

QUESTION NO. 1

James Berrie to ask the Chair:

Bus Lanes

Could the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee please confirm how much money the Council has spent improving bus lanes and related public transport infrastructure across the whole of Reading over the last 5 years? Could the Chair of this Committee also provide the same information for money spent by RBC on similar bus lane improvements north of the river (i.e. in Mapledurham, Thames, Peppard and Caversham wards) ?

REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:

I thank Mr Berrie for his question.

The Council's Local Transport Plan sets out our transport strategy for the Borough, including for bus-related public transport infrastructure. This includes a comprehensive network of park & ride facilities and MRT (Mass Rapid Transit) routes linking the park & ride sites to the town centre.

The following bus-related public transport schemes have been implemented by the Council over the past 5 years:

- Reading Station Interchanges (£13.2m)
- Mere oak park & ride facility (£4.2m)
- Winnersh Triangle park & ride facility (£3.1m)
- South Reading Mass Rapid Transit - Phases 1 & 2 (£5.6m)

These investments have been made at strategic points on the network to manage the highest levels of growth forecast over the next few years. The schemes will have benefits not only in these locations but for the wider transport network throughout Reading by reducing congestion and improving journey times. The vast majority of funding for these schemes has been secured through grants from Central Government which are allocated through a competitive process and therefore only the best value schemes receive funding.

The Council's transport strategy for north of the river includes new park and ride facilities and associated bus priority measures, including on the proposed Third Thames Bridge. The Council continues to work with Wokingham, South Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire to progress plans for these much needed investments which would be located outside of Reading Borough.

I am sure Mr Berrie recognises that the very narrow and constrained two-way network of roads north of the river does not lend itself to the easy introduction of bus lanes. Indeed the one stretch of bus lane that existed in Church Street was removed by the late and unlamented Berkshire County Council because of pressure from the 'north of the river' motorists lobby!

There is virtually no scope for using either pavement or existing road space north of the river to create new bus lanes whilst maintaining existing road or safe pedestrian capacity.

Perhaps Mr Berrie and CADRA might like to propose stretches of road where he and they feel we could introduce new bus lanes or priority measures? I would be happy for these to be reviewed.

QUESTION NO. 2

Rachel Van Der Kemp to ask the Chair:

Recreation Road Tilehurst

Three years ago the residents of Recreation Road, Tilehurst, presented a petition to this Sub-Committee asking for action to be taken against speeding traffic that used Recreation Road as a rat run to avoid the traffic lights in School Road.

Since the petition was handed in nothing appears to have happened and the petition has gathered dust on a shelf.

Residents of Recreation Road have to put up with dangerous traffic speeding along where even 30mph is too fast considering the numbers of parked cars and also of the many children and toddlers on their way to nursery and to the local park, both of which are situated at the end of the road. We suggested a 20mph limit along our road or possibly a one-way plug as options to tackle the problem.

Smashed wing mirrors and scrapes to parked vehicles, including recently some £2,000 damage to a parked van, are a regular occurrence in our road due to the speed of cars travelling up and down. Can you please tell us when we might expect to see the Council finally taking action on traffic in Recreation Road ?

REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

REPLY by the Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:

I thank Mrs Van Der Kemp for her question.

Changes to use of the public highway have traditionally been funded by central government and with continued funding cuts it has become increasingly difficult for us to deliver transport schemes. The Government has ended funding of localised traffic management and road safety schemes leaving local highway authorities without any money to support such initiatives.

However, we have developed a list of unfunded traffic schemes and officers have been reporting how we can prioritise and fund each request and ultimately meet residents' expectations. Recreation Road is on this list although we are not able to indicate how and when any changes could be taken forward at this time.