

## Appendix 2 - Consultation Response

### Introduction

Reading Borough Council (RBC) have recently started [consultation](#) on the draft of their [new Local Transport Plan \(named the Reading Transport Strategy 2040\)](#). The consultation is open until Monday 11th December 2023 and, as a neighbouring local authority, Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) have been invited to comment upon the plan.

The strategy is a statutory document that sets out Reading's plans for developing their transport network to 2040 and beyond. Although it focuses primarily on improvements within Reading Borough it also includes cross-boundary schemes which includes schemes within, or impacting upon, the Wokingham area as well as some proposals that are wholly within Wokingham Borough. As a neighbouring local authority Wokingham Borough Council is listed as a key delivery partner in the Reading Transport Strategy 2040.

The online consultation questionnaire has six questions, some with multiple parts. Each question is detailed in the following section, along with a suggested WBC response, where applicable.

This Appendix sets out our proposed response to the questions asked in the consultation as well as further comments to be provided to Reading.

#### Response to be sent by email:

*Thank you for giving Wokingham Borough Council the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Please find our response, approved by our Executive Member for Active Travel, Highway and Transport, below:*

### **1. General Commentary**

- 1.1. WBC believe that cross-boundary schemes are very important between Reading BC and Wokingham BC in order to help facilitate connectivity between the boroughs and further afield. These schemes are important for residents and businesses in both boroughs as it enhances community mobility and stimulates economic growth. WBC are looking to support these schemes and work closely with Reading on any schemes that operate across the boundary or with potential impacts upon WBC. This clear co-operation is essential to successful schemes.
- 1.2. All five objectives fit well with WBC's forthcoming economic development strategy and this reiterates the importance of the LTP from an economic development standpoint.

1.3. It is clear from the LTP that RBC are planning for greater accessibility into their borough by public transport. Part of it this will increase use of WBC's road network and car parks, potentially adding facilities to enable them to become transit hubs (for instance the Park and Rides). This might impact upon our air quality and net zero targets; therefore, these sites should be managed on our terms and to WBC's requirements. It is also important as part of this that any new routes or improvements are fully funded, potentially by Reading (possibly using BSIP funding or perhaps from future revenue generated by any demand management initiatives), and provided at no extra cost to WBC or Wokingham residents. A full business and traffic model produced by RBC would be important to WBC to understand the planned levels of use, impacts and operating costs of these transit hubs and their impact on WBC's road network.

## **2. Policies**

### **Multi-Modal**

2.1. WBC are broadly supportive of the six multi-modal policies (RTS1 to RTS6). Recognising the importance of measures to address the ongoing Climate Emergency, WBC will continue to partner with RBC, along with its other neighbouring authorities, to bring forward measures to encourage further and more significant modal shift to more sustainable modes. However, when considering schemes that involve the reallocation of road space, the expected impacts on the road networks in neighbouring boroughs should be fully understood and quantified. This must ensure that congestion and air quality problems within Reading Borough are not just shifted outside the borough and onto the road networks of the neighbouring boroughs.

### **Public Transport**

2.2. WBC are broadly supportive of the six public transport policies (RTS7 to RTS12). However, WBC consider Policies RTS8 and RTS9 should be expanded, as appropriate, to include the following:

- As part of the evolution and upgrade of Park and Ride sites, existing and proposed sites, along with their associated bus services, should become self-funding;
- Support should be provided for improved/step free access to both platforms at Earley Station;
- Enhanced service provision and faster journey times on the Reading to London Waterloo rail line as the line runs parallel to the A329 between Bracknell and Reading and additional modal shift to this rail line could play a key role in reducing congestion along this route;
- Delivery of the Heathrow Western Rail Link to be expediated as much as possible;

- The electrification of the North Downs Line and associated service improvements; and
- Prior to the opening of the Heathrow Western Rail Link, maintain and encourage development of the existing coach services to Heathrow Airport that operate from Reading Station (RailAir) or MereOak Park and Ride (National Express) as well as from TVP Park and Ride.

### **Active Travel**

- 2.3. As partners on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC are broadly supportive of the four active transport policies (RTS13 to RTS16). However, when considering schemes that involve the reallocation of road space, the expected impacts of the road networks in neighbouring boroughs should be fully understood and quantified, to ensure that congestion and air quality problems within Reading Borough are not just shifted onto the road networks of the neighbouring boroughs.
- 2.4. In bidding for funding for routes we would prefer to work together to ensure continuity along these routes as much as possible to help increase uptake and prevent high quality facilities reaching a boundary and just stopping. This will require further planning and potential re-prioritising routes within our respective LCWIP documents to ensure our plans align well.

### **Network Management Policies**

- 2.5. WBC are broadly supportive of the twelve network and demand management policies (RTS17 to RTS29), subject to the following caveats:
- A full business and traffic model produced by RBC would be important to WBC to understand the planned levels of use, impacts and operating costs of these transit hubs and their impact on WBC's road network.
  - It is important that any parking or demand management measures implemented on RBC roads do not lead to increased parking or congestion issues on neighbouring WBC roads; and
  - It is important that any innovations are shared across borough boundaries and that future services such as Mobility as a Service are able to operate on a wider scale across the Berkshire and Thames Valley area on a single platform with a common payment system for the benefit of all residents across Berkshire and the Thames Valley and not just RBC residents.
- 2.6. Further to this it should be noted that RBC have a number of policies surrounding Freight (under policy RTS23, Freight and Sustainable Distribution), WBC currently have a freight policy under development. It will be important that this is considered in discussions between the boroughs. Policy 24.2 on the delivery of freight consolidation centres and their potential route suggestions are of great interest; any potential locations and subsequent route suggestions should not be used to shift freight traffic onto

the WBC network from elsewhere, though conversely, depending on the site selection, we might also be interested in the potential for sharing use of these consolidation centres.

### **Communication and Engagement Policies**

- 2.7. WBC are supportive of the two network and communication and engagement policies (RTS30 and RTS31).
- 2.8. Policy RTS32 is around aviation. This policy refers to lobbying for access enhancements to Heathrow and Gatwick (including rail access) and monitoring and engaging with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). WBC are supportive of improved rail links with the airports as well as the electrification and decarbonisation of the North Downs Line.

### **3. Schemes with direct involvement of, or impact on, Wokingham Borough**

- 3.1. Please find below a table which summaries the schemes which most direct affect Wokingham Borough along with our response to these; we would be pleased to continue to work with Reading Borough Council on all of these to help us both achieve the best outcomes for both parties.

<b>Multi-Modal Schemes</b>	
<p>Transport Corridor Multi-Modal Enhancements <a href="#">(Page 98)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC is broadly supportive of this scheme although, as space is reallocated away from the private car, it is important to ensure that vehicles do not transfer to using alternative routes, thereby shifting congestion, parking and/or air quality issues onto the WBC network.</p> <p>As four of these routes enter Wokingham Borough it is important the Reading Borough Council work closely with WBC to ensure effective enhancements and to prevent creating a barrier to transport at authority boundaries.</p>
<p>Cross-Thames Travel <a href="#">(Page 101 / 102)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC are supportive of this scheme. However, this scheme will require further work alongside the Climate Emergency Team in WBC to prevent adverse impact upon our Climate Emergency Action Plan.</p> <p>This scheme is also a TFSE priority scheme and has had support from a Cross Travel Working Group. We continue to support the project though with the following caveats/concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consideration of the benefits and disbenefits related to a the potential emissions increase including accounting for the emissions produced during construction.</li> <li>• A full business case and emissions assessment would be required for the project as we would be pleased to continue to develop this in partnership as funding become available.</li> <li>• It is also essential that this be a sustainable route corridor and not an extension of the A3290/A329(M).</li> </ul>
<p>Connecting Neighbourhoods <a href="#">(Page 103)</a></p>	<p>It should be noted that there are no distinct schemes highlighted for this section of the plan. Therefore, it is difficult to identify any specific impacts. Further information would be required once the schemes are determined in further detail.</p>
<p>Demand Management <a href="#">(Page 104 / 105)</a></p>	<p>Elements of this scheme could potentially lead to an increase in traffic within Wokingham Borough to sites such as train stations as neighbouring boroughs act as intermediaries to access Reading. This may require WBC to review infrastructure required to support this.</p>
<b>Public Transport Schemes</b>	

<p>Superbus Network <a href="#">(Page 106)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC are supportive of this scheme, however, improvements must be administered fairly and consistently between both boroughs and it should not impact affordability of, or access to, services to residents located outside Reading Borough.</p>
<p>Concessionary and Discounted Travel <a href="#">(Page 107)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC supports this scheme. However, it is important that it does not lead to increases in bus fares outside Reading Borough. In line with WBC LTP3 Policy PT4, WBC consider that it is essential that bus fares on bus services both within Wokingham Borough and across its boundaries are affordable. Any alterations to fare structures or concessionary fare policies should be administered fairly and consistently both within and outside of the Reading Borough boundary and should not impact affordability of services to residents located outside Reading Borough.</p> <p>Given the potential for confusion on cross border services, it is essential that a common approach is agreed between both authorities, that in turn benefits the residents of both authorities.</p>
<p>South Reading Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridor <a href="#">(Page 110)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC supports this scheme which will help boost usage of Mereok Park and Ride and should also consider how this can assist residents of Shinfield and the surrounding area.</p>
<p>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Corridors <a href="#">(Page 111)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC supports this scheme which will help unlock development in Wokingham Borough and enhance the bus service offered at existing and proposed Park and Ride sites.</p>
<p>Mereok Park and Ride Mobility Hub Expansion <a href="#">(Page 112)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC are supportive of this scheme as it will also help the site become self-funding.</p> <p>However, this expansion should not come at cost to WBC. Any funding from this should come from revenue generated from any demand management measures in Reading BC or potentially from Reading's BSIP as these hubs will support access to the town, thereby making demand management schemes possible.</p>
<p>Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride Mobility Hub Enhancements <a href="#">(Page 113)</a></p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC are supportive of this scheme as it will also help the site become self-funding.</p> <p>However, these enhancements should not come at cost to WBC. Any funding from this should come from revenue generated from any demand management measures in Reading BC or potentially from Reading's BSIP as these hubs will support access to the town, thereby making demand management schemes possible.</p>

<p>Park and Ride Mobility Hubs (<a href="#">Page 114 / 115</a>)</p>	<p>As a delivery partner, WBC are supportive of this scheme as it will also help the site become self-funding.</p> <p>However, this expansion should not come at cost to WBC. Any funding from this should come from revenue generated from any demand management measures in Reading BC or potentially from Reading's BSIP as these hubs will support access to the town, thereby making demand management schemes possible.</p>
<p>Mobility as a Service (MaaS) (<a href="#">Pages 119 to 121</a>)</p>	<p>WBC recognises the importance of adapting to the future and supports the development of Mobility as a Service but would encourage increased emphasis around knowledge sharing and partnership working to ensure the adoption of a common approach across Berkshire and the Thames Valley to maximise the benefits for all residents.</p> <p>It should be noted that this scheme is in its early stages, therefore, it is difficult at this stage to understand the full potential impacts without further project details. Further detail is requested once this scheme is further developed.</p>
<b>Active Travel Schemes</b>	
<p>Strategic Pedestrian Routes (<a href="#">Page 123</a>)</p>	<p>As a partner in the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC supports these active travel schemes.</p>
<p>Local Pedestrian Routes (<a href="#">Page 124</a>)</p>	<p>As a partner in the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC supports these active travel schemes.</p>
<p>Strategic and Town Centre Cycle Routes (<a href="#">Page 125</a>)</p>	<p>As a partner in the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC supports these active travel schemes.</p>
<p>Shinfield Road Active Travel Improvements (<a href="#">Page 126</a>)</p>	<p>Although Wokingham Borough Council is not listed as a delivery partner for this scheme, this scheme curtails very close to the boundary between Reading and Wokingham.</p> <p>When this scheme is progressed, it is important the WBC are consulted as a stakeholder on this scheme to ensure that there are no adverse impacts upon the highway close to the boundary in WBC and to ensure that any required continuation of the scheme in WBC can be considered.</p>
<p>Local Cycle Routes (<a href="#">Page 129</a>)</p>	<p>As a partner in the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC supports these active travel schemes.</p>
<p>Micro-Mobility Hire Scheme (<a href="#">Page 133</a>)</p>	<p>As a partner in the development of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, WBC supports these active travel schemes.</p>
<b>Network Management Schemes</b>	

<p>Parking Schemes and Management <a href="#">(Page 135)</a></p>	<p>WBC is broadly supportive of these schemes although, as space is reallocated away from the private car, it is important to ensure that these reallocated vehicles do not transfer to using alternative routes within Wokingham Borough, thereby shifting congestion, parking and/or air quality issues onto the Wokingham Borough network.</p> <p>Any changes to parking, particularly in the proximity of the borough boundary, and for sites which have parking in both boroughs, must be discussed with WBC before being implemented. Any changes to parking could have an adverse impact upon parking levels in WBC or impact use of stations in Wokingham Borough.</p>
<p>Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) - Managing Travel on the Roads <a href="#">(Page 140)</a></p>	<p>WBC are broadly supportive of this scheme.</p> <p>However, where it notes <i>"Develop smart alternatives to M4 closure diversions and subsequent gridlock in Reading through smart traffic management. Traffic lights dynamically respond to incidents and help redirect traffic around the town"</i> this must take into account any impact on WBC. Given WBC's proximity to the M4 these actions could lead to future changes where traffic may be diverted away from Reading's traffic network and onto WBC's traffic network.</p>
<p>Smart City Initiatives <a href="#">(Page 142 / 143)</a></p>	<p>As a partner in the Thames Valley Berkshire Smart Cities Cluster project, WBC are supportive of this scheme.</p> <p>It should be noted that this scheme is in its early stages, therefore, it is difficult at this stage to understand the full potential impacts without further project details. Further detail is requested once this scheme is further developed.</p>
<p><b>Communication and Engagement Schemes</b></p>	
<p>Travel Information and Advice <a href="#">(Page 145)</a></p>	<p>WBC are broadly supportive of this scheme.</p>
<p>Progress Reporting and Public Engagement <a href="#">(Page 148)</a></p>	<p>WBC are broadly supportive of this scheme.</p>