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NEWBURY NEWS



Northcroft Leisure Centre

Green grant win for leisure centre

£2.8m towards Northcroft decarbonisation upgrade

WEST Berkshire Council has been given a £2.8m grant to help deliver a major green upgrade at Northcroft Leisure Centre in Newbury.

It is from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme, which, alongside an additional £387,000 from the council, will fund a wide-ranging decarbonisation project designed to dramatically improve the building's energy efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and support the local authority's wider climate and environmental goals.

Planned works, set for completion by March 2027, include installation of air source heat pumps, new energy-efficient air handling units, insulation and rooftop solar panels.

Stuart Gourley (Lib Dem, Newbury Clay Hill), executive member for environment and highways at West Berkshire Council, said: "This is a major step forward in our climate journey.

"Northcroft Leisure Centre is a valued community landmark, and this work will

By NIKI HINMAN
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ensure it's as sustainable as it is popular."

Sally Thomas-Ellis, regional contract manager at Everyone Active, who manages the centre on the council's behalf, welcomed the news, saying: "It is great news to have more onsite renewable energy generation and improvements to energy efficiency, which will further reduce the centre's

carbon footprint going forward.

"Everyone Active is proud to work alongside West Berkshire Council in meeting their net zero ambitions, which is the most important part of our own net zero strategy."

The works, set to begin in 2026, will be planned to minimise disruption for centre users.

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme is run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and delivered by Salix.

Director of public sector decarbonisation at Salix, Ian Rodger, said: "We're delighted to support West Berkshire Council as it works towards its net zero goals.

"The work will not only improve the energy efficiency of a much-used community venue, but it will enable it to be transformed into a more comfortable place for the many thousands of people who enjoy visiting it every year."

It is great news to have more onsite renewable energy generation and improvements to energy efficiency, which will further reduce the centre's carbon footprint going forward



Mayor Petra Pemberton officially opens The Retrograde, alongside guest Helen Thompson of the Stoke Mandeville Maulers wheelchair rugby team and founder Aaron White

Vintage shop has a sustainable mission

A NEW retro-themed shop promises to bring a dose of vintage charm to Thatcham.

The Retrograde opened its doors in Chapel Street to a lively crowd of shoppers and dignitaries on Tuesday.

Mayor of Thatcham Petra Pemberton was joined by councillor Ben Schiffer-Harte and Helen Thompson from the wheelchair rugby team Stoke Mandeville Maulers in cutting the ribbon.

More than just a treasure trove of pre-owned items, The Retrograde hopes to encourage sustainable shopping by helping to divert the volume of products ending up on landfill.

Shoppers can donate items with the confidence that their contributions will benefit deserving causes, including Burghfield Common company No Knockout CIC, which provides children facing financial difficulties with access to

sports and arts programmes.

Founder Aaron White shared his excitement: "It was fantastic to see so many people get a chance to come into store on day one and get a sense of the vibe of the store and find out what we are bringing to the vintage thrift retail market.

"I'm really pleased that we can offer another shop, with an edge, a little difference that the Thatcham public can enjoy."