



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Comments on Reading Borough Council's Draft Reading Transport Strategy 2040

General

Earley Town Council is pleased that Reading Borough Council is consulting on its Reading Transport Strategy 2040, which is being developed as the statutory Local Transport Plan (LTP4) for the Reading Borough with the aim of improving its transport network, tackling poor air quality, congestion and achieving its net zero carbon target.

As transport links from Reading travel into and through Earley, which is in Wokingham Borough, it is important that Reading Borough Council works with Wokingham Borough Council, as its delivery partner, to ensure that the cross-boundary transport network is: -

- Sustainable - encouraging the use of public transport, cycling/walking.
- Tackles congestion – to improve journeys and improve air quality.
- Delivers clean/green transport options – in order to reach its net zero target.
- Considering the future – in relation to how the transport network will evolve in the future.

Buses

Reading Borough Council needs to ensure that: -

- Bus services are frequent and more reliable, as local residents tell us that buses often terminate before they reach Earley.
- There is more publicising of the Winnersh Park & Ride.
- Discussions are had with Wokingham Borough Council and Earley Town Council on bus routes.
- There is a provision of more real time information at bus stops, as some users, such as the elderly do not have smartphones.
- Consideration is given as to whether carpools will be permitted to use bus lanes.
- Nighttime audio messages are controlled to avoid noise nuisance in residential areas

Cycling

Earley Town Council would like to see: -

1. The direct cycle links separated from cars and pedestrians.
2. Reading Borough Council consulting with Wokingham Borough Council and Earley Town Council on ideas for cycle routes.
3. That proposed cycle rental schemes are considered but would like to remind Reading Borough Council that this was once available at Earley Train Station but was discontinued.
4. Better secure bicycle storage, with an option of storage where the bike is not visible, especially for more expensive bikes.
5. More radial cycle routes rather than just routes to Reading town centres and that they are better signposted.

Parking

Reading Borough Council must consider that: -

1. Its statement on 'demand management', particularly the impact on charges will result in parking in residential roads in Earley.
2. As Earley borders the Reading Borough, there are issues with Reading residents parking on residential roads in Earley and residents believe that this may be caused by people living in unlicensed rental properties without tenancy agreements, so are unable to get resident parking permits - Reading Borough Council should be able to verify this?
3. Earley has issues with parking on residential roads caused by users of the University of Reading and people getting a bus into Reading town centre, who are trying to avoid parking charges or permit schemes in Reading.
4. The difficulty parking at the Royal Berkshire Hospital is very real problem and is not as Reading Borough Council states "perceived".
5. Green parking tariffs are unacceptable if they displace parking onto residential roads in Earley.

Roads

Earley Town Council: -

1. Believes the allocation of road space needs to be balanced with resilience of routes. Reading Borough Council needs to protect alternative routes to avoid congestion and accidents.
2. Believes the third Thames crossing needs to have proper links to avoid traffic flowing through Earley roads. If the route is linked to the A329M, the Town Council would prefer it to be direct rather than via a stretch of the London Road.
3. Would like to understand what is happening with the proposed strategic traffic links of the Southeast of England and whether that would help the third Thames crossing.

Trains

Earley Town Council would like to see: -

1. Improved signalling to allow more trains to stop at Earley/Winnersh Triangle/Winnersh.
2. A direct rail link to Heathrow rather than via London.

General points

Reading Borough Council needs to: -

- Consider the positioning of the mobility hubs, so not to increase traffic in Earley.
- Make taxi regulations fair to provide a level playing field.
- Not introduce ULEZ or congestion schemes in Reading, unless it evidences that it is necessary and carries out full consultation with neighbouring parishes.
- Aim 20mph speed limits during school drop off and pick up times in/around roads and nearby roads where there is a school located.
- Know that the language of the strategy takes ownership of ideas and facilities that are in the Wokingham Borough not Reading Borough and this needs to be corrected. Example: Winnersh Park & Ride and most of Reading University are not the Reading Borough.
- Look at some of the figures in the strategy, such as figure 6 and 29, as they are unreadable.

Possible additional suggestions

- Are there plans for driverless trains – will Reading Borough Council be discussing this with train providers?
- School travel plans for Reading Borough and Wokingham Borough should be reviewed on a regular basis to assess their effectiveness and compliance. Also, the catchment areas of schools should be designed to increase cycling and walking.

This concludes the comments of Earley Town Council

Dated: 6th December 2023