

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
18 NOVEMBER 2020**

Present: Councillor Gittings (Chair);
Councillors Carnell, Duveen, Eden (Vice-Chair), Emberson,
Maskell, McGonigle, Page, Stanford-Beale and R Williams.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Eden declared an interest on Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 Partnership (item 6) on the basis that she was an unpaid director of Reading Community Energy Society, nominated by Reading Borough Council.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 20 November 2019 were confirmed as a correct record.

3. MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 16 September 2020 were received.

4. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- Joint Waste Disposal Board - 17 October 2019, 23 January 2020, 9 July 2020 & 8 October 2020
- AWE Local Liaison Committee - 7 November 2019, 18 March 2020 & 22 July 2020
- Reading Climate Change Partnership - 18 October 2019, 28 January 2020, 28 April 2020, 14 July 2020 & 2 September 2020.

5. QUESTIONS

A question on the following matter was asked in accordance with Standing Order 36.

Questioner	Subject
Councillor McGonigle	Use of single-use plastics within the Council

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

6. PRESENTATION ON THE READING CLIMATE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2020-25

Peter Moore, Head of Climate Strategy, and Professor Tim Dixon, Co-Chair of Reading Climate Change Partnership, gave a presentation on The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25. The presentation covered a wide range of topics including:

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- The history of Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP), its current status and its relationship with Reading Borough Council;
- The relationship between RCCP and Reading Climate Action Network (RCAN);
- The strategy vision - a climate resilient, net zero town by 2030, the key priorities identified on pathway to net zero and the breadth of the target audience emphasised in achieving a net zero town;
- Key issues in relation to energy and low carbon development, transport, resources, water, nature, health and well-being;
- Highlights of the Reading Climate Festival 9 to 15 November 2020;
- Ongoing plans for engagement with RCCP and RCAN;
- The key aims and targets of the Council's Carbon Plan 2020-25 and its importance in contributing to the Climate Emergency Strategy.

Peter Moore and Professor Tim Dixon answered questions put to them by members of the Committee. It was recognised that a lot of partnership work had gone into producing the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25 and that there had been universal support for the Strategy across all the political groups of the Council.

Resolved -

That Peter Moore and Professor Tim Dixon be thanked for their presentation and for all their hard work, together with the work of RCCP and RCAN, in producing the Strategy.

(Councillor Eden declared an interest on this item on the basis that she was an unpaid director of Reading Community Energy Society, nominated by Reading Borough Council.)

7. EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS PLANS - ANNUAL REPORT & ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROPOSAL

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on progress that had been made by Reading UK with the implementation of planning policies concerned with promoting Employment and Skills Plans (ESP). The report also highlighted Reading UK's proposals for delivery over the next two years to specifically address the challenges facing the town and support the economic recovery of the town, in line with the Powered by People Strategy that had been adopted by the Council at the meeting of Policy Committee on 28 September 2020.

The report explained that the Council had adopted the requirement for Employment and Skills Plans (ESP) under a 2013 Supplementary Planning Document that had sought to implement adopted Core Strategy Policies CS9: Infrastructure, Services, Resources and Amenities, and CS13: Impact of Employment Development to improve the work and training opportunities of local people. An ESP requirement was

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attached to any new development or any regeneration or extension Programme where more than 1,000 square metres of new non-residential floor space or ten dwellings were being created, or where the cost exceeded £1million.

The report stated that Reading UK was the main agent for implementing the policy. The process enabled the developer to choose to either enter into a delivery plan, through Reading UK and work with local partners, or to pay a financial contribution towards the delivery of training and employment Programmes. The financial contribution was based on a simple percentage of the anticipated construction costs and would be confirmed by a Section 106 legal agreement which was entered into by the developer before planning permission was granted. To date (November 2020), 32 developers had chosen to pay financial contributions ranging from £1,600 to £178,000 and a total of 54 plans had either been delivered or were in the process of being delivered. There were a range of partners supporting this work.

The Programmes that had been delivered from July 2019 to June 2020 were set out in Appendix A to the report: these had been supported by Section 106 cash contributions. It was noted that most of these Programmes had provided outcomes benefiting local people and the economy.

The report went on to explain the Programmes that would be delivered within the framework of Reading's adopted Economic Recovery Strategy Framework, "Powered by People", which was prepared by Reading UK, working with key stakeholders, and had been adopted by the Council at the meeting of Policy Committee on 28 September 2020. The Strategy provided a short term and medium-term response to ensure that every part of the community would benefit from support, both during and beyond the pandemic.

The post lockdown employment impacts on Reading following Covid-19 (October 2020) were set out in Appendix B to the report, Appendix C provided details of the Programmes to be delivered between 2020/21 and 2021/22 continuing the work to support local people into self-employment, develop sector skills and find good quality work. The total package of delivering the Programme over the next two years was £385k: comprising around £249,500 to Reading UK CIC and around £135k to New Directions.

Attached at Appendix D was a table setting out the Section 106 contributions by development.

The Committee welcomed the ongoing work by Reading UK CIC and New Directions in the delivery of the projects to date and its ongoing work in delivering future projects which would benefit local people and the economy.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted and the delivery of the employment and skills outcomes by Reading UK, as enabled by Section 106 Employment and Skills Plans, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be welcomed;**
- (2) That the following be agreed:**

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- (a) The proposed action plan, specifically tailored to the needs of the local economy following the financial impact of Covid 19 on residents and small businesses, as set out at Appendix C;
- (b) The Council's commitment to close partnership working to support Reading UK and its partners to manage and deliver this Programme to ensure the sustainable economic recovery of Reading;
- (c) The allocation of £385k of Section 106 developer contributions comprising around £249,500 to Reading UK CIC and around £135k to New Directions to support the delivery of the action plan.

9. WINTER SERVICE PLAN 2020/2021

Further to Minute 26 of the meeting held on 20 November 2019, the Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the outputs that had been delivered in the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020.

The report stated that overall, there had been no issues in relation to salt supply/delivery and the contractor had replenished the grit bins as and when required. Further, the winter decision making process regarding when to salt and the joint arrangement with Wokingham Borough Council, through their consultants, Volker Highways had worked well.

The report summarised the main points in relation to the review of the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020, which had been carried out in accordance with the Highways Act 1980 and the 'Well managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'.

Finally, the report gave a summary of updates for the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021, together with a copy of the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 (dated October 2020). The Plan detailed information regarding the winter service such as the roles and responsibilities of the Council and its joint arrangements with Wokingham Borough Council. The Winter Service Plan would be provided by the Council for 26 weeks of the year, starting on 1 October 2020 and ending on 31 March 2021.

Resolved -

- (1) That the outputs delivered by the Winter Service Plan 2019/2020 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;
- (3) That the Winter Service Plan 2020/2021 be noted and approved.

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11. HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2020/2021 PROGRESS REPORT & SPEND APPROVAL

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the Year 1 progress of the Council's 2020-2023 Highway Capital Investment Programme.

The report stated that the Council had committed to a £9 million Capital Investment Programme over three years to Reading's local residential roads and pavements. The work had originally been Programmed to be delivered through allocating £3 million per year over the three-year period. There had been a delay in the preparation and start of the Year 1 Programme due to the Covid-19 pandemic which meant that it was necessary to reprofile the £9 million capital investment to £1.5 million in year 1 and £3.75 million in each of years 2 and 3.

The Council had advertised and awarded the competitive tender to Eurovia Infrastructure Ltd to deliver 63 local residential road improvements, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report. Work on the residential road surfacing had begun in October 2020, with 33 roads (approximately 53% of the overall Programme) having been surfaced by 4 November 2020. Any scheme that had not been completed by late Autumn 2020 would be included in early Spring 2021, when the contractor would be returning to complete the surfacing Programme and to carry out any necessary remedial work.

With the local residential road surfacing Programme coming to a close in the late Autumn due to weather constraints, focus would be turned to delivering the residential pavement/footway schemes Programme, commencing mid-November 2020 and due for completion by the end of March 2021. These schemes were set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

The report also provided an update on the major roads resurfacing Programme (2020/21), financed by the Department for Transport (DfT) Award. Appendix 3 of the report showed a list of 13 schemes that had been completed with five more schemes that were in progress.

In addition, the report provided an update on the Council's Bridge/structural maintenance Programme (funded by the DfT award). The report explained that the Council had maintenance responsibility for around 80 bridges and 300 other structures. Each structure had been inspected in line with the Code of Practice for Highway Structures. Based on these inspections the priority for works within the capital Programme had been determined and a rolling 5-year Programme had been developed and updated annually. Appendix 4 of the report detailed the schemes for 2020-21 that were achievable within the available budget, some of which had already been completed.

The report advised that the DfT had announced on 3 June 2020 an additional 'Pothole & Challenge Fund' grant for Local Highway Maintenance allocations for 2020-21 to Local Highway Authorities for repairing potholes on the local road network and improving flood resilience. The £908,000 from the '£108 million to the South East'

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had originally been funding earmarked to Tranche 2b Bridges but had since been divided amongst all local authorities on the formulae basis and marked as 'Pothole and Challenge Fund.' The Council was currently seeking spending approval for the £908,000 DdT award: this comprised £700,000 for Pothole Reduction - major and minor carriageway resurfacing and £208,000 for Bridge/Structural Maintenance and Flood Resilience.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Year 1 progress of the Council's 2020/21-22/23 £9 million Highway Capital Investment Programme be noted;**
- (2) That the progress of the £1.432 million Highway Maintenance Award for 2020/2021 from the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Block Funding (Integrated Transport & Highway Maintenance) Settlement be noted;**
- (3) That the £908,000 Additional Highway Maintenance Award for 2020/2021 from the DfT Local Transport Block Funding (Challenge and Pothole Fund) settlement be accepted and that spend approval be given for the proposed Highway Maintenance Programme 2020/2021.**

12. ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME AND SCHOOL STREETS UPDATE

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the Council's Active Travel Programme. The report also provided an update on the Council's School Streets Initiative.

The Council's Active Travel Programme

At the meeting of Policy Committee on 18 May 2020 (Minute 97 refers), members approved progression of a series of Active Travel proposals in Reading. These proposals had been presented in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic which, alongside the Climate Emergency, had dramatically enhanced the focus on enabling greater levels of active travel through the provision of walking and cycling facilities.

The report explained that in June 2020 the DfT had formally announced the Active Travel funding Programme and confirmed the available funding (subject to application) for each authority. The Council had been allocated indicative funding in two tranches: £295k in the first tranche and £1,179k in the second tranche. Appendix A was a map showing the Tranche 1 schemes and the Tranche 2 schemes.

On 2 July 2020 the DfT had announced the outcome of the Council's Tranche 1 application. The award was 75% (£221,240) of the indicative allocation.

The report set out the progress of the Tranche 1 schemes. Officers confirmed at the meeting that all of the Tranche 1 schemes had been completed and that they would be commencing a review of these schemes early in 2021. The Committee would be provided with updates on progress in the coming months.

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On 10 July 2020 the DfT had announced the guidance and process for applying for Tranche 2 funding. The Council's Tranche 2 Active Travel Bid for the sum of £1.179k had been submitted to the DfT on 7 August 2020. The Council's Programme of improvements which formed the Tranche 2 bid to the DfT had comprised two 'core' schemes and three further supplementary schemes, in addition to a package of promotional activities. The Council's list of proposed schemes which formed the Tranche 2 bid were set out in the report.

The report stated that the DfT had confirmed that the announcement on the Tranche 2 funding was imminent.

At the meeting, Officers reported that on 13 November 2020 the Council had received notification from the DfT that the provisional allocation of £1.179k had been approved. The Council was waiting for the detailed grant conditions on Tranche 2 from the DfT, but with a clear communication from the DfT of the need to carry out publication consultation on the proposed schemes. The Council would, in any event, be consulting fully on any Active Travel proposals before being implemented. Officers noted that they may wish to review the priorities, given that the schemes for this second tranche had been drawn up some six months ago.

The Committee discussed the report and commended Officers on the progress that had been made in delivering the Tranche 1 proposals in September 2020. It welcomed the provisional allocation of Tranche 2 Active Travel funding of £1.179k that had been announced by the DfT, noting that this represented 100% of the original May 2020 allocation.

In light of the update given by Officers at the meeting regarding the DfT's announcement on 13 November 2020, Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, suggested some additional recommendations, which were supported by Members of the Committee.

The Council's School Streets initiative

The report provided an update on the Council's School Streets initiative, launched by the Council in late summer 2020, which was designed to allow a school to apply for a School Streets closure outside their school. The closures would only take place during term times and would be operational for the morning drop off, when the road would be fully closed. Residents would, however, be allowed full access throughout.

The report advised that School Street proposals were currently at the planning stages in respect of a joint proposal for Maiden Erlegh school in Reading, University Technical College Reading and Alfred Sutton who were currently carrying out an informal consultation with affected properties and parents/carers on the proposal to implement a School Street on Crescent Road between Wokingham Road and Bulmershe Road. In addition, Wilson Primary School was currently carrying out an informal consultation with affected properties and parents/carers on the proposal to implement a School Street on Wilson Road, including Lundy Lane, Tofrek Terrace and Westbourne Terrace.

Park Lane Primary (Junior School) was the only school that had formally applied to the Council to implement a School Street. The School had undertaken informal consultation with affected properties and parents/carers on the proposal to

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implement a School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close. No objections had been received as part of this consultation.

In assessing the application, Officers had carried out parking and traffic surveys on the proposed School Street and neighbouring streets, to determine the current baseline usage of the streets. A stage 1 Road Safety Audit had been undertaken by an independent road safety auditor on the proposed School Street and no safety concerns had been identified. Should the scheme be approved, a Stage 2 Road Safety Audit would be carried out prior to implementation.

In addition, Officers had requested that the School receive confirmation from the Royal British Legion (located at the northern end of Downing Road) that they did not object to the School Street proposal. Officers reported that the Council had been in correspondence with the Royal British Legion who had raised some questions about the operation of the Scheme. Park Lane Primary School was keen to manage the Street and ensure that those who had a legitimate need to access Downing Road and Lambourne Close were able to do so.

Appended to the report was a summary of the consultation responses for the proposal. Also appended to the report was a copy of Road Safety Audit Stage 1 which detailed the results of the Audit that had been carried out in November 2020.

The Committee commended the Headteacher of Park Lane Primary School and her colleagues for the work they had done in applying for a School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close.

Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;**
- (2) That the provisional allocation of Tranche 2 Active Travel funding of £1.179k, announced by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 13 November 2020, be welcomed and the fact that this represented 100% of the original May 2020 allocation be noted;**
- (3) That it be recognised that further guidance and information was still awaited from the DfT;**
- (4) That Officers be asked to review the detailed grant conditions (when received) and the implications for promoting one or more of the five schemes that had been submitted on 7 August 2020;**
- (5) That the long-standing commitment of the Council to consult fully and extensively with all road users in advance of implementing any of the Active Travel proposals be re-affirmed;**
- (6) That regular updates be submitted to future meetings of this Committee and meetings of Traffic Management Sub-Committee on the implementation of Active Travel Schemes;**

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- (7) That the delegations and spend approvals that had already been agreed by Policy Committee at its meeting on 18 May 2020 (Minute 97 refers) for taking forward any schemes be noted;
- (8) (a) That an experimental School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close, Reading be approved;
- (b) That in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the appropriate (experimental) traffic regulation order for the proposed School Street on Downing Road and Lambourne Close in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) England and Wales) Regulations 1996;
- (c) That subject to no objections being received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the experimental order permanent;
- (d) If objections are received, they be reported back to the Committee at the appropriate time.

13. MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES & FUNDING BIDS UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an update on key progress associated with the current Programme of major transport and highways projects in Reading, as well as funding arrangements for each of the schemes, as follows:

- Reading Station Interchanges
- South Reading Mass Rapid Transit
- Thames Valley Park, Park and Ride
- Reading Green Park Station
- Reading West Station Upgrade
- National Cycle Network Route 422

In respect of the Reading West Station Upgrade, the report explained that the scheme proposals included a new station building on the Oxford Road with associated highway alterations and interchange improvements, increased cycle parking, improvements within the station itself such as enhanced lighting and a new ticket gateline at the Tilehurst Road station entrance. Plans for the update to the station had been prepared by the Council, in partnership with Great Western Railway (GWR) and Network Rail. Funding had been secured from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) as well as £200,000 Section 106 developer contributions for the current phases of work. Pre-application discussions with the Council's Planning Department had been undertaken and the planning application for the scheme had been submitted to the Council in October 2020. Subject to planning consent, construction of the initial

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phases of the scheme was due to commence in Spring 2021. Appendix A contained drawings of the scheme.

The report also gave an update on progress with developing future schemes, including details relating to the submission of funding bids in respect of:

- Third Thames Crossing East of Reading
- Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

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 submission for the planning application for the Reading West Upgrade Scheme by Great Western Railway be noted;**
- (3) That the spend approval for the Reading West Upgrade Scheme budget of £3.2 million be granted, subject to planning consent being granted and the availability of £200,000 of Section 106 developer contributions for the current phases of work be noted;**
- (4) That the progress with developing future schemes, including the submission of funding bids, be noted.**

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.25 pm)