

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE - 2 JULY 2018

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

John Mullaney to ask the Chair of Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee:

#### Definition of Mass and Rapid

Can the lead councillor explain the meaning of 'Mass' and 'Rapid' - as in the Mass Rapid Transit ?

**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 Mullaney for his question.

The term 'Mass Rapid Transit' (MRT) is the generally accepted term for a major upgrade or new installation of sustainable transport routes and/or services. The main features of an MRT system are the provision of dedicated or segregated rights of way to ensure free or priority passage for the MRT vehicles. This dedicated right of way provides a more 'Rapid' service than previously available if the right of way was non-existent or shared with general traffic. Examples of MRT schemes include substantial bus priority lanes, guided busway, tram line or light railway system; either alongside or separate from the highway for general traffic.

If the system is rail based this would likely be a tram or light rail vehicle (LRV) or for bus based (Bus Rapid Transit - BRT) it could be a guided or unguided bus, which could be powered by conventional diesel, CNG, electric overhead or batteries, or indeed any suitable alternative fuel.

The vehicles provided for the Rapid Transit service would be able to move a greater 'Mass' of people in a given time due to the speed benefits of the dedicated right of way and the likely provision of greater capacity (through more frequent services and/or larger vehicles) in comparison to a conventional local bus service.

The East Reading MRT will initially be for the use of buses and coaches but, should funding become available, the bridge could be used by light rail, trams, pods or whatever new technology has developed which delivers mass rapid public transport

alternatives to avoid thousands of private cars causing congestion and pollution in the East Reading area due to the very substantial growth in housing in the Wokingham and Bracknell areas over the next 20 years.