

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	8 MARCH 2018	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	OXFORD ROAD CORRIDOR STUDY - UPDATE		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on progress with the Oxford Road corridor Study.
- 1.2 That TM Sub-committee support the re-advertising of the bus lanes as described within this report.
- 1.3 Drawings associated to the Oxford Road corridor study are to be viewed within the council website at:

<http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport-schemes-and-projects>

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultation to re-advertise the bus lanes on Oxford Road and as detailed within this report (incorporating revision of the bus lanes between Eton Place and Prospect Street), in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 2.3 That subject to no objection(s) received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 2.4 That any objection(s) received, following the statutory advertisement, be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.5 That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 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 Oxford Road corridor study was established with the purpose of identifying, defining and prioritising transport schemes following the opening up of Cow Lane to full height vehicles. 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.

5. THE PROPOSALS

- 5.1 A series of drawings are available to view on the Council's website at:
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport-schemes-and-projects>
- 5.2 The first of these drawings 1 to 3 show the Cow Lane layout on completion of the current works. Two-way traffic under full height bridges is possible once the current road construction and drainage works are complete. Footpaths are also being constructed under the south western bridge and there will be a proper closure of Salisbury Road with Portman Road. This will result in the removal of the old metal posts that have existed for many years. There will also be

some traffic management improvements to Beresford Road with entry treatments to the connecting side roads.

- 5.3 Drawing 4 shows a proposed westbound bus lane between Grovelands Road the Norcot Road roundabout. The purpose of this bus lane is to improve bus journey times in this section of Oxford Road and provide an improvement for cyclists. The bus lane will be provided by reallocating road space through the removal of the central hatching and without any loss of capacity to general traffic. Bus lanes also improve journey times for the emergency services during busier periods. This bus lane requires re-advertising as it has been in excess of 2-years since the previous statutory consultation took place.
- 5.4 Drawings 5, 6, and 7 show proposals to promote the Oxford Road corridor as a good cycling route. These improvements are mainly through the use of discretionary road markings. There has been a change to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions since these ideas were first promoted. Through the cycle forum there is an opportunity to continue working with interested groups to ensure the proposals are fit for purpose.
- 5.5 Drawings 8 and 9 show proposals for changes to improve bus and cycle facilities between Prospect Street and Eton Place. As with the bus lane at the western end of this section of Oxford Road the intention is to improve bus journey times and space for cyclists and the emergency services to use without compromising general traffic capacity. Since the statutory consultation was originally carried out there is the option to extend the length of the bus lane. It is still the case that general traffic capacity will remain unaffected but as congestion has increased this extra length (of bus lane) will improve journey times further at peak times.

Funding

- 5.6 The Oxford Road corridor study is funded from developer contributions collected either through Section 106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This funding is capital expenditure and does not affect the Council's revenue budget position.

Programme

- 5.7 Some of the works described within this report are already being delivered. The works currently at Cow lane will deliver footpaths under the southwestern bridge as well as formalising the closure of Salisbury Road. The Sub-committee is requested to grant approval to carry out the statutory consultation procedure for the bus lanes on Oxford Road. Should this be granted the statutory process will take place between now and June 2018. Only following the statutory process can a delivery programme be determined.

Additional considerations

- 5.8 The results of the consultation and exhibitions carried out previously demonstrated support for the lower speed limit of 20mph. This was significantly so across the residential areas north and south of the Oxford Road corridor. With changes to the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions in 2016 the use of 20mph has become easier to implement. This is particularly so in narrow residential streets where parking on both sides (of the road) naturally keeps average traffic speeds low. As part of the next phase of the Oxford Road corridor study it is intended to advertise 20mph for the residential areas between Portman Road to the north and Tilehurst Road to the south.
- 5.9 Traffic flow through the residential streets adjoining the Cardiff Rd estate will be reviewed to further protect the residential areas once the Cow Lane works are complete. Developments in the area, most notably the Cox and Wyman site, will change the profile of the area and the road network needs to reflect this. Ward Councillors will shortly lead on consultation with residents.
- 5.10 Other changes to the Oxford Road corridor include the already approved Red Route waiting restriction. This is currently being delivered and will change the way that drivers can stop on the Oxford Road. In addition to the Red Route further changes to the limited waiting is proposed with on-street pay and display a consideration.
- 5.11 As a result of the public exhibitions held for the Oxford Road corridor study we were asked to reconsider the banned left/right turn movements onto and off of the Oxford Road. A full review of these and the impact of an improved Cow Lane will be assessed once the Cow Lane works are completed.

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 and formal statutory consultation has already been carried out. Further statutory consultation is now required.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Traffic Regulation Orders will be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Any serving of notices for pedestrian crossings will be carried out to the requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 23).

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 has considered the equality impact for the proposals in the study area. There is expected to be significant benefit to all users of the highway within the study area but particularly to public transport users, pedestrians and cyclists.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As explained in 5.6. The Oxford Road corridor study is being funded from developer contributions collected either through Section 106 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). There is no direct cost to the Council in the delivery of these proposals. These proposals do not impact the Council's current revenue budget position.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 The Oxford Road Corridor Study; Strategic Transport Committee reports, Traffic Management Sub-Committee Reports or the equivalent advisory panel reports from 2008.