

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	10 MARCH 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	WEST AREA TRANSPORT STUDY		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	SOUTHCOTE & MINSTER
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS MADDOCKS	TEL:	0118 937 4950
JOB TITLE:	TRANSPORT PLANNING MANAGER	E-MAIL:	chris.maddocks@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on progress with the West Reading Transport Study and to seek authority to undertake an informal consultation on scheme options for Southcote during the summer.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 The Sub-Committee is asked to approve the undertaking of an informal consultation regarding the concept scheme options for Southcote during summer 2016.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan and current traffic management policies and standards.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council, as the Local Highway Authority, is responsible for the provision, improvement and maintenance of transport infrastructure within the Borough. In support of this work the Council has developed a number of area transport studies to investigate transport improvements for the area in line with the Council's objectives as set out in the Local Transport Plan 2011-26.

- 4.2 The West Reading Transport Study was established in June 2015, with the purpose of identifying, defining and prioritising transport schemes within Southcote and the western section of Coley Park. The overriding objective of the study is to take a balanced approach to enhancing the local area and connecting links, through measures that improve accessibility, road safety for all users, better managing traffic and parking, and encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking.
- 4.3 The West Reading Transport Study Steering Group has been established to direct progress of the study. The group is chaired by the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, and includes membership from the Ward Councillors for Southcote and Minster. Representatives of other organisations are invited to attend Steering Group meetings as appropriate.

5. THE PROPOSAL

- 5.1 The Steering Group has undertaken a comprehensive review of the existing and anticipated transport issues and opportunities in the study area, with a particular focus on the future challenges that will result from the expansion of Southcote Primary School, the opening of the WREN Secondary Free School at the former Elvian School site on Southcote Lane, and the residential development at Coley Park on the former DEFRA offices site on Coley Avenue.
- 5.2 A series of concept scheme options have been developed for the study area and surrounding area of influence, with the objective of helping to alleviate and manage the existing and forecast transport issues and challenges. It is anticipated that a significant proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding contributions that will be secured from the developments referenced above will be available for the implementation of transport schemes in the study area.
- 5.3 The concept scheme options prepared through the study for Southcote have been developed to meet the following objectives:
- Manage the increasing levels of traffic on Southcote Lane, including reducing traffic speeds and enhancing pedestrian and cycle facilities to provide safer access to schools and community facilities.
 - Measures to further utilise the existing network of pedestrian and cycle routes through Southcote and improve the linkages to Fords Farm and Coley Park.
 - Reduce the severance issues from Southcote to the north due to the Bath Road by providing enhanced accessibility to Prospect Park, the Meadway local centre and Prospect School.
 - Facilitate the movement of public transport within and to/from Southcote to ensure the existing high-quality, frequent bus service is maintained and has the potential to increase provision to meet rising demand in the future.

- Measures to improve the flow of traffic, reduce traffic speeds and help alleviate parking pressures throughout Southcote, including options such as a 20mph zone for the area.
- Opportunities to encourage sustainable travel to Southcote Primary School and options to help alleviate the issues caused by increased traffic pressures on Silchester Road and Faircross Road.

5.4 It is proposed that an informal public consultation on the concept scheme options will be undertaken in the summer in the form of a public exhibition. The consultation will provide an opportunity for local residents to review the scheme options and provide valuable feedback, enabling the Steering Group to make an informed decision on next steps. If scheme options are well received by residents they will be developed in further detail and a statutory consultation on the refined schemes would be undertaken.

5.5 In addition, concept scheme options for the western section of Coley Park (which forms the remainder of the study area) are currently being developed and it is anticipated that an informal consultation will be undertaken on these options following completion of the consultation in Southcote.

5.6 The Sub-Committee is asked to note the contents of this report and to approve the undertaking of an informal consultation on the concept scheme options in Southcote during the summer.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 The delivery of schemes outlined in this report help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

7.1 Informal consultation to be undertaken as described above. Statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising from this report.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 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.

9.2 At the relevant time, the Council will carry out an Equality Impact Assessment scoping exercise on all schemes.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The study will be funded by existing Transport budgets and scheme delivery funded through S106/CIL private sector contributions.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 West Reading Transport Study, Traffic Management Sub-Committee Report, June 2015.