

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	25th JUNE 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	17
TITLE:	READING STATION - HIGHWAY WORKS UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	ABBAY & BATTLE
LEAD OFFICER:	CRIS BUTLER	TEL:	0118 937 2068
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT NETWORK MANAGER	E-MAIL:	Cris.butler@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 As previously reported to the Traffic Management Advisory Panel (the predecessor to this Sub-Committee), in April 2011 Reading Borough Council completed the Central Area Highway Works which facilitates the redevelopment of Reading Station and provides enhanced public transport interchange facilities around the Town Centre.
- 1.2 This report provides a progress update on the Reading Station Redevelopment Project and the associated highway works.
- 1.3 The report highlights the key programme dates for future works associated with Reading Station.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee note the report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport and Planning Policy.

4. THE PROPOSAL

Reading Station - Transport Interchanges

4.1 Cabinet at its meeting on 28th November 2011 agreed the recommendations of the Traffic Management Advisory Panel report on the new Reading Station Interchanges and the separate report to award the construction contracts to complete the new public transport interchanges. The contractor has been appointed and has since been working alongside Network Rail in order to deliver the interchanges.

4.2 Northern Interchange:-

The formal opening of the new interchange took place on Monday 8th July 2013. This included the opening of all new bus lanes, the majority of taxi ranks, new pedestrian crossings and new street furniture. Use of the area has substantially increased since the interchange was opened to the public and the new facilities have been well received. In particular, users have praised the new controlled crossings on Vastern Road and the convenience of the new bus stops to the nearby north station entrance.

Cycle Parking on the North

4.3 At the end of the overall programme in Summer 2014, a new cycle parking hub with a minimum of 300 racks is due to be introduced in the area currently used as a site compound on the corner of the multi-storey car park. In the interim, 193 permanent and 23 temporary cycle racks have been introduced to cater for the high demand in this area.

4.4 Southwest Interchange:-

Following the opening of the new station entrances and transfer deck during Easter 2013, the Network Rail compound area in Station Hill was handed back to the Council to allow the interchange works to commence.

4.5 The demolition of the Station Hill road structure started in April 2013 and is complete. Demolition of the Station Hill southern footway is also now complete.

4.7 The contractor has started to create the new road and footway surfaces which will lead to completion of the new interchange in September 2014.

4.8 For reference, between the start of works in June 2012 up to April 2014, the cumulative recycling figures for excavated materials is as follows:

- 29,656 tonnes of excavated materials recycled and re-used on the Reading Station interchange project and across other unrelated projects = 97%,
- 947 tonnes sent to landfill = 3%.

(A Standard construction delivery lorry would normally carry 20 tonnes, therefore approximately 1480 lorry loads of material have been recycled)

Forbury Road near Apex Plaza

- 4.9 As part of the introduction of the new northern interchange, a new section of bus lane was introduced in Forbury Road near Apex Plaza to provide an uninterrupted route for buses heading from the south to the north of the Station.
- 4.10 The road layout at this location was adjusted to create the new bus lane resulting in one inbound and one outbound general traffic lane. (prior to the change, the road layout consisted of two inbound and one outbound general traffic lanes).
- 4.11 Since the changes were made, we have received some comments from users of the area about certain buses using the inbound bus stop (near the Corn Stores Public House) for long periods of time resulting in potential obstruction and conflict issues to the general operation of traffic flow. Officers have reviewed the issue and it is clear that the inbound bus stop may need to be relocated for standing buses.
- 4.12 Officers have since looked at alternative locations for the bus operator but at the current time, due to the high level of road space demand in the whole Town Centre, there are no immediate alternatives. However, as the northern interchange works continue, an additional area of bus stops will be released in July 2014, and the main bus service using the Forbury Road inbound bus stop has agreed to relocate to the north thus removing the issue.

New north and south public squares

- 4.13 The highway works contract includes the creation of a new public square on the north side of the Station (the area currently bounded by white hoarding) and substantial improvements to the existing public square on the south side of the Station (the area in front of the Three Guineas Public House). The works to the south are programmed to take place between March 2014 and August 2014 and the works to the north are programmed to take place between February 2014 and July 2014.

New Viaduct and Cow Lane Bridges

- 4.15 The remaining works to the west of the Station at Cow Lane include a new elevated railway supported by a viaduct that is located above the northern Cow Lane bridge and a new railway depot facility off Cow Lane/Richfield Avenue. The depot facility is now fully operational and was opened by the Secretary of State for Transport. The remainder of work is well underway, and will be completed alongside the construction of a new northern Cow Lane bridge that will also provide an enhanced route for all road users. The works are programmed to be completed during summer 2015.
- 4.16 Regular progress updates between the Council and Network Rail have led to a greater understanding of all phases of the construction programme. The Council was able to advise on the most appropriate form of temporary traffic management to enable a large proportion of the viaduct works in Loverock Road to take place. A temporary one-way system on Loverock Road between Little Johns Lane and Ashmere Terrace was suggested rather than traffic signals for

reasons of safety, to maximise the available on street parking areas and to reduce disruption to the businesses by maintaining traffic flow. The temporary one-way system was introduced in April 2013 and will operate for approximately 24 months.

4.17 Regular update leaflets and meetings will continue to take place with the local community through Network Rail's ongoing communications plan.

4.18 The Oxford Road Area Study has now formally commenced with measures proposed to complement the changes at Cow Lane bridges.

4.19 Members of the Sub-Committee are asked to note the contents of this report.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 Statutory consultation was carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Local exhibitions have been completed alongside Network Rail throughout the works.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None relating to this report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The Council has carried out a equality impact assessment scoping exercise, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The interchange works are funded by the DfT via the Council's successful Regional Funding Allocation bid with local contributions secured through S106 and

other Transport budgets. Works at Cow Lane form part of the Network Rail led Reading Station Redevelopment Project.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 TMAP reports - 10 September 2009, 11 November 2009, 10 June 2010, 4 November 2010, 17 March 2011, June 2011, November 2011, January 2012, March 2012, June 2012, September 2012, November 2012 and January 2013.
- 10.2 Cabinet reports - 11 April 2011, 12 April 2010, 14 April 2009, 1 December 2008, 29 September 2008, 29 October 2007 and 14 February 2005.
- 10.3 Traffic Management Sub-Committee reports - June 2013, September 2013, November 2013, January 2014 and March 2014.