

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
19 MARCH 2014**

Present: Councillors Maskell (Chair), Ayub, Duveen, K Edwards, Gittings, Page, Ruhemann, Tickner and Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Harris, Stanway and White

23. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 20 November 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

24. MINUTES OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meetings of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee on 16 January 2014 were received.

25. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Reading Climate Change Partnership Board, 16 January 2014;
- Joint Waste Disposal Board, 12 December 2013 and 12 February 2014.

Resolved: That the Minutes be noted.

26. CYCLING STRATEGY 2014 & IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report presenting an updated Cycling Strategy 2014 for adoption, based upon a review of the summarised consultation responses from a consultation carried out between 14 October 2013 and 10 January 2014 and subsequent amendments to the document. The report also sought approval of a proposed Implementation Plan 2014/15.

The report had appended:

- Appendix A - Location Plan of Serious Cycle Accidents 2011-2013
- Appendix B - Delivery Highlights in 2013/14
- Appendix C - Implementation Plan 2014/15
- Appendix D - Graphs for Cycling Strategy Consultation Questions
- Appendix 1 - Draft Cycling Strategy

The updated Strategy would replace the Cycling Strategy 2008 that had been approved as part of the Local Transport Plan 2006-2011 (LTP2) and carried over into the Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP3). The Cycling Strategy 2014 built on the work undertaken as part of the previous Strategy and set out detailed policies on the design principles for delivering infrastructure and route improvements for cyclists on the public highway. It also described other policies to encourage and promote cycling to different demographics, alongside integration of delivery and policy with public health objectives.

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The report highlighted the planned milestones and targets for 2014/15, gave details of the responses to the consultation on the strategy, summarised the main changes to the strategy, and gave details of the future cycle engagement proposals within the strategy.

In accordance with Standing Order 36B, a member of the public, Tanja Rebel, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee on this item at the invitation of the Chair. One of the issues she raised, which she had already raised with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport, was whether it might be possible to use the opportunity afforded by the need to repair the towpath along the Thames from Thameside Promenade to Scours Lane, following damage caused by the recent flooding, to improve the towpath for cyclists by making it broader and more compacted. Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport, noted that many of the roads and footpaths in the Borough had suffered damage in the floods and that there was a finite budget for repairs, so works had to be prioritised appropriately, but he said that he had asked officers to investigate what could be done in relation to the towpath.

Resolved:

- (1) That the updated Cycling Strategy 2014 be adopted;**
- (2) That the proposed Implementation Plan for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix C to the report, to be delivered as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund & Local Transport Plan programmes, be approved;**
- (3) That it be noted that further Implementation Plans would be prepared annually and reported to future Committees;**
- (4) That officers investigate what could be done to improve the Thames towpath for cycling.**

27. INTRODUCTION OF SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE ADOPTION BOARDS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the proposed process to implement the statutorily required Sustainable Drainage Adoption Boards. An update report was tabled at the meeting giving an update on the latest DEFRA information on the implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Adoption Boards, which had been provided since the publication of the original report.

The report explained that Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 had established Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) Approving Bodies (SABs) in unitary authorities (in single tier local government) and county councils (in two tier areas) and gave those bodies statutory responsibility for approving Drainage Applications and, in some cases, adopting the approved drainage systems associated with all new developments.

A drainage application would contain the full design, construction, operation and maintenance details of a drainage system to manage surface water from

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development which would demonstrate compliance with the SuDS National Standards. This application would be submitted to the SAB.

The statutory procedures had been due to receive approval in December 2013 with the SABs commencing on 6 April 2014. However, the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had confirmed on 17 February 2014 that the necessary legislation to implement Schedule 3 would be laid in April 2014 with formal commencement starting on 1 October 2014. The original report recommended that, prior to a formal implementation date being confirmed by Government, the authority commenced an approval process on a voluntary basis from 1 May 2014, in accordance with the proposed validation checklist, application form and flowchart detailing the SAB process, set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

The update report explained that further information had been received at a seminar on 10 March 2014 and in correspondence from DEFRA on 17 March 2014 and gave details of this additional information. This included confirmation of the 1 October 2014 implementation date, that DEFRA would provide a grant to the Council of £24,350 for 2013/14 and £37,150 for 2014/15 to start the SAB and of the application fees for SuDS applications, as well as details of issues in relation to drainage systems' ongoing maintenance and its funding and in relation to the format of application forms.

The report stated that drainage applications should preferably be submitted jointly with planning applications, but needed to be determined by a department separate from the Planning Authority. The SAB was required to determine applications in two weeks less than the statutory requirement for determining Planning Applications, so that the Planning Authority was aware of the SAB's decision before determining any simultaneous planning application. The report gave details of issues around the different assessments of viability of development proposals for drainage and planning purposes and it was reported at the meeting that guidance notes on viability were expected to be produced by DEFRA in April 2014.

Resolved:

- (1) That the reports be noted;**
- (2) That, prior to the formal implementation date, an approval process for the statutory requirement of the SAB be commenced on a voluntary basis in Reading from 1 May 2014, as set out in the original report;**
- (3) That the grant from DEFRA for the SAB, of £24,350 for 2013/14 and £37,150 for 2014/15, be accepted and spend approval be given in accordance with DEFRA's terms and conditions;**
- (4) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services prepare guidance for planning officers on how the approval or otherwise of SuDS applications should be presented in reports to the Planning Applications Committee and a report on this guidance be submitted to the Planning Applications Committee.**

28. 2013/14 WINTER FLOODING

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report giving details of the effects of the winter flooding 2013/14 and the Council's response to the flooding.

The report explained that record levels of rainfall had fallen in January 2014 (the wettest in 100 years), wet weather had continued into February 2014 and any rain falling on already saturated ground had run off quickly causing rapid rises in river levels. Flooding had been experienced on the Thames, the Kennet and the Foudry Brook in Reading for an extended duration, starting with the dissemination of the first flood alert on 23 December 2013. The River Kennet remained on flood alert at the time of writing the report (over ten weeks later).

Floodwaters had peaked in January 2014 and again in February 2014, with a short lull in between. The report gave details of the areas which had been flooded, of the flooded properties, which included those flooded internally (32), surrounded by water and underneath (45) and with water in gardens/sheds/garages (over 100), and of flooded roads, paths and pavements. It also gave details of assistance given by partner agencies and volunteers in the flooding response.

During the more severe of the two floods in February 2014, the floodwater levels on the Kennet/Holybrook in the Circuit Lane area appeared to have exceeded the historic levels seen in 1971. Sandbag walls and High Volume Pumps (pumping up to 24 tons/minute of flood water) had been employed to keep water levels low. Without these preventative measures it was estimated that another 12 properties would have internally flooded in Southcote.

The feedback from the public to the Council's response had been overwhelmingly positive. Officers had dedicated significant amounts of time and effort to liaising in person with local residents, keeping them informed with a mix of face to face dialogue and leafleting. This had ensured that residents knew of the Council's response plan and understood what to expect.

The report stated that the Floods & Water Management Act 2010 required the preparation of a Section 19 report following flooding. This further report would be prepared and brought back to a future meeting.

Resolved:

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That this instance of flooding be investigated and a Floods & Water Management Action 2010 Section 19 report be prepared and brought back to a future meeting;**
- (3) That flood extent maps be updated and provided to the Council's Land Use Planning Team;**
- (4) That the Council's Sandbag policy be reviewed and be subject to an annual review;**

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- (5) That work by the Council's Flood Recovery Group continue and, in particular, that the finance representatives on that group continue work to administer flood funding grants and discretionary powers;
- (6) That the positive feedback by the public to the Council's flood response be noted;
- (7) That the Emergency Response Team, volunteer groups, supportive local businesses, the military and the Fire Service be thanked for their hard work and support during the flooding.

29. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 2014/15

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the Local Transport Plan (LTP), a statutory document setting out the Council's transport strategy and policy. Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) had been adopted by Council on 29 March 2011 (Minute 73 refers). The adopted Plan included a 15-year Strategy Document and a Committee Report that stood as the first in a projected series of annual Implementation Plans incorporating a rolling three-year programme. This report was the fourth LTP3 Implementation Plan.

The report stated that the LTP3 Implementation Plan programme was reviewed annually through a scheme prioritisation matrix and budgeting exercise developed to deliver the LTP3 aims and objectives. The review process produced a prioritised list of proposed projects and budget allocations for the next year, with reserved and development schemes for subsequent years identified. These tables were shown in Appendix A.

The LTP3 Implementation Plan also monitored progress within the Strategy Plan detailed policy and delivery areas (Chapter 6). Some projects delivered or milestones reached in these policy and delivery areas in the most recent year of LTP3 (2013-14) were listed at Appendix B.

The various projects and measures delivered by LTP3 aimed to help Reading achieve the Sustainable Community Strategy Vision and the LTP3 strategic objectives (Strategy Plan Chapter 3). The success of these measures was reviewed through continual use of the Transport Planning Toolkit, which included data collection, surveys, modelling, consultation and engagement. Appendix C summarised some key outputs from the Toolkit in the previous year.

In addition to core LTP funding, Reading Borough Council had been awarded £4.9 million by the Department for Transport (DfT) through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). In partnership with Wokingham Borough Council, West Berkshire Council and other public and private sector partners, Reading had been awarded a further £20.692 million from the LSTF.

It was noted at the meeting that the data in Appendix C on trips to and from Central Reading included 22% by car and it was queried how many of these were by hackney carriages or private hire vehicles, which could be considered public transport trips.

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Resolved:

- (1) That the LTP3 programme and indicative budget for 2014-15 at Appendix A, be agreed;**
- (2) That the proposals for subsequent years as listed in Appendix A be noted and approval of any forward planning before the next Implementation Plan be delegated to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare in conjunction with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport;**
- (3) That the progress made in delivering the LTP3 Implementation Plan in Year 3 (2013/14) be noted;**
- (4) That the links to the Cycling Strategy Implementation Plan be noted (see Minute 26 above);**
- (5) That further information on the breakdown of the 22% of trips to and from Central Reading by car be obtained and circulated to members of the Committee.**

30. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - CONSULTATION ON DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE

Further to Minute 128 of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 February 2013, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report setting out the key issues arising from the consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) carried out in February-April 2013 and seeking approval to consult on a proposed Draft Charging Schedule (Appendix 1). This next stage of consultation would take place from the end of March to mid May 2014.

The report explained that, in the future, CIL would become the main source of developer contributions towards infrastructure beyond the immediate needs of the site. It would be charged as a £rate per m² of net additional development of 100m² or more or one dwelling or more and payment was mandatory, with no scope for discounts or alternative charges.

The report summarised the key issues raised in the consultation responses and full details of the responses received and the Council's recommended responses to these were set out in a Statement of Consultation, attached at Appendix 2. The report stated that a review of the original viability assessment had been undertaken by consultants and it summarised the key changes in the Draft Charging Schedule and additional background evidence produced, arising from the consultation responses on the Preliminary Draft and as a result of the further viability work.

Evidence to support the Council's CIL, along with the Council's proposed CIL rate or rates, would be published for consultation. Following consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule, subject to there not being a need for any major changes, it would be submitted for examination by an independent person appointed by the Council. Once approved by an examiner, the Charging Schedule would need to be adopted

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through full Council by April 2015. Once adopted, the Council would collect CIL from developers on commencement of development.

The report explained that there would be considerable flexibility as to how the money received through CIL would be spent. There was no requirement that it be spent on the provision of specific infrastructure to mitigate an individual development's specific impacts and it could be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure to support the development of the area. This would be set out in a list known as the Council's Regulation 123 list, attached at Appendix 3.

Once CIL was in place, it would still be possible to secure Section 106 for affordable housing, employment and skills training and site-specific mitigation and a draft revised Section 106 obligations Supplementary Planning Document would be also consulted on, alongside the Draft Charging Schedule for CIL (see Minute 31 below).

Resolved:

- (1) That the results of the consultation on the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule and the contents of the Statement of Consultation at Appendix 2 be noted, and the Council's responses as highlighted in shaded boxes in that Statement be approved;**
- (2) That the CIL Draft Charging Schedule, attached at Appendix 1, be approved for consultation for a period of six weeks;**
- (3) That the Draft Regulation 123 List of infrastructure types and projects that it was intended CIL would be used for once it was in place, attached at Appendix 3, be approved;**
- (4) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make minor changes to the Charging Schedule, if required, before submission to the Independent Examiner, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport.**

31. DRAFT SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (TO OPERATE ALONGSIDE THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY)

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report proposing consultation on a new Draft Section 106 Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), which would operate alongside the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), once introduced by the Council (see Minute 30 above). It stated that an interim Revised Section 106 SPD (November 2013), consulted on during summer 2013, had been approved for adoption at the 20 November 2013 Committee (Minute 20 refers). This had been an update of the 2004 Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance, intended as an interim version until the introduction of the CIL. The new draft Section 106 SPD was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and an Equality Impact Assessment was attached at Appendix 2.

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The report explained that, once CIL was being operated by the Council, or from April 2015, there would be restrictions on how Section 106 receipts could be used. Essentially, CIL would become the main means of securing developer contributions towards infrastructure to support development. Section 106 would be for site-related infrastructure necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms and could only be sought in accordance with relevant legal tests, details of which were set out in the report. Section 106 and CIL would not be able to be used for the same item of infrastructure. Additionally, the 'pooling' of Section 106 planning obligations, to be used for an item of infrastructure, would be limited to no more than five developments.

The report noted that obligations for affordable housing and for matters not deemed as infrastructure under CIL, were not subject to the same pooling restrictions. Therefore, the new SPD, once adopted, would need to be read in conjunction with the Employment, Skills and Training SPD (April 2013) and Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013).

Resolved: That the Draft Section 106 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document, attached at Appendix 1, be approved for consultation.

32. PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT ALTERATION TO THE READING BOROUGH LDF (LOCAL PLAN) - CORE STRATEGY POLICY CS16 AND POLICY DM 6 OF THE SITES AND DETAILED POLICIES DOCUMENT - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Further to Minute 19 of the meeting held on 20 November 2013, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report detailing the results of consultation on a Draft Issues and Options Paper on the proposed Alteration to the Local Plan and seeking approval to community involvement on and the submission of the Pre-Submission Draft Alteration.

The report stated that the Council had long supported a policy position that sought to achieve high levels of affordable housing provision as part of developments to meet the acknowledged high levels of need for such housing in the Borough. However, current government policy, contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with its emphasis on economic growth and the delivery of development, gave very high priority to the issue of viability. Inevitably that meant that some existing planning policies did not fully meet the requirements of national policy and would have to be changed as part of any review of the local plan.

On 20 November 2013, the Committee had resolved that a fast track review of the existing policies on affordable housing would be undertaken to bring them into line with government policy and thus enable the CIL Charging Schedule to be progressed. It had approved the publication of a Draft Issues and Options Paper on the proposed Alteration for consultation. The report detailed the results of that consultation, set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report also sought approval to community involvement, to be carried out in April and May 2014, on a Pre-Submission Draft Alteration to the Local Plan in respect of Policies CS16 and DM6, set out at Appendix 2 to the report, along with the

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Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Alteration set out at Appendix 3 to the report, and to the submission of the Submission Draft Alteration to the Secretary of State.

Resolved:

- (1) That the results of community involvement on Issues and Options for the proposed Alteration to the Local Plan be noted and the recommended responses to the representations made (as set out in Appendix 1) be approved;
- (2) That community involvement on the Pre-Submission Draft Alteration to the Local Plan in respect of Policies CS16 and DM6, as set out in Appendix 2, along with the Sustainability Appraisal of the Draft Alteration as set out in Appendix 3, be approved and authorised;
- (3) That the submission of the Submission Draft Alteration to the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for subsequent Public Examination be approved, subject to there being no need to make any amendments that would alter the policy direction, except for a change that resulted from a change in government policy affecting the threshold at which affordable housing could be sought, as discussed in the report;
- (4) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any amendments necessary to the Pre-Submission Draft Alteration to the Local Plan arising from community involvement that did not alter the policy direction, or that resulted from a change in government policy affecting the threshold at which affordable housing could be sought, as discussed in this report, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State and prior to the consequent Public Examination of the Document.

33. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ADOPTION

Further to Minute 22 of the meeting held on 20 November 2013, the Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report presenting the responses to representations received during consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - a planning document that detailed how consultation and community involvement on plans and major developments would be carried out - and seeking approval to the responses and the SCI.

It was a statutory requirement to have a SCI in place and the existing SCI had been adopted in 2006. However, with work expected to begin soon on reviewing the Local Development Plan, it was important to revise the SCI to take account of recent changes, learn from experience, and make it more appropriate to current circumstances.

A draft version of the SCI had been approved by the Committee on 20 November 2013 (Minute 22 refers). It had been subject to consultation between November 2013 and

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January 2014. A revised version, taking account of the results of consultation, had been produced, and was proposed for adoption (Appendix 3 to the report). The Committee was also asked to approve the responses to the comments received (within the Report of Consultation in Appendix 2 to the report). An Equality Impact Assessment was also attached at Appendix 1.

Resolved:

- (1) That the responses to representations received during the consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement undertaken between November 2013 and January 2014, as set out in the Report of Consultation at Appendix 2, be agreed;**
- (2) That the Statement of Community Involvement, as set out at Appendix 3, be adopted.**

34. PLANNING ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT - APRIL 2012 TO MARCH 2013

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the Planning Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) 2012-13.

The report explained that the AMR presented a digest of monitoring information collected by the Council to assess the progress of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and to monitor the outcome of LDF policies. The Government had issued new regulations which required local authorities to put monitoring information on their websites when it became available on at least an annual basis, and the Council was in the process of moving over to this model of reporting.

A draft AMR had been made available on the Council's website in December 2013. An amended final version had now been prepared and published on the Council's website at: <http://www.reading.gov.uk/businesses/planning/planning-policy/research--monitoring-and-technical-reports/www-reading-gov-uk-amr/>. The report highlighted key points from the 2012-13 AMR.

Resolved:

That the content of the Annual Monitoring Report 2012-2013 be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.10pm).