

Potential Scrutiny Topics

The following have been identified as possible topics for future scrutiny reviews.

Topic
<p>Sewage discharges to watercourses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To confirm what progress has been made in tackling concerns previously highlighted by Scrutiny to Thames Water.• To investigate the reasons for recent sewage discharges by Thames Water into West Berkshire's water courses.• To understand what enforcement action has been taken in response to illegal discharges.• To understand what investment is planned for water supply and sewage systems in West Berkshire to tackle existing problems and accommodate new development.
<p>Percentage of children on free school meals who achieve a good level of development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To investigate the reasons why the percentage of children on free school meals who achieve a good level of development are consistently amongst the lowest of any local authority in England.• To understand what approaches have already been explored in West Berkshire in order to close the outcome gap.• To explore how other local authorities have successfully closed the outcome gap and identify if there is any learning that could be applied in West Berkshire.
<p>Early Years Capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To investigate the impacts for schools in West Berkshire of the Government's ambition for all schools to provide wraparound care between 8am and 6pm for school-age children by September 2026.
<p>Environment Strategy - Operational Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To review progress in implementing the Council's Environment Strategy, including the agreed Delivery Plan.
<p>Budget Scrutiny</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To review the Executive's Budget proposals and make recommendations in respect of those proposals.

Members of the public may also suggest a topic for scrutiny using the [online form](#) on the West Berkshire Council website.

In developing the scrutiny work programme, it is recommended that scrutiny topics be prioritised using the PAPER methodology shown overleaf.

PAPER Scrutiny Topic Prioritisation Methodology

Criteria	Aspects	Scoring
<u>P</u>ublic Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the topic of concern to local residents? • What is the level of interest amongst particular communities / groups? • Has the topic been identified by Members / officers / external partners? • Has there been negative press about the topic? 	3 = high public interest 2 = medium public interest 1 = low public interest
<u>A</u>rea Affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the topic affect all parts of the district or only selected areas / communities? 	3 = entire district 2 = multiple wards 1 = single ward
<u>P</u>erformance / Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there / has there been a high level of dissatisfaction amongst service users? • Is there evidence of poor performance in this service? • Do we understand why performance is poor? • Is the service costly to run relative to other areas? • Does this relate to a priority in the Council Strategy and / or the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy? 	3 = poor performance / high priority 2 = fair performance / medium priority 1 = good performance / low priority
<u>E</u>ffectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the issue one where the committee can exert influence and add value? • Are changes to policy and / or legislation planned that will affect the service? • Is work already underway or planned to investigate the issue? • Are changes already planned for the service? 	3 = good chance to deliver change 2 = fair chance to deliver change 1 = little chance to deliver change
<u>R</u>esources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can the review be delivered with existing resources and in a timely fashion? 	3 = good availability of resources 2 = some resource constraints 1 = poor resource availability