

Suggest a topic for scrutiny

About you – contact details	
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* These details must be filled-in.

Your suggested topic(s)	
Your suggested topic for scrutiny:	
Home to school transport	
Your reasons for requesting that this topic be considered: <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 (page 3 of this document)	
Topics suggested for scrutiny need to meet one of the following criteria. Please click the appropriate box(es):	
(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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>

The outcomes you hope scrutiny of this topic will achieve:

Transparency of costs of home-to-school transport;

Implications of Council's policy regarding Post 16+ transport to school

Understanding of numbers of children affected by changes in the Discretionary Fare Payer scheme

Resilience and practicalities of proposed alternative schemes, specifically Safer Walking Routes and cycle training

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

Meeting with Caroline Corcoran, Services Manager on 18 June 2013

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

Home to School transport Notes for attached Scrutiny request 20 June 2013

I have some queries and concerns regarding the changes to the Home to School Transport policy and the Fare Payer scheme. These changes have generated interest and questions from the public, especially those parents affected by the changes due to be implemented from September 2013.

Following a meeting held on 18 June 2013 between Cllr Keith Woodhams, Cllr Irene Neil and Caroline Corcoran and myself I have gained a better understanding of the need for change and the resulting financial implications. From the meeting I noted:

- Every Fare Payer parent/carer was written to, detailing the changes
- WBC subsidises Fare Payer passengers by between £100 and £500 **per pupil**, per year
- Walking/cycling is healthier and a cheaper option
- A Catchment Area review is to be undertaken
- A Safer Route to School review is underway (although I understand it will take up to 3 years to complete)
- The increases in Fare Payer rates make them comparable to public transport costs
- The Fare Payer Scheme is discretionary

However, I still have some issues with the implementation and concerns with the effects that the changes may bring about. For instance the changes may:

- **Increase the number of private car journeys**
- **Increase cost to some parents for coach transport**
- **Some parents will find there is no public transport alternative to use**
- **Lack of consultation (schools were asked to inform parents of the changes, because it 'was cheaper for the Council to do it that way')**
- **Potential danger of children walking to school along busy roads**
- **Post 16+ pupils will not get funding for school transport. They will need to pay for transport or apply to the school's Hardship Fund if available. This is despite the recent changes to Government policy so that young people from this September have to remain in full time education, training or employment until age 18 (from 2015).**

I have completed the Scrutiny form highlighting the following areas:

1 Key public concern. I have received email complaints and there has been newspaper reports regarding the impact of the Fare Payer scheme changes.

3 Budgetary. The figures quoted in my meeting with Caroline Corcoran for coach hire seem very high. A scrutiny of the negotiated rates would be useful.

5. Corporate priority. Improving Education in West Berkshire is a vital priority.

8. New area of Government legislation. Post 16+ students having to remain in education, training or employment.