

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
- 20 NOVEMBER 2019**

Present: Councillor Barnett-Ward (Chair);

Councillors Debs Absolom, Ayub, Carnell, Challenger, Duveen, Eden (Vice-Chair), Emberson, Maskell, McGonigle, Page and Stanford-Beale

Apologies: Councillors Robinson and R Williams

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ayub declared an interest in Item 20 regarding the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Emissions and Age Policy.

14. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

Further to Minute 8 of the previous meeting, the Chair tabled correspondence from the Environment Agency providing an update on the North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Proposals.

15. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 11 September 2019 were received.

16. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board - 4 July 2019
- AWE Local Liaison Committee - 11 July 2019

17. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

Questioner	Subject
Helen Palmer	Zero Carbon Standards
Graham Smith	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme -
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Anti-Social Behaviour
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation

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	Scheme - Ground Surface Water
Richard Lainchbury	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Mobile Water Pumps
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - 5m Exclusion Zone
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Increased Flood Risk
David Wynne	North Reading and Lower Caversham Flood Alleviation Scheme - Removal of Trees
Michael Sage	Reading 2050 Refresh Workshop
Michael Sage	Reading's CO2 Emissions
Michael Sage	Food Waste Collections
John Booth	Clean Air
John Booth	Climate Emergency
Councillor McGonigle	Chain Stores

(The full text of the questions and replies was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

18. PETITION OBJECTING TO EXTENDING THE EXISTING VEHICLE CROSSING AT 8 ST JOHN'S ROAD, CAVERSHAM

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on a petition requesting that the Council did not extend the size of an existing vehicle crossing at 8 St John's Road, Caversham. A copy of the Council's Vehicle Crossing Policy was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The Chair announced that it was recommended that consideration of the report on the petition be deferred, as the dropped curb proposed was to serve a development that was currently subject to two retrospective planning applications under consideration. The planning applications were to be determined at a forthcoming meeting of the Planning Applications Committee and it was therefore considered, to ensure Councillors did not pre determine matters to be considered when dealing with the planning applications, which included parking and access, that the matter of the drop curb should not be considered before decisions on the planning applications had been made.

Resolved -

That consideration of the report be deferred.

19. AIR QUALITY UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on actions that had been taken to deliver the Air

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Quality Action Plan 2016 and air quality related projects that the Council had recently completed.

The report gave details of the following projects:

- Bus Emission System Retrofit - this had been identified as the most effective single measure able to bring forward compliance with a Ministerial Direction regarding Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) limits on a number of specific roads. The scheme involved retrofitting 84 buses to Euro 6 standard;
- Vehicle Idling - officers would continue to use proactive measures to encourage compliance with no idling law, and enforcement officers had now begun to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to a minority of taxi drivers found to be idling unnecessarily on the rank;
- Go Electric Reading - a Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs funded project to look at providing electric car charging for people living in homes without a drive; Phase 1 of the project had seen fifteen charge points installed into lamp columns, and in Phase 2 of the project it was planned to install fast or rapid Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) on Council-owned assets near to the residential areas that had indicated demand for EVCPs;
- 2019 Air Quality Grant Bid - an application was being prepared to fund a project aiming to accelerate the introduction of electric taxis to the fleet by purchasing four electric taxis and one rapid charge point.

The report also explained that it was proposed to update the Air Quality Action Plan, following the detailed studies which had been carried out following the Ministerial Direction that had been targeted at reducing Nitrogen Dioxide, as well as a brief overview of the Government proposed Environment Bill.

Resolved:

- (1) That the actions taken be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to review the Air Quality Action Plan be noted.

20. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE EMISSIONS AND AGE POLICY

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to note the Hackney Carriage Emissions and Age Policy, which set out the Council's requirements until 2030 and had been agreed by the Licensing Applications Committee on 23 October 2019 (Minute 5 refers). A copy of the report that had been agreed by the Licensing Applications Committee was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

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The report explained that the Policy was a staged approach with the aim of removing older and more polluting vehicles whose exhaust fumes were harmful to health and detrimental to the environment. The Policy had been developed in consultation with the Reading Taxi Association and the Reading Cab Drivers Association following the declaration of the Climate Change Emergency. In order to support the introduction of electric vehicles onto the fleet, the Council had recently put in a bid for Government funding which would enhance electric charging infrastructure as well as delivering a number of electric vehicles which would raise awareness and confidence in using the vehicles.

Resolved -

That the new Hackney Carriage Emissions Age Policy, which aimed to deliver an Ultra-Emission or Electric Vehicle fleet by 2029, be noted.

21. CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with a summary of the progress against the carbon footprint targets for the Council's own operations and those of the Borough, and detailing the ongoing activity to meet the objectives set out in the climate emergency declaration. A copy of the Greenhouse Gas Report 2018/19 was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that since its first Climate Change Strategy in 2008/09, the Council had invested in solar panels, LED street lighting and energy efficiency projects, which had reduced the carbon footprint of its own operations by 62.5%. The Borough's carbon footprint had reduced significantly since 2005 and the most recent national data had shown that by 2017 the per capita emissions for the Borough had reduced by 50%, to 3.3 tonnes per person. This had been the greatest reduction of any local authority area in the south east of England over the period. It had been estimated that the avoided costs to the Council from the reduced energy consumption since 2008 were £10.9m compared to if no action had been taken. For 2018/19 this had been estimated to be £1.5m. The 2015 to 2020 Carbon Plan target for 2020 had been met three years early and a new 2020 to 2025 carbon plan would continue to reduce the Council's carbon footprint towards zero, reducing exposure to rising energy costs.

The report explained that the Reading Climate Change Partnership was now preparing its third Climate Change Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025, which would include an Action Plan to reduce the Borough emissions to net zero by 2030 and to prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Council was also currently developing a suite of new strategies and programmes which would be incorporated into the third Climate Change Strategy and a Climate Action Board had been proposed. A new post of Head of Climate Strategy had been established alongside a new revenue budget and the Council had launched a number of additional initiatives and projects. Processes had also been put in place for all Committees to report on environmental implications and climate impacts.

Resolved -

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- (1) That the significant progress made to date by the Council's proactive approach to addressing climate change issues and its impact on Reading and the scale of the ongoing challenge be noted;**
- (2) That the establishment of a Climate Action Programme Board and the development of additional policies to further strengthen the Council's response to climate change be supported;**
- (3) That the development of a new Carbon Plan for the period 2020 to 2025 through ongoing investment in low carbon technologies and initiatives to reduce energy costs and the carbon footprint of Council operations towards zero by 2030 be supported.**

22. DRAFT RUSSELL STREET/CASTLE HILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report that sought the Committee's approval of a draft review of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal for community involvement between December 2019 and February 2020. An Equality Impact Assessment was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the draft appraisal and associated documents, including maps showing proposed boundary extensions, was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area had been designated in 1974 and a full conservation area appraisal had been adopted in 2004. One of the primary concerns of the Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) had been the length of time since many conservation area appraisals had been adopted, and it had subsequently been agreed that the CAAC would lead on review of conservation area appraisals. The review and updated appraisal of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area had been carried out by the CAAC in conjunction with the Baker Street Area Neighbourhood Association (BSANA), with assistance from planning officers, officers of Historic England and interested local community representatives, and the review had made use of the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit as recommended by Historic England.

The report summarised boundary extensions recommended by the review, and the issues and vulnerabilities that had been identified for the Conservation Area including poor maintenance and intensified use of private properties, streetscape environment and public realm, crime and anti-social behaviour and threats to views and vistas in and out of the Conservation Area. The review recommended that the name be changed to the Castle Hill/Russell Street/Oxford Road Conservation Area, that funding be sought for improvements to the public realm, streetscapes and properties, that management plans involving the Council and community groups be established and that Article 4 Directions with Local Development Orders (LDOs) be expanded. The Committee were asked to approve the draft Appraisal for a formal public consultation, the outcomes of which would be reported back to a future meeting.

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At the invitation of the Chair Evelyn Williams, Chair of Reading CAAC, and Abbey Ward Councillor Karen Rowland, addressed the Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Draft Russell St/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal, attached the report at Appendix 2, be approved for community involvement;**
- (2) That the Deputy Director of Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services be authorised to make any minor amendments necessary to the Draft Russell St/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, prior to the start of community involvement on the draft document;**
- (3) That the proposed management plan actions set out in the report be agreed, noting the qualification in the management plan that actions would only be carried out as and when sufficient resources become available to undertake the work required;**
- (4) That the proposed extensions to the boundaries of the Conservation Area be considered in the light of responses to the public consultation.**

23. MAJOR TRANSPORT PROJECTS - UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on key progress and milestones associated with the current programme of major transport projects in Reading.

The report explained that, to enhance facilities at Reading Station, the Council had secured funding of £36,000 from Great Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for the delivery of wayfinding and cycle parking security improvements at Reading Station interchange. Officers had developed the project alongside input from partners, including the British Transport Police and Thames Valley Police, and the report sought scheme and spend approval. The scheme would include installation of additional CCTV cameras within the cycle parking hub at the northern interchange and new pedestrian wayfinding units to the south of the station.

The report noted that detailed design work for Green Park station was being progressed in parallel with the construction of the interchange, including a new planning application for the station building elements of the scheme which had been granted consent in September 2019. The Council had worked with railway industry partners to address budget pressures for the latest station elements of the scheme, resulting in an additional £2.477m funding being secured from the New Stations Fund and £550k from the Local Growth Fund to ensure provision of the best possible facilities for passengers from station opening. The report sought scheme and spend approval for the additional funding, which

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would result in the overall budget for the station being £20.077m. The indicative programme for delivery of the station had been updated to winter 2020.

The report also summarised the progress of schemes for South Reading Mass Rapid Transit, Thames Valley Park Park & Ride, Reading West Station Upgrade and National Cycle Network Route 422, and gave an update on unfunded schemes for Reading Station Interchange Enhancements, future phases of the South Reading Mass Rapid Transit and a Third Thames Crossing East of Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress on delivery of the programme of major transport schemes as set out within the report be noted;**
- (2) That the funding secured from Great Western Railway's Customer and Communities Improvement Fund for enhancements at Reading Station interchange be noted and scheme and spend approval for the scheme budget of £40,000 be approved and granted;**
- (3) That the additional funding secured for Green Park Station from the Local Growth Fund and New Stations Fund 2 be noted and scheme and spend approval for the revised budget of £20.077m for the scheme be approved and granted;**
- (4) That the progress with developing possible future schemes, including the submission of funding bids as set out within the report, be noted.**

24. TRANSPORT FOR THE SOUTH EAST - STATUTORY STATUS

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of the process being carried out by Transport for the South East (TfSE) to seek statutory status and the benefits this would bring to Reading.

The report explained that TfSE was a partnership of 16 local transport authorities, five local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) and other stakeholders. The partnership was seeking to formalise its role with a proposal to become a statutory Sub-national Transport Body in the south east region, with powers and responsibilities to help deliver economic growth, improved quality of life and protection and enhancement of the environment. The specific functions that TfSE were seeking as part of its proposal to Government were set out in the report and these would operate concurrently and with the consent of the constituent authorities, rather than taking on responsibilities which currently sat with local authorities or the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The report noted that TfSE provided an opportunity to support and deliver growth plans across the region through the development of a long term strategic programme of transport measures. It would complement the work of the LEPs and support the delivery

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of Local Plans and Local Transport Plans, and would address some of the barriers to growth of the economy that had been held back by transport infrastructure shortcomings, notably strategic infrastructure which was the responsibility of Network Rail and Highways England. Statutory status would enable the Council to influence more directly the priorities and programmes of these agencies through representation on TfSE's Board so helping to secure delivery of longstanding transport infrastructure ambitions. TfSE aimed to promote a more joined up approach to the delivery of cross boundary schemes within the region, which was a particularly important issue for a unitary authority such as Reading. TfSE's Shadow Partnership Board had approved the final proposal to be submitted to Government by the end of the year, and was seeking approval from all of its constituent members.

The report noted that TfSe had also been awarded Government funding to develop a transport strategy for the region, and a public consultation on the strategy had been launched on 7 October 2019. The draft strategy set out ambitious plans to grow the economy of the region by an additional 50% to £500bn and create almost three million additional jobs by 2050, in the context of achieving sustainable transport-led growth. A consultation event had been held in Reading and the consultation was open until 10 January 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress made by Transport for the South East in developing proposals for statutory status be noted and the inclusion of Reading Borough Council as a constituent member of the Sub-national Transport Body approved.**

25. LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on the development of the Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Reading, which would be adopted under the emerging Local Transport Plan, and seeking approval to submit the first iteration to the Department for Transport (DfT). A copy of the LCWIP was attached to the report at Appendix A and a prioritised list of Cycling and Walking Improvements was attached to the report at Appendix B.

The report explained that the Council had successfully applied to the DfT to develop a LCWIP for the wider Reading area, in partnership with Wokingham and West Berkshire Councils. The LCWIP, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1, had been developed with support from DfT's appointed consultant WSP and Sustrans. It set out plans to encourage more people to cycle and walk for local journeys or as part of longer multi-modal journeys, through the creation of strategic routes supported by a series of orbital, local and leisure routes. The Plan set out targets to increase cycle mode share into/from the town centre from 4% to 8% by 2030 and to 10% by 2036. Similarly, walking targets would aim to increase trips from 29% to 35% by 2030 and to 40% by 2036. In addition the Plan also set out the intention to reduce the number of cyclists and

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pedestrians injured on the Borough's roads and to increase the number of children cycling and walking to school.

The report explained that the prioritised list of Cycling and Walking Improvements, which was attached at Appendix 2, had been prioritised against the five proposed LTP themes, deliverability considerations and an assessment of the potential to increase levels of walking and cycling. This meant that future improvements that would be delivered through the strategy, subject to funding, would be focused to achieve the greatest benefits. The LCWIP was a 'live' document that would be reviewed and updated periodically, and feedback would be sought in parallel with further consultation on the emerging LTP in spring 2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the first iteration of the Local Cycling and Walking Plan and submission to the Department for Transport be approved;**
- (2) That it be noted that further consultation on the emerging Local Transport Plan would be integrated into the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.**

26. WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE PLAN 2019/2020

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report informing the Committee of a review of the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 and the changes incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020, which was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

The report stated that the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 had provided a robust service for the duration of the winter period with minimal disruption to the primary and secondary road network during the 'normal' winter weather. There had been some unavoidable disruption to the road network during the snow events, but the Winter Maintenance Contractor had coped well considering the severity of the weather at the time. A review of the Plan had been carried out, to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and 'Well managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice', and as a result of the review a number of changes had been incorporated within the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2018/2019 be noted;**
- (2) That the outcome of the review carried out on the Winter Service Plan to ensure compliance with the Highways Act 1980 and the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' be noted;**

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- (3) That the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 be noted and approved.**

27. EXTENSION OF WINTER TERM CONTRACT 2016-2022

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to approve a further three year extension of the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016-2022 to provide a sustainable Winter Maintenance Service under the current contractual terms and conditions.

The report outlined a review of the current Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 that had been delivered by the Council's contractor J H Cresswell & Sons Ltd. The 2018/19 contract performance indicators had shown that the contractor had met all their required standards and had continued to deliver good value and a very good winter service to the Council. The contractor had agreed to continue to deliver the Winter Maintenance Term Contract for the final three years, until June 2022, under the current contract arrangement and terms and conditions. A three year extension would ensure that the contractor could allocate the three yearly refurbishment costs to their gritting vehicles so that they were compliant and safe to use. Other options for delivery of the contract had been considered but had proved to be financially less favourable when compared to remaining with the current contractor.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 be noted;**
- (2) That the further three year extension of the Winter Maintenance Term Contract 2016 to 2022 be approved.**

**28. STREET LIGHTING AND ELECTRICAL MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT 2013-2018
(CURRENTLY EXTENDED UNTIL 30 JUNE 2021)**

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to approve a further one year extension of the Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contract.

The report outlined the current Reading Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contract 2013-2018 with SSE Contracting Ltd, which was currently extended until 30 June 2021. Following the receipt of Challenge funding from the DfT, the street lighting stock had been upgraded to LED with a Central Management System; this had significantly reduced the maintenance input and would do so for the next 20 years with an estimated reduction in costs of up to 50%. Street lighting energy consumption had also fallen by 55% as a result of the change to LED lighting.

The report explained that the Council had successfully renegotiated the Contract with SSE Contracting Ltd based on the reduced maintenance requirements and had saved around £200k in maintenance costs per annum. SSE Contracting had agreed to continue

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the contract for the final year, until 30 June 2021, under the current contract arrangement and terms and conditions. The Council would look at alternative options during the next financial year including retendering the contract and would consider bringing the contract in-house as part of a joint street lighting and traffic signals service.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Street Lighting & Electrical Maintenance Term Contact 2013-2018 (currently extended until 30 June 2021) be noted;**
- (2) That the further one year extension of the Street Lighting and Electrical Maintenance Term Contact 2013-2018 (currently extended until 30 June 2021) be approved.**

(The meeting closed at 8.00 pm)

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