

Local Transport Plan 4



2023



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

5. Travel and Transport

Strategic Transport Network

The borough is well connected to major strategic roads. The M4 motorway crosses east to west through Wokingham, and the A329(M) provides a similar role north-south between Reading and Bracknell. These roads are accessed at Coppid Beech, Winnersh Triangle, Thames Valley Park and at M4 Junction 11 near Shinfield. Significant local roads also include the A4, A33, A321, A327 and A329.

Access to these strategic routes supports our local economy and enables residents and business to access services and amenities regionally and nationally. We will work with our partners and stakeholders to protect and enhance our strategic road and rail connectivity. This will help to effectively transport people, goods and services within the borough and to neighbouring areas.

Local Highway Network

Maximising our existing assets is vital to keep the borough moving. A well-maintained transport system is a priority for the council and was supported in the Spring 2023 consultation.

We will trial changes, investigate new approaches using technology to better monitor the network, and align proposed improvements with planned maintenance schedules to reduce disruption. We will also reduce the carbon footprint of highway maintenance and construction activities.

Continuing the current trends which has seen injuries from traffic collisions reduce over the last 15 years, an objective of the LTP will be to help achieve a further 50% reduction in serious and fatal road traffic collisions. Improvements will include targeted measures at areas with the highest collision rates including the A329, A4 and B3349 Barkham Road corridors.

Measures to reduce injuries to vulnerable road users will also be progressed. Areas that currently experience a higher number of collisions include Twyford and Remenham in the north, Arborfield and Newland in the south, and in and around the town centres of Woodley and Wokingham.

Health and Wellbeing

Transport plays a significant role in people's health and wellbeing. This can include enabling access to services, physical activity and the impact of emissions and noise on health.

Typically, Wokingham has a healthy population. Healthy life expectancy is above the national average and Wokingham is one of the top local authorities for physical activity in adults. However, the borough was in the bottom 20 for physical activity in children and young people. Levels of obesity are double for year 6 children compared to reception aged children, and those in more deprived areas are more likely to be obese than average.

Improving physical activity levels in children and young people, such as through making active travel an easy and accessible choice, can be a key component in achieving a healthier Wokingham and to reduce preventable difference in health and opportunities.

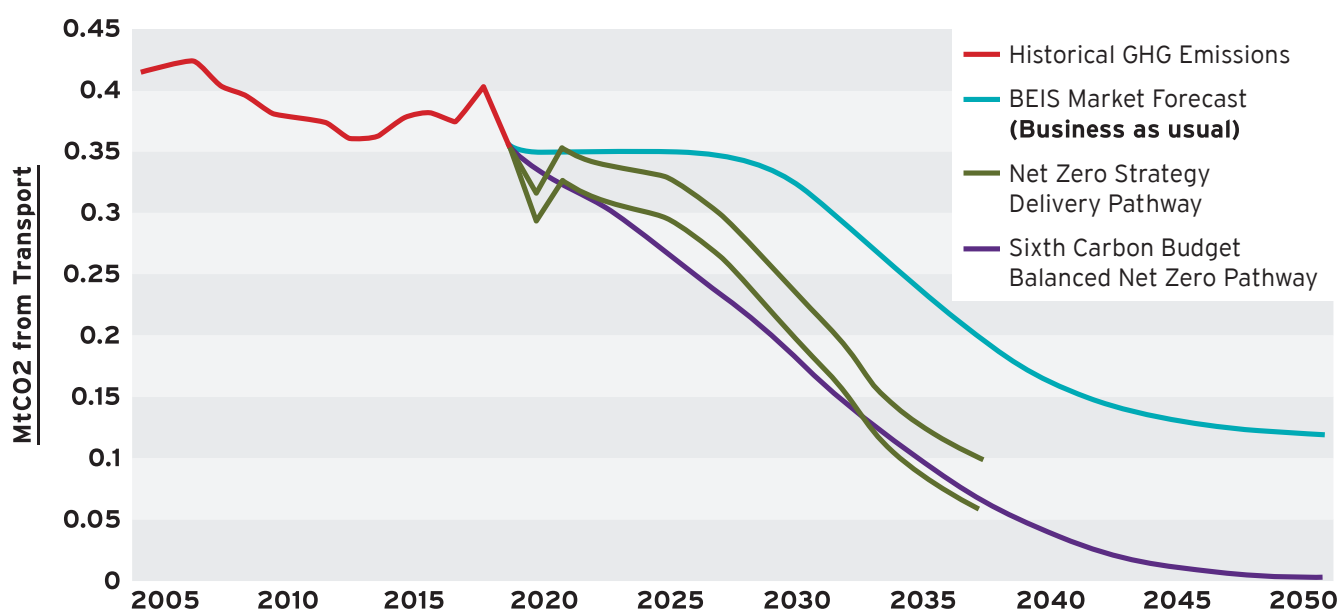
Environmental Impacts

Local transport accounts for a third of the carbon emissions in the borough. In addition, there are similar levels of carbon emissions arising from major transport links through the area, such as the rail network and the M4.

The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and has committed to doing as much as possible to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Achieving this will require significant changes in travel behaviour and vehicle propulsion.

To be carbon neutral in line with local (2030) or national (2050) targets we will need to make significant changes and at a faster rate of change than that observed to date. In the following diagram, the red line to 2020 indicates our progress to date and the purple line where we would need to go to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Historical Transport Emissions, business as usual and Net Zero strategy pathways



Changing Population

It is expected that the population of the borough will increase to 200,000 over the next 10-20 years. Changing demographic characteristics are likely to change the demand for travel. Older age groups make different types of trips to those of working age, including higher levels of concessionary bus travel, and families moving into new housing tend to make more trips than more established residential areas. Of interest, we have noted higher levels of active travel in the new Arborfield Garrison development.

Air Quality

Wokingham Borough has three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), which are where pollution has exceeded legal limits. These are located in Wokingham Town Centre, at Twyford Crossroads and along the M4 motorway running east-west across our borough. Noise pollution is also highest adjacent to the M4 motorway. Clean air in our communities was identified as a priority from the spring 2023 consultation. The removal of all air quality exceedances in the current AQMAs in Wokingham town centre and Twyford will be a short-term priority for the LTP.

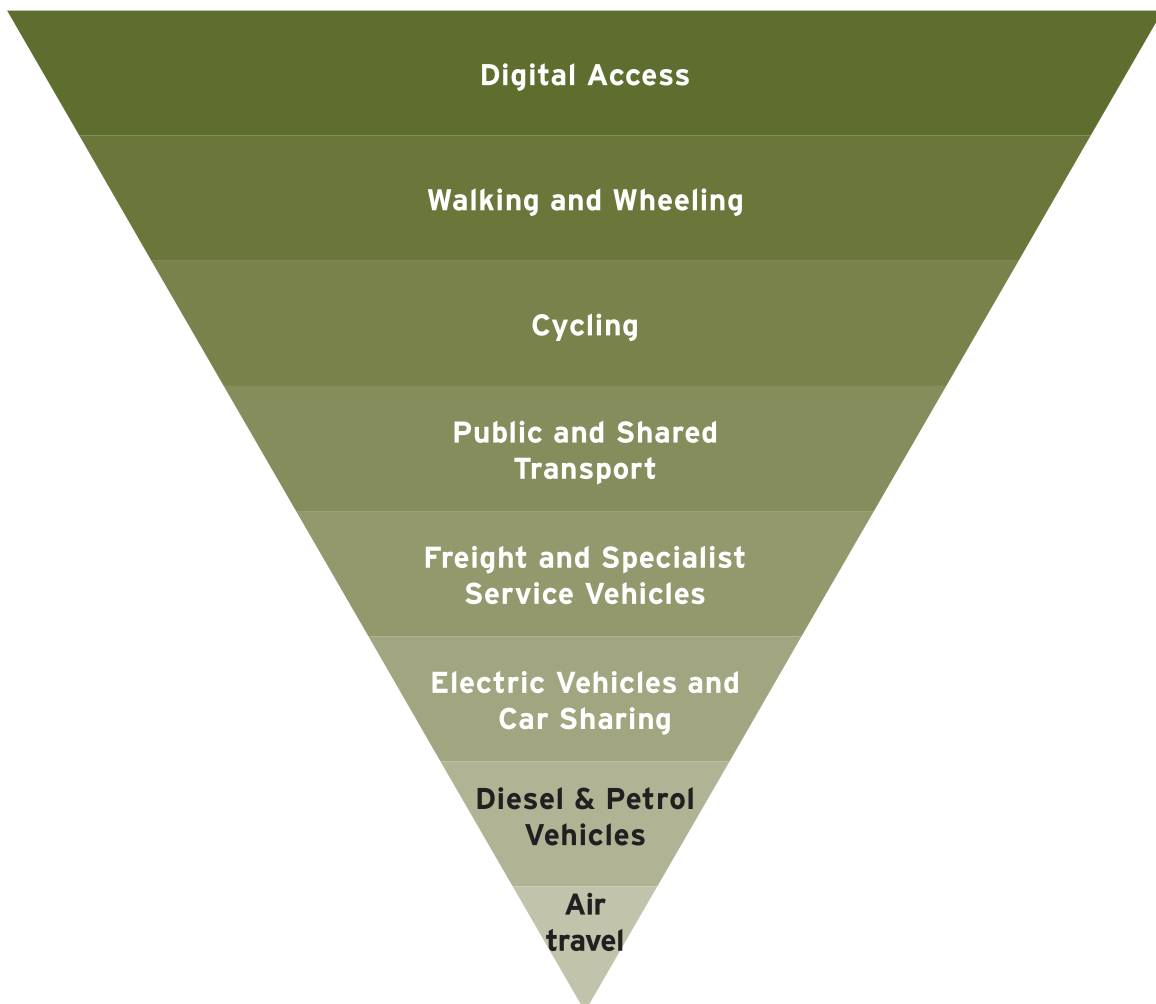
A new Local Plan

A new Local Plan to allocate further housing and employment development in the borough is being developed by the council. The 2021 Local Plan consultation proposed continued development at Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) in Arborfield, South Wokingham and Shinfield and a new SDL at Hall Farm between Shinfield and Earley. These will provide new homes to thousands of future residents along with new education, retail and employment facilities.

The LTP will complement and align transport strategy with the emerging Local Plan. Infrastructure delivered in the larger developments will need to provide safe walking, cycling and attractive public transport routes within and from these developments to support and enable sustainable development and appropriate infrastructure for new and existing residents.

Hierarchy of Transport

In line with national policy, the following diagram sets out a hierarchy of transport provision for the LTP, clearly placing the most sustainable forms of travel and access first and with less sustainable modes having a lower priority. At the top is Digital Access, which contributes to reducing the need to travel, for example to work and shopping (however, we recognise that this can also have a negative impact on the economy). Next is walking and wheeling, which is the term used for wheelchairs, scooters and pushchairs. Although private cars are shown to be our lowest priority, we know that many of us will continue to rely on the private car and simply could not (due to ability or other circumstances) switch to more sustainable modes even if there was appropriate infrastructure and services.



Digital Access

Technology has already had a significant impact on how we live our lives and the need for and how we travel. Consistent with the aims in the Wokingham Borough Council Plan and Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP), the LTP will support growing use of digital technology. This includes improving digital accessibility and promoting remote working where possible and placing it top of the hierarchy for travel.

We will also expand the role of My Journey to help individuals, schools and businesses develop bespoke travel policies, promote car sharing schemes and active travel opportunities.

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

Aligned with national policy, there will be an objective for 50% of trips in our towns to be made by active travel. Those residents living in urban areas are generally closer to services and employment, have more travel choice and the greatest potential to walk, cycle or use public transport.

This will be achieved by delivering the active travel infrastructure in our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), improving facilities for walking, cycling and wheeling and reducing the dominance of road traffic in urban centres where supported. We will also improve cycle parking and access and investigate the potential for an on-street cycle or e-scooter scheme through the production of a Future Mobility Strategy.

The priorities for active travel are identified in our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. These include but are not limited to:

- A329 Reading - Winnersh - Wokingham - Coppid Beech Roundabout;
- B3349 Barkham Road;
- Reducing through traffic and increasing active travel facilities in Wokingham Town centre;
- Finchampstead Road.;
- Lower Earley Way; and
- links to Twyford and Twyford Station.

Outside of urban areas, rural villages and local towns bring communities together and provide local services and employment that reduce the need to travel. We will support vibrant rural centres by improving access and public realm, providing local parking facilities, and helping to enable local communities to provide events in their area.

Delivery of the LCWIP and sections of the Greenways network will bolster active travel commuting and leisure opportunities by walking, cycling or wheeling in our rural areas. It will, however, take time to create a network of new off-road routes. Therefore, we will also trial locally supported changes to increase the network of low traffic routes for walking, cycling and horse riding, with priority given to those that improve access to services and amenities such as education and the Greenways.

To enable more walking, cycling and wheeling to school and to promote increased physical activity in young people, we will develop a sustainable routes to school strategy. This will look at public transport and active travel access to schools and where targeted changes could improve access and safe routes for all that enable and support independent access to schools, shops and other amenities. We will also investigate locations to introduce school streets.

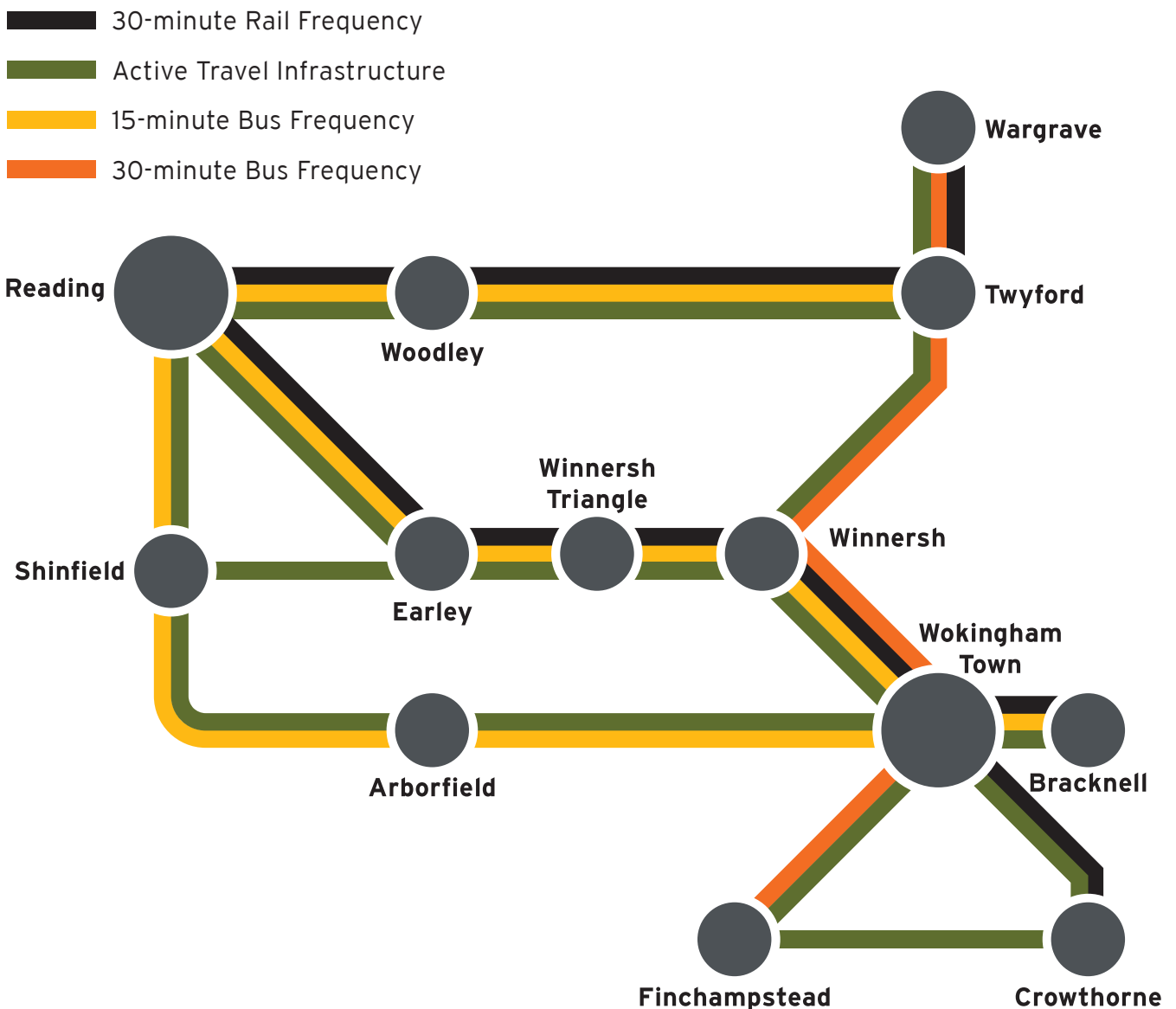
Public Transport

Reading has one of the highest levels of bus use per head in the country and those parts of the borough adjacent to the Reading including Earley, Woodley and Shinfield, and along the A329 and A4 corridors, benefit from the most regular services. Outside of the urban areas, provision is varied with typically less frequent services between Wokingham, Arborfield and Finchampstead, and between Wokingham and Twyford.

We will implement proposals in the Bus Service Improvement Plan targeted at those areas serving the greatest number of people and where improved bus services can be viable. This includes increasing service frequencies and reliability on higher frequency routes and expanding the bus network to support our growing population.

The strategy will seek to improve travel choices and safety by implementing high-quality travel corridors for walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport to provide a core network of attractive cycle and bus routes.

Aspirational Sustainable Travel Network



We will also investigate and deliver measures to improve access for all. This includes seeking lower fares for bus travel, improvements to the railway crossing at Tan House/Carnival Hub to provide a step free railway crossing and continuing to fund dial-a-ride services to serve rural communities. Support to improve bus services and interchange to Crowthorne Station will also be explored with local stakeholders.

Park and ride services provide additional capacity into Reading and access to a high-quality bus service that is not always viable in lower density rural areas. The park and ride sites at Mere oak and Thames Valley Park are linked by a single, high frequency bus service via Reading town centre or the hospital. Coppid Beech and Winnersh Triangle park and rides are not currently operating as demand for park and ride services has not yet recovered after the pandemic. Nevertheless park and ride is an important part of the transport network and we will seek to further enhance facilities at these, including interchange and electric vehicle charging facilities.

We will work with and encourage rail operators to increase capacity on the North Downs Line and to introduce a Winnersh Triangle stop on the existing Reading-Guildford-Redhill rail service as well as supporting improved services at our railway stations, interchange and measures to decarbonise the railway.

Twyford station has also benefitted from the introduction of electrified rail services and Elizabeth Line operations providing a direct service into and across central London to Shenfield. To complement the enhanced services, we will support improvements to interchange and access for all at Twyford station.

Electric Vehicles and Car Sharing

To facilitate the transition to zero emission vehicles, we will deliver electric vehicle charge points in areas with limited off-street parking and the highest density of housing, including Wokingham town centre, Winnersh and Earley. To further increase the range of charging options, we will investigate opportunities to generate energy at our park and ride car parks and promote the sharing of existing private charge points, known as peer-to-peer charging.

We will produce an electric vehicle strategy setting out priorities. To reflect the growing and changing technology this will be updated periodically throughout the LTP period. There will also need to find innovative ways of increasing access to zero emission vehicles including the development of a Car Sharing Strategy.

While the transition to zero emission vehicles will help to reduce our emissions, they will still contribute to air and noise pollution. Their contribution to reducing carbon emissions is also small in the short term before widespread uptake. As such, changes in our behaviour and travel in the short term will also be required. Achieving this will require a reduction in total traffic across the Borough and changes to speed limits, with the priority being those that improve road safety and/or air quality.

Freight

We will produce a freight strategy to better manage the growing number of light and heavy good vehicles, with initial focus on Wokingham Town Centre.

Our Strategy

Detail on the measures to achieve our strategy is set out on the following pages.