Transforming Cities Fund

Application for:

Central Berkshire Growth City Region

8th June 2018

Reading Borough Council — Working better with you

Bracknell Forest Council

Wokingham Borough Council

West Berkshire Council
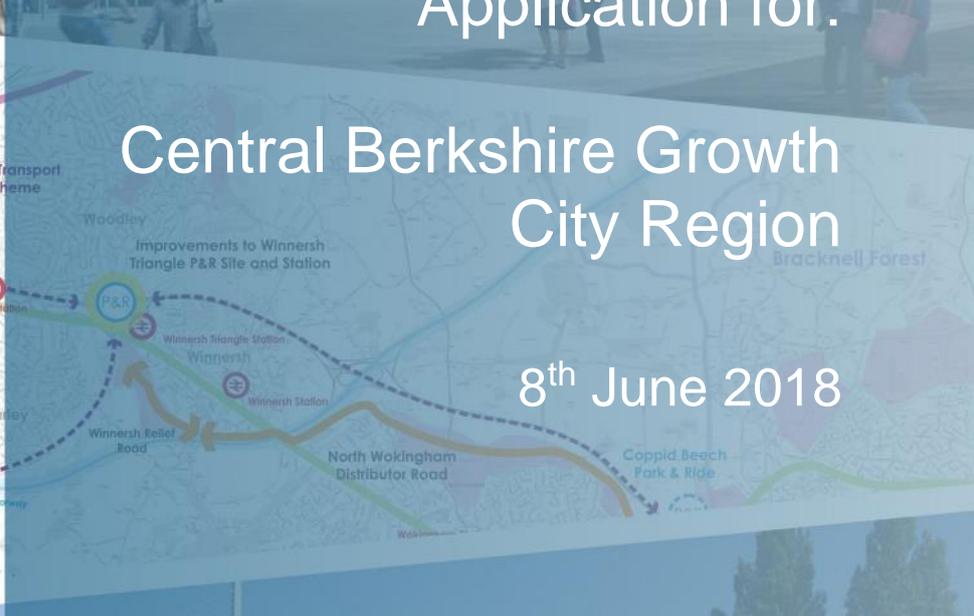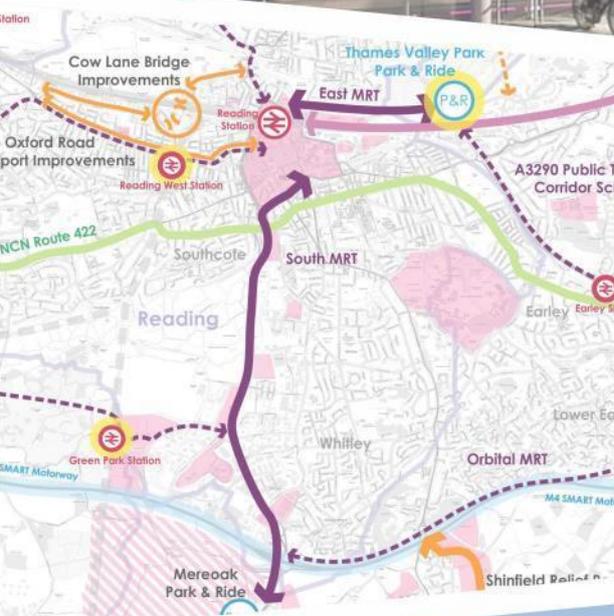
Transforming Cities Fund
Call for Proposals

Application Form

Applicant Information

Bidding City Region:

Central Berkshire Growth City Region

Bid Manager Name and position:

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The personal data you provide is purely for the administration of the Transforming Cities Fund. It will be held for the duration of the process and then deleted. Further details on DfT's privacy policy can be found at www.gov.uk/dft/privacy-policy

We may share this information with other central government departments for the purpose of assessing bids (HMT, MHCLG, BEIS). If additional personal information is provided to us, such as in the form of letters of support, this may also be transferred as part of the assessment process.

Additional evidence, such as letters of support, maps or plans should be included in an annex.

The use of statistics, from both government bodies and well-respected independent sources, is encouraged. The suitability and validity of these will be scrutinised as part of the bid.

SECTION A – Definition and challenges

This section will seek a definition of the bidding city. City regions should:
- Explain the city geography, with a clear city region identified
- Indicate workday population (the Fund seeks to target the larger city regions in England)
- Describe the key transport challenges across the city region at a high level. This could include a discussion of productivity, or how transport connectivity is affecting this.
- Further evidence to support this argument – such as congestion, air quality or journey time impacts.

A1. Constituent Local Authorities:

Reading Borough Council

Wokingham Borough Council

Bracknell Forest Borough Council

West Berkshire District Council

A2. Geographical area:

Please provide a short description of area covered by the bid (in no more than 100 words)

The Central Berkshire Growth City Region is a densely populated urban area with a regional centre, sub-regional hubs, major business/science parks and large suburban areas (Fig1).

The area forms a natural economic cluster which is forecast to be the UK's fastest growing economy during 2017-2020[1] straddling four Unitary Authority boundaries over 200 sq km. The Growth City Region (based on the pre-2016 ONS/Centre for Cities defined built-up area)[2] sits at the centre of the Reading travel to work area; and the Central/Western Berkshire housing, labour and commercial market areas (Fig2).

Please append a map(s) showing the location of the city region and its boundaries.

A3. Population

Please include the **workday** population of the city region and relevant references.

The workday population of the City Region is **401,824**[3].

This comprises of 165,005 in Reading Borough; 126,524 in part of Wokingham Borough, 83,753 in part of Bracknell Forest and 26,542 in part of West Berkshire.

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[1] 'Rebalancing the Economy: Time for a New Push', by EY, Issue 3: Winter 2017-18
[2] Centre for Cities http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf
[3] Nomis official labour market statistics, Census 2011

A4. Discussion of key transport challenges:

The region is one of the most important areas driving the UK economy, with average annual growth of 3.83% from 2014-2017 in Reading UA[4] and Berkshire contributing £37.4bn GVA per annum[5]. The region was the second fastest growing area of the UK between 2014-17[6] and is forecast to be the UK's fastest growing economy during 2017-2020[7].

The built-up area is one of the highest ranked for productivity, growth and inward investment by Centre for Cities[8]. In addition, 2,600 additional homes are forecast to be required per annum during 2013-2036[9].

As a result of the region's success and forecast levels of growth, we face significant transport challenges. These include:

Congestion
Congestion in the area causes the highest levels of delays outside of London[10]. In spite of investment in public transport services, buses struggle to avoid congestion due to limited segregated bus priority routes. 26 peak hours are spent in traffic, estimated as a cost of £75M [11] (Fig3).

The ONS reports that Reading commute times have increased by 46%[12] and a survey undertaken to inform this bid shows 93% of 58 local businesses believe congestion affects productivity (AppendixB).

Providing Attractive Alternatives to the Private Car
Bus usage has increased by 24% since 2010 against a back drop of national decline[13] however increasing public transport usage with worsening congestion offers a significant challenge due to limited segregated bus priority routes.

Bus journey times in peaks are approximately double free flow conditions, however daytime off peak journeys are only 15-20% quicker than peaks, demonstrating congestion impacts journey times throughout the day[14]. Operational costs have risen, as more buses are needed to maintain headways whilst keeping fares affordable/attractive. Public transport remains relatively unattractive in the less accessible areas (Fig4).

Cycle Usage
Cycling levels are low offering a significant opportunity to increase mode share, particularly in the outlying areas (Fig5). There is no comprehensive network of segregated routes throughout the region.

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[4] Rebalancing the Economy: Time for a New Push', by EY, Issue 3: Winter 2017-18

[5] Office of National Statistics NUTS3 local area by gross added per head, 2016

[6] Centre for Cities http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf

[7] Rebalancing the Economy: Time for a New Push', by EY, Issue 3: Winter 2017-18

[8] Centre for Cities http://www.centreforcities.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/18-01-12-Final-Full-Cities-Outlook-2018.pdf

[9] OAN Sensitivity Testing – Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, March 2018 prepared by GL Hearn (assuming 5000 homes of West Berks need are delivered within the city region)

[10] Department for Transport statistics, Table CGN0502b, February 2018

[11] Inrix 2018 Traffic Scorecard – average hours per year in peak hour congestion

[12] https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/labourproductivity/adhocs/008005traveltoworkmethodsandthetimeittakestocommutefromhometoworklabourforcesurvey2007to2016
https://www.inyourarea.co.uk/news/commuting-times-in-reading-and-bracknell-soar/

[13] DfT Transport Statistics, Table BUS00110A

[14] Detailed analysis of service 17 undertaken by PBA with Reading Buses, using GPS data from the bus On Board Units in October 2017

High Levels of Car Ownership
High car ownership represents a barrier to encouraging sustainable travel, particularly in less dense residential environments (Fig6).

Air Quality
Vehicle emissions resulting from levels of congestion are a significant concern, particularly the effects on human health[15]. A number of AQMAs have been declared (Fig7).

Piecemeal Delivery of Transport Strategy
The area wide transport strategy (Fig8) is being delivered in phases due to limited funding and is therefore only partially completed. A significant package of schemes on the key corridoes would provide a step change and ensure benefits are maximised (Fig9).

Access to the National Networks
High quality local transport connections are needed to fully realise and add value to investment in the national networks, particularly access to Heathrow Airport, enhanced connectivity to the rail network (Crossrail, WRLTH, electrification) and the M4 Smart Motorway (Fig10).

Planned Levels of Growth
Growth will exacerbate the demand on the A33 and A3290/A329 corridors, which carry the highest levels of traffic in the region and provide connectivity between key areas for jobs, homes and education (Fig11).

Please limit responses in section A4 to 500 words.

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[15] 2017 Air Quality Annual Status Report

SECTION B: Who & Where

This section will seek detail on the city's key priority areas to invest in, and motivations. City regions should:

- Identify and prioritise **the main corridors or places for investment**, and why. This could include highlighting where opportunities for growth, productivity or business are within these areas of the city region.
- Identify **who would be affected** by this investment and how user needs are recognised.

Maps identifying the priority areas can be appended as an annex to this section.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

Corridors for Investment

There are seven main 'spoke' corridors within the region, which is a key connectivity hub in the wider SE England region (Fig14). Two of the radial corridors (A33 and A3290/A329) and a connecting orbital corridor are prioritised for investment (Fig1) due to emerging and planned major growth. These link a significant number of existing and planned jobs, homes and education/research facilities to the strategic transport infrastructure (Fig10) and provide the main inter-city connections.

The corridors for investment have been prioritised by Transport for the South East in their Economic Connectivity Review (Fig14).

The radial corridors suffer from significant congestion (Fig3). Piecemeal funding has delivered some sections of bus priority and cycle facilities, but the networks are substantially incomplete (Fig9).

Development sites are allocated in the adopted Local Plans (Fig11) and further growth opportunities emerging in Local Plans reviews (2,700 dpa across the Authorities)[16].

Businesses have confirmed improvements in public transport would increase productivity (Appendix B) and attract new businesses. Connections to the strategic transport networks will maintain/attract businesses[17].

Reading area commuting times have increased by 46%[18] and feedback from our business survey highlight key areas of congestion align with the corridors prioritised for funding, including "*peak time delays up to an hour at J11 M4/A33 junction*" and "*routes heading east out of Reading along the A329M / M4 J10 are subject to journey times between 30-45 minutes, impacting hugely on the working day*".

A comprehensive sustainable transport network is essential to continue the increasing trend in bus/rail use and support growth, productivity, housing delivery, attract new businesses, provide apprenticeships and improve air quality (Fig8).

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[16] GL Hearne, OAN Sensitivity Testing – Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, March 2018
[17] Paragraph 4.8 GL Hearne, OAN Sensitivity Testing – Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, March 2018

Beneficiaries:

Existing & New Residents
Increasing transport capacity and accessibility will unlock and/or accelerate housing provision at allocated sites along the corridors (Fig11) and improve inter-city connectivity to unlock further housing sites.

Enhancing access to employment and training will help attract and build a skilled workforce[19].

Health and wellbeing will be improved with attractive walk and cycle facilities, better air quality from reduced car use and social cohesion from better connectivity and use of shared travel.

Improving local transport will help improve outcomes for deprived areas by enabling better access to services, particularly for two wards in the 10% of most deprived areas in the country (Fig12).

Business Clusters & Education/Research Facilities

Improved connectivity and reduced/reliable commute journey times will increase productivity, attract new businesses and skilled workforce, and encourage clusters for knowledge exchange[20].

Congestion is forecast to increase with substantial growth in jobs predicted[21]:
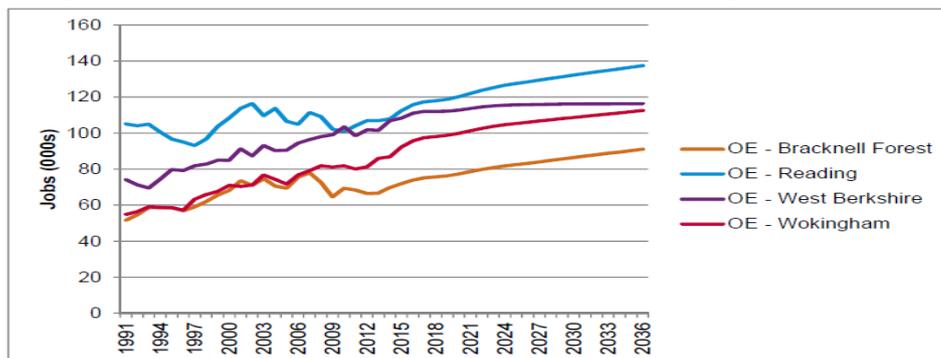
Clusters[22] (comprising over 90,000 employees) would benefit from the investment including: business/science parks; connected digital businesses (Fujitsu, Huawei, Microsoft...); major life science/healthcare businesses (Bayer, Quintiles, 3M…); research & development businesses (QinetiQ, IBM, BAE, Thales…); start-up/growth hubs; education facilities (offering apprenticeships[23]); and the regional hospital (Fig11).

Retail & Cultural Hubs
Improved connectivity will encourage investment, increase footfall and retain/enhance vitality within the regional centre and sub-regional hubs within the region, which are all located on the prioritised corridors[24].

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[19] Almost 50% educated to NVQ4/graduate level or above – Centre for Cities, 2016
[20] Central Berkshire FEMA : Economic Development Needs Assessment – confirms job growth (page 9 and 10) and Western Wokingham being an area for growth due to benefiting from Reading (page 10 bullet 2)
[21] GL Hearne, OAN Sensitivity Testing – Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, March 2018. These trends in job growth have been verified by Cambridge Economics
[22] Innovation South – A Powerhouse of World Class Strengths in Digital Enabling Technologies, A science and innovation report sponsored by the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2017
[23] Berkshire "construction job family factsheet" released by the TVBLEP Skills Priority Statement
[24] https://livingreading.co.uk/invest/the-case-for-investing-in-reading

SECTION C: Ambition for change

This section will seek evidence of how investment will tackle these challenges, and wider fit with existing plans. City regions should:

- **Articulate their vision for improved connectivity** from the Fund and how this links to the assessment of need outlined in the previous sections.
- **Demonstrate support from stakeholders** for investment in the identified areas, such as from the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership(s), employers and transport providers. This could also include **commitments of further local and private funding.**
- Highlight ambition to align with existing funding streams and to **utilise new approaches** and **powers available** to improve public transport.
- Demonstrate how the Fund would link to **wider long term plans** and spatial strategies around housing, local growth, productivity and air quality.

Supporting letters may be attached as an annex.

Please limit responses to 500 words.

Vision

The West of Berkshire Strategic Framework Plan[25] provides a collective and ambitious vision for growth in the region, recognising the need to address the current infrastructure deficit to enable the area to fulfil its potential as part of the wider economy of SE England.

Our complementary 'Smart and Sustainable Reading' 2050 Vision[26] was developed with engagement of local communities (21,000 people contributed), over 350 businesses, education providers and public sector partners to help drive economic growth and evolution to 2050. The themes of green tech, rivers and parks, and culture emerged under the overarching umbrella of a Smart and Sustainable City concept.

It is our ambition to help fulfil this vision by delivering a step-change in high quality, high technology, public/sustainable transport provision along the key growth corridors in the region (Fig13). It builds upon our current transport strategy (Fig8), reflects our adopted and emerging growth strategies and connects economic corridors (Fig14) to address the following core needs:

-Improve accessibility, affordability and journey time/reliability of more sustainable means of travel;
-Provide public transport that is more attractive than single occupancy private car use;
-Increase in active travel;
-Enable 'non-car reliant' planned growth;
-Improve links to the national networks (including Heathrow, rail and the M4); and
-Improve air quality.

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[25] West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework Delivering sustainable new communities to 2036
[26] A Vision for Reading 2050, https://livingreading.co.uk/public/downloads/GcFeR/Reading2050%20Vision%20Document%20PRINT%20version%20e%20(with%20margin)%20online%20version%20low%20res.pdf

Support

Significant support and enthusiasm has been demonstrated through feedback from 58 businesses responding to our survey and 35 letters of support have been recieved from key local stakeholders (Appendices B&C).

We would work with these organisations to develop the package of sustainable transport measures and secure local contributions, in addition to continuing to secure funding contributions through the planning process (Fig11).

New Approaches & Powers

A 'place based' approach would be applied in determining the transport package, using assessment techniques to evidence how the shared vision will be achieved. This will focus the investment to deliver outcomes that meet and deliver the long term plans and spatial strategies around housing, growth, productivity and air quality.

A 'smart' approach would investigate/implement:
-Smart transportation options to make travel more affordable, safe, convenient and sustainable;
-New smart transportation models, such as MaaS, transport services sharing economy;
-Innovations to tackle congestion and air quality issues;
-Infrastructure to support electric and autonomous vehicles.

We will explore opportunities to further enhance relationships with local bus operators through powers from the Bus Services Act 2017. We are currently delivering the first red route outside of London and would explore further innovative traffic and parking management powers, complementary to the investment in sustainable transport, to deliver modal shift.

Wider Long-Term Plans

Our proposals (Fig13) would help to deliver:

-Growth and innovation (UK Government's Industrial Strategy[27]);
-Business connectivity (TfSE's Economic Connectivity Review[28]);
-Increased productivity (TVB LEP's Strategic Economic Plan[29]);
-Housing need (Western Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework[30] and Housing Market Area[31]);
-Economic growth (adopted/emerging Local Plans[32]);
-Air quality targets (Annual Status Reports[33]);
-Mode share targets (LTPs[34]);
-Innovation through building on the 'Smart Berkshire' project[35] and leading-edge research project[36].

[27] https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/the-uks-industrial-strategy
[28] https://transportforthesoutheast.org.uk/strategy/ecr/
[29] TVB LEP's Strategic Economic Plan
[30] West of Berkshire Spatial Planning Framework Delivering sustainable new communities to 2036
[31] GL Hearne, OAN Sensitivity Testing – Western Berkshire Housing Market Area, March 2018
[32] RBC Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Wokingham Borough Managing Development Delivery (MDD) Local Plan (adopted February 2014), West Berkshire Local Plan, Bracknell Forest Local Plan, emerging RBC Local Plan, emerging BFBC Comprehensive Local Plan, WBBC New Local Plan, WBC Local Plan update
[33] RBC, WBBC and WBBC Air Quality Annual Status Reports 2017
[34] RBC Local Transport Plan (2006 - 2011); RBC Local Transport Plan (2011 to 2026); RBC Local Development Framework, Central Area Action Plan; emerging RBC LTP4; WBC Local Transport Plan (2011 to 2026) ; emerging WBC LTP4, BFBC Local Transport Plan(2011 to 2026); WBBC Local Transport Plan (2011 to 2026)
[35] http://www.thamesvalleyberkshire.co.uk/news?id=33
[36] leading-edge project being developed by local partners for early adoption of autonomous electric services on the MRT corridors, to capitalise on anticipated 2021 legislative changes.

When authorities submit a bid for funding to the Department, as part of the Government's commitment to greater openness in the public sector under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, they must also publish a version excluding any commercially sensitive information on their own website within two working days of submitting the final bid to the Department. The Department reserves the right to deem the business case as non-compliant if this is not adhered to.

Please specify the weblink where this bid will be published:

http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport-schemes-and-projects

Submission of proposals:

Proposals must be received no later than 2359 on **Friday, 8 June 2018**.

An electronic copy only of the bid including any supporting material should be submitted to: TCFproposals@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Enquiries about the Fund may be directed to TCFenquiries@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Appendix A - Maps & Plans

Figures

Appendix B - Business Survey Results

[See separate sheet]

Appendix C - Letters of Support

Partner Authorities

- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Reading Borough Council
- West Berkshire District Council
- Wokingham Borough Council

Local Employers

- Berkshire Institute of Directors
- Genting Casinos UK
- Green Park Business Park (Mapletree)
- Grow@GreenPark Business Park
- Heart of Berkshire Hospitability Association
- Microsoft Limited
- Reading Business Improvement District
- Reading Football Club
- Reading UK CIC
- Royal Berkshire Hospital
- Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership
- Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce Group
- Thames Valley Park Business Park
- Volume Agency
- Winnersh Triangle Business Park

Education / Research Facilities

- Bracknell & Wokingham College
- Bracknell Economic & Skills Development Partnership
- New Directions Reading
- PRA Health Sciences
- Reading College
- The University of Reading (including Thames Valley Science Park)
- University Technical College Reading

Housebuilders

- Berkeley Homes
- Crest Nicholson
- David Wilson Homes
- Dawnus Construction Holdings

Transport Providers / Promoters

- Co-Wheels (operator of Reading's car club)
- Great Western Railway
- Heathrow Airport Ltd
- Hourbike (operator of the Readybike cycle hire scheme)
- Network Rail
- Reading Buses
- Sustrans
- South Western Railway
- Transport for the South East