

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 2 JULY 2018

QUESTION NO. 2 in accordance with Standing Order No.36

Enrico Petrucco to ask the Chair of Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

Differential Road User Charging

Why hasn't a comprehensive review of differential road user charging (ie: local resident concessions) been assessed to tackle the Reading-wide congestion problems (which will plague the central Reading portion of any prospective ER-MRT scheme)?

REPLY by the Chair of the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee (Councillor Debs 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 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport (Councillor Page):

I thank Mr Petrucco for his question.

As stated in my response to the previous question, the feasibility of implementing a road user charging scheme in Reading has previously been investigated through the 2009 Transport Innovation Fund process. This work will be revisited alongside other possible demand management measures as part of the development of our new Local Transport Plan (LTP) and associated car parking and air quality strategies.

The work to investigate possible road user charging schemes as part of the wider LTP strategy development will include a review of opportunities for the inclusion of concessions within the charging regimes, for instance the potential for variations and discounts for local residents and small businesses.

However, it must be stressed that road user charging cannot be considered in isolation and the transport strategy will take a holistic approach to transport provision in the area. A package of demand management and public transport enhancement schemes will be required to enable and manage the significant levels of growth proposed for the area; alongside meeting wider objectives of the strategy which will not solely consider congestion but will also focus on air quality, road safety, accessibility, affordability and health & wellbeing.

Regarding the central section of the East Reading MRT scheme, bus lanes are already in place to and from Reading Station northern interchange on Bagnall Way and Vastern

Road. A bus lane on Napier Road approaching Reading Bridge roundabout is proposed as part of the overall scheme, and safeguarding to extend this bus lane further along Napier Road is included within the emerging Local Plan. This will provide a comprehensive series of bus lanes linking the new section of the East MRT route (between Napier Road and the A3290) to Reading Station and the town centre.