

# The DfT's statutory guidance on Local Transport Plans

## April 2026

This is an unofficial print-friendly version of the DfT guidance. It is designed for ease of reference in PDF or printed form.

Every effort has been made to ensure that this version correctly reproduces the guidance (as published on 2 April 2026), but for critical matters, or for a fully accessible text, the original guidance itself should always be consulted at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-plans>.

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Statutory guidance

# Local transport plans

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Applies to England

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This statutory guidance is designed to help local transport authorities (LTAs) exercise their statutory duty to develop and deliver local transport plans (LTPs) by:

- setting out LTA statutory duties
- providing best practice guidance
- signposting to other helpful sources of information and guidance

This guidance is for local authorities in England outside London.

When this guidance refers to the current spending review, it means the spending review period from financial year ending (FYE) 2027 to FYE 2029 for day-to-day spending and FYE 2027 to FYE 2030 for capital investment.

# Introduction

'Local transport' covers all the journeys that people make in their local area and by all modes – from walking, wheeling and cycling to bus journeys and driving on the local road network.

Local transport is central to people's lives and plays a vital role across national and local objectives. Almost all journeys begin and end on local transport networks, with 70% of all journeys in England being under 5 miles in 2024.

Local transport networks are complex. They are part of a much wider system that includes housing, economic activity, access to education and public service provision. These things all need to work together and be considered in an integrated, holistic and place-based way to deliver maximum benefits for the greatest number of people. Local transport networks also play a vital role in supporting national transport networks.

Every place is unique and has different transport needs. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to transport, and what constitutes 'good' local transport will not look the same everywhere. This is why local government is so important.

Local government holds the knowledge and powers necessary to tailor transport infrastructure and service provision to local needs. From dense metropolitan areas to sparse rural villages, coastal communities and anywhere in between, local transport authorities (LTAs) understand their areas and are best placed to make decisions that reflect their unique characteristics and challenges, addressing the specific needs of the people and businesses in their area.

Local transport authorities (LTAs) are well placed to work with their communities, key stakeholders, infrastructure providers, neighbouring authorities and planning authorities to:

- plan the infrastructure needed to support and encourage sustainable growth and
- realise the transformative economic potential of transport in delivering on the government's [Plan for Change](#).

Good local transport will support other priorities in the Plan for Change, with good public transport enabling people to access education and other public services. Better active travel options will support people to make healthier choices, and a cleaner vehicle fleet will support the environment.

The government has set out its vision for domestic transport in England in '[Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport](#)', which is focused on creating a transport network that works well for people and is safe, reliable and accessible, so they can get on with life and easily make the journeys they need. Integrating transport is central to realising the ambition set out in the strategy and a local transport plan (LTP) should be an LTA's vision for integrated transport in its area.

## Local authorities' role in transport

In England (outside London), transport responsibilities vary from place to place, with responsibilities split between multiple authorities in some areas. Transport responsibilities are complex and evolving, particularly as the government's commitment to devolution is delivered and more strategic authorities are established.

LTA's have overall responsibility for local transport in their area, including responsibility for:

- local transport planning
- supporting bus services
- providing information on public transport

The LTA is either:

- the strategic authority or
- the county council or unitary authority in areas where there is no strategic authority

The local highway authority (LHA) is responsible for managing, maintaining and improving the local highway network. The LHA also acts as the local traffic authority. It has a duty to manage traffic to ensure its efficient movement and to reduce congestion on the local highway network.

The LHA may be the same as the LTA, or it may be a different local authority, depending on local circumstance:

- in areas with a strategic authority, the LHA is a metropolitan district council, county council or unitary authority
- in areas without a strategic authority, the LHA is the county council or unitary authority, which will also be the LTA

Under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) the LTA has a duty to produce an LTP. LTPs are an important part of an LTA's role in delivering high quality local transport for their areas to boost growth, opportunities and connectivity.

Under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament, all constituent councils of a strategic authority would have a duty to implement the policies contained within a strategic authority's LTP when carrying out its functions. For example, when carrying out its highways functions.

## What a local transport plan should do

An LTP should clearly set out the LTA's local transport policies and how it will implement them. LTAs should adopt a vision-led or outcomes-focused approach in their LTPs. This means moving away from the 'predict and provide' model of transport planning, which aimed to forecast vehicle and transport need and then provide capacity to suit.

Instead, LTAs should develop LTPs in a vision-led way, by asking at the outset:

1. What outcomes do we want and need to achieve?
2. How will the scope of our transport evidence base and transport strategies combine to deliver them?
3. How are we prioritising and maximising sustainable transport options?

When developing these outcomes, LTAs should consider how they will support the national priorities for local transport set out by the government. This statutory guidance is designed to help LTAs exercise their statutory duty to develop and deliver LTPs by setting out LTA statutory duties, providing best practice guidance, and linking to other helpful sources of information and guidance.

Where this document refers to 'must', this means LTAs are required to include this in their LTP because it is either:

- linked to a statutory duty or
- linked to local transport funding provided by government
- related to a key priority set out in 'Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport'

Where this document refers to 'should', this means LTAs are expected to include in their LTP as this represents best practice and/or the government's objectives.

At times, this guidance refers to other guidance that is expected to be published later this year. This is intended to help LTAs plan their approach to LTP development and give them as much notice as possible of upcoming updates. The Department for Transport (DfT) will update the LTP guidance regularly to ensure it has the latest information to assist LTAs in their transport planning.

# Aligning local transport plans with other local strategies

An important part of a vision-led approach is alignment between transport planning and other strategies produced by the LTA. The vision set out in an LTP should be aligned with other local strategies including:

- the LTA's local growth plan (LGP) or equivalent local economic strategy
- the spatial development strategy (SDS)
- local plans

SDS and local plans must be in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

To support growth, LTAs should consider the following as part of their LTPs.

1. How people get to and from work, informed by evidence on travel to work areas. In many cases, the travel to work area boundary will be different to the LTA boundary and LTAs should consider the different needs of travel to work areas as part of LTPs.
2. How the LTP can support the delivery of a sufficient supply of homes.
3. How the LTP can support the transport needs of key growth-driving sectors in the area.
4. How the LTP can support the transport needs of a modern economy. This includes clusters and sites for knowledge and high technology and storage and distribution operations.
5. How the LTP can support the needs of children and young people getting to school or college.

To support the alignment of these strategies, the LTA should consider developing the LTP alongside its SDS and economic strategies at the same time. This will create a mutually supportive place-based framework, capable of unlocking the potential of transport to support growth.

Where other local authorities are responsible for these strategies, the LTAs should work with them to support the alignment of the LTP and other strategies.

LTPs should also provide the overarching transport strategy for their areas. LTPs should provide the strategic vision and context for other transport strategies, plans and schemes for the area including:

- bus service improvement plans
- bus network accessibility plans
- enhanced partnership or bus franchising scheme
- local cycling and walking infrastructure plans
- local electric vehicle charging infrastructure strategies
- rights of way improvement plans
- highways asset management policy and strategy

It is for LTAs to decide whether to include any of these other transport strategies within a single LTP document or as separate documents that sit under their LTPs.

Where local transport functions are split between different levels of local authorities, for example on local highways, the LTA should work closely with other local authorities in their area on the LTP and other transport strategies.

## **Local transport plan implementation**

Under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) the LTP must include local transport policies and the LTA's proposals for the implementation of these policies. LTAs may set out how they will implement policies in a single LTP document or as a separate plan document. While it is for the LTA to decide how best to set this out, it should ensure its implementation plan is aligned with any required scheme or financial reporting requirements.

For the current spending review period, LTAs have to set out how they plan to spend local transport funding through either local transport delivery plans or, for LTAs receiving an integrated settlement, outcome delivery plans.

As long as an LTA's spending plans are in line with the overall vision and strategy set out in the LTP, the department does not expect an LTA to update the LTP every time they update their local transport delivery plan or outcome delivery plan.

However, if an LTA's delivery plans are not in line with its LTP, then this is an indication that the LTP needs to be updated.

## **Duration of local transport plans**

The LTP must clearly set out the time period it covers. It is up to LTAs decide how many years an LTP should cover.

The LTP should take a long-term view of transport needs for the area of at least 10 to 20 years. LTAs should also consider aligning the time period of their LTP with other local strategies such as the spatial development strategy.

An LTA may also decide that parts of its LTP can cover shorter time periods. For example, the LTA may decide that while its LTP covers 20 years, its electric vehicle infrastructure charging strategy covers 5 years.

## Updating local transport plans

Under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) it is up to LTAs to update their LTPs as they see fit.

All LTAs must review this LTP guidance once published and determine whether their LTP should be updated.

At the time of publishing this guidance, some LTAs are in the process of updating their LTPs. These LTAs should take a proportionate approach to applying this new LTP guidance to their LTPs. LTAs should consider appropriate grounds to update LTPs, such as to align with strategic policy reviews including spatial development strategies and local plans, or where the strategic context otherwise changes in a way that merits a revision to the LTP.

Examples of situations where DfT would recommend that LTAs review and update their LTPs are:

- when the LTP should be updated before the specific time it covers expires
- when the LTAs plans to spend local transport funding are not in line with the policies in the LTP
- a development corporation has been established within the LTA's area
- a new town (or significant housing development) is planned within the LTA's area
- a large new development or scheme is planned within the LTA's area which will have a significant impact on local transport
- changes to airports and ports that would impact local transport within the LTA's area

# The new local transport funding model

The government is committed to simplifying funding for local authorities. As such, the department is reducing the number of local transport funding pots and moving towards providing multi-year, multi-modal transport funding settlements for LTAs. This additional flexibility will enable LTAs to prioritise the transport investment that their areas need as set out in their LTPs. The more simplified funding framework will also reduce administrative burdens on LTAs, meaning they will be able to use funding more effectively and efficiently.

As part of this new approach government has adopted an outcomes-based assurance framework. The government will set the local transport outcomes we want LTAs to achieve through the integrated settlement outcomes framework or the local transport outcomes framework, depending on an area's devolution settlement. These should be built into LTPs when identifying priorities and assessing which projects to deliver.

These outcome frameworks will be one of the ways the department will monitor LTA performance on local transport, along with reporting on local transport spend and scheme progress.

The department will not routinely review LTPs as part of this approach. However, if an area is not performing as expected based on these frameworks, the department may review their LTP as part of the overall assessment to determine what support the LTA needs. The department may also review LTPs to inform stakeholder engagement and policy development.

A simplified explanation of how the new local transport funding system will operate is set out below and covers the following steps:

- the government sets expectations through outcome frameworks
- the government sets out what funding is available
- LTAs set out their spending plans
- LTAs report to the government
- the government provides support to LTAs
- LTAs and the government carry out evaluation

## Setting expectations through outcomes frameworks

The department has set out the local transport outcomes it wants LTAs to achieve with transport funding through 2 different outcomes frameworks. The outcome framework that will be used will depend on the devolution status of the LTA.

Integrated settlement outcome frameworks – these have been agreed with each of the established mayoral strategic authorities and include local transport outcomes and targets they are expected to achieve.

Local transport outcome framework that will apply to all other LTAs – this framework sets out the local transport outcomes for these LTAs but does not include specific targets, instead, [LTAs' performance against a series of indicators will be used alongside wider metrics measuring progress against the local transport delivery plan](#), as part of the overall assessment of LTA performance.

The government has also launched a [local outcomes framework](#) which sets 16 national priority outcomes, including transport outcomes. Each outcome is underpinned by a set of

metrics to provide consistent and transparent data on outcomes at local authority level . These outcomes are aligned with the transport outcome frameworks.

## **Setting out what funding is available**

For the current spending review, the government has provided LTAs with simplified and consolidated funding for local transport.

Established mayoral strategic authorities (EMSAs) will receive an integrated settlement, providing a single cross-government funding settlement for several policy areas including transport and infrastructure.

Strategic authorities with a mayor will receive a mayoral transport fund, including funding for infrastructure and services across all modes (including for highways maintenance, active travel, bus, light rail and electric vehicle charging infrastructure). Other LTAs will receive the integrated transport fund, providing infrastructure funding for all modes and a separate bus services fund.

This new approach to consolidated local transport funding provides greater flexibility for LTAs to deliver on the government's local transport outcomes and local priorities.

LTAs will continue to receive funding for transport as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement, including funding for concessionary fares and for highways maintenance. LTAs are also able to use funding from other sources, such as developer contributions, to fund local transport. LTAs should consider all these sources of funding when developing their LTPs.

## **Setting out spending plans**

For this spending review period, LTAs that receive an integrated settlement are required to produce outcome delivery plans that set out their strategy and planned interventions to deliver the agreed outcomes. These plans should be published and kept up to date. This will facilitate transparency and scrutiny by local residents and kept up to date.

LTAs that do not receive an integrated settlement are required to set out how they will spend local transport funding in a local transport delivery plan (LTDP) that is provided to the department. This plan must set out how the LTA will use consolidated funding to achieve progress against the local transport outcomes framework.

The schemes and policies in an outcome delivery plan or local transport delivery plan should be aligned with the implementation proposals for an LTP. If an LTA's delivery plan is not in line with the policies set out in its LTP, then this is an indication that its LTP needs to be updated.

LTAs are responsible for ensuring that how they spend local transport funding is value for money. LTAs are accountable to local electorates through regular elections, scrutiny processes and public meetings. Their financial management is subject to external audit and statutory duties under the Local Government Act 1999, including the duty to deliver best value.

An LTA is also responsible for ensuring it has appropriate governance in place to oversee funding, and to ensure local accountability frameworks / local assurance frameworks (if required) are in place and functioning effectively. As part of the funding assurance

framework, an LTA's section 151 or 73 officer will be required to confirm that their local transport delivery plan represents value for money (VfM).

LTAs are responsible for undertaking assurance for all schemes. Under certain conditions schemes may be designated as 'retained' and subject to additional engagement with the department, which may include business case approvals.

This is to comply with departmental delegations set by HM Treasury and deliver against our responsibility for ensuring the effective management of public funding and integration between local and national transport networks. The department can also add value to retained schemes by providing wider expertise and experience in high value or riskier local projects.

The purpose of scheme retention is to:

- provide the government with assurance that value for money is being achieved, benefits realised and outcomes are being delivered
- enable the provision of department support, expert knowledge and assistance to LTAs to ensure they are set up for success
- ensure integration with national networks

The department will consider and notify LTAs which schemes are to be retained and the level of engagement and approval required from the department before the schemes can progress.

## **Reporting to the government**

The LTAs that receive an integrated settlement must provide reporting to the government on progress against the integrated settlement outcome framework.

The LTAs that do not receive an integrated settlement will be required to report on progress against the local transport outcomes framework and their LTDPs to department. LTAs must also provide reporting to the department on local transport spend and scheme progress.

## **Supporting local transport authorities**

The department will use the outcome frameworks and reporting on spending to assess LTA performance on local transport.

Where there are concerns over an LTA's performance, department will provide support. This may include support on individual modes, through Active Travel England or the Bus Centre of Excellence, or support for larger transport projects.

Where support has been provided but there are still concerns about the LTA's performance, the department may take further action which could result in changes to local transport funding.

## **Evaluating local transport schemes**

LTAs are responsible for implementing their own proportional scheme level monitoring and evaluation. Where the department has retained a local transport scheme, LTAs must evaluate retained schemes in line with the department's [local authority major schemes](#)

[benefits management and evaluation framework](#) (2025), with monitoring and evaluation plans for all retained schemes reviewed by the department.

LTAAs that do not receive an integrated settlement will be required to report on progress against the local transport outcomes framework and their LTDPs to the Department for Transport. LTAs will also provide reporting to the department on local transport spend and scheme progress by the department.

As part of the local transport funding system, the department will be procuring a national evaluator for the national programme level evaluation of its devolved funding.

All LTAs must collaborate with the national evaluator. This will include submitting the required data in a consistent format, agreed between the contractor appointed to deliver the national evaluation, the department, and all LAs as part of the development of the national monitoring and evaluation framework.

The department will publish all evaluation reports in accordance with [government social research: publication protocol for transparency and accountability](#).

## **Evaluation of local transport plans**

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are key features of LTPs, enabling LTAs to track progress against delivery of their plans and to learn lessons to improve future performance.

Information collated as part of this process will inform and improve future planning and decision-making. Robust M&E is important for transparency and public accountability.

M&E should be considered prior to the implementation of the LTP to ensure that relevant baseline data is collected, and appropriate measures are in place to collect M&E data for the duration of the LTP. Guidance about evaluation methods can be found in [TAG unit E1](#).

As part of their LTPs, LTAs should:

- evaluate the process that was followed to develop the LTP and how this can be improved in future
- collect monitoring data to identify whether planned interventions have been delivered on time and to budget, and to track progress against delivery on intended outputs and targets

See:

- [Local authority major schemes: benefits management, monitoring and evaluation framework](#)
- [Government Social Research: Publication protocol](#)

# Supporting national priorities

When producing LTPs, LTAs have a statutory duty to have regard to both government guidance and any policies announced by the government. LTPs should support the government's national priorities as well as the Department for Transport's vision for domestic transport in England which is set out in ['Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport'](#).

These form the national policy framework for the development of LTPs. LTAs should set objectives for the LTP in line with these national priorities and explain how the policies will support the delivery of both local and national priorities.

The department has 3 strategic priority outcomes which it will shortly set out in greater detail in its annual strategic plan. These strategic outcomes are interconnected and cross-cutting in nature, articulating the broad range of outcomes that the department is striving to deliver across all of its work.

1. Enhancing growth and place – enhancing economic growth by transforming the transport system. Maintaining and renewing our existing network and developing new infrastructure, tailored to the needs and opportunities of different places and delivered through local partnerships.
2. Improving journeys for people – improving the transport system to prioritise people's needs, ensuring that journeys are seamlessly integrated, reliable, accessible, and safe. This will enable everyone to travel with confidence and convenience, while accessing work, essential services, and opportunities.
3. Delivering green and healthy transport – delivering transport that is greener, healthier and more resilient, to reduce greenhouse emissions, improve air quality, and boost public health by supporting walking, wheeling and cycling.

Alongside the strategic plan, the Secretary of State for Transport has set out her vision for domestic transport across England in 'Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport', which focuses on how the department can deliver people centred domestic transport.

This is supported by 3 guiding principles which should underpin how transport is designed, built and operated:

- putting people at the heart of everything we do
- using transport to create better connected places
- working in partnership across the transport sector

In addition, the strategy sets out 8 priorities for where the department wants to see the biggest difference made in this Parliament:

1. Simplify payment and information – journeys across different kinds of transport will be easy to plan, pay for, and navigate – with integrated ticketing wherever possible.
2. Providing dependable and safe journeys – the transport network will be more dependable and safer, building confidence and trust in the network.
3. Making travel accessible and inclusive – the transport network will be increasingly accessible and inclusive by design.
4. Empower local leaders – local leaders will be empowered and supported to deliver better local transport for their communities.
5. Align transport and development – decisions on transport, housing and wider development will be integrated, creating better-connected places.

## Supporting national priorities

6. Champion data and technology – data and technology will drive the integrated, innovative and accessible transport system of the future.
7. Create healthier communities – making healthy travel choices will be easy and convenient, supported by a transport network that delivers cleaner, quieter and more liveable places.
8. Optimise decision-making and appraisal – transport investment decisions will prioritise people and places, underpinned by high quality and accessible analysis.

The following sections set out how LTAs should support the priorities set out in 'Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport'.

LTAs should:

- set out how their LTPs are aligned with the government's national priorities, including [Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport](#)

## Simplifying ticketing and payments

LTAAs have a key role to play in supporting the simplification of payments, fares and information for transport users as set out in ['Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport'](#). LTAs can work with partners to support a range of integrated ticketing options:

- contactless - passengers with a bankcard can tap to travel, and are charged an automatically calculated fare, referred to as 'pay as you go' (PAYG)
- smartcard – passengers load payment (for PAYG) or travelcards (such as multi-day passes) onto a smartcard with a microchip and tap to travel
- digital PAYG (DPAYG) – passengers download an app, 'tap' on with their device (rather than a physical card), and location tracking identifies their journey
- barcode - passengers scan a code at a gate or with a driver or conductor when travelling
- paper – paper tickets remain available for those who need them

To support LTAs, the government is already developing technologies and standards to give local areas in every part of England a menu of choices for implementing integrated ticketing.

For example, PAYG with contactless is being expanded on rail across the South East over the next few years, and smartcard and contactless PAYG will reach more than 90 stations across Greater Manchester and the West Midlands.

In addition, all LTAs will benefit from 'Project Coral', a shared technology solution for integrated contactless PAYG on bus services led by Transport for West Midlands with department funding and developed in partnership with major bus operators and Midlands Connect. The department expects Project Coral to be able to be integrated with LTAs across bus, rail and tram by 2030.

LTAs should set out their approach to integrated ticketing in their LTP and work closely with partners, particularly bus operators, to realise the opportunities provided by Project Coral.

Simpler payments are also important for car users and to support this the government have backed the [National parking platform \(NPP\)](#), a system that allows drivers to use one app to pay for parking in any participating area, rather than needing to download a new payment app in each place. By creating opportunities for new entrants to enter the market, the department expects that the NPP will encourage more specialist arrangements, which may include measures to help those who prefer to pay by cash or apps targeted at specific protected groups like disabled motorists. LTAs are encouraged to consider how the use of this platform can support the policies in their LTP.

LTAs must:

- set out their approach to integrated ticketing in their LTP including how they will realise the opportunities offered by Project Coral

LTAs should:

consider how they can use the NPP as part of their LTP

## Providing dependable and safe journeys

Journeys on the transport network should be safe and dependable, building confidence and trust, as set out in '[Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport](#)'. LTAs should set out how they will improve the safety of the local transport system in their LTPs.

### Road safety

In January 2026 the government published its new [Road safety strategy](#). This includes a range of measures and interventions to improve safety for all road users – whether walking, wheeling, riding a motorcycle or driving.

The strategy sets an ambitious target to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on British roads by 65% by 2035 (and by 70% for children under 16). These targets will focus the efforts of road safety partners, with measures to:

- protect vulnerable road users
- update vehicle safety technologies
- review motoring offences

Local highway authorities in England manage around 98% of publicly maintained roads (by length) and are key partners in improving road safety. They have a statutory duty to take steps to reduce and prevent collisions. LHAs are, therefore, key partners in supporting the road safety strategy and performance on road safety has been included in the local transport outcomes frameworks.

In LTPs, LTAs must set out policies and proposals that can help improve road safety on the local road network. Partnerships are important in delivering road safety improvements, and local authorities are encouraged to work collaboratively with partner organisations including the emergency services and other stakeholders.

To assist local authorities, the strategy includes commitments to:

- publish national guidance on the development and delivery of road safety education, training and publicity
- publish a manual to support the implementation of a lifelong learning approach for road safety
- publish a new edition of the best practice guidance [Setting local speed limits](#) and update separate guidance on the use of speed and red-light cameras for traffic enforcement
- publish an updated [Manual for streets](#)

### Personal safety on transport

Everyone should feel safe and be safe when travelling. [The Personal Safety on Transport survey research](#) showed that most adults in Great Britain felt at least 'fairly safe' on public transport. However, women felt less safe than men and disabled people felt less safe than non-disabled people.

Personal safety on transport is shaped by a combination of factors including:

- street design
- well-lit stations

- visible CCTV and safe waiting areas
- organisational culture
- staff capability
- the ability to get help when it is needed

As part of the government's aims to reduce violence against women and girls (VAWG) by half over the next decade, the department has an ambitious, evidence-based programme of work to help tackle VAWG on transport.

This is outlined in the department's 9 commitments within the cross-government [Freedom from violence and abuse action plan](#):

1. Publish statutory guidance for local authorities by the end of 2027, setting out clear recommendations for making all bus stations and stops in England as safe and accessible as possible.
2. Explore expanding the provision and use of CCTV on the bus network, to increase feelings of safety and reduce the length of investigations.
3. Launch mandatory training for staff in the bus industry, including drivers, on how to recognise and respond to incidents of VAWG and anti-social behaviour on the network to enable earlier identification and intervention.
4. Scope the feasibility of a single national reporting mechanism across all modes of public transport to increase reporting and feelings of safety.
5. Bring forward legislation to address the inconsistent taxi and private hire vehicle driver licensing standards highlighted in Baroness Casey's audit into child sexual exploitation.

In developing LTPs, LTAs should consider what policies can be introduced to improve personal safety on transport. This includes the use of new powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and measures seeking to prevent and address violence against women and girls such as providing adequate lighting and CCTV at bus stops and the provision of Transport Safety Officers.

LTAs must:

- set out policies and proposals that can help improve road safety in their LTP

LTAs should:

- set out policies and proposals in their LTP to improve personal safety on transport

## **Making travel accessible and inclusive**

The local transport network must be designed with users at the centre. It is essential that LTAs seek to improve transport choices, accessibility and experience.

Placing users at the centre of the transport network means placing all users at the centre, including those that are disabled and with other characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010. To do this successfully, LTPs need to not only consider the current varying transport needs and options, but also future proof their approach against demographic and technological trends.

### **An accessible transport system**

In 2026 there are 16.8 million disabled people in the UK, equating to almost a quarter of the population. Disabled people report a lack of confidence in being able to use public transport in a reliable and safe manner. This is a significant barrier to their full participation in society. When transport services are accessible, they make a tangible difference for disabled people and their families, enabling more independent and confident travel.

LTAs have an important role to play in setting clear expectations and consistent delivery standards, so that transport services and travel on the streetscapes are designed and built in a way which actively promotes independent, safe and confident travel for disabled people. Authorities have specific duties in this regard:

- the Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies, in common with other service providers, to make reasonable adjustments to remove substantial disadvantages that disabled people would otherwise face when accessing relevant services
- the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires public bodies to pay regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster understanding between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- part one of the Care Act 2014 sets out general responsibilities of local authorities to promote individual well-being including in relation to participation in work, education, training or recreation and social and economic well-being
- section 112 of the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) specifically requires authorities to have regard to the transport needs of “disabled people within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010 and of persons who are elderly or who have mobility problems” when developing and implementing policies included in their LTP

These are proactive, anticipatory duties and it is vital that LTAs build compliance into their processes for the inception, development and delivery through to monitoring and review of all relevant policies. Compliance should not be simply a matter of confirming compatibility with legal requirements but should actively inform the development of policies with a view to designing them inclusively from the start.

### **Supporting an accessible travel charter**

The department is developing an accessible travel charter that will provide a clear and practical framework for improving transport across all forms of transport.

The charter will:

- support the sharing of best practice and resources

- encourage improvements across different transport modes
- enable constructive local discussions on accessibility

These actions are essential to removing the barriers that many people still experience when travelling.

The charter will also bring greater clarity and direction. It will set out a vision for how the transport system should function so that disabled people can travel with comfort and dignity.

It will include a set of pledges that organisations responsible for commissioning and operating transport services can adopt. In addition, it will support consistency and efficiency by promoting the exchange of best practice.

Once published, LTAs should adopt the charter and embed its principles within their transport policies, helping to provide a consistently high-quality and accessible experience for disabled people wherever they travel.

### **Consideration of accessibility in local transport plans**

When developing their LTP, LTAs should evaluate the inclusivity of policy, process and service proposals for people with disability, adapting them to improve access and inclusion. LTAs should also record their consideration in an equality impact assessment (EQIA) alongside the final LTP.

Accessibility should be a central theme of the LTP and each policy should describe how it supports accessibility. The department recommends the inclusion of a specific accessibility chapter to provide a clear statement of intent on and commitment to the recommendations discussed here.

As part of work on accessibility in LTPs LTAs should:

- appoint or identify a senior leader to promote inclusive design and challenge in accessibility, making clear their role and the difference it will make
- appoint a councillor or strategic authority board member to promote accessibility;
- describe how the LTA will develop and deliver policies, projects and services which eliminate accessibility barriers and promote equality of opportunity;
- identify the governance arrangements that will ensure projects and services support an inclusive, accessible transport system and streetscape
- train officers and elected officials involved in the development of the LTP to understand the rights, needs and perspectives of disabled people – this should include creating or identifying an accessibility group to promote understanding of real-world experiences of disabled people
- identify the principles of accessibility and inclusion that should be followed when developing and delivering transport policy and services
- describe how disabled, older and mobility impaired people are engaged through the development of services and policies, across transport modes and within individual modes
- set out how monitoring data, evaluation, research, real-world experience, complaints, and other feedback inform the embedding of accessibility within transport policy development and project delivery
- highlight transport and streetscape policies and projects with a particular impact on the transport and mobility needs of disabled, older and mobility impaired people
- promote a culture of openness with disabled transport users by providing accessible information on LTP development across all channels

- embed inclusive design and delivery principles within procurement activity, holding contractors to the same standards as the LTA itself
- seek to increase use of the statutory bus concession in the area, through more effective promotion and an application and renewal process accessible to applicants with a range of access needs

The department encourages the adoption of the social model of disability when developing policies and drafting LTPs, recognising that disabled people are disabled, not by their individual conditions, but by barriers created by policies, services, processes, procedures and designs which inadequately anticipate and reflect their needs.

This can be a powerful lens through which to view the need for greater accessibility, seeing it clearly as the responsibility of LTAs and operators to enable access, rather than of disabled people themselves.

## **Pavement parking**

Pavement parking is an issue of concern to many, particularly people living with sight-loss, mobility or sensory disabilities, older adults, parents with young children and anyone who relies on safe, accessible pavements to move around independently.

Local authorities have existing powers to enforce against pavement parking where:

- vehicles are parked in contravention of existing waiting restrictions (for example, yellow lines, which also apply to the pavement and verge)
- a designated prohibition has been implemented through a traffic regulation order and indicated by prescribed traffic signs
- the vehicle parked is a heavy commercial vehicle with an operating weight of over 7.5 tonnes

Under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament, the Secretary of State for Transport would be able to introduce regulations to give LTAs powers to prohibit pavement parking of motor vehicles on footways and verges.

If the bill is passed, the government will issue detailed regulations and statutory guidance before the powers come into effect.

When developing LTPs, LTAs should consider whether policies are needed to curb pavement parking.

## **Accessibility guidance**

It is important that guidance on the accessibility of transport infrastructure, streetscapes and service design is used routinely and followed closely.

Guidance should only be departed from where either:

- there is clear justification – to provide a higher standard of accessibility
- local circumstances make it impossible to follow

Guidance that LTAs can actively draw upon includes:

- [Inclusive mobility: a guide to best practice on access to pedestrian and transport infrastructure](#)
- [Inclusive mobility: using tactile paving surfaces](#)
- [Floating bus stops provision and design](#)
- Guidance on the safety and accessibility of stopping places (Due for publication in 2026/27)
- [Manual for streets](#)
- [Design standards for accessible railway stations: a code of practice](#) (To the extent to which respective facilities are within the LTA's responsibility or interest)
- [Taxi and private hire vehicle licencing best practice guidance for licencing authorities in England](#)
- [The Blue Badge scheme: local authority guidance England](#)
- [Managing the English national concessionary travel scheme \(ENCTS\)](#)
- PAS 1899:2022 electric vehicles accessible charging (BSI 1057)

## **Unlocking opportunity through local transport**

LTAAs can help break down barriers to opportunity and support inclusive growth by improving people's access to work, education and essential services via the transport system. Through its child poverty strategy and youth strategy, the government has set out priorities for improving the lives of young people and tackling the drivers of child poverty.

Transport disadvantage is closely associated with poorer health outcomes. Limited access to affordable and reliable transport can reduce access to healthcare services, healthy food, employment and social participation.

As part of work to develop LTPs, LTAs should engage with providers of these services and those who use them, ensuring that local transport increases equitable access – such as through affordable fares and improved connectivity for underserved areas.

To support LTAs, the department is:

- developing a transport opportunity toolkit to enable authorities to identify, evidence, and articulate the social value of transport
- developing a transport poverty tool, building on the connectivity tool, that will identify local areas where transport may be a barrier for local income groups and help LTAs identify where transport interventions may have the most impact in helping tackle inequality

LTAs should use the transport opportunity toolkit and transport poverty tool to inform the development of their LTP. Other tools on inclusive transport are available and may be used by LTAs when developing their LTP.

## **Aligning local transport and school transport**

LTAs should plan the wider local transport network in a way that supports and complements travel assistance to schools and colleges. LTAs may not always be the local authority with responsibility for transport to school and colleges. The LTA should work with other authorities to better align local transport with school and college transport.

Better alignment can:

## *Making travel accessible and inclusive*

- help reduce pressures on local authority budgets
- make more efficient use of vehicles and public transport capacity
- support children and young people to access education safely and reliably

As part of their work on LTPs, LTAs should:

- consider the travel patterns and needs of children and young people attending schools, colleges and alternative provision, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) – this should include understanding how reductions in local public transport services, gaps in safe walking, wheeling and cycling routes, and longer travel distances, affect demand for dedicated school transport, especially for pupils attending specialist provision
- work closely with education and SEND teams to ensure early, joined up planning around school place planning, admissions decisions and education, health and care plan (EHCP) processes – early collaboration helps avoid costly transport arrangements, enables route planning to be optimised, and supports the development of more local provision that reduces long distance travel
- consider how public transport, supported bus networks and active travel infrastructure can better meet school travel needs – this may include aligning times for bus services and school start and finish times, improving reliability and reach of services, and ensuring active travel routes are safe and appropriate for children

Strengthening these partnerships will help deliver an integrated, sustainable travel system that supports local authorities to meet statutory duties, supports school and college attendance, and ensures children and young people arrive ready to learn.

Consideration should be given to ensure that public transport feels safe and accessible for all users to ensure that it remains a viable option for travel to schools and post-16 education destinations.

LTAs must:

- comply with their statutory duties on accessibility when producing their LTPs, this includes producing an equality impact assessment alongside their LTP
- consider the needs of all users, particularly those with characteristics protected under the Equalities Act 2010 and design in accessibility for disabled people from the outset when developing their LTP

LTAs should:

- adopt the 'social model of disability' when developing their LTPs
- adopt the government's transport accessibility charter when published and embed its principles within their LTP
- include an accessibility chapter in their LTP in line with this guidance
- consider whether policies are needed to curb pavement parking
- consider the needs of school transport as part of their LTP, in particular those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- work with local authority education and SEND teams when developing their LTPs

## Create healthier communities

Transitioning to a better, greener and healthier transport system is central to reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, supporting healthier communities, and strengthening the resilience of our networks in a changing climate.

Improving and integrating public transport, active travel infrastructure, and shared mobility options gives people more choice on how to travel. This helps people to choose healthier and less polluting travel options.

National transport policies such as the zero emission vehicles mandate and ending the sale of new non-zero emission busses, reiterate government's commitment to transition to vehicles that are zero emission at the exhaust.

These policies are expected to deliver a significant contribution towards reducing emissions from transport, critical to meeting our government's Net Zero goals, while also tackling air pollution, protecting public health and supporting the government's 10-year health plan.

Complementary action to reduce noise and other environmental impacts of transport, including water pollution and waste, will further safeguard health, protect ecosystems and enhance nature and biodiversity.

LTAs also have significant scope to reduce emissions in the local transport systems. The department expects LTAs to consider how carbon and air pollution emissions can be reduced when planning transport interventions and producing their LTP.

The transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) will reduce emissions and noise pollution and improve air quality. LTAs will be required to produce an EV infrastructure strategy, including policy on charging solutions, as part of their LTP.

Every LTA must produce a strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for their LTP. It is recommended that LTAs examine their internal SEA processes and take their own legal advice to ensure that they are complying with the requirements of SEA. [Guidance is available on SEAs.](#)

## Delivering clean air

LTAAs have a crucial role to play in delivering cleaner air for their local areas. Policies set out in LTPs, such as measures to increase the number of zero emission vehicles or increase active travel and public transport usage, can have a significant impact on air pollution and contribute directly to improved health outcomes and reduced preventable mortality. LTAs should consider the air quality benefits of these policies when developing their LTP.

Local authorities (district councils and unitary authorities) have a duty to review and assess local air quality, and address exceedances in their area, as set out in local air quality management (LAQM) guidance.

A number of local authorities have also been directed to implement local air quality plans to address areas that are exceeding legal nitrogen dioxide limits. The LTA may not always be the local authority with responsibility for air quality. In these cases, the LTA must collaborate with the relevant local authorities, including committing to action that can help deliver cleaner air.

The alignment of LTPs with these air quality requirements will continue to provide a systematic way of joining up air quality management and transport planning.

LTAAs should seek to align policies in LTPs with national government commitments, including guidance set out in the [Air Quality Strategy: Framework for Local Authority Delivery \(2023\)](#). This means that as well as meeting local air quality objectives, LTAs should also contribute to national targets, including those set through the Environment Act 2021 to reduce fine particulate matter (PM2.5).

All local authorities in England are expected to use their powers to reduce PM2.5 emissions from sources within their control.

Co-operation between transport, environmental services, public health, and planning departments, as well as with partner organisations such as National Highways, will help ensure a strategic approach to improving air quality and quality of life, especially for those living near busy roads and junctions.

LTAAs should work with local authorities to ensure that the air quality and environmental effects of all planned interventions on the road network are thoroughly understood before they are implemented.

LTAAs should use the following guidance when considering policies on air quality in their LTPs:

- [local air quality management policy guidance](#)
- [local air quality management technical guidance](#)
- [air quality strategy: framework for local authority delivery](#)
- [PM2.5 targets: interim planning guidance](#)

## Noise pollution

In England, 40% of adults are exposed to long-term averaged road-traffic noise levels exceeding 50 decibels (dB) at home and 5% to similar levels of aircraft or railway noise. This contributes to conditions like sleep disturbance, heart disease and diabetes alongside potential long-term reductions in cognitive performance of children. Whilst the transition to electric vehicles may help reduce noise, the department recognises the importance of continuing efforts to address noise pollution from the transport network.

LTAAs should integrate transport noise considerations within their LTPs to ensure a coordinated and systematic approach to the management of transport noise.

The government's position on noise is set out in the [Noise Policy Statement for England \(2010\)](#). It provides the policy framework to assist the implementation of the Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006.

Local authorities are expected to help manage environmental noise and its effects by contributing to mitigation where noise arises from local roads, addressing noise issues within large urban areas known as agglomerations and supporting delivery of measures set out in the noise action plans.

This includes investigating and, where appropriate, prioritising mitigation in and around Noise Important Areas. The government will publish updated noise action plans for consultation in 2026.

# Quantifying and managing carbon emissions

LTAAs should consider how they can reduce carbon emissions from transport as they develop their LTPs.

In 2025, the government published [Quantifiable Carbon Guidance \(QCG\)](#), which provides practical advice on how LTAs should prepare and use carbon analysis to inform the development of their transport strategies and schemes and quantify their carbon impact.

As part of local transport outcome frameworks, LTAs must report on the carbon emissions of their local transport projects. LTAs will need to report on both the user and infrastructure emissions of schemes included in their local transport delivery plans.

LTAAs must also use QCG when developing their LTPs. However, LTAs can decide how to apply the different approaches set out in QCG flexibly and subject to their local needs and circumstances.

QCG should be used by LTAs early in the development of their LTPs to consider how transport emission can be reduced as part of their LTP. This will provide the greatest opportunities to reduce the amount and costs of carbon emissions.

The QCG presents a tiered approach that LTAs can apply based on their analytical capability and the availability of data for different interventions. QCG will help LAs to take a whole-life approach to carbon, considering how best to reduce emissions as they develop their transport strategies and projects by providing:

- advice on how and when carbon analysis can be integrated into the process of developing transport strategies and schemes
- guidance on different methods for assessing carbon impacts, including the methodologies and datasets that can be used
- a foundation from which carbon analysis methods and data can continue to be developed by the department and the sector

The application of the process and methodologies discussed in the QCG is most effective through the use of specific carbon tools and so LTA's should consider the use of these tools when calculating and reporting on their emissions.

These tools, and further information on how to use them effectively, can be found on the DfT analytical hub. Access to this hub can be requested from [analytical.library@dft.gov.uk](mailto:analytical.library@dft.gov.uk).

For individual transport schemes, any scheme retained by DfT for approval will need a carbon management plan (CMP) which sets out how a transport project will measure, manage and reduce carbon management throughout its lifecycle. LTAs may also want to develop CMPs for transport schemes that are not retained by the department. CMPs should be developed in accordance with [DfT business case guidance](#).

## Improving health through better local transport

Local transport systems have an important influence on both physical and mental health. Transport policies and design affect everyday travel choices and can either encourage or discourage physical activity. Creating safe, convenient environments for walking, wheeling and cycling helps people build activity into daily routines such as commuting or travelling to

school, improving physical health. The importance of considering the health implications of transport will increase as we have an ageing population, some of whom may be living with reduced mobility and dementia.

Access to reliable and affordable transport can reduce social isolation by enabling people to access employment, education, healthcare and social networks, improving mental health and wellbeing.

Exposure to air pollution and noise, often highest in deprived communities near busy roads, poses additional risks, contributing to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases and poorer mental health. Policies in LTAs to improve local transport can:

- enhance health
- reduce health inequalities
- support the ambitions of [the government's 10 year health plan](#)

When developing LTPs, LTAs should work with public health authorities and local authority public health directors. Good co-operation between transport planning and spatial planning departments, environmental health, public health and partner organisations is essential to ensure a strategic approach to improving health and wellbeing.

Care should be taken to understand whether LTP actions indirectly result in negative effects in vulnerable locations and communities. For example, a poorly planned pedestrian area might force more traffic to use a street near a school.

The consideration of 'human health' via a health impact assessment (HIA) is a legal requirement contained within an SEA.

To ensure that health outcomes are at the heart of the LTP process, measures to support positive health outcomes should be identified at an early stage. This could include a range of metrics for considering the health impact, for example physical activity, mental health impacts, air quality and perceived and actual road safety data.

LTAs should also assess how transport interventions may affect different population groups, including children, older people, disabled people and disadvantaged communities. Such data may already be available from the local director of public health.

## Climate change adaptation

As our climate changes, the UK will experience wetter winters, hotter summers and more extreme weather. This extreme weather can disrupt travel, delay journeys, pose risks to safety and damage infrastructure.

The department has developed a climate adaptation strategy for transport to ensure the transport system is prepared for the impacts of climate change and to help LTAs adapt to these impacts.

LTAs should use consider the impact of climate change on the transport network as part of their LTP and take steps to address the risks to transport infrastructure, as identified in the [third climate change risk assessment](#).

Flooding of transport assets is a particular risk and LTAs should use LTPs to form one part of a cohesive framework for effective flood risk planning and mitigation alongside:

## Quantifying and managing carbon emissions

- strategic flood risk assessments
- local flood risk management strategies
- relevant flood risk management plans
- surface water management plans

Resources are available to support LTAs with their climate change adaptation policies and LAs should consider using:

- the [local authority climate service](#), developed by the Met Office, which supports LTAs to better understand climate change in their area
- [transport hazard summaries](#), which LTAs can use to understand transport-related climate risks and ways to strengthen their resilience – these are developed by the department in collaboration with the Met Office
- DfT's [climate risk assessment guidance](#) for the transport sector to identify climate risks and prioritise adaptation actions
- DfT's [database of adaptation best practice case studies](#)
- the DfT's [transport analysis guidance \(TAG\)](#) which outlines how to proportionately consider climate adaptation in the transport appraisal process

LTAs are also encouraged to periodically undertake climate risk assessments and participate in reporting on adaptation under the adaptation reporting power (ARP) every 5 years.

## Nature

It is important that LTAs are encouraged to consider nature-based solutions which achieve multiple benefits when planning transport policies and projects. The department recommends that LTAs align LTPs with relevant local nature recovery strategies (LNRS) to maximise benefits and identify opportunities for delivery.

LTAs should also consider how their LTP can help meet the strengthened biodiversity duty and LTP potential to meet this. The duty requires public authorities to:

- consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity
- agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration
- act to deliver policies and achieve objectives

[Read separate guidance for public authorities on complying with the biodiversity duty.](#)

LTAs must:

- conduct a strategic environmental assessment alongside their LTP
- conduct a health impact assessment alongside their LTP
- use QCG to report on carbon emissions of local transport projects funded by the Department for Transport
- use QCG when developing their LTPs

LTAs should:

- work with other local authorities to align LTPs with local air quality action plans and air quality strategies

- consider how their LTP can support management of environmental noise by contributing to mitigations and supporting delivery of measures in action plans
- consider how carbon emissions can be reduced in LTPs
- work with health authorities and directors of public health and integrated care systems to consider how local transport can improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities when developing LTPs
- consider climate adaptation as part of their LTP -align their LTP local flood and risk management strategies
- align their LTP with local nature recovery strategies
- consider how their LTP can help meet the biodiversity duty

## Aligning transport and development

Transport should enable people to thrive in the places they live – connecting them to jobs, education, leisure activities, healthcare, goods and services. Analysis shows that well-connected communities deliver better economic, social and environmental outcomes.

LTPs should therefore be vision-led and place-based, starting with a clear, shared view of the kind of places local areas want to create and the outcomes they want to achieve.

A joined-up approach to LTPs and spatial development strategies (SDS) will create a mutually supportive framework, that can deliver better transport and planning outcomes for local areas and the economy. LTAs therefore should align their LTP with existing or emerging SDSs and local plans.

LTAs, and other local authority partners, should create cross-disciplinary teams of transport planners, highway engineers, and spatial planners to align and where possible develop LTPs and local plans and SDS together or ensure that they are mutually supportive.

These cross-disciplinary teams should have the skills to undertake place-based quantitative and qualitative assessments that seek to understand how people move within and beyond the administrative area, using connectivity metrics, such as the government's connectivity tool, to inform how transport investment can support:

- housing delivery
- job access
- travel between key destinations such as leisure, healthcare and education

Local plans, developed by local planning authorities often operate at a different and smaller administrative scale than LTPs and follow different review cycles, so aligning an LTP update with these plans may not be practicable, however, due regard must be given to any existing or emerging plans as LTPs are developed.

As part of this joined-up approach LTAs and other local authority partners should work together to:

- put people first and make sustainable transport considerations part of early engagement with local communities and stakeholders
- consider how transport investment and infrastructure can support proposed developments, catalyse growth and optimise connectivity and density
- support an appropriate mix of development uses and densities, to facilitate the creation of well-connected neighbourhoods
- explore maximum local parking standards for new developments taking account of the connectivity of a development, levels of car ownership, opportunities for improvements to public transport as well as active travel and the needs of disabled motorists
- create well designed streets to support development – streets should be safe, inclusive and attractive to all users, including through measures to minimise the scope for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles

To support this work, LTAs and planning authorities should use the government's [connectivity tool](#), to understand the relative connectivity of their area, and appraise the ability of the transport network to get people where they want and need to go.

The tool has a variety of applications across plan-making and decision-taking but as a minimum it should be used routinely to:

- identify locations that are already well connected and capable of supporting higher densities and a wider mix of uses
- identify areas where targeted transport interventions could materially improve connectivity, supporting existing communities, future growth or regeneration
- test how different development and transport scenarios align with the authority's spatial and economic vision, before decisions are finalised

LTAs should consider updating their LTPs when there are new developments within their area that will have large impacts on local transport. This would include the creation of a new town or the establishment of a development corporation within their area.

LTAs should:

- align their LTP with spatial development strategies
- use the government's [connectivity tool](#) when developing their LTP
- consider updating their LTP when there is a significant development in their area that would have large impacts on local transport

## Data and technology

Better use of data and technology in transport can help improve decision making and drive innovation. The department will champion open data principles, drive collaboration and embed new technology, enabling innovation to thrive.

To support LTAs to make the best use of data and technology the department will:

- support better data use across the transport system, including facilitating knowledge sharing and support for LTAs as set out in the [Transport Data Action Plan](#)
- deliver a transport innovation procurement pathway to help authorities procure innovative solutions and technology, including evidence bases that showcase the increased flexibility within the procurement act – giving buyers in the public sector more confidence to purchase new, innovative technologies and services
- support knowledge exchanges for local authorities and other practitioners, to help share practical insights and lessons learned from areas that have already trialled technologies such as connected vehicles and intelligent traffic junction controls
- develop a transport data marketplace, bringing together data about different types of transport to make it easier to access for the people who need it, such as local authorities -support authorities to maximise the benefits of digital twins through the integrated transport digital twins programmes enabling local authorities to model the impact of decisions and coordinate better, more timely responses to disruption
- commission research into the barriers to, and benefits of, mobility as a service deployment in England – including coordinating monitoring and evaluation from previously trialled apps to develop an evidence base
- introduce the department's [Digital traffic regulation orders \(D-TRO\) service](#) which will provide a standardised digital record of traffic restrictions, this will support greater transparency, improved data quality, and the reuse of traffic regulation data across transport systems and services – the service is already at public Beta stage, and the government intends to mandate the publication of new and amended traffic regulation orders to the D-TRO service through secondary legislation– ahead of this, local authorities are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the D-TRO service and consider how their existing processes and systems align with D-TRO requirements
- provide a number of data tools such as the connectivity tool, which brings together transport and land use data in an innovative way to help authorities measure the connectivity of individual locations in their area

LTAs should seek to make the best use of the programmes and tools the department has developed when thinking about policies for their LTP.

Self-driving vehicles are now a reality, offering local transport authorities' innovative new options to improve connectivity and accessibility through a new set of transport solutions in their areas. The Automated Vehicles Act provides the powers for central government to set high safety and operating standards for this technology, ensuring these services are introduced responsibly.

LTAs should consider how the safe deployment of automated vehicles (AVs) could support their local transport objectives. LTPs should include consideration of how AVs integrate with wider transport goals, including greater availability of public transport, economic and social impacts and how these services may complement or strengthen the existing transport network. Licensing authorities and bus franchising bodies should further consider how the local consent mechanism within the Automated Passenger Services permitting scheme

could be used to shape and influence how self-driving passenger services deploy in their area.

Guidance on [Automated passenger service permits: local authority and transport body roles](#) has been published to help local authorities and transport bodies understand the automated passenger services permitting scheme.

LTAs should:

- consider the role that data and new technology can play to improve local transport in their LTPs
- consider how the safe deployment of automated vehicles could support their local objectives

# Designing and maintaining the local road network

Nearly all local transport journeys rely on the local highways network – whether by car, bus, van or walking, wheeling and cycling. Maintaining a safe, reliable and sustainable local highway network:

- underpins connectivity for communities and businesses
- supports productivity
- enables greener travel choices

Responsibility for roads is spread across a number of organisations:

- National highways are responsible for the strategic road network (SRN)
- all other adopted roads form part of the local highway network, and local highway authorities are responsible for managing and maintaining those roads. The local highway network represents 98% of the road network
- a small number of roads are unadopted roads and are maintained by their private owners rather than National Highways or the local highway authority

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) responsibilities cover all elements of the local public highway, road maintenance, street lighting, traffic management, road safety and managing road works.

The LHA is also the local traffic authority and so has a duty to manage traffic to secure expeditious movement of all traffic with a view to reducing congestion on the local highway network. In fulfilling this duty, LHAs must have regard to statutory network management duty guidance published by the department.

The LHA may be the same as the LTA or it may be a different local authority depending on local circumstance:

- in areas with a strategic authority, the LHA is a metropolitan district council, county council or unitary authority
- in areas without a strategic authority, the LHA is the county council or unitary authority, which will also be the LTA

It is vital that the LTA works with the LHA and local traffic authority when developing policies in their LTP on the design and maintenance of the local highway network. This should include working in partnership and with other relevant parties, including traffic commissioners and bus operators, to develop and implement plans to improve bus punctuality, including through the use of bus priority.

## Supporting the strategic road network

The SRN supports long-distance journeys, taking strategic traffic out of towns and villages. The SRN must also operate alongside the local road network, providing suitable access and egress points, and enabling local traffic to mix safely.

National Highways will continue to engage with LTAs and LHAs on the operation of the SRN alongside the local road network. To support mayoral strategic authorities' role in the road network, National Highways is committed to formalising and strengthening its relationship

with these authorities, giving a more cohesive approach to the management and development of England's strategic road network alongside local roads.

When developing LTPs, LTAs should work with LHAs to consider how the local road network will operate alongside the SRN. If LTAs and LHAs are considering changes to the parts of the local road network that connect with the SRN as part of their LTP, they should speak with National Highways.

## **Designing the local road network**

The LHA should identify roads in its area according to their location and the activities on them, to help balance competing demands whilst continuing to manage the network efficiently. To group roads in this way, the LHA should define the uses of different sections of road or types of road in its network.

In places with a strategic authority, where the LTA is different to the LHA, the strategic authority will need to work together with their constituent highway authorities to develop a [key route network \(KRN\)](#).

When identifying types of roads in their area LHAs should consider applying the concepts of place and movement set out in the Manual for Streets (MfS). This leads to considerations about how to manage each road type, bearing in mind its function.

LHAs should consider the needs of buses, light rail, coaches, other public transport and freight when identifying different types of roads. Residential areas and town centres are likely to require a focus on place, and on the functions that are not about movement of through traffic such as sitting, resting, café culture, street markets, play and so on.

Busier, higher-speed roads such as those on the major road network, or interurban routes with speed limits 40mph or above, are more likely to prioritise movement of through motor traffic, although opportunities should not be lost to incorporate placemaking into their design and management.

For each type of road, LHAs should then establish hierarchies of different road users for different types of roads. For roads identified as streets, the road user hierarchy should broadly align with hierarchies set out in the MfS, which prioritises consideration of the needs of people walking and wheeling, followed by cyclists, public transport and so on to private motor traffic.

This does not mean prioritising those groups at all times and on all streets, but considering their different needs in that order will help ensure all users' needs are considered holistically.

For example, in residential areas pedestrian needs may be considered paramount and footways, crossing points and street layouts designed accordingly, with a focus on clear, uncluttered environments which can be easily navigated. On a busy high street, buses and bus passengers may be the priority, with bus priority, stops, shelters and pedestrian movement being a focus of design.

The department recommends that the MfS be used for the design of new and existing streets. It is not considered appropriate to apply the design manual for roads and bridges (DMRB), the Secretary of State's design standards for the SRN, to local roads in built-up areas, particularly on streets with a 20mph or 30mph speed limit.

If DMRB is applied to local roads for example, for bypasses, interurban routes or roads which form part of the major road network and which have motor traffic movement as their primary and dominant function, it has the status of guidance and should be applied in an appropriate and proportionate manner.

## **Highways asset management policy and strategy**

Every LHA must produce a highways asset management policy and strategy. The policies for managing the local highway network in these strategies must be aligned with the local transport policies in the LTP, to support a well-run local transport system. This means that the objectives set out in the LTP should be reflected in the objectives set out in a highways asset management policy and strategy.

In areas where the LTA and LHA are different authorities, they will need to work collaboratively on their highways asset management policy and strategy and LTP.

The importance of this close working relationship between different authorities is reflected in legislation which places a duty on some LHAs to implement the LTP when carrying out their highways functions. Under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament, this duty will be extended to all LHAs.

A highways asset management policy and strategy sets out how the LHA will manage their network in a sustainable, efficient and evidence-based way. This strategy should include:

- clear objectives aligned with national priorities and the local objectives set out in the LTP
- lifecycle planning to optimise asset performance and minimise whole-life costs
- risk management to address vulnerabilities and ensure resilience
- performance monitoring to track progress and drive continuous improvement

The department allocates capital funding to local authorities to enable them to maintain and improve their respective networks and revenue funding for local highways is provided through the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The department strongly advocates a risk-based whole lifecycle asset management approach to highway maintenance programmes that considers all parts of the highway network, such as carriageways, footways, cycle facilities, bridges and lighting columns.

As part of this, the department encourages LHAs to focus on long-term preventative maintenance, which is more cost-effective than, for example, the reactive patching of potholes, while fulfilling their requirements to maintain a safe highway.

Footways are part of the public highway, and therefore LHAs should consider footway maintenance as part of their highways asset management strategy.

LHAs should consider the above when producing their highway asset management strategy and should refer to best practice documents such as the [Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice](#) and [UK Roads Leadership Group Guidance](#).

LHAs must also publish transparency reports annually, which summarise their:

- asset management policies
- performance data

- investment decisions
- achieved outcomes

These reports help the government and the public to understand how effectively the network is being managed.

## **Freight**

The LTP should recognise the critical role of freight transport and delivery services in supporting local, regional, and national economic growth.

Businesses and the wider supply chain rely on the transport system for the supply of materials, the distribution and export of goods, and the provision of essential services. Efficient access to, and between, ports, rail freight interchanges, depots, logistics centres, airports and modal interchanges is fundamental to a modern, productive economy.

LTAs should include policies on freight within their LTPs, setting out how they will support efficient, reliable and sustainable freight movement in their area which contribute to the effective functioning of a national freight system. This should consider:

- connectivity to key economic assets and strategic corridors including international gateways and strategic corridors
- supporting efforts to decarbonise the sector through the provision of charging facilities
- provision of quality lorry parking facilities
- the needs of last-mile deliveries in urban centres
- the interaction between freight and other road users

In doing so, LTAs should align freight policies with the vision and objectives set out in '[Better Connected: a strategy for integrated transport](#)' and in future with the forthcoming freight plan and zero emission HGV and coach strategy.

LTAs must:

- work with LHAs when developing their LTPs

LTAs and LHAs should:

- work in partnership to develop policies on the design and maintenance of the local highway network – this should include developing and implementing plans to improve bus punctuality, including through the use of bus priority
- work in partnership to establish a hierarchy of roads users in their area – these road user hierarchies should broadly be aligned with Manual for Streets
- use MfS for the design of new and existing streets
- work in partnership to set out the role of freight in their LTPs

LHAs must:

- produce a highways asset management policy and strategy – this must be in line with the overall policies set out in the LTA's LTP
- publish annual transparency reports on highways maintenance

## Key route network guidance

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament would place a duty on mayoral strategic authorities to designate a KRN and give a mayor a power of direction over the KRN.

It is issued under section 55 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 and section 118 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Mayoral strategic authorities should review this guidance when considering what roads form part of the KRN and the use of the power of direction over the network.

A KRN is a set of the most important locally-managed roads that are key to delivery of the LTP, excluding any roads managed by National Highways. The relevant LHA remains responsible for the management, maintenance and safety of KRN roads.

Mayoral strategic authorities will have a duty to designate a KRN. Other LTAs are not required to do so but may also choose to agree a KRN to assist local transport planning, on their own or jointly with one or more neighbouring LTA.

When a KRN has been agreed, authorities may wish to collaborate to ensure it functions as a coherent, streamlined, network within the wider local road network. This could include having a single set of highway design standards on the KRN or collaborating on joint maintenance arrangements or standards.

### Agreeing a key route network

Local areas are best placed to use their own knowledge of local networks and conditions to agree an appropriate KRN. Local areas should decide when they review the roads that are part of the KRN, but it is recommended they should do this when updating their LTP and other documents such as spatial development strategies and local growth plans.

In mayoral strategic authorities, the KRN is agreed by a resolution of the authority following a proposal by the mayor.

In foundation (non-mayoral) strategic authorities, the consent of all local highway authorities is required.

Mayoral strategic authorities should review this guidance when considering what roads form part of the KRN and the use of the power of direction over the network.

All strategic authorities should develop their KRN in collaboration with local highway authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders.

Factors which authorities could consider in agreeing whether a road should form part of a KRN include:

- average annual daily traffic
- number, frequency, punctuality and reliability of buses and scheduled coaches using the road and, if available, bus patronage
- congestion levels and their impact on the performance of public transport services
- light rail flows (where it is on-street)
- levels of walking, wheeling and cycling
- if the road is prioritised in the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan

- the road user hierarchy in manual for streets and any existing local highway authority road hierarchy
- whether the road is part of the major road network
- whether the road provides a link to a key employment, education, retail, industrial or development site, economic centre, transport hub or other destination of importance
- whether the road is important for freight movements
- any existing parking provision on the road
- any information on the groups of people who use or live on or near the road
- where there is a neighbouring strategic authority, the approach taken within their KRN to roads which border both strategic authorities
- where the KRN can form a continuous bus or active travel route from common origins to destinations

Any road which meets one of the following criteria should normally be included in a KRN, unless there are compelling reasons not to do so where:

- there are a significant number of timetabled bus services per house
- the punctuality of frequent bus services is consistently affected by recurrent congestion
- it is a key route from the SRN to an urban centre or tourist coach station or drop off point with a large number of scheduled coaches a day

Strategic authorities must maintain on their website a record of the roads designated as KRN roads. They are encouraged to make this available in other formats, such as an interactive map or shapefile.

## **The power of direction**

The power of direction is a legal power for the mayor to direct the LHA to undertake an action on a KRN road. It may relate to any of the LHA's traffic, highway, permit or street works powers. It can only be used once a KRN has been designated.

### **Use of the power of direction on the key route network**

In exercising the power of direction, the mayor must have regard to the network management duty imposed by section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the duty imposed by section 17 of that act, as well as any guidance issued under section 18 of that act.

The power of direction should be used only to direct an authority to deliver a measure that has been set out in at least one agreed plan or strategy of the strategic authority, such as a:

- local transport plan
- enhanced partnership agreement or bus franchising scheme
- bus service improvement plan
- local cycling and walking infrastructure plan
- local growth plan
- spatial development strategy

The power of direction is not intended to be used frequently but where the mayor and relevant LHA are not able to agree how or whether to take a particular measure forward. This is to ensure that mayors are able to effectively deliver the measures set out in the LTP to improve transport in their area.

The mayor must pay the costs arising from making a direction, from the period from the direction up to one year after the completion

### **Other procedure and considerations**

The acts which provide the legal power for the power of direction do not dictate local procedures for arrangements relating to use of the power, beyond the requirements set out above, to pay costs arising from it and publish a copy of the direction.

Places should consider whether they wish to agree locally that:

- before issuing a direction, the mayor will consult the LHA in which the direction will be exercised, and consider their response
- the overview and scrutiny committee of the strategic authority will consider any direction made and may call the mayor to give evidence
- within a year of completion of relevant works, the strategic authority will fund and publish a proportionate independent evaluation of the transport impact of the direction

It may also be beneficial for local agreement to be reached prior to any use of the power of direction on:

- whether works required to execute a direction would be delivered by the LHA directly, a contractor operating on its behalf or through another mechanism
- if works are not being delivered by the LHA, how it would be ensured that works meet all relevant legislation and are designed with reference to relevant national good practice guidance, road safety requirements, and any other highway standards specified by the relevant local highway authority, and that such works have appropriate liability
- insurance provision

Mayoral strategic authorities must:

- designate a key route network of the most important local roads

Other LTAs may agree a key route network if they choose to.

Mayoral strategic authorities should:

- review this guidance when considering what roads form part of the key route network and the use of the power of direction over the network

# Active travel

Investing in active travel delivers benefits across every aspect of life — improving physical and mental health, boosting economic growth, cleaning up our air, and giving people more choice about how to travel.

The government will publish the third cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS3) later this year. This will set out the government’s vision for active travel and funding available to LTAs in England (outside of London) for active travel.

LTAs must set out their active travel policies as part of their LTP. Setting out how walking, wheeling, and cycling will be enabled, prioritised and integrated with other forms of local transport. These policies should be in line with the overall objectives of the LTP and the government’s national priorities.

The active travel policies within the LTP should help inform LTA’s local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, which LTAs will be required to keep up to date. Active Travel England will publish updated guidance on LCWIPs later this year.

The LTP should cover the following topics:

1) A summary of local active travel policies and objectives. 2) A summary of measures required to deliver local active travel targets in an integrated way, including:

- local policies and measures which will support public health outcomes, for example supporting active travel to school, to work and to local services
- how active travel delivery can help reduce carbon emissions from transport
- joint working between LHA and bodies such as national parks, to deliver local schemes and initiatives
- how these policies and measures will support the local active travel network including LCWIPS and other plans such as the National Cycle Network
- highways maintenance approaches that tackle key safety and accessibility issues for people walking, wheeling and cycling
- plans to improve accessibility of walking, wheeling cycling and public transport for disabled and older people, in line with LTN1/20
- appropriate design assurance of schemes, for example a local Design Review panel process
- policies for improving personal safety, for example, women and children
- cargo or freight delivery initiatives using active travel modes
- how these policies will be aligned with the LTP and other local plans and strategies including local plan policies, supplementary planning documents, design codes and guides, and development management practices – see for example [Cycle infrastructure design \(LTN 1/20\)](#) and [Inclusive mobility: making transport accessible for passengers and pedestrians](#)
- a summary of measures to increase the capability of the LTA to improve delivery and quality of active travel measures

Active travel measures can include:

- planning
- evidence collection
- appraisal
- evaluation and monitoring

## Active travel

- consultation and stakeholder engagement
- technical skills
- Infrastructure
- behaviour change initiatives

3) A summary of overall approach to delivering appropriate infrastructure as part of local cycling and walking infrastructure plans (LCWIPs):

- gathering information – identify existing patterns of walking, wheeling and cycling and potential new journeys and identify barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling
- network planning for walking, wheeling and cycling – identify key trip generators, core walking, wheeling and cycling zones and routes, audit existing provision and determine the type of improvements required – identify origin and destination points and travel flow, convert flows into a network of routes and determine the type of improvements required, with appropriate coverage for urban areas, towns and cities
- development of plans – in progress or finalised LCWIP setting out proposed 10-year pipeline, with improvements set out in order of priority
- stakeholder engagement – approach for involvement of experts and local stakeholders in LCWIP development, for example breadth of engagement with local residents, businesses, road users (buses, taxi and private hire vehicles, freight), emergency services, disabled persons' groups, MPs/councillors, older person groups, places of education, ethnic minority groups and religious groups

LTAs must:

- set out an active travel strategy as part of their LTP
- align local cycling and walking infrastructure plans with the active travel policies set out in the LTP

## Micromobility

When implemented well and managed effectively, shared micromobility schemes such as cycle, e-cycle and e-scooter rental schemes can have real benefits in terms of integrated, sustainable, efficient and green transport.

Shared micromobility allows a user to flexibly borrow or lease vehicles without the need for individual ownership, lowering cost barriers to individuals in accessing these benefits. These services typically operate door-to-door, meaning that users can access transport close to the start point and end point of their journeys.

LTAs have a range of tools available to them to support micromobility:

- rental cycles and e-cycle schemes can be set up now, without permission from central government – Active Travel England have published further [guidance on setting up and operating shared micromobility schemes](#).
- currently, rental e-scooters are only available on a trial basis – LTAs operating an e-scooter trial must follow specific guidance set out in [e-scooter trials: guidance for local authorities and rental operators](#).
- under The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament, local leaders would be given powers to licence shared cycle schemes – licensing is expected to be extended to other shared micromobility modes, such as e-scooters, with DfT setting minimum standard conditions to ensure consistency, safety and operability

In developing LTPs, the permanent role of e-cycles and e-scooters, once legislated for, in our transport mix should be considered in both the private and shared rental contexts. When considering the role of micromobility in LTPs, LTAs should:

- ensure that these schemes work for whole communities and not just individual users
- consider parking for shared micromobility early in the process and include mechanisms for regular reviews of parking demand
- consider engaging with industry to assess the revenue-generating potential of their particular scheme when determining whether, and to the extent which, they require operators to contribute financially – requiring significant financial contributions from operators could negatively impact the quality of the service, increase the cost to users, or damage the long term financial viability of a scheme, particularly in less densely populated area
- consider interventions to improve safety, such as training and coordinated enforcement plans to better crack down on those who use micromobility in an irresponsible or anti-social way

LTAs should:

- consider the role of e-scooters and (e-)cycles, once legislated for, as part of their LTPs

## Car sharing

LTAs should consider car clubs and other car sharing services as part of their LTP. Car clubs can provide a flexible and lower-cost alternative to private car ownership. Supporting the use of shared cars as part of a wider shared mobility or decarbonisation strategy can help deliver environmental, economic, and societal benefits.

Alongside directly procuring car club operators, LTAs have a role in ensuring a supportive policy environment for car clubs. This includes considering parking provision including appropriate bay and permit charges, integration with other transport services including as part of mobility hubs and raising awareness of available car sharing services.

Chargepoint access should be considered for shared electric vehicles (EVs).

[Find out about local authority funding allocations for LEVI electric chargepoint infrastructure funding.](#)

LTAs should:

- consider the role of car sharing as part of their LTPs

# Buses and coaches

## Role and requirements of the Department for Transport

A successful local bus service plays a vital role in an integrated transport system, providing people with access to all the necessities and opportunities of everyday life.

The government's vision is of a bus service which is attractive to, accessible to, and well-used by everyone in the community, and where the needs and priorities of bus passengers, both existing and potential, are front and centre of everything those involved in delivering services do.

The government have set out 9 objectives for improving bus services:

- they provide the connections people need – particularly to get to work, school or college, to access healthcare, to get to the shops and to opportunities for recreation
- services are more reliable, and people trust that their bus will turn up on time and that buses are available when they are needed
- people are, and feel, safe – especially women and girls – throughout their journey
- services are faster – particularly in towns and cities
- buses are better integrated into the wider transport system and it's easy to make a journey using different transport modes
- they have accurate, accessible and easy to understand information when and where people need it, including when services are disrupted
- disabled people feel that bus services, including information, roadside infrastructure, vehicles and on-board assistance are more accessible, and that they enable them to travel independently, in safety and with reasonable comfort
- tickets are affordable, including for younger people, in both urban and rural areas
- it is an increasingly climate and environmentally-friendly choice

LTAs, working with operators, are crucial to realising these objectives locally. The best way to do this is for bus services to have a strong revenue base of passengers which requires bus services to be attractive and accessible to everyone in the community.

To support LTAs to deliver better bus services the department will:

- set out a national vision, objectives and priorities for buses
- publish guidance and accompanying documents assisting LTAs towards delivery of the national vision, objectives and priorities
- set clear expectations for how LTAs should monitor local bus service performance

The department will require LTAs to:

- set out their policies for improving bus services and how they will implement them in their LTP
- have either an enhanced partnership in place or to be in the process of introducing a bus franchising scheme, in order to receive DfT bus funding
- maintain and publish an up to bus service improvement plan (BSIP), in order to receive DfT bus funding
- produce a bus network accessibility plan
- provide regular information reporting on how the LTA is spending funding on improving bus services and its their outcomes

## LTA bus powers and duties

LTAs have a range of tools available to them to improve bus services including the:

- power to introduce bus franchising, where the LTA decides the bus routes, timetables and fares with bus operators contracted to provide bus services
- power to introduce an enhanced partnership (EP) with bus operators to improve bus services
- power to subsidise bus services where bus routes would not be commercially viable
- duty to coordinate information on bus services in their area for the public including information on timetables, bus routes, timetabling of services, fares for disabled passengers, connections with other public transport services and any other information the LTA deems appropriate
- responsibility for administering the national concessionary bus fare schemes for eligible older and disabled people and the power to supplement the statutory concession with local discretionary concessions
- duty to publish digital material, including information relating to transport services

The Bus Services Act 2025 broadened the range of tools available to LTAs to improve their bus services. This includes:

- opening up, simplifying and streamlining bus franchising
- strengthening the arrangements between LTAs and operators in areas with EPs
- requiring LTAs in EP areas to identify and publish a list of socially necessary local services and implement a more robust process before these can be changed or cancelled – the government expects franchising LTAs to follow a similar process
- enabling the creation of new local authority bus companies
- providing a new power for LTAs to design and pay bus operator grants
- a new duty to produce, consult and maintain a bus network accessibility plan
- new powers for LTAs to tackle anti-social behaviour
- new requirements to protect vulnerable passengers including mandatory training requirements for bus staff

The department has published the following guidance to support LTAs:

- [Setting up a bus franchising scheme](#)
- [Bus franchising manual](#)
- [Enhanced partnerships](#)
- [Designing and setting up a bus grant payment scheme](#)
- [Floating bus stops provision and design](#)
- [Bus user priority \(local transport note 1/24\)](#)

In due course, the department will publish guidance on:

- bus franchising
- bus network accessibility plans
- bus service improvement plans
- local authority bus companies
- bus byelaws

## Improving bus services

LTAs must set out their policies for improving buses and how they will implement them as part of their LTP. The LTP should align with the department's national vision for buses.

The LTP should contain:

- a description and analysis of local bus services
- a vision for bus services in the LTP area
- the high-level approach to how the vision for bus services will be implemented
- a plan to improve bus punctuality, including through improved bus priority measures

The plan to improve bus service punctuality in the LTP should set clear expectations towards improving punctuality. This plan should be developed and implemented in partnership with LHAs, local traffic authorities, bus operators and traffic commissioners. Where relevant, LTAs should consider using a KRN to improve bus service punctuality.

The following must align with the overall policies set out in the LTP:

- for LTAs in the process of introducing a bus franchising scheme, LTAs must assess whether a proposed franchising scheme would support the local transport policies set out in the LTP
- for LTAs with an enhanced partnership (EP), the policies set out in the EP plan should be in line with the policies in the LTP, with more detail on bus policies and how the LTA will work with operators set out in the EP – the EP scheme should set out in more detail the measures that will be taken to improve bus services when compared to an LTP
- every LTA has a duty to produce a bus network accessibility plan. LTPs and these plans should be aligned – these plans must be published for the first time by 31 March 2027, and thereafter reviewed where there is a substantial change to local bus services or at least every 3 years
- every LTA must continue to produce a bus service improvement plan (BSIP) – this should be aligned with the overall bus policies set out in the LTP, but provide more detail on the current bus offer and proposals to improve bus services – for LTAs with an EP, the statutory EP plan can service as the BSIP document to meet the department's requirements, so long as it complies with forthcoming BSIP guidance and is updated in line with the government's expectations

In developing their LTP, LTAs should articulate the following:

- a bus vision – a clear statement setting out the ambitions for delivering the LTP's overall vision for integrated transport and implementing locally the government's ambition and policies for buses
- the current offer to passengers – a summary of the existing bus service in the area, setting out the role it plays in the overall integrated transport system of the LTA area, and an analysis of how it compares to the aims and objectives of the bus vision
- ambitions and proposals for the medium to long term – this will help provide a high quality and flexible pipeline attractive to funders. LTA priorities and proposals should be set out geographically and thematically for examples as follows:
  - bus network development – improvements to bus service levels and network coverage, including socially necessary local services
  - bus priority infrastructure – priority routes/corridors
  - improvements to fares and ticketing
  - improvements to waiting infrastructure – bus stops, stations and interchanges
  - measures to improve personal safety and security
  - measures to improve accessibility and inclusion

LTAs should also take into consideration:

- the range of bus service providers in their area and the surrounding areas
- commercial bus operators and services tendered by the LTA
- community transport operators
- large and small-to-medium-sized enterprises
- potential new entrants to the bus market

Cross-border services collaboration should be also considered, to enable the provision of quality networks for passengers travelling across LTAs.

### **Modern buses, decarbonisation and air quality**

The full transition to zero emission buses is a vital part of the government's plan to make buses better for passengers and to realise the benefits of lower running costs, cleaner air and smoother, quieter journeys.

The Bus Services Act 2025 includes a measure to accelerate the decarbonisation of bus services, by prohibiting bus operators from using new non-zero emission buses on English local bus services from no earlier than 2030.

The final date will be announced by the government following full engagement with interested stakeholders. While existing non-zero emission buses can be used after this date, LTAs should liaise with bus operators in developing a pathway to ultimately fully decarbonise their local bus fleet.

To assist authorities in establishing the value for money of any zero emission bus investment, a [Greener Bus Tool](#) has been developed. A further total cost of ownership model is under development to assist LTAs in determining an appropriate level of subsidy to bus operators.

LTAs, working with bus operators, should set out the pathway to decarbonise their local bus fleet. This should include the date from which they intend it to be fully zero emission. To support cleaner air, the pathway should also describe requirements for bus operators to manage air pollutant emissions from fleets before they are fully zero emission. This should include:

- emission standards for pollutants such as nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate matter
- targeted maintenance to improve the performance of emissions abatement systems
- retention of clean vehicle retrofit accreditation scheme (CVRAS) accreditation for retrofitted buses

LTAs, working with bus operators, should also consider if zero emission buses can be deployed in areas where there is poor air quality.

### **Demand responsive transport**

Demand responsive transport (DRT) has been increasingly introduced by LTAs over the last few years.

A formal definition of DRT is yet to emerge, however, the recently published [DRT Best Practice Guidance](#) defines DRT as a flexible service that provides shared transport at separate fares in response to requests from users who specify their desired location and

## *Buses and coaches*

time of pick-up and drop-off, typically using smaller vehicles than traditional fixed route bus services. LTAs considering DRT should refer to the guidance.

DRT can complement fixed route public transport services and improve mobility in low-density areas and at low-demand times of day, DRT should be considered as part of a broad suite of transport options available to LTAs.

While many DRT services are implemented primarily to improve social inclusivity and access to services, DRT can also contribute to decarbonisation by replacing private car journeys and facilitating multi-modal travel – for example, linking users to a train station or fixed route bus service. It is important that DRT services are integrated into the local transport network to be effective.

DRT may also offer a more accessible service to older and disabled people than other forms of bus. When exploring DRT, LTAs should consider vehicle and booking system accessibility, and the need for disability awareness training for drivers.

## **Community transport**

The department expects LTAs to recognise the full range of transport services that people rely on, including those that fill gaps in local transport networks such as community transport. LTAs must therefore engage with community transport operators in their area when producing their LTPs.

Community transport plays a critical role in facilitating people's independence, allowing them to connect with communities, employment, education and essential services such as healthcare.

These services often provide a lifeline for vulnerable and older people as well as those living in rural areas that are less well connected with regular public transport modes. These services provide affordable, accessible options for people with mobility needs, so without them many would be unable to travel, negatively impacting on health and wellbeing.

Community transport is typically run by not-for-profit organisations, charities or community groups and so does not always have a voice within LTAs. The department expects LTAs to think holistically and to engage with these organisations to ensure they are involved in local transport decision making and planning and that their services are integrated into the wider transport network.

When developing their LTPs, LTAs should engage with the Community Transport Association (CTA), the membership organisation that represents the community transport sector.

## **The role of coaches in the local transport system**

Coaches play an important role in local transport networks and economies by:

- providing essential links between many towns, cities, airports and other destinations
- connecting people to education through home to school services and providing rail replacement services when trains stop running
- contributing to the local economies through tourism, with [coach passengers spending £8.3 billion a year in Britain's tourist hot spots](#)

The department therefore expects LTAs to recognise and plan for the role and contribution of coach services in their LTPs. In particular, LTAs should:

- consider in their LTP the current and potential demand for coaches – including for regular and special events that generate peaks in demand
- work with local highway authorities to set a vision, policies and plans to deliver appropriate provisions for coaches, both scheduled and other services
- set out in their LTP how appropriate, accessible, parking and pick-up/drop-off locations for coach services will be provided – this should include consideration of the space needed for the operation of vehicle wheelchair lifts, the importance of good lighting and signage, driver welfare facilities and the appropriateness of CCTV coverage at key locations
- consider opportunities in the LTP to provide coaches with access to bus lanes if they do not already have them, where this will not have a noticeable negative impact on the performance of the lane for local buses
- consider, where relevant, in co-operation with other LTAs, whether providing funding to pump-prime new or more frequent scheduled coach services, would improve connectivity, access to employment or bring wider economic benefits. This should be considered alongside other potential interventions, such as funding new or additional rail services or infrastructure – including as an interim measure while new infrastructure or services are planned and provided

When developing their LTPs LTAs should engage with and seek advice from trade bodies such as:

- Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- Road Haulage Association
- UK Coach Operators Association

LTAs may also want to consider seeking recognition and accreditation for the coach facilities available in towns and cities with a visitor economy, for example through the CPT's coach friendly scheme. LTAs may also want to review in CPT's guide to creating a coach-friendly destination.

LTAs must:

- set out their policies for improving bus services and how they will implement them as part of their LTP
- continue to have either an enhanced partnership or be following the statutory bus franchising process
- continue to maintain and update a bus service improvement plan
- produce a bus network accessibility plan

LTAs should:

- include a plan to improve bus service punctuality in their LTP, including through improved bus priority measures
- work with bus operators to set out a high level pathway to decarbonise their local bus fleet
- work with bus operators to manage air pollutant emissions from fleets before they are fully zero emission
- consider the role of demand responsive transport as part of their LTP

## *Buses and coaches*

- consider the role of community transport as part of their LTP
- recognise the role of coach services in, and plan for their contribution to, local transport as part of their LTP

## Light rail

Government recognises the valuable role that light rail systems can play in delivering high-quality, reliable, and sustainable transport as part of truly integrated urban networks. Light rail can:

- support economic growth
- improve connectivity
- enhance the passenger experience.

In England, responsibility for light rail systems is devolved. Each local authority that owns a system is accountable for its operation and long-term financial sustainability.

LTAs are best placed to identify opportunities for light rail and assess the potential benefits within their areas. It is therefore for authorities to bring forward proposals where they consider light rail to be appropriate.

LTAs should be mindful that light rail schemes are among the most expensive local transport interventions, and they must therefore ensure proportionality and value for money by considering a full range of modal options when planning transport solutions.

Decisions should be mode-neutral and based on robust evidence, taking account of local needs, deliverability, and long-term sustainability.

## Taxis and private hire vehicles

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) are an integral part of local transport networks. They are used by everyone in our communities, but especially low-income young women and those with mobility difficulties. Taxis and PHVs:

- enable people to access the businesses, schools, and hospitals in their area
- provide the important 'first-and-last mile' of longer journeys on other modes
- are often vital for late night travel or reaching places not served by public transport

People today do not live their lives within the boundaries of local authorities, they cross these invisible borders frequently, living in one area but working and socialising in others.

Outside London, district and unitary councils are currently responsible for regulating the taxi and PHV sector. The council responsible for taxis and PHVs is known as the licensing authority. This means there are currently 263 licensing authorities in England and whether they are also the LHA or the LTA varies by area.

Licensing authorities are uniquely placed to ensure that taxi and PHV services within their area actively promote equality and independence for disabled people. By ensuring the drivers and operators they license understand how to provide every customer with the assistance they need, licensing authorities can ensure disabled people travel with confidence that their needs will be met.

Licensing authorities should take action to support sufficient wheelchair accessible vehicles to satisfy passenger demand so that wheelchair users need no longer structure their lives around the times and locations when vehicles accessible to them are likely to be available.

Supporting an accessible service is an integral aspect of licensing authorities' role. Therefore, it is important that licensing authorities make the provision of an inclusive service a core strategic aim, and that they consider the factors which can influence the extent to which such services meet the needs of all passengers.

The government is currently consulting on making LTAs the licensing authority for taxis and PHVs. Whatever decision is taken, LTPs should include a clear vision for the role of taxis and PHVs as part of the transport solution for the LTA's area – including any expectations on their role and use relative to public transport and how they can support goals like emissions reduction and charging infrastructure for transport decarbonisation. This should be grounded in the needs and experiences of passengers and recognise the particular reliance placed on taxis and PHVs by disabled people.

Where the licensing of taxis and PHVs is not the responsibility of the LTA, they should work with taxi and PHV licensing authorities when developing their LTPs. This can support goals like emissions reduction and charging infrastructure for transport decarbonisation and the provision of a range of services to meet passengers' varied needs.

Under the English Devolution & Community Empowerment Bill, currently before Parliament, constituent councils of a strategic authority would have a duty to implement the strategic authority's LTP when carrying out their functions. If the constituent council is the licensing authority, they would have a duty to implement the LTP when carrying out their taxi and PHV licensing functions.

The department issues guidance to local authorities in England to support them in ensuring that their [local taxi and PHV licensing regime](#) fosters safe and accessible services for all passengers.

LTAAs should:

- work with licensing authorities to consider the role of taxis and private hire vehicles as part of their LTPs
- include a clear vision in their LTP for the role of taxis and PHVs as part of the transport system for the area

# Electric vehicle infrastructure charging strategy

The successful deployment of zero emission vehicles relies on the widespread availability of charging infrastructure. LTAs are fundamental to successful chargepoint rollout, particularly the deployment of scaled, equitable local charging networks. Crucially, LTAs:

- are responsible for strategic transport planning
- can influence local policies on planning and development

All LTAs must develop and publish an electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure strategy as part of their LTP. This EV infrastructure strategy should be in line with national and LTP objectives and include their policy on cross-pavement charging solutions. The EV infrastructure strategy can either be a chapter of a single LTP document or a separate EV infrastructure strategy document that sits underneath the LTA's LTP.

Developing and maintaining an up-to-date EV infrastructure strategy allows LTAs to:

- set a clear vision defining local priorities for EV uptake, aligned with national policies and local approaches to decarbonise transport
- identify where and when new charging infrastructure may be required, delivering scaled, commercially sustainable provision
- create new investment opportunities and inspire local confidence in EVs
- monitor progress and adapt policy in line with evolving priorities

When considering the development of an EV infrastructure strategy, the department recommends LTAs consider the following areas. These could be worked through using a checklist structure.

1. Introduction – explain the purpose and need for the document.
2. Rationale – outline the reason for action.
3. Current status – describe the current situation, considering road transport emissions, air quality, EV uptake to-date and existing levels of charging provision including cross pavement solutions, particularly for residents without access to off-street parking.
4. Projections – outline a range of EV infrastructure scenarios and the need for EV infrastructure, considering future projections of local EV uptake to understand the level and type of charging infrastructure required, and ensure all areas and communities have access to it.
5. Benefits – clearly detail the benefits which may result from the projected uptake.
6. Role of the LA – outline the case for LA involvement in the deployment of EV infrastructure, considering engagement with residents and businesses to ensure the strategy meets the local charging needs of all residents, fleets and visitors including disabled people. LTAs should also work with local electricity distribution network operators to understand energy considerations and consider integration with broader local planning including, but not exclusive of, local growth plans, climate change action plans, air quality management plans, local area energy mapping and planning.
7. Strategy – summarise the strategic plan to move from current status to projected status. LTAs should set out their approach to cross-pavement solutions, including local adoption policy, with reference to departmental guidance. LTAs should set out where these are suitable, paying particular regard to vision and impaired and other disabled people, along with their approach to providing permissions.

8. Implementation – outline the implementation approach, considering ownership options, a commercial approach and procurement and delivery route that reflects local priorities and considers opportunities to draw in private investment.
9. Conclusion – summarise the recommended approach and action plan.

Government has made a wide range of free resources available to LTAs to support all aspects of the development and delivery of EV infrastructure strategies including planning, procurement and stakeholder engagement. There is also guidance on charge point safety, accessibility, including PAS1899:2022 and charge point delivery.

This is largely contained on the [Knowledge Repository](#) and includes insight on how to write and implement an EV infrastructure strategy.

Helpful guidance on cross-pavement solutions includes:

- [Cross-pavement solutions for charging electric vehicles.](#)
- a [Blueprint delivery document \(PDF\)](#) on the Knowledge Repository to assist LTAs in deciding how to implement and deploy cross-pavement solutions in their local areas
- [Technical guidance concerning the code of practice for electrical installation](#)
- –guidance on [how to reinstate a road after doing street works](#)

LTAs must:

- produce an electric vehicle infrastructure strategy as part of their LTP. This must include the LTAs policy on cross-pavement charging solutions

## **The role of rail in local transport**

The rail network is a key part of the country's national rail network. Rail's core strengths are in providing for:

- passenger travel between Britain's main economic hubs, such as cities, large towns and airports
- high volume passenger travel into city-centres and in urban areas
- long-distance movement of bulk freight

These core strengths will vary in importance for local areas depending on local circumstances. These local circumstances should be considered by LTAs when developing any rail policies in their LTP.

### **The Long-Term Rail Strategy**

The Railways Bill, currently before Parliament, would commit government to publish a long-term rail strategy (30 year horizon) which set out the Secretary of State's vision and objectives for Great British Rail (GBR). It will set out long term strategic objectives for rail that should guide decision making over a 30 year period and the outcomes the railway is expected to deliver to support the government's broader economic, social and environmental ambitions.

While the primary audience for the long-term rail strategy is GBR, it will also benefit LTAs who will be able to use the strategy to support their ambition around local transport and how it interacts with the railways, housing and jobs.

# Working in partnership with Great British Railways

The formation of Great British Railways (GBR) will mark a major shift in how the railway operates. GBR will be established as a new publicly owned and accountable directing mind for the railway. It will be accountable for the service it delivers, with clear targets to meet for service performance and quality. GBR will run passenger trains and manage the infrastructure, combining the functions of today's rail operators and Network Rail, bringing decision making together across track and train.

GBR will play an important role in local economies, not just as an employer and trader. Under the Railways Bill, currently before Parliament, mayoral strategic authorities (MSAs) would have a statutory role in the railways with requirements placed on GBR to consult them, share information and enter into partnership arrangements.

It is vital that MSAs and GBR work together in developing LTPs to ensure policies and investments are aligned, to improve public transport across modes.

LTAs that are not MSAs will not have a statutory role in the running of the railways. However, they will still be able to engage with GBR and help support a fully integrated local transport system.

The Urban Transport Group and rail industry have developed a guide for building relationships between GBR and LTAs to support partnership working. This provides a framework which offers a range of options for MSAs to exercise their statutory roles in partnership with GBR. The depth of partnership can flex from time to time according to local priorities.

Partnership	Available to	Partnership includes
<b>Collaborating with MSA</b>	Mayoral strategic authorities	Committed 2-way collaboration with a presumption that GBR will deliver LTP rail objectives where operationally and financially possible.
<b>Investing</b>	Mayoral strategic authorities	The MSA coinvests to realise local rail outcomes. GBR and the MSA agree a joint investment plan to maximise co-investment.
<b>Commissioning</b>	Mayoral strategic authorities	The MSA commissions local services from GBR and holds them accountable for delivery. MSAs specify and take a financial stake, including financial risk, in a defined local rail service.

In addition, Established MSAs will have the right to request fully devolved rail services. This would mean devolved services are carved out and separated from GBR. Rail is locally managed by the LTA, who takes on revenue risk. Example: Merseyrail.

All other LTAs will be able to engage with GBR to ensure LTPs are informed by input from the railway, and LTAs are able to input into rail planning.

## **Local transport plans and rail**

LTAAs should work with Network Rail and DFTO (or remaining train operating companies) ahead of the stand up of GBR if considering rail as part of their LTPs.

Local rail projects are among the most expensive of local transport interventions and LTAs should consider whether rail is the best option for the outcomes alongside other modes. They should consider costs and potential funding sources when considering including any local rail project within their LTP.

Given the potential impact on the national rail network, it is also vital that LTAs engage with Network Rail and DFTO or train operators ahead of GBR stand up and with GBR when established, when developing any rail projects as part of their LTP.

The inclusion of a particular policy or rail project within an LTP does not mean they will be funded by Network Rail and train operators ahead of GBR stand up, or by the future GBR or central government.

Early engagement with the railway will ensure that LTPs are informed and rail proposals are deliverable. Engagement also supports the railway by building an understanding of the local growth and economic development plans and strategies that the LTP is seeking to enable, informing railway planning and investment processes.

### **A local mayoral rail strategy**

Under the Railway Bill currently before Parliament, mayoral strategic authorities (MSAs) would have a statutory role in the railways. As part of this, GBR would have a statutory duty to have regard to MSA LTPs when carrying out its functions.

To support GBR, MSAs may want to consider including a local rail strategy as part of their LTP. MSAs can consider the following for a local rail strategy:

- integrating rail fares and timetables with bus and tram services to simplify multi-modal journeys for passengers
- policies to improve all passengers experience of travelling by rail, such as safe and accessible places for passengers to wait for bus, taxis and private hire vehicles and walking, wheeling and cycling connections to and from railway stations
- placemaking around stations through higher-density housing, civic, community spaces like parks or plazas, higher-density commercial development, like retail or office space and local regeneration and community-led initiatives
- the appropriate balance between improving local train services and/or other modes such as light rail, trams and buses to best meet local needs and support growth
- the value for money and affordability of improving local rail services, as part of the coordinated local transport network
- working with GBR from an early stage of strategy development to identify the economic impacts of the trade-offs that might be needed with other rail services such as regional and longer distance passenger and freight services, to ensure train services are reliable and best meet the needs of all passengers, including those making both local and longer-distance journeys

LTAs should:

- work with Network Rail and the Department for Transport Operator (DfTO) or train operating companies ahead of the stand up of Great British Railways (GBR) if considering rail as part of their local transport plans

MSAs should:

- set out a rail strategy as part of their LTP

## Local transport outcome frameworks

The department has set out the priorities that it wants LTAs to achieve with transport funding in delivering their local plans and priorities via:

- integrated settlement outcome frameworks that have been agreed with each of the established mayoral strategic authorities – this framework includes local transport outcomes and targets they are expected to achieve for each outcome
- local transport outcome framework that will apply to all other LTAs to govern increasingly consolidated transport funding –this sets out the local transport outcomes for these LTAs, but it does not include specific targets, instead, LTAs performance against a series of indicators will be used as part of the overall assessment of LTA performance

The indicators in the local transport outcome framework that will be used to hold LTAs to account for local transport performance are set out below:

Indicator	Data source
<b>% mode share of trips made by public transport</b>	DfT Mobile Network Data Modelling
<b>Public transport, walking and cycling connectivity score to key destinations</b>	DfT Connectivity Tool
<b>Bus patronage (passenger journeys; elderly and concessionary journeys)</b>	DfT Annual Bus Statistics
<b>Bus punctuality, reliability and speed</b>	DfT Bus Open Data Service / Local data
<b>Bus passenger satisfaction</b>	Transport Focus – Your Bus Journey
<b>Bus accessibility</b>	DfT Annual Bus Statistics
<b>Vehicle miles on local bus services</b>	DfT Annual Bus Statistics
<b>Tram and light rail patronage</b>	DfT Light Rail and Tram Statistics
<b>Miles of compliant new or improved active travel network delivered</b>	LTA reporting – Active Travel Update Your Capital Scheme
<b>% of adults doing active travel at least twice in the last 28 days</b>	Sport England
<b>Active travel capability rating</b>	DfT Assessment
<b>Local highways capability rating</b>	DfT Assessment
<b>Local authority-managed roads where maintenance should be considered</b>	DfT Road Condition Statistics
<b>Road casualties (KSIs; KSIs under 16; pedestrian and cyclist KSIs)</b>	DfT Road Casualties Statistics
<b>NO<sub>2</sub> monitoring sites above legal limits</b>	Local authority monitoring data / DEFRA national monitoring network

Indicator	Data source
<b>Annual transport carbon impacts to 2050 (user and infrastructure emissions)</b>	LTA reporting using Quantifiable Carbon Guidance
<b>% of bus fleet that is zero tailpipe emission</b>	DfT Annual Bus Statistics
<b>Public EV chargepoints per 100,000 population</b>	DfT EV Charging Infrastructure Statistics
<b>EV charging sockets and pavement channels on local authority land</b>	LTA reporting
<b>Transport capital programme reporting (scheme numbers and % spend in development, delivery and completion)</b>	LTA reporting

The government has also launched a local outcomes framework which sets 16 national priority outcomes – including transport – that central and local government will work in partnership to deliver. These outcomes are aligned with the local transport outcome frameworks in this section of the document.

## **Suggested list of stakeholders for local transport authorities to consult**

Effective, early and truly collaborative consultation is essential in delivering LTPs that are fit for purpose.

Under the Transport Act 2000 (as amended) strategic authorities must consult constituent councils in their area on the LTP.

If the LTA is a county council, they must consult district councils in their area on the LTP.

The Transport Act 2000 (as amended) places a duty on LTAs when preparing their LTPs to consult as appropriate:

- operators of any rail network, station or services in the area (i.e. Network Rail and Train Operating Companies)
- bus operators
- other transport service operators and providers
- organisations representing transport users, such as public transport users groups

The act also requires LTAs to consult such others as they consider appropriate. This might include the following, although this is not an exhaustive list it includes:

- neighbouring LTAs
- active travel groups
- bus and coach sector bodies including:
  - Association of Local Bus Managers (ALBUM)
  - Bus Users UK -Confederation of Passenger Transport
  - Road Haulage Association
  - UK Coach Operators Association
- community transport operators and the Community Transport Association
- community rail partnerships
- disabled person groups
- environmental non-governmental organisations
- freight companies and organisations including the Logistics UK and Road Haulage Association
- local education authorities, education providers and universities
- national parks and park authorities
- parish and town councils
- ports and airports
- public health and integrated care system directors
- representatives of older people
- representatives of children and young people
- representatives of women's groups
- road safety organisations
- sub-national transport bodies
- taxi and private hire vehicle companies and organisations