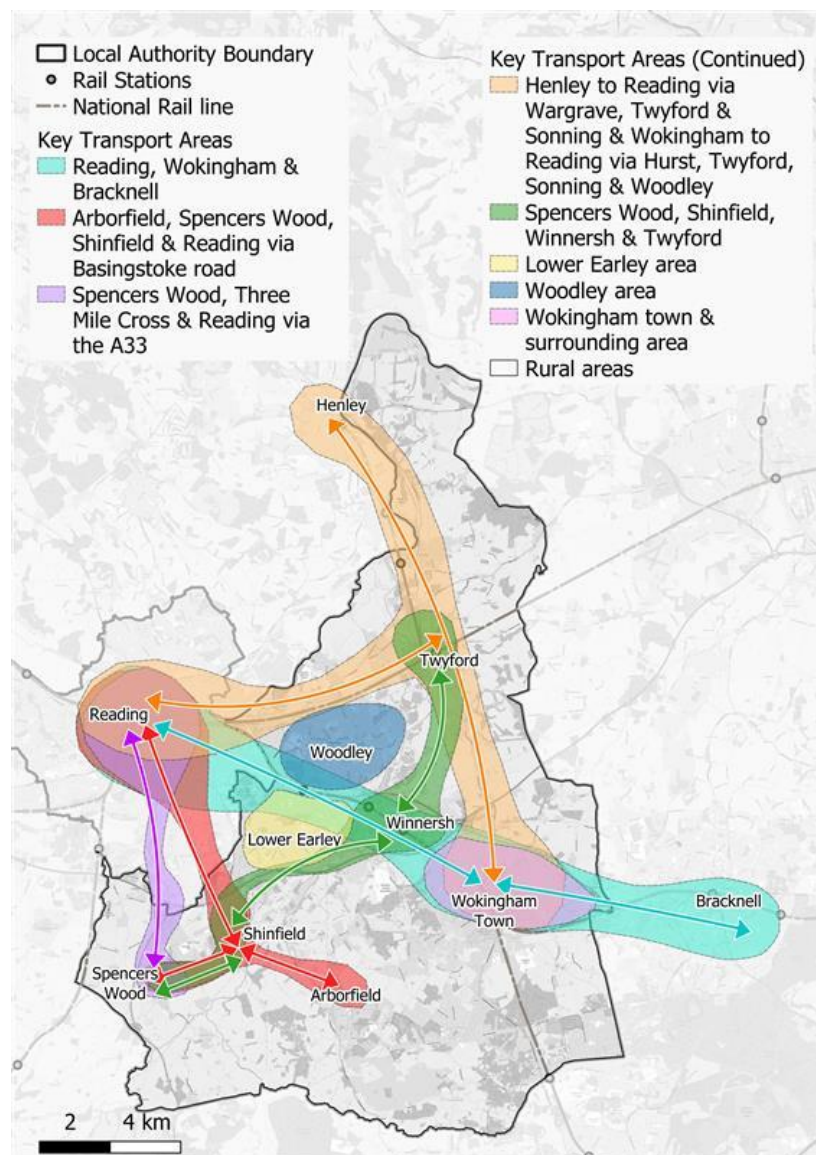




WOKINGHAM BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2024 (2024-2040)





2.3 Key Corridors Urban Areas and Less Dense Rural Areas

The main bus corridors are listed below and shown in Figure 2.2. There are also three urban areas and three lower density rural areas. The key corridors are:

- 1. A329** – the main east-west corridor through the borough which connects the residential communities of Wokingham Town, Winnersh and Earley to Reading and Bracknell. The corridor follows the London Waterloo rail line and provides connections to local stations. There are also several secondary schools and the route is branded with Reading Buses “Lion”.
- 2. A3290/A329(M)** – accommodates the park and ride service from Winnersh Triangle Business Park to Reading Town Centre. It includes an existing bus lane and priority on the approach to Sutton Business Park. The services are branded with the Park and Ride livery. A Saturday Park & Ride bus service was reintroduced in November 2023 following the pandemic and the decking of the car park.
- 3. A327** – connects Wokingham Town to Reading Town via the communities of Barkham, Finchampstead, Arborfield and Shinfield. The corridor is currently being enhanced as both Shinfield and Arborfield development areas are located on this corridor, along with the newly developed Thames Valley Science Park and future film studios. The corridor is branded with Reading Buses “Leopard”.
- 4. A33/ B3349** – corridor has the potential for growth due to development in the Shinfield area. Currently bus services connect Reading Town Centre, with Thames Valley Science Park and Spencers Wood, as well as to the more rural villages of Swallowfield and Riseley. The busiest sections of the corridor are between Spencers Wood and Reading Town Centre. This corridor was remodelled in 2021 to extend the 600 services from Mere oak Park and Ride.

Figure 2.2: Key Corridors, Urban Areas and Less Dense Rural Areas

5. **A4/A321** – provides access between Reading Town Centre and High Wycombe for the communities of Woodley, Sonning, Charvil, Twyford and Wargrave. Thames Valley Business Park and Sutton Business Park are also located along this corridor. Twyford Station, with the improved Elizabeth line, and Wargrave station, with the Henley branch service, are served by local bus services. There is no uniform branding on this corridor.
6. **Spencers Wood – Shinfield – Winnersh – Twyford** – is a new corridor which is not yet established. The corridor will provide an east-west connection across the borough by linking new and established development areas with local rail stations and key bus corridor.

Urban Areas

There are three main urban areas in Wokingham Borough and these are:

7. **Earley/Lower Earley/Maiden Erleigh** – large residential areas with a high proportion of family homes. There is a local secondary school, a good number of primary schools, local convenience shops, doctors' surgeries, and a supermarket. There are significant numbers of secondary age students using bus services to access schools in Reading, along the A3290 and in Woodley. The area is branded with Reading Buses "Claret" Service.
8. **Woodley and North Earley** – Woodley town centre has a good range of shops and is the main interchange for local bus services. Local bus services serve the surrounding residential areas with local orbital bus services. There are several primary schools and doctors' surgeries in the town. The area is branded with Reading Buses "Orange" brand.
9. **Wokingham Town and Surrounding areas** – the recently regenerated town centre is central to the area. The A329 and A327 corridors serve the town centre and the recently regenerated Wokingham Station. Local link bus services provide access from the surrounding communities of Emmbrook, Woosehill, the Norreys Estate, Easthampstead, Finchampstead and Barkham. There are also the areas of new development to the north and south of the Town along with a new park and ride site on the east of the town, boarding with Bracknell Forest Borough.

Rural and Low-Density Areas

10. Rural and lower density areas are located to the north, south and east of the borough as shown in Figure 2.2.

This section sets out the BSIP proposals for delivering better bus services, which meet the Council's vision and objectives, as set out in section 1 of this document. The BSIP proposals aim to deliver our objectives which are based on the National Bus Strategy. Most of the proposals are subject to additional funding being available, whether from Department for Transport or other sources.

The delivery of the action plan is set out below in a series of tables corresponding to the National Bus Strategy and this BSIP's objectives. All actions are subject to the availability of appropriate funding. Each of the individual elements of the action plan has been developed with a view to being financially sustainable in the medium-term. In some instances, capital funding will be required for the delivery of bus priority measures so that operational efficiencies can be achieved. Revenue funding will aim to pump-prime service enhancements in the short-term, so as to attract new passengers who then continue to travel and help sustain the services in the longer term. This approach will provide time for the priority measures to be implemented and passenger numbers to grow, with the view to enabling services to be run commercially after this initial period. The proposals and actions have been developed by the Council working in partnership with local operators and taking account of feedback from passengers and other key stakeholders.

Figure 4.1 at the end of this section shows a diagram of some of the main proposals after 2025. Most notable are the proposed corridor improvements in terms of bus priority and additional levels of services.

4.1 More Frequent Services and expanding the network coverage

The first main group of proposals focuses on the National Bus Strategy objective for more frequent services which are summarised in Table 4.1. This corresponds into the delivery of the first three Council objectives which are:

- Objective 1: Grow passenger numbers to pre-pandemic levels and to continue to strive for growth.
- Objective 2: Return bus services to pre-pandemic levels, improve levels of service and extend to new areas of travel demand.
- Objective 3: Improve accessibility to transport services and the local bus network for communities in more rural and low-density areas.

Bus services in rural areas are generally infrequent and limit accessibility for many residents, which creates barriers for residents relying on public transport including adults with enhanced needs and care leavers. In the north and the east of the Borough this is a particular problem. There are similar rural and low-density areas in nearby authorities such as Windsor & Maidenhead, West Berkshire and Bracknell Forest. The Council has discussed with neighbouring authorities the potential for a joint Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) operation, subject to suitable funding being made available. By sharing resources such as control centre, software and reservations process it may be more cost-effective.

Table 4.1: Bus Network Planning & Improvements to Bus Services: Service Level and Network Coverage, Objectives 1, 2 & 3.

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
BSIP Proposal 1: Review and increase service frequency and network coverage on key corridors	Some corridors and local routes have low frequency which is not sufficiently attractive to non-public transport users or occasional users. Providing bus priority measures to reduce journey times and variations in times will make buses more efficient and attractive. Increased bus usage is an important component of the Borough Air Quality Action Plan and Climate Change Emergency Plan.	1A: Work with operators on the key corridors to improve service frequency through the Enhanced Partnership.	From April 2024 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Bracknell BC, Hospital, Town & Parish Councils
		1B: A327 Corridor: The Leopard 3 & 3A: Reading-Shinfield-Arborfield currently 20minute. Extends to Wokingham 60min frequency. Extend so 15 min frequency to Arborfield and 30 min to Wokingham.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Bracknell BC, Town & Parish Councils
		1C: A4/A321 Corridor: Route 128 & 129: Reading -Woodley - Twyford - Wokingham. Also Thames Valley Park & Ride - Reading. Increase Wokingham to Twyford from 60min to 30 min frequency. To include increased service to Thames Valley Park & Ride and Twyford rail station.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils
		1D: A3290 Corridor. Reading - Winnersh Park & Ride. Re-establish the bus services to Winnersh P & R. Note that this is already funded to 2025/6 via the BSIP+.	TVP services started to RB hospital & coach to Heathrow in 2023. Winnersh services started on Saturdays from Dec 2023 & 6 days planned Sept 2024, to tie in with completion of Reading BC bus lane on A4. BSIP+ approved funding to March 2026		Bus operators, Reading BC

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
		1E: A3290 / A329m Corridor. Reading - Thames Valley Park P & R - Winnersh P & R - Coppid Beech P & R - Bracknell. Based on extending the Winnersh P & R to Bracknell via park & rides.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Bracknell BC
		1F: The A33 corridor Reading - Mere oak P & R - Spencers Wood - Swallowfield. Route 600. Increase to 30min frequency to Spencers Wood & Swallowfield.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils
		1G: Spencers Wood - Shinfield - Winnersh - Twyford. A new corridor linking up existing and new develop areas. Provide a new 30 minute service, subject to demand and viability assessments.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils
		1H: Coppid Beech P & R -North Wokingham - Wokingham. Provide a 20 minute service, subject to demand and viability assessments.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils
BSIP Proposal 2: Review and improve service frequency and network coverage to urban areas of Earley, Woodley, Wokingham Town and new development areas.	There are a number of urban, suburban and new development areas which have inadequate levels of service and network coverage.	2A: New service to new development north of Wokingham town. Extend service between North Wokingham and Wokingham rail station / town.	From Apr 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Town & Parish Councils
		2B: Reading - Earley - Lower Earley/ Maiden Erlegh Area. Claret route 21 and Little Oranges routes 19a/19b/19c. Review the patterns of services and increase frequencies and provide a route between Lower Earley and Wokingham.	From Apr 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils
		2C: Reading - Woodley - North Earley. Oranges route 13 & 14 improve frequencies and/or extend hours.	From Apr 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
BSIP Proposal 3: Improve service quality, accessibility and network coverage in low density areas.		2D: Plan a new south of railway route between Wokingham and Bracknell via the South Wokingham development area.	From 2026, subject to funding from developers		Bus operators, Bracknell BC, developers, Town & Parish Councils
		2E: Ensure adequate planning of bus services and associated infrastructure to all new developments including those in the Local Plan.	To coincide with development occupations		Bus operators, developers Town & Parish Councils
	High levels of car ownership and lack of regular bus services especially in the lower density areas, means that buses are not attractive to car drivers. Bus driver shortages are causing buses to be cancelled and services become less reliable. This is especially a problem for Thames Valley Buses and relates to driver cost inflation.	3A: Work with operators in low density areas to improve service frequency through the Enhanced Partnership.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC
		3B: Extend marketing of services as the 'green alternative' combined with conversion of rural buses to E-buses.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC
		3C: Review of services to rural and low-density areas. To consider fixed routes 121, 123, 124, 125/A/B in and around Wokingham, community buses, community taxis, dial a ride, access for all and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT). DRT could be required to infill gaps in low accessibility areas. To include a review of marketing and potential for ZEBs and the need for a service to Crowthorne rail station. (P3A-B, 4B)	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils & community groups
		3D: Delivery of study outcomes, that are expected to include enhanced fixed route and or DRT for rural areas.	From April 2026 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils & community groups

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
BSIP Proposal 4: Accessible and inclusive bus services for all	Bus services must be accessible and inclusive for all from journey planning, boarding/alighting the bus through to the in-vehicle experience.	4A: Provide better information about which buses are accessible through on-line / in-app information as well as printed publicity.	Ongoing		Bus operators, Reading BC, Town & Parish Councils & community groups
		4B: Provide an audio function to the My Journey website to help with journey planning.	From April 2026 subject to funding		
		4C: Add audio compliance to key bus stops and interchanges. This would improve accessibility with audio announcements.	From April 2026 subject to funding		
		4D: Undertake appropriate marketing which aims to raise awareness of bus travel for all, this includes different demographic groups as well as those with additional travel needs. (BSIP+ funded pre-2026)	Ongoing		
	In some low-density areas fixed routes are not viable. But there are opportunities to work with the parishes to provide community bus and /or taxi services. Accessibility for all users is not always available.	4E: Continue to fund the provision of community transport dial-a-ride services for those unable to access conventional bus services due to additional needs.	From April 2026 subject to funding		

4.2 Bus priority: delivering faster and more reliable services on priority routes/corridors

Bus priority is an important part of the strategy and Table 4.2 lists the proposed actions to deliver Objective 4: Improve bus journey times, reliability, and punctuality along key transport corridors.

Table 4.2: Bus Priority: Delivering Faster and More Reliable Services on Priority Routes/Corridors, Objective 4

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
BSIP Proposal 5: Increase bus priority measures on key corridors. Identify bus priority that includes additional bus lanes, bus gates and traffic signal priority along the key corridors.	Bus journeys are delayed in traffic on most of the corridors. Providing bus priority measures to reduce journey times and variations in times will make buses more efficient and attractive.	5A: Develop a detailed delivery programme of bus priority measures for all corridors based on level of funding available.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Bracknell BC
		5B: A329 Corridor: Bracknell - Wokingham - Winnersh - Reading. Identify bus delay locations and deliver bus priority measures. To include Showcase roundabout, Winnersh crossroads, Station Approach & Coppid Beach junctions. Ties in with Reading BC Red Route in 2017 from the Borough Boundary. Review all traffic signals for a better bus priority corridor.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC, Bracknell BC
		5C: A327 Corridor: Wokingham - Finchampsstead - Arborfield - Shinfield - Reading, the 3 Leopard Route. Identify bus delay locations, mainly on Shinfield Road between the M4 and Reading Borough boundary near the University. Working with Reading Borough who are proposing bus priority at signalised junctions and a bus lane on Shinfield Rd.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC
		5D: A4/A321 Corridor: Reading - Woodley - Twyford - Henley - Wokingham. Construct a westbound bus lane on A4 from the A4 bus gate connection to Woodley, through Sutton Seeds roundabout and to the Borough boundary. There is an urgent need for this as it will tie in with Reading BC bus lane from the Borough boundary to Cemetery Junction, which is expected to cause delays including to buses. In the longer-term look, to add additional bus priority along the A4.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC
		5E: A3290 Corridor. Reading - Thames Valley Park - Winnersh. To tie in with the Reading Borough proposals for the corridor. These also connect with the Reading BC A4 corridor improvements as the A329M joins the A4 at Sutton Seeds roundabout.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC

Proposal	Existing Situation	Action	2025/6-2028/9	2029/30-2039/40	Key Partners
		5F: The A33 corridor Reading - Mere oak P & R - Spencers Wood - Swallowfield. Route 600. The A33 north of the M4 is being extensively addressed by Reading Borough as part of a Superbus route with additional bus lanes southbound around the Matalan junction and northbound near to the Tesco depot and Bennet Rd gyratory. Support Reading BC improvements in and around the Mere oak P & R and work with RBC to deliver more extensive measures as the site, as it is within WBC. Subject to monitoring of journey times further priority measures will be investigated and proposed.	Due for completion by Reading BC in 2025	Further measures post 2029	Bus operators, Reading BC
		5G: Spencers Wood - Shinfield - Winnersh - Twyford. Investigate, monitor journey times and deliver bus priority along this corridor. Any new developments along the route to contribute towards bus priority.	From April 2025 subject to funding		
		5H: Localised bus priority measures at key junctions. To include yellow box junctions in urban areas and traffic signal bus priority. To includes a) Pepper La / Wilderness Rd/ Elm Rd junction b) Colemansmoor Rd / Loddon Bridge Rd. c) Improved bus priority for access to Wokingham rail station. d) Bus priority on South Wokingham distributor Rd at the junction with Easthampstead Rd.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC
		5I: Localised bus priority traffic management measures. To include a) changing parking restrictions in locations on street parking is delaying buses, e.g. The Drive, Culver Lane & East Ct Ave. b) convert some speed humps to speed cushions. c) enforcement cameras on bus priority measures such as bus gates.	From April 2025 subject to funding		Bus operators, Reading BC