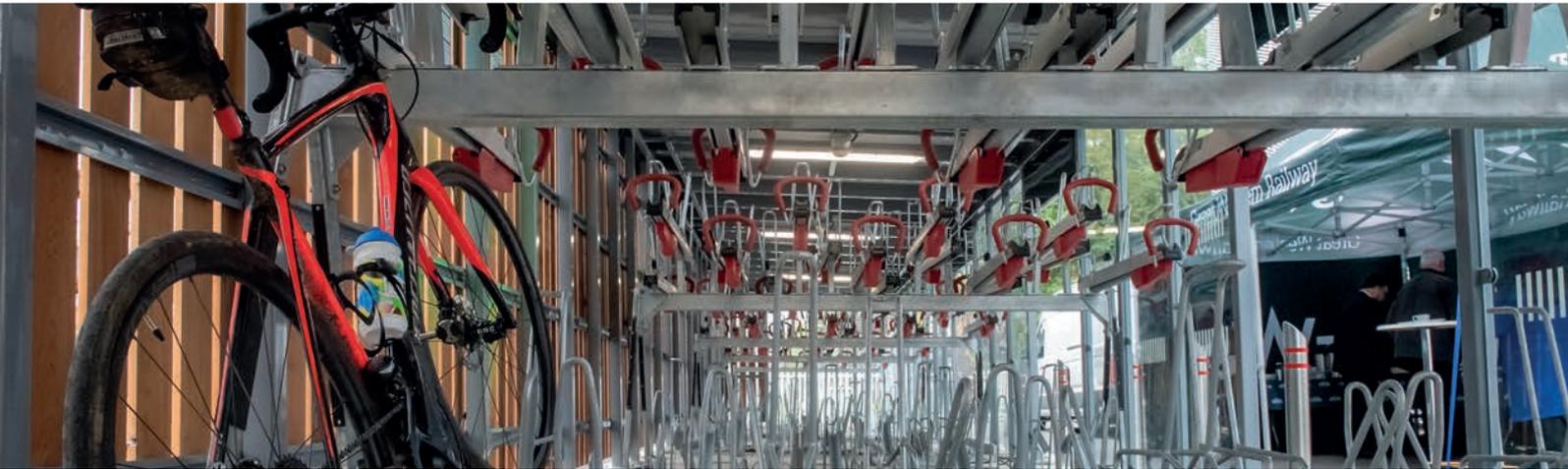


Produced in partnership with

Local Transport Plan 4 Strategy Document (2024-2039)



Consultation Draft - February 2023



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

Introduction

- 1.1 West Berkshire is a varied district with range of different transport needs for residents and visitors. From the bustling centre of Newbury, strategic road and rail routes passing through the district to the rolling hills and rural living in the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 1.2 The existing framework for all aspects of transport and travel to support a stronger, greener, healthier and prosperous West Berkshire is set out in Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3).
- 1.3 Good progress has been made delivering the LTP. There has been significant transport investment over the last decade, including Newbury town centre regeneration, bus and rail station upgrades, electric vehicle charge points and strategic cycle routes.
- 1.4 Travel within West Berkshire is also being made more sustainably. From 2011-2020 (prior to COVID-19 pandemic) traffic volumes on main routes had remained stable, air quality had improved significantly and public and shared transport use had been growing.
- 1.5 West Berkshire and how residents access services is also changing. People are living longer and the population of West Berkshire has increased by 5% in the last decade. Digital access is increasingly changing travel behaviour. There have been significant changes in the online retail and services sectors over the last decade. The COVID-19 pandemic has also drastically increased the number of people who work from home and how people live their lives.
- 1.6 The negative impacts that can arise from transport are also better understood. Transport is one of the largest polluting sectors in the UK and there are local and national commitments to improving the environment and reducing emissions that the LTP4 will need to help deliver.
- 1.7 Work to understand travel patterns, trends and emerging opportunities has been progressing over the last 12 months. This has led to the development of this ambitious, but realistic, draft strategy that we are now consulting on to understand **your views**.

West Berkshire LTP3 Delivery and Case Studies

2.1 West Berkshire Council has a strong track record of delivery and a significant amount of new transport infrastructure to improve a range of travel choices has been implemented since 2011. These include:

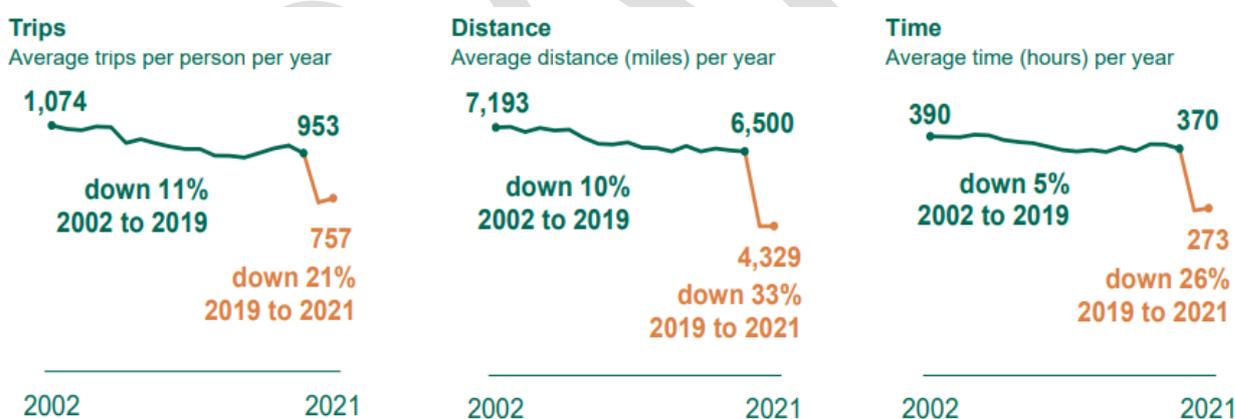
- **Market Street Redevelopment.** £50 million investment to enable residential and retail units off Market Street and a brand-new Newbury Wharf Bus Station opened.
- Production of and securing £2.6million funding towards West Berkshire **Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)**, to improve frequency and bus stop facilities.
- **Railway Station upgrades.** In partnership with rail operators and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) these include a £7m upgrade of **Newbury station** to improve access and interchange and current £4m **Theale Railway Station** upgrade to improve accessibility and facilities across the station.
- **Cycle Improvements.** New cycle lanes on the A4 through Newbury and Thatcham, improved crossing facilities, parking restrictions and road safety improvements along the A4 Western Avenue and production of a West Berkshire Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP).
- **London Road Industrial Estate Regeneration, Newbury.** A £4 million regeneration scheme with a new junction onto the A339 for access. This is part-funded through the Local Growth Fund via the LEP.
- **Public Electric Vehicle Charge Point** Installation, including Lambourn High Street, Pangbourne Station Road, Thatcham Gilbert Court and locations across Newbury.



Newbury Bus Station (left) and NCN 422 (right)

Looking Forward

- 3.1 Going forward, transport strategy and investment will need to consider and be adaptable to changes in society, technology, policy and the environment.
- 3.2 A new Local Plan that will guide **future development** in the district is currently being produced. The draft Local Plan includes a requirement for over 9000 new residences to 2039, with draft allocations at Sandford Park in Newbury and at north-east Thatcham. Additional development will change travel demands, but also provides opportunities to extend public transport service, provide new mobility options and walking and cycling facilities to new standards, all of which can also improve facilities and travel options for existing residents.
- 3.3 Improvements in **technology and digital access** have changed how people travel, with shifts in the retail (home delivery, click and collect) and services (banking, local authority services etc) sectors have led to significant travel behaviour change over the last decade.
- 3.4 The **COVID-19 pandemic** changed how people went about their lives almost overnight. There was a major shift to home working and remote access to services, which has further accelerated changes in travel. The changes seen during and since the pandemic are also a unique example of how significant shifts can occur in a short space of time. The long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on travel are not yet fully established, but initial data suggests an acceleration of already falling travel and less longer distance trips being made.



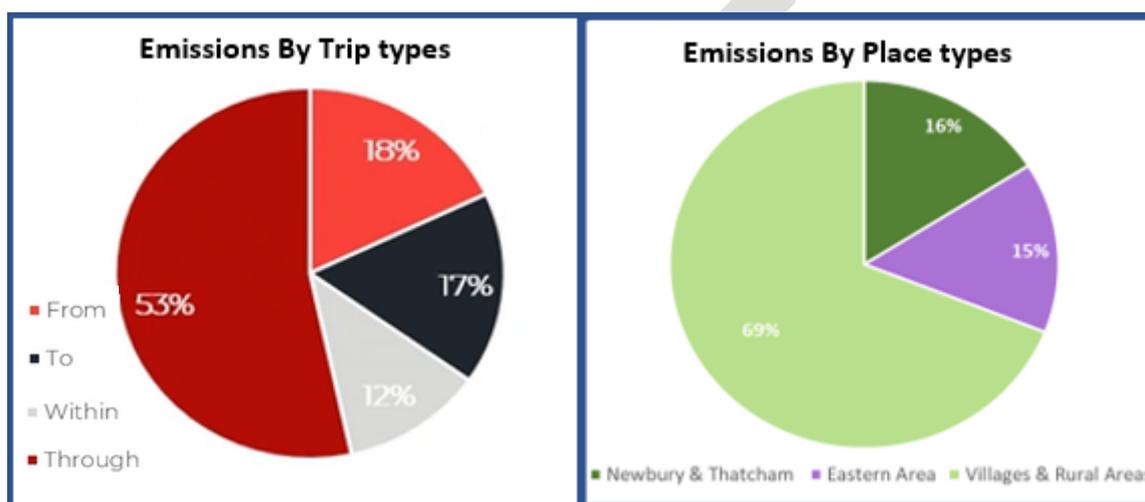
Change in average trips, distance travelled and time travelling per person (2002 -2020)

Source: National Travel Survey Fact Sheet, 2021

- 3.5 Although **car ownership** has increased over the last decade, each car is now used less, and fewer younger people are learning to drive. In future, people may consider alternative ways to access a car, such as the sharing of resources which is now commonplace in some other sectors (such as Air BnB).
- 3.6 New LTP guidance is being developed by the Department for Transport. The draft guidance recommends that LTPs have a greater focus on Places and the contribution of transport investment to achieving wider vision and objectives. Authorities will also be required to assess the impact of their LTP on carbon emissions.

Reducing the Impact on our Environment

- 4.1 West Berkshire Council has a strong record of responding to green issues. In July 2019 the Council unanimously declared a **Climate Emergency** and commitment to becoming carbon neutral. The Council's Environment Strategy highlights the role that the council, its partners and residents have in responding to this challenge.
- 4.2 Transport accounts for **54% of total carbon emissions** in West Berkshire. Over half of these are due to through trips, such as those on the A34 and M4. For trips which start and/or end in West Berkshire, the contribution varies by place type. The **rural areas account for two thirds of emissions**, compared to 15-16% in Newbury and Thatcham and the Eastern area.



Breakdown of total emissions by trip type (left) and by place (right)

Source: West Berkshire Carbon Analysis, WSP, 2023

- 4.3 Electric vehicles will have a role in reducing emissions. However, analysis by the Local Government Association suggests that even with optimistic EV uptake scenarios, **at least a 20% reduction in travel will be required** to keep on track with carbon reduction targets. This will mean being bolder, and prioritising investment to reduce emissions to a greater extent than ever before. This will require changes in individuals' lifestyles, travel choices and implications to the state, but will also provide new opportunities in terms of new jobs, economic savings and wider benefits to the health service through health and wellbeing.
- 4.4 The LTP strategy is a vital component in reducing emissions and the transition towards achieving net zero. An action plan will be developed following consultation and the carbon impact of those interventions assessed as part of the production of the final LTP.
- 4.5 This draft Local Transport Plan strategy sets out ambitious aspirations. This includes for 50% of trips in Newbury and Thatcham to be made by walking and cycling, growing the network of shared vehicles, giving people affordable ad-hoc access to vehicles, and supporting the roll out of electric vehicle charging facilities across the district.
- 4.6 Transport also has impacts on air quality, noise and wildlife and the LTP can help to reduce negative impacts and support the legal duty to conserve and enhance biodiversity.

Vision and Objectives

- 5.1 The LTP will be Vision led, with the strategy and interventions developed around delivering on the local priorities for West Berkshire.
- 5.2 A draft Vision has been developed from national, regional and local strategies and refined through engagement with officers and elected members in West Berkshire Council.



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

- 5.3 This draft vision sets out the identified local priorities that the LTP will support, these are:
- **Creating Places for People**
 - **Providing Sustainable Access for All**
 - **Decarbonising Transport**
 - **Supporting Sustainable Growth**

- 5.4 A number of objectives have been identified for each of the priorities. These objectives, set out below, also provide targets that the progress of the LTP can be measured against.

Places for People

- 5.5 We want to put people’s health and wellbeing at the centre of the strategy. Central to this is **Vision Zero**, for no one to be seriously or fatally injured on the West Berkshire highway network. **Safer residential and school streets** will also create quieter and better places to live and ensure children and young people can walk and cycle to school safely.
- 5.6 Although the private car still has its place within West Berkshire, we want to **reduce the dominance of vehicles** in centres where change can support vibrancy and the local economy.
- 5.7 All of 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

- 5.8 The LTP will seek to support **improved digital connectivity**, and facilitate the role of technology in helping people to access services and transforming the transport system.

5.9 To give people choices about how they travel, we will increase **access to public transport and shared mobility**. To make door to door journeys easier, the LTP will seek to enable **seamless interchange between travel modes**, particularly at bus and railway stations and improve the attractiveness of **public transport vehicles**. These changes will help to enable everyone to move around on an attractive and integrated sustainable travel network.

Decarbonise Transport

5.10 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 in Newbury and Thatcham to be made by active travel**.

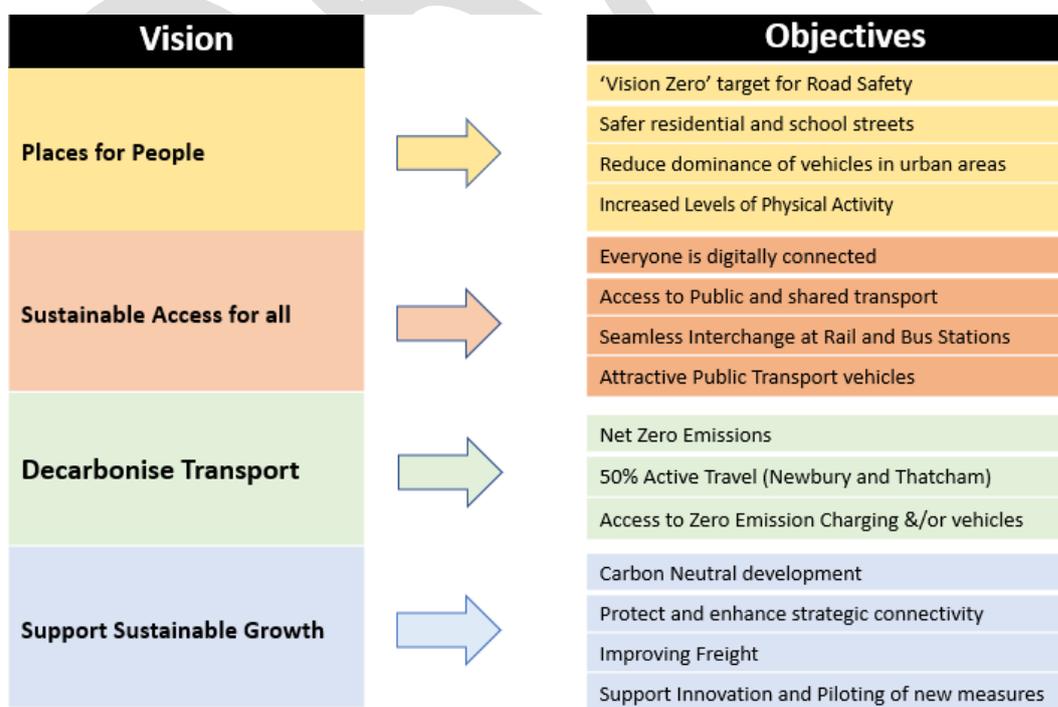
5.11 Recognising that walking and cycling is not feasible for every trip in West Berkshire, for longer distance journeys and where public transport is not available, we need cleaner fuels and the LTP will support widespread **access to zero emission charging facilities and vehicles**.

Support Sustainable Growth

5.12 Four objectives have been identified to support sustainable growth, including **carbon neutral development** which means new development should not add to current carbon challenge.

5.13 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 **improving freight**, including the transition to more sustainable modes and the management of freight in and through urban centres, such as Newbury and Thatcham.

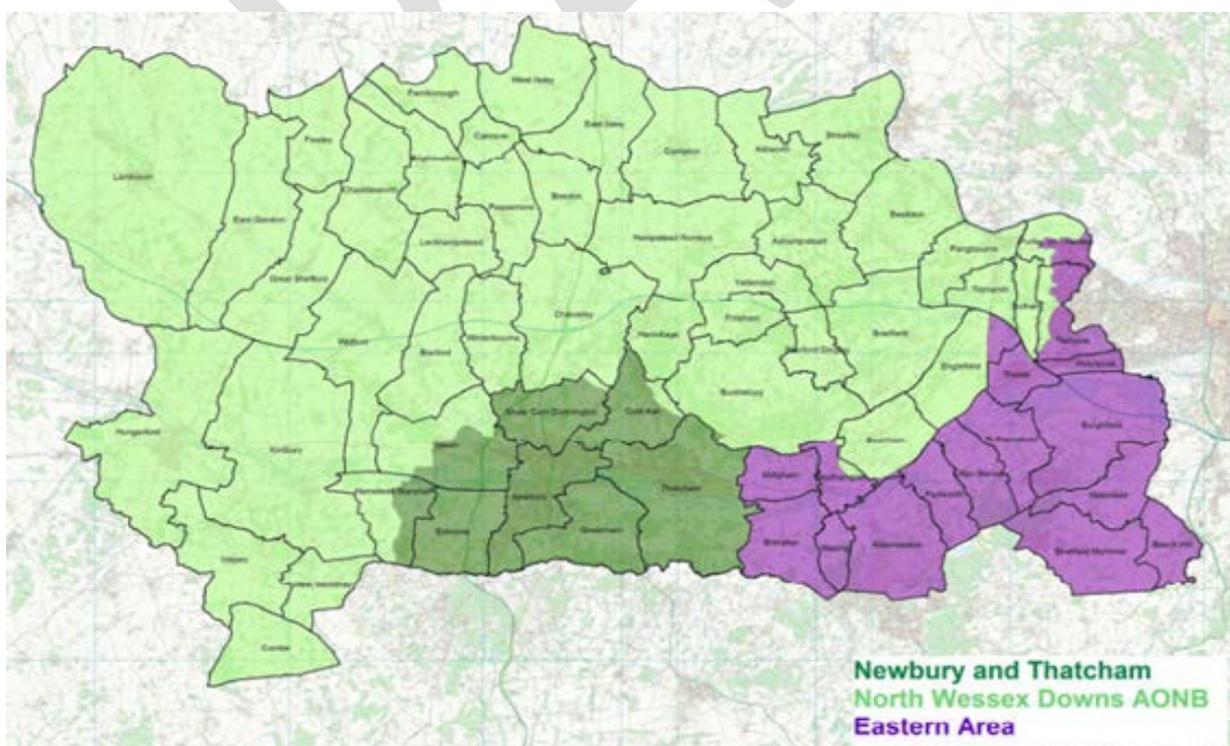
5.14 The LTP will also **support innovation and the piloting of new measures**. This can give people first-hand experience of the benefits that new measures can bring, enabling greater public involvement and more dynamic and cost-effective ways of delivering new interventions.



Draft Vision and Objectives for West Berkshire LTP4 strategy

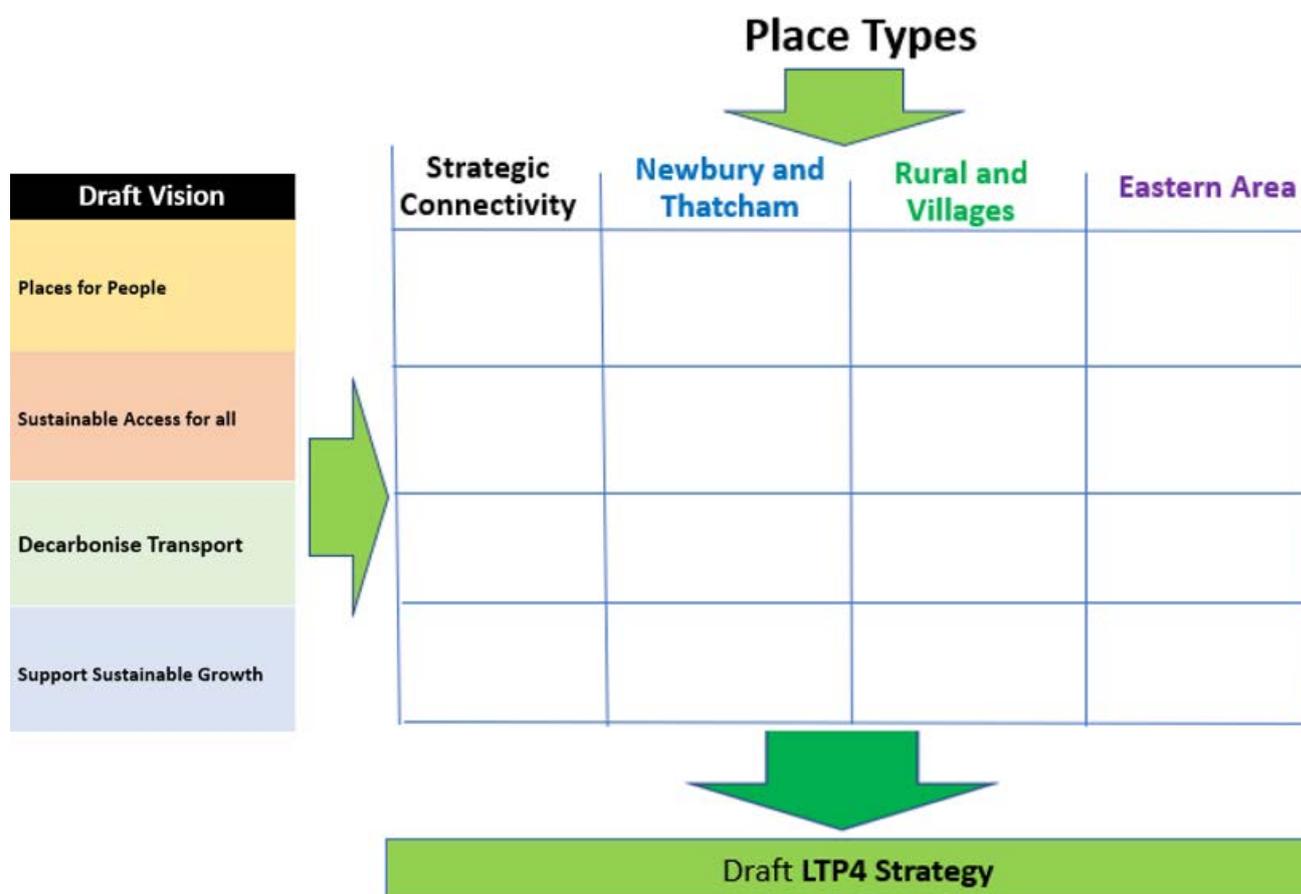
A Place Based Strategy

- 6.1 The way people travel depends on a range of factors such as proximity to services, trip purpose and the standard of digital and/or transport infrastructure. These factors typically are heavily influenced by the ‘place’ that people live in.
- 6.2 The development of the LTP has considered the variations in population and travel patterns across the district. It has also considered existing and emerging strategies to ensure the LTP is well aligned with the emerging Local Plan. This has led to the identification of a number of different functional areas of West Berkshire, proposed as the following **place** types;
- **Newbury and Thatcham** urban areas where 44% of West Berkshire residents live. The majority of trips made are to and from Newbury or Thatcham. It is the area with the highest levels of walking and cycling and the lowest car ownership. This area also includes the most significant new development proposals.
 - **Rural areas**, including villages and the town of Hungerford falling within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Includes 74% of the district area and 36% of the population. There are a number of local service centres, railway stations in the south and east of the AONB 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.



Proposed Places in West Berkshire LTP4

- 6.3 There are strategic road and railway corridors that run through West Berkshire. Recognising that these play an important role for residents and business in each of the above places in West Berkshire, it is proposed that **Strategic Connectivity is also a ‘Place Type’** that the LTP strategy will be developed around.
- 6.4 The draft strategy has been developed by considering how transport can help achieve the vision and objectives in each of the identified place types. This approach ensures that the strategy and interventions reflect the differing needs and opportunities in the different places across West Berkshire.



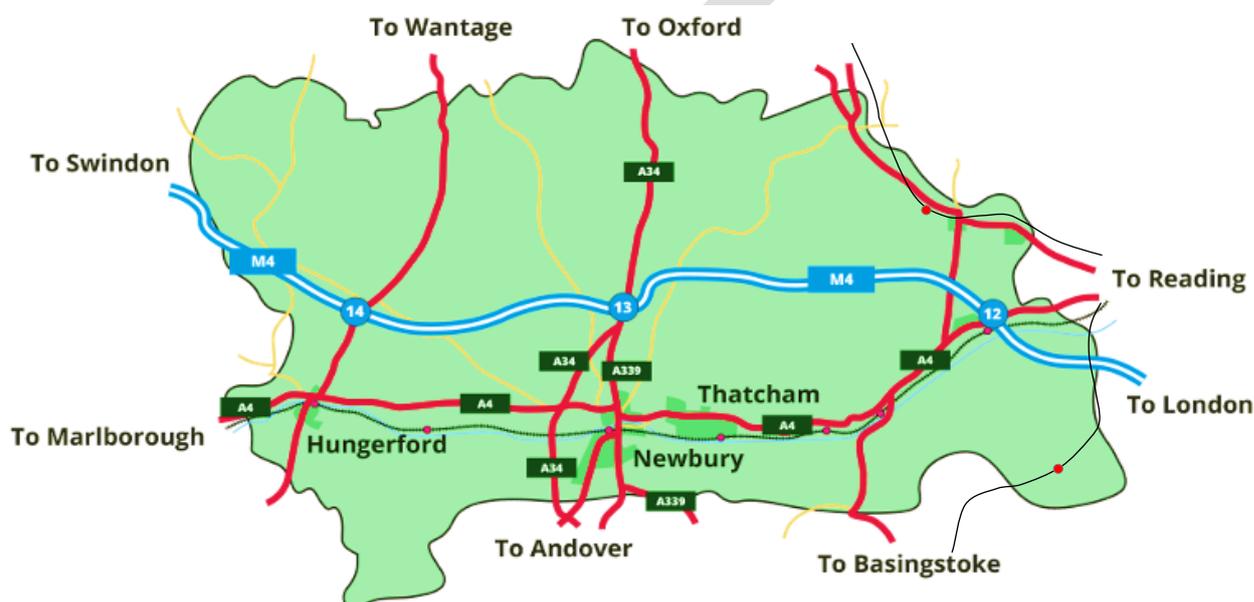
Considering how the Vision is achieved in each place type to develop the draft LTP strategy

- 6.5 The following sections set out the transport evidence, and draft strategy for
- **Strategic Connectivity**
 - **Newbury and Thatcham**
 - **Rural areas**
 - **Eastern area**

Place Based Evidence and Strategy

Strategic Connectivity

- 7.1 Strategic road and rail links that 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 England's Economic Heartland (EEH) and Western Gateway sub-national transport body (STB) areas.
- 7.2 The primary strategic corridors running east to west are the M4 and Great Western Mainline. Measures to improve strategic connectivity, including electrification of the railway and SMART motorway enhancements from J3 to J12 of the M4, are underway.



Overview of strategic transport connections in West Berkshire

- 7.3 Demand had been growing on these corridors over the last decade, but has reduced since the COVID-19 pandemic. If travel demand grows in future, including any expansion of London Heathrow and/or western rail link to Heathrow, it could put further pressure on these routes.
- 7.4 The A34 provides a road link for freight between the ports on the south coast and the 'Golden Triangle' in the Midlands. It is the busiest non-motorway trunk road in the UK with 12,000 HGV flows daily; and HGV flows also now above pre pandemic levels. The A34 corridor can suffer from congestion, which could be alleviated by transferring freight onto other modes, and a lack of lorry parking and facilities.
- 7.5 There are, however, some negative emissions and noise impacts associated with the M4 and A34. When collisions occur, traffic can be displaced onto local networks not suitable for the volumes and type of traffic that uses the Strategic Road Network.
- 7.6 In addition to the Strategic Road Network, 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. Both routes also serve important interurban bus travel.



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

- 7.7 Rail services from Newbury and Thatcham provide direct connections to London Paddington. Local stations on the Reading to Taunton Line at Aldermaston and Midgham and at Mortimer on the Reading to Basingstoke line provide connections to Reading, with interchange to other rail routes including improved travel opportunities created by the Elizabeth Line.
- 7.8 The Great Western Main Line also runs north-south along the eastern edge of West Berkshire area, with well-utilised local services stopping at Tilehurst, Pangbourne and Goring and Streatley.
- 7.9 Going forward, the following proposals would help address the identified issues and support improved strategic transport connectivity.

Strategic Connections Strategy

Sustainable Access for all

- Service Improvements to stations on the Great Western Main Line
- Enhance bus frequency to every 15-minutes between Newbury-Thatcham-Reading
- Delivery of new and improving existing regional cycleways, including extension of Eling Way from Hermitage towards Newbury and from Hampstead Norreys to Compton
- Support development of Mobility as a service (MaaS) applications

Decarbonising Transport

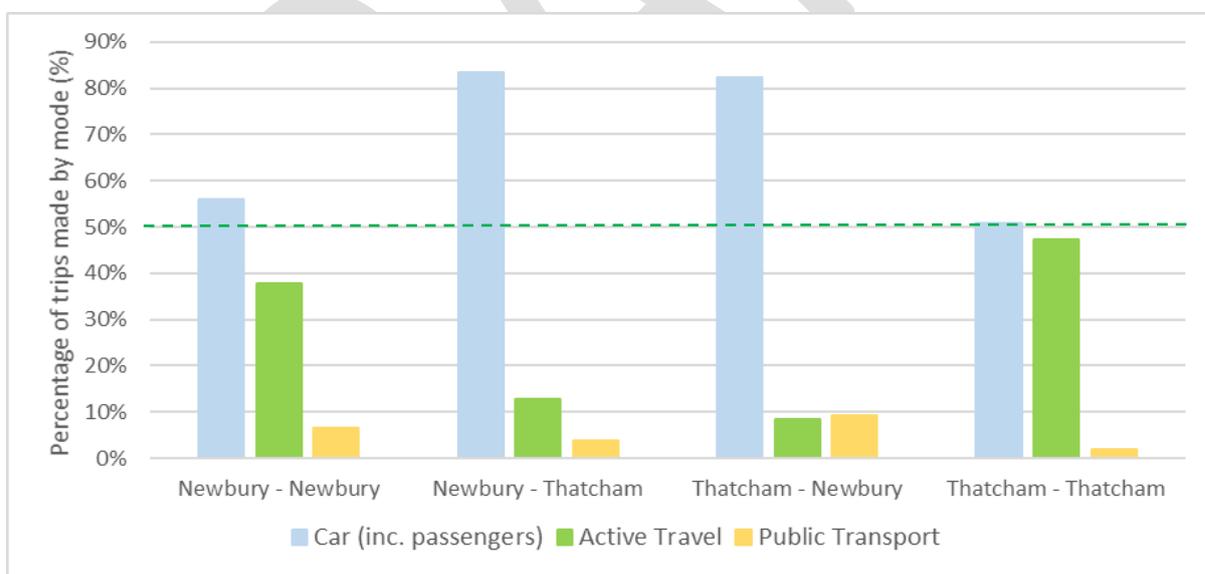
- Work with partners to reduce noise and environmental impacts of M4 and A34

Support Sustainable Growth

- Theale Strategic Rail Freight Terminal
- A339 Newbury to Basingstoke and Junction and Safety Enhancements

Newbury and Thatcham

- 8.1 Newbury and Thatcham are the **largest urban areas** in West Berkshire and home to 44% of the district’s population. Within the towns there are multiple schools, retailers, services and major employment sites including Vodafone Headquarters, 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.
- 8.2 The A339 is the busiest highway route through Newbury, with traffic volumes more than double the next busiest road and delays occurring at some junctions during peak periods. Reflecting the historic urban environment there is **little to scope to build additional highway capacity** within these towns so future travel enhancements will need to be achieved through increasing sustainable travel and maximising the efficiency of the existing network.
- 8.3 50% of employment trips made by residents are to a destination within Newbury and Thatcham. Walking and cycling accounts for a third of these trips, rising to almost half within Thatcham, but just 10% of trips between Newbury and Thatcham.
- 8.4 Although walking and cycling levels are below the 50% target identified by government in Gear Change and the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, the short distances mean modal shift to active modes is feasible and suggest that with the right interventions a target of **50% of trips to be made by walking and cycling** is achievable.



Travel Choices for internal trips in Newbury and Thatcham

Source: Census Travel to Work data 2011

- 8.5 The West Berkshire LCWIP identifies Newbury and Thatcham as **core walking zones** and east-west routes between Newbury and Thatcham and a north-south route in Newbury as the corridors with the **highest potential number of active travellers**. Nearby Greenham Common also provides a popular traffic free environment for leisure cycling and gateway for new and lapsed cyclists that improved active travel networks should also connect into.

- 8.6 Accounting for 50% of employment trips to London and 25% of trips to Reading, public transport has an important role in enabling residents to access destinations outside of the district. There is a new bus station in Newbury and three railway stations including Newbury, Newbury Racecourse and Thatcham. Patronage at all three railway stations had been increasing from 2009- 2019, albeit have decreased since the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 8.7 Access and Interchange at Newbury station has recently been upgraded. Facilities at and access route by sustainable modes to Thatcham are more limited.
- 8.8 There are commercial and supported bus services in Newbury and Thatcham, with bus accounting for up to 10% of trips. Reading Buses operate services between Newbury, Thatcham and Reading seven days a week from early morning until late evening. However, other bus services are less frequent, with two hourly or daily services connecting Newbury and Thatcham with surrounding villages and rural areas.
- 8.9 Car ownership is lower 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. This suggests owning a car is not as essential as in other parts of the district. A third of households own two or more cars. However, national data shows each individual vehicle is being used less, and with a growing ability to also access some services digitally, sharing of resources and shared mobility is likely to become increasingly attractive. There are currently a handful of car club vehicles within Newbury, from which a network could be developed.
- 8.10 In time there could also be scope for a wider mobility aggregator providing a single point for a range of mobility choices across the Berkshire area.



Electric Vehicle Charging and Car Club Vehicle

- 8.11 Electric vehicle uptake in the district is above the national average and there are a number of 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 provision of shared electric vehicles.
- 8.12 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.

Strategy for Newbury and Thatcham

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

- Improve attractiveness and safety of walking and cycling routes to schools
- Improve access to cycling, including on street micro mobility (cycle/eCycle /eScooter) hire scheme and greater access to storage facilities
- Create quieter residential areas and safer environments for pedestrians and cyclists
- 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 from Newbury and Thatcham to Greenham Common and to the Eling Way
- Zero pedestrians and cyclists fatally or seriously injured in Newbury and Thatcham.

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 between Newbury and Thatcham
- Upgrade of interchange facilities at Thatcham station and provision of electric shared mobility and EV charging facilities at Newbury and Thatcham railway stations

Decarbonise Transport

- Zero emission buses in Newbury and Thatcham and along the A4 to Reading
- EV infrastructure aligned with expansion of shared mobility network and in areas with limited off-street parking
- Reduction of traffic movements in Newbury and Thatcham

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
- Improve operation of and reduce impact of freight in Newbury and Thatcham town centres
- Explore opportunities to improve biodiversity and/or reduce maintenance costs through new approaches to delivery.

Eastern Area

- 9.1 The Eastern Area is the second largest place type identified and includes 20% of the district's population.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 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 other larger 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. There are however few local amenities to the north of the A4.
- 9.4 The A4 is the main transport corridor running east through this area connecting Newbury, Thatcham, the Eastern Area and Reading. Bus services run half-hourly along the A4, with delays occurring in vicinity of M4 J12 and access to Ikea. Broadly parallel to the A4 corridor are the NCN 4 and Newbury to Reading railway line. At the western end of the A4 the destination for travel is Newbury and Thatcham, but this shifts to a greater draw to Reading as you travel east along the A4.



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

- 9.5 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. With approximately half a million trips in 2019, Theale and Tilehurst are the busiest of these stations, and where improving interchange and walking and cycling access would have the biggest benefit by encouraging seamless sustainable journeys.
- 9.6 Mortimer, Aldermaston and Midgham railway stations have comparatively modest usage, albeit usage had decreased by less during the COVID pandemic than the two stations closest

to Reading. Mortimer also serves a larger rural catchment, albeit interchange facilities are limited.

- 9.7 Over 50% of households in the Eastern area have access to two or more cars. Car is the most dominant mode choice for commuting, with car usage from the Eastern area higher than for those residents in rural areas of the North Wessex Downs AONB.
- 9.8 Reading is the most common employment location outside of the district, accounting for almost a third of trips. Parts of the Eastern Area fall within the Reading city region and are served by a number of frequent bus services. Reading Buses provide 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.
- 9.9 Despite the relatively close proximity to Reading, a low level of trips is made by sustainable modes with public transport accounting for 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 interchange and upgrading public transport corridors through the eastern area and into Reading.
- 9.10 Similarly, parts of the Eastern Area are within cyclable distance to much of Reading and cycle route improvements to the A4 and A329 are identified as strategic cycle corridors in the Reading Area LCWIP.
- 9.11 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.



A340 The St at Aldermaston (Left) and Theale Rail Station (right)

Strategy for the Eastern Area

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.

Sustainable Access for all

- Improve interchange hubs at railway stations, including potential for shared mobility vehicles, EV charging, secure cycle parking, bus interchange at Mortimer station and pedestrian and cycle links from Calcot to railway stations.
- Collaborate in supporting partners and innovators in developing new solutions for decarbonising transport, including with existing and emerging proposals for Reading.
- Support extension of the Reading local cycle network, including the A329 sustainable travel corridor, and local connections into existing and planned strategic cycle routes.
- M4 / A4 interchange hub offering transfer onto sustainable travel choices (to Reading).
- Improvements to bus journey times on A4 across/in vicinity of M4 J12.
- New Demand Responsive Transport services to serve villages in the south-east of the district.
- Secured cycle parking, adapted cycle parking and motorcycle parking at local destinations.

Decarbonising Transport

- Support 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

Sustainable Growth

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

Villages and Rural Areas

- 10.1 The Villages and Rural areas include the North Wessex Downs AONB to the north, northwest and southwest of the district and is home to 36% of West Berkshire's population.
- 10.2 The rural nature is reflected by more limited services and facilities. The services, shops and amenities that do exist are typically located in villages, such as Lambourn, Hungerford and Pangbourne and to a lesser extent Kintbury and Chieveley.
- 10.3 Travel destinations are similar across most of the area, with 60% of employment trips to locations within West Berkshire. The exception is Pangbourne and Streatley just a third of trips are within the district, with 20% of trips to Reading and over 10% to London.
- 10.4 A quarter of commuting trips start and end within the same ward. Walking and cycling accounts for 30% of these local trips. Footway provision can be missing on approach to these areas and improvements to these, alongside improving pedestrian rights of way could improve access and the attractiveness of recreational walking.
- 10.5 Cyclists and many horse riders use vehicle carriageways, particularly in the surrounds of Lambourn, which has a large racehorse training and rehabilitation centre. Vehicle speeds can be intimidating to some users; there may be opportunities across a large rural road network to reduce speeds and / or traffic volumes to provide attractive routes for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- 10.6 The M4 and A34 run through the AONB area, providing excellent connectivity to the strategic road network, particularly for those living in the vicinity of junction 13 (Hermitage/Newbury) and junction 14 (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.
- 10.7 Reducing the environmental impact of travel will be primarily through cleaner vehicles. With low population density, it will be challenging to deliver a viable charging network, and there will be a need to provide more innovative ways of increasing access to EV charging.
- 10.8 Digital access and home working are most prevalent in this part of West Berkshire. The 2011 census data also showed that in certain areas in the AONB, up to 15% of people worked from home in 2011. Home working levels have increased significantly since then, (over 40% across West Berkshire in the 2021 census) and is the most realistic alternative to vehicular travel for work.
- 10.9 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 2 services per hour in the peaks. Rail patronage had been steadily increasing over the last decade. 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.

10.10 There are, however, limited bus services with services at best every 2 hours to some of the villages. There are also services by community transport operators. The potential role of DRT is being investigated and could offer a service in western rural areas between Hungerford and Lambourn and north-eastern areas.

Strategy for the villages and Rural Areas

Places for People

- Actively support key villages – Lambourn, Hungerford, Chieveley
- Revise speed limits, where appropriate, and develop educational campaigns on improving safety on rural roads.
- Trial of events, temporary highway changes and/or access measures to support the vitality of rural villages and local centres.

Sustainable Access for all

- Maximise the potential of rail through improved interchange, including a turning facility at Pangbourne Station to support buses on the A329 between Pangbourne and Reading.
- Improved facilities and interchange at Hungerford Station.
- Upgrade of public transport fleet to reduce emissions and provide mobile office capability.
- Shared mobility/shared journey options in all villages.
- Upgrade of footways connecting main local centres.
- 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.
- Trial 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.
- Promote peer-to-peer charging networks.
- Seek measures to reduce noise pollution associated with the M4 and A34.
- Continue improving rural broadband and digital connectivity.

Sustainable Growth

- Improve active and shared travel and zero emission vehicle facilities supporting appropriate and sustainable new developments.
- Retain access to and enhance the safety of A34 and M4 junctions.
- Seek enhanced rail service frequency to at least 30-min frequency to Pangbourne, Goring and Streatley, Hungerford and Kintbury stations.

West Berkshire Council
Countryside and Planning
Market Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 5LD

T 01635 551111
www.westberks.gov.uk

Produced in partnership with

