# READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT STRATEGY

## JANUARY 2011

## LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2011 -2026





Reading BOROUGH COUNCIL

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

As our roads become more congested the role of public transport becomes increasingly important. Providing a feasible and real alternative to private car travel will benefit all of Reading's residents through reduced congestion, improved air quality, greater mobility and greater opportunities for all groups in society.

Public transport in Reading has seen rapid and dramatic improvement, with a comprehensive network of bus services providing high levels of access to places of work, education, centres of retail and centres of recreation. This excellent network was built on a framework of involvement and partnership, between local government, transport operators, local businesses and the public themselves. We believe that further development of the network, and of public involvement and other partnerships, is not only possible and desirable, but absolutely necessary if Reading is to remain a successful and vibrant place to live, work and visit.

This development must be responsive and flexible; it must be able to meet changing patterns of demand as travel habits evolve, it must encourage increased public engagement and it must look to find innovative solutions to the challenges which arise. It is vital that public transport moves beyond the traditional and the mainstream, establishing new ways to provide alternatives to private car travel, and attempting to genuinely integrate different transport modes.

Integration between travel modes is central to the development and improvement of the public transport network in Reading. Interchange, between car travel and public transport and between public transport modes, provides more choice and flexibility to the public enabling them to decide how and when they access public transport services. Effective integration with rail services will provide passengers with onward connections throughout the UK and beyond. New measures such as mass rapid transit, cycle hire and integrated ticketing will give passengers faster, simpler journeys to key locations, further improving the attractiveness of using public transport for local trips.

This document lays out our approach to public transport in Reading over the next fifteen years and is structured as follows:

- Section 2 goes into the detail of the various different modes and options that together make up the public transport network in Reading;
- Section 3 sets out our vision for transport in Reading and therefore the context in which the Public Transport Strategy sits;
- Section 4 details the objectives we have set for Public Transport services, which are derived from the overarching objectives for transport in Reading;
- Section 5 sets out the policies for this Public Transport Strategy;
- Section 6 considers the strategic context for defining a deliverable plan;
- Section 7 provides an overview of our Action Plan gives detail of the new initiatives that have driven the development and principles of this Public Transport Strategy;
- Section 8 describes the supporting factors necessary to tie in the various dimensions of public transport;
- Section 9 describes the measures we will use to monitor our progress.

“Talking versions” of documents are available on request on audiotape, from Reading Borough Council. Versions of this document are also available on request in a number of alternative languages, if required.

## 2 PUBLIC TRANSPORT MODES

The following section details the different modes of public transport available in Reading and our aims for developing and improving these areas of public transport. Currently over 40% of trips are made into the town centre by public transport each day. This is more than by private car which highlights the importance of public transport to Reading's vibrant economy.

We have chosen to use a broad definition of publicly available transport in this strategy to facilitate a focus on viable alternatives to private car use, which include:

- Bus
- Education Transport
- Park & Ride
- Taxi & Private Hire
- Cycle Hire
- Car Clubs
- Rail

**Bus**

Reading has a successful and comprehensive network of bus services, extensively developed over the last two LTP periods, and bus patronage has increased by 10.7% since 2003/04. A key aim for this Public Transport Strategy is to continue to provide the high quality bus services that Reading residents enjoy and to further integrate these services into a wider provision of public transport across the borough.

Through new methods of delivery, we will be able to ensure that the best possible services are provided where and when they are needed. Innovations in ticketing and passenger information will offer passengers more choice and more clarity over accessing public transport. Integration with other modes will provide more choice and flexibility. Greater community engagement and participation in the decision making process for delivering public transport will mean services operating where they are

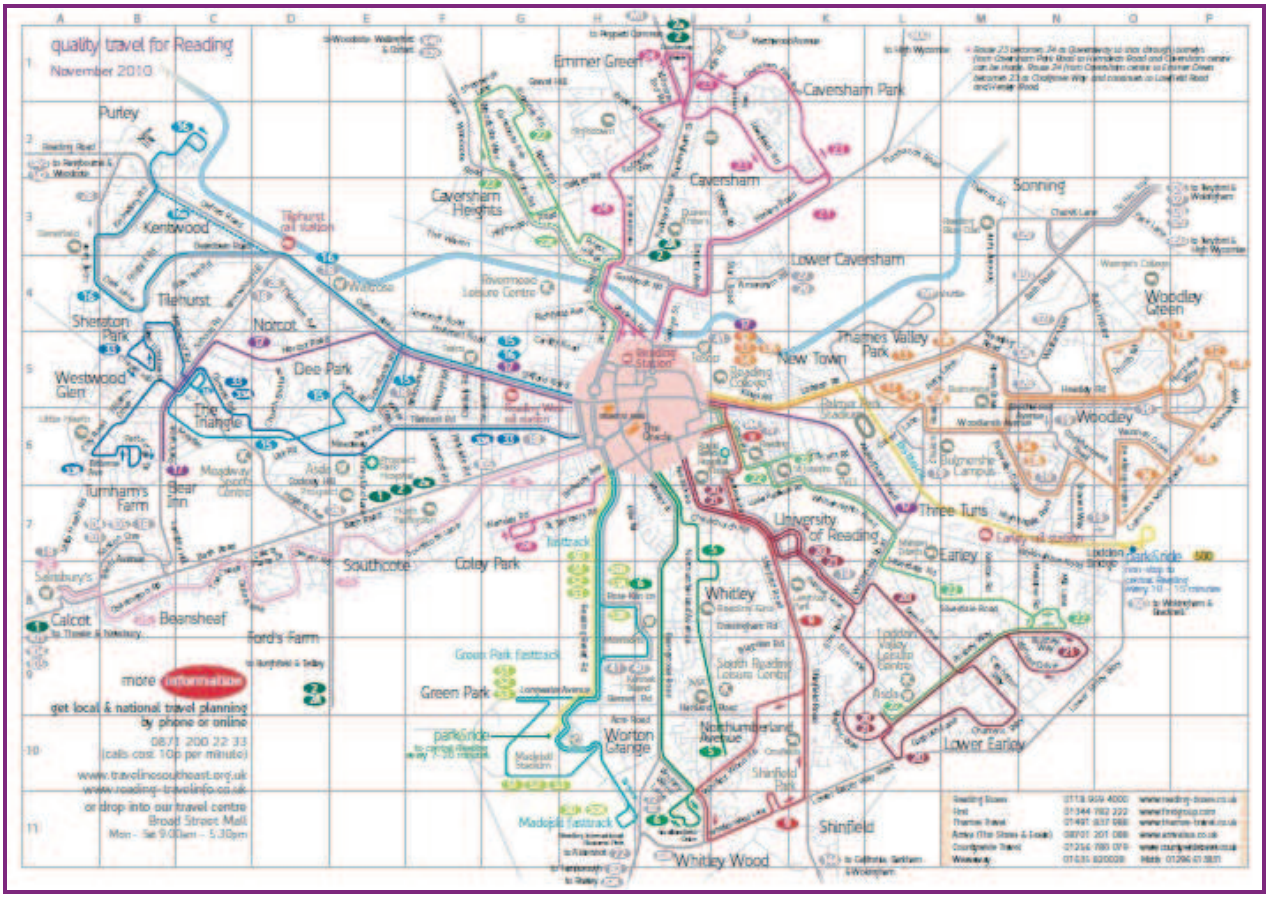
needed. Future developments, such as bus based mass rapid transit, will provide more travel options to more people, making more areas of the Borough accessible by the public transport network. The following chapter sets out the different areas of bus service provision and highlights the key areas of development that we wish to progress through this Public Transport Strategy.

Commercial Network

Reading has a strong commercial operation of bus services across the Borough and beyond. The commercial network provides a vital backbone to the public transport network, giving access to enough locations that the vast majority of trips in Reading can be made using the commercial bus network. This contributes to public confidence in relying on public transport to get them where they need to go and we will continue to work towards improving this provision. Throughout the last LTP period we have worked extensively with local operators to help them deliver a useful service to Reading residents. The commercial network has played a vital role in delivering our LTP2 priority to improve non-car access to key services, employment, education and leisure and will continue to deliver through LTP3.

We will continue to consult with operators through liaison groups such as the Bus/Rail Partnership and Bus Futures as well as the regular contact with individual operators.

The map below shows the current extent of bus services in the Borough and wider urban area:




Community, Contract and Supported Services

The needs of passengers with mobility problems are of paramount importance to public transport provision. The high quality of the low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses operating within Reading and improved roadside infrastructure has meant that many of the barriers to public transport use have been lowered.

However, there are cases where door-to-door transportation is the best solution, and this is provided by demand responsive dial-a-ride services, such as those provided by ReadiBus. ReadiBus is a registered charity, which operates a fleet of fully accessible minibuses and is supported by the Council to ensure the cost of journeys is affordable for users. ReadiBus services are also a part of the local concessionary fares scheme.

Voluntary and community-based transport plays a huge part in supporting the public transport network, filling a role that mainstream services could not. We will continue

to work with ReadiBus, and other voluntary and community-based operators, to ensure that these vital services are supported and delivered. We will ensure that the operators can continue to benefit from the facilities open to mainstream operators, such as bus lanes, bus gates and traffic light priority, as well as through promotional materials and supply of information to prospective passengers.

However, this is not the limit of our involvement beyond the mainstream public transport network. There are also cases where the Council financially supports routes which would not be viable otherwise, serving community needs where a demand responsive service would not be appropriate. Examples of this involve community links services across the Borough, school services, and contracted buses for park and ride sites.

We will continue to look for opportunities to deliver these services as efficiently and effectively as possible, and to find ways to better meet the needs of the public. We intend to apply specific initiatives (including Open Data and Co-production described later in this strategy) to improve responsiveness to the demands of passengers, increase consultation and encourage involvement and investment in the delivery of services.

Aims

- Continue to support community services that provide access to key services, employment, education and leisure facilities.
- Develop an effective system of partnership with service users, operators and users to provide adaptive and efficient services.
- Continue to support the commercial network through interventions such as bus priority schemes as well as through innovations like integrated ticketing.

**Education Transport**

Through this Public Transport Strategy we will work to develop sustainable travel options to schools across the Borough. Public transport has a key role in providing access to education. It facilitates independent travel and reduces the number of cars on the network at peak times. School based car trips can account for up to 18% of

traffic in the peak and so transferring these trips to public transport will be of benefit not only to the school community but the wider community as a whole.

Public transport access to schools in Reading is already high with almost 100% of pupils living within 30 minutes of a secondary school. However we recognise that not every pupil attends their nearest school and we will continue to work with schools, pupils and parents to provide transport services to support pupils in their journeys to and from school, even where these trips are not viable on the commercial network. In addition, due to changing demographics, the travel demand at schools can change between years as different groups of children move through the school system. Therefore, services need to be flexible and responsive to meet these fluctuations in demand.

Reading schools also attract pupils from wide catchment areas and so there is a sizeable amount of travel across local authority boundaries, both into and out of the Reading Borough. Therefore we will continue to work with our schools and with neighbouring authorities to cater for these pupils and provide them with viable public transport options.

Through transferring modal choice away from car use and onto buses, congestion around school sites will decrease, improving the road safety for other pupils who are walking or cycling to school. Through the school travel plan programme, safety was often cited as a concern for parents when deciding whether to allow their children to travel independently to school. An additional benefit to school pupils is that they will be able to practice their road safety skills on a regular basis while travelling independently. This is in contrast to door to door delivery when parents drop off and collect their children at the school. Road safety awareness is essential for young people's learning and development.

Reducing congestion around schools through fewer car trips would improve the air quality around these schools, benefitting the whole school community. In undertaking active travel more pupils would be integrating exercise into their daily lives, resulting in improved health. This could also be applied to some of the wider school community where more parents walk to school with their children, and more members of staff could be encouraged to use active travel in a safer environment around the school.

Commercial viability

While the majority of school services in Reading are currently operated by commercial operators, they are not easily commercially viable. Therefore financial support is often required to guarantee sufficient revenue. The ideal situation would be for school buses to become more commercially viable, reducing the reliance on local authority financial support. In most circumstances buses will need to secure two full peak loads of pupils to offer the potential for a service to break even. It is recognised that achieving this may require some flexibility and co-ordination of school opening times.

One option would be to use existing pupil travel information from the national school census to develop a bespoke school bus network. This information could be used to direct the bus routes through areas where there are high numbers of pupils, increasing the revenue potential of the routes. The development of such a network should be considered a key part of encouraging the school community away from car travel to alternative modes of transport. A dedicated network will help to develop a mindset within the school community that bus travel is an attractive choice for getting to and from school and that other options are preferable to travelling by private car. Any school bus network should also be closely integrated with other Council supported services increasing the utilisation of individual buses which improves commercial viability. This type of efficiency is the aim of our new approach to supported public transport, where we will offer vehicle resource, data and design tools, rather than just define routes and services.

Cross department working

Close liaison and collaboration with RBC Education department will strengthen any future development of a school bus network. While Transport Strategy has good links with schools developed through the school travel plan programme, Education is more tightly integrated with the schools. These contacts should be utilised to further improve links with the schools and their pupils. In this way any services provided can be developed in collaboration with those who will be using the services as noted above. Schools will also need to be flexible for the development of a school bus network to be a success, especially in relation to their start and finish times, allowing

them to complement neighbouring schools and ensure efficient use of transport resource.

Opportunities

**Increase the quality and continuity of service** – The use of quality buses on school routes has been shown to improve pupil behaviour on the bus and reduce instances of vandalism. Quality buses will also increase bus use among school pupils in the same way that has been demonstrated with Reading's premier route network. Branded buses will help to promote the service and give pupils a sense of ownership over their bus routes. Dedicated drivers for specific routes will also improve pupil behaviour and the travel to school experience for all.

**Increase the quality and access to information** – Through the School Travel Plan Programme the awareness of sustainable travel options and the benefits of sustainable travel have become more prevalent in schools. The development of a central school travel information website will also provide an excellent resource for pupils, parents and staff at schools to plan their journeys. The website can promote the use of public transport and deliver useful information to the school community.

**Improve interchange facilities** – The 'spoke' nature of the current commercial and to an extent school network means that some pupils have one or more connections to make in their journeys to and from school. Other pupils may travel into Reading via another mode such as the train and change onto a bus for their onward journey. Through improving the interchange facilities across the network, the ease with which these connections can be made will improve. Changing buses is currently seen as a barrier to bus use for many school pupils and especially parents who may have concerns over their child making a connection. Therefore improving this aspect of the journey may encourage more to use the public transport network.

Aims

- The development of a dedicated school bus network complementing the commercial network, with cross boundary routes where appropriate.
- The development of a school travel web site/ web resource.

- The development of a marketing or ‘awareness’ strategy for promoting bus services to children, parents and the whole school community, ensuring that the right information and message gets to the right people.

- Improve interchange facilities to simplify travel for pupils who make journeys with multiple parts.

- Develop links with active travel initiatives to highlight wider health benefits of increased levels of walking, cycling and public transport use for young people.

**Park & Ride**

Park and Ride schemes play an important role in removing traffic from congested roads by providing an option for those visiting Reading by car that does not require them to drive into the centre to park.

Our vision for Park and Ride is to make it the first choice for those arriving in Reading by car, providing a viable, affordable option for parking and travel to central Reading. To achieve this there must be the availability of locations, an adequate supply of spaces, and onward connection, by bus, rail or bike, must be achievable in a comparable time frame.

Our role is to identify sites where Park and Ride is a practical and beneficial option. The scope for Park and Ride is influenced by external development, as sites are often not bespoke for Park and Ride, but may share use of a single site.

Park and Ride is a key link between public transport and the private car providing a cheaper alternative to long term parking in the centre of Reading and, during congested times, faster journeys into the town centre, through measures such as bus priority or new rail services. Park and Ride sites link a number of our proposed initiatives, acting as high profile interchange points, where information provision and ease of ticketing, particularly for visitors unfamiliar with Reading, enable Park and Ride to better serve those seeking to travel. An expansive cycle hire scheme would also enable Park and Ride sites to serve as parking for destinations across the borough, providing wider options for non car travel.

Existing Services and Future Options

Currently, central Reading is served by two Park and Ride operations. These are located at Madejski Stadium on the A33 just north of Junction 11 of the M4 and at Loddon Bridge in Wokingham Borough just off the A329M at Winnesh Triangle.

Expansion of Park and Ride facilities relies on there being enough parking capacity at suitable edge of urban area sites, including those that are located in neighbouring authority areas. Where bus shuttle services are utilised a high level of bus priority is essential to demonstrate journey time savings for users and will require reallocation of road space on the radial routes. The interchange facilities must be of the highest quality to reassure potential passengers.

We will continue to assess opportunities for Park and Ride facilities, whether at existing or in new locations, and will look for ways to develop the provision of Park and Ride services as an alternative to car travel into the centre of Reading.

Existing facilities and potential developments include:

- Loddon Bridge Park & Ride;
- Madejski Stadium Park & Ride;
- Green Park Station Park & Rail – new station at Green Park with parking facilities;
- Mereoak Park & Ride;
- Park and Ride sites on the outskirts of the urban area serving other major radial routes;
- Park and Cycle opportunities which could be integrated with other park and travel schemes through smart technology; and
- Facilities to allow people to book Dial-a-Ride services from a Park and Ride site, to help meet mobility aims whilst reducing the number of cars travelling into central Reading.

Park and Cycle

In addition to the improvement and development of new and existing Park and Ride schemes we will seek to develop Park and Cycle schemes operating from existing and future Park and Ride sites. The two schemes would be complementary to one another and provide users with even more choice in their journeys to key locations across the Borough. The use of Park and Ride sites would also be the most cost effective way to introduce a Park and Cycle scheme because the car park is already established. In addition the two main Park and Ride sites for Reading at Madejski Stadium and Loddon Bridge are already on direct, signed and safe cycle routes to central Reading. Also, users would not be constrained to travel on the fixed bus routes operating out of the Park and Ride sites but could access a wider range of potential destinations.

The introduction of Park and Cycle sites would take place in tandem with the introduction of a cycle hire scheme, the potential for which will be explored later in this document. Integrating a cycle hire scheme with Park and Cycle will strengthen both initiatives. Providing an easy interchange point between private car travel and cycle hire will open up the opportunity to cycle to more people. The Park and Cycle sites will also provide information on available routes and the locations of other hire points across the borough.

Presently users of Park and Ride schemes in Reading pay on bus, while parking is free. A Park and Cycle scheme could be operated in a similar way with parking remaining free, and users paying for the use of the hire bikes as they would at any of the other hire stations within the scheme. Promotion of such a scheme would also be integral to its success and we will work to develop a marketing strategy to promote the use of Park and Cycle as a feasible alternative for travel into central Reading and other locations across the Borough.

Park and Sail

Local Transport Plan Guidance from central government has been encouraging local authorities to consider opportunities for using inland waterways as part of their Local Transport Plan proposals. Park and Sail in Reading may be one such opportunity. A feasibility study on the viability of a Park and Sail service was undertaken in 2003 to

assess the potential of such a service in Reading to serve commuter, lunchtime business and weekend shopper markets, primarily for those arriving from areas north of the River Thames.

Some issues identified in the study included

- Effective access to the marina from the strategic road network and the possible need of a minibus service which impacts on cost.
- Access to the potential Thames Valley Business Park landing point maybe too far from some of the offices to be an attractive option.

Aims

Our key aims relating to Park and Ride are:

- Identify and implement bus- and rail-based Park and Ride schemes on the strategic corridors on an opportunistic basis;
- Provide transfer services that have priority over the private car;
- Implement a Park and Cycle scheme in line with the introduction of a wider cycle hire scheme
- Investigate opportunities for further innovations such as Park and Sail.
- Support the planned bus-based rapid transit network, providing interchange locations, including at Park and Ride sites to benefit from the high quality services.

**Taxi and Private Hire**

Taxi and private hire vehicles support the public transport network through providing a service when other modes of public transport may be unavailable. It also gives the public the reassurance that they will be able to undertake journeys that may not be possible on the public transport network. This removes the fear of being caught out and not able to make an essential journey, thus making other public transport options more attractive and reducing the need for people to own private cars if not all of their

journeys can be made by the public transport network. Taxis and private hire vehicles can also be pre-booked which further strengths their role as a service that can be flexible to passenger needs on a similar basis to Dial-a-Ride services.

The local authority's role is to work with the providers of taxi and private hire services to ensure that the service adheres to the quality obligations set out in the relevant licences, compliant with all relevant guidance on the conditions that arise from the application of the appropriate sections of the legislation (the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Act 1875, as amended). The Council and police have powers to revoke taxi and private hire licences if the licence holder does not meet their obligations and a penalty points system is in place for breaches of regulations as set out in the handbook. Through these mechanisms we will continue to work with taxi and private hire providers to ensure a high quality and reliable taxi service continues to operate in Reading.

Taxi ranks and pick up points are also responsibility of the local authority and we will continue to support and liaise with providers to ensure that there is adequate provision of such facilities and that they are best placed within the geography of the town centre and the rest of the Borough.

Aims

- Continue working with taxi and private hire vehicles to provide a safe and reliable service, using mechanisms of control such as the penalty points system.
- Continue close liaison with the providers of taxi and private hire vehicles to manage the provision of taxi ranks and pick up points.
- Support Air Quality Management Plan initiatives to minimise the impact of taxi and private hire car operations in central Reading.

**Cycle Hire**

Cycling has been an area of success during the previous Local Transport Plan periods, which have seen an increase in both the number and mode share of cyclists, as well as the launch of branded cycle routes, with improved signs and publicity in the form of

route and network maps. These initiatives have promoted cycling as an alternative to private car travel, with benefits to individual and community health, the environment and reduced congestion.

The challenge that remains is including cycling within genuinely integrated journeys. Cycling as a sole mode of transport can provide an alternative to private car travel, but cycling can also serve to support train and bus travel, particularly where origin or final destination are not on a bus route or are some distance from a train station.

To achieve this, the barriers to cycling use must be lowered, including access to a bike, access to cycle parking in key locations and access to safe, easy, direct routes which can be used with confidence.

Benefits of a cycle hire scheme

- Opens up cycling to everyone, removing barriers of bike ownership and maintenance.
- Cycling meets a number of health objectives and a cycle hire scheme widely available to residents of and visitors to Reading would benefit from integrating exercise into their daily travel habits.
- Increased cycling should also result in less congested roads, decreasing pollution and improving air quality, contributing to a wide variety of corporate goals.
- Economic benefits of reduced journey times and more opportunities for casual shopping patterns as cyclists pass local shops.
- Improved road safety through greater driver awareness of cyclists and the presence of cyclists bringing down vehicle speeds.
- Fostering inclusion through providing more options and opportunities to access services which can be tailored to local needs and local geography.
- Hire point location flexibility means the scheme can meet the changing demands of users as new routes and destinations open up.

Existing Schemes

The experiences of existing, successful cycle hire schemes, which have tested the application of cycling as a form of public transport, can provide a firm foundation for the development of new schemes.

Cycle hire schemes operate in many cities across Europe, North and South America, with established schemes featuring thousands of bikes. These schemes demonstrate how availability and distribution are central aspects of enabling cycle hire to act as public transport. In order to provide a genuine alternative to private car travel, cycle hire must be available in enough locations, near residential areas, places of work, retail and employment. Schemes tend to cover a core geographic area to begin with, slowly expanding outwards.

There are also examples of innovative techniques used to meet demand, with some schemes featuring a modular docking system, whereby additional docks can be deployed in key locations very rapidly. This allows for reaction to unusual patterns of demand, such as those resulting from special events, public or school holidays.

Safety is an issue which schemes do not address directly, and beyond giving advice, it is often left to individuals. With short term cycle hire schemes, it is unlikely that a customer will have their own helmets or high-visibility clothing, as they are unlikely to be regular cyclists. A potential solution to this may be partnering with local businesses to provide new customers with vouchers to purchase this equipment, as part of a welcome pack to the scheme.

Cycling as Public Transport

A large-scale cycle hire scheme has the potential to give many residents the opportunity to enjoy the freedom of cycling as a mode of transport without the need to own a bike. To achieve genuine usability of a scheme, driving significant modal shift, a threshold density must be reached, where enough bikes are available, in enough locations, to provide a feasible alternative mode of transport. Therefore we will work towards delivering a Borough wide cycle hire scheme, which will also integrate with other forms of public transport, providing an ideal, flexible, short

distance public transport mode, filling gaps in provision and replacing the private car for direct journeys that are greater than walking distance.

Infrastructure

Cycle hire schemes require specific infrastructure to be put in place, namely the cycles themselves and their docking stations. In many cases, this initial infrastructure is supported, either by advertising-partners or by commercial public transport operators. The infrastructure also needs to be trackable and flexible to enable a swift response to the trends of the network and ensure that bikes are always available at key locations.

An increase of cycling through the scheme would also increase demand for new routes to be opened up creating a virtuous circle where the options for safe and quick cycle routes increase providing a more comprehensive network to all cyclists.

The hire stations can provide route maps and network maps showing users where other hire stations are located and the fastest and safest routes to key destinations.

Cycle hire schemes employ innovative technologies to ensure the maximum functionality for users. Bike availability details, payments and other interactions with customers occur online. Docking stations can be solar powered and moveable so the scheme may flex to meet patterns of demand. Next generation schemes will incorporate smartcard payments, integrated with other modes of transport, to provide a single solution for customers. Mobile technology is also likely to lead to developments in location-based and real time information, simplifying the integration of different transport modes.

Aims

- Develop a cycle hire scheme that will integrate with other methods of public transport.
- Develop a payment scheme that is integrated with other public transport options in Reading, through smartcard ticketing or similar.
- Promote cycle hire as a real alternative form of public transport.

- Develop flexible infrastructure to enable hire stations to be moved according to need and observed trends in travel.

**Car Clubs and Car Share**

It is recognised that there will always be some situations where travel by car is necessary, and no alternative mode of transport is a viable option. In regard to this strategy, the challenge is to integrate occasional car use within a wider culture of public transport use. By supporting car share or providing car clubs as an option, private car ownership can be reduced, as those who need access to a car sporadically will have the access they require for those specific trips, but continue to use more mainstream public transport as their primary mode.

Car Clubs

Car clubs offer members the opportunity to hire cars for short periods of time, providing a flexible alternative to car ownership. Research has suggested that 25 private cars are taken off the road for each fully utilised car club vehicle. Those with occasional need of a car have access to one, in convenient locations, without the cost of owning, maintaining and running a vehicle of their own.

Car club membership often requires time to build to a critical mass and become self-financing, and initial set up costs are high as the necessary quantity of vehicles and supporting infrastructure must be provided. Individuals are only likely to join the car club at a point of significant change in their lives (i.e. when their living and travel arrangements change considerably), such as upon moving house or changing job, therefore membership accrues over time, rather than building swiftly.

The role of the Council will be to pave the way for investment in infrastructure, and support the initial development of a scheme in the time before it reaches the necessary vehicle utilisation threshold to become self-financing, but there should be no need for ongoing revenue support.

There is also significant scope for integration within the wider public transport network, with interoperable smartcards functioning for bus ticketing, cycle hire, and car hire. The availability of car hire vehicles becomes part of the public transport

options available, with information about the scheme included with information about other modes, and joint marketing initiatives such as discounts for car club members on mainstream public transport.

Car club vehicle locations are usually found in residential areas, near rail stations, at supermarkets and local centres, and at business parks. These locations mirror to a large extent the interchange hubs discussed as part of a cycle hire scheme and co-ordinate with the existing bus network.

A significant car club scheme will help to make progress towards the reduction of congestion and vehicle emissions, by reducing car ownership and thus the number of vehicles on Reading's roads and by supporting the use of low emission or electric vehicles.

Car Share

Informal car share arrangements have a long tradition of community support, where friends or work colleagues, travelling to the same, or nearby, locations will share transport. We will investigate ways to offer formal structures to support these social car share arrangements, helping to bring together those making regular journeys or with spare time who are willing to car share with those looking for ways to travel.

We will support workplace and social car sharing through promotion materials, events and maintaining or providing membership to websites and databases, and through enabling use of facilities and infrastructure as appropriate, to assist the development of reciprocal networks to enable people to make the journeys they need to make.

Aims

- Develop a car club scheme that will integrate with other methods of public transportation.
- Develop a payment scheme that integrates with other public transport options in Reading through smartcard ticketing or similar.
- Promote car clubs using low-emission vehicles as an alternative to traditional public transport where no other mode is viable.

- Develop initial infrastructure to enable a car club scheme to become self-sustaining.

- Promote social and other car share schemes, with volunteer drivers and reciprocal peer networks.

**Rail**

Reading is the second largest interchange on the UK rail network and is an international gateway to many destinations in Great Britain and Europe. A travel time of thirty minutes to London by rail, with frequent high speed train services makes Reading an attractive location for business, including major employers such as Microsoft, ING and Oracle. In addition to services to London, Reading Station provides a gateway to the West, South West, Midlands and North of England, with commuters travelling into as well as out of Reading. With 700 trains per day and 18 million passengers per year using Reading Station, expected to double by 2030, the Station is a key location on the national rail network.

However, the potential of this prime position in the network has historically been eroded by serious track capacity constraints in the station throat and also a lack of platform capacity. In July 2007 the Government approved £850 million of funding to expand capacity and relieve pressure on what has been a 'bottleneck' in the network. Network Rail continues to progress with works on the project which they aim to complete during the LTP3 period in 2015.

<u>Improvements to Reading Station</u>

Engineering works around the station will increase the number of platforms from the current 12 to 15. A new passenger foot bridge will provide step free access to all platforms, and also connect to new entrances and interchanges at both the North and South of the station.

To the West of the station capacity will be increased by reducing the conflicting movements caused by freight and passenger services, in an enhancement that will provide benefit not just to passengers, but also freight services running to and from the South and the West.

Passive provision will also be made for any potential extension of the Crossrail project beyond Maidenhead to Reading.

Reading Station Interchange

Reading Station represents the most significant point of interchange on the local public transport network, not only as a link between different modes, but also onward connecting journeys on the bus network. The current facilities for buses are mainly located in the area on Station Hill, to the south-west of the main station entrance, although a number of services for operational reasons use Friar Street. The station remodelling and upgrade will change this layout in two main ways.

The footprint of the revised station layout is somewhat larger than at present to accommodate the additional platforms and circulating areas. This reduces the amount of land that will be available to the south-west for buses and taxis to use.

The revised station will have three entrances, all of similar accessibility and quality, rather than the current arrangement with the main entrance to the south and a rather limited facility on the northern side. Based on these new circumstances it is proposed to develop three separate bus interchanges which can be reached via the new entrances, with each providing stops for appropriate services, depending on which part of the town the buses are ultimately travelling towards.

The Reading Station Upgrade project is also expected to extend to include work to the station concourse, to ensure that it will serve passengers better and will further improve central Reading infrastructure.

We will work together with Network Rail & the Department for Transport in the delivery of the concourse, and consult with local transport operators and the public to ensure that interchange between modes and the completion of onward journeys, can be made as smoothly as possible.

In addition, we believe in ensuring that travellers are kept informed at all stages of their journey, allowing them to make decisions and to alter their travel plans on the move. This can be achieved through the innovative use and distribution of the

information on various travel modes available to and through the Council's UTMC data systems.

Strategy, Partnerships and Policy

In framing a strategy for passenger and freight rail services we have recognised the need for close liaison with developers and a number of initiatives are being pursued in partnership with local businesses and the rail industry. We are working in partnership with Network Rail and train operating companies to facilitate the delivery of the Reading Station upgrade project. This partnership also enables us to promote the use of existing rail services and ease of interchange at Reading stations.

In addition to the Reading Station Upgrade programme, we are also conscious of wider national rail policies. We recognise the importance of electrification of the Great Western main line, noting the potential environmental impacts including; a reduction in noise pollution and a reduction in air born particulates as fewer diesel engines trains serve and pass through Reading. Electrification also provides an opportunity for increased journey times. We are also conscious of the age of rolling stock serving Reading, and the need to either replace or reengineer the High Speed Trains within the LTP3 period. Our partnerships with Network Rail, Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and the Department for Transport (DfT) offer an opportunity for us to engage and influence these policy areas.

Aims

- Continue to work with stakeholders and partners including Network Rail, Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and the Department for Transport (DfT) on the £850 million regeneration of Reading Station.

- Engage with future franchise renewal processes and the development of utilisation strategies and encourage the provision of appropriate additional and existing rail services, increased frequencies and new or improved stations;

- Improve access to bus and rail services and promote the use of vehicles accessible to mobility impaired people;

- Provide appropriate interchange and parking facilities for mobility impaired people;
- Improve interchange facilities between rail and other modes of travel.

## 3 VISION

### LTP3 Vision

Transport Vision: Connecting Reading

*Transport in Reading will better connect people to the places that they want to go: easily, swiftly, safely, sustainably and in comfort. We will meet the challenges of a dynamic, low-carbon future to promote prosperity for Reading.*

*Whichever way you choose to travel, by foot or bicycle, motorcycle, bus, rail, car or boat whether to work or education, to leisure or the services you need, our transport system will help you get there.*

Our Strategy

Our four delivery themes: Inclusion, Intervention, Infrastructure and Innovation; have been developed to help us bridge the gap between vision, policy and Local Action Plans.

Inclusion focuses on making local journeys safer, healthier and easier for people. Safety considerations encompass personal security as well as road safety. Transport measures influence health through a wide range of impacts from air quality to active travel opportunities. Inclusion is the most wide-ranging delivery theme as to ensure easy access, we need to deliver a range of travel choices and inform people of these choices. Inclusion measures will tend to be 'quicker wins', underpinning the benefits of the longer-term programme.

Interventions include the provision of real time travel information, customised travel planning and the technology that assists with the daily management of the network. Improvements to public transport services, including dial-a-ride and taxis also allow more people to travel to more places, encouraging sustainable travel and offering viable alternatives to private transport options.

New infrastructure for all modes is sometimes required to provide a long-term, step-change in transport provision or network capacity to ensure that places continue to be well-connected or that new neighbourhoods are integrated into the wider area.

Ongoing prosperity is supported by new infrastructure and other complementary measures of increasing capacity and ensuring reliable journey times.

Innovation will be essential to meet future challenges, particularly in relation to ongoing population growth, climate change and energy security. A world-class economy needs robust and resilient transport infrastructure. Transport contributes directly to prosperity through the research of new technology and other innovations locally.

**Public Transport Strategy Vision**

The continuing development of the public transport network in Reading is based on the four delivery themes identified above working in unison to deliver a system that meets the needs of a wide range of users, at a range of times in a wide range of situations.

Taking into account emerging government policies of local responsibility, value for money, fairness and choice, our vision for the Public Transport Strategy is to ensure that Reading continues to remain at the forefront of public transport provision. We will strive to develop new ways of delivering public transport, providing people with a real choice in travel options and enabling all to use our network as a real and viable alternative to the car. As pressures on our road network increase it is vital that public transport in Reading continues to meet the needs of its residents. New developments in information sharing and distribution will mean better informed users while new schemes such as cycle hire and the development of Park and Ride facilities will give more options than ever before.

An effective public transport network can have many positive impacts. In addition to environmental benefits such as the reduction of carbon emissions and other harmful pollutants, public transport also has the potential to make a strong economic contribution. These contributions are central to Reading's success, with improvements to public transport allowing swifter journeys, higher productivity where time spent on public transport can be used to work, and greater flexibility for those without a car to enable them to reach employment and retail centres.

Over the past ten years, a great deal of progress has been made. The advances under the previous two Local Transport Plan periods have created a foundation of excellent access across Reading Borough, where public transport links to schools and work, retail and residential, doctors and hospitals, allow people to travel without the need of a private car.

For the third Local Transport Plan period, we will aim to explore new opportunities and markets for public transport. The specific needs and desires of individuals and communities will be the driving force of future public transport policy. We will seek new and inclusive methods of consultation, striving to champion the diversity which makes Reading a successful and vibrant place.

## 4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives below, taken from LTP3, can all help to focus the delivery of our public transport vision. Together they provide the link between the local vision, the national goals and emerging policy and the four LTP delivery themes of Inclusion, Intervention, Infrastructure and Innovation.

| | LTP3 Strategic Objectives | LTP3 Delivery Themes |
|---|---|---|
| People | To facilitate more physically active travel for journeys in a healthy environment | Inclusion |
| | To improve personal safety on the transport network | Inclusion |
| | To provide affordable, accessible and inclusive travel options for everyone | Inclusion |
| Place | To ensure that the transport network operates safely and efficiently to meet the needs of all users | Intervention |
| | To align transport and land use planning to enable sustainable travel choices, improve mobility, reduce the need to travel and preserve the natural environment | Intervention |
| | To deliver balanced packages of value for money transport solutions and make best use of existing transport investment | Infrastructure |
| | To offer sustainable transport choices for the Travel to Work Area and beyond, integrating within and between different types of transport | Infrastructure |
| Prosperity | To improve journey times, journey time reliability and the availability of information | Infrastructure |
| | To reduce carbon emissions from transport, improve air quality and create a transport network which supports a mobile, affordable low carbon future. | Innovation |

**Enabling Policies**

LTP3 lists a number of enabling policies under the four themes of Inclusion, Intervention, Infrastructure and Innovation

Inclusion

- To implement multi-targeted schemes, particularly those that will make pedestrian and cycling connections safer and more attractive to local destinations, to achieve best value for money;
- To support investment in safer and more affordable transport in areas of greater deprivation;
- To support the Air Quality Management Plan in improving air quality; and
- To support alternative or community-based public transport where commercial public transport is inaccessible or unaffordable.

Intervention

- To maintain and manage the transport network in order to keep transport moving safely, monitor trends and respond to circumstances;
- To give priority to walking, cycling and public transport and improving access by those modes;
- To ensure the provision of a safe, reliable, efficient and easy to use public transport network to meet the travel needs of all those who are unable to use, or choose not to use, a private car and to commit to Quality Partnerships with local public transport operators where this will enhance the standard of service provided;
- To provide travel information on all transport options through a wide range of channels to enable everyone to make better decisions for their journeys; and
- To engage with local residents, businesses and other stakeholders to target interventions to meet local needs.

Infrastructure

- To identify and pursue opportunities to upgrade radial, orbital, regional and national connections that will secure local benefits;
- To secure the provision of higher capacity, higher quality and low carbon public transport services;
- To maintain close working relationships with central government, neighbouring authorities, transport operating companies, Network Rail, the Highways Agency and other partners.

Innovation

- To support the development and use of innovative technology to keep transport moving, monitor trends and respond to changing circumstances;
- To encourage and enable low carbon or low energy travel choices for private and public transport; and
- To use innovative techniques of communication and engagement to review and reshape the strategy over time.

**Role of the Public Transport Strategy**

Local bus services, cycle hire and Park and Ride facilities are able to make a contribution to improving public transport in Reading through their role in our "Quality Travel for Reading" initiatives. These integrate a series of general plans and strategies covering the Reading urban area, including this Public Transport Strategy, while geographically-based action plans form the platform for transport delivery.

Public transport has a key role to play in providing an alternative to the private car for many journeys made within Reading. Public transport already accounts for a substantial proportion of trips to central Reading and could play a bigger part in providing access to local centres and in providing links for commuter trips to our business parks.

The relatively dense network of services provided in Reading already produces high accessibility scores for most journey purposes but improvements in quality and reliability, together with better integration between modes, can further improve access. This is particularly true for accessibility indicators with lower journey time thresholds and for some disadvantaged areas and vulnerable user groups. Further developments such as a cycle hire scheme will provide more options to these groups, offering a cheap and flexible mode of travel.

Better lighting and facilities at interchanges and at key stops can improve personal security on the network. Opportunities for cyclists to use bus lanes can also improve their safety on the road.

Reducing car dependency through better provision of bus services, cycle hire opportunities and Park and Ride facilities will reduce congestion and this will in turn lead to improvements in air quality. The use of newer buses and cleaner fuels will also help reduce emissions.

Upgraded bus stops and facilities for public transport, together with modern buses, can enhance streetscapes and assist in neighbourhood regeneration projects. Increased mobility can improve access to services and jobs and more options for active travel will improve health.

These are the sorts of contributions that public transport services make to the overarching objectives of the LTP, and the Public Transport Strategy aims in Chapter 2 have been developed on this basis.

## 5 PUBLIC TRANSPORT POLICIES

The LTP3 'enabling' policies help define and shape the operational environment and ensure the delivery of wider objectives. This section draws on the relevant 'enabling' policies as summarised in the previous Section but also describes more specific 'delivery' policies for each aspect of public transport strategy.

**Bus Policy**

The following operational policies have been agreed in consultation with bus operators and neighbouring local authority partners:

BP1 To ensure the provision of safe, integrated, efficient and easy to use local bus services to meet the travel needs of all those who are unable to use, or choose not to use, a private car and to support proposals to enhance the level and quality of services provided on strategic corridors and key routes and ensure a minimum level of service is available throughout the area to enable people to make essential journeys.

BP2 Definition of the strategic network:

Urban corridors (minimum frequency of 5 journeys per hour between 0730 and 1900 Monday-Saturday)

Park & Ride services (minimum frequency of 4 journeys per hour between 0730 and 1900 Monday-Saturday)

Inter-urban links where there is no rail alternative (minimum hourly service between 0730 and 1900 Monday-Saturday)

BP3 Definition of key routes:

Links to local centres (half-hourly service between 0800 and 1800 Monday-Saturday)

Links to major employment, education and medical facilities (minimum service 4 journeys per hour between 0800 and 1800 Monday-Saturday)

Evening network (hourly service on defined routes between 1800 and 2300 Monday-Saturday)

Night network (hourly service on defined routes between 0000 and 0200 Friday/Saturday)

BP4 Minimum service levels in the borough:

3 journeys per day between 0900 and 1700 Monday-Saturday to within 500m of all occupied dwellings

Sunday services (hourly between 1000 and 2100 on defined routes)

BP5 To give priority for Council financial support of services in line with the recommendations in the adopted Transport Assessment Framework:

Firstly, to maintaining frequency and capacity on the strategic network

Secondly, to maintaining frequency and capacity on key routes, and thereafter, on other routes which ensure minimum service levels are met - priority in the latter category to be given to routes serving key groups/journey purposes and areas with high levels of public transport dependency (large numbers of adults and/or children in households without access to a car, elderly people, and people with mobility problems or long term limiting illnesses) and otherwise to routes generated as a result of community initiatives.

BP6 To promote the adoption of the latest designs of vehicles in advance of any regulatory requirements and to encourage deployment of the most accessible vehicles available on routes which comprise the strategic and key local bus network.

BP7 To ensure that appropriate facilities are provided at bus stops in line with the recommendations of the adopted Bus Stop Hierarchy, according to the use made of particular stops by passengers for changing onto other modes and between buses, waiting and alighting, and to introduce infrastructure supporting the use of low floor vehicles on strategic and key local bus routes wherever possible.

**ANNEX 1** – BUS STOP HEIRARCHY

BP8 To improve the penetration, speed and reliability of public transport services by promoting the reallocation of road space to public transport services and to

support the provision of priority for public transport services at junctions, through selective detection and other measures as appropriate.

BP9 To minimise the use of road humps for traffic calming on roads used by buses as part of the strategic and key local bus network and to promote alternative methods of reducing traffic speeds at these locations.

BP10 To promote the use of alternative, low energy, low emission fuels in public service vehicles and to encourage operators to adopt, in advance of any regulatory requirements, vehicles with the latest engine technologies meeting European emissions standards.

BP11 The Council will commit to Quality Partnerships with local public transport operators to enhance the standard of services provided to the fullest extent available under legislation. Where desirable service features fall outside the scope of statutory partnerships, operators will be encouraged to enter into voluntary agreements to improve relevant service standards. The Council will work within the partnership framework to improve the efficient operation of public transport services and provide enhanced facilities for the travelling public including:

- Promotion of traffic management schemes
- Provision of waiting and interchange facilities
- Provision of bus priority measures
- Partnership provision of comprehensive and accessible information on all available public transport services and facilities for passengers and potential passengers

BP13 To pursue a comprehensive approach to the overall planning of public passenger transport services within Reading and in particular to co-ordinate all aspects of Council expenditure on transport services and facilities, including education and social services transport, so as to achieve the best value for money.

BP14 In furthering transportation policy and objectives the Council will seek to develop practical partnerships with all interested bodies, particularly transport

operators and users, and will seek to maximise the benefit for public transport, cycling and walking of funds obtained under s106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

**Community Transport Policies**

CP1 To promote and support the provision of community-based and specialist public transport services to meet the travel needs of passengers unable to use other forms of transport.

CP2 To promote and support the provision of shopmobility facilities wherever appropriate to enable people with impaired personal mobility to access major shopping centres and pedestrianised areas.

CP3 To incorporate Community Transport within a new ethic of co-production and open, transparent consultation.

CP4 To enable Dial-a-Ride services to co-locate and operate at Park and Ride sites with dedicated facilities.

**Park & Ride**

PP1 To promote the development of a network of Park & Ride sites as an integral part of the introduction of demand management measures on radial corridors and the implementation of the town centre strategy.

PP2 To integrate Park & Ride shuttle bus services with the proposed bus-based rapid transit network wherever feasible and appropriate.

PP3 To develop Park & Cycle sites alongside existing and future Park & Ride sites.

**Rail Policies**

RP1 To seek the retention and development of the rail network, rolling stock and infrastructure and to encourage the provision of appropriate facilities and services to meet the travel needs of people that live and work in or visit the Borough, so as to maximise the use of rail for journeys where facilities exist or can be secured.

RP2 To continue the redevelopment and upgrading of Reading Station and to encourage the redevelopment and upgrading of other stations within the

Reading area as vital components of regional and sub-regional rail services and as gateways to mainline services.

RP3 To encourage the provision of high-quality access to and from all rail stations by, and time-efficient interchange with, other modes, including walking (and especially step-free access to, from and within stations), cycling, bus, taxi, park and ride, kiss and ride etc, wherever feasible and appropriate.

RP4 To promote the investigation and development of new stations and services wherever travel demands indicate significant potential, in conjunction with rail service providers and other agencies, and to protect possible sites and routes from adverse development.

RP5 To work with rail providers and other agencies to develop existing services, and to assist in the marketing of regional and sub-regional rail services, stations and their facilities and any associated bus services.

RP6 To investigate, in conjunction with Network Rail and other agencies, the potential of rail corridors as routes for walkways and cycleways, linear parks, communications and energy pathways etc.

**Information and Marketing Policies**

MP1 The Council will develop a comprehensive passenger information strategy, recognising that different types of information will be required to meet the needs of different passengers at each stage in the process of planning and undertaking a journey and that there should be a division of information provision responsibility between operators and the Council.

MP2 The Council is committed to the implementation in partnership with operators of the local component of the national public transport information system (Traveline).

MP3 To promote the use of the internet and other technologies for information dissemination and for advance ticketing.

MP4 To promote, subject to any limitations arising from the Competition Act 1998, area-wide ticketing arrangements which will allow passengers to use a single ticket to travel on all local bus and rail services necessary to complete a journey and to act as banker / broker for such schemes where appropriate.

MP5 Concessionary fares - to continue to promote and support the current arrangements, including the England National Concessionary Fares Scheme and to investigate other concessionary fares arrangements for other groups of passengers as appropriate.

MP6 To promote and support the introduction of green travel plans by all major employers, including local authorities, and for visitors and staff at public facilities (hospital, University, leisure centres).

MP7 To ensure the availability of personalised travel planning information from a variety of sources, in the form of aide memoirs, online, in-person, including journey information and ticketing information.

MP8 The Council is committed to the release of real time information and Urban Traffic Management & Control data, in an open and universally acceptable format, for use by developers for the production of web and mobile applications.

**Interchange Policies**

IP1 To encourage and support the provision of appropriate facilities at interchanges on the public transport network.

IP2 To encourage and promote feeder networks (bus routes, cycle routes, pedestrian routes) and appropriate transport facilities (e.g. bus routes, car clubs, cycle hire) around local hubs (such as rail stations, business parks, supermarkets) and ensure adequate signage for such facilities.

IP3 To encourage the development of appropriate facilities for taxi interchange at rail and bus hubs.

IP4 To encourage, and investigate with operators, the relocation of the national coach service stop and interchange facilities to a more accessible location at a Park & Ride site.

IP5 To investigate the potential for a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme for central Reading, including slot-booking for stopping arrangements, and ensuring a high quality service in exchange for access to facilities.

**Consultation and Engagement Policies**

EP1 To champion the principles of co-production and community engagement and to provide the tools and resources necessary for the public to influence the provision of the public transport services that they use.

EP2 To support and develop the formation and continuation of relevant forums and groups such as the Transport Users Forum and the Bus Operators' Liaison Group, to ensure collaborative working with relevant stakeholders and interest groups.

EP3 To undertake, in conjunction with consultees as appropriate, an annual travel needs analysis and survey programme

EP4 To re-assess these policies from time to time as circumstances require and feed into the Local Transport Strategy and Implementation Plans and corporate review processes as appropriate.

# 6 DEFINING THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Awareness of the arena within which this strategy sits is vital to ensuring its relevance and success. An understanding of the strategic environment, the factors influencing it and the different levels within it, aids the selection of efficient, tailored approaches.

## Geography of Approach

Over the previous two Local Transport Plan periods, the public transport network in Reading has been developed to provide an excellent level of access, providing links not just around Reading, but beyond, helping to support the economic success of the region. Taking a wide-angled view of the network as a whole has allowed this progress to occur, and we will continue to pursue further improvements on this scale. There will also be a second focus, on identifying and meeting specific transport needs and travel demand of communities and individuals.

This strategy describes a toolkit, of policy and initiatives, which can be applied at different levels, in different combinations and it is the way in which these initiatives combine that shapes their impacts. Only as part of a whole, as part of a concerted, strategic approach, can these elements have the intended effects, addressing the core themes of innovation, intervention, infrastructure and inclusion.

## Helping Individuals

A key consideration is making public transport easy to use. This means not only structural issues like the convenient location of bus stops and availability of low floor buses, but also helping individuals to make informed choices about public transport.

The approach at this level then, is about information first and foremost, about the options available and helping people to assess what is right for them, be that bus, cycle, car club, rail or a combination of all available options. This can include help with journey planning, information about ticketing, simplifying the process of making connections for onward journeys, or putting people in touch with non-mainstream transport providers.

**Empowering Communities**

Our aim is to create new, open forms of consultation, to allow the public a greater role in designing and delivering transport interventions. This is particularly the case at a community level, where we will seek to engage people, in an effort to make public transport provision more reflective and responsive, and to explore innovative methods of consultation and communication. Communities can be based around where people live, work, or otherwise share common interests and transport needs.

**Supporting Reading**

There will also be continuing support for Reading as a whole, and in cases where a scheme is likely to have widespread impacts, or is important to securing Reading's position as a transport hub and successful economic centre, the Council and Local Economic Partnership will retain overall control, but still seek increased input from the wider community.

The four key themes of innovation, intervention, infrastructure and inclusion run through all the levels of approach. By focusing on innovation and inclusion this strategy aims to maximise results gained from limited resources by targeting interventions and infrastructure improvements where they are needed the most.

Decisions about new services will be made using a Transport Assessment Framework, designed to ensure a measured approach and to help distinguish what sort and what scale of public transport is best suited to a particular case, and also where existing approaches need to be altered to be more efficient and effective.

Supporting Reading covers an area stretching across administrative boundaries, requiring partnership with neighbouring local authorities to work for the benefit and success of the economic area as a whole.

**Demographic Impacts**

Demographic factors and the differing characteristics of neighbourhoods within Reading have a large impact on the existing, and potential, demand for public transport. The circumstances of individuals and families dictate to a large extent their

travel choices. Car ownership may be influenced by income, distance to work or education, the size of a family, or any number of other factors.

There will always be specific cases where the use of public transport is not a viable option, but it is important to ensure that where it is, the option exists.

Demand for public transport can also be influence by factors such as in-migration and shifting population demographics associated with this. We must be responsive to these changes in the population of Reading, and to the unique cultures in different areas, helping to meet all the different challenges that are presented to us.

**Classifying the Network**

The public transport network itself is multi-layered, with some areas of greater strategic importance than others. Historically, this has been based on the bus network, in the form of a hierarchy, where those routes on high priority corridors or serving high priority localities required a higher quality service.

These definitions remain; strategic routes comprising radial and inter-urban routes, key routes serving local centres and the remaining network of community link and socially supported services.

This public transport strategy also recognises the importance of interchange facilities with other modes, prioritising central Reading, followed by local centres linked by a ‘string of pearls’ public transport network design, that can ultimately offer a step change in the accessibility and availability of public transport provision.

## 7 INITIATIVES AND ACTION PLAN

To deliver our aims and achieve our vision for improving public transport services in Reading, we will develop measures that will be incorporated into the annual rolling 3-year LTP3 Implementation Plans to drive forward real change in public transport provision, organisation and implementation. The timescales of the Implementation Plans will mean that the public transport strategy is able to be more flexible and reactive to changing circumstances, while still striving to achieve our long term aims and vision.

The aims of each mode will inform the direction of implementation and we will look to further integrate these aims where different modes interlink and complement one another, resulting in a unified public transport network providing more public transport options, catering for different demographics and their transport needs.

The approach to bus service development that evolved during the first two LTP periods has delivered significant improvements to the network and real benefits for users and non-users, including improving access to places of employment, education, medical facilities and local centres. The progress made on the LTP targets has demonstrated the value of the approach. We are therefore continuing to develop services within this overall Quality Travel for Reading framework to achieve our aims.

Improvements in conventional public transport services alone will not deliver the required capacity and level of mobility that is essential to support the economic growth and development proposed for our area. We will therefore continue to co-ordinate our transport functions as a local education authority and social services body to make the best use of resources. We will also continue to work with community transport operators, and in particular the dial-a-ride provider ReadiBus, to ensure facilities are provided for people who are unable to use conventional services. Extending and enhancing existing services will deliver real benefits, but further growth in demand will eventually have to be met by a step change in capacity. We will continue to develop our proposals for bus-based mass rapid transit to complement current local bus operations.

We will continue to investigate the potential for further Park and Ride sites to encourage transfer from car to shuttle bus for longer distance journeys into Reading.

Diversification of Park and Ride options will also be pushed forward through this strategy into new areas such as Park and Cycle and alternatives such as Park and Sail will be investigated.

Through new initiatives such as co-production we will engage with the public in a more meaningful way. Open data agreements will help discover the potential for new ways of utilising information about public transport services. The processes of developing public transport will be more transparent to the users, giving them greater insight which will lead to more informed requests. By working more closely with the user we will be able to further develop the public transport network to better meet their needs and maximise the options and opportunities for the delivery and organisation of public transport services.

- Initiative: Co-Production
- Initiative: Open Data
- Initiative: Integrated SmartCard Ticketing
- Initiative: Fares
- Initiative: Fasttrack 2020
- Initiative: Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme

**Initiative: Co-Production**

A different approach to design and delivery

The foundation of co-production is the recognition that people are assets, and we should seek to harness their individual knowledge and skills to pursue creative solutions to the challenges faced in public service provision. This reappraisal of the role of service users is the basis for a re-evaluation of the contributions individuals can make to public services, benefiting themselves, those around them and the community at large.

Traditional measures of effectiveness and efficiency focus on financial values, on cost cutting and squeezing more from limited budgets. Co-production places greater

importance on non-financial factors; those social and cultural quality of life issues which form the basis of successful, inclusive communities.

At the heart of co-production is a commitment to reciprocity, and to the building of social support networks, where service users become more active participants, blurring the line between provider and receiver.

Putting co-production into practice

Co-production allows for a more participative approach, calling on a wider range of knowledge and skills to design public services more creatively and more innovatively. By actively seeking the involvement of service users, rather than responding only to those who make their voices heard, the opinions of those who do not usually participate in consultation exercises can be included. This is beneficial because not only are opinions more representative of society as a whole, but also those who value public services the most and those whom decisions affect the most are part of the process.

Co-production has the potential to be cost-effective, not just by saving money, but by producing more efficient outcomes. The harnessing of non-monetary resources, and the appreciation of non-monetary outcomes, which comes from an environment of co-production is often ignored by traditional models. The value of the volunteer or informal economy is immeasurable, especially with regard to community building and achieving social cohesion. By making data freely available, the Council will in essence become a part of this informal economy. In addition to this, the Council could offer additional resource, in the form of tools, expertise and some financial support, creating transparency and flexibility.

Transparency in processes, and an evidential basis for decision-making, are the major benefits of co-production. It allows the public a level of understanding which is not achieved by traditional consultation, which can occur too late in the process. Furthermore, the intention is to encourage contribution, rather than allowing room only for objection, promoting a level of social investment, where individual members of the public feel part of what is happening around them.

This kind of involvement, when it occurs on a regular basis, can be used to create strong social networks, encouraging positive behavioural change and supporting schemes in the long-term.

By building these networks, and encouraging positive involvement, we hope community initiatives will be able to support public services. In essence co-production builds services from the ground up, rather than patching flaws in provision. Community groups become more aware of their environment, avoiding clashes with other events or activities by choosing better times, or different venues. Co-production in transport could also forge a culture of public transport use, increasing patronage and involving service users in route design to better meet demand. This sort of difference can make marginal routes commercially viable, and reduce the cost of supported routes.

Major difficulties and possible solutions

There are a number of obstacles to commissioning co-produced public services, including short-term thinking and the inflexibility of target-based methodologies for service delivery. Instead, we will need to look long-term, with a wider view of what constitutes success, and a focus on quality of life.

Transport provision as a public service is an enabler; linking together other Council functions, as well as the wider economy, and society as a whole. This is transport's natural position, and co-production allows it to work as a mediator, encouraging negotiation and compromise across a variety of fronts, to ensure efficient and innovative public services can be provided, reacting swiftly to changing circumstances. Other departments and their service users can then be encouraged to become part of the process of programme development and delivery, and pursue the re-investing of any savings seen.

This ability to focus on, and find value in, the immeasurable is vital to successfully applying the values of co-production. This successful application will be achieved by linking innovation and engagement and communication techniques to outcomes in the LTP3 framework, which incorporates both short- and longer-term timescales.

Encouraging and valuing involvement

We envisage building a balanced and equal partnership, not just between the Council and service users, but between service users, with everyone granted a voice in the process of design and delivery of transport services.

This will involve the development of appropriate online tools and resources to enable service users to contribute from a position of knowledge and understanding. This may include:

- Relevant local statistics presented in a simple map=based format, searchable by area;
- Analytical tools to enable visualisation of options and the potential outcome of interventions;
- Technical support to move ideas towards deliverable designs;
- Self-managed consultation tools to enable scheme promoters to canvas local support;
- Structured evaluation and feedback on outcomes to inform future proposals.

**Initiative: Open Data**

Central government is committed to the release of public data through initiatives such as data.gov.uk and the Freedom of Information Act. Rather than just keep pace with this change, the Council aims to be a leader of data-sharing.

We intend to make available as much transport related data as possible. This will include live feeds of real time bus information, journey times and traffic cameras, as well as fixed data such as bus timetables and stop locations, and historical data on the performance of the public transport network.

This information will be available to local software developers, allowing them to harness it, combine it with other data sources and create useful, innovative applications which benefit the public. Our intention is that this will support local developers first and foremost, in the spirit of Reading's position as a high-tech hub.

We will hold an annual *Transport Innovation Challenge* for transport related mobile and web applications, to showcase the most innovative and most beneficial work of local developers.

In addition to this data being open to developers, it will also form the backbone of the Council's consultation tools on community and contract service design and delivery, allowing the public greater insight and greater input into the process and the evidential base behind decision-making.

What transport data could be made available?

By releasing data into the public domain, with no controls on commercial use (apart from perpetual licensing for the Council, so as it may benefit from any tools developed), outside developers will be encouraged to find new uses for the data, or combine it with other available datasets to benefit the wider public.

*Real Time Information (RTI)*

Real time bus information, including bus locations, stop arrival predictions, estimated journey times and historical performance data, is especially well suited to the development of mobile and web applications, and also has the potential to provide the most immediate benefit to public transport users.

*Urban Traffic Management & Control (UTMC)*

Data held by UTMC, including traffic flows and CCTV feeds, has significant potential on a number of fronts. Firstly, it is data in which there is a great deal of public interest, as people experience the localised impacts of traffic on a daily basis. Secondly, the data is very raw; it is held in large quantities but has rarely been opened for use beyond its immediate purpose, nor any consistent cross-dataset analysis undertaken.

*Other Data*

As well as 'live' data feeds from UTMC and RTI, there are a number of other fixed data sources. These include route and timetable information, details of infrastructure and stopping arrangements and more sensitive data such as patronage and running costs.

These fixed (albeit regularly updated) datasets provide the framework around which live feeds can be hung. This information is vital to the interpretation of live data, providing the context through which it can be understood. For example, real time data showing bus locations is of little value without stop locations, and punctuality data is enhanced by the availability of traffic flow data for the area surrounding the route.

**Initiative: Integrated SmartCard Ticketing**

Smartcard ticketing has existed in Reading since 2003, both commercially, through Reading Transport Limited, and in the form of Reading Borough Council's concessionary fares scheme and the subsequent English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS).

The ENCTS is based on a government-supported smartcard standard known as ITSO, and we now wish to promote the use of ITSO smartcards beyond concessionary fares. Reading Transport Limited, the major local bus operator is making steps to move to a fully ITSO-compliant ticketing system, and the Council is supporting this initiative using challenge funding to develop an open access ITSO back office available to all local bus and rail operators.

The result will be an evolving fully ITSO environment for both commercial and concessionary fares ticketing. Once this stage is reached, the Council will look to develop an integrated, multi-operator approach to ticketing across Reading. The aim of this is to simplify ticketing for passengers, by creating flexible ticketing options which allow choice of route and choice of operator and which do not require a passenger to know their travel plans exactly in advance to get the best value ticket.

As well as providing ticketing for multiple operators, the Council will also seek to make progress with multi-modal payment. Specifically smartcard ticketing will be a part of any cycle hire scheme created within the Reading Borough, allowing choice of travel mode with a single method of payment.

It is also our aim to include car-related products within an integrated smartcard ticketing scheme, with car clubs and electric vehicle charging points a part of plans to

reduce congestion and carbon emissions. In addition, car parking could also become part of a scheme, not just as park and ride sites, but across Reading.

The aim of an integrated smartcard ticketing scheme is not just to simplify travel for passengers by providing them with a single ticket and payment method, but also to allow for ticketing to be more responsive.

Modern smartcard schemes can be flexible, offering discounts or variable fares in response to special events or unusual circumstances. This can help manage demand on a network, by encouraging passengers to travel at different times where they are able. It is also possible to reward passengers for travelling regularly by public transport through discounting of future travel, or even to offer free trips if a bus is late or cancelled.

We will investigate these, and other similar initiatives, to see where innovative approaches can be used in Reading. We will also investigate the possibility of integration with other schemes such as Oyster in London, and with other non-transport uses.

The overall approach will seek to move public transport ticketing into line with other initiatives, with online ticketing alongside real-time information about buses and cycle hire, traffic flows and weather conditions.

**Initiative: Fares**

In addition to enabling a simplified, integrated smartcard ticketing scheme, the Council will also investigate the potential for offering travel concessions to groups beyond those who currently enjoy them. This might include cheap travel for those under the age of sixteen, or for those under the age of nineteen who are in further education, and substantial discounts for adult fares, particularly on multi-journey and period passes.

Such travel concessions will build on the already successful scheme that is Reading's variant of the English National Concessionary Travel scheme for those aged over sixty and the eligible disabled. Reading is committed to the delivery of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme, and the local scheme is one of the most generous in the country. We will look to extend the success of this to new groups as part of a local

scheme. The aim of this would be to make public transport more inclusive and more affordable, and to instil a culture of public transport use, presenting it as a viable day to day alternative to private car ownership.

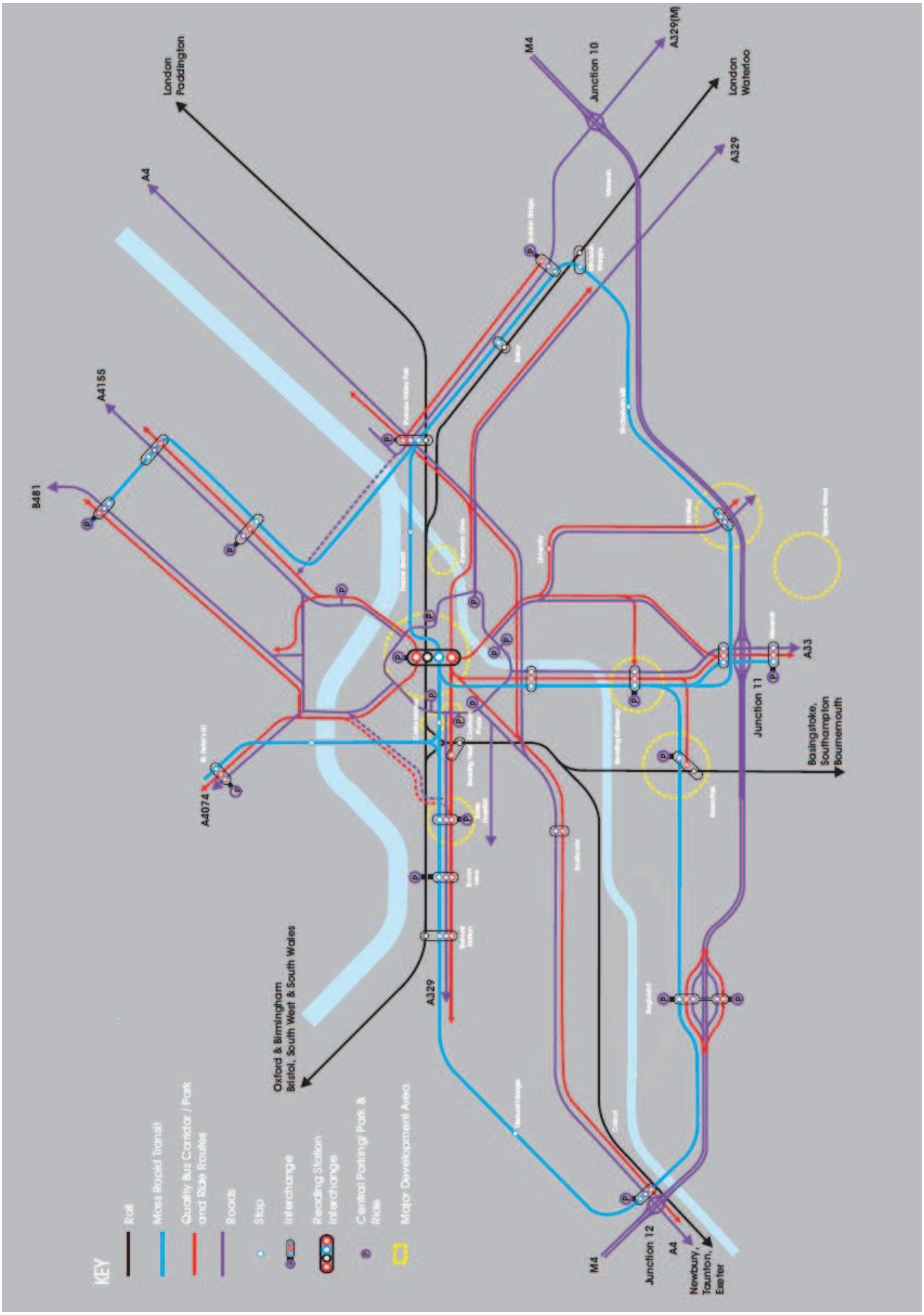
**Initiative: Fasttrack 2020**

Reading's Fasttrack services current operate between central Reading and south Reading along the A33, serving key destinations such as Madejski Stadium and GreenPark. Further development of this kind of quick shuttle service to key locations in the form of a bus-based mass rapid transit system (MRT) would increase the public transport options for destinations across Reading. An MRT-type system will enhance the image of the town, increase the inter-connectedness of the urban area and the local sustainability. It would strengthen the standing of public transport as a genuine alternative to car travel and deliver a step change in service quality, further adding to the attraction for users.

Reading's transport system has historically developed in a radial pattern focused upon the town centre. The strategy for the new MRT network is fivefold:

- Introduce a step change in quality, extent and capacity of public transport services in Reading and the surrounding area.
- Complement transport provision along the main radial routes or corridors;
- Develop new or 'missing' radial routes such as the eastern corridor;
- Develop orbital routes which combine to form a 'grid' pattern allowing passengers to reach all parts of the area without needing to travel through the town centre;
- Develop strategic transport links to other systems in the functional economic area.

The graphic following summarises the key features of the long term vision for public transport in Reading in the context of the known major development proposals.


London Paddington
A4
A4155
B481
A4074
A329
Oxford & Birmingham
Bristol, South West & South Wales
M4
Junction 10
A329(M)
London Waterloo
A329
A33
Junction 11
Basingstoke, Southampton Bournemouth
M4
Junction 12
A4
Newbury, Taunton, Exeter
KEY
Rail
Mass Rapid Transit
Quality Bus Corridor / Park and Ride Routes
Roads
Stop
Interchange
Reading Station Interchange
Central Parking/ Park & Ride
Major Development Area

**Initiative: Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme**

A statutory quality partnership scheme (SQPS) is a way in which the transport authority can formalise and enforce agreements with local operators, to ensure the provision of the best possible public transport for Reading. Similar schemes have already proven to be successful in Reading, with voluntary partnerships supporting quality bus corridor and premier route branding across Reading.

A SQPS enables issues of service frequency, service quality, service information and integrated ticketing to be addressed, with standards set and requirements agreed by operators, in exchange for access to high quality infrastructure and bus priority measures provided by the Council.

The aim of an SQPS is to improve service quality, hinging around the main interchange point that is central Reading. This will benefit passengers through improved service quality and stability, encourage greater modal shift to public transport, and benefit operators through increased patronage and access to the facilities and support provided by the Council, enabling them to increase punctuality and reliability.

The area governed by a central Reading SQPS would encompass all stops within the IDR, and seek to manage pressure on existing infrastructure, by requiring operators to book slots at stopping facilities, thereby reducing overcrowding, both at stops, and on roads. In order to serve stops within the centre of Reading, operators would be required to meet quality standards and be a part of a multi-operator integrated ticketing scheme. In line with previous commitments on consistency we would also seek to ensure the stability of the network as a whole by restricting operator service changes to agreed dates, and requiring advanced notification of all changes impacting stops within the scheme area.

There would need to be exceptions to the scheme for specialist services, such as school routes, demand responsive community or dial-a-ride services and rail replacement services.

We will scope a suitable scheme at an early stage in the delivery of this strategy, and seek the input of stakeholders such as relevant operators, local residents and public transport users.

## 8 SUPPORTING FACTORS

In addition to the new initiatives set out in the Action Plan, we will continue to develop the approaches and the themes that have provided the grounding for previous improvements to local public transport services.

- Co-ordination
- Information
- Interchange
- Consultation

### Co-ordination

Integrated Transport Unit

Effective co-ordination of the initiatives and objectives described in this strategy is vital to the success of public transport within Reading. Public transport co-ordination is a statutory responsibility of a local transport authority and extends to include education and social care transport provision organised by the Council. We will continue to review the effectiveness of the internal arrangements for managing and procuring such services, and the integration of policy and budgetary provision so as to secure the best value for the community. An integrated approach to transport, perhaps based in a dedicated Transport Unit that can ensure best practice is applied, has been shown to be a coherent and effective use of resources

An integrated approach facilitates the delivery of comprehensive information to intending passengers on available travel options and allows commissioning organisations to allocate the most effective resource to meet specific transport needs.

Transport Assessment Framework

To aid decision-making, and ensure a transparent and rational process, a comprehensive transport assessment framework will be designed. This framework will take account of the objectives outlined in this strategy, when deciding which solution best fits a particular set of circumstances. It will also seek to show where innovative

approaches can achieve better results than traditional, mainstream service provision, and where the knowledge and skills of service users can benefit their communities and Reading as a whole by aiding the process.

**Information**

The effective provision of information is vital to supporting public transport network, and encouraging their use through lowering the barriers to public transport use and providing tailored journey information, particularly to those who are most vulnerable and have special accessibility needs.

Information provision is also an area where the use of emerging technologies can provide new methods of delivery for journey information, allowing increasing levels of flexibility, tailoring information to individuals and simplifying the use of public transport.

The Local Transport Plan periods running from 2001-06 and 2006-11 saw a number of achievements as a result of the inception of Bus Quality Corridors and a real time information (RTI) system. We will continue to build on these achievements, and those in other key strategic elements, such as:

- Traveline South East – website and call centre;
- Reading travel info website;
- Network maps, area guides and leaflets;
- Printed bus stop arrival and departure boards;
- On-bus information displays;
- Ticketing and fares information.

At the centre of Reading Borough Council's strategy for public transport information is a commitment to traditional 'static' timetable and service information displays. This includes at-stop displays, route maps and network information, the accuracy of which is a cornerstone to simplifying public transport use.

The responsibility for production and delivery of passenger information in the Reading urban area is shared between bus operators and the three local authorities (Reading Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and Wokingham Borough Council). This approach is supported by a number of joint initiatives progressed through voluntary quality bus partnerships and partnerships of this sort represent the best method of realising further improvements in passenger information.

Consistent, comprehensive public transport information is vital to meeting our continuing commitment to quality travel for Reading, building on the success of previous LTP periods. We seek to create positive passenger experiences, from door-to-door, for all transport users, from novices to more experienced and knowledgeable passengers. To encompass the entirety of a journey, information must be available at all locations which may form part of a journey, both within the network, on-vehicle and at interchanges, and outside the network, at common destinations and accessible at home or at work. In all cases the key methods of dissemination for this information are electronically, paper-based and in person.

Traveline

Traveline provides multi-operator travel information and journey planning. Reading Borough Council supplies data to this service in partnership with neighbouring authorities. This information is available via both the internet and telephone call centres, and we will continue to work with Traveline and other authorities in the southeast to develop the service at a regional level.

Travel Kiosk

The travel kiosk in the centre of Reading provides advice on bus services and ticketing. We will work in partnership with operators to ensure that comprehensive information is available to the travel kiosk and can be accessed by travellers speaking face-to-face with an advisor

Paper Information

This includes information about the network as a whole, in the form of maps, area guides and leaflets, as well as at-stop timetables and specific route information.

These resources are updated in response to service changes and are available on-vehicle and at the travel kiosk. In addition to this, there is also scope for individualised travel planning literature in the form of aide memoirs provided either by the travel kiosk or accessed via the internet for printing or viewing on a mobile device.

Real Time

Following an initial funding award in 2002, Reading has introduced a real time information system across the Reading urban area.

In addition to at-stop displays showing estimated arrival times, on-bus displays inform passengers of next stops, and give information about any special circumstances such as diversions or bank holiday timetables.

Building on these existing information platforms, we are keen to provide real time information in other forms. Specifically, there is a desire to pursue innovative delivery methods, in particular using web and mobile devices to allow prospective passengers to access real time information before entering the network.

Ticketing

Ticketing information is key to encouraging the use of public transport. Helping passengers find the simplest, best value fare contributes to making public transport a viable alternative to private car use. We remain committed to improving this information and pursuing innovative solutions on this front, again focusing on promoting web and mobile access, not only to general fares, but also to special offers, and as part of a one-stop solution to public transport, including journey planning and ticketing

The Future

Reading Borough Council is recognised as a centre of excellence and innovation in the distribution of information to the public, particularly in relation to real time information. However, the environment for dissemination of information is rapidly changing, with new delivery methods arising from developing technologies, and the

importance of staying at the forefront of these emerging technologies is acknowledged.

This desire to pursue the best possible methods for delivering high-quality information to the public is behind the decision to make feeds of live information available to software developers. This will include real time bus and rail information, details of car park status and roadworks, as well as access to traffic management's CCTV, variable messaging and journey time information.

It is hoped that these feeds of information will be used to create web and mobile applications, perhaps linking with other available streams of data, to present the public with information when and where they need it.

The Council's annual 'Transport Innovation Challenge', will promote the best of local software development talent, showcasing the most inventive apps, and selecting one to be the Council's officially supported transport information app for the following year. By holding the Challenge once a year, it is hoped to drive continuing development year on year, and remain at the forefront, as further data is made available and new methods of delivery arise.

## READING RTI PRODUCT/CHANNEL MATRIX

| | ON-BUS DISPLAYS | ON-STREET DISPLAYS | OFF-STREET DISPLAYS | RBC WEB | MOBILE APPS | SMS | GADGETS | VOICE | INTRANET | PRIMARY DATA SOURCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Real-Time Bus | | ☺ | ☺ | ☺ | 😐😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | RTI |
| Real-Time Rail | ☺ | ☺ | ☺ | ☺ | 😐😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | UTMC |
| Car Park Status | | | ☺ | ☺ | 😐😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | UTMC |
| Messaging | ☺ | ☺ | ☺ | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | UTMC |
| Advertising | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | | 😐 | | | | | RTI |
| RBC Ticketing | | | | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| Bus Operator Ticketing | | | | 😐 | 😐😐 | 😐 | | | 😐 | |
| Rail Operator Ticketing | | | | 😐 | 😐😐 | 😐 | | | 😐 | |
| Local Journey Planner | | | | 😐 | 😐😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| National Journey Planner | | | | 😐 | 😐😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| Bus Late Alert | | | | | 😐 | ☺ | | | | UTMC |
| Car Park Full Alert | | | | | 😐 | ☺ | | | | UTMC |
| Bus Due Alert | | | | | 😐 | 😐 | | | | RTI |
| Route Diversion Alert | | | | | 😐 | 😐 | | | | UTMC |
| Connection Alert | | | | | 😐 | 😐 | | | | RTI |
| Carbon Calculator | | | | 😐 | 😐😐 | | 😐😐 | | 😐 | UTMC |
| Journey Progress | ☺ | | | | 😐😐 | | | | | RTI |
| UTMC Roadworks | | | | ☺ | 😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| UTMC Journey Time | | | | ☺ | 😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| UTMC VMS | | | | ☺ | 😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| UTMC CCTV | | | | ☺ | 😐 | | | | 😐 | UTMC |
| Audio Announcing | ☺ | ☺ | ☺ | 😐 | 😐 | | | 😐 | 😐 | RTI |
| Bluetooth Connection | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | | | | | | | |
| RFID Connection | 😐 | 😐 | 😐 | | | | | | | |
| Social Networking | | | | 😐😐 | 😐😐 | 😐😐 | | | 😐 | |

**KEY:**

Implemented by RBC ☺

RBC to develop 😐

Implemented by Connexionz ☺

Connexionz to develop 😐

Implemented by innovators ☺

Innovators to develop 😐

Not applicable

Graphic design standard required

**Interchange**

A key facet of an integrated public transport network is the ability to make onward connections and change modes easily and efficiently. This encompasses a variety of different aspects of transport policy, but from a passenger perspective those which have the most impact are interchange infrastructure, information about onward connections and the availability of simple, integrated ticketing options.

Effective transport interchanges can only occur in correlation with the success of the wider public transport network. The passenger experience at interchanges is a microcosm of their experience on the network as a whole, with any deficiencies swiftly highlighted as passengers attempt to move between modes and plan journeys.

Inclusion

The ability to make simple, effective journeys, even where these journeys comprise of multiple stages, is an important lever in improving inclusion and accessibility. Ideal public transport allows those without private transportation the same access to jobs, shops, schools, community centres and doctor's surgeries as those who can travel by car. It ought to be cheaper, quicker and easier to travel by public transport than by car, and effective interchanges are vital to this. It is all too easy for time to be lost at interchanges, waiting for a connection where timetables don't align, or as a result of poor information about where to find buses or trains, or which ticket to buy.

These difficulties will need to be minimised if the perceived disbenefit of interchange is to be overcome, making transfers as efficient as possible, through comprehensive, real-time information about buses and trains, and multi-modal, integrated smartcard ticketing.

Intervention

We recognises that due to the nature of the commercial public transport network, the whole of central Reading acts as an interchange for the wider area. The majority of bus routes serve one corridor and central Reading, with onward journeys to another destination requiring a connection to be made.

As such, in order to ensure an effective interchange for all passengers, it is essential that we manage efficiently the stopping arrangements, information provision and ticketing options for all services within the centre of Reading.

Infrastructure

There is a great deal of high quality infrastructure in place, in support of the extensive bus network which operates in Reading, including new, high quality bus shelters across the borough. The successful Quality Bus Corridor schemes which accompanied the implementation of Premier Route branding across Reading, saw new bus stop infrastructure and the installation of real time bus information displays at key locations.

Within the centre of Reading, a set of new real time information displays is being deployed, offering passengers far more detail, relating not just to buses, but to other modes of travel, including items such as rail times and traffic information.

Innovation

It is our intention to adopt innovative approaches to ticketing and information provision, as detailed in the outlines of the Integrated Smartcard Ticketing and Open Data initiatives. These will play a vital role in ensuring interchange facilities meet the needs of passengers, and the Council will continue to pursue the use of emerging technologies and new methods, where these can provide even greater benefit to the public.

A network of interchanges

While the centre of Reading, in particular the area surrounding Reading Station, is the primary interchange point within the Borough, it is important to consider facilities at other potential points where passengers may be making onward connections.

Integrated ticketing will ease transfer between buses, and enable the use of park and ride or cycle hire sites. Information provision should be a high priority at all bus stops, cycle hire points and rail stations within the Reading Borough.

In essence, the entire public transport network should be geared towards door-to-door journeys, making travel as simple and affordable as possible, offering a choice of ticketing options and travel modes, so that passengers are able to make the journey they want, not the journey the network allows.

The result will be a network design with enhanced facilities, including wider information provision at points where multiple routes and multiple modes meet. It is envisaged that there will be secondary interchanges in these prime locations (for example, local centres and key facilities) along every corridor.

**Consultation**

The Council recognises the requirement to meet statutory obligations on consultation, and will continue to do so, as well as building on the excellent working partnerships which have been forged between Reading Borough Council, neighbouring authorities and local transport operators.

These partnerships, along with specialist advice from consultants and research groups, and a network of data collection sources spanning traffic flows, bus punctuality and patronage, and air quality, have aided our in decision-making processes.

However, we have also sought to involve the public, transport users and other relevant groups more widely, through a series of public forums, some specifically on transport issues, some on wider issues impacting local communities.

It is this aspect of consultation we would wish to promote, with the aim of striking a balance between expert input and the value of local knowledge. The involvement and investment of local communities is key for the success of public transport, and public contribution represents a major asset which remains relatively untapped.

Over the third Local Transport Plan period, which coincides with the horizon set for the Sustainable Community Strategy, the Council is committed to maintaining pace with social change, and responding to the shifting demands which result. Through exploiting advances in social media and emerging technologies, our hope is to build better models of engagement with the public, building confidence in communities and encouraging ownership of the improvements made.

The Council's Open Data and Co-production initiatives will help meet these aims.

Open Data and Co-Production

Open data can create an environment conducive to open consultation, by enabling the public to share the evidential base used by policy-makers. The release of data prior to decision-making can enable the involvement of better informed stakeholders at a far earlier stage of the process, with effective public consultation taking a large and genuine role in option identification and appraisal.

Effective implementation of these initiatives

For the use of community design to be effective, the systems for communicating with the public need to be two way and the services need to be flexible in reacting to public wishes and needs. Public Transport services, especially bus services such as community transport, are often tweaked and tuned to provide the best possible service for the allocated budget. Co-production's championing of close engagement with the end user should mean that any changes to services directly meet the needs and desires of users. The principles of co-production can also be applied to schemes such as cycle hire where hire stations can be moved or added according to changing needs or cycle routes can be improved.

There is already a great deal of value in the feedback delivered by the public in the form of anecdotal evidence of the conditions of the public transport network. What is missing is a structured, effective method of collecting this evidence and building a picture of user perceptions.

We will implement suitable methods to collect this information, as well as for wider consultation, and to enable the public to become involved in intervention design and delivery.

The model which lends itself best to this style of activity is web-based, but driven by community groups. To achieve this, they must be provided with the necessary information, and the necessary tools to play a central role in decision-making; to meet, to assess and to suggest solutions.

The emerging Open Data and Co-production initiatives are vital to achieving this aspiration, and will be applied to consultation practices, beginning with the Council's role in community and supported transport services, and quickly spreading to other aspects of public transport policy.

## 9 MONITORING PROGRESS

This strategy will be monitored on a continual basis along the same lines and methodologies set out in LTP3. A variety of data sources and analysis techniques enable us to monitor the transport network and public transport service performance both in real time and through historic survey data. These sources of information are pooled together to generate a picture of the public transport services in Reading, showing where there are opportunities for improvement.

Monitoring methods for public transport include:

- Automatic Traffic Counters recording volume speed and classification
- Annual Cordon Counts
- Real Time Passenger Information systems recording bus punctuality and reliability
- Electronic Ticket Machine data recording passenger boardings
- People surveys
- Regular site visits, surveys, inspections and assessments
- Project specific surveys, consultation and investigation
- Sharing of relevant data with neighbouring authorities and other Council departments

### UTMC and Real Time Information

In addition to monitoring the public transport network, the data collected is used to optimise and in some cases change services. The Urban Traffic Management and Control (UTMC) system collects and disperses a range of real time information including car park use, traffic signal operation and optimisation, variable message signs and bus lane enforcement cameras. The system also communicates with real-time passenger information on Reading's bus services, providing a useful tool for operators to track and react to changes on the network in real time, providing a better service for users. In addition to real time reactions to issues on the network, pre-emptive action may be necessary when problems are predicted and so they may be mitigated before they can cause disruption to the network.

Automatic Traffic Counters

Newly upgraded permanent monitoring installations are able to record volume, speed and traffic classifications of traffic, in two cordons around central Reading. This provides a longer term picture of the trends in traffic across the borough over time, enabling us to deliver a better public transport services through identifying areas where intervention is necessary.

Annual Cordon Count

These counts provide a detailed view of the movements in and out of central Reading over a 12 hour period. They enable us to measure progress towards improving and increasing use of public transport. A variant of the central Reading cordon counts will be used to monitor our new local interchange hubs.

Collecting Data by Camera

Data collection using traffic cameras gives a very high level of detailed data and has added benefits of bus lane enforcement, which keep bus lanes clear public transport priority. The network of cameras also allows us to react to situations as they arise to keep traffic flowing where possible.

Data Collection for Bus Services

Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and on bus and at stop surveys enable us to have a detailed view of how the network is performing at any given time, while also giving a longer term view of historical patterns of performance. This means that services can be tuned and adapted depending on the feedback from the data, in order to pursue greater stability, reliability and punctuality in the network.

Electronic Ticket Machine (ETM) data and on bus surveys allows us to monitor bus service patronage. Through this, the success of schemes can be measured in terms of increasing bus use, such as Quality Bus Corridors, enhanced timetable frequency and infrastructure improvements. Any issues with capacity are also shown in this data.

Other Monitoring Activities

Other forthcoming public transport services such as cycle hire will be monitored through usage figures at hire stations and scheme membership data. Permanent cycle monitoring sites which collect data on the number of cyclist will also be used to show any changes in cyclist numbers which may occur following the introduction of the cycle hire scheme and any subsequent installations of addition hire points.

Public engagement is also important to assess the performance of public transport services, giving members of the public the opportunity to voice their concerns with the public transport they use. Surveys include the annual Resident or 'Place' Survey including questions about bus user satisfaction, school travel census and workplace travel plan updates.

Asset Condition Surveys will be used to retain the quality of the supporting infrastructure such as bus stops and cycle hire stations, enabling us to step in and correct any issues that may arise.

Data Exchange

To further improve the quality of data that we utilise we will continue to share data with neighbouring local authorities to enhance our strategic knowledge of the transport network in Reading. Members of the public will also be able to access data related to public transport and in turn they are able to provide us with invaluable information on issues and defects, opportunities and problems on an ad hoc basis. Throughout the life of this strategy we will investigate and promote effective methods of allowing users to provide structured feedback on the day-to-day operation and development of our transport networks.

## ANNEX 1: BUS STOP HIERARCHY

| Classification | Function | Minimum facilities | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Type A – Interchange | Off-street or on-street (multi-stop) boarding and alighting facility providing opportunity for passengers to make bus-to-bus connections or to transfer between modes (e.g. car-bus, bus-rail) | Adequate shelter(s) incorporating lighting<br>Stop flag(s)<br>Seating<br>Comprehensive information (static displays/RTPI/people on duty)<br>Telephones<br>Adequate lighting at interchange and in vicinity<br>CCTV/security patrols<br>Cycle parking<br>Ability to transfer between modes<br><br>DESIRABLE:<br>Level boarding – i.e. raised kerbs | Reading Station Interchange(s) |
| Type B - Bus station | Off-street, multi-stop boarding and alighting facility, served by a number of routes and providing opportunity for bus-to-bus connections for passengers | Fully enclosed, well-lit waiting area with seating<br>Comprehensive information (stop flags, static displays and (depending on location, multi-modal) RTPI<br>Customer service desk/people on duty<br>Telephones<br>Toilets<br>Lost property office<br>Somewhere to eat or at least buy a snack<br>Cycle parking<br>CCTV/security patrols<br><br>DESIRABLE:<br>Level boarding – i.e. raised kerbs where appropriate<br>Ability to transfer between modes (depending on location) | (No current example in Reading) |

| Classification | Function | Minimum facilities | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Type C – Key stops on route (may or may not be timing points) | On-street facility at a location with significant numbers of passengers boarding*<br><br>** boarding flows greater than 100 passengers per day or between 50 and 99 passengers boarding per day with average of more than 2 passengers per timetabled departure* | Adequate shelter incorporating lighting<br>Stop flag<br>Seat/bench<br>Information (static and RTPI)<br>Bin<br><br>DESIRABLE:<br>Adequate lighting in vicinity<br>Raised kerb | Cemetery Junction (Kings Rd, inbound) |
| Type D – Minor | On-street facility at a location with limited numbers of passengers boarding*<br><br>** boarding flows less than 50 passengers per day or between 50 and 99 passengers boarding per day with average of less than 2 passengers per timetabled departure* | Stop flag<br>Static information (timetable display)<br>Bin<br><br>DESIRABLE:<br>Adequate lighting in vicinity<br>RTPI information (depending on location)<br>Raised kerb | |
| Type E – Basic | On-street facility primarily used by passengers for alighting | Flag<br>Bin<br><br>DESIRABLE:<br>Adequate lighting in vicinity<br>Static information<br>Raised kerb | |
| Type F – info points on Hail and Ride routes e.g. community noticeboards, or named points without fixtures on routes | | Static information (timetable display) | (No current example in Reading) |