

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	17 JUNE 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	MAJOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS PROJECTS - UPDATE		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the current major transport and highways projects in Reading, namely:

- A33 and Reading Bridge Pinch Point schemes
- Reading Station Area Redevelopment
- The new Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge
- Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle park and ride schemes

1.2 This report also advises of any future key programme dates associated with the schemes.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Sub-Committee note the report

2.2 That the new Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge and associated new footway and cycleway links are dedicated as Public Highway under the provisions of the Highways Act 1980.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

4. THE PROPOSAL

A33 Pinch Point Scheme

- 4.1 The scheme comprises of a range of measures to improve journey time reliability and reduce congestion along the corridor. This includes extending the left-turn filter lanes for exiting the A33 onto Rose Kiln Lane (north and southbound); providing more direct pedestrian and cycle links alongside the A33 crossing of the Kennet and providing an alternative pedestrian and cycle route to negotiate seasonal flooding along the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road.
- 4.2 Works commenced in December 2014 with completion expected early July 2015. The project team has continued to review the current programme in order to reduce any disruption while the improvement works take place. This has included some recent night time working and limiting any necessary lane closures to off peak hours only (09.30 to 15.30).
- 4.3 The wider scheme will includes more direct pedestrian and cycle links alongside the A33 crossing of the River Kennet. A new raised pedestrian and cycle route along the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road will also be built. The current path is affected by seasonal flooding and this new path will be built up at road level which will be usable all year round, as well as being safer for cyclists and pedestrians alike.
- 4.4 In April 2015, works on the northbound approach to the A33/Rose Kiln Lane junction were completed. This has created additional left turn capacity and improvements to the overall operation of the gyratory.

Reading Bridge Pinch Point Scheme

- 4.5 In November 2014 essential work began to strengthen Reading Bridge. The bridge is a 92 year old structure and is on a major strategic route, both through Reading and the wider region. The structure is in need of essential strengthening and waterproofing to ensure it can continue to carry the amount of traffic it does in future years without the need for vehicle restrictions. The Department for Transport awarded Reading Borough Council capital grant funding from their Pinch Point Fund to enable to works to be carried out.

- 4.6 The initial phase of the work in November and December 2014 involved filling a large void underneath the southern approach structure with foam concrete. Since January the contractor erected scaffolding on both ends of the structure so that strengthening of the bridge using carbon fibre and concrete repairs could be carried out safely.
- 4.7 As of February concrete repairs underneath the bridge on the south and north side were carried out, as well as a specialist sub-contractor carrying out stone repairs to the balustrades on the footways of the bridge.
- 4.8 The full advertised bridge closure took place between Monday 18th May and Saturday 30th May when the entire road surface was removed down to the bridge deck. Concrete repairs were carried out and over 660 carbon fibre strengthening rods inserted into the original reinforced concrete deck structure. The deck was then covered in water proofing and the road layers rebuilt. The western footway slabs were also replaced with Fibre Reinforced Polymer (FRP) slabs during this closure. At this meeting, the Transport Users forum will be receiving a detailed presentation on the works.
- 4.9 Currently work is continuing under off-peak lane closures which are in place Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. These lane closures are scheduled to continue throughout the works period. Some weekend off peak working will also take place as and when required, but we will look to keep this to a minimum.
- 4.10 Works to complete the project includes replacement of the footway slabs with FRP slabs, carbon fibre strengthening under the central section of the bridge river span, completion of the concrete repairs and painting of the bridge.
- 4.11 The southern scaffolding is scheduled to be removed late June which will allow a floating pontoon with supporting scaffold to be brought beneath the central span, so that the concrete repairs and carbon fibre strengthening works can be carried out within this area. The river will remain open for boat users.
- 4.12 The project is expected to be completed in August 2015.

Reading Station

- 4.13 As previously reported to the Sub-Committee in March 2015, the Public Inquiry was held and completed on 13th January 2015.
- 4.14 All the objections to the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) were withdrawn but as they were outstanding when the public inquiry was held, the Department for Transport were not able to make a decision until they received the Inspector's report.
- 4.15 This process has now been completed, and The Secretary of State for Transport has confirmed both the CPO and SRO.
- 4.16 Alongside completing the necessary legal procedures to complete the CPO, Network Rail are due to commence the procurement process for the works with site mobilization expected in August 2015. Network Rail will again utilise the area on the west side of Cow Lane between both bridges as a site compound and no works will interfere with the operation and management of Reading Festival.
- 4.17 The works are expected to take approximately 6 months to complete.

Cycle Parking on the North side of the Station

- 4.18 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. Works are due to commence later in the Summer 2015 with completion planned in the Autumn 2015. In the interim, cycle parking for 212 bikes has been introduced to cater for the high demand in this area.

Pedestrian and Cycle bridge

- 4.19 The major construction works for the pedestrian cycle bridge over the River Thames are well underway with expected scheme completion early September 2015. Once complete, the bridge will provide a key new route for pedestrians and cyclists between Caversham, Reading Station and central Reading.
- 4.20 The majority of the preparatory work for the bridge has been completed including new flood storage areas, sheet piling and the main bridge foundations.
- 4.21 The first three sections of the bridge arrived in May 2015 with the remaining six sections of the bridge, including the 37 metre high mast, to be transported in overnight in early June 2015.

- 4.22 The bridge sections have been manufactured in Rotterdam, Holland and will be assembled on site. The main bridge mast will be lifted into place in June 2015 and then connected up in stages with the bridge sections. When complete, the bridge will be approximately 120m long, with a 68m span over the River Thames.
- 4.23 The contractor will also continue widening the paths that will lead to the bridge and laying the foundations for the ramp and steps on the south bank of the river Thames.
- 4.24 Working alongside the contractor, the Council will continue to provide updates to Residents and Businesses via the Council Website, letters and the information boards displayed on site.
- 4.25 It will be necessary to dedicate the new pedestrian and cycle bridge and associated new footway/cycle links as Public Highway. This process will be completed as a Declaration under the provisions of the Highways Act 1980.

MereOak and Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride schemes

- 4.26 Construction works are underway for the new park & ride sites at MereOak and Winnersh Triangle, which together will deliver nearly 1,000 parking spaces. The two sites are being constructed simultaneously.
- 4.27 The MereOak Park & Ride site, located south of M4 junction 11, will provide 579 parking spaces and will be served by the regular Greenwave bus service to and from Central Reading, as well as serving GreenPark and Reading International Business Park. The site will include improved pedestrian and cycle paths alongside the car park, linking to the existing provision at Junction 11 to connect over the M4. Completion of the scheme is due in August 2015.
- 4.28 The Winnersh Triangle Park & Ride site, located near to Winnersh Triangle Station, will have 390 spaces and users will have the choice of travelling by bus or train into central Reading. The site will replace the existing Park & Ride site at Loddon Bridge which is prone to flooding. Completion of the scheme is due in September 2015
- 4.29 Members 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 The projects have been communicated to the local community through local exhibitions and Council meetings.

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 an equality impact assessment scoping exercise on all projects, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The costs associated with delivery of the A33 and Reading Bridge Pinch Point Schemes are met by the DfT Pinch Point project.

9.2 The costs associated with delivery of the Pedestrian Cycle Bridge, and the Park and Ride schemes are met by the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee reports.