

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 16 NOVEMBER 2022**

Present: Councillor Gittings (Chair);

Councillors Carnell, Challenger, Cross, Griffith, Hornsby-Smith (Vice-Chair), Keeping, Leng, McElroy, Moore, Page, Robinson, Terry and Yeo

Apologies: Councillors McGonigle

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2022

The Minutes of the meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 14 September 2022 were received.

18. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board - 7 July 2022
- AWE Local Liaison Committee - 5 July 2022
- Reading Climate Change Partnership - 26 April and 14 July 2022

19. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Questions on the following matters was asked in accordance with Standing Order 36.

Questioner	Subject
Hilary Smart	Cycle Path Maintenance
Councillor McElroy	School Streets
Councillor Cresswell	Affordable Housing
Councillor Cresswell	Renewable Energy

20. STREET WORKS PERMIT SCHEME

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the statutory obligation on the Council to manage all works within the public highway under a 'Street Works Permit' scheme and of the

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procurement process to secure a suitably qualified and experienced consultant to deliver a 'Street Works Permit' scheme for Reading and sought authority to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer. A Financial Implications Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the aim of the 'Street Work Permit' Scheme was to ensure compliance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 which had imposed a Network Management Duty to ensure that the Council secured the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network and facilitated the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority was the Traffic Authority. The estimated value of the contract to implement a 'Street Works Permit' Scheme was approximately £100k.

Resolved -

- (1) That approval to tender for a consultant to implement the required 'Street Works Permit' Scheme for Reading, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 be granted;**
- (2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy & Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the 'Street Works Permit' Scheme, as set out in section 4 of the report.**

21. BRIDGES AND STRUCTURAL TERM CONSULTANCY CONTRACT

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of the procurement process for the Bridges and Structural Term Consultancy Contract and sought authority to enter into a framework arrangement using the SCAPE/Perfect Circle Framework Contract to deliver the essential maintenance of the Council's bridges and structural assets and to enter into the SCAPE/Perfect Circle Contract. A Financial Implications Report was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that the current term Bridges and Structural Consultancy Contract had come to the end of its term and the Council now needed to renew the contact to join a suitable accessible framework, in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015. The benefit of SCAPE was that it provided the Council with access to local consultants that had local knowledge and experience, providing a reduced carbon footprint, provided work opportunities for local residents and encouraged partnership working with the Council. The estimated value of the Bridges and Structural Framework Contract was approximately £150k revenue funding per Financial Year. The capital fees would be dependent on the capital works programme that would be delivered and would be funded from those capital budgets. A benchmarking exercise had been carried out and had compared rates for the SCAPE/Perfect Circle Framework Contract against other

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Framework Contracts, which had shown that they were all similar and offered good value to the Council.

Resolved -

- (1) That approval to enter into the SCAPE / Perfect Circle Bridges & Structural Term Consultancy Framework Contract, in accordance with the Council's Procurement Rules & Public Contracts Regulations 2015 be granted;**
- (2) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Environmental & Community Safety, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be granted authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the Bridges & Structural Term Consultancy Service Contract, as per Section 4 of the report.**

22. ANNUAL REPORTS ON THE READING CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY AND READING BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report presenting Annual Reports for 2021/22 on two key elements of Reading's response to the climate emergency, as follows:

- An Annual Report on the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 for the year 2021/22, attached to the report at Appendix 1. This report had been produced by the Reading Climate Change Partnership and reflected activity by a range of partners across Reading, not just the Council. The headline message from the report was that Reading Borough's carbon footprint had fallen by 55% between 2005 and 2020 (the latest year for which data was available). This represented the fourth largest reduction of 374 UK local authorities;
- An Annual Report on the Council's Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions (for the year 2021/22), attached to the report at Appendix 2. This report had been produced annually by the Council and detailed progress with implementation of the Council's Carbon Plan. The headline message from the report was that the Council's carbon footprint had been cut by 71.3% between 2008/09 and 2021/22, up from 69.8% in 2019/20. This represented a modest reduction but still a welcome improvement given the expectation that emissions could 'bounce-back' after being artificially suppressed by pandemic restrictions (closure of offices and public-facing facilities etc) in 2020/21.

The report set out the key conclusions from both reports.

The Committee discussed the report and Councillor Page thanked the University of Reading for the internationally recognised work it had been doing on climate change which had included the warming stripe graphic that represented increasing average global temperatures and now appeared on Reading Transport buses and on the new home kit of Reading Football Club. Councillor Page also reported that Reading had again achieved the Carbon Disclosure Project's A list accolade and was one of only 19 local

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authorities in the UK that had received the top score on climate action. Councillor Page thanked Peter Moore and all officers who had played their part in what he said was another impressive performance.

Resolved -

- (1) That the following be noted:**
 - (i) The reduction in Reading Borough's carbon footprint, which has fallen by 55% since the baseline year of 2005;**
 - (ii) The reduction in Reading Borough Council's corporate carbon footprint, which has fallen by 71.3% since the baseline year of 2008/09;**
 - (iii) The need for the Council and other partners to maintain efforts to meet the very challenging target of a net zero carbon Reading, and a net zero carbon Council, by 2030;**
- (2) That the University of Reading, Peter Moore and officers be thanked for their work on climate change.**

23. INTRODUCTION OF CIVIL ENFORCEMENT OF MOVING TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTIONS

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on the introduction of civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions across the Reading Borough Council area. A copy of the Climate Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report explained that Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 had introduced the principle of allowing Highway Authorities outside London to use powers to enforce moving traffic offences. However, secondary legislation had not been subsequently laid, meaning offences could only be enforced by the Police under criminal law. The Department for Transport (DfT) had announced in 2020 that they would be fully enacting the remaining elements of the Traffic Management Act, permitting Highway Authorities outside London to use approved camera devices under civil law, to enforce traffic contraventions. This would allow the highway network to be more effectively managed by the Highway Authority (the Council), and would allow the civil enforcement of a variety of moving traffic contraventions whilst maintaining national standards to improve road safety, pollution levels, journey time and public realm in locations with low compliance. Moving traffic contraventions related to traffic controls which were enabled through Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and the correct signing and lining and included the following:

- driving through a 'No Entry' sign;
- turning left or right when instructed not to do so;
- entering yellow box junctions when your exit was not clear;
- driving where motor vehicles were prohibited;

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- driving a private vehicle on a route for buses only.

The Council had applied to the DfT to be included in the list of authorities that could enforce key highway restrictions or prohibitions across the Borough which was confirmed and had come into force on 15 July 2022, with the passing of The Civil Enforcement of Moving Traffic Contraventions Designations and Miscellaneous Amendments Order 2022.

From 8 April to 20 May 2022, the Council had launched a six week public consultation and exercise that had set out how it would implement Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Although the Council had applied for the powers across the Borough, there had been a need to identify some sites for immediate enforcement once the legislation had been passed and there were currently fifteen sites that had been identified for a first tranche. All fifteen were yellow box junctions and the locations were set out in the report.

The report stated that in general consultees had been in favour of enforcement of moving traffic contraventions, with 52% of consultees supporting the overall initiative. Of the written comments that had been received overall 22% had been in general support of this type of control, whilst 16% of comments has raised concerns that this was about income generation and 9% of responses had been concerned that this would not be a good use of Council funds.

Following consultation, officers had continued to work on the implantation of the tranche one sites and it was anticipated that the first sites would go live before the end of 2022, with all the sites active by 1 April 2023. Across 15 locations there were 25 enforcement areas, this was due to some sites enforcing multiple directions. The DfT had prescribed a six month warning notice period at every site, which meant that the first correspondence sent for each vehicle at every site would not contain a Penalty Charge Notice, but a Warning Notice that had no charge attached to it. The same would apply to every new site that might be introduced in the future. Following the introduction of the initial sites it would be anticipated that more sites would follow, where this would meet the criteria for this method of enforcement and a facility would be introduced to allow stakeholder, including the public, to suggest sites they felt would benefit from enforcement.

In answer to a question about the use of the enforcement action to support School Streets, Helen Taverner, Parking Services Manager, explained that it could be used, but there would be a need to proceed with caution and the regulations stated that it could not be designed into the system from the beginning. It would only be introduced for this purpose after it had been proved that engineering and education measures had failed to work.

Resolved - That the report be noted and the scheme as described endorsed.

24. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on progress with developing the new Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for Reading, following feedback that had

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been received from the initial public consultation that had been carried out in summer 2022 and had been incorporated in the updated draft plan. A copy of the Reading Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Draft for Public Consultation was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report explained that the purpose of the RoWIP was to identify improvements for the rights of way network in the Borough, to ensure it was kept up to date and well maintained, to integrate it better into the overall transport network, to provide a better experience for its users and to encourage more people to choose to walk or cycle for local journeys. Public rights of way provided rights to enable land to be accessible by the public, allowing people to pass along them at any time. In addition to walking some rights of way were also open to cyclists, horse riders and in rare cases motorists, although there were none open to motorists in Reading. The different types of right of way included footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic.

The public rights of way network was set out in the Definitive Map and Statement which were held by all local transport authorities. The network in Reading constitutes 41 footpaths, three bridleways and one restricted bridleway. Some of these routes connected people to key destinations and were used by people travelling to work and school, as well as rural type routes that were used for leisure. Public rights of way were marked with signs or coloured arrows, for example yellow for footpaths and blue for bridleways. As part of preparing the draft RoWIP an initial consultation had been carried out from 7 June to 24 July 2022, feedback on using shared paths for walking and cycling had also been asked for as well as the rating of the RoWIP priorities and for evidence of any historic rights of way that had not been recorded as part of the current network. Over 200 responses had been received and the key headline feedback was included in the report.

The feedback that had been received had been used to update the draft RoWIP and, in addition, audits of all the rights of way in the Borough had been carried out to help with the development of the plan. The draft strategy for consultation was a wide ranging plan, covering all aspects of management, maintenance and improvement of the Public Rights of Way network which aimed to meet the current and future needs of the public. It was proposed to carry out a 12 week statutory consultation over winter 2022/23 which would include a public survey and engagement with statutory consultees. In addition to the main strategy document, there were a number of appendices which were currently being finalised. Following the conclusion of the consultation all feedback that had been provided would be reviewed and the plan would be updated and submitted for approval to a future meeting for the Council to adopt formally the new RoWIP in 2023.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress made on developing a new Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Reading, as outlined in the report, be noted;**
- (2) That the undertaking of a 12 week statutory public consultation on the draft Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan, in line with guidance produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs be approved.**

25. STRATEGIC TRANSPORT SCHEMES UPDATE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the progress with delivery of the current programme of major transport projects in Reading, which were as follows:

- South Reading Mass Rapid Transit
- Reading Green Park Station
- Reading West Station Upgrade
- Tilehurst Station Upgrade
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 - Shinfield Road
- Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 - Bath Road
- Active Travel Capability Fund
- School Streets Programme

Active Travel Tranche 3 - Bath Road Scheme Concept Designs were attached to the report at Appendix A.

The reported explained that construction works for Reading Green Park Station and multi-modal interchange were now substantially complete and therefore were supported by partners from the railway industry. The project had entered a period of thorough testing and authorisation prior to the station's official opening and public use. The Council was working with Network Rail and GWR to ensure that the station was open as soon as possible which was currently scheduled for early 2023.

With regard to Reading West Station the Council had been notified by GWR of delays to the opening of the Tilehurst Road entrance as there had been drainage issues which had resulted in a three to four week delay and it would now be mid-December 2022 before the works would be complete. GWR was responsible for informing the public of the delay and this had been raised with them when they had first informed the Council.

Delivery of the Active Travel Tranche 2 Shinfield Road Scheme had commenced on-site and had started initially at the University/Christchurch Green end of the route by the Council's in-house Highways delivery team. However, the report stated that it should be noted that due to resource limitation a degree of sub-contracting would be required in order to deliver that scheme. The degree of external support would be reviewed on an on-going basis during the scheme delivery phase. The next scheme would be on Bath Road and a further consultation for the scheme had been carried out between 7 July and 1 August 2022 and had included a drop-in event. The feedback from this, and previous consultations, was currently being used to prepare the detailed designs for the scheme and included elements of the proposals that would need to be taken through a TRO statutory consultation process. An indicative timeline for delivery of the scheme was set out in the report.

Resolved:

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- (1) That the progress made on the delivery of the current programme of strategic transport schemes as outlined in the report be noted;**
- (2) That scheme and spend approval for the Active Travel Fund - Tranche 3 scheme, which would provide segregated cycle facilities and pedestrian enhancements on the Bath Road between the town centre and Berkeley Avenue be granted;**
- (3) That approval to undertake the necessary procurements to deliver the Active Travel Tranche 3 scheme be granted and the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Director of Finance and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services granted authority to award any such corresponding contracts be granted.**

26. READING BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) - UPDATE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that provided the Committee with an update on progress with development of the schemes and initiatives that had been included within the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), following the announcement by the DfT of indicative funding allocations for selected local authorities, that had included up to £26.3m for Reading for the three year period from 2022/23 to 2024/25. A draft copy of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Scheme Variation was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The report explained that there were a number of detailed requirements that had been placed on local authorities by the DfT in order for the BSIP funding to be confirmed and the report outlined the requirement for the Council to have made an Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation and Participation Agreement for the reduced fare initiative which formed part of the overall BSIP programme. These were requirements for the award of DfT funding and for implementation of the proposal for a multi-operator day ticketing scheme for use on local services within a designated area. The Participation Agreement outlined the terms and conditions for the compensatory payments to be paid to the bus operators.

In order to deliver the full BSIP programme a number of procurements would be required to be carried out and initial plans were being progressed to procure support for the design work for the next phase of the South Reading Bus Rapid Transit scheme and the continued provision of Route 9 services in south Reading. The next steps for delivery of the BSIP programme included ongoing liaison with officials from the DfT in order to achieve the full grant funding award. In addition, the scheme and initiatives, which formed part of the BSIP programme, would continue to be developed with local operators, including holding a second EP Board meeting to ratify the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation and Participation Agreement.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the on-going discussions with Government and local bus operators to further develop the BSIP proposals in advance of an announcement on final funding allocations by the Department for Transport be noted;**
- (2) That scheme and spend approval be granted for the full BSIP programme, subject to the Department for Transport confirming the final award of grant funding and subject to consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Director of Finance and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services upon receipt of the grant conditions and acceptance of funding;**
- (3) That approval be granted to undertake the necessary procurements to deliver the BSIP programme and the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Assistant Director of Procurement and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services granted authority to award any such corresponding contracts;**
- (4) That the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Director of Finance and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services be granted authority to enter into and make amendments to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme Variation with local bus operators**
- (5) That the Assistant Director Planning, Transport and Public Protection in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, Director of Finance and Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services be granted authority to enter into and make amendments to the multi-operator ticketing scheme 'Participation Agreement' with the relevant bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership Scheme arrangements.**

(The meeting closed at 7.54 pm)