



Reading Transport Strategy 2040

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 Reading Transport Strategy 2040 (hereafter the RTS), 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 RTS, with the IIA comprising three linked assessment areas:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)

1.2 Reading Transport Strategy 2040

1.2.1 Pursuant to the Transport Act 2000 and as noted in the RTS, the LTP for the RBC area 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, which are '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 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 or a wider IIA as appropriate).

1.2.3 The RTS which has been subject to IIA comprises the following substantive components:

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

¹ Formerly Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA)

- *Supporting Healthy Lifestyles*
 - *Enabling Sustainable and Inclusive Growth*
 - *Connecting People and Places*
 - *Embracing Smart Solutions*
 - About Reading – characterises travel and the transport system in Reading, including reference to key environmental, equalities and health issues and also presents case studies of recent successful transport interventions by RBC and partner organisations.
 - Challenges and Opportunities – reviews the key transport issues (and associated evidence) which have been addressed through the new RTS and which 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 transport policies to support the achievement of the RTS vision and objectives and to address the identified key challenges.
 - Our Schemes and Initiatives – sets out a suite of transport schemes (including proposals and initiatives) to support the achievement of the RTS vision and 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 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 RTS have been subject to an IIA incorporating SEA, EqIA and HIA as detailed in this report.

2 IIA Policy and Context

2.1 Key Baseline Issues

2.1.1 A summary of the key environmental, equalities and health issues which have been considered within the emerging RTS and the associated IIA is provided in **Table 2.1** below. Both the 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 and 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	<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	<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	The need to prioritise the redevelopment of previously developed (brownfield) land. The need to protect sites designated for their geological interest. The need to safeguard soil resources.
Water	The need to protect and enhance the quality of water sources and the water environment. The need to locate new development including transport infrastructure away from areas of flood risk, taking into account the effects of climate change.
Air Quality and Climatic Factors	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. The need to mitigate climate change including through promoting sustainable land use patterns and the decarbonisation of the transport sector. 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.
Material Assets	The need to promote the efficient use of natural resources, including moving towards a low carbon and circular economy. The need to make the best and most efficient use of existing infrastructure and available land. The need to maintain and enhance the security and safety of transport infrastructure.
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 RTS itself. In overall terms, this helps the RTS to respond to key issues as identified through the IIA process. However, it has been necessary to examine each emerging substantive component of the RTS individually and in combination in order 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 with which the RTS must align and support in terms of its delivery.

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 reflect the following issues:

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 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

- Minimise the amenity impacts of transport, including in terms of reducing noise and vibration and deterioration of noise quality.
- Prevent and avoid unacceptable health impacts from transport, in particular impacts on air quality.
- Support people to make healthy and active lifestyle choices.
- 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 have been addressed within the 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 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 Sustainability Appraisal/SEA (SA/SEA) Regulations, the IIA considers the likely evolution of the baseline position in anticipation of new LTP (that is, the RTS). As the Transport Act 2000 requires RBC to have a LTP in place, this essentially raised 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. Not providing a new LTP/RTS is not reasonable as that scenario would fall short of meeting current statutory requirements and would not provide any new policies or transport schemes.

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.

EqlA 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 EqlA 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 EqlA 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 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 RTS itself.
 - The RTS only identifies the outline principles of 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 Regulations 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 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 RTS, its underpinning by a suite of high level RTS objectives, and on the basis that the inclusion of 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 have been identified within the RTS itself. As detailed in **Section 4.2** (and **Section 5** of the IIA), the development and incorporation of the 43 IIA recommendations within the RTS

itself represent 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 then-emerging RTS was the preparation and consultation on an IIA Scoping Report. In accordance with the SA/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 2040 (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 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, comprised 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 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 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 that the likely significant effects of implementing a plan or programme (the emerging RTS) and reasonable alternatives to it are 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 and in line with statutory requirements, consideration has been given to the need to identify and assess any possible reasonable alternatives to the substantive components of the emerging RTS.

4 How has the IIA Informed the Reading Transport Strategy 2040?

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 (2020 Draft RTS) 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 2020 Draft RTS and its coverage of key environmental, equalities and health issues has been demonstrably improved through this independent review process. A further review was undertaken in 2023, prior to public consultation on the 2023 Draft RTS.
- 4.2.3 The IIA report has now been updated to take account of subsequent changes to the 2023 Draft RTS, including the incorporation of all IIA recommendations and formal consultation feedback to produce the final (2024) RTS. While recent formal consultation has not resulted in substantive alterations to the RTS it verifies that the IIA and RTS were harmonious, indicating that the previous IIA influences on the RTS are valid.
- 4.2.4 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 RTS, which 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 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 RTS. As a result, the RTS is now considered to be more robust and result in

a greater range of likely significant beneficial (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 RTS. The following plan components have been subject to assessment:

- Vision and Objectives
- Policies
- 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**
 - Transport Schemes and Initiatives – **Section 7.3**, with detailed policy assessment matrices for each policy grouping provided in **Appendix E**
 - 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**
 - 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 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 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 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 RTS Vision and Objectives against the IIA Framework. A common uncertainty applies to the assessment of these 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 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 RTS Vision and individual 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 RTS Objectives closely match the IIA Objectives. Read as a whole, the 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 Policies and Transport Schemes and Initiatives

IIA of Policies

- 5.3.1 **Appendix F** of the IIA provides a full summary and visualisation of the how the 32 RTS Policies perform against the IIA Objectives. This allows for easy identification of predicted effects from the 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 policies are predicted to have either Major (i.e. significant) or Minor (i.e. less significant) beneficial effects on the IIA Objectives, with no Major Negative (i.e. significant adverse) effects predicted. Only two 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 perform against the IIA Objectives. This allows for easy identification of predicted effects from the policies and 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 policies are predicted to have either Major (i.e. significant) or Minor (i.e. less 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 schemes Cross-Thames Travel and 'Connecting Neighbourhoods'; in relation to IIA Objective 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 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 Under Active Travel, the Micro-Mobility Hire scheme was assessed as having a Minor negative effect in relation to IIA objective 2 (safety and security) due to a potential increase in less experienced micro-mobility road users leading to an increase in collisions involving vulnerable road users.
- 5.3.9 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 Recommendations and Monitoring

6.1 Recommendations

- 6.1.1 The adoption of all previous IIA recommendations by RBC means that all substantive components of the RTS, have been fully assessed as considered to be capable of performing well against the IIA framework. Beneficial effects were identified in relation to many of the IIA objectives, including specifically in relation to health, accessibility, productivity and competitiveness, air quality, townscape enhancement and climate change.
- 6.1.2 This critical, complementary and iterative review of the plan components supported the promotion of more sustainable forms of transport, as set out in detail in the RTS, 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 and environmental conditions.
- 6.1.3 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.
- 6.1.4 In the absence of any significant adverse environmental, health or equalities effects assessed on the basis of the policies and schemes in the RTS, it was not necessary to develop specific further IIA recommendations through the assessment process, although additional mitigation and enhancement opportunities have been identified. However, the assessment did identify a small number of likely adverse or uncertain effects depending on the future implementation of individual components of the RTS, including policy RTS22 – Demand Management, Policy RTS11 – waterways, Policy RTS28 – Mobility Services & Sharing Economy and transport schemes involving land take. To address this, it will be important for the existing components of the RTS to provide environmental, health and equalities safeguards to be implemented as intended. This includes:
- Application of environmental constraints maps (as included in the RTS and provided in **Appendix D**) in the development, design and consenting of transport schemes
 - Application of EqIA processes where relevant under Policy RTS3 – Equality and Inclusivity

6.2 Monitoring

- 6.2.1 SEA Regulations require the identification of measures to monitor likely significant effects from the implementation of a plan – in this case the RTS. As the prospective IIA effects of the RTS have been assessed as being primarily positive, the proposed approach to monitoring the predicted likely significant environmental, equalities and health effects of the RTS will be subject to refined as required once the policies and schemes set out in the RTS begin to be implemented. This requires the approach to monitoring to be both flexible, depending on changes to schemes mainly, and positive, with any mitigation or enhancements oriented to provide physical, social and economic benefits.
- 6.2.2 Successful monitoring requires the development of an appropriate framework. Specifically, the RTS must identify indicators for monitoring that are specific manageable and targeted towards measuring the implementation of the plan. This also applies to the ongoing monitoring of the IIA

and environmental, equalities and health measures contained within the IIA Report, clearly linking each policy and transport scheme in the RTS to the condition.

- 6.2.3 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. In addition, the RTS itself sets out a proposed monitoring framework to monitor performance against the RTS Objectives (and thus the overall RTS Vision).

Appendix A Reading Transport Strategy 2040 IIA Framework

Table A.1: Reading Transport Strategy 2040 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?