

About the Thames Valley and West Berkshire Local Chamber Advisory Group (LCAG)

Thames Valley is a true turbo-economy - the 'Silicon Valley' of Europe and one of the UK's most productive regions. Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group (TVCC) is the independent voice of business in the region.

West Berkshire has the ambition to be an *"incubator location by creating an environment that helps start-ups and existing small businesses to grow"* (West Berkshire Council). West Berkshire Chamber represents businesses of all sizes across an array of sectors, including advanced engineering, financial & professional services, life sciences and technology companies.



Aim and Objective

This policy statement summarises the core local policy priorities this Chamber will support throughout 2021. Like the strategic priorities, set out in the Business Manifesto 2021, they reflect the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and our transition out of the EU. The objective is to help ensure that our region's decision makers and key stakeholders hear a clear voice from businesses as to what we consider important and decision makers understand what to focus on delivering. It is also an invitation to those partners to engage with businesses and the LCAG to help shape, frame and deliver solutions that will secure the economic prosperity of the local area and wider Thames Valley region.

Local Policy Priorities

The West Berkshire LCAG has identified the following local policy priorities:

- As appropriate and relevant to our business community, support proposals that deliver Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's Local Economic Recovery Plan.
- Be the independent voice of business, providing decision makers and key stakeholders with informed input that promotes the value of community engagement and business reputation.
- Champion local initiatives that support the recovery of the transport sector and rebuild confidence in travelling on public transport.
- Foster stronger business-focused relationships with all levels of education and community to build a greater understanding of the world of work and the skills and knowledge required of business for its future workforce. Promote initiatives that encourage business and academic institutions to focus on skills transfer and diversification to help our workforce adapt.
- Maintain support to existing exporters and help new businesses grow their trade activity.
- Preserve our active partnerships with significant local groups to achieve our wider policy aims and objectives and help inform developing policy and/or refreshed plans, such as West Berkshire Council's Economic Development Strategy.
- Promote initiatives that support a green recovery, and proposals that are helping to build a local economy centred around climate change, sustainability principles and social purpose.
- Promote the sectors where West Berkshire (and Berkshire as a whole) has evidential strengths to support foreign direct investment into the area.

- Support initiatives that re-imagine Newbury town centre, open up new possibilities for hospitality and retail and ensure the high street experience, which has fundamentally changed, recognises and builds a stronger sense of community and place. Encourage the appropriate levels of investment and active management in our town centre that will help secure its future vitality and vibrancy and employment opportunities.
- Support proposals that can help secure the appropriate mix of development and the highest standard of urban design, planning and infrastructure provision (e.g. West Berkshire's refreshed Newbury Town masterplan).

Strategic Policy Background

Our LCAG priorities form an integral part of the wider TVCC regional programme detailed in the four main priorities set out in the Business Manifesto 2021. Together, they form policies and actions behind which the whole Chamber network will focus:

- **Resilient Infrastructure Networks:** Promote the need for investment in a resilient infrastructure network for the Thames Valley, strengthening provision of physical and digital networks that will support the region's future sustainable economic growth and innovation.
- **Low-Carbon, Green Economy:** Be an advocate for in-region excellence and thought leadership, supporting the greater awareness and understanding of the steps we all need to take for a more sustainable, low carbon, 'green' future for the Thames Valley.
- **EU Exit Transition:** Use the Chamber's experience to provide our businesses community with relevant support and practical information as Britain transitions out of the EU and to lobby Government to ensure frictionless trade, investment and freedom of movement for the workforce.
- **Restart, Rebuild, Renew:** Continue to support initiatives that will 'Invest in the Success' of the region, its productivity and the wider levelling-up agenda, and the "Restart, Rebuild, Renew" of the UK and Thames Valley economy, post COVID-19.



Joe Baily
President, West Berkshire
Chamber of Commerce




Paul Britton
Chief Executive, TVCC



www.thamesvalleychamber.co.uk

