Examination of the Reading Borough Local Plan Partial Update

Reading Borough Council Hearing Statement for Matter 7: Transport

January 2026

Contents

Note: In all Council Hearing Statements, references to the Local Plan Partial Update (LPPU) are to the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan Partial Update showing tracked changes [LP003b] unless otherwise specified.

Issue 1: Are the policies for transport justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

7.1 Is Policy TR1 based on robust and up-to-date evidence including transport modelling? Will Policy TR1 be effective and will it deal appropriately with any cross-boundary transport issues?

7.1.1 Policy TR1 (and the LPPU as a whole) is supported by robust and up-to-date evidence consisting of the Sustainable Connectivity and Vehicle Trip Distribution Study [EV017] which identifies the connectivity and trip distribution of new allocated sites and any specific mitigation measures required and the Transport Modelling Report [EV018] including appendices [EV019-EV022], A4 addendum [EV023] and Technical Note M4 J11 Merge Diverge Assessment Revised [EX044]. All of these documents are considered to use a robust methodology, described in the relevant documents, and are up to date having been prepared in 2024 and 2025 using the most up to date available data.

7.1.2 The purpose of policy TR1 goes wider than simply addressing the transport impacts of the level of development specified. It links to the Reading Transport Strategy [OP002] and in doing so refers to the Council's objectives for transport as well as promoting sustainable modes of travel. As such, specific transport assessment work does not form the main justification for proposed updates, rather it is the Reading Transport Strategy that is the main justification.

7.1.3 The main changes in policy TR1 include the following:

- Reference to creating healthy streets – this is inserted to reflect the 'Supporting healthy lifestyles' objective in the Transport Strategy which is to *"Create healthy streets to encourage active travel and lifestyles, improve connectivity to key destinations and increase personal safety"*, and it is also a key element of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020-2030 [EX004].
- Reference to making contributions towards active travel, public transport or local highway works to address any impacts – this is inserted to ensure that the policy is effective in securing necessary contributions.
- Reference to development sites contributing to upgrades to bus stops – the Transport Strategy in paragraph 5.31 (p81) highlight the Bus Service Improvement Plan, a sub-strategy for the Transport Strategy, which contains *"ambitious plans to transform bus services in Reading, initially to build back passenger levels which reduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, and subsequently to encourage more patronage on buses."*

7.1.4 Policy TR1 will be effective in that it is deliverable over the plan period. Policy TR1 is tied to achieving the objectives of the Transport Strategy which are fundamental principles of sustainable transport in the local area and which should be integrated into all relevant development. Doing so does not form a particular additional burden on development.

7.1.5 Policy TR1 is also effective in that it is based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by statements of common ground. The Transport Strategy itself was developed with engagement with all neighbouring authorities, and where appropriate takes an approach which encompasses the wider urban area including areas outside Reading's boundaries. Paragraph 8.17 (p172) identifies the need for continued cross-boundary working including on a number of listed measures with particular cross-boundary implications. In addition, each individual scheme and initiative included within the Transport Strategy identifies the key delivery partners and stakeholders required as part of its delivery.

7.1.6 The Transport Modelling Report [EV018] as well as the Addendum [EV022] demonstrate that there are no significant cross-boundary impacts expected as a result of the level of development. This situation is reflected in Statements of Common Ground signed with neighbouring authorities West Berkshire District Council, Wokingham Borough Council and Bracknell Forest Council.

7.1.7 Representations at Regulation 19 stage are mainly supportive, although some question elements of the Transport Strategy itself, which is not within the remit of the LPPU to resolve.

7.2 How has the Council:

a) Identified the transport demands arising from the LPPU policies, allocations and growth aspirations;

b) Assessed the impacts of policies, allocations and growth aspirations on the transport network's performance;

c) Identified and assessed the adequacy of any outcomes or mitigation; and

d) Identified any phasing and/or funding requirements necessary to ensure that the identified infrastructure measures are viable and deliverable?

7.2.1 The answers to each point are set out below.

7.2.2 **a) Identifying transport demands:** The transport demands have been identified as a result of the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) [EV015] process. Each site that is anticipated to deliver any net change in dwellings and floorspace was identified and input into the Transport Modelling process using the figures for net change resulting from the HELAA, which in total led to the HELAA's capacity figures. In the case of the Transport Modelling Report [EV018], the report distinguishes between the Reference Case, which is the level of development contained in the existing adopted Local Plan and existing permissions, and the Local Plan case which includes each new site as well as any uplifted figures on existing sites plus windfall allowances and allowances for Local Authority New Build. The sites constituting the Reference Case are shown in the Transport Modelling Report Appendix A [EX019] and the sites constituting the Local Plan scenario are shown in Appendix B [EX020]. The trip rates applied depend on the location and accessibility zones of the site based on the accessibility zones that underpin the Council's Parking Standards and Design SPD.

7.2.3 In addition, each proposed new site (including some that did not end up being included) was assessed through the Sustainable Connectivity and Vehicle Trip Distribution Study [EV017]. This examined the connectivity of each proposed new site to employment, schools, supermarkets, local shops, GP surgeries, pharmacies, leisure centres, green open spaces, bus stops and railway stations, and also used capacity figures derived from the HELAA. Each site was given a connectivity score for walking, cycling and public transport (peak hour average) and ranked. Mitigation measures were recommended which have, where relevant to individual sites, been incorporated into the policy criteria for the site. In addition, a high level trip rate assessment of each site was made, although this was done more comprehensively as part of the later Transport Modelling Report.

7.2.4 **b) Impacts on transport network performance:** The impacts on transport network performance were assessed through the Transport Modelling Report [EV018]. This took account of the level of development emerging from the HELAA and assessed its impact on the transport network by comparing the trip rates from the Reference Case (adopted Local Plan development and planning permissions) and Local Plan case (new and uplifted sites and additional allowances).

7.2.5 The results of the Transport Modelling Report were that there were three junctions close to the town centre with a volume/capacity ratio increase greater than 1.5% as follows:

- London Road/Redlands Road (AM Peak Only)
- Shinfield Road/ Elmhurst Road/A327 (PM Peak Only)
- London Road/Sidmouth Street (PM Peak Only)

7.2.6 No negative impacts on roads within neighbouring authorities or on the Strategic Road Network were identified.

7.2.7 The draft of the Transport Modelling Report was shared with neighbouring local authorities and National Highways. West Berkshire District Council requested more information on the A4 westwards from Reading, in response to which the Transport Modelling Report Addendum [EX022] was prepared which demonstrated that traffic flows on the A4 to Junction 12 change marginally with insignificant impact.

7.2.8 National Highways commented on the Transport Modelling Report in May 2025 to raise some concerns with the impact on Junction 11 towards the end of the plan period. These concerns relate specifically to both the westbound and eastbound off-slip. The e-mail from National Highways is in Appendix 5 of the Council's Response to Initial Questions Part 1 [EX002]. In response, the Council's consultants Stantec prepared a Technical Note M4 J11 Merge Diverge Assessment [EX035] which identifies that:

> *"the current layouts are sufficient to accommodate the forecast flows with the exception of the Westbound Merge in the AM of the Local Plan scenario. As the assessment is borderline for needing the mitigation and due to it only being in one peak the situation could be monitored through the local plan period."*

7.2.9 This note was provided to National Highways on 10 November 2025. NH reviewed the assessment and provided comments on 1 December. These were addressed in a revised version of the Technical Note M4 J11 Merge Diverge Assessment which was produced on 7 January and which has been added to the Examination library as EX044, and this concludes that current layouts are sufficient to accommodate the assumed forecast flows. On this basis a Statement of Common Ground has been prepared which agree that these conclusions are a robust assessment of the expected impacts on Junction 11 and demonstrate that M4 Junction 11 is sufficient to accommodate the LPPU development but that there should be monitoring of the westbound merge at the next five year plan review stage as this is the most borderline situation. At the point of submitting Hearing Statements (9th January 2026) this statement had still only been signed by the Council and was still awaiting signature by National Highways, although there no longer appears to be any disagreement on this matter. This Statement of Common Ground has been added to the Examination library as EX043.

7.2.10 **c) Adequacy of outcomes or mitigation:** Mitigation measures were identified in the Sustainable Connectivity and Vehicle Trip Distribution Study [EV017] including specific measures relating to the extension and frequency increase of the BUZZ18 bus service, improved Sunday bus service between Reading Link Retail Park and the station, reinstated bus stops on Napier Road and layout changes at Vastern Road. These mitigation measures were subject to consultation with Transport officers at the Council and are considered to be deliverable improvements that have relatively little physical impact. These measures were then reflected in proposed changes to relevant site allocations (CR11i, CR14v, CR14w, CR14x, SR4g, WR3w and CA1h).

7.2.11 Specific mitigation measures are not identified in the Transport Modelling Report [EX018] but for the three overcapacity junctions close to the town centre identified above it notes that mitigation would be focused on sustainable transport modes, including bus priority and walking and cycling infrastructure. It should be noted that Shinfield Road/ Elmhurst Road/A327 would be mitigated in part by the Shinfield Road Active Travel Improvements and the London Road/Redlands Road and London Road/Sidmouth Street junctions would be mitigated in part by London Road active travel improvements. Both of these projects are reflected in the Reading Transport Strategy [OP002] and in policy TR2.

7.2.12 More generally, the Reading Transport Strategy contains a wide range of measures to mitigate impacts on the transport network and shift travel patters towards active travel and public transport. Only those schemes that had been delivered by 2024 were factored into the modelling, meaning that additional delivery of those measures would provide further mitigation of any impacts. The background to each of these measures is set out in the Transport Strategy including the rationale for each measure to be included within the Transport Strategy and how it will contribute towards the core objective of the Strategy to replace private car trips with more sustainable forms of travel.

7.2.13 **d) Identification of phasing and funding requirements**: In terms of mitigation measures identified in the Sustainable Connectivity and Vehicle Trip Distribution Study [EV017], these have been linked to the delivery of specific development sites

and would need to be phased in line with delivery of those sites, and funding provided through the development. The measures are relatively modest and should not cause a particular issue in terms of viability.

7.2.14 The phasing and funding of the wider measures including within the Transport Strategy [OP002] is set out in section 7 ‘Funding and Implementation’ within the Strategy document. The phasing of individual schemes and initiatives takes account of the current status with their development, the overall complexity of the scheme including the need for delivery partners, and the likely timescales for achieving funding and time required for delivery. This has in turn been taken into account in the in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan [EV005] and the summary Infrastructure Delivery Schedule in the LPPU.

7.3 Are the major transport projects in Policy TR2 justified and deliverable?

7.3.1 The major transport projects in policy TR2 are taken from the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 [OP002], where the full background to and justification for each project can be found, in particular in section 6. Not all projects from the Transport Strategy are included in policy TR2, just those considered to have potential for land-use implications.

7.3.2 A comment on the deliverability of each project, including any progress so far, is set out below.

7.3.3 **Bus rapid transit** (pp114-115 of Transport Strategy): The Council has recently delivered Phase 5 of its South Reading Bus Rapid Transit scheme on A33, which now completes the southbound section. The northbound BRT scheme would be subject to large scale investment from government or development in the surrounding area.

7.3.4 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is important for Reading because it offers a fast, reliable, and sustainable alternative to car travel, helping to reduce congestion on busy routes like the A33 and A4. By providing dedicated lanes and priority at junctions, BRT improves journey times and makes public transport more attractive, supporting the town’s growing population and economic development. It also contributes to environmental goals by lowering emissions and encouraging a shift away from private vehicles, aligning with Reading’s ambition to become a greener, more connected urban area.

7.3.5 Our current BRT schemes progress to-date has already delivered significant journey time and reliability improvements on this corridor.

7.3.6 Our BRT scheme complements and strengthens our other bus schemes and initiatives, including SuperBus and Park-and-Ride, as well as the local bus network. All local bus services can use our BRT facilities and passengers can interchange from local bus services to our BRT services. Other elements of Superbus including ticketing offers and integrated ticketing systems, facility upgrades and better real-time information are also transferable across both BRT and local bus network and all helps to create a cohesive and efficient public transport network that benefits both residents and businesses.

7.3.7 There remain significant challenges to delivering BRT from the North, East and West of the town, which would also be subject to significant investment and collaborative working with neighbouring authorities. We continue to explore and deliver co-ordinated small bus priority schemes in lieu of the major investment required to deliver BRT.

7.3.8 **Park and ride mobility hubs** (pp116-119): Park and Ride Mobility hubs involve the provision of a comprehensive Park and Ride network for Reading serving the town centre. These facilities will increase demand for public transport services, therefore enabling more viable bus services with better timetable frequency and coverage throughout the week. The provision of Park and Ride facilities alone will provide benefits; however, the benefits will be maximised through the accompanying delivery of BRT corridors and the Superbus Network. These will introduce supporting measures including public transport priority and service frequency enhancements as well as integration with local walking and cycling networks, secure cycle parking and other transport schemes.

7.3.9 Reading is currently service by 3 park and ride sites however these are located one to the south and two to the east of the borough. To be more effective Reading needs to be serviced by a series of park and ride sites across all transport corridors into the town including to the west on the A4 and A329 corridors, working with West Berkshire, and to the north, working with South Oxfordshire. The success of the park and ride mobility hubs will be linked to the delivery of our Bus Rapid Transit, Superbus and Cross Thames Travel schemes.

7.3.10 Park and Ride mobility hubs offer more interchange possibilities such as interchange for national coach services, as is available at Mereoak Park and Ride, and coach services to Heathrow, as available at Winnersh Park and Ride. Both sites also offer substantial cycle parking, EV charging and, at Winnersh, interchange with rail services.

7.3.11 The Council continues to deliver improvements to Mereoak Park and Ride and has recently secured planning permission for a permanent building on the site, initially envisaged as driver facilities, but which can be adapted in the future to cater for passengers. Alongside this, plans include improved, semi-enclosed waiting facilities/shelters for passenger waiting. The delivery of these measures is subject to funding.

7.3.12 The development of Mereoak is supported by the Council's South Reading Bus Rapid Transit investment delivering bus priority measures on the A33 corridor between Mereoak and the town centre to make journey times quick and reliable. All our Park and Rides are supported by other measures in the Council's BRT and SuperBus network schemes, including fares promotions and other bus priority measures including our London Road and Kings Road Bus Lanes supporting park and ride buses to both Thames Valley Park and Winnersh.

7.3.13 Park and Ride functions as an important facility offering a viable alternative to private motor vehicle trips being made in to Reading. Our park and ride sites are located towards the outskirts of the borough and in many cases outside of the borough but close to mage highway junctions or intersections.

7.3.14 Development of other Park and Ride hubs largely involves engagement with neighbouring local authorities, within which these Park and Ride sites, sit. The Council has supported Wokingham borough councils relaunched P&R services from Winnersh and will continue to collaborate with them and other local authorities to develop future improvements.

7.3.15 **Reading West Station upgrade** (p121): The Council, in partnership with GWR and Network Rail, delivered the first phase of a masterplan for Reading West Station which sets out a vision for significant enhancements to the Station. These works included the provision of a new station building on the Oxford Road and transport interchange works and cycle parking as well as a new ticket barrier at the Tilehurst Road station entrance. The scheme has provided significant safety and security improvements at both entrances with enhanced CCTV coverage and lighting, which have been designed with input from the British Transport Police.

7.3.16 The scheme included passive provision for accessibility enhancements within the new station building and the future pashes of the Masterplan would involve the installation of lifts to provide step free access to the platforms and full accessibility. The Council will continue to work with railway partners to seek opportunities to secure funding for these key elements of the overall Masterplan for the station.

7.3.17 **Tilehurst Station upgrade** (p122): The Council supported GWR and Network Rail in the delivery of enhanced facilities at Tilehurst Station, which saw the implementation of accessibility improvements which included new lifts and overbridge being installed. This is a key feature of ensuring that public transport remains an attractive and accessible option for passengers, unlocking new opportunities for modal shift.

7.3.18 The Council is continuing to work with Network Rail and GWR to develop further enhancements to the Station, which will include new cycle facilities and pedestrian links to both the transport interchange and to access the local buses (and car park). Concept plans have been developed and considers by parties and the scheme is largely deliverable, subject to investment from the rail industry, or other external parties.

7.3.19 **Reading Station interchange enhancements** (p120): The purpose of this scheme is to make enhancements to the Reading Station interchange which prioritise pedestrians, cyclists and public transport, and deliver public realm benefits to enhance the area as a major welcome point and gateway to Reading. This links to the Council Plan and Local Plan, to support the growth and prosperity of the town, and by providing clean and accessible spaces for active travel.

7.3.20 Opportunities have already been realised, through the development of enhanced North/South active travel links, through the reopening of the station underpass, and its recent refurbishment, which saw it opened to cyclists as well as pedestrians.

7.3.21 The area has already benefited significantly from large scale development (Station Hill), which has seen significant public realm improvements delivered. The Council is actively working with the Station Hill developer, as well as Network Rail (who are also considering development in this area), to develop a master plan that will deliver on the ambitions of the Local Transport Plan.

7.3.22 A movement study has already been commissioned to review the demands of the area, following which detailed plans will be developed, to be delivered alongside the ongoing private developments in the surrounding area.

7.3.23 **Cross-Thames travel** (pp105-106)**:** The Cross-Thames travel scheme includes enhancing existing public transport, walking and cycle routes across the river, alongside fundamentally reviewing new options including the need for an additional river crossing and associated orbital route around the north of Caversham to link a new crossing with the A4074.

7.3.24 Improvements of existing routes or delivery of new routes to connect to the crossing would offer the opportunity to remove through-traffic from Reading town centre and Caversham local centre. This would enable the reallocation of road space within Reading and across the two existing bridges over the River Thames for improved public transport and cycle facilities which would better serve the local community and town centre. This would in turn reduce dependency on the private car and encourage a shift to sustainable transport.

7.3.25 The current congestion experienced over the crossings within Reading has a significant negative impact on the operation of both local and longer distance bus services to the north of Reading Town Centre. This unreliability leads to longer journey times and less frequent services making public transport less attractive and exacerbating the issue of congestion from private motor vehicle trips generated.

7.3.26 A new Thames Crossing would facilitate the provision of new park and ride (P&R) facilities to the north of the borough and in south Oxfordshire to serve the town centre and hospital. This would be by providing priority measures either on a new crossing or by reallocating part of the existing crossing to ensure services are reliable and efficient to operate.

7.3.27 This scheme is of particular importance when considering the growth in travel demand forecast that will be generated by the developments planned both in south Oxfordshire and further north as well as in Reading and Wokingham, particularly on the A329 corridor.

7.3.28 The scheme is of strategic importance to Reading and the wider area and has therefore been included as a priority scheme within Transport for the South East's Strategic Investment Plan.

7.3.29 The long-standing scheme would represent one of the largest infrastructure interventions within Reading over recent times with many challenges and risks associated with delivering a scheme of this scale. The scheme is politically supported by the Berkshire authorities but does face opposition from South Oxfordshire parish, district and county councils who cite concerns over increased traffic through rural areas, environmental impacts on the Chilterns, and future maintenance responsibilities.

7.3.30 Funding for the crossing is expected to draw on multiple sources, including central government transport grants, developer contributions through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, and borrowing. Additional options under consideration include private-sector investment and tolling or road-pricing.

7.3.31 **Superbus network** (p110): The Council has delivered a series of improvements to the bus network across Reading through its recent Bus Service Improvement Pan (BSIP) funding. The Superbus network would continue this investment to provide throughout the whole of Reading a network of high-quality, high-frequency branded bus routes and infrastructure (bus shelters, real-time information, accessible buses and bus stops, Wi-Fi and USB charging on buses etc.), with reduced fares.

7.3.32 Bus priority measures have been delivered already including as part of the Council's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor on the A33 as well as recent bus lanes delivered through BSIP on the London Road and Oxford Road to supplement the towns existing bus lanes.

7.3.33 The recently announced Local Bus Grant will be utilised to continue to build deliver and develop the Bus Service Improvement plan, and continue to provide bus priority measures that support the achievement of our ambitions for the local bus network.

7.3.34 Additionally, the expansion of the red route scheme along high frequency routes has supported the improvement of traffic flow. Furthermore Cyclists, motorcyclists and taxis will generally be permitted to use bus priority infrastructure provided to support our Superbus network.

7.3.35 We have delivered and continue to offer enhanced evening, nighttime and weekend service frequencies on key routes, to encourage bus travel outside peak periods.

7.3.36 Further information on the Councils ambitious plans for the bus network can be found in our Bus Service Improvement Plan.

7.3.37 **Transport corridor multi-modal enhancements** (p102)**:** This is largely being driven through a variety of Bus and Active Travel schemes already mentioned within the Transport Strategy, but focusses on the specific measure which the Transport Planning Team consider when developing new schemes, such as:

- Reallocation of road space to walking, cycling and public transport
- Improved pedestrian and cycle provision, including seating, wider, more accessible routes and upgraded /new crossings
- Improved public transport provision, including bus priority infrastructure, travel information and stop facilities
- Increase in capacity at active travel and public transport pinch points
- Traffic signal upgrades
- Safety enhancements
- Removal of excessive street furniture
- Increased landscaping and vegetation
- Introduction of pedestrian and cyclist rest areas
- Delivery of live air quality information
- Delivery of digital roads, to enable improved management and maintenance

7.3.38 These is not an exhaustive list of considerations, but rather some key attributes towards enhancing multi-modal opportunities on strategic routes. This is supported

by the Councils LCWIP which also identifies the key strategic Active Travel routes as well as schemes, such as Shinfield Road Cycle Lane and London Road Bus Lane, both of which have already delivered enhancements through road reallocation. It is also worth noting that the Councils approach to bus lanes, allows access by other forms of transport, such as cycles and motorcycles, facilitating improved access and traffic flows.

7.3.39 The Council will continue to deliver these priorities through the development and delivery of its Active Travel and Public Transport schemes, with schemes already planned for 2026/27, including Bath Road Active Travel Scheme & BSIP bus priority measures.

7.3.40 **Inner Distribution Road multi-modal enhancements** (p103): This is largely being driven through a variety of Bus and Active Travel schemes already mentioned within the Transport Strategy, but focusses on the specific measure which the Transport Planning Team consider when developing new schemes, as noted in 7.3.10.

7.3.41 In particular the Council is currently in the process of delivering a scheme on the Southampton Street Junction with the IDR, to facilitate improved public transport access into the town. There are also plans in place to compliment this scheme which could see reallocation of road space to improved greening, as well as Active Travel opportunities, with the first elements expected to be delivered in 2026/27, utilising BSIP / Local Authority Bus Grant funding.

7.3.42 **Oxford Road multi-modal enhancements** (p104): This forms part of a wider assessment of demand management of this particular corridor, with a view to reducing the overall congestion of traffic in the area, and to improve active travel and public transport links.

7.3.43 A study has been commissioned to better understand the demands of this corridor, ahead of an assessment and options appraisal being developed to propose enhancements. This will help support a healthier environment and provide opportunities to develop active travel opportunities over the course of the Transport Strategy 2040.

7.3.44 **Town and local centre public space enhancements** (p123): We will enhance the experience of visiting central Reading and local centres by focusing on sustainable travel modes and removing or reducing conflicts between motorised transport and walking and cycling. We will incorporate the Healthy Streets principles as part of these enhancements. Improvements could include:

- Better access for walking and cycling in and around Reading town centre, including to Reading Station
- Improved walking and cycling connectivity over and through the IDR
- Better access for bus passengers to key interchanges in the town centre as outlined in our Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Creating car or vehicle-free areas
- Providing rest and amenity areas
- Managing available kerb space and providing adequate facilities for deliveries

- Removal of obstructions to free bus movement on approaches to central areas
- Effective management of deliveries, blue badge parking and on and off-street parking will all contribute towards a more accessible town centre.
- Enhanced public realm through use of high-quality materials, landscaping and design to encourage social interaction

7.3.45 The Council is preparing a Town Centre Strategy and has consulted on a Town Centre Public Realm Strategy SPD that is expected to be adopted in June 2026, that sets out the principles, which will support the achievement of the above aims. As set out within section 7.3.7 (Reading Station) of this document, the Council has commenced the first stage of this work, in partnership with local developers, to understand the various movement demands within the town centre, which will help support the development of improved and enhanced public spaces and transport interchanges.

7.3.46 As part of the Station Hill development, improvements have been made to the surrounding area, including at the Reading Station interchange, and at the Friar Street and Greyfriars Rd access to the development, including improved pedestrian spaces, and cycle facilities.

7.3.47 **Strategic pedestrian routes** (p127): In line with our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), we will create a network of strategic pedestrian routes that connect people to local facilities and provide feeder links to the strategic pedestrian network, as well as the wider transport network, including mobility hubs/key interchanges across the borough.

7.3.48 This will encourage walking and improve options for multi-modal interchange on key walking routes which connect major employment areas, transport mobility hubs, the town centre and district hubs across the Reading area. Improvements will reduce conflict with traffic and other road users and improve safety and perception of safety.

7.3.49 Further work will be undertaken to identify strategic pedestrian routes for improvements, including:

- Roadspace reallocation
- Enhanced public space
- Resurfacing and better surface treatments
- Better Lighting and CCTV
- New/improved crossings with more priority for pedestrians
- Improved signage
- Street clutter removal and consolidation
- Introduction of pedestrian and cyclist rest areas
- Increased landscaping and vegetation

7.3.50 Active Travel funding, alongside local contributions allows us to deliver the priorities of the LCWIP, over the duration of the Transport Strategy period.

7.3.51 **Local pedestrian routes** (p128): In line with our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), we will create a network of local pedestrian routes that connect people to local facilities and provide feeder links to the strategic pedestrian network, as well as the wider transport network, including mobility hubs/key interchanges across the borough. We will incorporate the Healthy Streets principles as part of these enhancements.

7.3.52 Our pedestrian routes will deliver improved accessibility and connectivity to local facilities for all users. The encouragement of walking will lead to increased levels of physical activity, reduced walk journey times and mode shift away from private car leading to reduced congestion, reduced carbon, improved air quality and improved public transport reliability. We will deliver safety benefits for people who walk, such as reduced obstructions on footways, including parked vehicles and street clutter.

7.3.53 The Council has previously implemented a series of improvements across the borough delivering an additional 35 pedestrian dropped kerb crossing facilities with tactile paving at residential road junctions, and 24 new handrails installed to benefit pedestrians. Through various forums and through the work on our LCWIP we will continue to identify and deliver improvements to pedestrian routes around Reading.

7.3.54 **Strategic and town centre cycle routes** (p129): The borough of Reading is compact in nature of Reading Borough meaning there is significant opportunity for improvements to increase cycling levels and create a shift away from private car travel.

7.3.55 The Council has identified and set out its principles for developing a Strategic network within its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and through its policies for Healthy Streets, connecting major destinations (including education, employment centres and transport mobility hubs) along key transport corridors and in the town centre. These routes include both radial and orbital routes as well as enhanced routes within the town centre as outlined in our corresponding schemes.

7.3.56 The main principles of the LCWIP have been further referenced within sections 7.3.14 and 7.3.15 (above), which will contribute to developing a holistic cycle network for Reading.

7.3.57 **Shinfield Road active travel improvements** (p130): The Shinfield Road active travel scheme is a key element of the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which will provide segregated cycle facilities and pedestrian improvements on a key route between residential areas in south Reading, the University of Reading, Royal Berkshire Hospital and the town centre.

7.3.58 The full extent of the scheme is from Christchurch Green to Shinfield Rise in Shinfield local centre. Construction of the scheme began in October 2021 by the Council's in-house Highways team, starting by the University / Christchurch Green and progressing south-bound past Leighton Park School as far as Cressingham Road.

7.3.59 Due funding constraints the full extent of the scheme was not delivered, and pending further funding being secured, the Council are assessing alternative measures to improve active travel access on the remainder of this route.

7.3.60 **Bath Road/Castle Hill active travel improvements** (p131): The Bath Road/Castle Hill active travel scheme on the A4 corridor is a key element of the Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The scheme will provide a segregated cycle route and pedestrian improvements, including new formal crossings, on a key route between residential areas in west Reading and the town centre.

7.3.61 The Council has secured funding of £2.5m to deliver the scheme, including grant funding from Active Travel England. Detailed scheme design plans have been prepared to incorporate feedback received from members and through various consultations and the Council intends to commence delivery of the scheme in 2026.

7.3.62 **London Road active travel improvements** (p132): The London Road active travel improvements will see the delivery of a series of active travel improvements on the London Road corridor between Cemetery Junction, the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Sidmouth Street and the town centre. The improvements will be in line with our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and improvements to local and strategic pedestrian and cycle links.

7.3.63 These improvements would be in line with the Council policies and principles as set out within the Transport Strategy and LCWIP and could include:

- Enhanced cycle lanes in each direction to enhance the existing shared facilities, potentially through the provision of segregated facilities with reallocation of general traffic capacity
- Improved cycle provision at all junctions
- Raised tables at select junctions to encourage lower vehicle speeds and provide enhancements for pedestrians
- New and improved pedestrian crossings
- Enhancements at bus stops and links to future bus priority measures on the London Road corridor which will be available for use by cyclists
- Improved carriageway markings
- Linkages to wider cycle network through connecting this facility with new cycle infrastructure being delivered through Woodley and the town centre and NCN 422 route via the existing facility in Sidmouth Street

7.3.64 Initial concept designs were prepared as part of the Councils initial Active Travel Consultation in 2021, and the Council has continued to consider these as part of wider plans on this corridor.

7.3.65 In late 2025 the Council upgraded the toucan crossing on the A4 London Road at the top of Sidmouth Street cycle scheme. In 2026 we are also planning on implementing our bus schemes on the A4 London road between Sidmouth Street and London Street which will provide further enhancements for cyclists.

7.3.66 As London Road is identified as a strategic route forms part of the Councils vision for a strategic cycle network, the scheme remains a priority, subject to suitable funding being secured during the Transport Strategy period.

7.3.67 **Local cycle routes** (p133): In line with our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), we will create an improved local cycle network along lightly trafficked routes, linking communities to local facilities such as shops, leisure facilities, healthcare and education.

7.3.68 Cycle facilities will include a mixture of shared or segregated foot/cycleways, on-carriageway cycle lanes, cyclist awareness signage and crossing facilities. Shared use facilities will have an interim role to play as we transition towards the provision of segregated cycle infrastructure where space permits.

7.3.69 Consideration will be given to micro-mobility vehicles, including e-bikes and e-scooters (if legislated for). Improvements to our borough-wide local routes are proposed as part of the LCWIP. These routes will take account of different types of cycles for those with tricycles, cargo bikes or mobility needs. We will incorporate the Healthy Streets principles as part of these enhancements.

7.3.70 In Spring 2025 we delivered a new shared footpath and cycleway on Portman Road providing a formal pedestrian and cycle route between Beresford Road and the new residential development. This shared path will eventually link up with the new pedestrian and cycle path currently being constructed in Richfield Avenue.

7.3.71 Our Bath Road Active Travel scheme aims to create safer, segregated cycle lanes and improved pedestrian crossings along Bath Road, connecting to Castle Hill and the town centre, with strong public support for reallocating road space from traffic. We are intending to commence construction of this scheme later this year.

7.3.72 **Cycle parking mobility hubs and facilities** (p136): The Council had previously developed a business plan and had agreements in place to deliver a bike hub on permanent premises in the town centre, however the property owner withdrew their offer at short notice. The Council has delivered improved cycle security measures in the town, and continues to explore opportunities to secure a permanent site, which could include a freestanding enclosure being built, subject to planning and suitable land being identified in the town centre.

7.3.73 The delivery of new and improved cycle parking mobility hubs and secure facilities would reduce cycle theft and encourage an increase in cycling as people would feel safe storing their bikes at key destinations, including transport interchanges and residential areas. We will also look to provide more residential secure cycle parking across the Borough to encourage more residents to own a bike and use it to travel to work and for leisure purposes. This will help to encourage a modal shift from car use to cycling, which in turn will reduce congestion and improve air quality around the town centre.

7.3.74 **Smart City initiatives** (pp146-147): Reading's Smart City approach will look to make best value of data from both the perspective of what it can tell us about our transport network and also from the perspective of its potential value to the local authority. We will use it to improve our understanding of people's travel needs and will work cross-sector and cross-authority to address the transport challenges, using data and technology to address these needs where they provide the optimum solution.

7.3.75 With transport having such a cross-authority role, there is significant potential for our transport team to work more closely across the authority to tackle the challenges around the sustainable delivery of transport. This will build on previous initiatives such as the Beat the Street programme which was jointly delivered by health and transport teams to encourage active travel.

7.3.76 As outlined in our Transport Strategy we will produce a smart city strategy for Reading, with transport fully integrated into this strategy, and cross-sector procurement and projects that tackle climate, sustainable travel and congestion. Through this we will maximise the value of data and improve the management of the transport network. This will allow movement of more people, supporting economic growth, whilst reducing their carbon footprint and not exacerbating air quality and congestion issues

7.4 Is it clear from Policy TR2 what pedestrian and cycle routes would be delivered? Is it clear what land would need to be safeguarded?

7.4.1 The Reading Transport Strategy 2040 from which the major transport projects in TR2 are taken sets out more detail, but the strategic and local pedestrian and cycle routes link to routes identified in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan [EX004 and associated appendices EX004a-j], which identifies a network of town centre, strategic, orbital, local and leisure cycle routes and for walking a network of prestige, primary, secondary, link footways, local access footways and rights of way.

7.4.2 The cycle routes are shown on Appendix C for cycling [EX004c] and Appendix E for walking [EX004e]. Specific route measures in a prioritised list for both walking and cycling are set out in Appendix G [EX004g].

7.4.3 The Council does agree that on current reading, the link between policies TR2 and the LCWIP (which is dealt with more fully in TR4 for cycling) may not be fully clear. Therefore, to be effective, a main modification is suggested to ensure that the link is fully made clear.

7.4.4 Based on the current version of the LCWIP, the Council has not identified a need to safeguard any particular land from development. The routes identified would mainly rely on restructuring existing land within the highway, which would generally not need to be safeguarded in the Local Plan. However, a review of the LCWIP is expected in the lifetime of the plan period, and it is possible that land needing to be safeguarded could be identified at that point. This would need to be input into a future Local Plan review. The Council is at an early stage of initiating an update of the LCWIP which will require modifications due to changes in national guidance since it was prepared, working with key partners including neighbouring local authorities and will be subject to public consultation.

7.5 Is the approach to cycle routes and facilities in Policy TR4 justified?

7.5.1 The approach to cycle routes and facilities in policy TR4 is justified in that it is an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on robust and proportionate evidence.

7.5.2 Much of the existing text of the policy remains in place from the existing Local Plan which was found to be justified, deliverable and consistent with national policy upon examination. The Local Plan Review 2023 [LP011] at paragraphs 3.530-3.540 (pp 81-82) considers the need for an update based on changes since the plan adoption and identified that policy TR4 should be subject to update due to:

- Increased emphasis on cycling in national policy; and
- Changes to the cycle network as a result of publication of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020-2030 (LCWIP).

7.5.3 The LCWIP [EX004 and appendices EX004a-j] therefore forms the main justification for the changes to the approach of policy TR4, and the proposed changes themselves are mainly taken from and link to this document. The LCWIP, which looks beyond Reading's boundaries at the wider urban area, used a methodology set out in paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8 (pp 21-25) of the LCWIP to identify five categories of route – strategic, orbital, town centre, local and leisure routes, with different measures set out for each type of route. The resulting network plan for cycling is shown in Appendix C of the document [EX004c].

7.5.4 The following options were considered:

- TR4(i) – Update the Proposals Map to show the cycle network from the LCWIP, policy updated to outline different requirements for the five types of cycle routes and cross-referencing to LCWIP and any successor document (proposed option)
- TR4(ii) – No change to the existing policy.

7.5.5 The only relevant representation on this policy at Regulation 19 stage relates to the status of the Thames Path, shown as a leisure cycle route on the network plan. This representation is not within the remit of the LPPU to address.

7.6 Is Policy TR5 justified and consistent with national policy and Building Regulations? What is the evidential basis for non-residential development going beyond Building Regulations?

7.6.1 Policy TR5 is considered to be justified in that it is an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on robust and proportionate evidence.

7.6.2 The Reading Transport Strategy 2040 [OP002] sets out to promote the use of electric vehicles or alternative ultra-low emission vehicles for essential car journeys in policy RTS1 (p75), and policy RTS29 (p96) deals specifically with ultra-low emission vehicles, highlighting that a Reading-wide approach will be developed to *"encourage the switch from combustion engine vehicles to electric and other zero emission vehicles"* and that electric vehicle charging installations will be fast-tracked to allow infrastructure provision to keep up with demand.

7.6.3 The Council adopted its Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy (EVCI) in March 2024 as a sub-strategy to the Transport Strategy, following a period of public consultation. The overarching aim of the EVCI Strategy is to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles (EVs) for necessary travel in Reading, doing so within the wider context of the Transport Strategy and its aspirations to reduce the need to travel by

vehicle, reduce carbon emissions, improve air quality and promote sustainable and active travel. A key priority in the EVCI is the provision of EV charging points for residents who do not have driveways in the Borough, and progress on the delivery of this is on-going following the Council securing grant funding from Government for this purpose.

7.6.4 In the Climate Emergency Strategy [OP004], among the priorities on the pathway to net zero by 2030 identified on p14 is de-carbonising transport systems, which will involve encouraging a switch to low/zero carbon modes of transport and supporting the phased replacement of petrol/diesel vehicles with electric vehicles. Action T20 under the Transport theme is to improve electric vehicle charging infrastructure, which involves developing and implementing a policy for appropriate provision of electric vehicle charging points across the Borough.

7.6.5 The Reading Transport Strategy makes the point that by 2030, 70% of new cars are likely to be electric. In this context, the Building Regulations requirement for one space in ten to be provided with a charging point for new non-residential developments is clearly insufficient. There are added priorities in Reading given that the Borough includes some particular hotspots of poor air quality, which would be mitigated to some degree (albeit not fully) by supporting the roll-out of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. It is considered that 20% of spaces is not unreasonable and is still significantly below the Building Regulations expectation for residential developments.

7.6.6 Regarding the update at the end of the policy, in order to support the transition to low-emission vehicles and the achievement of the objectives of the Reading Transport Strategy and Climate Emergency Strategy, it is necessary for the policy to support the roll-out of charging infrastructure where it is proposed, subject to detrimental impacts listed in the policy.

7.6.7 In terms of national policy, there is nothing in the NPPF that prevents a local planning authority from seeking standards above Building Regulations for charging points. Doing so would be a key part of the plan mitigating climate change as required in paragraphs 11 a), 20 d) and 158.

7.6.8 The updates to the policy are intended to better relate it to the Building Regulations generally, and remove any duplication with residential charging point requirements that are already set out in Approved Document S which came into effect in 2022. As set out above, seeking standards for non-residential development that exceed the Building Regulations is considered to be justified.

7.6.9 The following options were considered:

- TR5(i) – Remove residential EV requirements, increase non-residential EV provision to 20%, introduce the presumption in favour for charging infrastructure (proposed option)
- TR5(ii) – No additional EV charging contributions
- TR5(iii) – Seek a higher proportion of non-residential parking to include charging points

7.6.10 The only representation received at Regulation 19 stage relating to the matter of charging infrastructure is from the University of Reading, which disputes that the proposed increase for non-residential development is necessary or justified. This is addressed in the points above.

Appendix 2: Proposed main modifications emerging from Hearing Statement

This Schedule sets out proposed 'main modifications' to the Local Plan Partial Update as a result of the contents of this hearing statement.

For the avoidance of doubt, the modifications and references in the following table show changes to the Local Plan Partial Update Pre-Submission Draft, November 2024 [LP003b].

The above document is already in tracked changes format and shows how the adopted Local Plan (November 2019) would be amended. Please therefore be aware that there are two types of amendments shown in this schedule.

Changes already proposed to be made in the LPPU Pre-Submission Draft [LP003b]:

- Additional text that would amend the adopted Local Plan (2019) is shown in green and underlined: Example
- Deleted text that would amend the adopted Local Plan (2019) is show in green and struck through: ~~Example~~

Changes proposed as a main modification through the examination process:

- Additional text that would amend the Pre-Submission Draft LPPU (November 2024) is shown in blue and underlined: Example
- Deleted text that would amend the Pre-Submission Draft LPPU (November 2024) is show in blue and struck through: ~~Example~~

Amendments in blue supersede those in green, so for instance where a change proposed to the adopted Local Plan in green is proposed to be further amended or deleted, this is shown in blue only.

Table A2.1: Schedule of proposed main modifications

Modification Number	Page number [LP003b]	Policy/Paragraph [LP003b]	Main Modification	Reason for Main Modification (linked to soundness requirements)	Reference in this statement
Matter 7 - A	146	4.5.8	*Amend twelfth bullet point and insert new bullet point below it as follows:* • Strategic and local pedestrian routes: As per the LCWIP, improvements to strategic and local pedestrian routes as identified in the latest version of the LCWIP will take place that follow the Healthy Streets principles. • Strategic, town centre and local cycle routes: The strategic cycle network (made up of the strategic, orbital and town centre routes shown in the latest version of the LCWIP) will be improved based on LCWIP and Healthy Streets principles, alongside an improved local cycle network using the local routes identified in the latest LCWIP.	To ensure that the policy is effective	Paragraph 7.4.3