solar panels and battery storage.

West Berkshire residents can join this group-buying scheme which offers not just solar panels, but optional battery storage and EV charge points too. There's also retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are just looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate whilst increasing their independence from the grid. It is free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation.

We are working in partnership with our neighbouring Berkshire authorities and independent experts, iChoosr, to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible. More details on the West Berkshire Council website for residents interested. Householders can register online to become part of the group for free and without obligation.

Other News

Member bids will be decided in September. Looking for fund matched capital expenditure ideas up to £5,000. See attached Criteria and previous example. Happy for other community groups to contact me directly if they have ideas.

The new West Berkshire Council "Report a Problem" site is slowly being rolled out. This should enable people to see other issues raised nearby (already working for the report a pothole / report a blocked or broken gully). They are reporting Councillors should be able to see what is going on in their parish/ward and past issues raised (and whether they met criteria for addressing)

Request for feedback from PC

Are we genuinely getting the 2 cuts a year on rural verges? I have reported Church Hill which clearly has not see a cutter all year (brought up also by resident of Bird Lane last week). If there are any other matter Council are not attending to please raise with me and I will get another meeting with Highways/Countryside officers to address.