



Reading Transport Strategy 2036

Integrated Impact Assessment

Non-Technical Summary

On behalf of **Reading Borough Council**



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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Stantec UK Ltd¹ (Stantec) has been commissioned by Reading Borough Council (RBC), to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the emerging Reading Transport Strategy 2036, as the statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for the Borough of Reading. This Non-Technical Summary (NTS) of the Integrated Impact Assessment Report ('the IIA Report') documents the findings of the IIA carried out in respect of the Consultation Draft Reading Transport Strategy 2040 (hereafter the Draft RTS'), with the IIA comprising three linked assessment areas:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA);
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA); and,
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

1.2 Reading Transport Strategy 2040

1.2.1 As noted in the RTS, the next LTP for the RBC area (required pursuant to the Transport Act 2000) will comprise two elements:

- The RTS, which provides a strategic framework to address key transport issues and therefore acts as a long-term Strategy Plan; and,
- Implementation Plans – live delivery documents to implement the policies and proposals set out in the RTS.

1.2.2 The Implementation Plans, anticipated to be updated annually by RBC, will support the RTS rather than introducing new policies or proposals. These future plans therefore do not fall within the scope of this IIA and are not themselves likely to result in any new or different significant effects from those identified in this IIA of the RTS. In the event that future Implementation Plans do set out any substantive policies or proposals not already assessed within this IIA, RBC would need to consider the implications of this in relation to relevant statutory impact assessment requirements (i.e., the need to undertake a further SEA and/or EqIA as appropriate).

1.2.3 The Draft RTS which has been subject to IIA comprise the following substantive components, which are also expected to be included in the final RTS in due course:

- Executive summary – provides a succinct review of the vision & objectives, context, challenges & opportunities, policies, schemes and monitoring arrangements outlined in subsequent sections of the RTS;
- Introduction – overview of the purpose and approach to preparing the emerging RTS, including the role to date of consultation, engagement and the IIA in informing the Draft RTS;
- Visions and Objectives – setting out a holistic transport vision statement and supporting 5 objectives to underpin the RTS. These objectives are centred on the following themes, each of which is relevant to the IIA:

¹ Formerly Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA)

- *Creating a Clean and Green Reading*
 - *Supporting Healthy Lifestyles*
 - *Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*
 - *Connecting People and Places*
 - *Embracing Smart Solutions*
 - About Reading – characterising travel and the transport system in Reading, including with reference to key environmental, equalities and health issues. This section also presents case studies of recent successful transport interventions by RBC and partner organisations;
 - Challenges and Opportunities – review of the key transport issues (and associated evidence) which need to be addressed through the new RTS. These issues have been grouped into the following seven broad challenges, all of which are relevant to the IIA:
 - *Adapting to the future (including responding to the climate emergency);*
 - *Improving air quality*
 - *Reducing car congestion and the negative effects it causes*
 - *Providing affordable and accessible travel for all*
 - *Removing barriers to healthy lifestyles*
 - *Achieving good accessibility to local facilities and employment*
 - *Accommodating development and delivering the Local Plan*
 - Our Policies – sets out a suite of proposed transport policies to support the achievement of the RTS vision & objectives and to address the identified key challenges;
 - Our Schemes and Initiatives – sets out a suite of proposed transport schemes (i.e., proposals and initiatives) to support the achievement of the RTS vision & objectives and to address the identified key challenges;
 - Funding and Implementation – identification of potential funding mechanisms and timescales for the delivery of the identified schemes and initiatives;
 - Partnerships and Stakeholders – outlines the importance of partnership working between RBC and other organisations to deliver the proposed schemes and initiatives and to implement the RTS more widely; and,
 - Monitoring and Review – sets out a series of key performance indicators and timescales to monitor and review the RTS.
- 1.2.4 In accordance with statutory requirements, all substantive components of the Draft RTS have been subject to an IIA incorporating SEA, EqIA and HIA as detailed in this report.

1.3 How to Comment on this IIA Report

- 1.3.1 The NTS of this IIA Report are being issued for consultation alongside the Draft Reading RTS. Details of how to participate in the consultation, including providing comments on this IIA report,

will be provided on RBC's Local Transport Plan website and published in a local newspaper prior to the consultation period commencing.

2 IIA Policy and Context

2.1 Key Baseline Issues

2.1.1 A summary of the key environmental, equalities and health issues which need to be considered within the emerging RTS and the associated IIA is provided in **Table 2.1** below. Both the Draft RTS and this IIA are focused on addressing these issues.

Table 2.1: Key Issues Relevant to the RTS IIA

SEA Topic	Key Issues
Biodiversity, Flora & Fauna	<p>The need to conserve and enhance biodiversity interests including sites designated for their ecological importance</p> <p>The need to maintain, restore and expand valued habitats and to safeguard protected species.</p> <p>The need to deliver biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>The need to protect and enhance green infrastructure assets.</p>
Population (including issues of relevance to the EqlA and HIA aspects of this IIA)	<p>The need to support the implementation of the adopted Reading Local Plan (2019), other adopted and emerging statutory Development Plans in neighbouring planning authorities, and relevant national policies.</p> <p>The need to develop an integrated and efficient transport system which meets identified needs and supports projected population growth whilst effectively managing travel demand.</p> <p>The need to unlock key employment sites, support the growth of key economic sectors and facilitate economic growth in Reading.</p> <p>The need to tackle deprivation and severance and to improve access to key amenities, facilities and economic opportunities for all demographic groups and communities.</p> <p>The need to improve access to the transport system for all, including tackling physical barriers and improving affordability, in order to address wider societal inequalities of opportunity and outcome.</p>
Health (including issues of relevance to the EqlA and HIA aspects of this IIA)	<p>The need to use the transport system as a critical enabler of good health and wellbeing through improving access to healthcare and providing opportunities to enhance physical and mental health through active travel.</p> <p>The need to protect the health and wellbeing of resident and workplace populations.</p> <p>The need to promote healthy and active lifestyles and to reduce obesity levels.</p> <p>The need to protect and enhance access to high quality open space provision.</p>

SEA Topic	Key Issues
	The need to protect and enhance access for all to healthcare and leisure facilities.
Soil	<p>The need to prioritise the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land</p> <p>The need to protect sites designated for their geological interest.</p> <p>The need to safeguard soil resources.</p>
Water	<p>The need to protect and enhance the quality of water sources and the water environment</p> <p>The need to locate new development including transport infrastructure away from areas of flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.</p>
Air Quality & Climatic Factors (including issues of relevance to the EqIA and HIA aspects of this IIA)	<p>The need to tackle poor air quality, particularly within the existing Reading Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), and to improve air quality for the benefit of human health and the environment.</p> <p>The need to mitigate climate change including through promoting sustainable land use patterns and the decarbonisation of the transport sector.</p> <p>The need to ensure that new development, including transport infrastructure and facilities, is resilient to adverse weather and adaptable to the effects of climate change.</p>
Material Assets (including issues of relevance to the EqIA and HIA aspects of this IIA)	<p>The need to promote the efficient use of natural resources, including moving towards a low carbon and circular economy.</p> <p>The need to make the best and most efficient use of existing infrastructure and available land.</p> <p>The need to maintain and enhance the security and safety of transport infrastructure.</p>
Cultural Heritage	The need to protect and enhance the significance, special interest and character of cultural heritage assets and their settings.
Landscape	The need to conserve and enhance landscape character and to protect visual amenity.

2.1.2 The key issues listed in **Table 2.1** and summarised in Appendix A of the IIA are evidenced within the 'About Reading' and 'Key Challenges and Opportunities' sections of the Draft RTS itself. In overall terms, this helps the direction of travel for the emerging RTS to respond to key issues as identified through the IIA process. However, it is still necessary to examine each emerging substantive component of the Draft RTS individually and in combination to determine their likely significant environmental, equalities and health effects.

2.2 Review of Plans and Programmes

2.2.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the following types of plans and programmes were examined for their relevance to the emerging RTS and this IIA:

- International conventions and treaties;
- European Directives and associated legislation;
- Legislation enacted by the UK Parliament; and,
- Policy documents and strategies published at the national, regional and local levels, including by the UK Government and RBC.

2.2.2 The adopted Reading Local Plan (2019) is of particular importance as this sets out a new spatial strategy and policy framework which the RTS must align with and support the delivery of.

2.2.3 A detailed review of the other plans and programmes identified as relevant to the emerging RTS is provided in **Appendix B** of the IIA. From this review it is clear that the RTS should:

Environmental

- Align with relevant existing and emerging policies and proposals within relevant national, regional and local plans and strategies. In particular, the emerging RTS must support the delivery of the spatial strategy and development on allocated sites within the adopted Reading Local Plan;
- Avoid of likely significant adverse effects from the implementation of the plan's policies and proposals on sites designated at international and national levels for reasons of biodiversity conservation or ecological importance;
- Minimise and appropriately mitigate likely adverse effects on sites designated at the local level for their ecological importance;
- Minimise the environmental impacts of transport provision and infrastructure, including in terms of reducing carbon and greenhouse gas emissions and using natural resources sustainably;
- Reduce congestion and improve air quality in Reading, including but not limited to implementing the existing Reading Air Quality Action Plan and improving areas with known poor air quality;

Equalities

- Underpin the development of a safe, secure, efficient, reliable and integrated transport system across the whole RBC area;
- Support improvements in journey times and connectivity to and from key destinations, without disadvantaging particular demographic groups or communities;
- Improve the accessibility of the transport system and of amenities, key services, economic opportunities and social activities for people with disabilities;
- Encourage measures that reduce the need to travel and allow communities in different locations to flourish;

- Support the widespread uptake of active and sustainable modes of transport for all demographic groups and communities;
- Deliver transport which is accessible to all and does not contribute to social exclusion or disadvantage, whether through severance or unaffordability;
- Enable the efficient, effective and sustainable movement of people and freight to increase economic productivity, competitiveness and opportunities for all;
- Secure economic growth and inward investment by supporting the delivery of new and upgraded transport infrastructure to increase connectivity and improve access to high quality employment and economic opportunities.

Health

- i. Minimise the amenity impacts of transport, including in terms of reducing noise and vibration and deterioration of noise quality;
 - ii. Prevent and avoid unacceptable health impacts from transport, in particular impacts on air quality;
 - iii. Support people to make healthy and active lifestyle choices; and,
 - iv. Seek to protect enhance the health and wellbeing of the resident and working population, including through facilitating access to healthcare, safeguarding physical health and providing opportunities to enhance mental health and social wellbeing.
- 2.2.4 As with the key baseline issues (Table 2.1), these key policy priorities need to be addressed within the emerging RTS and taken account of in this IIA. This is required to effectively tackle identified transport challenges, support the implementation of other relevant plans and address key baseline issues. Consideration of these priorities also helps the emerging RTS to respond to applicable legislative and policy requirements.

2.3 Evolution of Baseline Conditions in the Absence of the RTS

- 2.3.1 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, the IIA considers the likely evolution of the baseline position in the absence of the preparation of a new LTP (i.e., the RTS). As the Transport Act 2000 requires RBC to have a LTP in place, this essentially the possibility of LTP4 remaining in place until its expiry in 2026 rather than being replaced now. There is no alternative scenario whereby there would be no new LTP prepared beyond 2026: such a scenario is not reasonable as it would fall short of meeting current statutory requirements.

3 Approach to IIA

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 In accordance with relevant statutory requirements, the overall purpose of the IIA is to identify and address the likely significant environmental, equalities and health effects of implementing the emerging RTS.

SEA

- 3.1.2 In accordance with the SEA Regulations the purpose of SEA is to identify, assess and evaluate the likely significant environmental effects of a qualifying plan, programme or strategy. A key objective is to enhance the environmental and wider sustainability performance of an emerging plan. This is achieved through identifying any likely significant environmental effects from implementation of the plan as drafted, proposing mitigation measures to address any identified significant adverse effects, and identifying enhancement measures to improve the overall performance of the plan. As such, SEA is an integral part of good policy development and should not be viewed as a separate or retrospective activity.

EqIA and HIA

- 3.1.3 A key role of the IIA is to assist RBC in demonstrating compliance with the PSED (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) and relevant equalities duties embedded within the Transport Act 2000.
- 3.1.4 To support the statutory SEA and EqIA processes, a high-level health impact assessment (HIA) has also been undertaken. The purpose of HIA is to consider how a plan, programme or proposal will affect the key factors which can influence people's health and wellbeing. The HIA approach is particularly concerned with the distribution of effects within a population, as different groups are likely to be affected in different ways, and therefore how health and social inequalities might be reduced or widened by particular proposals. Therefore, the cross-cutting nature of HIA with EqIA and SEA should be recognised and has been considered closely within this IIA. It is imperative to note that:
- The interventions and policies ultimately included within the Draft RTS were developed following an extensive process (including detailed scenario modelling) and selected specifically to address the transport problems, issues and opportunities evidenced within the Draft RTS itself.
 - The Draft RTS only identifies the outline principles of proposed schemes and initiatives. This means much of the detail of their design and implementation is still to be confirmed, at which point reasonable alternative options regarding siting, routing, technology and detailed design will require to be considered. As these alternative design options are not yet known they cannot be considered within this IIA. For schemes that require planning permission or other consents, in due course consideration will need to be given to whether they fall under the EIA Regs and constitute an EIA Development, which would necessitate the provision of an Environmental Statement (ES). In accordance with the EIA Regulations, any ES required to accompany a consenting application for a proposed scheme would need to consider any reasonable alternatives considered and outline their potential environmental effects.
- 3.1.5 Taking account of the high-level nature of the Draft RTS, its underpinning by a suite of high level RTS objectives, and on the basis that the inclusion of proposed transport schemes only provides broad policy support rather than setting out detailed design options, no reasonable alternatives (e.g., policies, schemes or designs) were identified as being capable of satisfactorily addressing the transport challenges identified within the Draft RTS itself. On this basis it was not possible to identify any fundamentally different reasonable alternative options such that no reasonable alternatives required to be assessed. However, as detailed in **Section 4.2** (and **Section 5** of

the IIA), the development and incorporation of the 43 IIA recommendations within the Draft RTS itself represents a form of reasonable alternatives, as the possible non-incorporation of these recommendations would likely have resulted in different (and sub-optimal) environmental, equalities and health effects being predicted. For the reasons detailed in **Section 2.3**, the evolution of the baseline scenario is also not considered to constitute a reasonable alternative for the purposes of the 2005 Act.

3.2 IIA Reporting

Previous IIA Reporting – IIA Scoping

- 3.2.1 The only previous stage of IIA undertaken in respect of the emerging RTS was the preparation and consultation on an IIA Scoping Report. In accordance with the SEA Regulations this was prepared by PBA (now Stantec) on behalf of RBC and submitted to the SEA Consultation Bodies in November 2018 for a five-week consultation period. Reflecting the inclusion of equalities and health issues within the IIA, the report was also consulted on internally with key RBC officers related to Public Health, Sustainability, Air Quality and Corporate Policy. Of note, the IIA Scoping Report referred to the preparation of a Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), now retitled as the Reading Transport Plan 2036 ('the RTS'), by RBC.
- 3.2.2 The purpose of the IIA Scoping Report was to provide relevant information to enable the SEA Consultation Bodies (and wider consultees) to form a view on both the proposed IIA consultation period and the scope/level of detail appropriate for inclusion in this IIA Report. A key objective of the IIA Scoping Report was to identify an evidence-based framework ('the IIA Framework') to underpin a systematic assessment of the likely environmental, health and equalities effects from substantive components of the emerging RTS. This IIA Framework, which has since been updated in response to comments from the SEA Consultation Authorities, comprises a series of 13 IIA Objectives and linked guide questions and criteria related to the identified key environmental, equalities and health issues and identified key policy issues.

IIA Methodology

- 3.2.3 The IIA of the Draft RTS has been undertaken in accordance with the approach set out in the IIA Scoping Report (as refined to take account of responses from the SEA Consultation Bodies). For reasons of brevity the full methodology is therefore not reproduced below, rather attention is drawn to key elements which have underpinned the assessment scope and approach.

Reading RTS IIA Framework

- 3.2.4 From the outset, the IIA Framework was intended to underpin the IIA, incorporating SEA, EqIA and HIA, by providing a holistic assessment tool which considers key environmental, equalities and health issues in tandem.
- 3.2.5 The IIA Framework was designed to allow for a co-ordinated and single assessment of likely significant environmental effects and likely equalities and health impacts from the emerging RTS in accordance with all relevant statutory requirements. In particular, the inclusion of 'health' and 'equality and social inclusion' as IIA Headlines provides a basis upon which to assess likely equalities and health effects using the same IIA Framework. The corresponding IIA Objectives and guide questions have been developed to allow for the assessment of wider determinants of health, identification of any disproportionate impacts on persons with protected characteristics (as required by the PSED), and the consideration of any likely barriers or disadvantages to vulnerable demographic groups.
- 3.2.6 All substantive components of the Draft RTS have been tested against the finalised IIA Framework, as reported in **Section 6** and **Appendices E** and **F** of the IIA Report. This systematic assessment has not only identified any likely significant effects on the environment but also provides evidence to inform supplementary EqIA and HIA reporting, as presented in

Section 6 of the IIA. The IIA objectives are as follows (a full framework is provided in **Appendix A**):

- Health
- Safety and Security
- Equality and Social Inclusion
- Accessibility
- Employment and Skills
- Material Assets
- Productivity and Competitiveness
- Air Quality and Amenity
- Sustainable Placemaking
- Climate Change Mitigation
- Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil
- Water, Flood Risk and Resilience
- Landscape

3.3 Consideration of Reasonable Alternatives

3.3.1 The SEA Regulations require the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme (i.e., the emerging RTS) and reasonable alternatives to it to be examined, as well as the rationale for identifying reasonable alternatives to be described. To be eligible for consideration in this IIA process (incorporating SEA), reasonable alternatives must be:

- Realistic, in that they are plausible alternatives which could be implemented instead of specific proposals within the emerging RTS and are consistent with relevant national and other policy frameworks;
- Related to the objectives of the emerging RTS; and,
- Within the geographical scope of the emerging RTS, i.e., any reasonable alternatives would need to relate to the Reading urban area.

3.3.2 Following the approach outlined in the IIA Scoping Report, in line with statutory requirements consideration was given to the need to identify and assess any possible reasonable alternatives to the substantive components of the emerging RTS. However, it is imperative to note that:

4 How has the IIA Informed the Reading Transport Strategy 2036?

4.1 Pre-Assessment Advice

- 4.1.1 Throughout 2019 the initial Draft RTS evolved in response to new evidence, policy developments (e.g., adoption of the Reading Local Plan), the findings of a major consultation experience conducted by RBC (October – July 2019) and informal testing by both RBC and Stantec so that the plan adequately covers all key transport issues. This included informal testing of emerging plan components in relation to the key environmental, equalities and health issues identified previously through IIA Scoping. Reflecting the early stage of RTS preparation, the informal testing focused on defining the scope of each substantive component (e.g., policy or scheme) and ensuring all components contribute positively to the overall RTS vision and objectives.

4.2 Assessment Recommendations

- 4.2.1 There are two general methods to improve the quality and mitigate potential adverse or uncertain effects of an emerging plan:
- i. Testing, and subsequently amending proposed components (e.g., policies or transport schemes) so that these can be implemented successfully (i.e., as intended) and in a way which maximises their beneficial outcomes (including in relation to key environmental, equalities and health issues); and,
 - ii. Gap analysis to identify any need for and then develop additional plan components to address any key issues not fully addressed, or to mitigate potential adverse or unforeseen effects from proposed components.
- 4.2.2 RBC provided a consolidated version of the initial Draft RTS to Stantec in January 2020 to facilitate an independent IIA review to be undertaken, resulting in the development of a suite of 43 IIA recommendations. These recommendations were discussed with RBC officers in late February 2020, and all subsequently incorporated within the final version of the Draft RTS. In consequence, the quality of the Draft RTS and its coverage of key environmental, equalities and health issues has been demonstrably improved through this independent review process. This IIA report has since been updated to take account of subsequent changes to the Draft RTS, including the incorporation of all IIA recommendations.
- 4.2.3 Details of the IIA recommendations made in respect of the initial Draft RTS, together with a summary of how each recommendation has been addressed in the final version of the Draft RTS, is provided in **Section 5** of the IIA. This clearly demonstrates that the IIA process has directly informed and positively contributed to the preparation of the Draft RTS.

4.3 Summary

- 4.3.1 Through resolving uncertainties and inconsistencies, and by identifying opportunities to improve the clarity and performance of the initial Draft RTS, the IIA process has closely influenced the final content of the Draft RTS. As a result, the Draft RTS Strategy is now considered to be more robust and result in a greater range of likely significant beneficial (i.e., Major Positive) effects on key environmental, equalities and health issues, with no significant adverse effects now predicted.

5 IIA Findings

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The IIA, incorporating SEA, has been undertaken for each constituent part of the Draft RTS. The following plan components have been subject to assessment:

- Vision and Objectives;
- Draft Policies; and,
- Proposed Transport Schemes and Initiatives.

5.1.2 Each of these substantive components has been subject to two levels of analysis, as reported in full within **Section 7** and **Appendices E – G** of the IIA Report:

- Assessment against the IIA Framework, primarily to identify any likely significant environmental effects in accordance with the SEA Regulations. **Section 7** of the IIA Report summarises the findings from the IIA and the matrix for the Vision and Objectives, whereas the detailed matrices for the other elements are provided in appendices. The assessment is reported as follows within the full IIA Report:
 - Vision and Objectives – **Section 7.2**;
 - Proposed Transport Schemes and Initiatives - **Section 7.3**, with detailed policy assessment matrices for each policy grouping provided in **Appendix E**; and,
 - Draft RTS Policies – **Section 7.4**, with detailed policy assessment matrices for each policy grouping provided in **Appendix F**.
- Drawing on the results from the above, specific assessment against:
 - The NHS Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Rapid HIA Assessment Tool (2019) – summarised in **Section 7.5**, with the detailed assessment provided in **Appendix G**; and,
 - The PSED under the Equality Act 2010 (and in relation to relevant equalities duties set out in the Transport Act 2000) as detailed in **Section 7.6**.

5.1.3 This section provides a non-technical summary of the key findings from the full assessment documented in the IIA Report.

5.2 Proposed RTS Vision and Objectives

5.2.1 Informed by the publication of the Reading 2050 Vision, the adopted Reading Local Plan (2019) and a major consultation exercise conducted by RBC in Summer 2019, Section 2 of the Draft RTS sets out a new Transport Vision for Reading to underpin the RTS. This Vision comprises a holistic, transport focused vision statement and supporting text:

5.2.2 *Our vision is to deliver a sustainable transport system in Reading that creates an attractive, green and vibrant town with neighbourhoods that promote healthy choices and wellbeing. Future mobility options will enable everyone in Reading to thrive, enjoy an exceptional quality of life and adapt to meet future challenges and opportunities.”*

5.2.3 The proposed RTS Vision is supported by a set of 5 Objectives which indicate how the Vision will be achieved through the implementation of the RTS:

- **Creating a Clean and Green Reading** – Provide transport options to **enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality** to create a carbon neutral town (Objective 1)
- **Supporting Healthy Lifestyles** – Create **healthy** streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve **accessibility** to key destinations and increase personal **safety** (Objective 2)
- **Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth** – Enable **sustainable growth** and connect communities so that everyone can benefit from Reading's success (Objective 3)
- **Connecting People and Places** – Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car, helping to provide a transport network that is fast, affordable, connected and resilient (Objective 4)
- **Embracing Smart Solutions** – Use technology to manage the network **efficiently** and allow informed travel choices, whilst enabling Reading to become a **smart, connected town of the future**. (Objective 5)

5.2.4 An assessment of the compatibility and coverage of the proposed RTS Vision and Objectives against the IIA Framework. A common uncertainty applies to the assessment of these Draft RTS components, in that owing to their high-level nature there is necessarily a degree of uncertainty regarding their scope, whilst implementation details are deferred to specific policies and schemes. However, these uncertainties are unavoidable and do not restrict either the assessment of these Draft RTS components nor undermine their effectiveness. The compatibility of the RTS vision and objectives with the IIA objectives is outlined in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Relationship between RTS Vision and Objectives and IIA Objectives.

IIA Objectives	RTS Vision and Objectives Demonstrating Compatibility
1. Health: Improve the health of the resident and workplace population, including with respect to physical and mental health and social wellbeing.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
2. Safety and Security: Maintain and enhance safety and security (actual and perceived)	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 4 and 5.
3. Equality and Social Inclusion: Reduce poverty and inequality in society, tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
4. Accessibility: Reduce the need to travel and ensure appropriate and affordable access for all to facilities, services, economic opportunities and social activities.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
5. Employment and Skills: Support increased and higher quality employment by enabling investment in key economic sectors, the delivery of key employment sites and by improving access to educational opportunities.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
6. Material Assets: Manage, maintain and where possible improve the efficient and effective use of natural resources and infrastructure to meet identified needs.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
7. Productivity and Competitiveness: Deliver an integrated transport system which facilitates the efficient movement of people and freight to increase economic prosperity.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
8. Air Quality and Amenity: Tackle poor air quality, reduce concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and minimise exposure to noise and vibration.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
9. Sustainable Placemaking: Maximise the efficient use of land, enhance urban design quality, protect and enhance the significance, special interest and character of heritage assets and their settings.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

IIA Objectives		RTS Vision and Objectives Demonstrating Compatibility
10.	Climate Change Mitigation: Decarbonise the transport sector and support wider efforts to mitigate climate change.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
11.	Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil: Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests, including through safeguarding important sites and species, improving green infrastructure provision and safeguarding important soil resources.	RTS Vision, Objective 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.
12.	Water, Flood Risk and Resilience: Conserve, protect and enhance water environments, water quality and water resources, whilst improving climate resilience and reducing the risk of flooding	RTS Vision and Objective 4.
13.	Landscape: Protect and enhance the landscape character, townscape character and visual amenity.	RTS Vision and Objective 2.

5.2.5 **Table 5.1** demonstrates that, whilst the proposed RTS Vision and individual proposed RTS Objectives relate to specific topics, taken together they provide strong coverage of most of the IIA Objectives and there are no complete gaps. Indeed, the wording of some proposed RTS Objectives closely match the IIA Objectives. Read as a whole, the proposed Strategic Objectives therefore appropriately respond to identified key environmental, equalities and health issues as well as responding to identified transport challenges.

5.3 IIA of Proposed Policies and Transport Schemes & Initiatives

IIA of Policies

- 5.3.1 Appendix F of the IIA provides a full summary and visualisation of the how the 30 RTS Policies preform against the IIA Objectives. This allows for easy identification of predicted effects from the proposed policies, which helps to focus the IIA on key environmental, health and equality issues and predicted significant effects in accordance with SEA requirements.
- 5.3.2 The majority of proposed policies are predicted to have either Major (i.e., significant) or Minor (i.e., not significant) beneficial effects on the IIA Objectives, with no Major Negative (i.e., significant adverse) effects predicted. Only 2 Minor Adverse effects were identified relating to policies RTS11 - Waterways and RTS28 – Mobility Services and Sharing Economy. RTS11 was identified as having the potential to negatively impact IIA objectives 12 (water, flood risk and resilience) if an increase in water traffic causes changes to water environments and deterioration of water quality and is not managed. RT28 was identified as having a potential negative impact on IIA objective equality and social inclusion due to exclusion of certain groups (e.g., the elderly or those on low incomes) where technology may be needed to access sharing services.
- 5.3.3 The main likely effects of the assessed strategic policies are listed against each of the IIA Objectives in **Section 6.4** of the IIA Report, with the full assessment presented in **Appendix F**.

IIA of Schemes and Initiatives

- 5.3.4 **Appendix E** of the IIA provides a full summary and visualisation of the how the 43 RTS Schemes and Initiative preform against the IIA Objectives. This allows for easy identification of predicted effects from the proposed policies, which helps to focus the IIA on key environmental, health and equality issues and predicted significant effects in accordance with SEA requirements.
- 5.3.5 The majority of proposed policies are predicted to have either Major (i.e., significant) or Minor (i.e., not significant) positive effects on the IIA Objectives, with no Major Negative (i.e., significant adverse) effects predicted.
- 5.3.6 Eight Minor Adverse effects were identified across all of the IIA objectives for the 43 schemes and initiatives. This predominantly included Multi-Modal Transport scheme Cross Thames Travel in relation to IIA Objective 9, 10, 11 and 13 and effects are largely related to the location of these physical infrastructure schemes on the urban fringes of Reading and the potential for these schemes to increase capacity on the highway network, leading to an induced level of traffic.
- 5.3.7 Proposed Park and Ride interventions largely performed well with the exception of IIA objective 9 which is largely relate to the fact that limited spatial detail is known about the location of some of the schemes and present and they have the potential to impact on visual amenity and nearby heritage assets.
- 5.3.8 The main likely effects of the assessed strategic policies are listed against each of the IIA Objectives in **Section 6.3** of the IIA Report, with the full assessment presented in **Appendix E**.

6 Next Steps and Monitoring

6.1 Further IIA Recommendations

- 6.1.1 The incorporation of all IIA previous recommendations means all substantive components of the Draft RTS, and the Draft RTS when read as a whole, were assessed as performing well against the IIA Framework. Beneficial effects were identified in relation to many of the IIA objective, including specifically in relation to health, accessibility, productivity and competitiveness and climate change. This primarily related to promotion of more sustainable forms of transport, including improvements and provision of new bus and rail infrastructure to help increase the coverage and reliability of such services to help benefit a wider range of users both in terms of physical and financial accessibility.
- 6.1.2 Improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure and provision of education and training opportunities and initiatives to help improve the confidence and knowledge of vulnerable road users (such as cyclists) also has the potential to help increase the capacity of the transport network through increasing the uptake of walking and cycling. Encouraging active travel will also help address local health issues such as obesity and inactivity, reducing the incidences of lifestyle diseases such as coronary disease and type 2 diabetes. Promotion of public transport, walking and cycling is also key in helping decarbonise the transport sectors to help Reading reach its target of being carbon neutral by 2050 and improve local air quality.
- 6.1.3 In the absence of any significant adverse environmental, health or equalities effects now being predicted from the Draft RTS, it was not necessary to develop specific further IIA recommendations through the assessment process (i.e., for incorporation into the final RTS post consultation). However, the assessment did identify a small number of likely adverse or uncertain effects depending on the future implementation of individual components of the Draft RTS. To address this, it will be important for the components of the Draft RTS which provide environmental, health and equalities safeguards to be implemented as intended. This includes:
- Application of environmental constraints maps (as included in the Draft RTS and provided in **Appendix D**) in the development, design and consenting of transport schemes; and,
 - Application of EqIA processes where relevant under Policy RTS3 - Equality and Inclusivity.

6.2 Next Steps

- 6.2.1 This IIA has documented the findings of the IIA carried out in respect of the Draft RTS. At this stage, the following proposed components of the Draft RTS have been subject to IIA:
- Vision and Objectives;
 - Draft Policies; and,
 - Proposed Transport Schemes and Initiatives.
- 6.2.2 Following consultation on Draft RTA and this associated IIA Report, all consultation responses received will be reviewed and used to inform the preparation of the final RTS for adoption. At this point an IIA Post Adoption Statement will be prepared in accordance with the SEA Regulations.

6.3 Monitoring

- 6.3.1 SEA Regulations require the identification of measures to monitor likely significant effects from the implementation of a plan. The IIA Framework set out in **Appendix A** provides a good starting

point for developing targets and indicators for monitoring of the effects predicted through this IIA. Building on this, the proposed approach to monitoring the predicted likely significant (all positive) effects of the Draft RTS will be subject to refinement in tandem with the preparation of the final RTS for adoption, with the final approach set out within the RTS IIA Post Adoption Statement. Proposed IIA monitoring will also align with the overarching proposed RTS monitoring framework set out within the Draft RTS itself.

Appendix A Reading Transport Strategy 2036 IIA Framework

Table A.1: Reading Transport Strategy 2036 IIA Framework

IIA Objective Title	IIA Objective	Guide Questions – <i>Will the RTS...</i>
1. Health	Improve the health of the resident and workplace population, including with respect to physical and mental health and social wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Facilitate and encourage use of public transport, walking and cycling? ▪ Improve accessibility to public open spaces, sports facilities, path networks? ▪ Reduce the negative impacts of transport on human health, especially in terms of pollution and air quality? ▪ Reduce the likelihood of transport-related road accidents and casualties? ▪ Improve access to healthcare facilities? ▪ Minimise transport induced noise and vibration levels at sensitive locations? ▪ Safeguard sensitive environmental receptors to maintain and enhance human health?
2. Safety and Security	Maintain and enhance safety and security (actual and perceived)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Avoid creating opportunities for crime and antisocial behaviour? ▪ Create a travel environment that feels safe to all users at all times? ▪ Promote the provision of safe pedestrian and cycle access links? ▪ Improve perceptions of safety and fear of crime to help remove barriers leading to reduced social isolation? ▪ Improve the safety and security of the transport network? ▪ Help reduce severance effects of the transport network?
3. Equality and Social Inclusion	Reduce poverty and inequality in society, tackle social exclusion and promote community cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote a culture of equality, fairness and respect for people and the environment? ▪ Result in differential impacts on different demographic groups, persons with protected characteristics (as specified in the Equality Act 2010), or those vulnerable to social exclusion or poverty? ▪ Support increased opportunities for education and lifelong learning? ▪ Reduce poverty and social exclusion? ▪ Support the regeneration of disadvantaged or deprived areas? ▪ Support the removal of barriers and provision of adequate transport to meet the diverse needs of different demographic groups, people with disabilities and vulnerable members of the community?

IIA Objective Title	IIA Objective	Guide Questions – <i>Will the RTS...</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and enhance access to community facilities, public services and key amenities? ▪ Reduce the need to travel? ▪ Improve access to healthcare facilities, in particular for those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage or other groups facing structural inequalities? ▪ Reduce exposure to air pollution, particularly for the most vulnerable? ▪ Promote social cohesion and integration between different demographic groups? ▪ Improve disabled people’s ability to make seamless door to door journeys?
4. Accessibility	Reduce the need to travel and ensure appropriate and affordable access for all to facilities, services, economic opportunities and social activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce the need to travel? ▪ Increase the accessibility of public services, economic opportunities and markets? ▪ Improve the accessibility and integration of the transport network? ▪ Enhance or restrict access to walking, cycling routes and public rights of way? ▪ Reduce congestion and allow for greater journey time reliability, particularly by more sustainable means of travel? ▪ Address changing transport needs resulting from population growth and ageing? ▪ Reduce reliance on car travel?
5. Employment and Skills	Support increased and more inclusive employment by enabling investment in key economic sectors, the delivery of key employment sites and by improving access to educational opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve physical access to employment for all demographic groups and communities? ▪ Improve access via active travel and public transport options to employment opportunities? ▪ Increase and diversify employment opportunities? ▪ Improve the accessibility of education infrastructure, in particular by active travel and public transport?
6. Material Assets	Manage, maintain and where possible improve the efficient and effective use of natural resources and infrastructure to meet identified needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the delivery of the emerging Reading Local Plan spatial strategy? ▪ Unlock the delivery of key housing sites? ▪ Facilitate the re-development of previously developed land? ▪ Support the provision of adequate infrastructure, services and facilities to meet identified needs?

IIA Objective Title	IIA Objective	Guide Questions – <i>Will the RTS...</i>
7. Productivity and Competitiveness	Deliver an integrated transport system which facilitates the efficient movement of people and freight to increase economic prosperity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the sustainable management of infrastructure assets, including parking provision? ▪ Promote the co-location of synergistic economic activities, industries and land uses? ▪ Support the efficient movement of freight?
8. Air Quality and Amenity	Tackle poor air quality, reduce concentrations of harmful atmospheric pollutants and minimise exposure to noise and vibration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain or enhance air quality? ▪ Decrease noise and vibration levels at sensitive locations? ▪ Reduce exposure to poor air quality? ▪ Prevent and reduce emissions of harmful pollutants?
9. Sustainable Placemaking	Maximise the efficient use of land, enhance urban design quality, protect and enhance the significance, special interest and character of heritage assets and their settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the integration of land use and transport? ▪ Promote high quality design? ▪ Protect valued local views? ▪ Maintain and enhance the attractiveness of the public realm? ▪ Conserve, protect and enhance the importance, special interest, character and settings of heritage assets (designated and non-designated)? ▪ Preserve important archaeological resources?
10. Climate Change Mitigation	Decarbonise the transport sector and support wider efforts to mitigate climate change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support a sustainable pattern of development which minimises energy consumption and GHG emissions? ▪ Reduce reliance on car travel? ▪ Contribute to or challenge the decarbonisation of the transport sector? ▪ Promote modal shift towards sustainable and active travel? ▪ Promote the use of clean fuels and technologies?
11. Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Soil	Conserve, protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity interests, including through safeguarding important sites, species and habitats and by protecting green infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure appropriate safeguards for the integrity and conservation objectives of sites designated at international, national or local levels for reasons of biodiversity or geodiversity value or species protection? ▪ Protect and enhance valued species and habitats? ▪ Safeguard against habitat loss or fragmentation? ▪ Protect and enhance protected trees or important woodland areas?

IIA Objective Title	IIA Objective	Guide Questions – <i>Will the RTS...</i>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve access to nature? ▪ Protect and enhance important soil resources? ▪ Deliver biodiversity net gain?
12. Water, Flood Risk and Resilience	Conserve, protect and enhance water environments, water quality and water resources, whilst improving climate resilience and reducing the risk of flooding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve the quality of waterbodies in accordance with the Water Framework Directive? ▪ Maintain or enhance the ecological and chemical status of the water environment in accordance with the Water Framework Directive? ▪ Affect the volume of surface water runoff into or abstraction from water bodies? ▪ Minimise the risk of flooding to people, property, infrastructure and environmental assets? ▪ Manage residual flood risks appropriately and avoid new flood risks? ▪ Seek to minimise new development in areas prone to flood risk or mitigate the potential for such risk? ▪ Promote the resilience of the transport system to the effects of climate change and adverse weather?
13. Landscape	Protect and enhance the landscape character, townscape character and visual amenity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protect and enhance landscape character? ▪ Safeguard important landscape and townscape features? ▪ Protect visual amenity and valued views? ▪ Prevent urban sprawl?