

# Suggest a topic for scrutiny

About you – contact details	
Title	Cllr
Firstname*	Tony
Surname*	Vickers
House No./Name*	62
Address (Line 2)	Craven Road
Address (Line 3)	
Address (Town/City)	Newbury
Postcode*	RG14 5NJ
Email Address	tonyvickers@phonecoop.coop
Telephone Area Code/Number*	01635 230046

\* These details must be filled-in.

Your suggested topic(s)	
<b>Your suggested topic for scrutiny:</b>	
Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue	
<b>Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered:</b> <i>(Please include your reasons for suggesting the topic and include details of any evidence you may have)</i>	
see attached notes for further details	
<b>Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria. Please click the appropriate box(es):</b>	
(1) The issue is an area of key public concern (e.g. as identified through Members surgeries, constituents' concerns, the Annual Satisfaction Survey, raised in the local media, etc).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(2) There is evidence of poor performance within the activity (i.e. through performance indicator data, experience of Members, internal or external auditor findings, etc).	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) It is a budgetary area in need of examination to ensure value for money is being obtained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(4) There has been a pattern of budgetary overspends within the area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) It is a corporate priority for the Council as published within the Council Strategy.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(6) It has an external focus (e.g. scrutiny of the Council's partners, government agencies, utility providers, private sector companies, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) It is a Central Government priority area.	<input type="checkbox"/>
(8) It is an area of new Government legislation that has significant implications for the Council or its partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>

**The outcomes you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve:**

**better utilisation of council-owned car parks and public highways in vicinity of retail, commercial and residential town centre area, with increased net revenue**

**If you have already raised this issue with a Member or Officer of West Berkshire Council, please provide details here:**

numerous occasions with parking and planning services and at planning and transport member task groups

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form. Whilst we cannot guarantee that your suggestion for scrutiny topics will always result in a scrutiny project, every suggestion or comment will be carefully considered.

If you wish to post your form, please send to:

Elaine Walker,  
Strategic Support  
West Berkshire Council  
Market Street  
Newbury RG14 5LD

or email to: [ewalker@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:ewalker@westberks.gov.uk)

## Newbury town centre parking policy, as an asset management issue

Note on proposed scrutiny task for Resource Management Working Group, by Cllr Tony Vickers.

1. There are currently hundreds of empty spaces at all times in the Council's Newbury town centre multi-storey car parks. Meanwhile there is a serious shortage of on-street parking spaces for town centre residents, such that if residents entitled to a permit in the town centre (and nearby) zones were to obtain one they could rarely find a space in which to use it within 400m of their homes – which is the furthest that many residents can walk.
2. Newbury town centre is unique in West Berkshire District in its mix of employment types and associated travel patterns of private car use. Despite requests to have a 'holistic' look at all aspects of parking in this area, within the context of a review of overall parking policy that has long been promised, the only reviews undertaken by the parking service have been to modify the residents parking zones and to extend on-street parking charges. These reviews have not included the potential for residents to use their permits in nearby off-street car parks nor for shoppers and commuters to move from off-street to multi-storey car parks.
3. The purpose of this scrutiny task is to see if there is any way in which the council owned car parking assets (multi-storey, off-street surface and on-street) can be used to maintain (or even increase) net revenue from parking, while at the same time maintaining or improving service to all categories of user.
4. In justification, the criteria ticked on the form were (1) public concern; (3) value for money; and (5) corporate priority.
5. **Public Concern.** Constituents of Northcroft and Victoria Wards have become increasingly unhappy, as officers in the parking service can confirm, at the reduction in available road space for parking near their homes. These are not residents of newly developed properties but live in established streets, where the impact of nearby developments (both residential and non-residential) with inadequate parking has harmed their amenity in terms of ability to park near their homes. Meanwhile since the electronic displays of available spaces in the pay-on-exit car parks has been introduced, it has been very evident to residents that the Council owns a very under-used parking resource which is denied to them, as council tax-payers.
6. **Value for Money.** It would seem likely that by displacing some commuters and shoppers from off-street car parks in or near residential areas into nearby multi-storey car parks (e.g. Eight Bells to Market Street M/S, or West Street into Northbrook Street M/S), with some adjustment – even a reduction - to hourly rates of charging and by allowing residents with parking permits – possibly for an increased annual charge – to have unrestricted use of certain off-street car parks, a better use of council-owned assets could be achieved, with increased net revenue.

7. **Corporate Priority.** The vibrancy of Newbury Town Centre is a key priority. Many businesses support a holistic review of parking policy of the kind described: Newbury BID recently expressed concern at the on-street parking charges proposals that the Council is advertising. At present there is friction between some residents and some businesses because the latter are seen to be using (or in the case of M/S car parks not using!) the former's assets: car parks which they are paying to maintain empty.
  
8. [A related issue which causes friction between residents and the Council corporately is the temporary use of vacant sites as privately run car parks which under-cut the Council-owned ones and meanwhile pay little or nothing into the Council's coffers and are not available to council-tax-paying residents for parking. However it would require change of national policy to address this.]