

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	10 JANUARY 2019	AGENDA ITEM:	12
TITLE:	OXFORD ROAD AREA STUDY: ADDITIONAL PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 Following agreement to re-advertise the original proposals for the study at the March 2018 meeting of the Sub-Committee, Officers have investigated further measures that could bring additional benefits to bus journeys along the corridor.
- 1.2 Officers are seeking approval to conduct a statutory consultation on these revised proposals for Oxford Road, following safety audit, which will provide additional benefits to the flow of buses toward the Norcot Road and Bedford Road junction approaches.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 - Drawings of the revised corridor proposals for safety audit and statutory consultation.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the revised proposals in Appendix 1 proceed to safety audit and statutory consultation.
- 2.3 That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out the statutory consultation and advertise the proposals in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 2.4 That subject to no objections being received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 2.5 That any objections received during the statutory consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.6 That the Head of Transportation and Streetcare, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor be authorised to make minor changes to the proposals.
- 2.7 That no public enquiry 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 AND PROPOSALS

- 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 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 was 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.
- 4.3 Network Rail's Cow Lane bridge improvement works are at an advanced stage of delivery, the approval to implement a bus gate at the Beresford Road 'No Entry' section and the recent implementation of the Red Route (West Section) all compliment the objectives of this corridor study.
- 4.4 The purpose of these revised proposals along Oxford Road is to provide improvements to bus journey times. The proposals achieve this through the reallocation of existing road space, or by minor adjustments to the road alignment. Where these adjustments have

been considered necessary, Officers have sought to design the scheme in a way that minimises the extent of these works to ensure that they are cost effective, relative to the anticipated benefits.

- 4.5 These improvements to bus lanes will also provide additional areas for cycling outside of the general traffic lanes and further encourage cycling as a transport mode.
- 4.6 Approval was granted for bus lane improvements along Oxford Road at the March 2018 meeting of the Sub-Committee. However, Officers have been working to consider further measures to address other key areas, particularly the improvement of bus journey times at the Bedford Road junction and toward the Norcot Road roundabout.
- 4.7 Officers consider that improvements are achievable within the scope of the corridor study and Appendix 1 provides a sequence of drawings for bus lane improvements along the section of Oxford Road within the corridor study.
- 4.8 The Sub-Committee is requested to grant approval for these revised proposals to be progressed to safety audit and statutory consultation. Following this statutory process, a delivery programme can be determined.
- 4.9 In the event that the results of the safety audit necessitate significant design changes, these will be reported to the Sub-Committee for further consideration.
- 4.10 Within the wider corridor study, there remain other considerations for development, for example:
 - The wider use of 20mph speed limits, particularly in the adjacent narrow, residential streets;
 - Conducting the statutory consultation on lowering the speed limit of Portman Road, Cow Lane and Richfield Avenue to 30mph; and
 - Conducting the statutory consultation on proposals to permanently close Milford Road and Meadow Road, preventing rat-running through the adjacent residential area.
- 4.11 Scheme implementation will not be programmed, no materials will be ordered and no works instructions issued until after a decision has been made by the Sub-Committee to implement a scheme, the meeting minutes are agreed and the resultant legal Order is sealed.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Council's priorities, as set out below:

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Informal consultations and public exhibitions have been conducted.
- 6.2 Statutory consultation will be conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Notices will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area.
- 6.3 Sealed Traffic Regulation Orders will be advertised in the local printed newspaper prior to implementation of the associated scheme.
- 6.4 Objectors to statutory consultations will be contacted with the decision of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed meeting minutes.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 New and amended Traffic Regulation Orders require advertisement and consultation under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

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 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics and statutory consultations provide an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 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.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Oxford Road Corridor Study - Update (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, March 2018).
- 10.2 Results of Informal Consultation - Possible Closure of Meadow Road and Milford Road (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, June 2018).
- 10.3 Major Transport and Highways Projects - Update (Traffic Management Sub-Committee, September 2018).