

West Berkshire Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy

November 2014



West Berkshire
COUNCIL

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1 Introduction and Overview

1.0.1 - Freight is an important issue in West Berkshire. The Freight Strategy is West Berkshire's vision for balancing the requirement for efficient distribution of goods around the District with the social and environmental effects of freight movement over the period of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) to 2026. It builds upon the Freight Strategy developed for the previous Local Transport Plan 2006/7-2010/11.

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 - As the nation's economy and population will continue to grow over future years, so too is it likely that the UK's demand for goods and its transport will increase. The movement of freight critically enables people to access the goods and services they need and helps support local businesses. Therefore, freight can be seen to have an important role in helping to maintain the economic vitality of the local economy of West Berkshire.

1.1.2 - National Travel Statistics indicate that the movement of goods has increased notably in the last 30 years and that a large proportion of this increase is attributable to the movements of goods by road. It can be considered therefore, that in most cases, road transport currently appears to be the most efficient and effective means of transporting goods. Transportation by more sustainable modes, such as water and rail, will in all likelihood, still require further onward transport by road to reach the final destination (e.g. to supermarkets in towns, to farms, to local businesses, from local minerals extraction sites).

1.1.3 - Movement by road however, particularly where the existing road networks are already well used and trafficked, can create and add to problems like congestion, have road safety implications, and harm the environment and quality of life of an area. Complaints made by local communities regarding vibration, intrusion, noise and air pollution are commonplace across many areas of the UK as well as the perceived and actual damage by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) to certain roads and the volume and size of such vehicles on many rural roads. Within West Berkshire these concerns are replicated across many parts of the District but with a particular emphasis on rural communities.

1.1.4 - Freight movement and how it is routed therefore has implications for not just the national and strategic road networks but the communities and areas that the networks pass through or use. West Berkshire has an extensive network of secondary and tertiary roads which generally act as distributor roads from the main highways to locations within the District. On occasions these roads are used by through HGV traffic and are a source of negative impacts and concerns on communities and the environment, and potentially a source of danger where roads are unsuitable.

1.1.5 - In this context, balancing the needs of businesses and consumers alongside our aims to protect the environment in which we live clearly presents a number of challenges. Freight policies and strategic plans together with their implementation and delivery are needed to help protect our environment and communities whilst ensuring freight can move efficiently with limited adverse effect and disruption to all users.

1.1.6 - This Freight Strategy has been produced to reflect the severe financial situation facing the Council and other public bodies at the time of writing. It is considered extremely unlikely, especially in the shorter term, that there will be considerable investment in freight-related infrastructure and measures given the need for the Council to make difficult decisions regarding its future work programmes and investment priorities.

1.2 Structure of the Document

1.2.1 - The following chapter considers the national and local policy context surrounding freight issues, including how the Council works with neighbouring authorities and other partners. The document then looks at the freight movements and networks in West Berkshire and the constraints that exist in managing these. This is followed by a consideration of sustainable freight movement in the District and a look at the various issues relating to road freight and how this will be managed. Lastly an action plan with key timescales has been included to help guide implementation of the strategy.

1.2.2 - The main LTP document contains a proposal for review after the first six years of delivery (March 2017). It is therefore intended that this strategy will be similarly reviewed after six years (2020) unless any amendments are required as a result of significant changes to policy or processes in advance of this date.

2. National and Local Policy Context

2.0.1 - The development of this Freight Strategy has been largely guided by national policy and the Council's own Local Transport Plan. This chapter sets out the national and local policy context in relation to freight issues in West Berkshire and how these have shaped the contents of this strategy, which in turn supports the delivery of wider corporate and national policies.

2.1 National Policy

2.1.1 - The Government's current approach to transport is outlined in its White Paper "Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen" (2011). This sets out the Government's vision for a sustainable local transport system that supports its joint priorities of supporting the economy and reducing carbon emissions. However, whilst both of these priorities have linkages to freight, there are very few specific references relating to freight made in the document. There is some recognition of the importance of providing strategic infrastructure for long distance freight movements and reducing carbon emissions through encouraging modal transfer to rail or water modes and eco-driving training for HGV drivers.

2.1.2 - However, the Department for Transport (DfT) has also introduced other freight-related initiatives. These include the provision of freight grants for businesses to encourage them to transport freight by rail or water, the introduction of a HGV road user levy that seeks to ensure that both foreign and UK registered hauliers make a financial contribution to the public purse when using the UK's roads, and trialling the use of longer HGV semi-trailers. In addition the Office for Electric Vehicles provides grants to encourage the purchase of electric-powered light goods vehicles.

2.1.3 – The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the role that transport policies can have in terms of promoting sustainable transport. In particular, NPPF paragraph 30 considers that "encouragement should be given to solutions which support reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion. In preparing Local Plans, local planning authorities should therefore support a pattern of development which, were reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport." In terms of freight, this could include seeking to locate development close to rail and inland waterways and applying safeguarding policies to protect existing or potential rail freight sites from other forms of development.

2.2 Local Transport Plan 2011-2026

2.2.1 - The Council's third LTP contains a series of policies that have been developed to help deliver the plan's overall vision for transport in West Berkshire, its local transport goals, and transport visions for each of the four areas of the District. In total the LTP contains 15 key policies that cover the main elements of transport with a number of supporting policies that pick up on more detailed topics.

2.2.2 - In terms of freight this is covered by its own key policy (*as outlined below*):

Policy LTP K12

Freight

The Council will work with its partners, businesses, and hauliers to develop more sustainable distribution practices that support the needs of the District's economy and minimise the impact on local communities and the environment. To achieve this, the Council will seek to manage freight movements within, to/from, and through the District by:

- I. Developing and promoting the West Berkshire Freight Route Network (which defines approach routes for HGV use) and working with partners to reduce HGV movements on inappropriate routes including in the vicinity of Air Quality Management Areas.
- II. Enforcing weight, width, and height restrictions on the local highway network.
- III. Opposing any proposals for increases in permitted sizes and weights of HGVs.
- IV. Encouraging sustainable freight transportation by rail or water.

2.2.3 - Policy LTP K12 covers the main freight issues that affect the local highway network and which are of greatest concern to local communities in West Berkshire. It also outlines the means by which the Council will seek to manage freight movements that have business in or pass through the District. In addition to the freight-specific policy, the effective management of freight will have a contributory role in the delivery of other LTP key policies as outlined in the table below;

The Role of Freight in other LTP Key Policies

LTP Key Policy	Role of Freight
LTP K2 – Minimising Congestion	Route management through the Freight Route Network and use of Traffic Management measures such as direction signing and traffic regulation orders.
LTP K6 – Air Quality	Appropriate routeing of freight can help to mitigate air pollution in Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs).
LTP K8 – Road Safety	Improved driver awareness of vulnerable users. Appropriate routeing of HGVs.
LTP K11 – Parking	Town centre loading restrictions. Overnight lorry parking facilities.
LTP K15 – Cross Boundary & Partnership Working	Effective communication of the Freight Route Network with the freight industry. Linking to freight networks of neighbouring highway authorities

LTP Implementation Plan

2.2.4 - The Council is required to produce an Implementation Plan (IP) to support the delivery of the LTP. This covers shorter term timeframes than the long-term LTP strategy document and is updated on an annual basis. The main focus of the IP is to outline the transport related schemes and projects that the Council intends to deliver to support the LTP. It looks at all capital and revenue funding available to the Council from a variety of funding sources.

2.2.5 - A major component of the IP is a set of tables which aim to bring together schemes and projects from the Council's Capital Programme, Service Plans, and team work programmes. It includes details of measures and initiatives undertaken by the Council to help improve freight access or to restrict freight movements. Further freight related measures will be fed into future versions of the IP as and when they are developed and providing funding sources have been identified.

2.3 Other Local Policy Documents

2.3.1 - The LTP's timeframe is consistent with that of the Council's Local Plan Core Strategy, which outlines a series of policies to influence development in the District. In terms of freight the Core Strategy seeks that the location of new B2 and B8 employment uses should be in areas with good access to major road and freight route networks. In addition, Policy CS13 (Transport) recognises the Council's adopted Freight Route Network (FRN), specifying that development which results in freight movements, including construction traffic, should take the FRN into consideration.

2.3.2 - The transport of minerals and waste associated with sites located in the District also has clear linkages with this Freight Strategy. The Council is currently in the process of developing its own Minerals and Waste Local Plan (MWLP) document. The Council's FRN and the proximity of potential sites to appropriate freight routes will be an important consideration in determining potential new minerals and waste sites in the new MWLP.

2.4 Cross-boundary and Partnership Working

2.4.1 - There are of course many influences outside the administrative boundary of West Berkshire that affect freight movements. Joint working with neighbouring local authorities will therefore be crucial in terms of the successful delivery of this strategy. To this end West Berkshire will continue to work collaboratively with adjoining local authorities on cross-border freight matters and with the other Berkshire Unitaries through the Berkshire Strategic Transport Forum. Cross boundary working includes for instance, making representations where appropriate on planning applications outside of the District's boundary where predicted freight movements are likely to have an undue impact on West Berkshire, or ensuring that the advisory freight route network is complementary with similar networks promoted by neighbouring local authorities.

2.4.2 - Further partnership working with freight operators and their national associations, the Highways Agency (HA), motorway service station operators, Thames Valley Police, and local town and parish councils will also be essential to assisting in the successful delivery of this strategy.

3. Current Freight Issues in West Berkshire

3.1 What are the freight movements in West Berkshire?

3.1.1 - Freight movements are defined as being strategic through traffic or local freight. Predominantly for West Berkshire these movements are road based and little currently is transported within the District by other modes such as by rail and waterways. There are however opportunities for the use of alternative means which this strategy aims to encourage.

3.1.2 – In terms of road freight, strategic through traffic refers to HGV movements which pass through the District, whereas local freight refers to HGV or light goods vehicle trips with an origin or destination within the District's boundary. Most of the local freight movements are made by road which includes vehicles serving shops, local businesses, and agricultural industries, as well as smaller goods vehicles making multi-drop deliveries. These also include many movements made by light vehicles, which has grown significantly in recent times following the increasing trend towards internet shopping and home deliveries.

3.1.3 - Large volumes of strategic freight, mainly bulk aggregates and deep sea containers, are moved by rail through the District. In addition, there are aggregates and petroleum distribution terminals located off the Berks and Hants line at Wigmore Lane, Theale. This railhead handles significant tonnages and volumes and is considered to be of strategic importance to mineral provision and to the supply of petroleum in West Berkshire and surrounding areas. Aside from the rail network, little if any commercial freight is currently moved via the waterways.

3.1.4 - Although West Berkshire is predominantly rural in character, there are concentrations of businesses and freight generators located in and around the urban areas of Newbury, Thatcham, and Theale, as well as along the A4 corridor between Thatcham and Theale. There are also areas of retail activity, more notably in and around Newbury and at Calcot, and in the other town centres, which all require regular servicing and deliveries. In general the commercial facilities are small and industrial although there are several warehousing and distribution businesses located at Colthrop in Thatcham and at New Greenham Park south of Newbury, plus AWE Aldermaston. These are located where there is good access to major roads and freight routes outlined in the Council's Freight Route Network.

3.1.5 - West Berkshire itself is therefore not a huge generator of freight traffic. However the District is strategically located at a major crossroads between national East-West and North-South freight movements with the result that high volumes of freight pass through West Berkshire on the M4, A34, and Great Western Mainlines dominating local traffic in volume terms.



3.1.6 - In terms of the District itself, being predominantly rural, there are a number of smaller industrial and distribution businesses located in former farm units or airfields which have grown to generate notable volumes of freight. Membury Industrial Estate is one such example. Additionally West Berkshire's racehorse and agricultural associated industries located mainly in the rural areas also generate significant volumes of freight movements. Most of these movements are likely to be associated with delivery and maintenance of farms and stock such as animal feed, horse boxes and movements of agricultural machinery and livestock; all of which are essential for the day to day running of West Berkshire's farming and equine industries.



3.1.7 - Due to the rural location of many of these businesses, freight movements to and from these areas is perceived by local residents as having a noticeable impact, since in general most of the roads used to access these places are neither designed nor suitable for freight movements, and pass through many rural communities and villages. These freight movements comprise a large majority of the local freight movements in West Berkshire.

3.1.8 - In addition to small business, farms and agricultural industries, there are a number of gravel extraction industries and mineral workings within the rural area of the District. These mineral deposits and workings are generally located along the

Kennet Valley. In 2012, 234,000t of primary mineral was extracted from within West Berkshire with a further 289,000t of secondary and recycled aggregate being generated in the District. This may result in a higher number of HGVs using the highway network in the vicinity of active minerals and waste sites.

3.2 What is the current Freight Network?

3.2.1 - West Berkshire is bisected by the north/south A34 trunk road and east/west by the M4. These two highways form part of the national Strategic Road Network managed and maintained by the Highways Agency and carry the vast majority of freight traffic passing through the District.

3.2.2 - Access to West Berkshire is also provided by the A4 from Reading and Hungerford, the A339 from Basingstoke, the A338 Wantage to Salisbury Road, and the A340 from Basingstoke to Aldermaston and on to Pangbourne and from the M4. These roads also play a small role in carrying through traffic not catered for by the Strategic Road Network.

3.2.3 - West Berkshire has an extensive network of secondary and tertiary roads which act as distributors from the main highways to locations within the District. On occasions these roads may be used by through traffic. This can result in having negative impacts on communities and the environment as well as being a source of danger where roads are unsuitable.

3.2.4 - To help better manage road freight movements in the District and to minimise the numbers of through freight movements on the local road network the Council adopted its Freight Route Network in 2009. Further details on the Freight Route Network are outlined in section 5.1.

3.2.5 - Analysis of Highways Agency traffic data for 2013 indicates that the Strategic Road Network carries the majority of HGV traffic in West Berkshire with HGVs accounting for an average of 14.9% of total traffic flows on the M4 and 16.7% of total traffic flows on the A34. This equates to approximately 13,000 and 9,000 HGVs respectively using the M4 and A34 in West Berkshire every day.

3.2.6 - Due to the District's location on the SRN, its local industries, and regulations restricting lorry drivers' hours, there is a high demand for overnight lorry parking within the District. This has led to vehicles parking in laybys and on roads in industrial estates, as well as at parking facilities at the motorway service stations. The Council has undertaken a review of overnight lorry parking, which is discussed further in section 5.3.

3.2.7 - West Berkshire has three railway lines running through the District. The major route through the District is the Berks and Hants line running between Reading and Taunton. This route is heavily used by aggregate trains moving between the Mendip quarries and London and the South East, sharing the line with long distance and regional passenger trains. The petroleum and aggregates railhead at Theale is also located on this line.

3.2.8 - The Reading to Basingstoke line cuts through the eastern edge of the District, along with the Reading to Didcot mainline cutting through the northern part. Both railway lines are also heavily used for freight movements in addition to their passenger services, most notably in terms of the large volumes of container traffic passing through Reading and Basingstoke en route to or from the Port of Southampton. Further details on this route can be found in Section 4.1.

3.2.9 - West Berkshire has two key waterways within its borders - the Kennet and Avon Canal, which links Bristol with Reading and the River Thames, which also provides navigable links to other canals such as the Grand Union to the east and the Oxford Canal to the north.

3.3 What are the constraints to managing the volume of road freight?

3.3.1 - The majority of constraints to managing the levels of road freight arise from West Berkshire's strategic location on a major crossroads between east/west and north/south freight movements. As a consequence many freight movements neither have an origin or destination in the District itself. This reduces the influence that the authority can place on partnership working with freight users in order to encourage more responsible freight routing or to promote alternative means of moving freight by road.

3.3.2 - Utilisation of inland waterways may be suitable where low time sensitive freight to be moved is located adjacent to the canal, such as gravel beds and where destination is also very near to the canal or River Thames. Some opportunities may exist to utilise the Kennet & Avon Canal for transporting gravel from adjacent gravel pits or for waste transfer, but these would appear to be limited at the present time.

3.3.3 – The location of three motorway service stations in the District means that there is a good supply of formal lorry parking spaces on the SRN in West Berkshire, However lorry parking surveys undertaken by the DfT in 2011 and by the Council in 2012 both show that despite this provision, plenty of informal overnight lorry parking regularly occurs in lay-bys on both the Strategic and local road networks and on roads within industrial estates.

3.3.4 - Overnight lorry parking away from formal lorry parking areas is however viewed as a key issue by many parish councils because parking on street or in lay-bys is often regarded as being undesirable, especially when this occurs close to or within residential areas. It can also lead to increased levels of crime and environmental problems such as litter and public health concerns. Further details on lorry parking in the District can be found in section 5.3.

4. Sustainable Distribution

4.0.1 - The encouragement of freight by sustainable means (i.e. by rail and water) as an alternative to road would be environmentally less damaging in terms of reducing the length of road-based freight journeys on the District's road network, particularly through local communities. However it should be noted that the most rail or water based freight movements would need to start or end with a road based movement.

4.0.2 - LTP Policy K12 (Freight) seeks to encourage more sustainable distribution practices including the encouragement of freight transportation by rail and water. Although road freight is by the far the most dominant means of freight transport both nationally and locally there are several commodities, such as aggregates, deep-sea containers, petro-chemicals, metals, waste, coal, and bio-mass fuels that owing to their bulk can be effectively transported by rail (and due to the lack of wharf infrastructure within West Berkshire, water movements are currently more limited). However the development of such infrastructure would be generally supported to enhance the choice of sustainable transportation infrastructure in the District.

4.1 Rail Freight

4.1.1 - The location of West Berkshire in the national rail network highlights the potential for a large amount of rail based freight movements. At present, large volumes of aggregates originating from quarries in the Mendips are moved via the Berks and Hants line through the District to markets in London and the South East.

4.1.2 - Deep sea container trains also travel north/south between Southampton and the Midlands using the rail network in the east of the District on a daily basis. The number of these trains has increased over recent years owing to expansion in operations at the Port of Southampton plus a Network Rail scheme to increase gauge clearances along the route to allow larger containers to be hauled by rail. This market has the potential for further growth, although this may be constrained due to capacity constraints on the rail network, including where there is a competing demand on train paths between Oxford Road and Southcote junctions in the Reading area. The development of this strategic rail freight corridor is supported since it provides an alternative means of freight haulage to the large numbers of road-based container traffic that currently passes through the District on the A34 corridor.

4.1.3 – There are also rail freight aggregates and petroleum distribution terminals located at Wigmore Lane, Theale. The Council recognises the important economic value of this strategic rail freight site and will seek through planning policies as part of the development plan process to ensure that it is protected against unsuitable development.



4.1.4 - The industrial estates in the Colthrop and Thatcham areas and the municipal waste facility at Padworth all lie adjacent to the main Reading to Newbury railway line and were in the past connected to the rail network. In some instances remnants of former railway infrastructure remain in place which may in theory allow a new rail connection to be provided (although the engineering

works required to achieve this are likely to be at a substantial cost). West Berkshire will work with Network Rail to ensure that any further changes to rail infrastructure take into account any potential rail freight use and work with rail operators and local businesses to monitor and support proposals for reinstating freight access should opportunities arise.

4.1.5 Details on how the Council will seek to protect existing rail freight sites and seek to further encourage sustainable distribution are included in the Action Plan (ref FAP2).

4.2 Waterborne Freight

4.2.1 - There are two sections of navigable waterways in West Berkshire. The first, the Kennet and Avon canal crosses east/west through the District from Reading through Newbury and Hungerford and continues through Wiltshire and onwards towards Bristol. The second is the River Thames around Purley, Pangbourne, and Streatley.

4.2.2 – Today these waterways are used almost exclusively by leisure and tourism activities with little if any commercial waterborne freight, although they could theoretically provide opportunities for the transfer of low time sensitive goods such as minerals and waste. However, any potential increase in movements on the inland waterways, particularly from larger craft, may result in disturbance to wildlife sites and cause operational and safety issues with the large numbers of leisure users, which will need to be taken into account when assessing any future proposals.

4.3 Freight Consolidation

4.3.1 – Sustainable distribution can also include freight consolidation measures as a means of influencing freight movements in urban areas to help manage the impacts arising from servicing town centres, such as increased air pollution, noise, and congestion. Freight consolidation involves large volumes of goods being transported to a warehousing facility on the edge of large settlements, where part loads are then consolidated and distributed by smaller vehicles to premises in urban centres thereby resulting in fewer larger vehicles requiring access. Retailers can also potentially benefit through maximising retail floor space as result of being able to store goods off site.

4.3.2 – The Council will investigate the feasibility of developing a freight consolidation centre to serve Newbury town centre (see Action Plan ref FAP4) as a means of contributing towards improving town centre congestion and air quality. This will include the development of a robust business case to determine the viability for such a facility as well as a demonstrable commitment from town centre businesses to use it.

4.3.3 – In addition to Freight Consolidation, there are other potential options for improving urban deliveries that can help reduce larger vehicles entering urban areas, particularly during times when congestion regularly occurs. This could include investigating the suitability of developing Delivery and Servicing Plans to help customers plan their delivery and servicing activity. These plans could include retiming deliveries so that they are able to take place at a less congested times out of hours. However, such measures will need to take into account any potential impact or disturbance on local residents. Therefore the Council will look at how quiet out-of-hours deliveries could be achieved.

5. Road Freight

5.0.1 - The overwhelming majority of freight movements in the District are made by road. Although it is right for this strategy to maintain aspirations to further develop sustainable distribution, it is important to recognise that road freight will continue over future years to have the greatest role in terms of freight transport and distribution. Therefore the Council's freight policies and strategy will need to take into account the various issues and impacts relating to road freight and how these will be managed.



5.0.2 - Road freight plays an important part in both the national and local economy by providing the goods and services that underpin modern lifestyles. Businesses depend on the efficient distribution of goods and services to help maintain their economic competitiveness and to help the local economy. The growth in popularity in home-based shopping has also led to an increased demand for home deliveries, which require more access to residential streets.

5.0.3 - A description of the various freight networks within the District and the freight movements that take place on them are outlined in Chapter 3. This recognises that the road freight network is a mixture of the Strategic Road Network (for longer distance movements) and the local road network for movements to and from the main urban areas, as well as more local routes that provide a means of access to communities, farms, and businesses across the District. The use of the latter can often present problems of larger vehicles requiring legitimate access to places and using routes that are unsuitable for freight movements thus resulting in negative impacts on the environment, local communities and road safety.

5.0.4 - This then represents the challenge for the Freight Strategy to satisfy the requirements of businesses and the consumer whilst at the same time being mindful of the impact that road freight can have on local communities and the environment. The issues and measures outlined in this section represent how the Council considers it can best manage road freight movements in the District to maintain economic vitality but without undue negative impacts.

5.1 West Berkshire Freight Route Network

5.1.1 - The identification and implementation of a freight routing network was identified as a high priority delivery element in the previous LTP Freight Strategy. As a result the Council undertook a review of freight movements in the District and from this developed a draft freight route network which was sent out for public consultation in 2007. Revisions were made following the consultation and the network and its associated maps were formally adopted by the Council in February 2009.

5.1.2 - The 2009 West Berkshire Freight Route Network (FRN) as shown in Appendix A consists of a series of preferred freight routes that aim to show HGV drivers and businesses the most appropriate routes to use in the District. In addition there are two further detailed maps covering the Newbury/ Thatcham and the Calcot/Tilehurst areas. It should be noted that the routes in the FRN are advisory in nature and have been produced to help freight operators and drivers to plan their routes and deliveries in the District. The FRN maps also highlight the main locations for

overnight lorry parking in the District such as the Motorway service areas and larger lay-bys where there are no restrictions on overnight parking.

5.1.3 - The hierarchy of the freight routes shown on the FRN maps is as follows;

Strategic Lorry Routes: For through HGV movements based on the M4 and A34 passing through the District.

District Access Routes: The main access routes from the SRN to key freight destinations - largely based on the 'A' roads that provide access to the main areas of industrial and commercial activity.

Local Access Routes: Accesses to local sites only and are not intended for through HGV movements. Some of these routes may contain restrictions that further limit HGV movement. These comprise 'A' roads not on routes linking main industrial areas, 'B' roads, and some minor routes.

5.1.4 - The FRN maps also show those routes and local communities that are unsuitable for HGV traffic. These include the locations of signed width, height, and weight restrictions that prevent the use of HGVs, and those routes which are signed "Unsuitable for HGVs" (typically rural single track routes).

5.1.5 - At the time of writing, the FRN and maps are currently being refreshed. Feedback from the freight industry has indicated that the FRN maps are better-suited to being viewed on a map-based background that clearly indicates to lorry drivers which are the preferred routes, and what routes and locations are to be avoided.

5.1.6 - The review will include changes to the highway network that have occurred since the previous update to the FRN. This will include the advisory routing for HGVs to/from Newbury town centre following the opening of the Parkway development. There will also be an opportunity to look at providing more detail as part of the local routes to provide recommended means of access to more remote sites as well as information on loading areas in urban centres. As is the case with the current FRN the update will seek to ensure that where possible, there is consistency with similar freight route networks promoted by neighbouring local highway authorities.

5.1.7 - Once the update has been completed and approved, the revised FRN maps will be communicated to local operators and businesses and the wider road freight industry, as well as being freely available to download from the Council's website (see Section 5.2 below). The refresh of the FRN is included in the Action Plan (ref FAP5).

5.2 Managing Road Freight Movements

5.2.1 - The efficient distribution of freight by road and the impacts arising from such activities is determined in part by the suitability of the road network available for HGVs to use. The placement of too many restrictions on routes can result in drivers having to make long diversions in order to undertake deliveries thus resulting in higher fuel usage and costs, and increase carbon emissions. However there may be



instances where it would be desirable to better manage or restrict HGV movements and in this respect there are a number of ways that the Council is able to influence this.

Freight management issues are prioritised against other capital schemes and the solutions may include the following;

- Working with the road freight industry by agreeing voluntary routing arrangements and publicity of the Freight Route Network.
- Formalising agreed routes with companies as part of planning consents (including for construction traffic) and through Vehicle Operators Licences.
- Signing – Direction signs to industrial estates and for deliveries to town/village centres using the most appropriate route. “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs at identified locations where HGVs are using an inappropriate route due to the nature of the road. However the signing needs to be considered with regard to other direction signs and the need to reduce sign clutter.
- Publicly available dataset of all HGV related restrictions within West Berkshire.
- Structural weight restrictions - where a bridge or section of road has been assessed as being unable to safely carry vehicles exceeding a certain weight and must be protected by an appropriate weight limit.
- Environmental weight restrictions - where the effect of HGV’s using a length of road is having a negative effect on the community. The effects can include noise, vibration, safety, and pollution. Each route would need to be carefully assessed as there would be legitimate HGV use and consideration would need to be given to the alternative route.
- Enforcement of weight restrictions by the Council’s Trading Standards service.

5.2.2 – The Council does from time to time receive complaints from local communities regarding HGVs using unsuitable routes with the request that measures be put in place to restrict HGV movements. Following investigations and where appropriate (subject to available resources) potential solutions for these issues will be developed as outlined above. Future revisions to the Council’s Traffic Management policies in the Network Management Plan will set out the process that the Council will look to use to deal with local freight issues (see Action Plan ref FAP7).

Enforcement

5.2.3 – Traffic restrictions (such as weight restrictions) need to be enforced to ensure that they are adhered to. In West Berkshire the responsibility for this lies with Thames Valley Police, along with the Council through its Trading Standards service which is able to enforce weight restrictions. However enforcement of restrictions is often labour intensive. Therefore the Council will explore options for increasing weight restriction enforcement (see Action Plan ref FAP10).

Development Control Process

5.2.4 – Larger development proposals, including those for minerals and waste sites, that are likely to generate significant HGV movements (including during the construction stage) will be expected to include a Transport Assessment. This will need to outline the volumes and distribution of HGV trips generated by the proposed development and to demonstrate how the impact arising from these movements can be mitigated.



5.2.5 - The Council through its role as the local planning authority is able to use the planning and development control processes to manage the impact of HGV traffic arising from new development on the local highway network, communities, and the environment (see Action Plan ref FAP3). This can include ensuring that sites are located within good proximity of the SRN and the FRN and seeking that planning conditions and obligations are put in place to control lorry movements (e.g. specifying customised freight routing strategies for development and construction traffic and restricting hours of operation).

Air Quality

5.2.6 – Poor air quality as a result of pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NOX) and particulates matter can have a detrimental effect on people's health. The Council has a duty to monitor and review air quality throughout the District and to react accordingly to safeguard communities should pollutant levels exceed prescribed European Union and Government objectives. This monitoring has led to the declaration of an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) around the A339/A343/ Greenham Road junction in Newbury and subsequent development of an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to direct how the Council intends that air quality at this location is to be improved.

5.2.7 - The AQAP identifies that road traffic is the source of the poor air quality, particularly as a result of queuing traffic and the percentage of heavy vehicles passing through the junction. Further detailed assessments undertaken by the Council indicates that of the exceedances in the concentrations of NOX, 44% is attributed to heavy vehicles, and that a 9.8% reduction in NOX will be required in order to meet the prescribed air quality standards. The removal of a proportion of heavy vehicles would have the capability of delivering air quality improvements that would significantly contribute towards meeting the NOX annual mean objective.

5.2.8 - Therefore the Council will need to consider the routing of freight along the A339 through Newbury and in the wider area to look at ways in which the air quality problems in the AQMA can be mitigated. This will need to take into account a number of issues including the role of the A339 as a designated primary route between Newbury and Basingstoke, the access requirements of south Newbury and New Greenham Park, the suitability of any alternative routes, and cross border movements into Hampshire (see Action Plan ref FAP7).

Noise

5.2.9 – Freight movements can create noise disturbance to people living in close proximity to main freight routes or freight generating facilities and impact on the tranquillity of rural areas. Although it is difficult to eradicate noise problems associated with freight movements, the Council can where circumstances permit seek to influence or restrict delivery timings and freight movements in noise sensitive locations. Where noise problems occur, the Council can seek to improve to mitigate the impact through Noise Action Plans.

Provision of Information

5.2.10 - Although the Council can only produce advisory freight routes (other than were there is a defined restriction on the network) it is able to engage with the freight industry and provide information to operators and drivers to help enable them to plan their deliveries and to encourage the use of appropriate routes and overnight parking areas. As part of this approach the Council will look to develop the Freight Page on the Council's website to include freely available downloadable versions of the revised West Berkshire FRN maps and information on lorry parking areas. The revised FRN maps will also be forwarded to major businesses and freight operators who have interests in West Berkshire and to national road freight organisations for distribution to their members.

5.2.11 – In addition the Council will also look at exploring opportunities to provide information via other forms of information technology. This may include advisory information displayed on variable message signs and developing mobile phone applications that provides information on routing, parking areas and restrictions.

5.2.12 – Details regarding how the Council will seek to communicate the FRN and other freight information is contained in the Action Plan (ref FAP11).

5.3 Lorry Parking

5.3.1 - Lorry drivers are restricted under EU legislation to the amount of hours they can drive; all drivers must take a 45 minute break after a driving period not exceeding 4.5 hours and must take a rest break following a full driving day (e.g. overnight). Therefore, given the distances HGV drivers are required to travel and the governed speed of HGVs, drivers are often required to take mandatory breaks around origins, destinations, and at intermediate points on their route. Additionally drivers may also run out of hours owing to delays due to congestion, roadworks, or road traffic collisions and will therefore need to park up and take a statutory break.

5.3.2 - The District's position at the crossroads of the M4 and A34 strategic routes results in high volumes of road freight traffic passing through the area on a daily basis. In addition, the local economy of West Berkshire and the surrounding areas also generates large numbers of HGV movements. For example, this includes a number of supply chain and warehousing businesses located at Colthrop in Thatcham, New Greenham Park south of Newbury, and around Theale, plus construction materials processing and production sites along the A4 corridor in the Beenham area.

5.3.3 - The combination of these issues frequently results in high levels of overnight lorry parking on both the Strategic and local highway networks. Away from the Motorway service stations overnight lorry parking is an almost nightly occurrence in laybys and on roads in industrial estates. This in turn can contribute to other undesirable impacts such as increases in lorry-associated crime, litter, public health concerns, reduced road safety, and damage to highway infrastructure and verges. The Council has undertaken an assessment of the extent of lorry parking in the District both on the SRN and the local highway network, which has shown a need for the Freight Strategy to give greater consideration to lorry parking issues. Therefore to support this, a reference to the Council's position on lorry parking will be included as part of LTP Policy K12 when the LTP is refreshed in 2017 (see Action Plan ref FAP1).

5.3.4 - In terms of parking on the SRN, the three motorway service areas in the District provide around 294 lorry parking spaces with further spaces available at Tothill services on the A34 just south of the authority's boundary. In addition many lorries regularly park up overnight in the laybys on the A34. Both the DfT and Council parking surveys indicate whilst many drivers do use the designated lorry parking facilities at the motorway service stations, there is often spare capacity at each of the service areas.



5.3.5 - The lorry parking study also identified lorries parking at a number of locations on the local highway network although there is no formal lorry parking facility available away from the SRN. These locations include the Faraday Road Industrial Estate in Newbury, Colthrop Industrial Estate in Thatcham and at various laybys on the A4 between Colthrop and Theale, and on the A4 west of Newbury at Halfway. In particular, the Faraday Industrial Estate in Newbury is extremely popular with up to 30 lorries regularly parking overnight, and is within reasonable walking distance to facilities in the town centre. This overnight parking has been supported in the past by businesses in the Faraday Road area.

5.3.6 - The numbers of lorries parking overnight in the Newbury area suggests that consideration should be given to providing a facility in the local area that will allow overnight lorry parking. This issue may become more pertinent should proposals for the redevelopment of the Faraday Road area come to fruition as this is likely to result in lorries being unable to continue park overnight in this location. However, national evidence suggests that lorry parking is not an attractive commercial proposition owing to the size of the site required and that the development and running costs will far outweigh any financial return with other urban land uses offering far greater profitability. Furthermore, planning policies would prevent such development taking place on greenfield sites. Despite this opportunities will be sought through the Local Plan Site Allocations Development Plan Document to identify any suitable sites for lorry parking in the Newbury and Thatcham area (see Action Plan ref FAP9).

5.3.7 - The prevalence of overnight lorry parking away from the service areas, in lay-bys and on roads within industrial estates can also result in other impacts including reported incidences of lorry-associated crime relating to load or fuel theft. The Council, through the Safer Communities Partnership, will continue to work with Thames Valley Police to increase lorry drivers' awareness of the risks of HGV-related crime and to encourage greater use of the formal lorry parking facilities available at the motorway service stations (see Action Plan ref FAP8).

5.4 Satellite Navigation Systems

5.4.1 - Over recent years lorry drivers and hauliers have been making increasing use of satellite navigation systems to help their operations in making deliveries etc. These systems have the benefit of voice instructions, which can be easier to follow than paper-based maps or directions. However, the over reliance on these devices has led to problems in the past with lorry drivers following systems designed for car users and finding themselves routing onto unsuitable local routes. This can result in damage to properties and roadside verges and hedges, bridge strikes, and the use of routes subject to restrictions. In extreme cases this can result in vehicles becoming physically stuck on narrow roads.

5.4.2 - The road freight industry is acutely aware of these problems and has been working with satellite navigation system providers to develop freight-specific systems that can advise drivers of the most appropriate routes to use and importantly the locations of restrictions (such as height, weight, and width restrictions) which prevent HGV use. Furthermore there has been cross-sector working between national and local government, sat nav mapping providers, and the road freight industry to improve the take-up of freight-specific systems and to ensure that changes to road networks are updated on systems in a timely manner.

5.4.3 - The Council does not have much influence in encouraging operators and drivers to adopt and keep updated freight-specific systems. However there may be opportunities for the Council to work with satellite navigation system providers to ensure that their systems are readily updated when changes are made to the local road network. In addition the Council will also seek to work with the providers to promote the preferred freight routes identified in the West Berkshire FRN so that this is included in their products.

5.5 National Road Freight Transport Issues

5.5.1 - Previous government studies have looked into the possibility of allowing longer and heavier goods vehicles to be permitted to use the UK road network. In particular a study undertaken in 2008 underlined the Government's scepticism regarding the suitability of trialling 60 tonne 'superlorries' on the UK's roads. The Council was deeply concerned regarding the potential impact on highway safety of these vehicles, and at the time expressed its objection to Government to trials of these vehicles.

5.5.2 - However although the study did not allow the 'superlorries' trial to go ahead, there was also an indication that there could be worthwhile benefits from permitting a modest increase in length of current articulated trailers.

5.5.3 - West Berkshire's stance on increasing the permitted weight/length of HGVs is outlined in LTP Policy K12 (Freight), which states that the Council will oppose any proposed increases in permitted size or weight of HGVs. Therefore the Council will seek to make representation to oppose any future proposals for increasing permitted size or weight of HGVs should these be put forward (see Action Plan ref FAP12).

6. Action Plan

6.0.1 – The following Action Plan in Table 6.0 below has been developed to help focus delivery of the Freight Strategy and to take into account the limited funding that is likely to be available for freight measures during the course of the plan period.

Table 6.0 Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy Action Plan		
Ref	Description	Timescale
FAP1	Amend LTP Policy K12 (Freight) at next review of the main LTP strategy to take into account the Council's position regarding lorry parking.	2017/18
FAP2	To use the development plan process to protect the strategic rail freight site at Theale and to encourage development at other locations which may offer opportunities for sustainable distribution.	On-going
FAP3	Ensure that issues relating to freight routing agreements and controls (for both construction and delivery movements) are fully considered as part of the planning application process.	On-going
FAP4	To investigate the feasibility of a freight consolidation centre to serve Newbury town centre.	2016/17
FAP5	Refresh the Freight Route Network and associated maps to reflect changes on the local highway network and so that they are better suited to the needs of the freight industry whilst maintaining the need to protect local communities.	2014/15
FAP6	To develop a clear framework for the Council's Network Management Plan to outline the approach to be used for dealing with local freight issues.	2015/16
FAP7	Freight movements on the A339 through Newbury; i) Quantify the volume, type and origins & destinations of freight movements using the A339 through Newbury. ii) Investigate options for routing freight traffic away from the A339 through Newbury and the wider role of the A339 as a nationally designated Primary Route with Hampshire CC and Basingstoke & Deane BC. iii) Implement scheme for managing freight movements on the A339.	Summer 2014 2015 TBC
FAP8	Encourage greater use of motorway service areas for overnight lorry parking (through FRN maps, advisory signing and information).	On-going
FAP9	Explore options for suitable overnight lorry parking locations in the Newbury & Thatcham area.	2015/16
FAP10	Seek opportunities for increasing enforcement of weight restrictions.	On-going

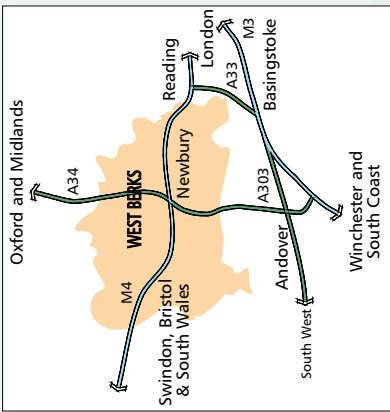
FAP11	<p>To communicate the Freight Route Network and other freight-related information by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Effectively promoting the refreshed Freight Route Network and maps with the road haulage industry and local businesses. ii) Establishing a bespoke Freight web page on the West Berkshire Council website with downloadable information such as FRN maps, lorry parking areas and details of weight, height and width restrictions. iii) Look at ways to develop electronic applications to assist with freight-related information provision. 	<p>2015</p> <p>2015/16</p> <p>Long term</p>
FAP12	<p>To continue to lobby DfT where appropriate on wider freight issues such as consistency in approaches to freight routing, satellite navigation systems, and changes to permitted sizes and weight of heavy goods vehicles.</p>	<p>On-going</p>

Appendix A

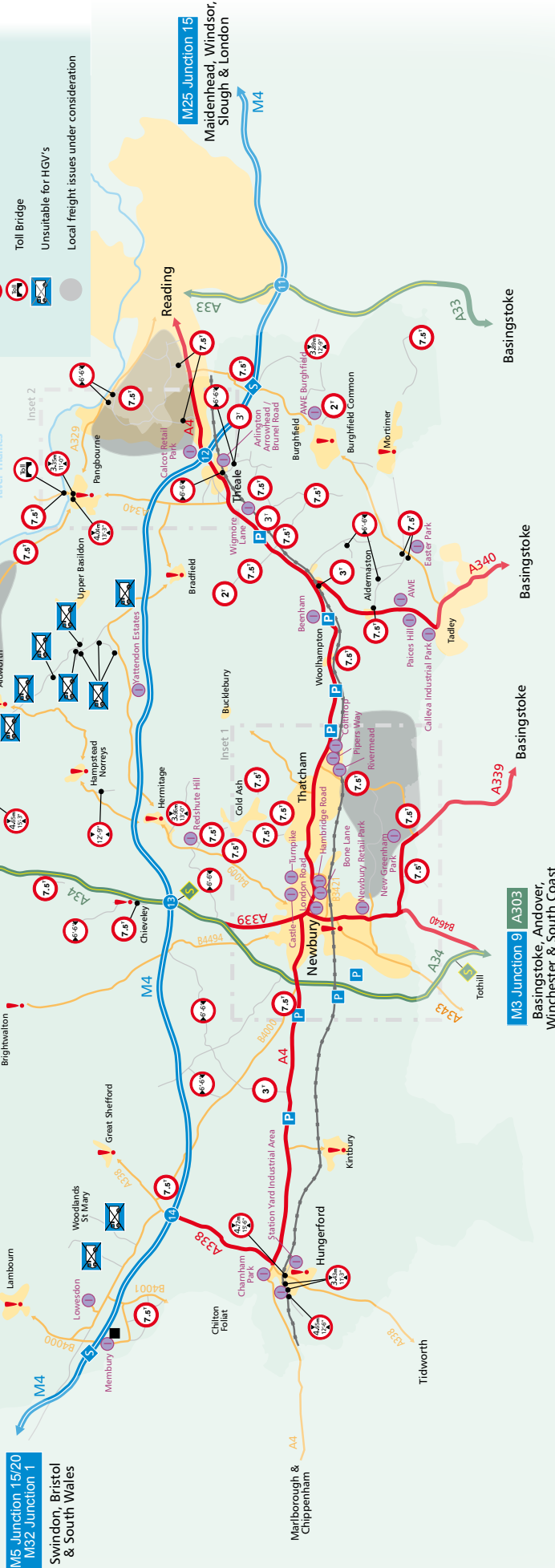
West Berkshire Freight Route Network Maps (Feb 2009)



Strategic Context Map

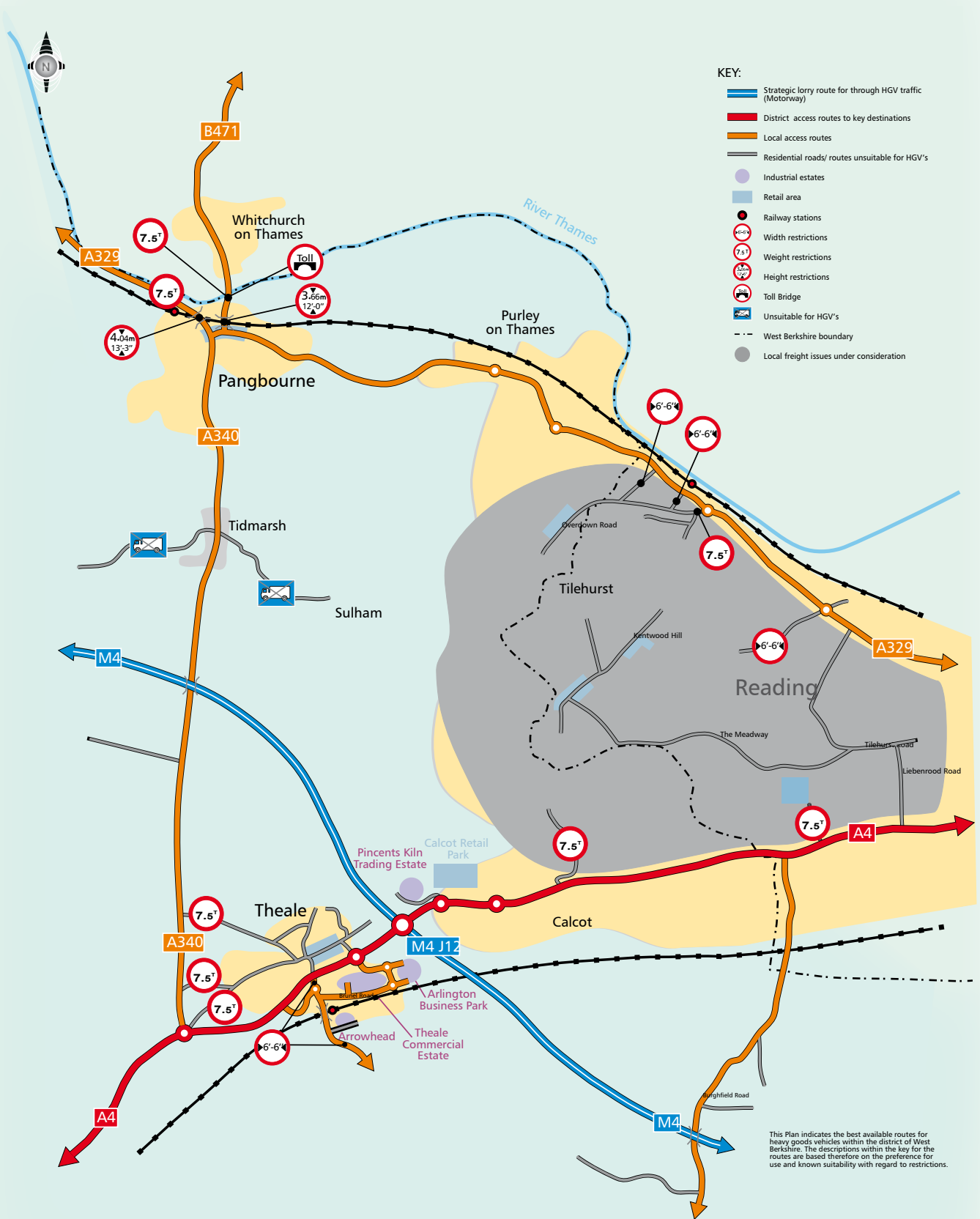


- KEY:**
- Strategic lorry route for through HGV traffic (Motorways and trunk roads)
 - District access routes to key destinations
 - Local access routes
 - Restricted routes/routes unsuitable for HGV's
 - Communities/Towns unsuitable for through HGV traffic
 - Key industry origin and destination
 - Motorway services (full access for HGV)
 - Other services (full access for HGV)
 - Layby permitting overnight parking 6 HGV's
 - Weigh bridge
 - Height restrictions
 - Width restrictions
 - Weight restrictions
 - Toll Bridge
 - Unsuitable for HGV's
 - Local freight issues under consideration



This Plan indicates the best available routes for heavy goods vehicles within the district of West Berkshire. The descriptions within the key, for the various routes, are intended to provide information on use and known suitability with regard to restrictions.

West Berkshire Freight Route Plan - February 2009



This Plan indicates the best available routes for heavy goods vehicles within the district of West Berkshire. The descriptions within the key for the routes are based therefore on the preference for use and known suitability with regard to restrictions.

If you require this information in an alternative format or translation, please call 01635 42400 and ask for Planning and Countryside.

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