READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE **16 June 2021**

QUESTION NO. 1

Mr Duncan Godding to ask the Chair:

Layout and signals at the junction of Bath Road and Burghfield Road

Will the committee consider looking at the layout and signals at the junction of the Bath Rd and Burghfield Rd? It would seem to make sense, and greatly improve traffic flow in the area, to have the left hand lane as travelling West along Bath Rd towards the junction dedicated to turning left. The signals could then be modified to allow traffic in this lane to turn left onto the Burghfield Rd when traffic is being allowed to turn Right/Left from Burghfield Rd onto Bath Rd.

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 Mr Godding for his question.

As you travel along Bath Road from Honey End Lane there is a single lane of traffic until you have passed the Esso/Tesco garage and the traffic island by the Granville Road junction. Only then does the Bath Road open up into two lanes to the traffic signals at the junction of Burghfield Road. Even during normal daily traffic flows the queue of traffic can exceed the two lanes and extend back into the single lane section.

If we were to dedicate one of the two lanes at the traffic signals as a left turn lane, it would only have very limited benefit to the driver who was able to reach the traffic signals before the queue extended beyond the two lanes and back into a single lane. At the busiest times there are drivers who use the left-hand lane to drive straight ahead, despite the two lanes quickly returning to one due to the bus lane beyond the junction. However, this does add extra capacity at the busiest period that would only increase the overall queue length if these vehicles could only use the second lane to go ahead and carry on along the Bath Road.

A dedicated left turn has been considered before by officers, but modelling has always shown an overall increase in queuing and delay at the busiest periods on the Bath Road from the Honey End Lane direction if drivers are unable to use both lanes to proceed ahead.

Any worsening of the queue on the Bath Road from the Honey End Lane direction will only increase the overall delay and for those drivers who want to turn left the benefit (of a dedicated left turn lane and signal) is completely lost.

However, we do not know what the longer-term impact of COVID will be on traffic and particularly on the traditional travel to and from work peak periods. As we emerge from the pandemic, and identify changes to those traditional traffic patterns, there may be opportunities for us to reassess individual signalised junctions and consider opportunities for such a change.

ENDS

QUESTION NO. 2

Lin Godfrey to ask the Chair:

Junction of Prospect Street/Peppard/Henley and Westfield Roads

In November 2017 a petition was presented to the Traffic Management Sub Committee re traffic management at the junction of Prospect Street/Peppard/Henley & Westfield Roads in Caversham.

What progress has been made towards the implementation of this request?

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 Lin Godfrey for her question

The petition presented in November 2017 was responded to in a follow-up report to TMSC in January 2018. The response by officers, which was accepted by the Sub-Committee, included the following:

Officers understand the perceived safety concerns at this junction and there is a statutory duty placed upon us, as the highway authority, to improve road safety through the reduction of causalities. The Council does this by analysing casualty data supplied to us by Thames Valley Police. The reply goes on to detail the casualty data (at that time) which indicated the junction had a very good safety record.

A review of the current accident data does not suggest this has changed.

The response goes on to explain the challenge of adding a pedestrian 'all-red-to-traffic' phase to the junction and the significant impact to vehicular traffic. The Council is conscious of a possible significant worsening of delay and congestion to road traffic which could create wider problems or knock on issues elsewhere, including poorer air quality, increasing delay to public transport, and increased traffic on other routes resulting in wider accident and/or vulnerable user concerns.

However, TMSC went on to make a commitment to carry out an assessment of the knock-on effects – this commitment resulted in the desire for pedestrian facilities to feature on our traffic management measures list which is held by this Sub-committee and is subject to funding.

To date no funding has been identified but other factors are now being considered by officers. The Council recognises the value of walking and cycling and the Government's COVID Active Travel Scheme initiative has provided some funding to improve walking and cycling facilities.

Furthermore, our own Reading Transport Strategy 2036 which was consulted upon last year reflects the policy position of improved walking and cycling against the need to reduce congestion and improve air quality. As a part of this we have adopted a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Policy (LCWIP) which will be used to shape our infrastructure to improve walking and cycling over the next few years. Our draft transport strategy and the LCWIP can be viewed on our website.

As we understand the longer-term impact of COVID, and less traffic particularly at the traditional travel to and from work periods, we are considering all possibilities and opportunities for improved facilities especially for pedestrians and cyclists should more funding become available, including all bidding opportunities made available by national Government.