

Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan Consultation Response from Transport for the South East

1. Introduction

1.1 This document is the draft Transport for the South East (TfSE) response to the consultation on Bracknell Forest Council's Local Transport Plan. This is a draft officer response that will be presented to our Partnership Board on 27 January 2025 for their approval. A further iteration may therefore follow.

1.2 TfSE is a sub-national transport body (STB) for the South East of England. Our principal decision-making body, the [Partnership Board](#), brings together representatives from our 16 constituent local transport authorities, district and borough authorities, protected landscapes, business representatives, Highways England, Network Rail and Transport for London.

1.3 We have a vision led [Transport Strategy](#) in place to influence government decisions about where, when and how to invest in our region to 2050. This strategy is currently in the process of being refreshed with a draft copy of the revised strategy out for consultation until 7 March 2025.

1.4 Our [Strategic Investment Plan](#) provides a framework for delivering our Transport Strategy setting out transport infrastructure and policy interventions needed in our region over the next three decades.

1.5 TfSE welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation. We trust that our response will provide value to the work of Bracknell Forest Council Council but also form the basis for further engagement, especially on the refresh of our transport strategy throughout 2025. Specifically, we are keen to establish a 'golden thread' in policy terms so that Bracknell Forest – as well as other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) – are able to achieve their own goals whilst playing a significant role in achieving our wider vision for the South East.

2. Vision and Objectives

2.1 The Bracknell Forest LTP Vision shows a fair degree of alignment with the 2050 Vision set out in TfSE's existing Transport Strategy. The degree of alignment between the economic social and environment dimensions of the two Visions is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Alignment between the Bracknell Forest LTP Vision and the 2050 vision in TfSE's adopted Transport Strategy.

Bracknell Forest LTP Vision	TfSE Transport Strategy Vision
“To develop a sustainable 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.”	By 2050, the South East of England will be a leading global region for net-zero carbon, sustainable economic growth where integrated transport, digital and energy networks have delivered a step-change in connectivity and environmental quality. A high-quality, reliable, safe and accessible transport network will offer seamless door-to-door journeys enabling our businesses to compete and trade more effectively in the global marketplace and giving our residents and visitors the highest quality of life.

2.2 The Bracknell Forest LTP Vision does not make reference to ‘integration’ or ‘improved connectivity’. However, the different transport modes will need to be better integrated if Bracknell Forest LTP Vision is to be achieved. For that reason, we would recommend inclusion of the word ‘integrated’ in the first sentence of the LTP Vision. In the ‘Scene Setting’ section of the LTP reference is made to the strong strategic road and rail connectivity that Bracknell Forest enjoys to external destinations that anchors it as a ‘vital economic hub’. In view of this we would recommend that reference be made to ‘improved connectivity’ in the Vision.

2.3 A comparison of the objectives of the Bracknell Forest LTP with the fifteen Strategic Priorities of TfSE’s Transport Strategy is set out in Table 2. This demonstrates good alignment with 12 of TfSE’s 15 strategic priorities aligning with 8 of the 12 Bracknell Forest LTP objectives.

Bracknell Forest LTP Objectives	TfSE Transport Strategy Strategic priorities
Sustainable Travel, enhancing safety and creating inclusive places	
Objective 1.1: Establish inclusive access for all across our transport network	An affordable, accessible transport network for all that promotes social inclusion and reduces barriers to employment, learning, social, leisure, physical and cultural activity.
Objective 1.2: Improve usage of active travel networks	A network that promotes active travel and active lifestyles to improve our health and wellbeing.
Objective 1.3: Create safer roads and lower instances of road traffic accidents	A safely planned, delivered and operated transport network with no fatalities or serious injuries among transport users, workforce or the wider public.
Objective 1.4: Deliver high-quality public realm, supporting safe and connected communities	
Support a thriving and connected economy	
Objective 2.1: Create a transport network to support economic growth, and sustainable	Better connectivity between our major economic hubs, international gateways

access to employment, education and skills training	<p>(ports, airports and rail terminals) and their markets.</p> <p>More reliable journeys for people and goods travelling between the South East's major economic hubs and to and from international gateways .</p>
Objective 2.2: Embrace new technologies that enhance the quality and efficiency of transport networks and deliver a positive user experience	A 'smart' transport network that uses digital technology to manage transport demand, encourage shared transport and make more efficient use of our roads and railways
Objective 2.3: Support the effective movement of freight across a variety of transport modes	
Objective 2.4: Effectively manage our highway assets in a sustainable way	
Provide a green and sustainable environment	
Objective 3.1: Support decarbonisation of our transport network	A reduction in carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, at the latest, and minimise the contribution of transport and travel to climate change.
Objective 3.2: Reduce dependence on private car travel and enhance modal choice for all	<p>A seamless, integrated transport network with passengers at its heart, making it simpler and easier to plan and pay for journeys and to interchange between different forms of transport.</p> <p>A reduction in the need to travel, particularly by private car, to reduce the impact of transport on people and the environment.</p>
Objective 3.3: Ensure our local transport network protects and enhances the local environment, biodiversity, and air quality	<p>A transport network that protects and enhances our natural, built and historic environments</p> <p>Use of the principle of 'biodiversity net gain' (i.e. development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before) in all transport initiatives.</p> <p>Improved air quality supported by initiatives to reduce congestion and encourage further shifts to public transport.</p>
Objective 3.4: Encourage the uptake of zero and low emission vehicles	

2.4 The three TfSE strategic priorities that are not encompassed within any of the Bracknell Forest LTP objectives are as follows:

- A transport network that is more resilient to incidents, extreme weather and the impacts of a changing climate.
- A more integrated approach to land use and transport planning that helps our partners across the South East meet future housing, employment and regeneration needs sustainably.
- Minimisation of transport's consumption of resources and energy.

2.5 Network resilience is becoming an increasingly important issue given the impacts of climate change and we would recommend that objective 2.4 be amended to include the phrase 'to improve network resilience'. As a unitary authority, Bracknell Forest Borough Council has the opportunity to deliver a more integrated approach to transport and land use planning. This will be important in achieving a number of the objectives of the Bracknell Forest LTP and would be worthy of inclusion as an additional objective.

2.6 The four objectives of the LTP which do not align with any of TfSE's strategic priorities are as follows:

- Objective 1.4: Deliver high-quality public realm, supporting safe and connected communities;
- Objective 2.3: Support the effective movement of freight across a variety of transport modes;
- Objective 2.4: Effectively manage our highway assets in a sustainable way; and
- Objective 3.4: Encourage the uptake of zero and low emission vehicles;

As a Sub-national Transport Body, TfSE does not have a role in the development and delivery of public realm initiatives nor the management of highway network and hence these aspect of a local transport authority's role are not reflected in TfSE's strategic priorities. However, TfSE's strategic priorities do include reference to the need for improved integration between transport and land use planning which will help support the delivery of a number of the LTP objectives. On supporting freight movement and encouraging the uptake of zero emissions vehicles, TfSE has active workstreams on both these issues as part of its ongoing technical work programme.

3. Other Comments

3.1 Although the primary role of an LTP is to guide transport investment and policy in the area covered by a local transport authority, it is important that it takes account of the relationship with the wider geographical area in which it exists. This is particularly important for an area such as Bracknell Forest that is closely interlinked with neighbouring areas via strategic regional corridors such as the M3 and M4. The Draft LTP includes maps showing Bracknell Forest in context of the South East and the strategic road and rail network connections. However there is no reference to the role of any strategic transport improvements outside Bracknell Forest, that may be needed to improve connectivity to the area. In addition, there is no reference to any joint working with the other Berkshire authorities to help secure these improvements. We are also disappointed to see that there is no reference to the role of TfSE in identifying the strategic infrastructure proposals that will benefit Bracknell Forest and its neighbouring Berkshire authorities as set out in our Strategic Investment Plan.

3.2 Although we are grateful for the extension that has been allowed to prepare this response, the request for an extension was necessitated by the very short timescale that had been allowed for the consultation (25 November to 30 December) which also concluded in the Christmas Break. We would respectfully request that more time is allowed for similar consultation exercises in the future.

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