

QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor Duveen to ask the Chair:

Recreation Road, Tilehurst

Some four or five years ago, the residents of Recreation Road, Tilehurst, presented a petition calling for action to be taken to stop this road being used as a rat run by motorists avoiding the traffic lights at the top of Norcot Road. Recreation Road has cars parked on both sides of the road and no room for cars to pass and has led to problems when cars from different directions meet headlong and someone has to give way and reverse.

There was talk of funding from Section 101 and/or CIL from the new development at Sona Gardens. Can the Lead Councillor tell me if there has been any progress on this matter?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:**

I thank Councillor Duveen for his question.

This issue features on the Request for Measures list that last came to Traffic Management Sub-Committee in March this year - it is listed as item 87. The requests are grouped alphabetically by ward and, therefore, being item 87 does not reflect its priority in any way.

The petition at the time expressed concern related to rat-running by drivers avoiding the traffic signals at the School Road junction with Norcot Road. Since then the traffic signals have been upgraded with newer technology that optimises demand thus helping to reduce queuing, particularly on Norcot Road.

We have also offered funding as a part of the CIL local schemes initiative and the traffic management measures list was used to encourage support for such measures. At that time this particular measure did not gain funding, but it remains on the list.

We have three further items that could be added to the list tonight (agenda item 6). Officers continue to review the list and will bring back an update report in March 2021. This will consider how measures on the list relate to our wider policy objectives for example the updated Local Transport Plan, and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Officers will also review all opportunities for funding and how schemes could advance when funding becomes available.

QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor Whitham to ask the Chair:

**More low traffic neighbourhoods for Reading**

We need to cut rat running in order to promote walking and cycling in Reading. School streets is part of the answer but in some parts of town a neighbourhood approach will work best. "Low traffic neighbourhoods" are being pursued in many other local authority areas. These are groups of residential streets, bordered by main or "distributor" roads (the places where buses, lorries, non-local traffic should be), where "through" motor vehicle traffic is discouraged or removed. Does the lead councillor support getting more "Low traffic neighbourhoods" in Reading and what action would he recommend residents interested in pursuing this take?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:**

I thank Councillor Whitham for his question.

As referred to in my reply to the previous question we hold a list of requests for traffic management measures, which includes many issues that have been raised by residents. Opportunities for funding will emerge as the CIL local schemes initiative showed - this was also referred to in my reply to the previous question.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods have been developed in London largely in response to COVID, and increasing ways of making cycling and walking easier across London. The situation in London is different to the rest of England where they have more autonomy in traffic laws, enforcement responsibility and access to significantly more funding.

Whilst Low Traffic Neighbourhoods sound interesting they have generated a lot of complaints about lack of consultation. Opponents of the scheme feel they are applied in the wrong places, they can make traffic worse, make roads more dangerous for cyclists and negatively impact local businesses already struggling due to COVID.

Low Traffic Neighbourhoods in London have been introduced because councils can introduce them for a trial period under an Experimental Traffic Order (ETO) and without undertaking initial public consultation. All of this sounds familiar, as we discovered with one of our own Active Travel schemes in Caversham.

I note your reference to School Streets, but this is school-focused and school led to deal with the specific demands and pressures around arrival and departure times.

Play Streets are probably a better model which have existed in Reading for a number of years. Play Streets are a good way of bringing neighbourhoods and communities together demonstrating local support for using our streets in a different way. Play Streets are also limited in their application but provide the opportunity to assess the impact of road closures without being permanent.

So we already do support residents who want to take more control over their streets, but we will not impose new ideas on residents and will only support initiatives such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods and School Streets with proper and careful advance consultation.

ENDS