

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & SPORT

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	9 MARCH 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	RED ROUTE - ROUTE 17		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	TILEHURST, KENTWOOD, BATTLE, ABBAY, REDLANDS, PARK
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform the Sub-Committee of the proposal to introduce a *Red Route* waiting restriction along the Reading Buses Route 17 corridor.
- 1.2 It was agreed by Policy Committee 20th July 2015 to turn the Reading Buses route 17 into a *Red Route*. The purpose of the *Red Route* proposal is to improve the efficiency of the Route 17 corridor, promote local business through better access to short term parking, stop indiscriminate parking on footways (thus improving safety concerns expressed by pedestrians and cyclists) through consistent enforcement of the waiting restrictions.
- 1.3 *Red Routes* have been used very successfully in London for some time. Through special approval from the Department for Transport (DfT) a small number of highway authorities outside of London have developed *Red Route* corridors. The recent revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions (TSRGD) has now brought *Red Routes* into line with yellow line restrictions as an effective parking management tool without the need for special approval. Although a *Red Route* is a no stopping restriction the advantages have been shown to out-weigh any disadvantages. The intention now is to carry out informal consultation with a number of localised exhibitions on changing the existing yellow line restrictions into a *Red Route* and report feedback to the June meeting of the Sub-committee.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Sub-Committee note this report.

2.2 That the Sub-committee agree to the informal consultation and consider the resultant feedback and officer recommendation at its next meeting in June.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The provision of waiting/parking restrictions and associated criteria is specified within existing Traffic Management Policies and Standards.

4. THE PROPOSAL

4.1 Policy Committee 20th July 2015 agreed to the principle to turn the Reading Buses route 17 into a *Red Route*. The purpose of the *Red Route* proposal is to improve the efficiency of the Route 17 corridor, promote local business through better access to short term parking, stop indiscriminate parking on footways (thus improving safety concerns expressed by pedestrians and cyclists) through consistent enforcement of the waiting restrictions.

4.2 *Red Routes* have been used very successfully in London for some time. Following the revision of the Traffic Signs Regulations & General Directions (TSRGD) *Red Routes* have been brought into line with yellow line restrictions as an effective parking management tool without the need for special Government approval. Where *Red Routes* have been used the advantages have been shown to out-weigh any disadvantages.

4.3 A *Red Route* is a no stopping restriction that has not previously used within Reading. This will affect everyone that uses or operates within the *Red Route* although the restrictions will be tailored to the local situation. It is intended to mirror the existing yellow line restrictions where possible. Specific restrictions such as loading bays, disabled bays, taxi bays, bus stops, limited waiting bays and residents permit parking bays that are currently in place will remain. However, there is an opportunity (as a part of the consultation process) to reconsider the existing waiting restrictions along the corridor. This provides an opportunity to make positive improvements to the benefit of the local area. For example, many of the limited waiting bays along the corridor are of relatively short duration and for some businesses they restrict customer parking. As a part of the *Red Route* consultation process we will consider how permitted parking can be more flexible in helping residents and local businesses. For blue badge holders and hackney carriages they are exempt to allow boarding and alighting from the vehicle. The current blue badge parking rules that apply to limited waiting bays will remain the same as they do now.

4.4 As a result of the Policy Committee consultation to the *Red Route* proposal there was some local interest. The feedback generally was positive from the travelling public to the idea of a *Red Route* but local media feedback indicated some concern by local businesses. Through the informal consultation process we will

explain that the current permitted parking restrictions in local centres and along the rest of the corridor do not need to change. However there will be the opportunity to revise the current waiting restrictions to consider opportunities to improve customer access to local businesses.

- 4.5 A concept scheme mirroring the existing waiting restrictions for informal consultation will be designed following this meeting for consultation from late spring 2017. The consultation will need to be broken down and conducted in localised areas to ensure it is relevant to people that live, work and conduct their business locally. A wider scheme promotion of the whole route can be carried out at the Town Hall allowing for a drop-in exhibition inviting wider public comment. The proposal to Policy Committee suggested introduction could be achieved by summer 2017. This remains a possibility with the next TM Sub-committee meeting in June.
- 4.6 Informal consultation will be used to inform statutory consultation and help with the overall engagement process. The Sub-committee is required to advance proposals to statutory consultation where a detailed scheme will need to be submitted. Changes in waiting restrictions are considered by Traffic Management Sub-committee and feedback on the informal consultation will be reported to the June meeting. It is then the intention of officers to make a recommendation to the Sub-committee on how the proposal could be progressed through statutory consultation. The provision of waiting restrictions meets with our local traffic management policy & standards as well as national transport policy and standards.
- 4.7 Prior to changes in parking enforcement by central Government local highway authorities were able to enforce certain waiting restrictions by CCTV. This particularly applied to loading restrictions, bus stop clearways and certain urban clearways which are fundamentally no stopping restrictions. The Government removed the ability to enforce these yellow line restrictions mainly due to the actions of some local highway authorities who had been using CCTV to enforce single and double yellow lines. This created public concern so, in clarifying the use of CCTV enforcement, the Government has limited its use to some very limited clearways (bus stops and school keep clears) and *Red Routes*.
- 4.8 During the time that we enforced loading bans on the Oxford Road and Kings Road/Wokingham Road corridors there was a notable improvement to bus journey times and a drop in pedestrian and cyclist complaints of indiscriminate parking. In addition, we received no complaints from businesses who were worried about the impact to them and their customers. We did, however, see an improvement in the turnover of parking spaces in some areas as the perception of regular enforcement improved compliance in limited waiting bays.
- 4.9 Introducing a *Red Route* along the route 17 corridor will enable a focus on enforcement activities in this key corridor and specific areas that cause traffic flow issues. *Red Routes* are exempt from the changes made by central Government and allow CCTV enforcement. Returning to a more efficient

enforcement service will bring back those benefits to local businesses, public transport, pedestrians and cyclists that we experienced previously.

- 4.10 The benefits in the reliability of public transport led to Reading Buses increasing the frequency of the route 17 as there was less lost time experienced. Since then there has been an increase in the bus lane provision on Kings Road to maintain the efficiency of the route 17 but the impact of the loss of CCTV enforcement is very noticeable particularly along the Oxford Road, at Cemetery Junction and through the Wokingham Road local centre by Alfred Sutton Primary School.
- 4.11 Whilst the Policy Committee report indicated income attached to this proposal in the region of £100K per annum this will fall over time through improved compliance. This can be demonstrated through falling revenue through existing enforcement activities.
- 4.12 There is no direct impact on other services that we provide along a *Red Route* corridor as statutory functions of the local authority, activities by the emergency services and statutory undertakers are permitted. The statutory work involved in creating a *Red Route* is no different from any other traffic regulation order (TRO) therefore it is intended to carry out this work in-house.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 On reflection of the expected benefits as outlined within this report the intention now is to carry out informal consultation with a number of localised exhibitions. This consultation will focus on changing the existing yellow line restrictions into a *Red Route* whilst leaving the permitted parking restrictions as they are. The informal consultation will be completed by June 2017 with the feedback reported to the June meeting of the Sub-committee.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and helps to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
 - Providing infrastructure to support the economy.
 - Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Informal consultation as explained within this report will be carried out with feedback reported back to the June meeting of the Sub-committee.
- 7.2 Officers will recommend the next stage to the June meeting of the Sub-committee and any statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any proposals for waiting restrictions are advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

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, victimization 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 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. However, this will be reviewed as a part of the informal consultation process and assessed again prior to statutory consultation as appropriate.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The works will be funded from within existing transport budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Policy Committee 20th July 2015