

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

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	11 SEPTEMBER 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	16
TITLE:	READING STATION - HIGHWAY WORKS UPDATE		
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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.
- 2.2 That the Sub-Committee acknowledge the delay to the highway improvements at Cow Lane Bridges due to the requirement by the Secretary of State for Transport to hold a Public Inquiry.

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.

4.3 Cycle Parking on the North

At the end of the overall programme in Autumn 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, cycle parking for 212 bikes has been introduced to cater for the high demand in this area.

4.4 North public square

Works to create the new north public square were accelerated and completion was achieved on 16th July 2014 to coincide with the official opening of Reading Station by the Queen on 17th July 2014. The new square played an integral part of the official opening ceremony and fully compliments the new northern entrance and facilities at Reading Station.

4.5 Southwest Interchange:-

The contractor is now beginning to create the new road and footway surfaces which will lead to completion of the new interchange at the end of September/ beginning of October 2014.

4.6 South public square

The contractor continues to progress works in this area to create the new public square. New paving has already been completed outside the Three Guineas Public House and new paving and surface water drainage is also well underway across the majority of the site. Completion is due at the end of September 2014.

New Viaduct and Cow Lane Bridges

4.7 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.

4.8 Cow Lane Bridges - Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and Side Roads Order (SRO)

At the 17th February 2014 meeting of the Council's Policy Committee, approval was granted to progress the modified CPO and SRO in order to facilitate improvements to existing highway and where necessary the stopping up of highway adjacent to Cow Lane and Cardiff Road and the closure and reprovision of private means of access.

4.9 The Orders were made by the Council under the provisions of the Highways Act 1980 and were submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport to request their confirmation.

4.10 The 2014 CPO and modifications to the SRO were made on 30 May 2014.

4.11 There was a statutory period in June and early July 2014 for any objections to the CPO and the SRO modifications running until 3rd July 2014 and 18th July 2014 respectively. Any objections are made by notice to the Secretary of State for Transport.

4.12 At the end of the consultation process, objections have been received by some of the affected landowners and in accordance with the CPO and SRO procedures, the Secretary of State for Transport has confirmed it will be necessary to hold a Public Inquiry. This has therefore delayed the construction programme for the Cow Lane Highway works by approximately 12 months.

4.13 At the time of writing this report (August 2014), the Inquiry is proposed to take place early next year, with a decision from the Inquiry Inspector potentially expected at the end of June 2015. Subject to the outcome of the Inquiry and no High Court Challenges being made (6 weeks from publication of notice of decision), construction of the highway works could commence in late summer 2015.

4.14 Negotiations with the objectors continue and there remains a possibility that if the proposed agreements are approved and the objections are withdrawn, the Public Inquiry will no longer be required.

4.15 Members of the Sub-Committee are asked to note the contents of this report and acknowledge the delay to the highway improvements at Cow Lane Bridges due to the requirement by the Secretary of State for Transport to hold a Public Inquiry.

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.
CPO and SRO procedures in accordance with the Highways Act 1980.

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, March 2014 and June 2014.