

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

<b>TO:</b>	<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>5 MARCH 2020</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>4(a)</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>RESPONSE TO PETITION REQUESTING REINSTATEMENT OF TRAFFIC ISLAND ON BERKELEY AVENUE</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>TONY PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION SERVICES</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>MINSTER</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>EMMA BAKER</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 4881</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>ACTING TRANSPORT PLANNING MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<b>EMMA.BAKER@READING.GOV.UK</b>

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is in response to a petition, submitted to the Council on 21 January 2020, requesting the reinstatement of a traffic island on Berkeley Avenue between Ashley Road and Bath Road that was removed as part of the NCN Phase 2 scheme.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the lead petitioner be informed accordingly.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 National Cycle Network route NCN 422 is a recognised scheme in 'The Cycle Strategy 2014: Bridging Gaps, Overcoming Barriers & Promoting Safer Cycling', which is a sub-strategy to the Local Transport Plan (2011-2026).
- 3.2 The National Cycle Network NCN 422 scheme is also included within the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-21 and Thames Valley Berkshire LEP's Strategic Economic Plan 2016-21.

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

### Petition

- 4.1 A petition, containing 93 signatures, was submitted to the Council on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020 requesting the reinstatement of the traffic island on Berkeley Avenue between Ashley Road and Bath Road.
- 4.2 The wording of the petition reads: *‘To comply with the making of two on road cyclingways wider (bearing in mind we already had a combined cyclingway on the west side of Berkeley Avenue), Reading Borough Council have removed the Traffic Island - Crossing Point between Bath Road and Ashley Road. We think this is a dangerous step as many people including those living in Coley Park area used this crossing point. Especially those who are older, children and push chairs, no consultation took place!’.*

### Response

- 4.3 The National Cycle Network route NCN 422 is a cross-boundary cycle scheme connecting Newbury to Ascot via Reading, Wokingham and Bracknell, funded by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 4.4 The Reading element of the scheme is made up of three phases:
- Phase 1 - Bath Road/Greenwood Road to Berkeley Avenue
  - Phase 2 - Bath Road/Berkeley Avenue to London Road via the town centre
  - Phase 3 - London Road/Watlington Street to Wokingham Road/Three Tuns.
- 4.5 The petition detailed above is in relation to the Phase 2 scheme, specifically the section on Berkeley Avenue between Bath Road and Ashley Road.
- 4.6 Detailed designs for the Phase 2 works programme were approved at Policy Committee in September 2017, following consultation with the Cycle Forum, Older People’s Working Group and Ward Councillors.
- 4.7 Proposals for Phase 2 included the reallocation of road space along Berkeley Avenue to facilitate the upgrade of the existing 1.2m wide advisory cycle lane to a mandatory 1.5m wide cycle lane. This was achieved by removing the traffic island between Bath Road and Ashley Road, which is the focus of the petition, and associated hatched road markings.

- 4.8 The traffic island that has been removed was not intended to be used as a safe location for pedestrians to cross, it was in place to support compliance of the hatched road markings. The traffic island did not meet standards for a safe pedestrian crossing, including it was unsuitable for those with mobility aids or pushchairs due to the lack of dropped kerbs and the steep grass verge on approach to the carriageway from the northern footway.
- 4.9 Prior to the removal of the traffic island consideration was given to the availability and location of alternative crossing facilities, which includes a formal pedestrian crossing facility approximately 115m to the west.
- 4.10 Further to the above, a combined Stage 1 and 2 road safety audit was undertaken by an independent road safety expert, as part of the design process in August 2017, and did not highlight any concerns regarding the removal of the traffic island.
- 4.11 Works to remove the traffic island, between Ashley Road and Bath Road, were subsequently complete in early October 2019, by our in-house Highways team as part of the overall works to implement phase 2 of the NCN scheme.
- 4.12 The Council has received one complaint regarding the removal of the traffic island in October 2019, submitted by the petitioner.
- 4.13 It is recommended that the traffic island on Berkeley Avenue, between Bath Road and Ashley Road is not reinstated due to the traffic island not being designed as a pedestrian crossing point, lack of other crossing features, such as dropped kerbs, and the availability of alternative safe pedestrian crossing points in close proximity to this location. Its reinstatement will also compromise the cycle infrastructure works that have been delivered.

## **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and helps to deliver the following Council Priorities:
- Keeping Reading's environment clean and green.
  - Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

## **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 The NCN Phase 2 proposals were reported to Policy Committee in September 2017, following consultation with the Cycle Forum, Older People's Working Group and Ward Councillors. The proposals were

also highlighted in a press release issued by the Council and in the local media in advance of Policy Committee.

- 6.2 The lead petitioner will be informed of the findings of the Sub-Committee.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 All statutory duties have been undertaken as required by the Highways Act.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 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.

- 8.2 The Council carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise as part of the development of Phase 2 of the NCN 422 scheme and did not highlight any negative impacts upon groups with protected characteristics.

## **9. ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Our transport strategy is focused on encouraging the use of sustainable transport, walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to the private car. The Cycling Strategy 2014 sets out the benefits of cycling and our approach, including the delivery of the National Cycle Network Route NCN 422 scheme to encourage more people to cycle for local journeys or as part of multi-modal longer journeys.

- 9.2 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total emissions. Significant investment in sustainable transport solutions, such as the delivery of the National Cycle Network scheme, is therefore vital in order to respond to the Climate Crisis declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The NCN 422 scheme described in this report was funded by Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 10.2 Scheme and spend approval was granted by Policy Committee in September 2017.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 Policy Committee, National Cycle Route 422 - Phase 2, 25<sup>th</sup> September 2017.
- 11.2 Traffic Management Sub-Committee, Major Transport and Highway Projects - Update, March 2018 to March 2019.
- 11.3 Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee, Major Projects - Update, from March 2019.
- 11.4 NCN 422 Phase 2 Detailed Designs:  
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport-schemesand-projects>.