

**Traffic Management
Sub-Committee**
14 June 2023



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	A33 Rose Kiln Lane Speed Limit - Approval to Consult
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	James Clements, Transport Programme Manager
Lead councillor	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Ward	Coley and Katesgrove
Corporate priority	Thriving Communities
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Sub-Committee approves the Statutory Consultation to take place.2. That subject to no objections being received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order(s).3. That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Sub-Committee to undertake a statutory consultation for the implementation of traffic restrictions in the form of a speed reduction between the Berkeley Avenue overbridge and 29 Rose Kiln Lane in both directions to 30mph.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
- Healthy Environment
 - Thriving Communities
 - Inclusive Economy

- 2.2 These themes are underpinned by “Our Foundations” explaining the ways we work at the Council:
- People first
 - Digital transformation
 - Building self-reliance
 - Getting the best value
 - Collaborating with others
- 2.3 Full details of the Council's Corporate Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the [Council's website](#). These priorities and the Corporate Plan demonstrate how the Council meets its legal obligation to be efficient, effective and economical.
- 2.4 The Council's Corporate Plan supports the delivery of new transport infrastructure in order to manage levels of congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions, whilst enabling the economic recovery and planned levels of growth in the borough and wider urban area.
- 2.5 The Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for Reading up to 2026. Development of a Reading's new LTP is on-going with the core principles of the strategy linked to wider objectives including the Reading 2050 Vision, the Climate Emergency and improved air quality, and to be aligned with other Council strategies including the new Local Plan and Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- 2.6 The National Bus Strategy 'Bus Back Better' was published in March 2021 as part of a £3billion funding package aimed at building back Britain's bus services. It sets out how the Government intends to deliver on its commitment to achieve ambitious and far-reaching reform of the bus services sector. As part of this funding, the Council were awarded £26m to improve the Bus Services and infrastructure, and to support growth of the public transport network. The measures proposed are required in order to deliver the Council's ambitions relating to the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP).

3. Proposal

- 3.1 The speed limit reduction is necessary to enable the introduction of inbound and outbound bus-stops, the former being in carriageway (rather than bus-lane), providing much needed transport links for employees and customers to the various commercial premises in the area. It should also be noted that in order to protect the existing capacity, the lane widths will be reduced in places and so a speed limit reduction is required to maintain safe vehicle movements, including those left turns (southbound) to commercial premises, which were identified as an existing issue during the Road Safety Audit.
- 3.2 This new section of Bus Rapid Transit supports and connects to the existing dedicated public transport priority measures on A33 corridor, linking Reading town centre to Green Park, Mere oak park and ride and in the longer term proposed Grazeley Garden Settlement and Four Valleys developments. The scheme is currently provided for buses but in the future could be used by guided buses, trams or driverless public transport vehicles.
- 3.3 This phase of the scheme is being delivered using BSIP funding.

- 3.4 This phase will provide key sections of the overall scheme by joining up previous sections of the BRT to provide continuous bus priority (particularly southbound) and will tackle a key pinch point of the overall scheme by constructing over the River Kennet. These phases are therefore a vital element within Reading as part of this overall approach and will complement further aspirations for enhancements to the BRT route within Reading and future aspirations for enhancements at the MereOak Park and Ride facility.
- 3.5 Delivering this phase of the South Reading BRT will help to deliver against the aspirations of the Reading Borough Local Plan and Draft Local Transport Strategy. It is key to increasing the capacity of the network to deliver the journeys that will support the economy and levels of proposed growth while contributing to the wider region public transport ambitions.
- 3.6 A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order reducing the speed limit has been drafted and is due to be implemented prior to commencement of construction in Autumn 2023.
- 3.7 In order to progress this scheme, officers seek authority to undertake a statutory consultation for the implementation of speed reduction between the Berkeley Avenue.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

The Bus Service Improvement Plan scheme contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan themes as set out below:

Healthy environment

- 4.1 The reduction in speed limit could reduce the rate of acceleration as drivers exit the junction and should allow drivers to slow down more gradually as they approach the junction, both of these factors could potentially help to reduce emissions in the area.

Thriving Communities

- 4.2 South Reading BRT provides a series of bus priority measures on the A33, resulting in reduced journey times and improved reliability for public transport on the main corridor into Reading.
- 4.3 There has been significant growth of some 7,500 jobs and 1,500 homes along the corridor, with a further three strategic development locations planned or under construction south of the M4 junction 11, (South Wokingham) and North Wokingham. Around 50% of the traffic on this corridor is forecast to be associated with planned development by 2026.

Inclusive economy

- 4.4 The proposal will bring new employment opportunities, and encourages regeneration and investment, and reduces congestion. It can change lives by driving social mobility and offering equality of access to centres of employment. It can also simply bring people closer together. Supporting a sustainable expansion of the transport network into local communities is vital to catalysing this socio-economic growth and potential.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1 Transport is the biggest greenhouse gas emitting sector in the UK accounting for around 27% of total carbon emissions. As set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy 2020-25, this figure is lower in Reading with transport accounting for around 20% of carbon emissions. However, significant investment in sustainable transport solutions is vital in order to respond to the Climate Emergency declared by the Council in February 2019 and to help achieve our target of a carbon neutral Reading by 2030.
- 5.2 A Climate Impact Assessment has been conducted for the recommendations of this report, resulting in an overall **Net Medium Positive**. It is expected that the introduction of this Phase of BRT will see a shift from private vehicle usage resulting in less emissions and air pollution. There will be an improvement to air quality by providing a more efficient and attractive way to travel.
- 5.3 Proposals set out in this paper seek to support a step-change in transport infrastructure and services and cover perceived local safety, accessibility, and traffic flow issues that, once resolved, should improve traffic flow (lower emissions, improved flow for public transport) and remove some barriers toward increased use of sustainable and healthy transport options.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1 Any Statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, advertised on street, in the local printed newspapers and on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'). Notices of intention will be advertised in the local printed newspaper and will be erected on lamp columns within the affected area. The Police are a statutory consultee and will be directly notified. The consultation will be hosted on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'), where details and plans will be available.
- 6.2 Traffic Management Sub-Committee are public meetings. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.

7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must 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, and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 7.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposal is not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics and statutory consultation provide an opportunity for the content of objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

8. Other relevant considerations

8.1 None

9. Legal implications

9.1 New, or changes to existing, 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. The resultant Traffic Regulation Order will be sealed/revoked in accordance with the same regulations.

10. Financial Implications

10.1 The only immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendations of this report will be for the advertising of proposed Traffic Regulation Order, which is a requirement as part of the statutory consultation process.

10.2 It is considered that the recommendations of the report provide value for money as the benefits of the proposal can be realised with very modest costs.

10.3 There are no foreseen financial risks related to the recommendations of the report.

11. Timetable for Implementation

11.1 The consultation will be launched later this month ahead of construction works, which are due to commence in Summer/Autumn 2023.

12. Background Papers

12.1 None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed A33 Speed Reduction - Location Drawing