

LTP4 Consultation Summary Report



Introduction

The fourth Local Transport Plan for Bracknell Forest sets out the aims and ambitions for travel in the Borough for the period to 2037.

Following the initial public survey in January 2024, in which the travel habits and views of residents and stakeholders were sought, a draft transport plan was developed to incorporate feedback and priorities alongside local and national policy. This draft plan was subject to a further stakeholder engagement and public consultation in the latter part of 2024.

The consultation plan can be viewed here: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/roads-parking-and-transport/local-transport-plan>



Public Consultation, November – December 2024

A public consultation on the draft plan, and its supporting documents, was launched on 25 November 2024 for 5 weeks. The plan was available to view online, with an accompanying electronic survey, and printed copies were available in Borough libraries or by post on request. Transport officers were available at library drop-in sessions to talk to residents. Feedback was also submitted via the dedicated 'LTP' email inbox and further comments were received through social media.

Key stakeholders were consulted directly including Town/Parish Councils, neighbouring Councils, transport operators, Natural England, the Environment Agency, Transport for the South East (TfSE) along with local business and interest groups such as Bracknell BID and the Joint Climate Advisory Board (JCAB).

Four questions centred around the proposed approach to:

- **walking and cycling**
- **public transport**
- **electric vehicles**
- **broader transport issues and general feedback on the draft plan**

The feedback received, and the actions we will take to address them are set out below.

Feedback on walking and cycling

Positive feedback

- Many respondents praised the existing walking and cycling infrastructure, particularly the segregated, traffic-free routes around the older parts of Bracknell town.
- Off-road and greenway routes were commended for enabling family-friendly and accessible cycling.
- Swinley Forest and surrounding green areas were highlighted as key strengths for outdoor activities, particularly cycling.
- Support was given for the Council's emphasis on active travel and modal shift towards walking and cycling.

Key issues and concerns

Maintenance and Cleanliness:

- Commonly mentioned issues included vegetation overgrowth, accumulated leaves, flooding in underpasses, potholes, and poor path surfacing, all of which pose barriers to safe travel.

Our response: Policies TP3/TP4 (Walking and Cycling) aim to address issues around vegetation and highway maintenance, and this has been further supported and emphasised by residents in the number of comments made. This will be taken forward as evidence to support budget priorities in future years.

Lighting and Safety:

- Some concerns were raised regarding poor lighting in underpasses and that isolated paths can feel unsafe, particularly for women walking alone at night.

Our response: Policy TP9 (Accessibility, Inclusion and Diversity) recognises these issues. Future work will include opportunities to improve existing underpasses, including lighting in and around these areas. In addition, a feasibility study will explore opportunities for additional 'at grade' crossings in and around the town centre as part of its ongoing redevelopment.

Signage and Connectivity:

- Suggestions were made on improvements to signage, network connectivity (especially in Warfield and Winkfield) and integration with regional routes, along with better promotion, to enhance navigation and encourage seamless travel for cyclists and pedestrians.

Our response: Policy TP9 (Accessibility, Inclusion and Diversity) proposes that signage will be reviewed and improved or rationalised wherever necessary – we will also be mindful of unnecessary clutter within the streetscape and emerging technology which can provide digital directions.

Cycling and Walking Conflicts:

- Opinions on shared cycling and pedestrian paths were mixed, with some concerns about conflict with cyclists and high-speed e-scooters. Suggestions included clear markings or separate lanes to improve safety.

Our response: We are aware of perceived and real concerns around e-bikes and scooters, which is the subject of current Government consultation on the regulation of on-street micromobility – as considered in Policy TP12 (Micromobility and shared mobility solutions). The request for clearer markings will be taken forward as evidence to support budget priorities in future years and opportunities for segregated user lanes will be explored within future schemes.

Secure Parking:

- Comments were received regarding a lack of secure and covered cycle parking, particularly in town and village centres and near rail stations and how this can deter cycling due to concerns about theft, even when bikes are locked.

Our response: Policy TP22 (Car, motorcycle and cycle parking) considers the security concerns for cycles and this is considered and this has been further emphasised in Policy TP4 (Cycling). Enclosed, high security bike lockers are being installed within Bracknell town centre as a trial and will be planned for wider use once our learning is complete.

Accessibility:

- Some felt that obstacles such as narrow or uneven paths, overhanging branches, poorly designed bollards, muddy grass verges and flooding make some routes inaccessible for cargo bikes, mobility scooters and pedestrians with buggies.

Our response: This evidence for improving maintenance schedules will be used to support budget priorities in future years. More consideration will be given to infrastructure that causes accessibility issues as set out under Policy TP9 (Accessibility, Inclusion and Diversity).

Policy and Design Suggestions:

- Suggestions included retrofitting Dutch-style roundabouts, adding parallel zebra crossings, creating direct cycle routes, updating the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to ensure LTN 1/20 compliance, and incorporating green spaces and landscaping improvements in major schemes.

Our response: The revised Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (a supporting document to LTP4) is comprehensive and will be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it reflects the latest opportunities. We will continue to encourage and require high quality green spaces and cycle paths within new developments, which are appealing and well thought through.



Feedback on public transport

Positive feedback

- Many welcome proposed enhancements like investigating new delivery models (e.g. Demand Responsive Transport) and updating infrastructure.
- Enthusiasm was shown for Mobility Hubs - integrated hubs for bus, train, bike etc - and secure cycle storage at stations.
- Some residents appreciate current bus frequency and connections, particularly in more central neighbourhoods.
- Train services and links to London and the wider region are generally well regarded, when not disrupted.

Key issues and concerns

Redevelopment of Bracknell Bus Station:

- A number of responses oppose relocating or removing the central bus station due to concerns about reduced accessibility, decreased bus use and potential safety issues in the town centre.

Our response: Information on the BFC website explains the decision and proposals around Bracknell bus station more clearly – this change is part of the town centre masterplan which was consulted on as part of the Local Plan for development. The proposal aims to create a more welcoming, accessible and modern gateway to the town centre from the train station as well as enabling stops closer to the Lexicon shopping centre and at key points across the town centre. It is important to note that at present the function of the Bus station will remain, however, its form will change in the longer-term. More detail can be found in the following document <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-10/bracknell-town-centre-masterplans-spd-adoption-version.pdf>

Frequency and Reliability of Services:

- There are calls for more frequent and reliable bus services, particularly during peak times, evenings, weekends, and to outer borough areas, alongside frustration with cancellations and delays.

Our response: Among other benefits our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will deliver the following improvements (funded through government grant):

- Increase to the frequency of the 108 service
- More journeys on the X94 service, including later in the day
- Improved reliability on the 53 and 156 services
- Serving new parts of the borough, including Crowthorne and Martins Heron rail stations, with services 157/158, 598 and X94
- Bus priority at strategic signalised junctions

Cost and Accessibility:

- Some felt that public transport is widely regarded as too expensive, particularly for families and frequent travellers, with fares often exceeding the cost of driving.

Our response: We will continue to work closely with operators to encourage and promote competitive fare deals and discounts for user groups which can increase patronage. Increased bus use is key to reducing the cost for the user. Initiatives such as the free bus to the town centre prior to Christmas and free 'taster' tickets for new residents can also boost long-term patronage.

Route Coverage:

- Comments were received about insufficient bus routes to key destinations like Frimley Park Hospital, Maidenhead, Crowthorne Railway Station and other outer areas of the borough. Requests were made for improved links between residential areas, schools, workplaces, and recreational venues.

Our response: Among other benefits our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) will deliver the following improvements (funded through government grant):

- *More journeys to Frimley Park hospital on the X94 service*
- *Extending the 598 service to call Crowthorne rail station*

Moving forward, we will continue to investigate new ways of providing bus services, such as Demand Responsive Transport, possibly using smaller or electric vehicles to deliver services to and from more areas in the borough.

Integration with Other Modes:

- There is an expressed desire for improved connections between buses, trains and potentially shared bikes and scooters at 'hubs', with better timing and infrastructure for smooth transitions.

Our response: We will continue to work with operators and strive towards more integrated ticket options for bus and train and investigate potential sites for 'mobility hubs' as detailed within the plan.

Infrastructure and Safety:

- Requests were made for better-maintained bus stops with shelters, lighting, real-time updates and enhanced safety measures, particularly for vulnerable groups. Future-ready infrastructure for electric or alternatively fuelled buses was also suggested.

Our response: The Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) recognises these issues and seeks to address them over the course of the plan as funding becomes available. Improvements to waiting and crossing facilities at bus stops and longer-term plans to replace and/or refurbish the current shelters across the Borough are key. Operators will continue to invest in new and cleaner buses.

Accessibility for Vulnerable Populations:

- Comments were received regarding challenges for the elderly, disabled and visually impaired residents due to limited routes and poorly timed schedules. Requests for better transport options for special events or community venues like South Hill Park.

Our response: A core focus of Policy TP5 (Buses) and our BSIP is to continually improve accessibility for the widest cross-section of the population, particularly the young and elderly. In addition to the BSIP measures outlined above, we will introduce a concessionary companion pass so that eligible disabled bus users can be better supported on their journeys.



Feedback on electric vehicles

Positive feedback

- Some applaud the council's efforts and emphasise the importance of expanding EV charging infrastructure, particularly in high-demand areas with limited off-street parking, and within major developments.
- There were a number of comments supporting the rapid chargers installed in Great Hollands, with requests for more within council-owned car parks

Key issues and concerns

Concerns About Accessibility:

- A number of responses highlighted the lack of EV infrastructure in flats or communal parking areas, expressing frustration over the challenges of charging without private driveways or garages, while emphasising the need for equal access to affordable charging solutions.

Our response: Our EV Strategy (a core component of LTP4) seeks to address these issues as far as is practically possible, in part by securing a chargepoint provider to install commercial chargepoints within streets where there is limited off-street parking. Updated Building Regulations now require the installation of chargepoints within new developments. Policy TP2 (Ultra-low emission vehicles – ULEVs, and Electric Vehicles) also commits to ensuring charging parking bays are PAS1899 disability accessible wherever possible.

Equity and Funding Concerns:

- Questions are raised about the use of public funds for EV infrastructure, particularly when essential services like health and education are under strain. Some argue that private companies should bear the cost. Others note that public charging is often more expensive than home charging, creating inequalities.

Our response: The EV Strategy (a core component of LTP4) makes it clear that government and local authorities expect the private sector to lead on EV chargepoint roll-out, and that we will seek solutions that are as cost competitive as possible for borough residents and visitors.

Scepticism toward EVs:

- Several comments reflect scepticism about EVs being environmentally friendly due to battery production and disposal concerns. Others believe hydrogen or alternative technologies might be a better solution. Some oppose EVs entirely, citing safety concerns, high costs, and perceived government overreach.

Our response: Policy TP2 (Ultra-low emission vehicles – ULEVs, and Electric Vehicles) recognises that purely electric vehicles will only be part of the overall future mix of vehicles on our roads. The technology, infrastructure and national policy around ULEVs is constantly evolving and we will continue to adapt.

Impact on Parking and Public Spaces:

- There are common grievances about the loss of parking spaces to accommodate EV chargers, particularly in areas already facing parking shortages, alongside concerns about increasing street furniture and visual clutter.

Our response: The EV Strategy (a core component of LTP4) will seek to install chargepoints in residential streets progressively and in line with increasing demands. Schemes to provide additional residential parking, for all vehicles, have been introduced in many pressured streets and this will

support the future inclusion of EV chargepoints. As EVs become more common, they will simply replace older non-EV cars in residential streets. Care will be taken in locating chargepoints so as not to exacerbate parking and access issues.

Future Planning:

- There are widespread calls for mandatory charging points in all new developments, along with suggestions such as converting derelict garages into EV charging car parks and prioritising the electrification of taxis and public service vehicles.

Our response: Recent changes to Building Regulations mean that all new developments are now required to have EV chargepoints installed. This is also reflected under policy TP2 (Ultra-low emission vehicles – ULEVs, and Electric Vehicles). We will work with housing associations where there are opportunities to convert private garage blocks and enable the inclusion of EV chargepoints.

Getting the right chargers in the right locations:

- Suggestions have been made to put slower chargers in streets and residential car parks where people can safely charge overnight, and to put rapid chargers in larger car parks and strategic locations for residents, visitors and commuters. Exploring opportunities to use Council land to generate revenue is also mentioned.

Our response: The EV Strategy seeks to ensure a mix of chargepoints in the most suitable locations, reflecting these suggestions, along with exploring land opportunities for the Council and its partners.



General feedback on the plan and accompanying environmental report

Positive feedback

- Many respondents appreciate the ambitious and vibrant nature of the plan.
- There is recognition of realistic measures aimed at shifting travel behaviours despite challenges.
- Some feel the plan provides a clear vision for sustainable transport, electrification and embracing emerging technologies.

Key issues and concerns

Traffic Management and Infrastructure:

- Persistent congestion on major routes, such as the M3 and M4 links.
- Need for improved roundabout designs and clearer lane markings.
- Drainage issues on specific roads causing flooding.
- Road maintenance and addressing potholes are seen as critical for supporting current infrastructure.

Our response: These are all recognised issues and a core aim of the LTP is to continue to address traffic efficiency and journey times on the road network, and invest in highway maintenance, making better use of the infrastructure that we have.

Car Parking and Housing:

- Insufficient or poorly planned parking in new housing developments leads to street parking and reduced accessibility. Requests for developers to provide better parking solutions.

Our response: Policy TP22 (Car, motorcycle and cycle parking) explicitly considers parking, and complements the Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It aims to ensure that parking in new developments is adequate and provided in a way which means residents will use it, rather than parking on streets and creating safety and access issues.

Environmental Concerns:

- Impact of the plan on biodiversity must be carefully considered.
- Need to address carbon emissions and encourage alternatives to petrol and diesel vehicles.

Our response: The core focus of LTP4 is on the environmental impact of transport, and this theme runs through all policies.

Equity and Inclusion:

- Accessibility concerns for elderly and disabled residents.
- Ensuring the plan addresses the needs of people who cannot afford electric vehicles or live in communal or flat-style housing without private parking.

Our response: Policy TP9 (Accessibility, inclusion and diversity) recognises the varied accessibility challenges facing some residents, focussing on the need for step free accesses in public places and on transport, reducing unnecessary street clutter, development of clear and easy to understand signage and improvements to public safety. We are also mindful of cost-of-living pressures which often determine how people travel and the impacts that even small price increases can have.

General Concerns and Suggestions:

- Some residents expressed a preference for minimal change, arguing that the current system works adequately for them and makes Bracknell Forest an attractive place to live and work
- Dissatisfaction with the focus on “net zero” initiatives, with some residents viewing it as a misuse of resources.



Changes to the draft plan and its approach

In taking on board the comments and representations made, we will make a number of changes to the draft Local Transport Plan and the proposed measures within it.

The ever-evolving nature of funding and national transport policy is considered within the plan and securing new government funding will be key to implementing further measures to deliver sustainable travel and the physical and mental health benefits it can provide.

Some particular needs and opportunities are highlighted within the consultation responses and a number of corresponding actions have been linked to these, including:

- Increase bus priority measures and improve the reliability and journey times of buses.
- Increase bus journeys and improve frequency on certain routes, including links to Frimley Park Hospital and Crowthorne Railway Station.
- Encourage bus operators to promote competitive fare deals and discounts for user groups which can increase patronage.
- Strive towards more integrated ticket options for bus and train and investigate sites for ‘mobility hubs’.
- Improve bus infrastructure, including upgrading bus shelters and stops.
- Require high quality green spaces and cycle paths within new developments.
- Improve cycleway signage to make it clearer and more useful.
- More cycle training places for children, helping towards a goal of providing all children with cycle training by the time they leave primary school.
- Improve footway and cycleway maintenance, including resurfacing, vegetation clearance, addressing drainage and flooding issues.
- More secure cycle parking in town and village and centres.
- Improve existing underpasses, including lighting in and around these areas, and explore opportunities for ‘at grade’ crossings in and around the town centre.
- Encourage a mix of EV chargepoints in the most suitable locations and avoid exacerbating existing parking and access issues.
- Seek EV charging solutions that are cost competitive for borough residents and visitors.

Text changes

- Page 7: 'Scene setting'

This text has been amended to add clearer and more comprehensive regional strategic context, and to reference the partnership work BFC undertakes with the other Berkshire authorities and wider regional and national bodies including Transport for the South East and the Department for Transport.

- Page 36 'The Vision for LTP4'

The word 'integrated' should be included in the vision, to reflect both modal and geographical transport integration.

The vision therefore now reads:

“To develop a sustainable, integrated and resilient transport network that reduces carbon, provides choice and access for all in a safe and healthy environment, making Bracknell Forest a desirable place to live, work and grow”

- Page 37: TP4: Cycling

An action has been added under Policy TP4 (Cycling) to “provide more secure cycle parking options that are practical in terms of cost and space”.

- Page 37: TP5: Buses

An action has been added under Policy TP5 (Buses), to “Investigate feasibility and trial demand responsive (DRT) services with neighbouring authorities”.

- Page 53 (Action Plan)

Reference to retaining the £2 bus fare cap has been removed from the Action Plan. Unfortunately, this was not viable as government changes in January 2025 have lifted the cap.

Summary

The varied responses to the consultation highlight the challenge ahead for the borough to find a balanced, reasonable and realistic approach to future transport. We will need to encourage and educate, rather than rely on restrictive measures.

It is recognised that for many the cost-of-living pressures are a primary concern and whilst we must strive to promote and encourage sustainable modes, and improve the infrastructure to facilitate them, we also need to focus on how sustainable alternatives can be made more attractive and financially competitive.

The quality and experience of using existing sustainable transport facilities is also important in encouraging this transition, with opportunities to look at improving our existing footway and cycle network and making the centres of communities more accessible. A necessary growth in the public transport network and the accelerated delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure are also key. It is likely that major national level interventions, including increased funding and regulation changes, will also play an important part in influencing travel choice and could provide accelerated benefits in terms of emissions reductions.

Feedback received from both rounds of public engagement highlight the desire for travel choice and freedom to reflect the practicalities for individual journeys. Many responses praised the relative ease of travel to and around Bracknell Forest when compared to neighbouring Boroughs. The Local Transport Plan now presented for approval focusses on maintaining this choice by providing a transport system that is cleaner, greener, more efficient, and fairer for all those who use it.