

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

**Present:** Councillors D Absolom (Chair), Ayub, Ballsdon, Brock, Chrisp, Duveen, Hopper, Khan, Maskell, McGonigle, Page and Rodda (from item 26).

**Apologies:** Councillors McDonald and Singh.

**22. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the addition of Councillor Hopper to the list of members present at the meeting.

**23. MINUTES OF TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 12 & 19 January 2017 and 9 March 2017 were received.

**24. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Waste Disposal Board of 27 January 2017 were submitted.

**Resolved:** That the Minutes be noted.

**25. PETITIONS**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the receipt of two related petitions asking the Council to reinstate the recently closed Garrard Street and Station Approach Taxi Ranks.

The wording of each petition was as follows:

Taxi Drivers

*"Petition against the closure of the main rank and proposals -*

*I am signing this petition document against the current closure of the main rank, Garrard Street and horseshoe rank.*

*The petition is objecting against the closure and suggest the following proposals:*

*1 - Garrard Street/Horseshoe rank to be reinstated*

*2 - Station Road/Friar Street to be used as a feeder to horseshoe rank*

*3 - Oakford Social Club/Railair Link and Forbury Road to be used as a feeder to the horseshoe rank - 15/16 cab rank."*

Taxi Users

*"Petition to reinstate original taxi rank outside the station -*

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

*We the undersigned, are concerned citizens who urge our leaders to act now, to change back to a convenient taxi rank like before.*

*I am not happy with the new taxi rank layout because:*

*1 - Signs are not clear when you come out of the Station*

*2 - Can't see the taxi rank when we come out of the Station*

*3 - Takes too long to get to the ranks*

*4 - Costs more to get home*

*5 - Walking down steps especially with the elderly, children, special needs and luggage*

*6 - More traffic*

*7 - Railair passengers can't find the taxi ranks."*

The report referred to information reported to the Traffic Management Sub Committee in November 2016, which had explained that in April 2011 a series of changes had been made to the movement and waiting restrictions in Reading Town Centre in preparation for the redevelopment of Reading Station. This had included various changes to the taxi ranks throughout the Town Centre. To assist the Hackney Carriage trade whilst Station Hill was closed it had been agreed to provide a temporary feeder rank in Garrard Street to link to the rank located on the east side of the station. The new station and interchanges had opened in 2014/15 and all works were now complete. Throughout the redevelopment it had been acknowledged by all parties that there would be a requirement to close Garrard Street at the eastern end to facilitate construction of the developments there at some point, and that this would mean losing the temporary feeder rank.

The report explained that officers had reviewed all potential options to try and maintain the horseshoe rank on the east side of the station but as road space was at such a premium in the Town Centre, there was no extra capacity to provide a feeder rank to successfully serve the horseshoe rank. The Council had worked with the taxi trades to develop the mitigation measures listed in the report and it was hoped these would help alleviate the impact.

The report explained that the taxi trades had subsequently requested some further changes to assist town centre access. Accordingly the report asked the Committee to approve the inclusion of a new movement restriction permitting access to Friar Street from Greyfriars Road for buses, taxis and cycles as part of the permanent traffic regulation order (approved by Traffic Management Sub-Committee in November 2016) which was due to be promoted in 2017.

Mr Asad Sheikh and Mr Mirza Begg (??) addressed the Committee on behalf of the petition organisers.

**Resolved:**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the lead petitioners be informed of the reasons for closing the Garrard Street and Station Approach taxi ranks;
- (3) That Officers continue to work with the Taxi Associations to investigate potential measures to enhance the taxi rank provision in the town centre;
- (4) That the request to open access to Friar Street from Greyfriars Road for buses, taxis and cycles be progressed as a part of the permanent traffic regulation order due to be promoted this year;
- (5) That the lead petitioners be informed accordingly.

(Councillors Ayub and Khan declared a pecuniary interest in this item. Nature of interest: Councillors Ayub and Khan were taxi drivers. They left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision)

## **26. DRAFT LOCAL PLAN**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking the Committee's approval to undertake community involvement on a Draft Local Plan and associated documents including a Proposals Map showing the geographical extent of the policies and proposals in the Draft Local Plan. The proposed community involvement would feed into production of a revised Draft Local Plan later in 2017.

The Draft Local Plan was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

The Local Plan Proposals Map was attached to the report as Appendix 3.

The report explained that the Council was replacing its existing development plans (the Core Strategy, Reading Central Area Plan and Sites and Detailed Policies Document) with a new single local plan to set out how Reading would develop up to 2036. Consultation on the first stage, Issues and Options, which had been a discussion on what the Plan should contain, had been undertaken between January and March 2016. The Committee was invited to approve the responses to the representations received. The representations and proposed responses were set out in Appendix 3 to the report.

The report stated that the Local Plan, once adopted, would be the main document that would inform how planning applications were determined. As such, it covered a wide variety of areas, from overall strategic matters such as the scale of development, to individual sites and policies on detailed matters. In replacing the three existing development plan documents, it sought to carry forward existing policies wherever they were still relevant with only minor alterations or updates. In other parts of the document, policies had been rationalised where the policy areas had been previously split across more than one document. However, there were several areas where the policy approach would change significantly from the existing plan and the report summarised the following policies, which were the most important of these areas:

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

- Housing need
- Employment need
- Affordable housing
- Sustainability policies
- Heritage
- Open spaces
- Housing standards
- Specific forms of housing
- Major transport projects
- Changes of use
- Area-specific sections
- Identified sites
- infrastructure

Councillor Maskell requested the addition of Oxford Road Community Garden to the list of local green spaces at EN7.

At the Chair's invitation, Karen Rowland, Chair of the Reading Conservation Areas Advisory Committee, addressed the Committee.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That, subject to the addition of Oxford Road Community Garden to the list of local green spaces at EN7, the Draft Local Plan (Appendix 1 of the report) and Draft Proposals Map (Appendix 2 of the report) be approved;
- (2) That community involvement on the Issues and Options for the Local Plan and associated supporting documents be authorised;
- (3) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Draft Local Plan in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to community involvement;
- (4) That the responses to the representations made on Issues and Options for the Local Plan (Appendix 3 of the report) be approved.

**27. CENTRAL AND EASTERN BERKSHIRE JOINT MINERALS & WASTE PLAN - ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for the Central and Eastern Joint Minerals and Waste Plan, issues and Options Consultation, which was intended to be undertaken during June and July 2017. This consultation, or community involvement, would then feed into the preparation of a draft local plan.

The report explained that the Council was preparing the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan jointly with the Royal Borough of Windsor

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

and Maidenhead, Bracknell Forest Borough Council and Wokingham Borough Council. The plan was being prepared by the Environment and Planning Services of Hampshire County Council. The report explained that the Issues and Options stage of local plan preparation involved consulting broadly on what the Joint Minerals and Waste Plan should address and how it should address it. Draft consultation documents for the Issues and Options Consultation were attached to the report as Appendix 1. The consultation document was at an advanced stage of preparation but would be subject to some further drafting.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan (Appendix 1 of the report) be approved;
- (2) That community involvement on the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan and associated supporting documents be authorised;
- (3) That the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Issues and Options for the Central and Eastern Berkshire Joint Minerals and Waste Plan in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to community involvement.

**28. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY - REVIEW OF REGULATION 123 INFRASTRUCTURE LIST**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report proposing a very limited review of the Council's existing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulation 123 Infrastructure List. The report explained that the Council currently collected from development towards infrastructure in accordance with its adopted Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule. Under the CIL Regulations, such funds had to be spent on items set out in what was known as the Council's Regulation 123 List. The current list had been agreed in March 2014 and was on the Council's website. Its provisions were now being reviewed in the light of emerging details of the programming and funding of the Mass Rapid Transport (MRT) System for South Reading and other infrastructure provision.

The report proposed that the existing CIL Regulation 123 List be amended to refer to the differing phases of the South Reading MRT project and that Phase 4 of the MRT Scheme be specifically excluded from the List. This was the only substantial change proposed and it had no general viability implications.

The report explained that some minor additional adjustments had been made to the Regulation 123 List to remove reference to Cycle Hire and to add reference to the West Reading Transport Study. It was proposed to carry out limited consultation on the new Draft Regulation 123 List, which was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

**Resolved:**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

**That the Revised Regulation 123 infrastructure list be approved as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.**

**29. 'FIXING OUR BROKEN HOUSING MARKET' - HOUSING WHITE PAPER, FEBRUARY 2017**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report summarising the contents of the Housing White Paper entitled "Fixing Our Broken Housing Market", which had been published by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in February 2017. The report stated that the White Paper explained how the Government would "provide radical, lasting reform that will get more homes built right now and for many years to come", setting out the support the Government would provide to enhance the capacity of local authorities and industry to build the new homes the Country needed.

The report explained that at the same time DCLG had also published several other documents including the government responses to the technical consultation on the implementation of planning changes, the starter homes consultation and proposed changes to National Planning Policy Framework along with a new consultation on Planning and affordable housing for Build to Rent. There was also the report of a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy which suggested that the government was considering changing the way development contributed towards the provision of local infrastructure.

The report considered some of the possible implications for the planning system as it currently operated and specifically for the Council. It stated that the government intended consultation on elements of the White Paper and on sister documents published at the same time. The report asked the Committee to note the contents of the White Paper and the ways that the Council was already working to fulfil many of its measures. It sought agreement to a draft recommended response to the consultation. It was noted that the report would also be considered by the Planning Committee on 5 April 2017 and that a report on the implications of the White Paper for the Council's Housing responsibilities had been presented to the Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee on 15 March 2017.

The Executive Summary list of proposals from the White Paper was attached to the report at Appendix 1. The main points of the White Paper as they related to the Council's Planning function were summarised at Appendix 2. The consultation questions were reproduced at Appendix 3 and the officers' commentary and recommended response to the proposals was outlined in Section 4 of the report.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the contents of the White Paper published by DCLG in February 2016 and the various proposed changes to the planning system be noted;**
- (2) That the general thrust of the Council's recommended response to the consultation and other proposals attached as outlined in Section 4 of the report be approved, with the final comments to be agreed**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
4 APRIL 2017**

**by the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services in  
consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment,  
Planning and Transport**

**30. COMMUNITY SOLAR SCHEME - UPDATE AND OUTCOMES FROM THE PROJECT**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the progress made in establishing a new organisation called Reading Community Energy Society Ltd (RCES). The report explained that RCES had been launched in 2016 with the mission of helping reduce climate change emissions by helping local communities to benefit from the local generation of clean energy. The organisation had been created by local volunteers known as Berkshire Energy Pioneers, the local Council and Energy 4All, who had over twelve years' experience in the community green energy sector.

The report explained that over the three months of July, August and September 2016, solar panels had been installed on a range of community buildings including places of worship, community, council and charity buildings. Just over 700 solar panels had been installed, reducing carbon emissions by approximately 82 tonnes per annum, or 1679 tonnes over twenty years. Energy from the solar panels was sold to host buildings at a price of 8p per kWh, with the price fixed for 20 years. This price was set to be less than existing tariffs and to offer good value in the future when energy prices were expected to be higher.

The report stated that the panels had been funded by the people of Reading and renewable energy supporters nationwide. The Committee noted that in July 2016 (not May, as stated in the report) a share offer had been launched to install the solar panels. The share offer had been fully subscribed within two weeks and over 120 people had invested over £224,000 in the project. The Council had purchased £10,000 one pound shares. Shareholders would receive an initial return of 5% per annum, with any further proceeds being fed into a community benefit fund. This fund was predicted to yield £132,000 over the 20 years of the project to be spent on local sustainability and energy efficiency projects.

**Resolved: That the launch of Reading Community Energy Society Ltd. be noted and its activities be endorsed.**

**31. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE POLICY**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on proposals to update and amalgamate existing stand-alone Highway Maintenance Policies and Working Practices into a single Highway Maintenance Policy document.

The report explained that the Council was committed to meeting legislative requirements and guidance in respect of the public realm and highway maintenance standards. Responsibility for maintaining those standards rested with the Council, in its capacity as Local Highway Authority, but affected everyone living, working or visiting in the Borough. The Council's duties for maintenance of public highway land under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 extended to include applications and

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

issuing licences for a range of highway uses. The report outlined proposed changes to the policy for control of 'A' boards and for applications for vehicle crossings.

The report also referred to plans to prepare a new draft policy on mirrors on the public highway, which would be presented to a future meeting of the Traffic management Sub-Committee.

The proposed sections of the new Highway Maintenance Policy were attached to the report at Appendices 1-13, covering:

Appendix 1 - Advertising "A" Board Policy  
Appendix 2 - Vehicle Crossing Policy  
Appendix 3 - Disabled Bays  
Appendix 4 - Access Protection Markings  
Appendix 5 - Placing of Skips  
Appendix 6 - Excavate and Store Materials  
Appendix 7 - Oversail the Highway  
Appendix 8 - Hoarding & Scaffolding  
Appendix 9 - Private Sewers  
Appendix 10 - Private Structures  
Appendix 11 - Planting  
Appendix 12 - Obstructions  
Appendix 13 - Cranes

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Highway Maintenance Policy as set out in the report be adopted;**
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Transportation & Streetcare in consultation with the Lead Member for Strategic Environment Planning & Transport, the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal & Democratic Services to make minor amendments to the Highway Maintenance Policy**

**32. HIGHWAY ASSET MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report seeking approval for a new highway Asset Management Policy, which would include a change in highway safety inspection frequency proposed as part of efficiency savings and Highway Asset Management.

The report explained that the Council wished to secure as much funding as possible from the Department for Transport incentive fund and one of the specified criteria to demonstrate progression towards Asset management was the publication of an approved Highway Asset Management Policy. The report outlined the features of the new policy, which would apply to the creation/construction, acquisition, operation, maintenance, rehabilitation and disposal of all Council Highway Assets.

The report also explained that as part of efficiency savings the Council had approved the reduction in the number of Neighbourhood officers who carried out safety



**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

inspections from nine to four. In order to continue to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to carry out Highway Safety Inspections with this significantly reduced workforce it was necessary to change how and when these inspections were carried out. The report set out proposals to reduce the frequency of inspections as follows:

Road Type	Current frequency	Proposed Frequency
Category A	Monthly	3 monthly
Category B	3 monthly	6 monthly
Categories C and U	Every 12 months	Every 18 months

The report explained that neighbouring authorities were considering altering the frequency of their safety inspections to levels similar to this proposal. Having carried out a risk assessment based on guidance in the Code of Practice, officer's considered the proposed changes were appropriate. The report stated that the frequency of inspections would be reviewed annually as part of Asset Management to ensure that they met requirements.

A copy of the proposed new Highway Asset Management Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the Highway Asset Management Policy be approved;**
- (2) That the proposed change to Highway Safety Inspection frequency be approved.**

**33. THAMES VALLEY LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP: FUNDING FOR MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES IN READING**

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report updating the committee on the current major transport projects in reading, namely:

- Southern and Eastern Mass Rapid Transit
- Green Park Station
- National Cycle Network Route 422

The report also provided details of the process followed by local authorities to gain scheme and spend approval through the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) for such major transport schemes, including initial and full business case submission and the assessment process followed by the LEP through an independent assessor.

Executive Summaries of the business cases for each scheme were attached to the report as follows:

- Appendix 1 - South Reading Mass Rapid Transport Phase 1 & 2
- Appendix 2 - Green Park Station
- Appendix 3 - National Cycle Network Route 422

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**  
**4 APRIL 2017**

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the report be noted and the further significant investment in Reading's strategic transport infrastructure, as set out in the approved Local Transport Plan and the associated business case for Reading's economy be welcomed;**
- (2) That the progress to date of the individual Transport Schemes, as detailed in the report, be noted and the inclusion of the "Local Funding" elements of each scheme in the Council's rolling Capital Programme be endorsed.**

(Councillor Duveen declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item. Nature of interest: Councillor Duveen's son worked for Network Rail)

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.51pm).