Local Transport Plan 4 Sustainability Appraisal Summary

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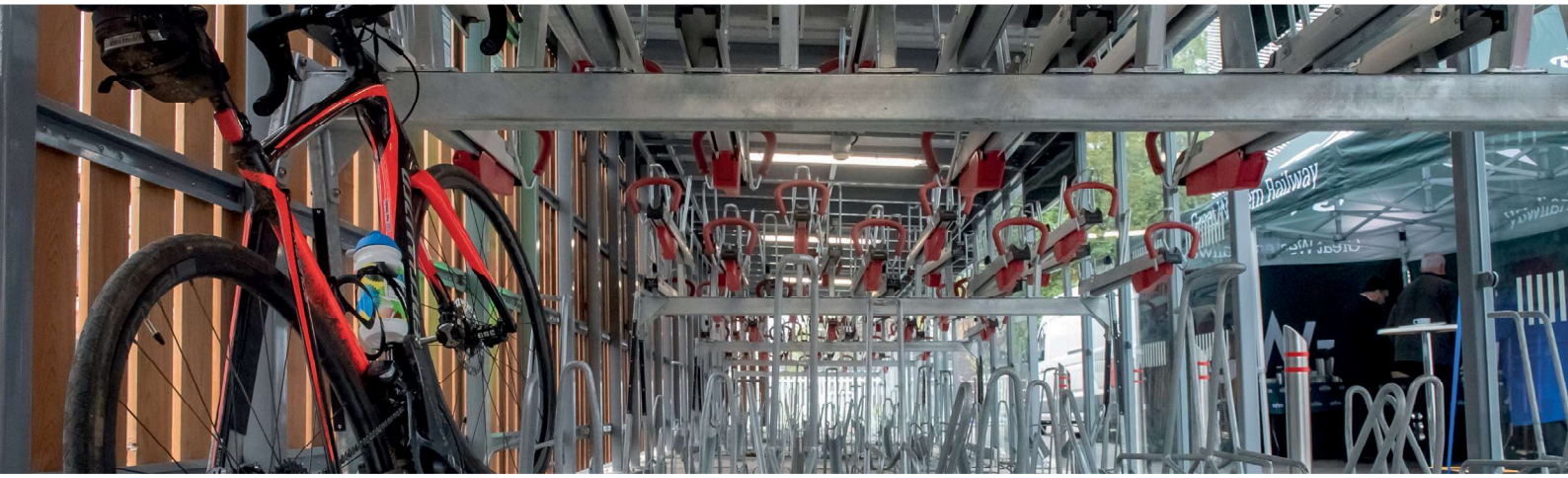

West Berkshire COUNCIL

LTP4 Sustainability Appraisal Summary

This summary is produced using the 4MAT model for helping people connect with, understand, appreciate and consider information via the Why? What? How? and What If?

Why?

1. SEA Regulations require the SA Report be made available concurrently with a draft plan as part of the consultation process, and the relationship between the documents be clearly indicated.
2. West Berkshire Council is seeking the views of statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England) on the results of the SEA. Consultation of the SA Report will occur with the consultation of the draft LTP4.
3. The public will be encouraged to comment on the SA report and be guided by the following questions:
   - To what extent do you agree with the assessment outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal report?
   - Do you think the proposed measures are sufficient to address the outcomes in the Sustainability Appraisal?
4. Following consultation, amendments will be made in response to consultation comments and a final report issued, alongside a post-adoption statement. The post-adoption statement will document how environmental, health, and socio-economic considerations, the views of consultees, and the outcomes of the SA have been considered in the adopted LTP4.
5. The HRA undertaken for the LTP4, will be consulted on with just Natural England.
6. A timetable for the remaining stages of the development of the SA and LTP4 is shown below:

LTP4 / SA Stages	Timescales
LTP4 revised draft Strategy and SA report consultation	February / March 2025
Post consultation LTP4 and SA updates	April / May 2025
Full Council adoption of LTP4	July 2025
Publication of final LTP4 and SA	July 2025

What?

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

A Sustainability Appraisal Framework has been produced to guide assessment of the LTP4. The framework (set out below) summarises the sustainability issues in West Berkshire across each environmental topic, and the subsequent sustainability objectives and appraisal questions to be used in assessing the LTP4 Strategy vision themes and objectives and will be used in the development of individual projects as these are developed.

Sustainability Appraisal Framework

SA Topic	SA Objective	SA Supporting appraisal questions
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	**SA1** - To protect and enhance biodiversity and geological diversity throughout West Berkshire	Will the strategy or proposal: • Protect the District's natural capital? • Enhance or increase provision of ecosystem services from the District's natural capital?
Water quality	**SA2** - To maintain and enhance water quality and resources	Will the strategy or proposal: • Support the protection and enhancement of water bodies? • Improve water quality?
Flood risk	**SA3** - To minimise the risk and impact of flooding of transport infrastructure and ensure risk of surface water flooding is reduced	Will the strategy or proposal: • Increase or decrease the risk of surface water flooding? • Ensure that sustainable drainage systems are provided where required?
Soils	**SA4** - To maximise the sustainable use of land and the protection of soils, safeguarding the best and most versatile agricultural land	Will the strategy or proposal: • Reduce impacts from infrastructure development and maintenance on soil and mineral resources? • Result in the loss of the Best or Most Versatile agricultural land?
Historic Environment	**SA5** - To conserve and enhance the historic environment, including designated and non-designated heritage assets, cultural heritage assets and features of archaeological importance	Will the strategy or proposal: • Conserve and or enhance heritage assets, their setting and the wider historic environment? • Contribute to the better management of heritage assets and tackle heritage at risk? • Improve the quality and condition of the historic environment? • Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness? • Promote high quality design? • Impact the historic environment through issues such as contamination, changes to the preservation conditions on a site etc? • Impact the preservation of archaeological assets? • Improve access and accessibility to heritage assets?

Landscape and Townscape	**SA6** - To minimise the impact on landscape and townscape character	Will the strategy or proposal: • Be located within the North Wessex Downs Landscape Area? • Improve the quality and condition of the landscape and townscape? • Respect, maintain and strengthen local character and distinctiveness? • Promote high quality design
Air Quality	**SA7** - To reduce traffic related air pollution where air quality is a concern and where possible, enhance air quality elsewhere.	Will the strategy or proposal: • Support measures to improve air quality/pollution? • Impact on the previously declared Air Quality Management Areas in West Berkshire? • Support measures for reduction of congestion at key junctions. • Support measures to reduce the impact on air quality arising from traffic generated by new developments.
Climate Change and Greenhouse gases	**SA8** - To reduce carbon emissions and the reliance of the transport network on fossil fuels in line with net zero carbon commitments	Will the strategy or proposal: • Support the Council's own target for transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2030? • Promote a reduction in private vehicle use? • Support the transition to Zero Emission Vehicles? • Increase the resilience of people, transport networks, infrastructure and natural environments to the impacts of climate change?
Minerals	**SA9** - To promote the sustainable transport of minerals and waste within West Berkshire	Will the strategy or proposal: • Encourage the sustainable transport of minerals from locally won sites? • Encourage the wider transfer of minerals from road to rail? • Reduce impacts from infrastructure development and maintenance on mineral resources?

Waste	**SA10** - To conserve natural resources and increase resource efficiency through use of recycled materials in construction and maintenance of local transport assets	Will the strategy or proposal: • Encourage the use of recycled and secondary aggregates in construction, maintenance and surfacing works? • Result in substantial use of resource and generation of waste?
Noise and Light	**SA11** - To reduce noise pollution in Noise Important Areas and protect tranquil and remote areas from the effects of noise and light pollution	Will the strategy or proposal: • Increase / decrease levels of noise? • Impact the dark skies areas within the North Wessex Downs National Landscape Area?
Access to the Countryside	**SA12** - To protect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of West Berkshire's residents through ensuring easy access to essential services and to the network of quiet routes and footpaths in the rural areas of the district	Will the strategy or proposal: • Increase active travel journeys in, to and within the rural areas of the District? • Increase the provision of active travel and PROWs in rural areas and connections between rural and urban areas?
Health and Wellbeing	**SA13** - To create transport networks that are safe for all users, including improving personal safety and reducing crime	Will the strategy or proposal: • Improve road safety for all users? • Reduce transport-related incidences of crime (such as thefts of bicycles)?
Active and Sustainable Travel	**SA14** - To increase the capacity and efficiency of the transportation network to support demographic changes, including increasing travel by active and sustainable modes of transport	Will the strategy or proposal: • Increase walking and cycling? • Increase public transport usage? • Provide better connectivity (particularly in rural areas) to facilities and services? • Help to reduce inequalities, particularly for those people and communities most vulnerable?
Economy and Employment	**SA15** - To maintain economic vitality, enable well-paid employment and education across the district through provision of reliable transport networks, including with neighbouring areas	Will the strategy or proposal: • Improve access to employment centres? • Improve access to education and training opportunities? • Improve connectivity with neighbouring urban and economic areas? • Support agile working patterns?

Sustainability Issues and Opportunities

SA topic	Summary of Sustainability issues and Opportunities
Climatic factors	• WBC has produced an Environment Strategy to guide the pathway to a Carbon Neutral District by 2030. Transport infrastructure is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and must be considered accordingly before progressing future schemes. • Impacts of climate change may be felt on strategic and local transport networks (e.g. flooding damage to road and rail networks, extreme heat damage to road surfaces and rail lines). Therefore, greater resilience will be required to be built into transport networks. • Mitigate the impacts of climate change through the development of green and blue infrastructure. • There is a need to further develop low carbon travel choices so West Berkshire residents and businesses can make sustainable travel choices. • There is a need to support the continued increase in infrastructure to support the demand in electric cars. • There is scope for redeveloping existing assets rather than building new.
Biodiversity and Geodiversity	• There are several statutory local, national and international sites designated for nature conservation within West Berkshire which may be affected by development, including transport infrastructure. • Designated habitats and protected species may be at risk by development and transport infrastructure. • LTP4 presents opportunities to be strategic in the enhancement of biodiversity at the landscape scale across corridors. Existing Biodiversity Opportunity Areas can be combined with priorities for wider ecosystem service benefits to deliver landscape wide environment gain for biodiversity and people. • There is a need to apply Biodiversity Net Gain in the delivery of infrastructure, including transport. • There is a need for transport to play its part in protecting and enhancing biodiversity. This could include the 'soft estate' alongside existing corridors, such as introducing wildflower verges.

Landscape and townscape	• Nearly 75% of West Berkshire is designated as part of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (AONB). • West Berkshire manages around 740 miles of Public Rights of Way. There is potential for LTP4 to develop transport to improve access to the countryside. • Transport infrastructure has the potential to erode and adversely affect local character and distinctiveness, such as surfacing, signing and lighting requirements. • Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) describes the multifunctional network of green and blue spaces, landscapes, and natural elements within and between towns and villages. The LTP4 has a role to play in helping to develop GBI assets, especially green/blue corridors in relation to transport corridors, such as road verges, railway embankments, canal banks and towpaths. • There is a need to encourage the provision of good quality, accessible GBI within developments and transport projects to improve health and wellbeing.
Soils	• It is important that any future development of the transport network in WBC does not have adverse impacts or lead to the degradation of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) (grades 1 to 3) agricultural land. • The LTP can have a role to play in ensuring, where possible, that improvements are contained within land covered by existing transport networks to protect BMV land
Cultural heritage	• There are over 2,000 listed heritage assets within West Berkshire. • The historic environment is increasingly under threat from development pressures. New infrastructure can adversely affect the visual amenity and settings of designated heritage assets. • Transport can adversely impact cultural heritage sites because of vehicle damage and emissions in urban areas and villages heritage assets. Ancillary features of transport, such as road signs and marking, as well as car parking, can impair the setting of historic environments.

Air	• As well as carbon emissions, road vehicles emit a wide range of pollutants, including nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matters (PM). • Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) can attribute to the acidification of soils and can add excessive nutrients to water courses that may cause algal blooms. • PM can arise from the burning of fuels and through degradation of vehicle tyres and braking systems. Emission of dust can also generate concentration of PM near quarries and construction sites. • The two areas with previously recognised poor air quality in West Berkshire were both attributed to road transport emissions. • The proximity to main Strategic Road Network (M4/A34) corridors presents a challenge in managing vehicle flows on local networks, particularly in relation to heavy goods vehicles. • Although changes in technology mean that vehicles are producing fewer emissions, the number of vehicles on roads is expected to increase. This has the potential to affect air quality and consequently, human health, natural capital, and ecological sites. • The UK Government's plan to end the sale of all new conventional petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035 and support for work- and home-based electric charging facilities, will promote use of hybrid and electric vehicles, with positive effects for air quality. • There is a need to promote sustainable and active travel opportunities for all to use, in preference to catering for unrestrained car use.
Water	• Poor water quality is typically due to a combination of agricultural runoff, untreated drainage from built-up areas and roads, and discharge from wastewater treatment works. • Urban areas and the transport network are sources of environmental contaminants, which include hydrocarbons, metals, plastics, nutrients (such as phosphate), ammonia, pathogens, sediment and solid pollutants. • There is a need to avoid and reduce the impacts of surface water as well as river and groundwater flooding in parts of West Berkshire. • There is a need to reduce the amount of major and significant pollution incidents which have affected the quality of West Berkshire's water resources, including from run-off from transport networks.

Noise and Light Pollution	• Noise pollution may impact the health and wellbeing of people who live near the Strategic Road Network (M4/A34) or key local routes (e.g. A4 & A339) due to current levels of traffic. • The natural environment, particularly tranquil areas, may experience an increase in transport-related noise pollution in proximity to transport corridors. • Light pollution can have harmful effects upon all areas, particularly in the more rural areas of West Berkshire, where artificial lighting has been limited. Too much light can impact the feeding and breeding cycles of birds, bats, insects and nocturnal animals • North Wessex Downs NLA seeks to reduce the threat of artificial light and to maintain the beauty of the dark sky areas.
Human health	• There is a need to develop strategies to address where inequalities occur in access to healthcare, jobs and other services associated with transport provision. • There are negative perceptions about noise and air pollution and the potential health impacts associated with road vehicle traffic on congested routes. • Obesity is seen as an increasing issue by health professionals. There is a need to develop strategies that encourage active travel. • There is a need to develop networks that encourage greater use of walking and cycling, particularly in urban areas. Further opportunities exist to promote leisure active travel access to the network of quiet routes and footpaths in the rural areas. • Human health and quality of life can also be improved by taking a natural capital approach.
General social considerations: Population, Education, Housing, Deprivation, Crime and Safety	• The West Berkshire population is expected to grow beyond 166,000 by 2036. • The population of over 65s is forecast to grow by over 59% in the period 2016-2036 and the over 85s by 148% over the same period, for which transport requirements will need to be considered. • Fear of crime, such as thefts of bicycles or travelling alone in later evenings, can influence people's choice of travel. • There is a need to develop transport networks that are safe for all who wish to travel.

Transport	• West Berkshire experiences congestion on both Strategic and local road networks during peak times. This can result in capacity pinch-points and road safety issues which reduce its efficiency leading to congestion, pollution and rat-running on less suitable routes. • There is a need to reduce reliance on the private car and to encourage greater use of sustainable and active travel choices, which would tackle the negative impacts of road, such as congestion, severance, road safety and increased costs of maintaining local transport assets. • There is a need to look at the impact of freight and encourage more sustainable forms of distribution. • There is a need to minimise the impact of road freight on local communities.
Renewable and low carbon energy	• The LTP4 has the potential to adopt approaches that encourage low-carbon technologies. • WBC's Environment Strategy identifies transport as a key theme in helping to meet its 2030 net zero target. • This is to be achieved by reducing reliance on private cars, increasing active travel, developing and maintaining resilient highway infrastructure and understanding the potential of ultra-low emission vehicles. • There is a need for the new LTP4 to build on progress made in the current LTP in increasing travel choices.
Minerals	• There are several mineral sites, mainly located along the A4 corridor, plus the rail aggregate depot at Theale, which transfers to road deliveries in the wider area. • The transport of minerals is expected to largely remain on the road network. • Minerals will be used in transport improvements and maintenance, as well as new development sites. • There is a need for increased use of recycled materials for transport infrastructure.
Waste	• Transport maintenance often requires the use of resources and generates waste. • There is a need for efficient use of resources, including recycled and secondary aggregates in transport maintenance and construction of new infrastructure. • New developments will create more waste, which will increase waste vehicle movements.

SAS – Mirrors	0	0	6

Improvements associated with Vision
Safety, Safer residential, school and fo
Increased levels of Physical Activity, E
network against extreme effects of cli

SA10 – Waste	0	0	6	Improvements associated with 'Vision Zero' for Road Safety, Safer residential, school and town centre streets, Increased levels of Physical Activity, Easier Journeys, Protect and enhance Strategic Connectivity and Improving Freight may have the potential to generate significant amounts of construction waste. As the location and design of improvements is currently not yet known, uncertain effects have been identified.
SA11 – Noise & Light	1	0	0	One objective significant positive effect has been identified (Zero Emission Vehicles). This is because electric vehicles are much quieter than the ICE equivalents and an increase in EV's should help to reduce transport noise.
SA12 – Access to the Countryside	2	0	0	Two objectives have resulted in significant positive effects (Increased Levels of Physical Activity and Easier Journeys). These will encourage greater levels of active travel, which along with improvements to the PROW and rural transport networks will help improve access to the countryside.
SA13 – Health & Wellbeing	5	0	1	Five objectives have resulted in significant positive effects ('Vision Zero' for Road Safety, Safer residential, school and town centre streets, Increased Physical Activity, Easier Journeys and 50% Active Travel in Newbury & Thatcham). These objectives will result in improved safety on transport routes in the District, reducing the number of KSI on the District's roads. Additionally, these objectives improve physical activity amongst the population and provide improved access to community facilities. A Better Maintained Network has resulted in uncertain effects as this may include measures to help improve safety.
SA14 – Active & Sustainable Travel	4	0	0	Four objectives have resulted in significant positive effects (Safer residential, school and town centre streets, Increased Physical Activity, Easier Journeys and 50% Active Travel in Newbury & Thatcham). It is likely that improvements associated with these objectives will increase levels in the use of active and sustainable travel modes.
SA15 – Economy & Employment	0	0	0	No significant or uncertain effects have been identified for economy and employment because of LTP4 objectives. However, several minor positive effects and a few negative effects have been identified.

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