



## Paper Chain 2010

*The voice of West Berkshire's children & young people*



West Berkshire Children  
& Young People's Trust



Berkshire Association of Clubs for Young People



# **The Paper Chain Project**

*The Voice of West Berkshire Children & Young People*

Takeover Day is a national, annual event led by The Children's Commissioner of England, Maggie Atkinson. It was launched as an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the importance of involving children & young people in decision making.

Takeover Day gives all children and young people across the country the chance to work alongside adults in a wide range of organisations, shadow top jobs, advise on key decisions, and offer a fresh perspective on big issues and ideas.

Allowing children & young people the chance to takeover adult roles and get involved with decision making provides many benefits and enables children & young people to make a positive contribution.

This year West Berkshire Children & Young People's Trust embraced its first Takeover Day. As part of the initiative the Trust launched The Paper Chain Project - West Berkshire's biggest ever paper chain as a way of enabling children & young people the opportunity of getting their voice heard.

Thousands of printed paper chains were delivered to participating schools across West Berkshire with the question "What could be done to make life better for children & young people living in West Berkshire". Children & young people were then encouraged to write down their views and ideas onto the paper chains. All the completed paper chains were collected and linked together to form West Berkshire's biggest ever paper chain.

To help mark Takeover Day, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2010, the paper chain was hung through Newbury to highlight the importance of listening to the views of children & young people.

Over 40 adult volunteers from various organisations in West Berkshire were united in helping the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Jeff Beck stretch the paper chain from The Town Hall, through Kennet Shopping Centre, past The Vue Cinema and along to the Council offices in Market Street. Here the paper chain was handed over to Graham Pask, The Chairman of West Berkshire Council.



Volunteers met outside the Town Hall at 2pm on Takeover Day.



The paper chain starts to stretch its way towards the Kennet Centre.



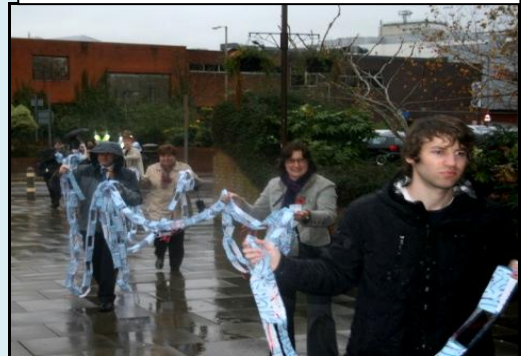
Making its way through the shopping centre and round to the Vue Cinema



Going past Vue cinema and making its way across the road towards the Bus Station



The rain starts to get heavy as we pass the Bus Station



The paper chain and the volunteers survive! the rain as we get to the Council Offices



West Berkshire's biggest ever paper chain was handed over to Graham Pask, The Chairman of West Berkshire Council.

## Schools involved in the Paper Chain Project 2010:

### Primary Schools

Basildon	Beedon	Brightwalton
Calcot Junior	Chaddleworth	Chieveley
Compton	Curridge	Englefield
Francis Baily	Garland	Great Shefford
Long Lane	Parsons Down	Purley Infants
Speenhamland	Springfield	Spurcroft
St Pauls	St Finians	CW- St Andrews
Woolhampton		

### Secondary Schools

Denefield	The Downs	Little Heath
St Bartholomews	The Key	Trinity

### Pre- School / Nurseries

Little Jogs Nursery	Kintbury Pre-school
Playmates	Rainbow Montessori Nursery
Thatcham Pre-school	

## Brief Summary

The question “What could be done to make life better for children and young people living in West Berkshire” provoked a variety of responses that have been split into the categories below.

Health: alcohol, smoking & Drug related	Bullying	Crime, Anti Social Behavior
Environment	Families	Leisure
More things to do	Parks	Reduced fares/price
Schools	Support services	Transport
Retail	Food	Other

Six main categories emerged from the responses given by the children & young people, with the two most popular being around ‘more things to do’ and ‘leisure activities’. Responses are currently being analysed, however, the six categories and some examples of what was said can be viewed below:

### 1. More Things To Do

The majority of the children & young people felt that having more things to do would make their life better. Many of the suggestions were about having more clubs and activities. Whilst other suggestions were to have a place for the children & young people to meet up with friends and hang out.

For example:

“A games centre where we can play all our Xbox/wii/ps3 games etc”

“More clubs for teenagers”

“Activities to meet new friends”

“A place to go when it’s cold & wet”

“More places to go instead of hanging about on the streets”

Some of the activities and clubs mentioned were; Youth clubs, dancing, chess, competitions, art & drama.

### 2. Leisure

Many of the children & young people would like more opportunities to access leisure activities and to keep fit. There were many requests for more swimming pools and for improvements such as slides and diving boards to the current pools in West Berkshire. There was also a surprisingly large number who would like to see an ice skating rink!

For example:

**“More swimming pools so we can be more active”**

**“Improve swimming facilities & make them more appealing to children”**

**“Young people’s gym”**

**“More sports opportunities”**

**“Ice skating rink please”**

### **3. Schools**

Schools were also quite a popular topic with many children & young people suggesting more playground equipment. Many young people from rural areas felt that school should close when it snows or that they should be allowed to wear their own clothing to keep them warm. Other suggestions were for more after school activities.

For example:

**“More playground equipment so we don’t get bored”**

**“More apparatus in the playground at school”**

**“More after school activities”**

**“More after school clubs for those whose mums & dads are working”**

**“No school when it snows”**

It was also picked up that schools were often linked with other issues such as transport. For example Libby King aged 8 from Parsons Down would like “traffic crossings so I can get to school safely” and Nicole Whiting aged 16 from St Barts suggested “cheaper bus fares at start/end times of school for children/students”

### **4. Environment**

The responses made in this category would like to see more bins around West Berkshire to keep the area clean from litter and dog poo! Some would like more wildlife and plants in the local area and other children & young people would like more cycle paths.

For example:

**“To pick up dog poo and put rubbish in bins”**

**“Stop people dropping litter by putting out more bins”**

**“More plants & trees and wildlife”**

**“Nature reserve so children can see animals and find out more”**

**“More cycle paths”**

## **5. Parks**

Lots of children & young people would like more parks in West Berkshire. Many of the suggestions in this category were for parks to be improved. Some children & young people would also like more skate parks in the area.

**“Better parks, slides and swings”**

**“Improve the parks because they are vandalised”**

**“Make parks more interesting so 12+ can have fun”.**

**“More parks & skate parks”**

**“Skate parks with free lessons”**

## **6. Transport**

The responses showed that young people would like to see a better transport service in West Berkshire. As noted previously many of the requests were associated with school as the children & young people would like reduced fares when travelling on public transport to and from school. Roads were also picked up on with comments made about pot holes & making them safer.

**“Better & more reliable public transport for those in isolated villages/hamlets to more cities & towns”**

**“Cheaper bus fares at start/end times of school - 8-9 am /3-5pm”**

**“Cheaper bus fares to get to school & to get home”**

**“Cheaper Bus Fares. £13.50 -£20 pw for students to get to school is a ridiculous amount of money”**

**“Holes in pavements & roads should be filled to prevent accidents”**

## **What happens next?**

During February and March 2011, organisations and services will be able to view the responses from the completed paper chains and formulate a plan of how they will be able to respond or act upon the ideas of children and young people of West Berkshire.

West Berkshire Children & Young People's Trust is formulating a priority for the 2011-2014 Children & Young People's Plan based on what the young people have said. The results will also feed into the Child Poverty Strategy.

In February we will also be contacting schools with their specific data so they can see what is important to their children and young people.

In April 2011 an update to the project will be circulated which will include the progress organisations and services have made to include Children and Young people.

## **Thanks to...**

A big thank you must go to the many schools that helped give their pupils the opportunity of getting their voice heard. A special thank you to all of the children and young people who have been involved in and have contributed to the Paper Chain Project.

Also to the volunteers who turned up in the cold and wet to make sure that the paper chain was able to snake its way through Newbury highlighting the importance of listening to and valuing the voice of Children and young People.

## **Further information**

For further information, details and feedback please contact:

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