

TITLE	Local Transport Plan 4 - draft for consultation
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday, 30 November 2023
WARD	(All Wards);
LEAD OFFICER	Director, Place and Growth - Giorgio Framaliccio
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways - Paul Fishwick

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) details the implementation of transport schemes and promotions as part of a considered strategic plan for transport reflecting changing travel trends and a greater focus on the climate emergency, which the borough council declared in 2019.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive agrees to publish the draft LTP4 for public consultation with the intention in summer 2024, subject to approval of full Council, for the council to adopt the plan as the council's strategic plan for transport over the next 10-15 years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory requirement of the council deriving from the Transport Act 2000. The current Local Transport Plan (LTP3) 2011-2026 has provided many improvements including the Wokingham Greenways, enhancements to Wokingham town centre, the Arborfield Cross Relief Road, the North Wokingham Distributor Road, upgrades to railway stations and more.

With a significant part of the current LTP having been delivered, changing technology and government policy, a better understanding of travel habits and with climate change, there is a need to refresh the transport strategy to address current priorities and the needs of our communities. The updated LTP will be an important part of the authority's goal of making Wokingham borough a net-zero carbon producer.

The draft LTP4 is attached to this report. It is intended to be a high-level document that will be supported in future by daughter documents which give further detail on our approach to different elements of transport planning (such as Cycling and Walking, Public Transport and Future mobility). The draft document includes an action plan, outlining some of the key interventions that we intend to deliver throughout the plan period. A less technical, easier to read version of this report will be produced for the consultation. In addition to this, a summary of the evidence informing the Plan (Appendix A) and a report on early public engagement completed in March 2023 (Appendix B) have been completed. These can be found at myjourneywokingham.com/car-travel/local-transport-plan/. A Sustainability Appraisal Report also forms part of the Executive pack (Enc 2).

Executive approval is sought to put the draft LTP4 out to public consultation. A draft set of consultation questions is included as Enc 3. A consultation plan is in development to detail how we will engage with all stakeholders though in particular young adults, those in education, SEND groups and religious and ethnic minorities each of which were under-represented in responses to the March 2023 engagement.

The LTP4 will support our local priorities, including a prosperous economy, improving the quality of life for residents, reducing the environmental impact of transport, and the first stages in the transition of the transport sector towards lower carbon emissions and Net Zero.

It should be noted that for the last three years the Department for Transport has intended to release detailed guidance as to the recommended content of an LTP. This has delayed the completion of this plan to date and although the guidance has still to be released, the current document has been developed using best practice and our best knowledge of the likely content of this guidance. WBC is aware that there will be additional guidance around carbon assessment which will need to follow the plan once this guidance is finalised.

BACKGROUND

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a strategic document that sets out the approach for all aspects of transport across the borough. The LTP will help identify future transport interventions for funding and ensures that we are addressing the priorities of our residents whilst ensuring we meet the requirements of national and local objectives. The LTP will be supported by Daughter documents that will provide greater detail in certain areas; two such documents have already been adopted by the council: The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the Local Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

The council's third and current LTP (LTP3) was written in 2011. With a significant part of the strategy having been delivered and changes in technology, policy and demographics, there is a need to produce a new transport strategy.

The LTP4 looks back at what has happened since 2011, then considers the views of our residents and changing/current travel habits and trends that have been identified. It considers changes in national and regional policy and the borough's own updated goals and objectives from its various strategies as well as the emerging Local Plan.

The Documents

The documents that are to be consulted on are the LTP4 and its Action Plan. In addition, there is a Sustainability Appraisal (Enc 2) which must be consulted on; this demonstrates that none of the measures will have a negative impact on the environment or on individuals, and makes recommendations for further work as projects from the plan are developed to ensure that this can be achieved.

There are two background documents that provide more detail on the data used in developing the new Plan: *The LTP4 Evidence Base*, which includes an overview of empirical data and changes in the borough since 2011 and *The LTP4 Principles Report* which summarises the results of our early engagement with residents in March 2023.

LTP4

Travel and socio-economic data analysis suggests that travel patterns can be split into four geographic areas:

Earley, Woodley and Shinfield	Includes the most urban areas of these Towns and Parish; mainly focussed on travel towards Reading
North Wokingham	Which includes Twyford and the surrounding area which is mainly rural and has high car dependency
South Wokingham	The more rural areas of the south of the borough which also have relatively high car dependency
Wokingham and Winnersh	The central area of the borough which has the highest levels of "self-containment" and active travel in the borough.

These characteristics have been used to develop place-specific solutions where we know that certain interventions will benefit certain travel types, it also means that although the Local Plan will have a Transport Hierarchy, we must accept and support those that are dependent on private car use.

The LTP will support our local priorities. This is reflected in a Vision within which the LTP strategy can be grouped into three key themes that deliver local priorities:

- Create Healthy and Safe Places
- Reduce Environmental impacts
- Develop the Economy

Create Healthy and Safe Places

The LTP will help to build and maintain healthy communities, attractive environments and work towards reducing negative impacts associated with road transport such as injuries from traffic collisions, noise and emissions.

Targets include a 50% reduction in those harmed on our roads and align with national objective for 50% of trips in towns to be made by walking and cycling. For rural areas measure to improve the vitality of rural service centres and access to active travel routes, through either Greenways or a network of lower traffic routes are proposed.

Reduce Environmental Impacts

Consistent with local, regional and national targets, the LTP will support the transition of the transport sector to carbon neutrality. Achieving this will require improved travel choice and changes in travel behaviour to reduce travel and congestion. This includes promoting low emission vehicles, developing a core network of attractive bus and cycle routes across the borough and the removal of all air quality exceedances in the borough.

Develop the Economy

We will work with our partners and stakeholders to protect and enhance our strategic road and rail connectivity. We will work with and encourage rail operators to improve services at our railway stations and measures to decarbonise the railway and complement these with improvements to station interchange and access.

Maximising our existing assets is vital in keeping the borough moving, and a well-maintained transport system was a priority from the consultation.

This Strategy is supported by an Action Plan which identifies some of the actions proposed to help deliver the objectives of LTP4, this is included as Enc 1.

Enc 2 is the Sustainability Appraisal.

Enc 3 provides a draft of the questions that are going to be asked in the consultation. This may not be the precise wording selected for consultation.

Enc 4 presents the draft Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA). This will be updated post-consultation.

Enc 5 provides the minutes from the extraordinary Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 October 2023

The Evidence Base and Principles Engagement Consultation Report which have been used in the development of the plan are available as appendices to the LTP online at <https://www.myjourneywokingham.com/car-travel/local-transport-plan/>.

Funding

The action plan contains several potential projects and ideas which are proposed to help us deliver the objectives identified. Wokingham Borough Council has been successful in the past in attracting funding from various sources including the Department for Transport, the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership, Homes England, DEFRA and other government departments. WBC has also been highly effective in making best use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and securing additional funds through “S106” contributions. In addition to this, the Council receives “local roads maintenance funding”, which includes the Potholes Fund, to fix potholes and resurface roads. This is supported by the “Integrated Transport Block” (ITB), which includes public transport and active travel upgrades. This is the only source of guaranteed funding WBC has for delivery of its local transport plan.

The delivery of LTP4, which primarily comprises the action plan but also any further work arising from these and any schemes contributing to achieving our objectives, will be undertaken using similar funding streams. The timing of delivery of some elements is likely to be affected by funding availability. It must be ensured that the work undertaken in delivering the LTP utilises the ITB and any other available funding, sourced through competitive bidding for grants but also through ensuring our future developments contribute as appropriate. An updated LTP will enable the council to be opportunistic when funding becomes available.

Any highways scheme which does not contribute to any of the council’s objectives should not be funded as we must ensure available funding is spent appropriately.

Throughout the development of the plan, officers have tried to ensure that other council department’s objectives and needs are considered. As part of this work, some synergies have been identified; for instance, in improving the quality of routes to school, there are environmental and health benefits as well as less reliance on the council to provide passenger transport. Discussions are ongoing with officers to ensure that all needs are considered. As part of the consultation process the LTP4 will also be discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

LTP4 development process

Below is a list of the key activities undertaken to date along with the next steps.

Autumn 2022	Member, Officer and Industry Engagement
Winter 2022/23	Development of evidence base
Spring 2023	Public Engagement to help define principles of the transport strategy
Summer 2023	Development of the Draft Strategy

Autumn 2023	Scrutiny and Executive Meeting to approve draft for consultation
Winter 2023/24	Public Consultation on the draft LTP4
Spring 2024	Finalise LTP4 and Action Plan
Summer 2024	Adoption of final Plan at Full Council

The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee held an extraordinary meeting on 9 October to discuss the Local Transport Plan; minutes of that meeting are included as Enc 5 of this report. The plan has been amended to reflect these discussions and suggested amendments as appropriate. Changes to reflect member and officer comments since this meeting are summarised as follows:

- The objective 'Grow the economy' is now 'Develop the economy' which is more inclusive and has the same outcome.
- Where appropriate, we have included 'for all', e.g. access for all, to indicate that the measures are inclusive and include consideration of those with ability and mobility issues. We have also included wheeling to include those relying on wheelchairs and other wheeled mobility aids.
- An introduction has been added to Section 6 as a reminder of the LTP vision and objectives.
- We have included measures and made text changes to take account of current budgetary pressures on the Council in respect of school and SEND transport in particular. However, these are subtle and are not overt in the document. Where appropriate, action plan measures are phrased to support infrastructure that may reduce the burden on the CTU revenue budget. A key related action is the intention to provide a daughter document or strategy for the LTP that will set out the policy for how this may be achieved. Discussions with Childrens and Adults services is ongoing.
- The draft Sustainability Appraisal also now included in the Executive Pack. (The other background documents - which are substantial - are now provided online).

Other changes:

Overview of comment/Change	Where
LTP Strategy	
Earley/Woodley travel, Change <i>majority of travel to reading to the main destination for travel outside the borough is towards Reading</i>	Exec Summary
Added reference to the goals in the previous LTP *Note these had been taken out from previous drafts	1.7
<i>Grow the Economy to Develop the economy</i>	Changed throughout
Reducing through traffic in Wokingham Town Centre	5.21

Improved connections to Crowthorne indicated from Wokingham Town and Finchampstead in the diagram	5.27
Bus Link to Crowthorne Station	5.28
Expand on impacts of EV RE: tyres and noise	5.34
Heathrow Western Rail Link	Added to strategy bullets in 'develop the economy'
Action Plan	
Change 20mph in town centres to urban centres	Road Safety
Add <i>Promotional campaign to promote active travel for all</i>	Engagement
Reduce through traffic in Wokingham Town Centre	Clean Air
Wokingham Town signage review and refresh	Clean Air

Next Steps

There is a need and desire for the LTP4 to further consider the vulnerable people agenda; discussions are ongoing with relevant officers in this area and we intend to continue to update the LTP report and its evidence base to ensure that the needs of these key members of the community are fully considered and addressed. This includes but is not restricted to how the plan can support those leaving care and looked after children.

In addition, we want to expand on how the plan addresses key areas including Public Health and the tackling poverty agenda. We will also be exploring further how we can support valuable services such as dial-a-ride. Some of this work will involve amending our action plan and potentially identifying additional further work to follow after adoption of the plan.

Following the public consultation, the feedback will be reviewed and the plan amended accordingly in conjunction with the Member Working Group and other stakeholders. This will result in a Final LTP which we would seek approval from Full Council to adopt in Summer 2024.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces unprecedented financial pressures as a result of; the longer term impact of the COVID-19 crisis, Brexit, the war in Ukraine and the general economic climate of rising prices and the increasing cost of debt. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are optimised and are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
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Current Financial Year (Year 1)	See below	Yes	Revenue and Capital
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	See below	Yes	Revenue and Capital
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	See below	Yes	Revenue and Capital

<p>Other Financial Information</p> <p>The LTP development has been funded using existing revenue budgets. The LTP action plan and related projects will be delivered from several funding sources including LTP integrated transport block, developer funding including S106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and external grant funding. The speed of delivery is dependent on funding, and our only currently guaranteed source of funding is from the ITB which the Council allocates in part to the “Integrated Transport Schemes” budget as well other competing schemes.</p> <p>Recent government announcements for bus services and walking and cycling improvements are well aligned with priorities set out in the LTP. Opportunities to align the delivery of the plan with planned maintenance and/or renewals will also be identified. Such integration will ensure better value for money and reduce disruption for users of the transport network.</p>
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<p>Legal Implications arising from the Recommendation(s)</p> <p>None</p>

<p>Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation</p> <p>Managed internal and external consultation has been completed with Member, officer and external stakeholder meetings completed to seek content for the LTP. In addition, a principles engagement was completed in spring 2023 to gauge opinion and understand initial views on transport initiatives. The consultation feedback was used inform the draft LTP Action Plan, themes and objectives. This stage of the LTP programme is seeking approval to consult on the draft LTP in winter 2023/spring 2024. When the plan is adopted, any decision to develop schemes in future will be considered as and when funding becomes available. When schemes are taken forward, there may be a requirement for full public consultation to ensure that the local population can have their say on any proposals.</p>

<p>Public Sector Equality Duty</p> <p>A draft Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed and is provided in Enc 4 of the Executive pack. The EqIA will be finalised post-public consultation in 2024.</p>
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<p>Climate Emergency – <i>This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030</i></p> <p>National guidance on quantifying carbon impacts from transport strategies, that was originally expected in Summer 2022, is still awaited. However, the LTP has been developed mindful of, and in line with, the anticipated guidance and has reducing environmental impacts as one of its three themes supported by several objectives. The LTP acknowledges the importance of the Climate Emergency Action Plan and includes measures throughout to address climate change to help reduce the impact of road transport on carbon emissions.</p>
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Reasons for considering the report in Closed Session
n/a

List of Background Papers
<p>Enc 1 – LTP4 Draft Strategy The main document which is the subject of the consultation.</p> <p>Enc 2 – Sustainability Appraisal This appraisal ensure the Plan meets requirements for Sustainability and Equality; it must be consulted on for a minimum 4 weeks as part of the LTP development process.</p> <p>Enc 3 – Proposed questions for consultation.</p> <p>Enc 4 – Draft Equalities Impact Assessment</p> <p>Enc 5 – Minutes of Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, 9 October 2023.</p> <p>Available at https://www.myjourneywokingham.com/car-travel/local-transport-plan/:</p> <p>LTP4 Appendix A – Draft Evidence Base LTP4 Appendix B – Spring 2023 Engagement Report</p>

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