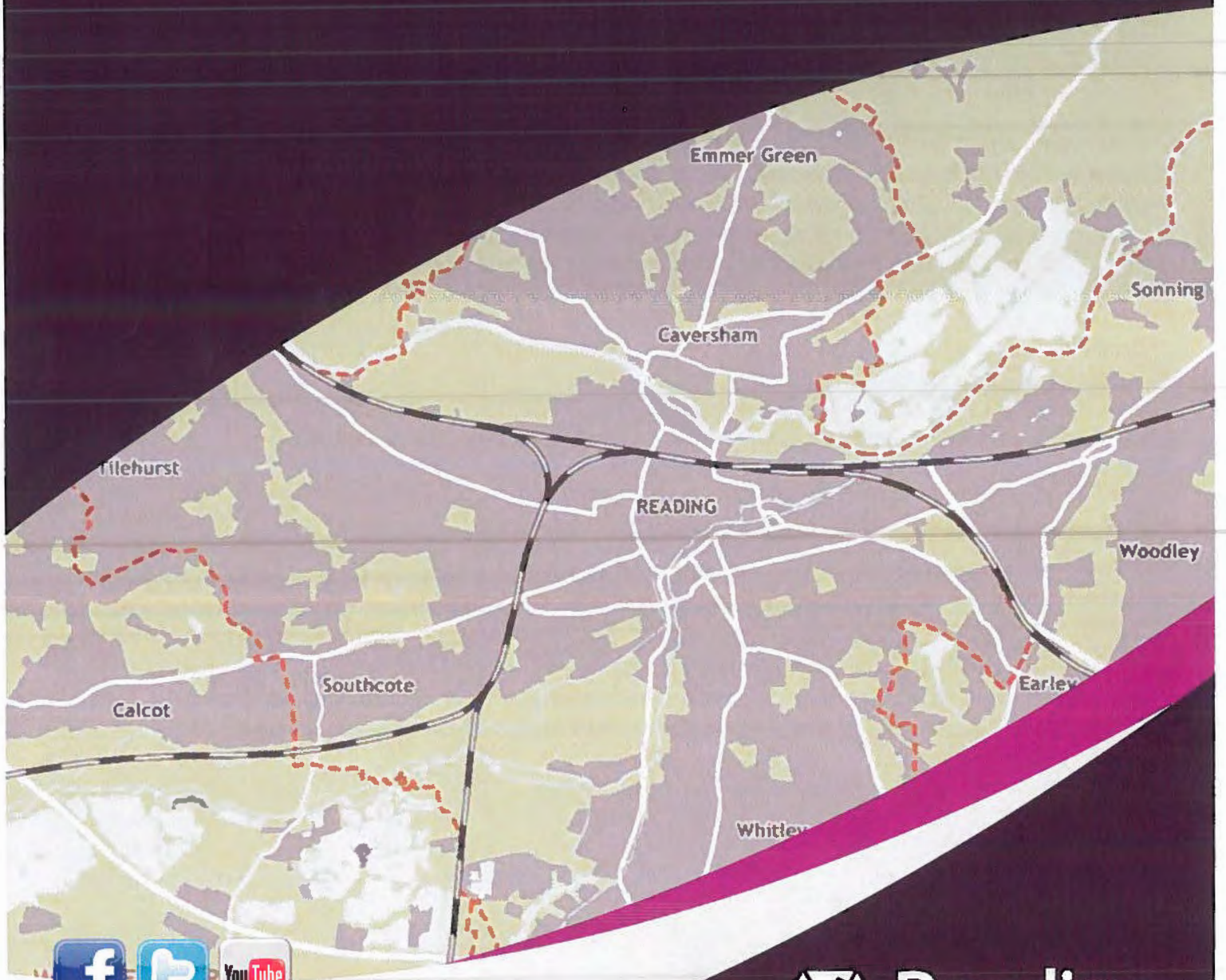


READING BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Adopted November 2019



www.reading.gov.uk



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

FOREWORD

By Councillor Tony Page

The Local Plan is the document that guides development in Reading up to 2036, and it will therefore play a decisive role in how our town evolves over the next two decades. It will be the main point of reference for anyone wishing to undertake new buildings, changes or developments within Reading over that period.



This plan has been carefully developed to address some of the key issues facing Reading. In particular, this Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and set out its commitment to work towards achieving a carbon neutral Reading by 2030. We must therefore ensure that new development only takes place where it can help us in achieving that aim. The Local Plan contains sustainability policies that put it at the cutting edge of authorities across the country. We are proud in Reading to be in the top 5% of local authorities in Britain for cutting carbon emissions and the Local Plan will play a major part in building upon that success.

Over recent years, Reading has had great economic success, and this has resulted in considerable investment in the town. However, this success brings its own issues. In particular, Reading faces an acute housing crisis. There are not enough homes in general, and there is a particular need for genuinely affordable housing which represents more than half of our overall assessed housing need. The Local Plan is a major part of our response to this issue, and we continue to work with neighbouring councils to look at the needs of the Reading area as a whole.

Other critical issues to be considered include how to provide the employment space and supporting infrastructure to make sure that Reading continues to be an attractive place in which to work, to live and to study. The benefits of Reading's economic success also need to be shared out more equally with those communities in Reading that suffer high levels of deprivation and social exclusion.

The Plan also takes a positive approach to conserving and enhancing Reading's considerable but, in the past, often overlooked historic legacy. Reading has some truly significant historic sites, some of which are identified for future use and enhancement as part of this Plan. Improving Reading's environment is a major part of the Plan, both in terms of revitalising tired and run-down sites and areas, and in preserving those elements that are essential to our residents' quality of life.

This Plan will ensure that our town remains a great place in which to live, work and play for people living here now - and in the future. It provides an excellent basis for delivering on our Climate Emergency Declaration earlier this year, and achieving a sustainable and prosperous future for Reading.



Tony Page

Deputy Leader, Reading Borough Council and
Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport

modes of transport. This should include provision that enables and supports walking, cycling and the use of public transport including from the development. For developments that are likely to have significant transport implications, Travel Plans will be sought. These will involve undertakings from developers and occupiers to implement measures for promoting and supporting the use of sustainable transport, in accordance with best practice. Measures will vary from scheme to scheme, and innovative solutions will be encouraged. Travel Plans should include robust measures to ensure that the proposals in them are implemented, monitored and reviewed as necessary. Major residential proposals should also examine and include proposals to **enable the promotion and support of safe routes to schools, as well as sustainable travel to local services and facilities, including access to and provision of public transport.**

- 4.5.4 All developments will be assessed for their impact upon the transport network, including the local and trunk road and motorway networks and, where relevant, the rail network. Development should provide mitigation measures in line with their impacts on these networks, taking account of levels of development that have already been accepted, and mitigation measures that have already been agreed or implemented. It will be a condition of planning permission that appropriate measures are in place to secure any remedial transport measures required. Where necessary, a transport assessment of the scheme will be required. This will measure the impacts both of the development proposal and of any remedial measures proposed by the developer to address those impacts. Once a satisfactory package of remedial measures has been negotiated, contributions may be sought from developers to secure their delivery.
- 4.5.5 Contributions to a general package of transport improvements in Reading will continue to be made through the Community Infrastructure Levy, but contributions in Section 106 agreements will also have a role to play where there are site-specific issues that need to be addressed, e.g. junction improvements, new pedestrian crossings, additional cycle facilities, new public transport infrastructure, or inclusion of land for a transport scheme.
- 4.5.6 The current Local Transport Plan covers the period 2011-2026, but this policy applies to any subsequent plans that may be published. A new version of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) is in production in 2019, and this will need to consider both additional capacity and demand management measures.

Major Transport Projects

TR2: MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS

Priority will be given to the implementation of the major transport projects identified in the Local Transport Plan (or any successor document) and other identified major transport projects. Land required for these projects will be safeguarded where necessary. These will include:

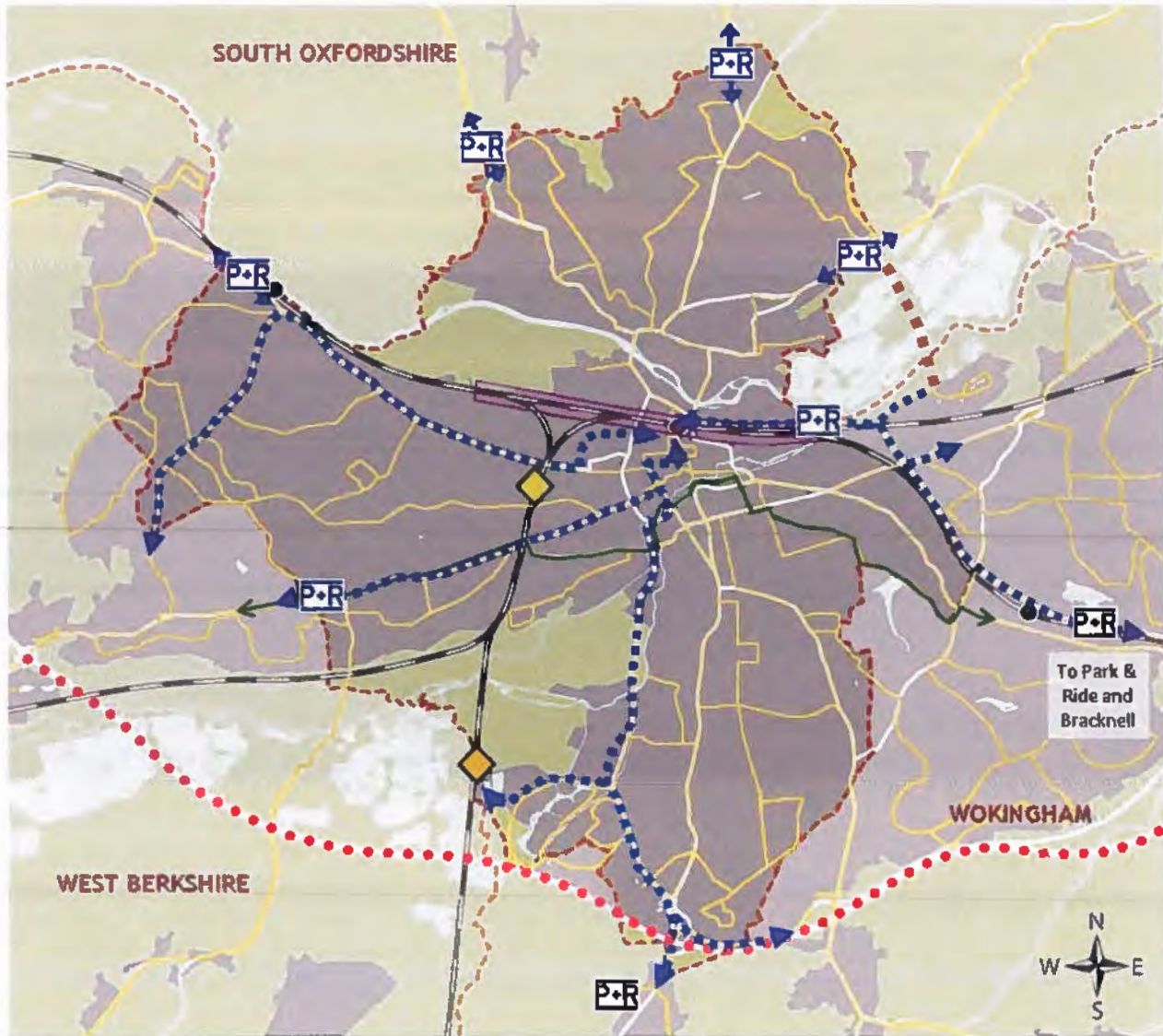
- ***Mass Rapid Transit***
- ***Park and Ride sites***
- ***Green Park station and interchange***
- ***Reading West station upgrade***
- ***Cow Lane bridges***
- ***Crossing of the River Thames***
- ***National Cycle Network Route 422***
- ***Development of high-quality bus services***

Land to be safeguarded for the following projects is shown on the Proposals Map: southern⁹³ and eastern Mass Rapid Transit route (TR2a), Green Park Station and Interchange (TR2b), Reading West Station (TR2c), Cow Lane Bridges (TR2d) and National Cycle Network Phases 1 and 2 (TR2e).

- 4.5.7 There has been considerable success in delivering major transport improvements for Reading in recent years, not least the recent upgrade to Reading station, which, as well as increasing capacity and alleviating a key bottleneck on the rail network, has also provided a stimulus for development on surrounding sites, as well as offering the opportunity to make improvements to the transport network elsewhere, including at Cow Lane. However, with the continued growth of the Borough, more investment is needed to ensure that transport infrastructure needs are met.
- 4.5.8 Those transport projects that are highlighted in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 that are likely to have the most significant needs in terms of land use are mass rapid transit, park and ride and Green Park station and interchange.
- **Mass Rapid Transit:** This is a scheme to provide high quality public transport connections between park and ride sites and major travel generators. Wherever possible, this is likely to involve a dedicated route, although it may also use some existing road space in places. The project involves a number of corridors across the Borough (see figure 4.8), but the routes to the south and east are at the most advanced stage, and can therefore be safeguarded on the Proposals Map. Much of the land shown on the route to the South has been secured by Section 106 agreement on major development schemes, and this will continue to be sought on key sites where they come forward.
 - **Park and Ride:** Despite recent new park and ride provision at Mere oak and Winnersh (both in Wokingham Borough), there is a continued need for new provision. Opportunities for new sites will therefore be sought, particularly on the corridors identified on figure 4.8. The constraints of the Borough mean that the sites are most likely to be in adjoining authorities, and the Council will continue to work with its neighbours to bring new facilities forward. A new park and ride is permitted at Thames Valley Park in Wokingham, and the Council has also discussed the potential for park and ride in West Berkshire and South Oxfordshire with the relevant authorities over a number of years, but no sites have yet been formally proposed. Specific proposals will be supported by a business case showing the benefits of the scheme. Park and ride can complement existing bus services, including inter-urban buses, by supporting their use.
 - **Green Park Station and Interchange:** A new railway station at Green Park has been planned for some time, and the development of the station has planning permission, both in Reading and West Berkshire, as it straddles the boundary. The development of a new area of more than 700 homes with supporting facilities at Green Park is now underway, meaning that the delivery of the station and interchange is now vital. The required land is shown on the Proposals Map.
 - **Reading West Station Upgrade:** There is a proposal to upgrade the existing Reading West Station with improved passenger facilities. The Council is working with Network Rail and First Great Western on progressing this project.
















⁹³ Not shown on the version of the Proposals Map, see Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Major Transport Schemes in Reading



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KEY

	Green Park Station and Interchange		National Cycle Network 422 scheme		Local authority boundary
	Reading West Station upgrade		M4 Smart Motorway scheme		Railway and station
	Future park and ride corridor		Existing bus network		Water
	Existing park and ride		Potential additional Thames crossing		Undeveloped land
	Proposed Mass Rapid Transit route		Safeguarded for Crossrail		Built up area and road

- **Cow Lane Bridges:** Cow Lane Bridges have long been identified as a major constraint on the local transport network. Improvements to Cow Lane Bridges, associated with the new station works, have been subject to some delays but are due to be completed early in the plan period.

- **Crossing of the River Thames:** The River Thames is a major barrier to movement, meaning that the existing bridges in the immediate Reading area (Reading, Caversham and Sonning Bridges) are under pressure at peak times. Reading is currently working with Wokingham Borough Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the two Local Enterprise Partnerships to identify measures to improve the situation. This may involve an additional crossing. The most likely route for such a crossing would be within Wokingham and South Oxfordshire, but if the work identifies a need for use of land within Reading, this should be taken into account. Mitigation on the road network on either side of a bridge may be required
- **National Cycle Network Route 422:** NCN 422 is a new national cycle route between Newbury and Windsor, including a section within Reading. The scheme is being developed by Reading Borough Council, Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire District Council, Bracknell Forest Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- **High-quality bus services:** Reading has developed a comprehensive high quality bus network to enable effective public transport services to operate, resulting in one of the highest uses of buses in the country. The scale of developments forecast will require that this network is expanded and developed. There are also important inter-urban bus services linking Reading with other towns and cities. The Council will seek support for enhanced bus facilities such as bus lanes and bus stops to both safeguard the existing network from the effects of developments and to enhance the services offered to serve new developments.

4.5.9 The constrained geography of the Borough means that major transport investment virtually always requires significant cross-boundary working. The Council will continue to work with its partners, including neighbouring authorities and the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership, to ensure that these vital schemes are delivered. More detail on the delivery of these schemes, where it is known, is set out in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which is in chapter 10 of this plan.

Crossrail and other rail schemes

4.5.10 The Secretary of State for Transport issued a Safeguarding Direction on 29 April 2009, identifying land which should be safeguarded for an extension of the Crossrail scheme from Maidenhead to Reading, the services on which are known as the Elizabeth Line. This land is identified on the Proposals Map, although there is no need to repeat this safeguarding through policy in this document. Elizabeth Line services are expected to reach Reading in 2019. Up to that point, the Council will consult with Crossrail Limited on planning applications that fall within the identified land. Once services are fully operational, the Council will consult with Transport for London.

4.5.11 The Council supports the proposed East-West Rail Link between Oxford, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and Norwich which would provide greater connectivity to these destinations for rail services from Reading. It is not currently expected that this will require additional land in Reading.

M4 Smart Motorway

4.5.12 Development consent was granted by the Secretary of State in September 2016 for the M4 Smart Motorway project between junctions 3 and 12 of the M4. The scheme uses technology to manage traffic flow, providing better information to drivers and converting the hard shoulder to a traffic lane. Works are expected to take place between 2017 and 2022⁹⁴. Within Reading Borough, works are expected to largely be within the envelope of the existing motorway and junction, as shown on the Proposals Map.

Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR3: ACCESS, TRAFFIC AND HIGHWAY-RELATED MATTERS

In determining proposals involving a new or altered access onto the transport network, improvement works to the transport network, the creation of new transport infrastructure or the generation of additional trips on the transport network, consideration will be given to the effect on safety, congestion and the environment.

Development will only be permitted where:-

- i) Accesses and works to the highway comply with the adopted standards of the Transport Authority;*
- ii) The development would not have a material detrimental impact on the functioning of the transport network;*
- iii) The proposals would not be detrimental to the safety of users of the transport network, including pedestrians and cyclists;*
- iv) The proposal would not generate regular movement of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) on unsuitable roads, or on roads without easy access to the Classified Highway Network; and*
- v) For non-residential uses, or new dwellings on classified roads, off-street servicing would be provided.*

Proposals involving either the construction of a new site access, or a material increase in the use of an existing site access, directly onto the Classified Highway Network will not be acceptable if they would be likely to result in the encouragement of the use of the network for short local trips or compromise the safe movement and free flow of traffic on the network or the safe use of the road.

4.5.13 Reading is a dense urban Borough, containing a broad variety of uses. It has a thriving economy and is a net importer of labour. These factors mean that Reading's transport network is often under significant pressure, and the impacts of new developments therefore require careful management, particularly in terms of new accesses and the effects of additional traffic generation.

⁹⁴ For more information, see <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m4-junctions-3-12-smart-motorway/#project>