

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

#### QUESTION NO. 1 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Councillor Hopper to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### Highway works at Reading Station and the Pedestrian/Cycle bridge over the River Thames

With reference to the Reading Chronicle's front page story "Outrage over 'misspent cash'" dated 29 October, will the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport please confirm:

1. The exact amount of money received from the Department for Transport for the highway works around Reading Station and for the new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the River Thames?
2. The final cost of these two schemes and from what sources the shortfall has been funded, given that both projects have been completed?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

#### **Part 1:**

As reported to Cabinet in November 2011, a grant of £9.6 million was provided by the DfT through the Regional Funding Allocation for the Reading Station transport interchanges and highway improvements.

As reported to the Traffic Management Advisory Panel and Cabinet in September 2012, the new pedestrian and cycle bridge is just one of a number of major projects that have been made possible by the Council's successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid. The £4.9m Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Small Package was approved by the Department for Transport (DfT) in July 2011 and the £20.692m LSTF Large Partnership Package was approved by the DfT in June 2012.

#### **Part 2:**

The final cost of the Reading Station transport interchanges and highway improvements was £14,398,450. The additional costs were funded from existing Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding, and the following S106 allocations (as below).

2013/14 (June 2014 Policy Committee)

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Use</i>
<i>Reading Station</i>	<i>1070 - 10-14 Carey Street</i>	<i>20,925.36</i>
	<i>1147 - 79 London Road/34 Eldon Terrace</i>	<i>8,129.53</i>
	<i>1350 - 288-290 Oxford Road</i>	<i>2,176.11</i>
	<i>1624 - Land at junction of Forbury and Vastern Roads (Reading Central One)</i>	<i>£213,819.93</i>
	<i>1693 - 29-31 Cressingham Road</i>	<i>16,546.64</i>
	<i>1696 - 52 Watlington Street</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>
	<i>1736 - 11 Elm Road</i>	<i>2,543.65</i>
	<i>1781 - 1-3 St Ronans Road</i>	<i>9,783.15</i>
	<i>1856 - 8 Castle Street</i>	<i>4,665.01</i>
	<i>1921/3315 - Mansfield Hall</i>	<i>218,097.22</i>
	<i>1962 - 145 Friar Street</i>	<i>7,843.19</i>
	<i>1981 - Reading Quarry, Berry's Lane (WBDC)</i>	<i>-8,443.13</i>
	<i>2015 - 60-62 Kings Road</i>	<i>17,457.18</i>
	<i>2076/1536 - 4 Riley Road</i>	<i>9,212.90</i>
	<i>2104 - Unit G Reading Retail Park</i>	<i>845.05</i>
	<i>3001 - Hastings Close</i>	<i>6,091.70</i>
	<i>3002 - 2 Berkeley Avenue</i>	<i>2,098.77</i>
	<i>3017 - 177 Park Lane</i>	<i>3,050.58</i>
	<i>3023 - 45 Cressingham Road</i>	<i>6,286.96</i>
	<i>3030 - 197-199 Oxford Road</i>	<i>10,410.72</i>
<i>3037 - 146 Wokingham Road</i>	<i>2,640.22</i>	
<i>3045 - 32 Brunswick Street</i>	<i>4,095.24</i>	
<i>3057 - 100 South View Avenue</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	

3062 - Land at Caversham Rectory	4,045.92
3071 - Bennet Road	6,948.62
3078 - Unit 2 Tunbridge Jones Industrial Estate	2,943.00
3081 - 53 Greyfriars Rd	8,213.47
3095 - 27 Mansfield Road	2,000.00
3117 - Taylor Court, Tilehurst Road	34,853.53
3132 - August House, Brownlow Road	28,252.19
3141 - Abbotsmead Place/School Lane	81,964.29
3148 - Tylers Place	12,045.02
3149 - 89 Gainsborough Road	3,000.00
3159 - Reading Link Retail Park Unit C2	15,866.11
3164 - 1 Oak Tree Road	3,032.51
3172 - 24 Bennet Road	7,357.50
3175 - 46 Northcourt Avenue	6,192.58
3176 - 29 Woodcote Road	4,000.00
3180 - 15-18A Hawthorne Road	12,068.80
3193 - 8 Crown Place	19,000.00
3194 - 409-411 Oxford Road	4,000.00
3203 - Land adj 122 Wantage Road	6,045.60
3229 - 39 Prospect Street	3,034.57
3231 - 34 St Ronans Road	3,968.80
3232 - 8-10 Kendrick Road	9,000.00
3234 - College Arms, Kings Road	13,080.00
3247 - 91-93 Kings Road	4,933.54
3256 - Former reservoir and pumping station, Bath Road	155,517.55
3262 - 56 London Road	1,500.00
3272 - Unit 2a Reading Gate Retail Park	61,012.22
3275 - Unit 4 Reading Gate Retail Park	103,407.00
3285 - 72-74 Bath Road	16,186.00
3312 - 2 Pell Street	3,500.00
3323 - 32-36 Kings Road	17,330.48
3965 - One Central Reading	22,890.00
<b>Reading Station Total</b>	<b>1,551,553.10</b>

Total Contributions Spent on Reading Station 2013 / 2014 £1,551,553.10

2014/15 (June 2015 Policy Committee)

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Use</i>
<i>Reading Station</i>	<i>1813/2105 - Aldwych House, Blagrove Street</i>	<i>248,167.27</i>
	<i>3298 - Land at Foudry Place</i>	<i>91,844.02</i>
	<i>4011 - 42 Kenavon Drive</i>	<i>206,176.98</i>
	<i>4067 - 350 Basingstoke Road</i>	<i>258,803.00</i>
	<i>4070 - Thames Tower</i>	<i>273,029.26</i>
	<i>Reading Station total</i>	<i>1,078,020.50</i>

\*The total monies spent on Reading Station also included a BCC Developer Contribution equating £245,257.52

Total Contributions Spent on Reading Station 2014 / 2015 £1,323,278.02

The final costs of the pedestrian and cycle bridge are still to be determined. As with any major contract, there is a period of review once the project is completed to agree the final accounts. The Council expects the full details of the final cost over the next few months.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

Councillor Hopper to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### QUESTION NO 2. Local Sustainable Transport Funding

Will the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport please confirm:

- Why, when and by whom was the decision taken to remove the modifications proposed for the A4 London Road between Cemetery Junction and the borough boundary next to Palmer Park?
- Since this work was funded by Local Sustainable Transport Funding from Central Government, what money was left over by the reduction in scope of the programme, and has that money had to be returned to the Department for Transport?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

Certain elements of the A4 Pinch Point scheme were delivered as part of the Cemetery Junction highway improvements project and this included the new eastbound bus lane on London Road and upgrading of the existing traffic signals and road surface at Cemetery Junction.

The proposed changes on the A4 near the Liverpool Road junction could not be taken forward due to engineering difficulties discovered during the design process. Notification on this reduction in scope was reported to the Park Ward Councillors and the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport in January 2015.

The only remaining part of the project to deliver is a new westbound section of bus lane beneath the Sutton Seeds flyover and officers are currently in discussions with Wokingham Borough Council to progress the project to delivery.

The grant funding for this project is provided through the DfT Pinch Point programme and is separate to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund programme. The Council's Pinch Point projects included the A4 Highway Improvements, the A33 Highway Improvements

and the Reading Bridge structural maintenance scheme. As the final construction costs across the whole programme are not yet confirmed, Officers are unable provide the details of any surplus funding at this stage. However, once the final accounts are agreed, discussions will take place with the DfT as part of the financial monitoring and returns process.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

#### QUESTION NO. 3 in accordance with Standing Order No. 36

Councillor Steele to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### Bus Stop Improvements

The Reading Chronicle reported on 29 October that the Council has paid back more than £22,000 Section 106 monies to the developer of Kentwood House in my Ward. The developer successfully challenged the Council for failing to carry out the agreed improvements to the two bus stops closest to the development including real time information for bus users.

Through the Chair, would the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport commit to implementing these improvements for my ward residents before the end of the current financial year? After all planning consent was conditional on payment for the bus stop improvement works and the Council should have implemented the works within 5 years of occupation.

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

The Planning Application was permitted in September 2005 and required a contribution of £22,000 which was fettered towards Kassel bus stop kerbs and Trueform bus stop poles at two existing bus stops on Kentwood Hill (£12,500) and Intelligent Transport Systems (£9,500). The process followed for each contribution is as follows:-

Kassel kerbs and Trueform poles - This was requested at the time of the application given that an hourly bus service along Kentwood Hill existed. However not long after this application was determined, Reading Buses removed the service meaning there would have been no requirement to upgrade the bus stops. The Council have since subsidised a bus service (4 buses a day) that runs along Kentwood Hill, route 28, but given the low frequency and number of passengers utilising the bus stops on Kentwood Hill, the bus stops were not upgraded and the money was therefore returned to the applicant.

Intelligent Transport Systems - At the time of the application the applicant wanted this to be allocated solely towards Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) but for some reason the actual S106 Agreement stated Intelligent Transport Systems although this does incorporate RTPI. As detailed above, the bus services were removed and the replacement service was so infrequent that RTPI was not deemed appropriate. As this system was not implemented, the money was returned to the applicant.

In conclusion given the material changes in bus service since the consideration of the planning application there is no longer a justification to complete the works originally proposed.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

QUESTION NO. 4 in accordance with Standing Order No. 36

Councillor Ballsdon to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### Funding for Bus Stop Improvements

The Reading Chronicle reported on 29 October that the Council has paid back more than £22,000 Section 106 monies to the developer of Kentwood House. The developer successfully challenged the Council for failing to carry out the agreed improvements to the two bus stops closest to the development including real time information for bus users.

Given that the Council has been forced to refund the money ring-fenced for these specific works back to the Kentwood House developer, through the Chair please would the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport advise how the Council will now fund them, ensuring that delivery of any other S106 fettered scheme is not impacted as a result?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

As detailed in the response to Councillor Steele about Kentwood Hill House, the circumstances relating to the provision of new bus stop infrastructure changed shortly after the planning application was determined. This meant that the specified bus stop infrastructure linked to the development was no longer necessary due to the substantial reduction to the existing bus service along Kentwood Hill and the funds were returned. The route 28 Community Link bus continues to operate in this area, and there are no plans to revise the frequency at the present time. As previously stated, there is no longer a justification to complete the works originally proposed and on that basis no other Section 106 funded schemes will be affected.

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

**QUESTION NO. 5** in accordance with Standing Order No. 36

Councillor Ballsdon to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

**S106 Developer Monies**

With reference to my first question (Q4) and again through the Chair, how confident is the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport that the Council has not misallocated or misspent any further S106 developer monies?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

A detailed process in relation to the Section 106 agreements was agreed by the Council's Cabinet in 2011. In accordance with the process, a schedule is produced of the proposed use of Section 106 agreements which is presented to and approved by the Council's Policy Committee each year. The last such report was made to Policy Committee in June 2015. The report is made available for member and public comment, and External Auditor Review prior to the Council's Final Accounts being approved (following Audit) each September by the Council's Audit & Governance Committee.

Working with Finance, Legal and the benefiting services, the Head of Planning, Development and Regulatory Services has begun a review of the procedure agreed by Cabinet in 2011 to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. If appropriate, a report will be brought to Policy Committee in the New Year.

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015**

**QUESTION NO. 6** in accordance with Standing Order No. 36

Councillor Ballsdon to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

**Capital Improvements Programme**

A report called "Capital Improvements Programme for Leisure, Parks & Open Spaces 2015-17" went to a committee meeting on 18 November. It outlined the projects which will be funded by Section 106 developer contributions, estimating the cost of each project and taking into account the geographic fettering of the legal agreements, ie the appropriate usage of this funding source of £348,500.

Please advise why no capital improvements programme has been brought to this or any other Committee to set out how Transport Section 106 monies are to be invested?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

In line with the agreed procedure the Section 106s the Council is holding have been published each financial year and is available to view on the Council website. The annual usage is available on the Policy Committee agenda each June and this includes the details of Section 106 contributions towards Transport Projects.

Individual reports on Transport projects are regularly submitted to Council committees such as Policy Committee, Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee and Traffic Management Sub-Committee. These reports make reference to funding allocations including when Section 106 contributions are part of the likely funding.

There are no additional schemes needing committee scheme approval at this time.

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2015

#### QUESTION NO. 7 in accordance with Standing Order No. 36

Councillor Whitham to ask the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### M4 scheme

Given the existing air quality problems in Reading, would the Lead Councillor join Green Councillors in opposing plans to increase capacity of the M4 and the knock on effect of increased traffic on surrounding roads?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor David Absolom):**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport (Councillor Page):**

The Council's Transport Development Control team submitted a formal response to the Planning Inspectorate on the application by Highways England for an order granting Development Consent for the Proposed M4 Junctions 3 to 12 Smart Motorway. The Local Impact Report is publicly available on the Planning Inspectorate website. For reference, the conclusion of the Council's Transport Impact Report supports the request by Councillor Whitham and states:-

*5.1 The Council accepts that extra capacity is required on the M4 to accommodate the existing flows and likely flows travelling along the corridor to and from London.*

*5.2 However it contends that with traffic flows reducing over the last 10 years, the provision of all lane running on this section will only accommodate the existing flows and the provision of an extra lane may divert traffic on to the corridor in the belief that a greater capacity is provided than the route can actually accommodate.*

*5.3 The removal of the hard shoulder to be used as a running lane on a heavily used section on motorway will be detrimental to highway safety especially given the spacing of the emergency laybys. When vehicles suffer sudden mechanical breakdown it is unlikely they will have sufficient velocity to reach a layby thus stopping in a live running lane, an extremely dangerous procedure.*

*5.4 During incidents where vehicles cannot reach a layby safely, a minimum of 2 lanes will be closed for safety reasons while the incident is resolved reducing the capacity of the motorway by 50%. This will cause severe delays on the motorway and traffic will divert on to local roads which in the case of Reading will result in gridlock.*

*5.5 The scheme should be reconsidered with a continuous hard shoulder in the interests of safety.*

In addition the Council has requested further information from Highways England regarding the forecast increases in traffic flow on the local road network and resulting congestion and air quality impacts from the proposed scheme.

The Council is committed to taking action to improve air quality, including providing viable alternatives to travelling by car within Reading through the provision of enhanced public transport services such as bus rapid transit routes and park and ride facilities. The Council's Air Quality Action Plan has recently been updated, with the objective of addressing the air quality issues in the borough.