

2-4 Send Road Redevelopment in Context of Reading Transport Strategy 2036

SUMMARY

The proposed scheme for the redevelopment of 2-4 Send Road has been conceived with sustainable transport at its heart. Drawing on the draft policy document Reading Transport Strategy 2036 (RTS)¹ and further insights from the new London Plan, the transport and parking approach taken to the development of this site is highly appropriate for the location, fits with the Council's transport goals, and reflects new travel patterns and habits that have emerged in the decade since the adoption of the current parking standards in 2011.

The private car has dominated transport in the UK for several decades, but that role is changing as more sustainable options are available and necessary to meet climate change and air quality improvement targets. Reading Council has emphasised the need to reduce private car dependency, as articulated in Reading's transport strategy.

Removing that dependency on private cars is a key thrust of the transport strategy, while simultaneously improving more sustainable forms of transport. RTS states: "Transforming how we travel is essential to achieving this vision," with goals outlined of reliable journey times, less congestion and sustainable options for all.

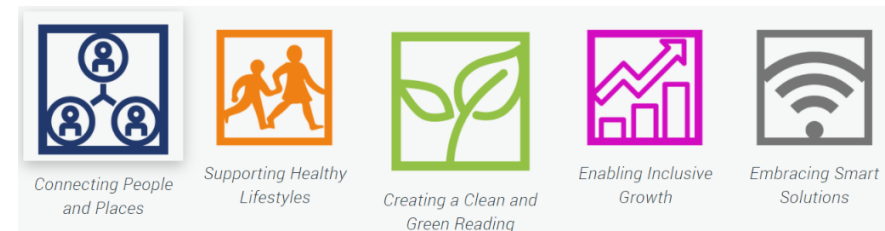
RTS articulates many of the key problems currently facing transport in Reading, such as severe road congestion, noise and air pollution and slow journeys. In addition, RTS notes some of the key attributes of transport in Reading. For instance, bus usage in Reading is the third highest in the country outside of London and has increased by 23% since 2010, compared to a UK-wide reduction of 11%. Reading station is the fourth busiest station in the country outside of London. Around 35% of trips into town are made on foot or by bike. Sustainable travel, including walking and cycling, now accounts for over 75% of trips to and from the town centre. But there is scope and need for so much more.

RTS notes key priorities for improvements:

- Improve public transport to make it faster, cheaper and more accessible.
- Increase public transport options such as expanding bus networks, creating 'priority routes' and introducing new Park & Ride sites.
- Tackle congestion with schemes that charge drivers in certain zones or at certain times of the day, or make some areas car-free.
- Encourage the use of shared transport such as car clubs, lift share and cycle hire.
- Increase capacity on the network, such as more buses and bus lanes, additional spaces for cyclists and pedestrians and new forms of transport like river taxis.

RTS states "the status quo is not an option" and the "strategy provides high quality and realistic alternatives to the private car." It adds: "We recognise that difficult choices will need to be made to address the climate crisis and improve air quality in our town" and to "achieve our overall vision for a step-change in sustainable travel choices in Reading."

The development proposal for 2-4 Send Road presents a high quality scheme that fits with the RTS vision, nudging people into more sustainable transport lifestyles with enhanced cycle storage and support for electrified personal mobility. Onsite car parking is reduced from the parking standards, which are now over 10 years old and no longer reflect the reality of transport requirements in such accessible parts of the town as Send Road, nor Reading's transport vision.



¹ Reading Transport Strategy 2036 was due for adoption in late-2020, but has been delayed as a result of COVID-19.

Sustainable Journeys Increasing

RTS seeks to “promote healthy choices and wellbeing” and to “Provide transport options to enhance quality of life, reduce emissions and improve air quality to create a carbon neutral town” to “encourage active travel and lifestyles” and “Promote the use of sustainable modes of transport by providing attractive alternatives to the private car.” RTS notes that over the last 10 years (since Reading’s parking standards were adopted), trips to/from central Reading by public transport have increased by 53%, walking and cycling by 56% and car and taxi trips have decreased by 13%.

More Homes, More People

Between 2013 and 2036 an additional 2,600 homes are planned to be built each year in the local area and population growth will mean more trips on Reading’s transport network each day. Between 2013 and 2036, Reading’s Local Plan commits to the delivery of 15,847 homes. According to RTS, Reading Borough itself was estimated to be home to 163,203 people in 2018 and around 233,000 in the greater Reading area. The population is set to rise by a further 8.7% by 2036.

If you take those 15,847 additional homes and put them into a car ownership context, assuming an average home size of two persons, that equates to 31,500 people. If you give each home two parking spaces that might encourage another 31,500 private cars. If you on the other hand provide one parking space per unit, that’s half the number of cars. Some residents will have more cars and park elsewhere, but a lot of people will transition into more sustainable forms of transport. The scheme for 2-4 Send Road gives people the option of having a car to use now and then. As the reality of ride hailing services and car clubs etc. take off, and Reading’s commitment to sustainable travel takes deeper root, some of these car parking spaces may arguably not even be needed in the near future.

RTS states: “Without interventions, car traffic is predicted to increase as a result of development, leading to additional demand on roads across Reading.” Simply put, reducing parking provision in new developments, with appropriately articulated sustainable travel options, will help to reduce congestion, improve air quality and reduce travel times.

UK’s Changing Car Culture

The picture of private car ownership and usage in the UK has been changing over the last few decades.

Younger ages are becoming less car dependent and many young people are getting a driving license much later in life, if at all. In the 1990s 80% of people drove by age 30. Today, 80% of people drive by age 45. People are staying in education later, car insurance for young drivers is out of reach for many, and families are being started at later ages.

At the same time, ownership of things is becoming outdated – look at how the bulk of music and movies are now accessed through streaming services. At the same time, people are working more hours from home (and this has intensified through COVID-19), and far more shopping takes place on line with a massive increase in home delivery services, which have eliminated many vehicle journeys and made it easy to lead a low- or no-car lifestyle in urban areas.

Reduce Cars, Improve Air Quality

Another driver of the need for a shift in transport habits in Reading is air quality. The town introduced an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in the town centre and key corridors into and out of the town, given the high levels of car congestion and accompanying air pollution in parts of Reading – and resultant deaths from poor air quality. RTS states that despite developing technologies that are reducing vehicle pollution, “a reduction in vehicle usage is the only measure that will improve air quality further.” Disincentivising private car ownership and incentivizing sustainable travel choices are therefore essential. Providing fewer onsite parking spaces on new developments is in sync with achieving this outcome.

Reading has severe congestion problems. Central Government statistics indicate that Reading has the third highest levels of delays on A-roads of any local authority outside London. The population of Reading is increasing and RTS suggests the Council is starting to follow in the footsteps of some of the London Boroughs that sought to reduce car ownership and parking. Reading already has high levels of bus usage so it

is in a good position to reduce car parking on accessible sites in close proximity to bus routes. As outlined in our Transport Statement, our development scheme is right next to a high frequency bus corridor.

Through RTS, Reading is clearly committed to improving public transport and walking and cycling facilities. Leading sustainable, low- or no-car lifestyles in Reading is increasingly viable in accessible locations like Send Road. RTS speaks of giving priority “to sustainable travel over private car use to support healthy lifestyles.” There are multiple benefits from this approach: improved air quality, reduced congestion (and accordingly improved productivity), and reducing car parking and car use will lead to more walking and cycling journeys that will improve health levels.

Another key change from when Reading’s parking standards were adopted is the availability of private hire vehicles and ride sharing. Apps now enable people to call up a vehicle when they need it.

How else can we encourage sustainable travel choices by our future occupants? Future occupiers will self-select given the sustainable location and travel provision. Nature abhors a vacuum. If you create more parking spaces they will get filled. If you create less parking spaces, fewer will be needed. People who have or want to own multiple private vehicles will de-select from a development like this. We will provide future occupiers with a Home User Guide (HUG) and that will clearly articulate the sustainable transport features of the site and location, with additional guidance on cycle, ebike, and escooter safety and maintenance.

Dis-incentivising Private Car

RTS also outlines other aspects of the transport solution that will further dis-incentivise private car use, and were not conceived of when the current parking standards were adopted in Reading back in 2011 – and drafted some time even earlier. RTS indicates the Council is looking at demand management schemes, and investigating options including, Workplace Parking Levy, Road User Charging, Clean Air Zone and Emissions-Based Charging, which will also reduce private car demand and use.

Data in the RTS also indicates that there is popular support for promoting sustainable travel in the town, including 90% support for car-free spaces,

75% support for reallocating road space for sustainable transport (75%), and 92% support for improving the connectivity of the walking and cycling network in Reading. There is clearly backing in the community for reducing car use and ownership.

In the near term, RTS also recognizes there are innovations that will further reduce the need for owning a private vehicle, such as driverless and connected vehicles. RTS states: “our ambition is for residents of Reading to be at the forefront of benefitting from these opportunities.” Driverless cars and connected vehicles mean increasingly there will be no need to own a car for anyone.

RTS states: “It will be important to encourage sustainable travel to manage growth by providing high-quality alternatives to the private car.”

The scheme for 2-4 Send Road is highly appropriate for the new reality of transport requirements in 2021 and beyond. The number of parking spaces is suitable based on historical data, and the picture will only swing more to reduced levels of private car ownership. Some of the households occupying these homes may well have no cars. Our proposed scheme has additional benefits for the neighbourhood of a less car dominated street scene. Well-designed buildings and landscaping are far more attractive than car filled developments.

Walking and Cycling

RTS further details the benefits of increasing walking and cycling with increased opportunities for social engagement. It states: “There is clear evidence that the environment in which people live has a significant impact on health and wellbeing. It has both direct health benefits, and an impact on people’s attitudes, behaviours and perceptions of their environment. For instance, reducing air pollution can improve perceptions of safety and promote outdoor physical activity and social interaction.”

RTS also indicates that Reading is committed to improving infrastructure prioritising pedestrians and cyclists, such as segregated facilities, traffic calming measures, and public space improvements. The clear pattern is that walking and cycling are going to be increasingly easy, safe and appealing in Reading.

RTS also demonstrates Reading is committed to increasing the number of walking and cycling trips into the town centre within a 2km and 10km radius respectively. Send Road and Forge Close would have a higher number of walking journeys than the average for the surrounding area because of the attractiveness of the route along the river or across Christchurch Meadows. The pedestrian bridge has further increased the attractiveness of the route and walking and cycling journeys to the station. All of these implemented changes post-date the 2011 adoption of the current parking standards.

Sustainable Transport Schemes Funded and Implemented

RTS also notes scope to greatly increase the amount of cycling, and cites examples from other urban areas who have been provided significant Central Government funding through the Cycling Ambition Cities programme. Reading has already been investing in improvements to walking and cycle routes in the town.



Dedicated cycle lanes along Sidmouth Street

The town has a strong track record of successfully securing external funding to deliver improvements to the transport network in Reading. Given the government's climate change agenda it is reasonable to expect

that at worst this pattern of attracting external funding will continue, so sustainable travel options will continue to improve in Reading, while the attractiveness of car use will continue to decline. More likely, additional funding will be made available to accelerate improvements in sustainable transport. For example, in August 2021, the Council reported it has applied for Government funding for segregated cycle lanes on Bath Road from Southcote Road to the IDR.

RTS notes: "We have delivered many significant active travel schemes including Christchurch Bridge and National Cycle Network route 422, alongside a comprehensive programme of local improvements such as numerous new pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities, additional cycle parking at Reading Station, town centre and local centres throughout the urban area, cycle training, road safety education and school and personalised travel planning initiatives." It further notes: "Christchurch Bridge was opened in 2015, providing a step-change in pedestrian and cycle provision between Caversham and Reading railway station and town centre, reducing the severance caused by the River Thames." Again, all these improvements all post-date the 2011 parking standards.

National Cycle Network Route 422 will connect Newbury and Ascot, via Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell. The scheme provides better connections for long distance cycle journeys, as well as enhanced facilities for more local journeys within Reading. The section within Reading links to those in neighbouring authorities serving major business parks, local centres, Royal Berkshire Hospital, the University of Reading and schools. Enhancements include both on and off carriageway cycle facilities, new crossing points including raised tables and tiger crossings to improve connectivity along the Bath Road, through the town centre and along Wokingham Road.

Combine these improvements with technological advances with electrification of bicycles and other personal modes of transport and sustainable journeys for leisure and work across the entirety of the Reading Borough become very achievable. For example, even a basic ebike has a range of 30 miles, and would cover a 5-mile journey at 15mph in 20 minutes. Given the compact nature of Reading Borough, there is significant opportunity for improvements to increase cycling levels and create a shift away from private car travel.

Accordingly, cycle usage will only have grown from previous figures. Our scheme will be supporting that with secure cycle storage at the properties, and Thames Valley Police cycle security guidance will be included in the Home User Guide (HUG). Send Road and Forge Close are within an easy and pleasant walk, cycle or e-scoot from Reading Station, Reading and Caversham town centres, and large open spaces and the rivers.

Further evidence of the sustainability of the Send Road location is in the wider transport connections enjoyed by Reading. RTS notes: “Existing rail lines runs east-west and north south through Reading, with frequent services from Reading Station providing fast links to London, the West, Wales, South West, South Coast, Gatwick Airport, the Midlands and North of England. Interchange at Hayes Station currently provides rail access to Heathrow Airport from Reading.” These excellent transport connections make it easy to cope without a private car – especially for homes in the most sustainable parts of the town like Send Road.

Reading Bus Service Popularity

In some towns with high car usage, bus services are infrequent and disadvantageous. This is completely the opposite in Reading, and that is reflected in strong growth in passenger numbers. Reading Buses has reported a 48% increase in bus use since 2009. Bus use per head of population in Reading has increased since 2010 by 24% and Reading now has the third highest level of bus use in the country. This is a markedly different situation to when the parking standards were drafted.

Private Car Use Compromised

At the same time, RTS notes that the average annual delay to drivers in Reading is more than twice England’s average. That is a strong motivator to encourage switching away from car use. Private car journeys are a compromised form of travel. According to RTS figures, the average car commuter in Reading spends 26 hours a year in congestion during peak hours. Reading car commute times have increased by 46% between 2007 and 2016. This is further testimony to the parking standards being adrift of the reality, requirements, constraints and opportunities in Reading.

Scooters

Households are able to accommodate more active travel ‘spaces’ through another change in transport culture. Many children and younger adults have a preference for scooters over bicycles, and scooters take up dramatically less space. Three scooters can easily fit in the space of one adult bike, and collapsible models can be kept inside without a need for dedicated cycle storage.

Electric scooters are getting large numbers of people mobile in sustainable ways, and escooter hire schemes have sprung up in several UK cities. Efforts are also afoot to resolve legal and safety issues surrounding the use of escooters in our towns, and they look set to play a growing role in non-car private transportation going forwards.

Significantly there is a continuing upward trend in sustainable transport trips against a decline in car trips.

Similarly, employment is another big generator of car trips in Reading, and RTS notes that up to 45% of car trips on the network in peak hours are related to employment. Send Road is within easy active travel distance of many places of employment. There has also been an increase in home working, reducing the need for private car journeys even further.

Changing Transport Environment

RTS makes further statements about how there are very different factors influencing today’s transport environment. “The Government’s targets for net zero by 2050 and a need to more than half CO2 emissions globally by 2030 as set out by the Commission for Climate Change require radical action.” It further says that “people will need to make changes to the way they live their lives and how they travel,” and “Even with electric vehicles, we will need to reduce how much we travel by private car.” Reducing car parking provision can help to nudge people into more sustainable and active travel modes.

RTS also points to advances in information services supporting transport. “The ability to connect door-to door could also provide an inclusive service reducing the need for households to own a car.” It continues: “Mobility services are widely forecast to provide a step-change in the way we will

travel in the future. Instead of individuals spending a lot of money investing in a car which is only in actual use around 4% or 5% of the time, they would pay a monthly subscription for a service that can be tailored to their needs which we can access via an app and a single payment platform. Mobility services can bring together public transport, with cycle hire, shared taxi hire as well as private car hire and, by reducing car ownership, can significantly reduce private car dependence which is critical to enabling economic growth in a net zero carbon future.” It continued that combined with big data and AI to predict demand and provide very efficient shared transport services, the need to own a car will be removed.

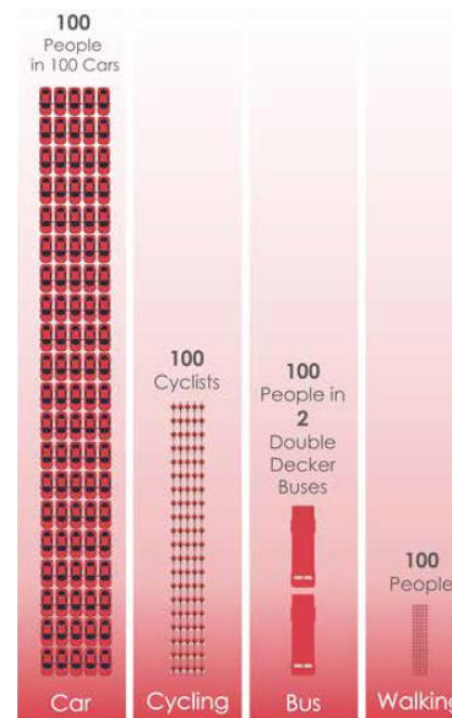
Micro-Mobility and Sharing Culture

Another key element of the changing transport environment is micro-mobility. Micro-mobility includes scooters, electric scooters, electric bikes and small electric one and two seat cars. While there are legislative challenges to overcome with e-scooters, trials of e-scooter hire are proving highly popular in other cities in the UK. Together e-bikes and e-scooters “with very little effort” open up larger areas to be within easy distance.

That change is accompanied by the growth of the sharing economy, where individuals are hiring out private cars, and there is a strong culture of sharing versus owning. RTS notes: “New companies are making sharing very easy and safe via apps, and this is expected to grow. Another aspect of the sharing economy is car sharing and there is significant potential for this to grow.”

Healthy Lifestyle Shift

One of the silver linings of COVID is people have re-discovered walking and cycling lifestyles and are enjoying the benefits of being outside for both their physical and mental well-being. This shift in lifestyles has become permanent for many people. RTS also states that there are “opportunities to improve signage to encourage walking, cycling and bus use as a preferred mode over private car, both for a complete trip, and as part of a multi-stage trip.”



Road space efficiency (Source: Reading Transport Strategy 2036)

Besides air quality arguments moving transport priorities away from private car journeys, there is another key health trend to get people out of cars and onto feet and bicycles: obesity. While obesity affects many different demographics, it is particularly concerning in children. RTS notes: “There is a high level of car use for trips to and from school in Reading, contributing to congestion in the peak hours, and an extended afternoon peak period. The level of physical activity for children is reduced and in Reading 34% of children are overweight or obese by the time they leave primary school.” Reducing car dependency can help nurture more active lifestyles among children. RTS: “Our overarching aim for school travel is therefore to increase the number of children walking, cycling or taking public transport and in reducing the number of car journeys to schools set ambitious targets to increase the percentage of the school community walking, cycling and using public transport.”

London Plan Highlights

Reading Transport Strategy 2036 makes several references to the London Plan. Some London Boroughs are further along in the transformation of policy and practice with regard to sustainable transport, and it can provide cues on where urban areas of Reading could benefit from policy and practice changes. RTS itself states that “we will integrate the principles of London’s Healthy Streets, and other best practice examples, into the development and delivery of walking and cycling schemes.”

The new London Plan states: “A shift from car use to more space-efficient travel also provides the only long-term solution to the road congestion challenges.” The Mayor has set a strategic target of 80 percent of all trips in London to be made by foot, cycle or public transport by 2041. The Plan also commits to rebalancing the transport system towards walking, cycling and public transport.

It also states: “The dominance of vehicles on streets is a significant barrier to walking and cycling, reduces the appeal of streets as public places and has an impact on the reliability and journey times of bus services. Reduced parking provision can facilitate higher-density development and support the creation of mixed and vibrant places that are designed for people rather than vehicles. As the population grows, a fixed road network cannot absorb the additional cars that would result from a continuation of current levels of car ownership and use. Implementing the parking standards in this Plan is therefore an essential measure to support the delivery of new housing across the city.”

One of the key features of the London Plan is the Healthy Streets Approach, which is designed to improve health and reduce health inequalities, which will help Londoners use cars less, and walk, cycle and use public transport more.

The car parking policy (T6) in the London Plan sets the tone for moving further away from private car dependency:

- Car parking should be restricted in line with levels of existing and future public transport accessibility and connectivity.
- Car-free development should be the starting point for all development proposals in places that are (or are planned to be) well-connected by public transport, with developments elsewhere designed to provide the minimum necessary parking (‘car-lite’).
- An absence of local on-street parking controls should not be a barrier to new development, and boroughs should look to implement these controls as needed.
- Boroughs with more restrictive general or operational parking policies are supported, including borough-wide or other area-based car-free policies. Outer London boroughs wishing to adopt minimum residential parking standards through a Development Plan Document (within the maximum standards set out in Policy T6.1 Residential parking) must only do so for parts of London that are PTAL 0-1. Inner London boroughs should not adopt minimum standards.

The Ten Healthy Streets Indicators



Source: Lucy Saunders

Walking and Cycling Way Forward

RTS set out ambitious plans to transform our streets and create an enhanced network of walking and cycling routes set out in our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The plan sets the Council's long-term aims for encouraging more people living in, working in and visiting Reading to consider walking and cycling for local journeys, or as part of longer multi-modal journeys. "We will aim to achieve this by prioritising pedestrian and cycle movements and providing safe and attractive routes that connect people to local services and support multi-modal journeys, such as those containing an element of bus or rail travel." 2-4 Send Road already enjoys those benefits of safe and attractive walking and cycling routes.

The Walking and Cycling policy in RTS reinforces the coming commitment to these modes of travel:

Policy RTS14 | Walking and Cycling

14.1: We will transform our walking and cycling network to be safe, clean and green and better connect people to local facilities and services, including education, retail, leisure and employment, as set out in the LCWIP.

14.2: We will create a hierarchy of walking and cycling routes, building on our existing network and seek to secure new routes, including through proposed developments, and, where feasible, segregate routes.

14.3: We will design our walking and cycling network to accommodate all users where feasible. This will include wheelchair users, adapted cycles, those who are visually impaired and cycles with trailers, for example.

14.4: We will integrate the LCWIP into cross departmental strategies to maximise the benefits of walking and cycling, including improved health and wellbeing, air quality, reduced emissions and to create a more attractive local environment.

14.5: We will monitor the development and uptake of new technologies such as e-bikes and e-scooters, to inform our walking and cycling strategy

Walking and biking prioritised in new Highway Code

From Autumn 2021, changes to the Highway Code will give pedestrians greater priority over cars at junctions and crossings. The Department of Transport also said there will be an extra £338 million in funding to boost cycling and walking, to help to sustain the increase in active travel during the pandemic. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said cycling and walking help people keep fit, reduce congestion and help the environment, so he was determined to keep the trend going by making them easier and safer.

RTS outlines further improvements to cycling infrastructure in the town:

- New and improved cycle parking hubs and facilities would encourage an increase in cycling as people would feel safe storing their bikes at key destinations, including transport interchanges and residential areas.
- By providing more residential cycle parking across the Borough, it will encourage more residents to own a bike and use it to travel to work and for leisure purposes. This will help to encourage a modal shift from car use to cycling, which in turn will reduce congestion and improve air quality around the town centre.
- Cycle hire hubs would increase access to cycling and complement other transport options. They provide opportunity for those who do not currently own a bicycle to try cycling, potentially leading to significant increases in cycling and physical activity.
- Increasing access to cycling could lead to corresponding reductions in car commuting and forecast congestion and could lead to improved air quality

Car Parking

RTS touches on car parking with the following statement: "Parking management is an important transport planning tool, enabling us to influence how people may choose to travel, with the aim of encouraging them to use more sustainable forms of transport." It makes reference to an

updated parking policy, but that is not yet available to assess. Given all the other arguments and evidence put forward in RTS, for Reading's urban areas, reduced car parking must be fundamental to a new parking SPD, and the town looks set to follow some London Borough's in having maximum rather than minimum parking requirements, and encouraging more car free development schemes to come forward.

RTS also indicates the Council is aware of opportunities to improve parking efficiency. The strategy document notes new technologies and systems to improve the efficiency of kerbside usage.

Powered Two Wheelers and Multi Modal Travel

The 2-4 Send Road development scheme recognises the potential of Powered two wheelers (sometimes also known as Powered Transporters) to contribute more to travel patterns in the town. RTS: "Powered two wheelers (PTW) have the potential to deliver reductions in congestion when used as a substitute to the car, occupying less road space, and being permitted to use some bus lanes where it is deemed safe to do so. The use of PTWs also contributes to improved accessibility and social inclusion where, for some, they provide a cheaper alternative to the car. PTWs can give independence to young people, being available from age 16, and have the potential to increase access to employment or further education opportunities.

RTS also notes the emergence of joined up thinking, with technologies that enable multi-modal sustainable transport choices. RTS states: "The car ownership model could be replaced by a mobility service contract, where an autonomous vehicle could be called up on demand. This concept also opens up a new world of travel options for those who do not have access to a car or hold a driving licence."

Sometimes a private hire vehicle is required. Taxi and private hire vehicles are a key part of the public transport network providing a service when other modes of public transport may be unavailable Technology can play a part in making taxis more accessible to people with the introduction of apps, cashless pay systems and enabling ride sharing. RTS states there is significant likelihood that Shared Autonomous Vehicles (SAVs) will come

forward within the next 5 to 10 years. That is further evidence of a declining need to own or park a private car.

Riding sharing apps can help too. RTS states that "if a car could pick you up and drop you off and attend to someone else's journey afterwards without the need for a driver, the efficiency of the model is vastly improved, particularly if you are willing to share your journey with someone else. We already share journeys on public transport yet are very reluctant to have strangers in our cars. This would not necessarily be a concern if we are buying a mobility package rather than a vehicle. Without the need to control the vehicle, we can also expect a marked increase in both productive and leisure time during travel."

This multi-modal travel arranging is also known as Mobility as a Service (Maas). RTS states that "current expectations are that we will start to move away from individual car ownership towards mobility services over the period of the plan. Trials are developing Mobility as a Service (MaaS), where, instead of owning a car, an individual signs up to a monthly mobility service contract to provide them with all their travel needs. Users plan and pay for their journeys using an easy-to-use app, and the mobility service provider provides them with the most suitable transport for their travel needs, which can be public transport, cycle hire, a taxi or car hire. Reducing car ownership has the potential to significantly reduce car dependency without restricting an individual's opportunities for travel." That is the future of travel. Increasing capacity to own and park private cars is the past.

The principle behind MaaS is to reduce car ownership by providing a multi-modal service that gives users the confidence that all their travel needs can be conveniently met without owning a car. In the first instance this may be giving up / not buying a second car. Research shows that without a car on the drive, people travel substantially more sustainably which is necessary to meet Reading's climate targets and improve air quality and health. Increased sustainable travel will make high quality public transport services more viable which will enable more investment in services and greater take up of MaaS. MaaS is not about preventing all access to a car and car clubs and car hire can be part of a scheme.

Step Change

RTS gives other indications of the kind of step change in thinking that is required to make Reading's transport system fit for purpose and the realities of climate change. It talks about how to "guide travel behaviour so they are making sustainable travel choices when travelling within or through Reading." That includes supporting the delivery of customisable and personalised travel planning services that will encourage individual sustainable travel choices.

RTS: "We want to achieve a step change in the provision of walking, cycling and public transport choices, for people travelling to, from and within Reading. We will prioritise sustainable travel modes to offer an attractive and realistic alternative to the private car. We will increase the capacity of the sustainable transport network by reallocating road space to sustainable modes."

There is further evidence in RTS that Reading is looking at leading some changes to bring about more sustainable transport choices. RTS summarises: "Due to key challenges including the declared climate emergency, car emissions causing poor air quality and the forecast levels of growth increasing future demand for travel, continuing with the status quo is not an option. Therefore, alongside providing sustainable alternatives we must manage demand on our network to help to achieve our overall vision for Reading. This will involve making difficult choices and delivering some or all of the following schemes:

- Clean Air Zone
- Emissions-Based Charging
- Road User Charging
- Workplace Parking Levy

Disincentivising private car travel can help to create a virtuous cycle. RTS states: "Car congestion is the single biggest factor limiting the delivery of quality reliable bus services as the bus services are hindered by congestion. This leads to increased journey times, reduced reliability and results in increased operating costs and limits the attractiveness of using bus services." Reduce private car use and bus, cycle and walking will improve. That will encourage more people to take bus and active travel

journeys, which will further reduce private car use, leading to further improvements for bus and active travellers.

RTS outlines other sustainable transport enhancements that will all help steer the urban areas of the town away from car dependency:

- Create a strategic cycle network based on the principles of London Cycle Superhighways to connect major destinations (including employment centres and transport hubs) along key transport corridors and in the town centre.
- Reallocate road space, segregation between pedestrians and cyclists and traffic, surface improvements, crossing enhancements, two-way cycle facilities, parking restrictions, signage, reducing street furniture and increasing accessibility for all.
- Manage car usage through dynamic pricing, with higher charges applied for certain booking types at particular times of day.
- Improved efficiency of kerb-space will allow removal of on street parking that obstructs pedestrian, cycle or public transport routes.
- Promote sustainable travel options and new schemes and initiatives to encourage mode shift away from the private car.

Conclusion

RTS repeatedly states that "continuing with the status quo is not an option." It also states: "There is no longer the available land to continue to provide more capacity for private vehicle travel and the environmental and health consequences are not acceptable or desirable when seeking to realise the Reading 2050 Vision and meet the aim of the RTS." We think the changes need to be implemented now, and we are putting forwards a development for 2-4 Send Road that is in line with that vision.