

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND SPORT

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 th JULY 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT - PINCH POINT FUNDING UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORT	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee on the Pinch Point applications that the Council submitted to the Department for Transport for improvements to the highway network to improve traffic flow.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee note the report and the successful award of grant funding for the A33 Congestion Relief Pinchpoint Scheme and the Reading Bridge Structural Improvements & Traffic Management Pinchpoint Scheme.
- 2.2 That the Committee agree to officers submitting a future report seeking detailed scheme and spend approval.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with the Reading Borough Council's adopted third Local Transport Plan.
- 3.2 The bids submitted received support from the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which supports the Berkshire Local Investment Plan.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council submitted three bids to the Department for Transport's (DfT) Pinch Point fund. The fund, for which £170 million was available, is to support improvements to the highway network that would remove/reduce current or future bottlenecks. The intention of the fund is to support economic growth by addressing barriers that restrict the movement of goods and people.
- 4.2 The intention of the fund is to secure an immediate impact, and so was aligned for supporting schemes that could be delivered quickly within the required timeframe. The DfT grant funding is required to be spent within the 2013/14 and 2014/15 financial years with all bids required to have at least 30% of funding from local contributions.
- 4.3 Successful bids were identified as those that would provide new or improved links to key economic sites, tackle congestion, or address the condition of highway structures that are close to becoming a barrier to access. Bids could fall into the below categories:
- Small schemes, which is for those between £1 million to £5 million;
 - Large schemes, which is for those between £5 million to £20 million;
 - And, structural maintenance schemes. Bids in this category were to address highway structures that are in need of maintenance due to issues such as age, weathering, and general deterioration due to heavy traffic volumes, and where a failure would result in serious issues for congestion on the highway.
- 4.5 The three bids that the Council submitted were:
- Reading Bridge Structural Improvements and Traffic Management;
 - A33 Congestion Relief; and
 - A4 Eastern Gateway Improvements.

5. SUCCESSFUL BIDS

- 5.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) announced on 31st May 2013 that Reading Borough Council had been awarded funding for two of the bid submissions. The Council was awarded £3.067 million for Reading Bridge Structural Improvements and Traffic Management Pinchpoint scheme and £1.442 million for A33 Congestion Relief Pinchpoint Scheme.

5.2 The initial funding profiles (£million) of the awarded bids are identified below:

Scheme	Total (£m)	DfT grant funding		Local contributions
		2013/14	2014/15	2013-15
Reading Bridge	4.383	0.142	2.925	1.316
A33	2.06	0.401	1.041	0.618

5.3 The Reading Bridge structural maintenance scheme will address issues that have been identified in the structure as a result of long-term exposure to weather where water leakage through the structure has caused deterioration. Without this work the bridge may have required a weight restriction to be applied in the future, which would create a significant highway pinch point. As the works to the bridge include structural strengthening and re-waterproofing and resurfacing there is also the opportunity to include investigating the introduction of a 'tidal flow' lane traffic management system to maximise the capacity for peak time traffic southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening.

5.4 The A33 scheme comprises a range of measures to improve journey time reliability and reduce congestion along the corridor. This includes extending the left-turn filter lanes for exiting the A33 onto Rose Kiln Lane (north and southbound); providing more direct pedestrian and cycle links alongside the A33 crossing of the Kennet; providing an alternative pedestrian and cycle route to negotiate seasonal flooding around the Bennet Road area; and partial signalling at peak times only of the junction of the A33 with South Oak Way.

5.5 The A4 bid was not awarded any funding. The total cost for this scheme, including local contributions, was £1.546 million. Funding opportunities will continue to be sought for this cross boundary scheme.

5.6 Work will now continue to progress the detailed design and delivery programme, including spend profiles. A further report will be submitted to a future Committee meeting seeking scheme and spend approval.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 To develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Project progress and timescales for works will be publicised to inform residents, visitors, and businesses.

7.2 All bids are available on the Council's website at :
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/residents/parking-road-and-travel/TransportStrategy/pinchpoint/>

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Statutory procedures will be required to implement some of these measures, where there is a requirement to promote Traffic Regulation Orders.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council is required to contribute to the cost of the projects as part of the commitment for local funding through a combination of existing Integrated Transport Block government allocations and from Section 106 contributions secured for transport improvements.

9.2 Detailed financial implications will be reported to a future Committee meeting.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Pinchpoint bid submissions are available on the Council's website at:
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/residents/parking-road-and-travel/TransportStrategy/pinchpoint/>