

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021**

Present: Councillor Gittings (Chair); Ayub, Carnell, Challenger (Vice-Chair), Eden, Khan, Maskell, McElroy, McEwan, McGonigle, Mitchell, Page and R Williams.

Apologies: Councillors Stanford-Beale.

(Councillor Duveen was unable to attend in person, so attended and contributed remotely via Microsoft Teams, but did not vote on any of the items, in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1972)

1. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that tonight was the first meeting of this Committee where Councillors were required to attend in person, following the expiry of the Coronavirus Act regulations in May 2021. These regulations had permitted Council meetings to take place online instead of in person. The Chairman expressed his views about the current arrangements.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 15 March 2021 and 26 May 2021 were confirmed as correct records.

3. MINUTES OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee held on 4 March 2021 were received.

4. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

The Minutes of the following meetings were received:

- AWE Local Liaison Committee - 17 March 2021
- Reading Climate Change Partnership - 18 May 2021.

5. QUESTIONS

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

Questioner	Subject
Councillor McElroy	Enforcement of moving traffic offences

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

6. ACTIVE TRAVEL PROGRAMME AND SCHOOL STREETS UPDATE

The Council’s Active Travel Programme

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the Council’s Active Travel Programme, Capability

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

Fund and School Streets Scheme. The report also sought scheme and spend approval for the delivery of the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 scheme to provide a segregated cycle facility and pedestrian enhancements on Shinfield Road, in line with the results of the public consultation. This included a secure cycle hub with parking, maintenance and loan/donation scheme, cycling and walking initiatives and updates to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. Delivery of the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 Scheme would be subject to a successful award of the funding by the Department of Transport (DfT). The following appendices were attached to the report:

Appendix A: Active Travel Fund - Map of Tranche 1 and 2 Schemes.

Appendix B: Active Travel Fund - Summary of Initial Engagement Responses.

The report explained that the bid submitted by the Council to the DfT for Tranche 2 included a programme of high-quality cycle and pedestrian infrastructure proposals on some of Reading's most strategic routes. The top four schemes from the bid were taken forward to the next stage of development work. This included the proposal along the Shinfield Road (from Christchurch Green to Whitley Wood Road) to create segregated cycle facilities linking to the tranche 1 schemes on Redlands Road and Christchurch Road. In accordance with the DfT's guidance on the delivery of the Tranche 2 Schemes, the Council carried out an initial engagement exercise into each of the four schemes between 24 February to 23 April 2021. Overall, all proposed schemes attracted high levels of support, with the proposal for Shinfield Road, receiving the highest level of support for, and the lowest level of opposition to, the proposed segregated two-way cycle lanes.

The report set out the indicative time table for the Tranche 2 programme, with statutory consultations due to take place in Autumn 2021. The report explained that in order to deliver a high-quality segregated cycle facility, the DfT funding would only allow one scheme to be taken forward, based on initial cost estimates.

Officers advised that the Council had submitted a proposal to the DfT on 19 April 2021 for Active Travel Capability Funding. The proposal included the development of a town centre cycle hub, offering secure cycle parking, cycle maintenance and a cycle loan/donation scheme, as well as various initiatives aimed at supporting a shift in travel behaviour to active modes. The report set out the proposed programme of walking and cycling initiatives that would be delivered as part of the Grant Fund.

The report advised that at the time of publication of the report, confirmation of the level of funding awarded by the DfT had not been received. Officers advised at the meeting that this remained unchanged. Scheme and spend approval for the initiatives and scheme was therefore sought, subject to the successful award of external funding.

The Council's School Streets initiative

The report provided an update on the Council's School Streets Initiative, including progress of a joint experimental School Street scheme on Crescent Road for Maiden

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

Erlegh School in Reading, UTC Reading and Alfred Sutton Primary School (see Minute 18 of the meeting held on 15 March 2021).

The report explained that Maiden Erlegh School in Reading, UTC Reading and Alfred Sutton Primary School undertook an informal consultation with affected properties and parents/carers on the proposal to implement an experimental School Street on Crescent Road, details of which were shown in Appendix C. Over 150 consultations had been received by the school community and the local community. A summary of the consultation responses were set out in Appendix D, with 53.5% of respondents being in favour of the proposal. The report also summarised a list of the concerns raised by residents.

The report set out that, in assessing the application, Officers had carried out traffic surveys and parking surveys on the proposed School Street and neighbouring streets to determine the current baseline usage of the streets. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit has also been undertaken by an independent road safety auditor and no safety concerns had been identified within the report.

Officers recommended that a School Street on Crescent Road be approved. It was noted that should the Committee agree to its implementation, Officers would assess the impact of the School Street on neighbouring roads during the initial trial period, in response to some of the concerns raised by some of the residents through the consultation.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress with development of the Active Travel Fund, Capability Fund and School Streets schemes, as outlined in this report, be noted;**
- (2) That scheme and spend approval for delivery of the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 scheme be agreed to provide a segregated cycle facility and pedestrian enhancements on Shinfield Road, in line with the results of the public consultation;**
- (3) That scheme and spend approval for delivery of the Active Travel Capability Fund schemes be agreed subject to successful award of the funding, including: a secure cycle hub with parking, maintenance and loan/donation scheme; cycling and walking initiatives and updates to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan;**
- (4) That a joint experimental School Street scheme for Maiden Erlegh School in Reading, UTC Reading and Alfred Sutton Primary School on Crescent Road be approved;**
- (5) That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, Ward Councillors, be authorised to make the**

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

appropriate (experimental) Traffic Regulation Orders for the proposed School Streets on Crescent Road in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996;

(6) That subject to no objections being received during the experimental trial period of the School Street, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, be authorised to make the experimental Order permanent;

(7) That any objections received be reported back to the Committee at the appropriate time.

7. NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY - NEXT STEPS

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the proposed next steps by the Council following the publication of the National Bus Strategy (the Strategy) “Bus Back Better” by Central Government in March 2021 and the subsequent guidance for Local Authorities and bus operators published in May 2021. The Strategy included the requirement for Local Transport Authorities to prepare a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in their area and to establish Enhanced Partnership Arrangements with local bus operators. Reading was highlighted as an example of best practice in the Strategy (shown in Appendix A) due to the high level of bus patronage and existing partnership working between the Council and Reading Buses.

The report set out the proposal for the BSIP, which would be developed in collaboration with all local bus operators and community transport providers in Reading. The BSIP would reflect the existing business plans of local bus operators, including Reading Transport Limited (RTL). The initial BSIP was required to be published by the end of October 2021 and thereafter to be updated annually and reflected in the local authority’s Local Transport Plan.

In addition to the preparation of the BSIP, it was proposed that officers would instigate the establishment of Enhanced Partnerships with all operators in the Borough. The report explained that due to the nature of the local bus market being heavily dominated by services provided by RTL, it was not considered necessary to pursue a franchise system at the current time.

The Council was required to publicly commit to progressing Enhanced Partnership arrangements with all local bus operators, in line with the National Bus Strategy. It was therefore proposed that the Council would publish a Notice of Intent on the Council’s website, which was in line with the Model Notice of Intent included within the guidance published by the DfT. Paragraph 4.7 of the report set out the Notice of Intent.

The report advised that for both the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership arrangements to be effective, it was important to offer cross-boundary services, particularly within

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

the Reading urban area. Therefore, Officers were intending to engage with all neighbouring authorities to identify opportunities to ensure that plans and arrangements were joined up and consistent, building on existing close partnership working arrangements.

Resolved -

- (1) That the opportunities and requirements resulting from the National Bus Strategy, be noted;**
- (2) That Officers be authorised to prepare a Bus Service Improvement Plan for Reading and to established Enhanced Partnership Arrangements with local bus operators, in line with the requirements and timetable as set out in the National Bus Strategy;**
- (3) That the publication on the Council’s website of the ‘Notice of Intent to Prepare an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes’, as set out at paragraph 4.7 of the report, be approved.**

8. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN - NEXT STEPS

The Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the proposed next steps for progression of the Council’s next Local Transport Plan (LTP), the Reading Transport Strategy 2036, following the statutory consultation which was undertaken between May to August 2020. One key element of the feedback received from that consultation was the differing views on expectations for changes to travel behaviour in the ‘new normal’, demonstrating uncertainty in this area at the current time.

The report set out the background to the development of the draft version of the Strategy 2036 which had included initial work to investigate the feasibility of demand management measures. These findings had demonstrated limited financial and environmental benefits resulting from the implementation of a demand management scheme at this time. Subsequently, further high-level analysis had been undertaken to consider possible demand management options to help address the issue of ‘rat-running’ and through traffic which added to congestion to Reading. However, there was insufficient data to progress this matter and it was therefore recommended that this matter should be revisited once traffic flows and behaviours had re-baselined.

The report explained that the Council was at a critical stage in the delivery of a number of significant sustainable transport schemes, the details of which were included in the overall priorities for the Strategic Transport Service Area Priorities (June to November 2021), as set out in Appendix A. The report advised that the service was currently at capacity and any new workstreams would either result in pausing another project or having funding to pay for external support. In addition, it was envisaged that future funding opportunities would be predicated on the Council demonstrating strong ambition through various other pieces of work such as an updated Local Cycling Walking Improvement Plan.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

Given these circumstances, the report set out the options available regarding the next steps for the LTP:

- Option A - update the draft LTP in 2021/22 for adoption to reflect what we currently know in relation to the 'new normal' priorities and emerging travel patterns.
- Option B - focus on the priorities set out in Appendix A in 2021/22 as well as exploring opportunities to secure external funding for future schemes; this to include exploring further development of demand management measures, alongside monitoring of the 'new normal' to inform an update of the draft LTP to commence later in the year.

Officers recommended that the Committee agreed to Option B so as to enable the service to focus on the priorities set out in Appendix A. This approach would support the post-Covid economic recovery and would align with a key corporate priority to build a more inclusive economy in Reading.

Resolved -

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and agrees to the recommendation to focus on existing priorities as set out in Appendix A in 2021/22, including the development of detailed Local transport Plan sub-strategies so as to put the Council in the best position to secure external funding for sustainable transport schemes and initiatives;
- (2) That further work on the draft Local Transport Plan be paused pending the establishment of a new baseline information in 2022/23 with a view to building an evidence base to bid for any new funding streams which will deliver sustainable, inclusive traffic demand management solutions across the town.

9. MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES UPDATE

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report providing an update on the progress with delivery of the current programme of major transport projects in Reading, which were 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

The report advised that the Council was working closely with Great Western Railway (GWR) and Network Rail in respect of Reading West Station Upgrade, for which planning consent for the scheme had been granted at the Council's Planning Applications Committee in January 2021. Appended to the report at Appendix A was a copy of a plan, showing the proposed site layout for the new station building.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

Delegated authority was sought for Officers, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, to enter into a Funding Agreement with Great Western Railway (GWR) for the delivery of the Reading West Railway Station Upgrade scheme and also for delegated authority to be given to Officers, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and in liaison with Network Rail, to transfer any Council land identified as required to facilitate the construction of the new Reading West Railway Station passenger building.

The report also provided an update on the development of future schemes and associated funding opportunities which were as follows:

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

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress with delivery of the current programme of major transport schemes be noted;**
- (2) That delegated authority is granted to the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, to enter into a Funding Agreement with Great Western Railway (GWR) for the delivery of the Reading West Railway Station Upgrade scheme;**
- (3) That delegated authority be granted to the Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, in liaison with Network Rail to transfer to Network Rail any Council land identified as required to facilitate the construction of the new Reading West Railway Station passenger building;**
- (4) That the separate application being undertaken by the Head of Transportation and Streetcare pursuant to authority delegated to him under the Council's Scheme of Officer Delegations for the "stopping up of the public highway" at Reading West Railway Station under Section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 be noted;**
- (5) That the progress made with developing future transport schemes and potential funding opportunities for the Council be noted.**

10. BRIDGE MAINTENANCE (WORKS) TERM CONTRACT 2021- 2025

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report on the outcome of the procurement process for the Bridge Maintenance (Works) Term Contract 2021-2025.

The report explained that the tender for a new term bridge maintenance contract 2021-2025, commencing in July 2021, was for an initial term of 48 months (4 years) with the option to extend by a further 36 months (3 years) subject to performance. The total estimated value of the contract was approximately £2 M over the first 4 years, at a rate of £500k per year and potentially up to an additional £1.5M should the contract be extended for the subsequent 3-year duration.

Four tender responses had been received and following the tender evaluation process Volker Laser Limited had been found to meet the quality (30%) and price (70%) tender evaluation criteria as follows:

- Quality 26.6% out of 30%
- Price 68.5% out of 70%

Volker Laser Limited would therefore be awarded the Bridge Maintenance (Works) Term Contract 2021-2025 in accordance with ‘the regulations’ and the specification.

Policy Committee, at its meeting on 26 September 2019, had given delegated authority for Officers, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, to enter into a contract with the successful tenderer for the Bridge Maintenance (Works) Term Contract 2020-2024 with a possible 3-year extension. This Committee was therefore asked to note the outcome of the process.

Resolved: That the outcome of the Bridge Maintenance (Works) Term Contract 2021-2025, with a possible 3-year extension, be noted.

11. NATIONAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-2027

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Service submitted a report providing information of the National Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027 (2nd Cycle), which would set the specific flood reduction measures and priorities for the period 2021 to 2027. The report also provided information of the Council’s contribution towards the updated National Flood Risk Management Plan 2021-2027. Officer were seeking the Committee’s approval to obtain delegated authority to submit the final draft to the Environment Agency.

In addition, the report provided an update of the Council’s successful Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant (FDGiA) in Aid Allocation from the Environment Agency to deliver a flood reduction scheme in Stone Street Reading and to obtain spend authority.

The report contained the following appendices:

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021

- Appendix 1: Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Plan Question & Answer brochure
- Appendix 2: Reading Borough Council Submission National 2nd cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 to 2027
- Appendix 3: Letter dated 26 April 2021 from the Environment Agency regarding Stone Street FDGiA

The report explained that Reading Borough Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority for Reading, had been working in partnership with the Environment Agency to develop Reading's submission to include within the National 2nd cycle Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 to 2027, as set out in Appendix 2.

The report further explained that the Council had successfully secured £150k FDGiA from the Environment Agency to deliver a flood reduction scheme in Stone Street Reading., the details of which were set out in Appendix 3. The Stone Street scheme would alleviate and reduce flood risk during extreme rainfall events by providing an overflow and surcharge facility in the wide verge area adjacent to Portman Road through the use of swales and shallow ponds to store water and improve biodiversity.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance, be granted authority to agree and accept Reading Borough Council's final contribution towards the National Flood Risk Management Plan 2021 to 2027;**
- (2) That the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid Allocation for Stone Street be approved;**
- (3) That the Assistant Director of Environmental & Commercial Services, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment Planning and Transport, the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services and the Director of Finance be granted delegated authority to enter into relevant contracts required to undertake the proposed Flood Reduction Programme.**

12. REVIEW OF GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR READING CLIMATE CHANGE PARTNERSHIP

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Service submitted a report providing information on a review of the governance arrangements for Reading Climate Change Partnership (RCCP) that had taken place to ensure that they remained fit for the purpose of delivering the Strategy over the next five years. The report advised that that the review had now been concluded by the Partnership and the conclusions reflected in a new Partnership Agreement which was being presented to the Council and other partners for their endorsement and signature.

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021**

Under the new Agreement the Council would continue to act as ‘host’ and accountable body for the Partnership, a role which it had performed since the inception of the Partnership. The Committee was asked to consider endorsing the Partnership Agreement for Reading Climate Change Partnership, as set out Appendix 1. Also attached to the report at Appendix 2 was a table illustrating how the Partnership Agreement aligned with requirements of the Council’s Constitution.

Annex 1 to Appendix 1 set out the composition of RCCP from June 2021, which included, subject to confirmation by this Committee, the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transportation (currently Councillor Page). Councillor McElroy asked whether it was possible for non-appointed Councillors to observe RCCP meetings. Councillor Page agreed to raise this matter with Board Members at the next meeting of RCCP.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Council’s willingness to continue to act as host and accountable body for the Reading Climate Change Partnership be confirmed;**
- (2) That the Partnership Agreement attached at Appendix 1 be endorsed;**
- (3) That the Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services be authorised to sign the Partnership Agreement on behalf of the Council;**
- (4) That the appointment of the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transportation to the Reading Climate Change Partnership Board be confirmed.**

13. PROGRAMME AND SPEND APPROVAL FOR LOW CARBON ENERGY CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Service submitted a report providing an update on progress with the development of the Council’s low carbon investment plans, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The programme consisted of a series of small and medium sized projects for which it would be impractical to seek approval to spend on an individual basis. Approval to spend was therefore being sought for the programme as a whole based on the summary set out in Appendix 1 (summary of low carbon investment programme).

The report explained that the programme involved some new technologies and approaches and therefore some flexibility was needed as projects might drop out of the programme and new projects were brought in to deliver the requisite carbon savings and returns on investment where required. The recommended actions therefore sought flexibility to cover this situation.

In addition, Officers sought appropriate delegations to submit bids and commit sums within the approved capital programme as match funding were required. The report explained that the urgency with which decisions may need to be taken were unlikely

**STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
30 JUNE 2021**

to align with Committee timescales and could be a potential barrier to timely implementation of the programme.

Resolved -

- (1) That the progress with the development of the Council's low carbon investment plans, as summarised in Appendix 1, be noted;**
- (2) That the programme and spend approval for the programme, as set out in Appendix 1, within the budgetary limits set in the Medium Term Financial Strategy be given;**
- (3) That the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services be granted authority to agree and significant variance in the programme, as set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report, in their capacity of Chair of the Climate Programme Board;**
- (4) That the Director for Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, be granted authority to submit external funding bids relevant to the programme and to commit sums identified within the programme's approved capital budgets as match funding for bids as required.**

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 8.20 pm)