

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	14 SEPTEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	WEST READING TRANSPORT STUDY UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	SOUTHCOTE
LEAD OFFICER:	STEPHEN WISE	TEL:	0118 937 3735
JOB TITLE:	SENIOR TRANSPORT PLANNER	E-MAIL:	Stephen.wise@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

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the contents of this report and agrees that officers continue to work up specific proposals for transport projects in the study area.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document setting out the Council's transport strategy and policy. Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 was adopted by the Council on 29 March 2011.

4. REPORT BACK

West Reading Transport Study

- 4.1 The West Reading Study has been started in order to address issues of traffic and transport in Southcote and Coley Park, given the opportunity presented by developments at the Elvian School site and the DEFRA site.

- 4.2 The study presented initial ideas for the Southcote area at a public exhibition held in St Matthews Church, Southcote Lane on 14th July 2016. Visitors to the exhibition were shown initial possible ideas and invited to offer comments. There were 72 names on the exhibition sign in sheet. 19 feedback forms were completed and 77 post it notes attached to the plans.
- 4.3 An on line consultation has been available until 26th Aug 2016 and has produced 9 responses.
- 4.4 Five questions were proposed on the feedback and online forms:
Main concerns.
Comments regarding proposals for traffic and parking.
Comments regarding proposals for public transport.
Comments regarding proposals for walking and cycling.
Further comments.
- 4.5 **Main concerns:**
Feedback from those consulted consistently raised 'through traffic' and 'parking of parents taking or collecting schoolchildren'. However for some people parking was an issue because it was outside their house or in their street, for some parking was an issue because it slowed down traffic. There was concern over speed of traffic but inconsistency as to the suitability of a 20mph zone across the whole area or across side roads only. The volume of through traffic was seen as a concern and many people were concerned with the effects of increases in traffic and parking on pedestrian safety, particularly children, cycling safety and the efficient operation of bus services. The attitude of people accessing the schools by car and parking irresponsibly was seen as a main concern by many. Residents did not see why Southcote estate should be used as an alternative to the A4 for car commuters from outside of the area.
- 4.6 **Traffic and parking:**
There was some support for all the different ideas proposed on the plans such as restricting parking close to the Beefeater, moving the Southcote Lane bus gate, restricting parking close to schools, reducing the speed limit. However there were also comments disagreeing with all of these proposals. Some residents agreed with the bus gate but wanted exemption for Southcote residents. Other people's parking being restricted was a consistent theme provided residents could still park. Restricting through traffic was generally supported. There was not consistency of support for a 20mph zone covering all the roads. Concerns were expressed that the Elvian development would add to the parking problems.
There was some concern that the bus gate penalised those who lived west of it but still within Southcote. There were consistent comments that the current U turn at Fawley Road, by cars avoiding the bus gate was dangerous and should be stopped.
- 4.7 **Public Transport:**

Those who expressed opinions supported the provision of efficient bus services and restrictions on parking to allow efficient operation, particularly close to The Beefeater. There was some concern that a 20mph restriction on Southcote Lane would adversely affect bus services.

4.8 Cycling and walking:

There was support for measures to improve the safety of those walking or cycling and for encouraging more schoolchildren to use these modes. There was inconsistent support for exactly what measures should be used; more crossing points were seen as good by some, but others were concerned they would remove parking, cycle lanes were generally seen as good but should they be 'shared use' as proposed for Bath Road or 'on road' such as on Berkeley Ave. Raised tables at side road entrances were seen as good by some but not others.

4.9 Further comments:

Some additional ideas were suggested such as re-establishing the second bus gate at the Burghfield Road/Southcote Lane junction that has fallen into disuse. This would then stop rat running traffic from Burghfield and reduce through traffic to the benefit of all Southcote residents, not just those east of Circuit Lane. Restrictions on teachers parking close to the schools were suggested.

Alternative arrangements for the Southcote Lane/Bath Road/Berkeley Ave junctions were proposed to reduce the stop/start affect caused by the mismatch of traffic lights, pedestrian crossing lights and roundabout.

Some introduction of one way operation of residential side streets around the Ashampstead Road area was suggested to reduce the car v car conflicts and consequent driving over paths and verges.

5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 RBC officers will consider the detailed responses to the consultations and produce definitive proposals based on the concerns and feedback received.

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 An exhibition has been arranged for the Coley Park area of the West Reading Study on 20th September at Coley Park Baptist Church from 6.30-8.30pm.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None at present.

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 The Council will carry out an equality impact assessment for transport project proposals in the study area.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None at present.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

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