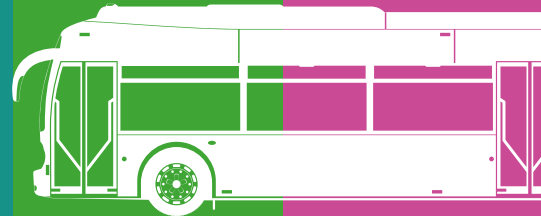


# Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy Document (2025-2040)



Consultation Draft - April 2025



WestBerkshire  
COUNCIL

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## Introduction

From the bustling centre of Newbury to the rolling hills and rural living in the North Wessex Downs National Landscape, West Berkshire is a varied area with a range of different transport needs for residents, businesses and visitors across the District.

The existing framework for all aspects of transport and travel to support a stronger, greener, healthier and prosperous West Berkshire is set out in the Local Transport Plan 3 2011-2026 (LTP3).

West Berkshire Council has made good progress in delivering the LTP3, with significant transport investment over the last decade including:

- **Market Street Redevelopment** and a brand-new **Newbury Wharf Bus Station**.
- Working in partnership to deliver **Railway Station upgrades** including £7m upgrade of **Newbury Railway station** and current £4m upgrade of facilities at **Theale Railway Station**.
- Production of and securing funding towards our **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**, new

**Demand Responsive services** and enhanced **services to Basingstoke**.

- **Bond Riverside** (formerly London Road Industrial Estate) access junction and **Kings Road Link Road**, Newbury.
- **Cycle facilities**, including stage one of the Stockcross to Newbury path, following on from the adoption of our **Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP)**.
- **Electric Vehicle Charge Point (EVCP)** installations across the District, with examples in Lambourn High Street, Pangbourne Station Road, and locations across Newbury and Thatcham.

Over the last decade the population of West Berkshire has increased by 5%. However, in the 10 years prior to the COVID pandemic in 2020, traffic volumes on main routes have remained stable, air quality has improved, and public and shared transport use has been growing. Traffic volumes now remain a few percent lower than before the pandemic, although the number of vans and good vehicles has increased.



*Newbury Bus Station (left) and Linkway 2, upgraded Newbury-Thatcham cycle route*

How residents access services is also changing. Digital access has reduced travel for retail and services, the number of people who work from home has increased, and fewer younger people are learning to drive.

In future, transport strategy and investment will need to consider, and be adaptable to, changes in society, technology, policy and the environment. This includes new development identified in our Local Plan. The bulk of new housing is likely to be to the south of Newbury and at north-east Thatcham. Additional development will change travel demands, but also provides opportunities for new infrastructure and travel options for new and existing residents.

Transport is the largest contributor to emissions accounting for just over **half of carbon emissions** in West Berkshire, compared to a national average of 32%. For trips which start and/or end in West Berkshire, rural areas account for two thirds of emissions, compared to a sixth (15-16%) in Newbury and Thatcham and a sixth in the Eastern areas adjacent to Reading.

West Berkshire Council has a strong record of responding to green issues and unanimously declared a **Climate Emergency** in 2019. It is committed to becoming carbon neutral. This draft **Local Transport Plan** strategy sets out ambitious aspirations in support of the transition towards net zero. Achieving adopted

carbon targets will mean making bolder changes to the network and prioritising investment in reducing emissions to a greater extent than ever before. This includes:

- a target for 50% of trips within Newbury and Thatcham to be made by walking and cycling,
- supporting the transfer of freight to more sustainable modes,
- increasing access to EVCPs, and
- growing the network of shared vehicles to provide an affordable alternative to (single or multiple) car ownership.

Transport also has impacts on air quality, noise and wildlife and the LTP can help in reducing negative impacts and supporting our legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Work to understand travel patterns, trends and emerging opportunities has informed the development of the new LTP. We consulted on a draft strategy in 2023. We have taken on board the feedback received, and the emerging priorities from a new national government, to develop a revised strategy and an action plan that sets out measures that will help in delivering our ambitions. We would now like to receive your views on the draft LTP strategy and Action Plan.

# A Place Based Strategy

The way people travel depends on a range of factors such as proximity to services, the reason for the journey they are making and the standard of digital and/or transport infrastructure. These factors are typically heavily influenced by the 'place' in which people live.

The development of the LTP has identified different functional areas of West Berkshire, proposed here as the following place types:

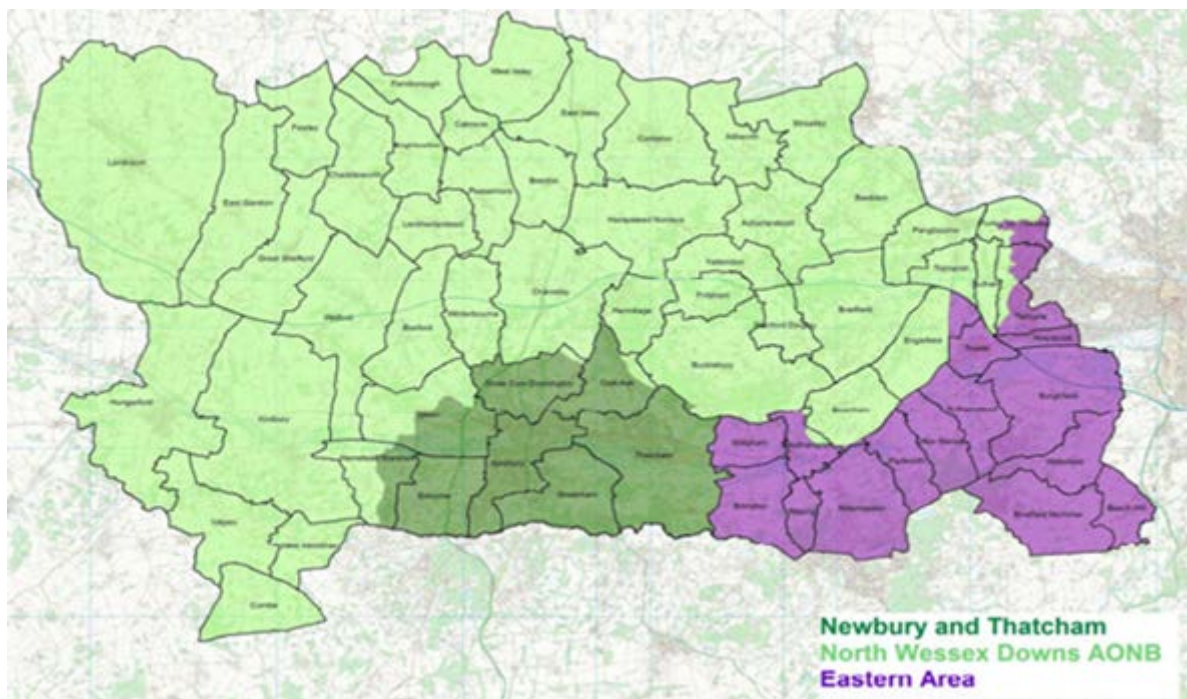
- Newbury and Thatcham. The urban areas with the highest levels of walking and cycling, lowest car ownership, and where the majority of trips are within Newbury &/or Thatcham. It is also where most new development is proposed.
- Rural areas, including villages and the town of Hungerford, falling within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly AONB). These include 74% of the District area and

36% of the population. There are several local service centres, railway stations in the south and east of the National Landscape area, and the highest levels of working from home.

- Eastern area of the district, including Theale and Calcot, accounting for 20% of the population. Parts of the Eastern area are within the Reading Travel to Work area and a third of trips are to Reading. This area has the highest bus usage in the district.

In addition to the place types, there are fundamental aspects of the transport network, such as maintenance and strategic connectivity, that apply across the whole of West Berkshire.

The LTP therefore sets out the strategy for the transport network, as a whole, and then how transport can help achieve the vision and objectives in each of the identified place types.



*Place Types in West Berkshire*

# Consultation

The Draft West Berkshire LTP4 Strategy Document (2024-2039) was consulted on in February 2023. There were approximately 300 responses from members of the public. A further 20 responses were received from local stakeholder groups. These included town and parish councils (Hungerford, Thatcham and Aldermaston), local modal user groups (including the British Horse Society, community rail partnerships, and West Berkshire Spokes) and Network Rail.

Three quarters of respondents agreed that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) should be updated. However, only a quarter of respondents felt that they had a good choice of travel options. The top priorities given by respondents included:

- a. Access to public transport
- b. Pedestrian facilities
- c. Clean air

The four themes and associated objectives in the draft strategy were broadly supported. Suggested changes to the draft LTP Vision and Objectives included:

- An increased focus on maintenance
- The need to provide comprehensive, rather than fragmented, cycle networks
- The similarity of many of the sustainable access objectives relating to public transport

- That there should be more explicit targets in the objectives

Place-based transport strategies were also supported, although the level of support for each place type varied. Support was highest for the strategic connections (all over 70%) and rural strategies (63-73%). Levels of agreement for the Eastern area's strategies were between 50-60%, although when discounting those who responded, "don't know" or "neither agree nor disagree", there were typically five respondents in favour for every one against.

The responses from stakeholders, such as Town and Parish Councils, also included several suggestions, including:

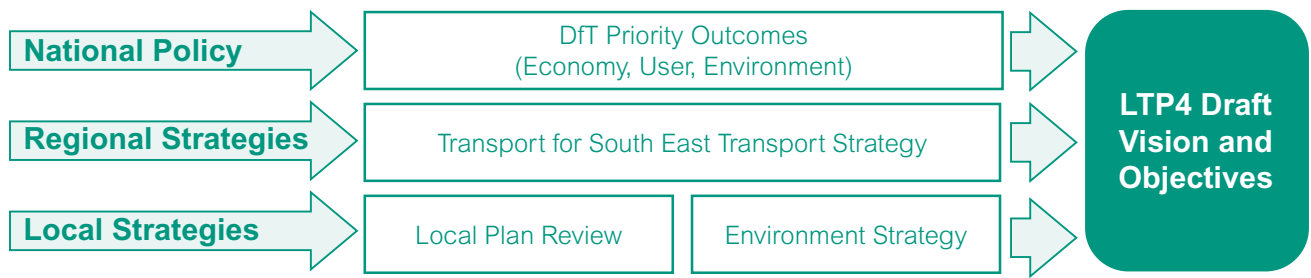
- Greater focus on maintenance of the road network to prevent pothole occurrence
- Household specific off-street parking data to inform off-street EV infrastructure
- Evening bus services
- Worsening traffic conditions near Aldermaston
- Greater emphasis on the shift from road-based to rail freight movement

The feedback received has been considered and used to develop this draft LTP4.

Place Type	Sustainable Access for All	Sustainable Growth	Decarbonising Transport	Creating Places for People
<b>Strategic Connectivity</b>	82%	76%	71%	-
<b>Newbury &amp; Thatcham</b>	71%	66%	60%	50%
<b>Rural areas</b>	73%	68%	63%	73%
<b>Eastern area</b>	59%	56%	52%	55%

*Levels of Agreement with the proposed strategies for each place type*

# Vision and Objectives



## Overview of how National, Regional Local Policy and Strategy have informed the LTP4 Vision

The LTP has been developed around a vision that will deliver on local priorities for West Berkshire. This vision and associated objectives have been developed from national, regional and local strategies, engagement with officers and elected members in West Berkshire Council and refined to reflect feedback from public consultation

This draft vision sets out the local priorities and associated objectives that the LTP will support. These are:

- Create Places for People
- Provide Sustainable Access for All
- Decarbonise Transport
- Support Sustainable Growth

## Places for People

People's health and wellbeing is at the core of the strategy. Central to this is **Vision Zero**, a target that no one should be killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the West Berkshire highway network.

**Safer residential, school and town centre streets** will support the creation of quieter and better places to live, encouraging people to shop, eat and stay in vibrant town centres and ensuring that children and young people can walk and cycle to school safely.

These changes will contribute to **increasing physical activity**, providing benefits to people's health, improved mental wellbeing, better concentration levels, and productivity.

## Sustainable Access for All

To improve travel choices and facilitate **easier journeys**, we will increase access to public and shared transport, improve interchange at bus and railway stations, and support operators in improving the attractiveness of public transport vehicles. These changes will give residents more travel choice and access to opportunities.

The LTP will support **improved digital connectivity** and facilitate the role of technology in helping people in accessing services and transform the transport system.

The transport network is a vital asset of West Berkshire and we will continue to improve data collection and prioritisation in providing a **better maintained network**. This includes embracing technology, improving the co-ordination of the aspirations for greater active travel, and reducing the carbon impact of operating and maintaining the transport network.

## Decarbonise Transport

The strategy will support the **transition of the transport sector to net zero** through a combination of infrastructure improvements and behavioural change.

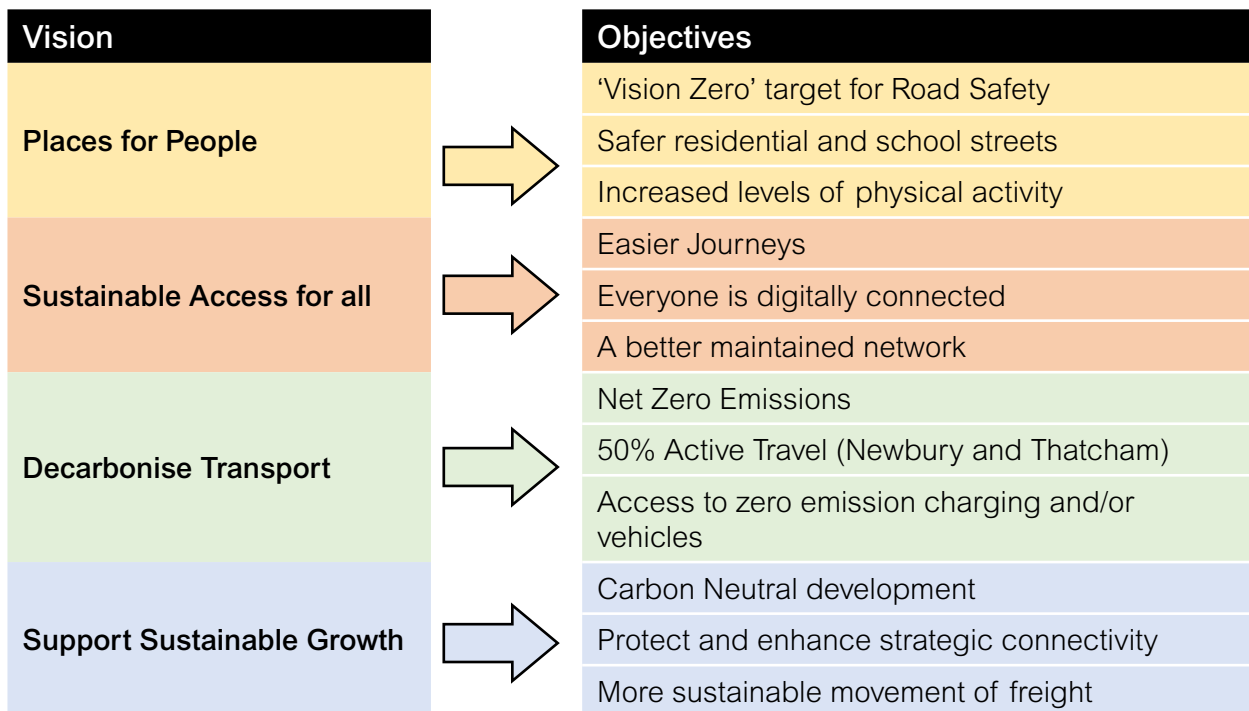
Supporting this is the objective for **50% of trips within Newbury and Thatcham being made by active travel**. Recognising that walking and cycling, or public transport, is not feasible for every trip in West Berkshire, we need cleaner fuels and the LTP will support widespread **access to zero emission charging facilities and vehicles**.

## Support Sustainable Growth

The movement of people, goods and services in and through the District is vital to the economy and the LTP aims to **protect and enhance strategic connectivity**.

Alongside this, the LTP will support **more sustainable movement of freight**, including the transition to more sustainable modes and the management of freight in and through urban centres, such as Newbury and Thatcham.

The LTP will also take account of, and align with, proposals in the Local Plan to support sustainable growth, including an objective of **carbon neutral development**.



*Draft Vision and Objectives for West Berkshire LTP4*



# Place Based Evidence and Strategy

## The Transport Network and Strategic Connections

A reliable, well maintained and resilient transport network makes an important contribution to life in West Berkshire and its economy.

## The Transport Network

The highway network in West Berkshire is expansive and diverse. The Council maintains around 1,300km (800 miles) of highway network and associated assets. This includes structures, 13,000 streetlights, 1,500 illuminated signs, 40 signalised junctions, 40 signalised crossings, highway drainage, verges and trees.

Although this network is an asset, it is expensive to maintain. Current funding is insufficient to maintain the whole network in the desired, or even current, condition and therefore investment must be prioritised on strategic routes or those that carry the most traffic.

The Council has implemented a code of practice, “Well Managed Highway Infrastructure” and will also further develop a resilient Network Plan, to maintain access during disruptive events, and a pothole strategy which will feed into a new Highway Asset Management Plan. This includes identifying those rural B roads that have the greatest strategic function and appropriately managing and treating these routes to reflect this.

Recent investment in the street lighting assets has enabled a switch to low-energy lighting.

Going forward, we will seek further opportunities to reduce the carbon emissions associated with street lighting. We will also upgrade and improve our

traffic signals to more efficient LED technology, so as to be more dynamic in responding to changing travel patterns. We will also develop asset management performance indicators, which will help monitor the condition of our network and assist in how we can reduce carbon in our maintenance operations.

Active travel is a vital component in the priorities for the Council, contributing to physical activity, health, and improving air quality by reducing carbon emissions. West Berkshire Council is responsible for over 800km of footways. To ensure that pedestrians and cyclists can move safely and comfortably, we will place greater focus on the maintenance of the active travel network. This includes:

- establishing a long-term maintenance investment strategy
- developing a set of condition targets for the cycleway network, and
- improving alignment of the carriageway and traffic signals maintenance program with enhancements to active travel facilities

The continued development of off-road multi-use routes, such as the Eling Way and Kennet and Avon Towpath, will provide attractive routes for both utility travel and leisure trips. These contribute to improving health and wellbeing, and provide a gateway experience for those new, and returning to, walking and cycling.

We will also seek to eliminate serious and fatal injuries from the highway network by applying a safe systems approach. This will be done through targeted improvements for safer roads and safer speeds that will improve safety, and through continued education and cycle training for children to encourage safer road use.

To support the new LTP and emerging Highway Asset Management Plan, spending and priorities for revenue derived from On-street Parking will be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the new LTP and priorities for the transport network.

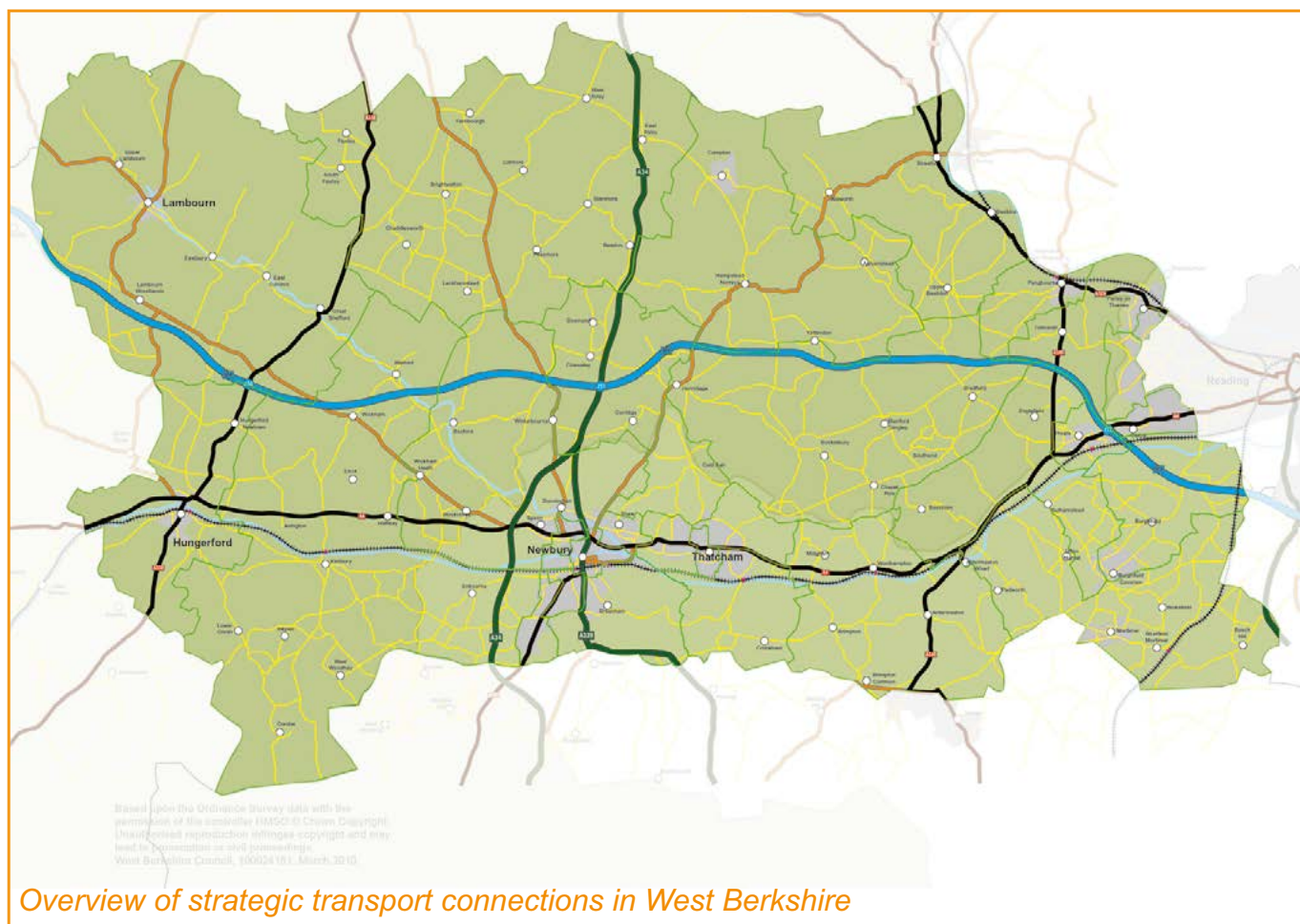
## Strategic Connections

Strategic road and rail links are vital to business, freight movement and residents' ability to access jobs and amenities. The strategic routes through West Berkshire also influence the strategic connectivity to the adjacent sub-national transport body (STB) areas including England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Western Gateway.

A34 is the busiest non-motorway trunk road in the UK with 12,000 HGV flows daily.

There are, however, some negative noise impacts and emissions associated with the strategic highway routes. When collisions occur on the M4 and A34, traffic can be displaced onto less suitable local networks and add to the negative impacts of heavy vehicles using the A339 through Newbury. The A34 corridor can also suffer from congestion, which could be alleviated by transferring freight onto rail, and insufficient lorry parking and facilities.

Transporting consumer goods more sustainably can provide local employment and help to reduce emissions, with freight



The Strategic Road Network, managed by Highways England, includes the M4 and the A34. The M4 runs east to west whereas the A34 provides a road link for freight between the ports on the south coast and the 'Golden Triangle' in the Midlands. The

trains on average emitting around a quarter of the CO2 equivalent emissions of HGVs per tonne-mile travelled. The existing Theale Rail-Road Transfer site makes an important strategic contribution to the movement of rail freight in West Berkshire. This facility will be protected



*Freight Movements in West Berkshire (Source: West Berkshire Freight Strategy 2014)*

and the growth of the Theale Site enabling additional and diversified transport of goods by rail will be supported.

Similarly, we will expect that all development that generates significant HGV movements will be required to show that practicable means have been explored to make use of rail as opposed to road for the transport of goods.

In addition to the Strategic Road Network (SRN), many roads on the local highway network support strategic and longer distance connectivity. The A4 running east to west connects to Reading in the east and Bristol in the west. The A339, running north to south, connects M4 J13 to Basingstoke and the M3 in the south and the A340 from the A4 to the north, through Aldermaston and to Baughurst, the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) and onto Basingstoke in the south. The A339 and A4 are both also important routes for interurban bus travel. We will work with transport providers and local businesses to provide more evening bus services.

Rail services from Newbury and Thatcham provide direct connections to Reading and London Paddington. Local stations on the Reading to Taunton Line at Hungerford, Kintbury, Aldermaston and Midgham and at Mortimer on the Reading to Basingstoke line provide for local journeys, with interchange to other rail routes at

larger stations, including improved travel opportunities created by the Elizabeth Line to Reading. There are also well-utilised local services stopping at Tilehurst, Pangbourne and Goring and Streatley on the Great Western Main Line, which runs north-south along the eastern edge of West Berkshire.

Demand had been growing on the rail network. However, patronage was significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic and, while there has been some recovery, in 23/24 rail trips in West Berkshire were approximately 25% below pre pandemic levels.

To improve local connections, we will work with operators and the rail industry to replace the current hourly Paddington to Newbury and Newbury to Bedwyn services with a single Paddington to Bedwyn service. Longer term, the aspiration is for the current Newbury to Reading train to be extended to London Paddington. This would provide two trains per hour for Newbury, Thatcham and Theale to London and access to other stations. Extending this service further west would also open up new travel opportunities and provide new connections into the south-west.

The strategy for the transport network and strategic connection is set out in more detail below.

# The Transport Network and Strategic Connections Strategy

## Places for People

- Delivery of local safety and collision reduction measures
- 20mph limits and quieter residential areas where residents want it
- Promote safe road use through education campaigns
- Safer access to schools' including idle-free zones & cycle training for children
- Develop a long-term maintenance investment strategy for active travel
- Better align forward maintenance program to deliver active travel opportunities.
- Delivery of new and improving existing regional cycleways, including extension of Eling Way from Hermitage towards Newbury and from Hampstead Norreys to Compton
- Improve access to and upgrade the Kennet & Avon Canal Towpath

## Sustainable Access for all

- Enhance bus frequency to every 15-minutes between Newbury-Thatcham-Reading
- Enhance bus services between Newbury and Basingstoke
- Service improvements to stations on the Great Western Main Line
- Increased service frequency through and from Newbury railway station
- Explore expansion of concessionary fare travel scheme for those most in need
- Support development of Mobility as a service (MaaS)
- Maintain the network in good condition and fix potholes the first time

- Identify and develop a resilient network plan for a range of highly disruptive events
- Develop asset management performance indicators
- Continue to remove stiles, barriers and restrictive infrastructure on the Rights of Way.
- Improved PROW mapping and information to support all users to make route choices.

## Decarbonising Transport

- Work with partners to reduce noise and environmental impacts of M4 and A34
- Work with partners to identify ways of increasing the use of rail freight and encourage a shift from road-borne freight to help lower emissions
- Upgrade and enhance traffic signals across West Berkshire
- Reduce carbon emissions of street lighting and highway maintenance

## Support Sustainable Growth

- A339 Newbury to Basingstoke and Junction and Safety Enhancements
- Protect the use of and promote growth of Theale Strategic Rail Freight Terminal
- Development that generates significant HGV movements will be required to show that practical means have been explored to make use of rail for the transport of goods
- Explore opportunities to improve biodiversity through new approaches to delivery
- New &/or enhanced bus services serving new developments across the District

# Newbury and Thatcham

Newbury and Thatcham are the **largest urban areas** in West Berkshire and home to approximately 40% of the district's population.

There are multiple schools, retailers, services and major employment sites, including Vodafone UK HQ, Newbury Racecourse, Stryker, West Berkshire Council and West Berkshire Community Hospital. These jobs and services not only provide for local residents, but also those from a wider catchment including rural communities to the south in Hampshire.

50% of Newbury and Thatcham residents work at a location within the two towns. Reflecting that these are short distances, walking and cycling already accounts for a third of these trips rising to almost half within Thatcham.

The historic urban environment means there is **little to scope to build additional highway capacity** within Newbury and Thatcham. The focus of the transport strategy for these areas will therefore be to increase sustainable travel and maximise the efficiency of the existing network. Doing so will also help to increase physical activity, reduce road traffic casualties, enhance the quality of streets and improve the health of residents.

These aspirations are reflected in setting a target for **50% of trips within Newbury and Thatcham to be made by walking and cycling**. Important in achieving this will be:

- Increased town centre pedestrianisation and improved crossing provision in the town centres
- Less traffic at lower speeds through an increased number of 20mph streets

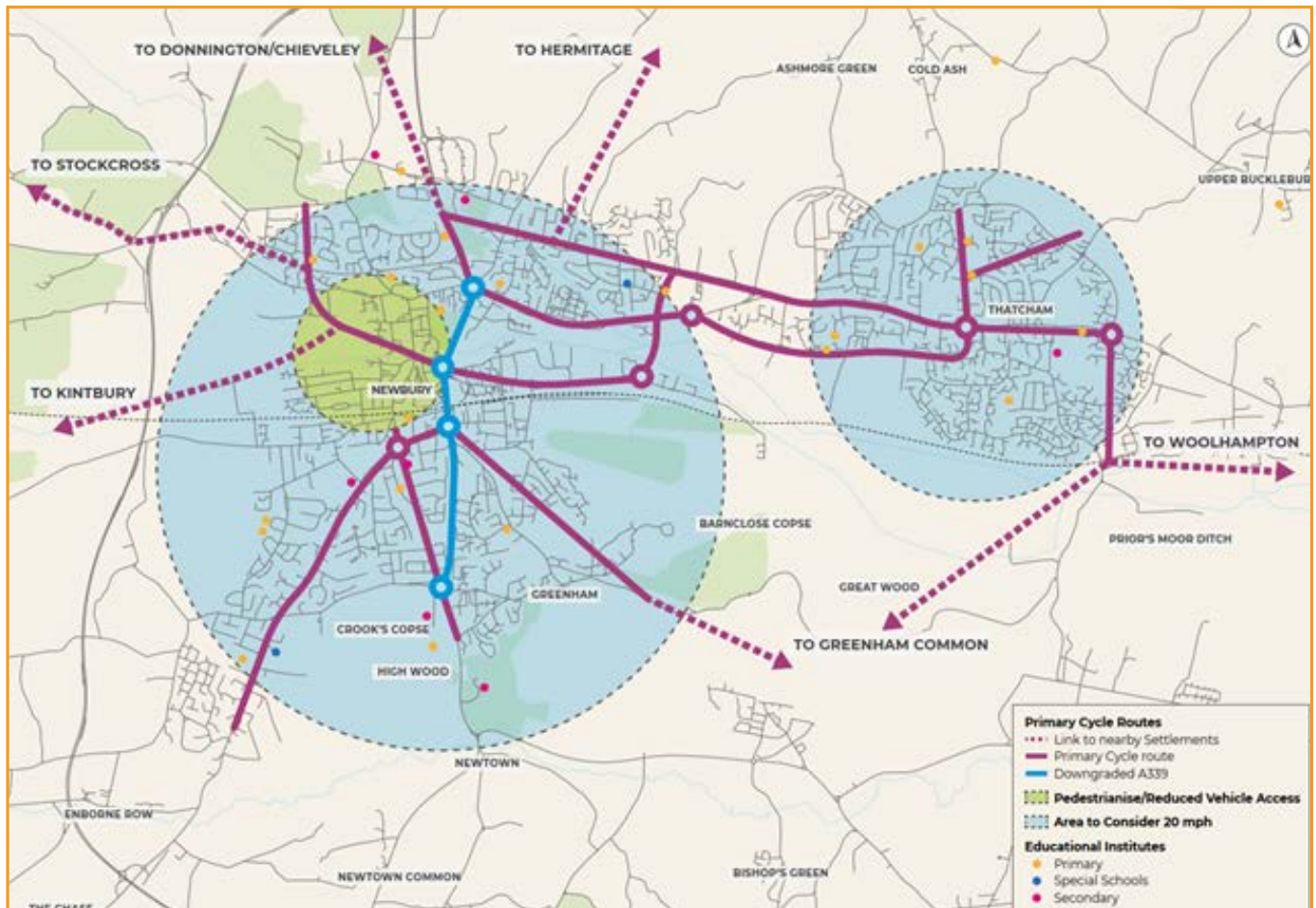
- A network of segregated and/or low-traffic cycle routes in Newbury and Thatcham
- Improving walking and cycling links to and from surrounding settlements
- Trial an on-street e-scooter rental scheme

The West Berkshire LCWIP identifies Newbury and Thatcham as core walking zones. Reducing the dominance of vehicles, speeds and extending town centre pedestrianisation will help to enhance safety and a sense of place for people on foot. A more attractive urban centre that encourages people to visit and dwell will, in turn, boost business.

Key to enabling more residents to walk and cycle will be a joined-up network of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes. We will prioritise corridors with the highest potential number of active travellers and linking into existing schemes. This includes east-west routes between Newbury and Thatcham, a north-south route in Newbury and improving access to education facilities, such as those on Newtown Road.

To accelerate the rate of change, and drawing on local suggestions, we will trial and test changes to streets. This is a dynamic and cost-effective way of delivering changes to the transport network. It can give people first-hand experience of the actual, rather than perceived impacts and improve road safety, active travel provision, and enables residents to quickly experience the shift in quality of place.

Supplementing the network within Newbury and Thatcham, we will also deliver improved links between Newbury and Thatcham, to surrounding settlements, to



*Indicative aspirational active travel network map for Newbury and Thatcham*

new development, including Donnington/Chieveley, Kintbury and the Eling Way at Hermitage. Nearby, Greenham Common also provides a popular traffic-free environment for leisure cycling and way for new and lapsed cyclists to access improved active travel networks that connect into it.

Looking forward, the **Local Plan Review** includes significant new development at Sandford Park, south of Newbury, and at north-east Thatcham. Although these will create new travel demands, improvements to transport infrastructure within, to and from these developments can improve and expand existing active travel, public and shared transport networks.

Running north to south through the centre of Newbury is the A339. Traffic volumes on the A339 are more than double the next busiest road in Newbury. However, the design of the road, junctions and

traffic volumes are out of keeping for an urban area and result in severance. Use by HGVs also has a negative impact on the local environment. Options to change the nature of this road in support of the strategy objectives will also be explored. This could include changes to speed limits, signage and character of the A339 through Newbury.

The level crossing at Thatcham Railway station can lead to delays on the adjacent road network. Options for the crossing will be reviewed with stakeholders; this could include exploring a way in which funding could be secured for a bridge crossing.

Car ownership is lower in Newbury and Thatcham than the rest of the District with approximately 1 in 6 households in Newbury and Thatcham not owning a car, rising to 1 in 4 in some areas. National data also shows each individual vehicle is being used less.

This suggests owning a car is not as essential as in other parts of the district. With a growing ability to also access some services digitally, people may consider the sharing of transport resources, which is now commonplace in some other sectors, e.g. accommodation and Airbnb. There are currently a handful of car club vehicles within Newbury, from which a network can be developed to provide a **shared vehicle within walking distance of each resident of Newbury**. Where feasible, these will be changed to zero emission vehicles in the next five years.

An on-street e-scooter hire scheme – subject to legislation and an operator - would further increase travel choice, particularly to the destinations such as the town centres, hospital, railway stations and racecourse. Along with shared cars these would give more residents a cost-effective alternative to car ownership.

Electric vehicle uptake in the district is above the national average and there are several publicly available EV chargers across Newbury and Thatcham. There are, however, locations with limited off-road parking where on-street provision is likely to be needed to support increased EV uptake. This could be aligned with the provision of shared electric vehicles.

Public transport has an important role in enabling residents to access destinations outside of the District, particularly for travel to Reading and London. There is a new bus station in Newbury and three railway stations including Newbury, Newbury Racecourse and Thatcham.

There are commercial and supported bus services in Newbury and Thatcham. Reading Buses operate commercial services between Newbury, Thatcham and Reading seven days a week from early morning until late evening. There are several Newbury town services, where additional evening and/Sunday services would improve travel options for residents. Other bus services are less frequent, with two-hourly or daily services connecting Newbury and Thatcham with surrounding villages and rural areas.

Access and interchange at Newbury station has recently been upgraded. Facilities at, and access by sustainable modes to, Thatcham station are more limited. We will seek to enhance interchange and parking facilities, including by bus and the potential for cycle hubs at both Thatcham and Newbury Racecourse railway stations.



*Electric Vehicle Charging and Car Club Vehicle*

## Strategy for Newbury and Thatcham

50% of trips made by walking, safer streets and a network of shared vehicles,

**Places for People** - 50% of trips within Newbury and Thatcham made by walking and cycling

- Zero pedestrians and cyclists fatally or seriously injured in Newbury and Thatcham
- Improve access to cycling, including greater access to storage facilities
- Deliver a core strategic cycle network in and between Newbury and Thatcham
- Trial extensions to Newbury Town Centre pedestrianisation
- Create quieter and safer urban streets for residents, pedestrians and cyclists.
- 20mph limits and quieter residential areas where residents want it
- Improve attractiveness and safety of walking and cycling routes to schools
- Test and trial access changes, prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements, thus reducing the dominance of car traffic in urban centres
- Improve walking and cycling links to Greenham Common and to the Eling Way
- Support a trail for on-street eScooter hire scheme
- Employer, school and residential travel planning programmes.

### Sustainable Access for all

- Zero emission public or shared transport within 400m of every house in Newbury

- Expand car club network into Thatcham
- 15-minute bus frequency and extra evening services between Newbury and Thatcham
- Improvements to bus services and journey times in Newbury
- Upgrade of interchange and facilities at Thatcham and Newbury Racecourse stations
- Trial of gritting active travel routes in winter

### Decarbonise Transport

- Zero emission buses in Newbury and Thatcham and along the A4 to Reading
- EV infrastructure aligned with the expansion of a shared mobility network and in areas with limited off-street parking
- Reduction of traffic movements in Newbury and Thatcham
- Reduce through traffic movements, particularly HGVs on A339

### Support Sustainable Growth

- Provide zero and low carbon travel options within new strategic developments in Newbury and Thatcham, including contributions towards enhancing bus services
- Create a high-quality active travel link between Sandleford Park, Newbury Town Centre, Thatcham Town Centre, north-east Thatcham and railway stations
- Trial of minibus service from north-east Thatcham to the railway station
- Improve the operation of and reduce the impact of freight in town centres
- Promote the use of e-cargo bikes



# Villages and Rural Areas

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The Villages and Rural areas include the North Wessex Downs National Landscapes to the north, northwest and southwest of the district. Covering three quarters of the area of West Berkshire, the villages and rural areas are home to just over a third of the population.

Their rural nature is reflected by more limited services and facilities. The services, shops and amenities that do exist are typically located in the town of Hungerford and villages, such as Lambourn, Pangbourne and to a lesser extent Kintbury and Chieveley.

Travel destinations are similar across most of the area, with 60% of employment trips to locations within West Berkshire. A quarter of commutes start and end within the same ward and walking and cycling accounts for 30% of these local trips.

The M4 and A34 run through the National Landscape area and provide excellent connectivity by car, particularly for those living in the vicinity of junction 13 (Hermitage/Newbury) and junction 14 (Hungerford/Lambourn) on the M4 and on the A34 respectively. With good highway access and most households having access to two or more cars, the private vehicle is likely to remain the most popular means of transport for residents in these areas.

Sustainable travel options, particularly public transport are more limited in the villages and rural areas. As a result, travel by car, digital access and walking and cycling for local trips play the greatest role in accessing facilities.

The focus of the strategy in rural areas is therefore focused upon:

- Provision and promotion of electric vehicle charging facilities
- Supporting improvement of facilities in rural towns and villages centres
- Improving walking and cycling facilities, and trialling local priorities

Reducing the environmental impact of travel will be primarily through cleaner vehicles. With low population density, it will be challenging to deliver a large public charging network. Therefore, there will be a need to provide more innovative ways of increasing access to EV charging and the sharing of resources. We will provide support to increase awareness of a range of charging options including **community and peer-to-peer charging**.

Digital access and home working are most prevalent in this part of West Berkshire. In 2011, up to 15% of people living in the AONB worked from home. Home working levels have risen significantly since then, (over 40% across West Berkshire in the 2021 census) and is the most realistic alternative to vehicular travel for work. Increased working from home does increase daytime population in the rural areas, which can support local business in these areas.

We will support communities to build upon these changes. We will enable communities to run seasonal events and **trial different highway and access layouts**. Additional transport facilities including electric vehicle charging, secure cycle parking facilities and, where feasible, car-pooling and/or car clubs will be provided in rural centres and help to support their role as a local hub with a range of facilities.

Footway provision can be missing alongside the highway network in rural areas. Lack of facilities and vehicle speeds can be intimidating to some users. Cyclists and many horse riders use vehicle carriageways, particularly in the surrounds of Lambourn, which has a large racehorse training and rehabilitation centre. Improvements to these, alongside improving Public Rights of Way could improve access and the attractiveness of recreational walking.

The **Eling Way** from Hermitage to Hampstead Norreys provides an attractive off-road route for recreational travel. We will continue to work to deliver sections of this to create a route to Newbury to the south and Compton, and beyond to the north. We

will also identify options for, and subject to funding deliver, an active travel route from Chieveley to Donnington.

However, new dedicated active travel infrastructure is expensive and can take time to deliver. Therefore, to grow the network of safer routes we will also **trial locally proposed changes to increase the network of low traffic routes for walking, cycling and horse riding**. These could provide safer routes to schools, links between settlements or attractive local routes that support increased recreation and improve quality of life. Suggestions will be sought from communities, trialled and/or delivered at low cost to grow a network of safe routes.

### Case Study: Doctors Walk and Balls Farm Road, Devon

Through the Emergency Active Travel Fund communities were invited to propose changes to support active travel. A proposal put forward by the local parish council to reduce traffic on the lane from the village of Ide, on the edge of Exeter, towards West Exe School and wider routes into Exeter was implemented by Devon County Council in September 2020.

The change reduced through traffic to create a quiet 'green lane'. There was a 50% reduction in vehicular traffic and a 50% increase in pedestrians following the changes. Following overwhelmingly positive feedback and subsequent public consultation, the changes that provided over a kilometre of attractive lane for active travel were made permanent in 2022.

There are two rail corridors through the area with stations at Hungerford and Kintbury on the Reading to Taunton line and at Pangbourne and, just outside the district, at Goring and Streatley on the Reading to Oxford line. These stations typically have an hourly service with at least two services per hour in the peaks. Pangbourne and Streatley have a high draw towards Reading and improving interchange facilities and the first and last mile of trips could further help to encourage the use of rail within these local areas and help patronage recover following the COVID-19 pandemic.

While there are some community transport operators, there are typically limited bus services to some of the villages. We will work with partners to use service demand responsive transport applications to deliver efficient bus services. **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)** will help to offer a service in:

- Western rural areas between Hungerford and Lambourn and
- Areas east of Thatcham and west of Reading (Thatcham Connect)
- A new DRT to serve villages in the east, including Pangbourne and Streatley.

## Strategy for the villages and Rural Areas:

Go Electric, support key centres and grow the network of safer walking and cycling routes

### Places for People

- Promote town and village centres, including trial of events/ temporary highway changes to support the vitality of rural villages and local centres and car parking incentives.
- Upgrade of footways connecting attractions and main local centres.
- Delivery of new and improving existing regional cycleways, including extension of Eling Way from Hermitage towards Newbury and from Hampstead Norreys to Compton.
- Develop walking, cycling and equestrian routes around settlements (“community circuits”).
- Trial of ‘green lanes’ including locally led proposals for safer walking and cycling access to public transport, schools and expanding the network for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- Secured cycle parking, adapted cycle parking and motorcycle parking at local destinations.

### Sustainable Access for all

- Seek enhanced rail service frequency to at least 30-min frequency to Pangbourne, Goring and Streatley, Hungerford and Kintbury stations.
- Improve facilities and/or interchange at Hungerford Station and Pangbourne Station.
- Implementation of Demand Responsive Transport services connecting local centres to the wider public transport network.

## Decarbonising Transport

- EV charging and shared mobility at rural hubs, starting with Lambourn and Hungerford, and explore expanding into other areas such as Chieveley and Streatley.
- Provision of charging points and promotion of peer-to-peer charging networks.
- Continue improving rural broadband and digital connectivity.
- Upgrade of public transport fleet to reduce emissions and provide mobile office capability.
- Work with National Highways to explore measures to reduce noise pollution and carbon emissions associated with the M4 and A34.

## Sustainable Growth

- Improve active and shared travel and zero emission vehicle facilities supporting appropriate and sustainable new developments.

# Eastern Area

The Eastern Area is the second largest place type identified and includes 20% of the district's population.

The areas adjoining Reading are typically more urbanised, particularly Calcot and Theale, with a higher density of residential houses, healthcare, education, retail and employment services. Areas to the west in the vicinity of the A4 and to the south are more rural in nature.

The A4 is the main transport corridor running east through this area connecting Newbury, Thatcham, the Eastern Area and Reading. At the western end of the A4 the majority of travel is towards Newbury and Thatcham, but this shifts to a greater draw to Reading as you travel east along the A4. Bus services run half-hourly along the A4 and broadly parallel to the A4 corridor are the NCN 4 and Newbury to Reading railway line. The A340 runs from the A4 south through the villages of Aldermaston Wharf and Aldermaston and north from Theale to Pangbourne.

Although a few local amenities are located to the north of A4, residents typically have

access to a wider range of amenities south of A4 due to its proximity to villages including Mortimer, Aldermaston, and Burghfield Common. There is also greater interaction with settlements outside West Berkshire that residents may travel to for services and vice-versa.

Both the A4 and A340 can dominate the local environment. We will work with communities to reduce the impact of traffic and enhance active travel routes along and/or in vicinity of these corridors, particularly where improvements increase access to public transport or the existing canal side routes.

Over 50% of households in the Eastern area have access to two or more cars. Car is the most common travel choice, with more people in the Eastern area commuting by car than those residents in rural areas of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape. A shift to cleaner forms of vehicle propulsion will be central to reducing transport emission from residents in the Eastern areas, particularly those in more rural parts of this area.



*M4 Junction 12 with A4 Junction and pedestrian/cycle bridge over M4 in background*

Theale, Burghfield Common and Mortimer have sites allocated for housing development as part of the Local Plan which could support and enhance local transport networks.

Parts of the Eastern Area fall within the Reading city region and there is a large draw towards Reading for jobs and services. We will work with Reading Council to improve facilities along main transport corridors and explore opportunities to align with emerging mobility opportunities that are progressed within Reading.

The Eastern area benefits from several frequent bus services, with Reading Buses providing services from Mortimer, Calcot, Purley-on-Thames and Tilehurst. These services operate from early morning until late evening seven days a week. Service 26 (Reading – Calcot) operates a 24-hour service.

Despite the relatively close proximity to Reading, a low level of trips is made by sustainable modes with public transport accounting for just 20% of trips. In comparison, approximately 30% of trips from Newbury and Thatcham to Reading are made by public transport. Trips could be captured outside the urban areas with improved interchanges and the upgrading of public transport corridors throughout the Eastern Area and into Reading.

Similarly, parts of the Eastern Area are within cyclable distance to much of Reading and cycle route improvements to the A329 and A4, including the Theale Connector over the M4, are identified as strategic cycle corridors in the Reading Area LCWIP.

There are four railway stations in the Eastern area, including Midgham, Aldermaston, Theale and Mortimer. There is also a station serving Tilehurst, although this is over the district boundary within Reading. Theale and Tilehurst are the busiest of these stations, and current improvements to Theale station will improve accessibility and car parking.

Mortimer, Aldermaston and Midgham railway stations have lower service provision and comparatively modest usage, but nevertheless provide an attractive facility for local journeys. Mortimer also serves a larger rural catchment. Interchange facilities are limited, but there is potential to improve bus/rail interchange if bus services to the station were enhanced.



*A340 at Aldermaston (Left) and Theale Rail Station (right)*

## Strategy for the Eastern Area

Enhancing links to Reading, improving public transport and priorities for rural centres.

### Places for People

- Reduce the dominance of vehicles and support improved public realm and place making improvements in local centres.
- Improve attractiveness and safety of walking and cycling routes to schools.
- Secured cycle parking, adapted cycle parking and motorcycle parking at local destinations.
- Support the extension of the Reading local cycle network, including the A329 sustainable travel corridor, and local connections into existing and planned strategic cycle routes.
- Support and collaborate with Reading Borough Council on proposals that could introduce micro-mobility hire schemes into parts of the Eastern area.

### Sustainable Access for all

- Completion of improvements to Theale station.
- Improve pedestrian and cycle links to and interchanges at railway stations, including shared vehicles, EV charging and cycle parking.
- M4 / A4 interchange hub offering transfer onto sustainable travel choices (to Reading).
- Improvements to active travel and bus journey times on A4 across/in the vicinity of M4 J12.

- New Demand Responsive Transport services to serve villages in the east of the district.
- Work with partners to use the service Demand Responsive Transport applications to deliver efficient bus services.

### Decarbonising Transport

- Support the provision of EV infrastructure in areas with limited off-street parking, particularly around Theale, Mortimer and Burghfield Common.
- Promotion of peer-to-peer electric charging networks.
- Support operators and adjacent authorities with the transition to zero-emission buses.
- Collaborate in supporting partners and innovators in developing solutions for decarbonising transport, including with existing and emerging proposals for Reading.

### Sustainable Growth

- Theale strategic rail freight Interchange.
- Attractive and direct walking and cycling links, access to public and / or shared transport and EV chargers to support carbon neutral developments.
- Trials new measures and / or network changes to accelerate the process for expanding the active travel network and decarbonising the transport network.

# LTP Action Plan: The Transport Network

Place	Objectives	Measures
The Transport Network	"Vision Zero" target for road safety	Road safety Educational campaigns
		Local Safety and collision reduction program
		20mph for streets where residents want it
		Speed Limit Review on routes with a history of collisions
	Safer residential, school and town centre streets	Development and implementation of School Streets across West Berkshire
		Delivery of cycle confidence sessions for children
		Test and trial access changes to reduce dominance of vehicles, create safer streets and Green Lanes
	Increase Physical Activity	Upgrade of Kennet & Avon Canal towpath
		Consolidate the definitive ROWIP map and statement by 2030
		Improve signage of pedestrian and cycles route to key destinations
Active Travel Maintenance Investment strategy, including process for aligning maintenance with active travel aspirations		
Net zero emissions	Reduce carbon emissions from street lighting and maintenance operations	
	Rolling programme of Traffic signals renewal and upgrade	
Access to zero emission charging and/ or vehicles	Provision of EV infrastructure in areas with limited off-street parking and local service centres	
	Promote use of Peer-to Peer Charging Networks	
A better maintained Network	Enhance Public Rights of Way, recreational routes and community circuits	
	Develop Asset Management Performance Indicators	
	Identify Rural Priority network	
	Develop a Resilient Network Plan	

Place	Objectives	Measures
<b>The Transport Network</b>	Easier Journeys	Annual programme of on street cycle & motorcycle parking
		Service Improvements along the Great Western Main Line
		Trial 30-minutes bus frequency between Oxford- Newbury - Basingstoke
	Access to public and shared transport	Feasibility study for freight management and micro mobility
		Improvements to minibuses Fleet
		Funding for Community Transport
	Protect and enhance strategic connectivity	Additional services on West Berkshire contracted bus service network
		A339 Newbury to Basingstoke and Junction and Safety Enhancements
	Carbon neutral development	New &/or enhanced bus services to serve new development across West Berkshire
		Attractive walking and cycling links, access to public/ shared transport and EV chargers in new developments
<b>Newbury and Thatcham</b>	Safer residential, school and town centre streets	Extension of Pedestrianisation in Newbury Town Centre
		A4 corridor strategic cycle route between Newbury & Thatcham
	50% active travel: Active Travel Network	Andover Road corridor between Wash Common and Newbury town centre
		Newtown Road traffic reduction
		Park Lane Traffic Reduction
		Newbury to Greenham Common, active travel and crossing improvements
	Access to public and shared transport	Changes to road layout and provision of cycle facilities from Fox & Hounds to Donnington and North Newbury development
		Trail of e-scooter rental scheme
	Easier Journeys	Development of network of shared vehicles
		Upgrade interchange facilities at Thatcham station
Upgrade facilities at Newbury Racecourse station		
Robin Hood Roundabout enhancements		
Easier Journeys	Evening services on “Jet Black” buses between Newbury and Thatcham	
	A4 Bath Road, bus priority at traffic lights	



Place	Objectives	Measures
<b>Newbury and Thatcham</b>	A better maintained Network	Trial of gritting active travel routes in winter Town Centre freight management strategy
	Carbon neutral development	Active travel link between Sandlford Park to Newbury Town Centre Active travel link between Thatcham Town Centre/ railway station and north-east Thatcham Enhanced bus services to Donnington Heights/Vodafone Campus Area wide Travel Planning for strategic Developments
	Safer residential, school and town centre streets	Access and pedestrian/cycle crossing improvements in Local Centres Make permanent successful green lane and local measure trials
	Increase Physical Activity	Eling Way: Hermitage to Newbury Active Travel Link from Curridge to Hermitage Chieveley to Donnington/Fox and Hounds Active Travel Route upgrade
	Access to public and shared transport	Demand Responsive Transport in north west of West Berkshire Promote use of Lifshare
	Safer residential, school and town centre streets	Local speed limit and calming at Aldermaston Speed limit change pilot in Theale
<b>Eastern Area</b>	Increased level of physical activity	Local connections and crossing improvements into Reading strategic cycle network Royal Avenue Crossing Replacement of M4 footbridge at Theale
	Easier Journeys	Completion of Theale Station Enhancements Work with Reading to deliver improvements to access and facilities at Tilehurst Station
	Access to public and shared transport	New Demand Responsive Transport services to serve villages in the east of West Berkshire Promote use of Lifshare



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