



EARLEY TOWN COUNCIL

Comments on Wokingham Borough Council's Local Transport Plan Consultation

ETC welcomes the opportunity to comment on this document and in general, we agree with the three themes: -

1. Create healthy and safe places
2. Develop the economy
3. Reduce environmental impacts.

The following comments are made in terms of their applicability to Earley Town: -

Theme 1 - Create healthy and safe places

Objective: Safer streets for all.

Earley is particularly affected by high levels of traffic in the vicinity of schools, so any actions to improve safety in these areas are welcomed. In 2022, in response to Wokingham Borough Council's Speed Review, the Town Council submitted suggestions for the application of 20mph limits across many residential roads in Earley and for a reduction of speed limit from 40mph to 30mph on the Wokingham Road.

Objective: 50% Active travel in Towns by 2030.

Lower Earley was originally developed with the pedestrian in mind and has a number of useful pedestrian and cycle routes. However, ETC would welcome further such active travel facilities along more direct routes. ETC would be pleased to see cycle parking at all green spaces across Earley, especially at sports facilities.

Objective: Thriving villages and rural centres.

Whilst Earley has a large number of residents, it does not have what one might consider a "Town Centre". It does have a small number of small centres currently without any EV facilities.

Theme 2 - Develop the economy

Objective: Protect and Enhance Strategic Connectivity

As the evidence suggests, many Earley residents travel outside of Earley for work. Access to the main road networks and improved train services will be very important for growth, as current traffic congestion is severe in places like Shinfield Arms Roundabout, Showcase Roundabout, Wilderness Road, Lower Earley Way and Three Tuns, during peak hours.

Objective: A Well-Maintained Transport Network

Whilst it is accepted that the transport network maintenance is thorough, there is always room for further enhancement.

Objective: Support Sustainable Development

Whilst ETC does not expect any major development within its boundaries, the delivery of off-site infrastructure is required to support new strategic development, preferably before the site has large scale occupation and certainly before developers complete their sales.

Theme 3 - Reduce environmental impacts**Objective: High Quality Travel Corridors**

Earley is well served with bus routes to Reading town centre along Wokingham Road and from the central belt along Rushey Way. However, getting to Wokingham from the western and southern areas is problematic. Whilst the 19s are useful, but rather circuitous set of three routes serving Woodley and parts of Lower Earley, the frequency is low. A better interchange at the Royal Berkshire Hospital with increased routes and improved waiting facilities would be good.

A significant issue at Earley railway station is the lack of accessibility to the London bound platform. Currently, the level of usage at the station does not meet Network Rail's criteria for installing lifts like Wokingham and Bracknell stations, but this is a needed facility at Earley station to make train travel more accessible.

Objective: Net zero carbon emissions

It is likely that Earley has a high proportion of residents working from home (WFH) and in some areas highspeed broadband has limited availability, which needs improvement. In considering the wider context of social cohesion, increasing WFH numbers, this needs to be balanced to ensure good leisure and public transport facilities for a better work/life balance.

The reduction of total traffic movements is a very noble aspiration, but this must be a very long-term objective. In the short term, there needs to be significant improvement to traffic flow, as flowing traffic produces far less pollution than traffic queues and stop/start traffic. These improvement could be through the use of more intelligent and agile automated traffic management systems, at existing interchanges.

Currently Earley has very limited WBC sponsored EV charging stations and ETC would welcome extension to such networks. It is highly noticeable how the Tesla Supercharger location at Mill Lane has increased utilisation, as EV ownership expands.

Objective: Clean air, removal of all air quality exceedances

ETC welcomes all actions to improve air quality through transition to zero emission vehicles and keeping traffic flowing smoothly. Obviously, this is challenging with the M4 and A3290 crossing the area.

This concludes the comments of Earley Town Council.

Dated 07.02.2024