

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

14 June 2023



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Evaluation of Local 15% CIL Scheme Update – Redlands Traffic Calming
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	James Penman, Network Services Manager, Network Services
Lead councillor	John Ennis
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Sub-Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report.2. That a high-level summary of the requested changes be added to the regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' so that they are formally captured (Section 3.6 refers)3. That, once resources permit, detailed investigations are conducted for the requested changes, enabling further stakeholder discussion and refinement toward an agreed scheme of alterations.4. That the removal of the priority flow feature on Redlands Road (section 3.5.1 refers) is given priority for any identified funding (Section 3.7 refers).5. That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was allocated by the Council to introduce a scheme of measures to improve motorist compliance with the 20mph zone restrictions in specific locations within Redlands Ward and Katesgrove Ward.
- 1.2. This report follows a scheme evaluation report at the November 2022 meeting of this Sub-Committee (linked [here](#)), where an officer recommendation to alter a priority-flow measure on Redlands Road was agreed. This alteration is still subject to funding being identified and will require statutory consultation.

There was an additional action added, seeking that officers meet with Ward Councillors and Reading Cycle Campaign to discuss other areas of concern that had been raised and to report agreed proposals back to this Sub-Committee so that a single statutory consultation could be undertaken.

- 1.3. This report summarises the outcome of the meeting, desirable changes and some officer comments. Funding is not yet identified for these changes and the majority of the requested alterations will be subject to detailed investigation, design, road safety audit and statutory consultation before they can potentially be agreed – or otherwise – for implementation. At this time, therefore, this is a report to note the outcome of the site meeting and that funding and further discussions will need to be undertaken before feasible and costed recommendations can be made to Members.

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 original scheme and any subsequent alterations proposed to complement the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and, by extension, the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by aiming to reduce barriers to the greater use of sustainable, healthy transport options

3. The proposal

- 3.1. From Spring to early Summer 2021, a scheme of traffic calming features was implemented in the Redlands area, primarily on Kendrick Road, Redlands Road, Allcroft Road and Morgan Road (please see Appendix 1 for the scheme drawings). These features were funded as a result of a local 15% CIL nomination, to be implemented within the existing 20mph zone and followed statutory consultation and delivery agreement by this Sub-Committee.
- 3.2. It is accepted, and regretful, that the implementation of physical traffic calming features has a relatively indiscriminate and varying impact to different road users and local residents. A report to the November 2022 Sub-Committee meeting (available [here](#)) sought to evaluate the scheme, including feedback received and officer comments, while acknowledging the challenges and limited options that are available to Local Authorities for addressing the issue of speeding.
- 3.3. The November 2022 report referenced the feedback received from independent road safety audits and officers recommended an alteration to the scheme as a result. This proposal was to remove the priority-flow feature on Redlands Road, just to the south of its junction with Allcroft Road, and – crucially – that it should be replaced with an alternative speed calming feature. The recommendation proposed that statutory consultation be undertaken on the provision of speed cushions in place of the priority-flow feature.

The recommendations of the November 2022 report were subject to funding being identified for the proposed changes.

- 3.4. An additional recommendation was added during the November 2022 Sub-Committee meeting, as per the following minute:

'A meeting be arranged with Ward Councillors, members of the Reading Cycle Campaign and officers to review the additional points and concerns that had been raised and a report submitted to a future meeting with the agreed proposals included in one consultation'

This meeting took place on Monday 27th March 2023 and additionally included attendance by Councillor Page (as then Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport) and a number of local residents.

Current Position

- 3.5. The following items summarise the elements raised during the joint site visit referenced in section 3.4:

3.5.1. Redlands Road – Replacement solution for the priority-flow feature, to the south of Allcroft Road

This discussion was inconclusive, however, there was a strong preference expressed against replacing this with speed cushions, which is linked to the next item below. It remains the view of officers that, as per the road safety audit recommendation, removal of this feature should include the provision of an alternative speed calming in – or near to - its place and not leave this section of carriageway untreated.

The mechanisms to deliver this potential change, including high-level costings for the recommended proposal, were outlined in the November 2022 evaluation report.

3.5.2. Redlands Road – Speed cushions

The November 2022 evaluation report referenced concerns that had been raised regarding the placement of cushions in the context of parked vehicles. These were reiterated during the site meeting, where there was also a perception that this type of feature has little effect on motorist speeds. A preference was expressed for the replacement of these cushions with full-width speed tables or flat-topped humps, particularly at locations where a wider table would create a beneficial 'at-grade', un-controlled pedestrian crossing.

While officers agree with the principle, concerns were raised regarding the impact and potential hazard that these features can create for emergency service vehicles (this will be of particular concern regarding ambulances traveling to/from the Royal Berkshire Hospital) and for bus passengers. These were the primary reasons for originally recommending the use of speed cushions. Officers also raised that full-width tables *can* create surface water drainage issues that would need to be addressed within the design, which could be challenging around the relatively steep gradient change along the road. The locations of the features may need to differ from the existing cushion locations.

This proposed alteration would require statutory consultation.

3.5.3. Redlands Road – Priority-flow feature between Upper Redlands Road and New Road

This feature currently prioritises the southbound flow of traffic, having been intended to complement the similar feature near to the junction with Allcroft Road, which prioritises the northbound flow of traffic.

It was requested the priority direction is reversed, as it was proposed that this would resolve a traffic issue during busier times of day, where southbound traffic allegedly becomes solidly queued past the feature on approach to the traffic signals at Elmhurst Road/Shinfield Road.

A cycle pass-through feature was also requested, however, this was considered during the initial scheme investigation work and discounted due to there being insufficient widths available to create this facility.

This proposed alteration would require statutory consultation.

3.5.4. Redlands Road – Build-outs between Addington Road and Allcroft Road

These were requested for removal, as there is no cycle-through facility, thereby reducing the available road width for cyclists and motorists. There is insufficient width to create cycle-through facilities.

This proposed alteration would not require statutory consultation, but agreement to deliver this change should also take into consideration whether an alternative speed calming feature should be placed within this section of the road – this *may* require statutory consultation, depending on the type of feature.

3.5.5. Redlands Road – Entrance treatments for side roads

The discussions were primarily in the context of the Allcroft Road junction and with the current priority-flow feature in place, but were expanded to other side-road exits from Redlands Road.

While inconclusive, the discussions included consideration for central traffic islands at the junctions or potential reprofiling of the junctions to narrow the bellmouths, with the intension of slowing vehicles entering and exiting the junctions and to prevent or reduce vehicles cutting across the junction. Paint-only options were also mentioned.

There appeared to be a general preference for raised tables to act as ‘at-grade’ uncontrolled pedestrian crossing points (as raised in section 3.5.2).

The principle of this is generally supported by officers and has been applied at other locations in the borough, where scheme funding and feasibility have permitted. Full-width tables would create the same potential feasibility concerns as raised previously in section 3.5.2 and such an installation may require reprofiling of the surrounding footways to ensure that the differing levels/gradient are safe and accessible. The placement of central traffic islands can create vehicle manoeuvrability challenges, although this will also be influenced by the available road widths and it is also acknowledged that more narrow bellmouths can reduce risks to cyclists by reducing the distance across the junction.

The proposed placement of raised tables would require statutory consultation. The placement of central traffic islands or the reprofiling of a junction bellmouth would not.

3.5.6. General – Profile of speed tables and humps

The height and profile of the speed humps on Morgan Road and Allcroft Road were raised. These were addressed in the November 2022 evaluation report, but there remains a desire for these to be altered.

Generally, and particularly in the context of any potential new/adjusted feature, it was requested that the profile of the speed hump/table approaches is such that they are more comfortable for cyclists – as a result it was also proposed that this would create less noise from motor vehicles. ‘Sinusoidal’ humps were suggested, where the approaches are feathered.

While officers acknowledge and understand the origins of request, it should be noted that the likely result of feathering the approaches will make the features less impactful at reducing vehicle speeds. This approach may not be as easy to achieve in certain areas, as they would require a greater length of road compared with a typical round hump, which could be challenging between dropped crossings, junctions, gully’s and other features in the carriageway.

Options Proposed

- 3.6. At this time there is no identified funding to develop or pursue the implementation of these requested changes. The extent of the changes forms a scheme of significant size and likely cost that will require appropriate resourcing for detailed investigation and design. At this time, available staffing resources are focussed on development of local 15% CIL funded schemes and the funded twice-annual Waiting Restriction Review programmes.

It is recommended that a high-level summary of the requested changes be added to the regularly reported 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' so that they are formally captured.

- 3.7. It is recommended that the removal of the priority flow feature on Redlands Road (section 3.5.1 refers) is given priority for any identified funding and for resourcing, as it is this element that was identified in the road safety audit and appears to be causing the greatest local concern. Agreement for a suitable replacement to this speed calming feature will need to form part of this work, so further discussions need to take place in order to reach an agreement in principle about the type of feature that should be investigated.

Other Options

- 3.8. None at this time. Future investigation and detailed design will inform the available options and recommendations of officers.

4. Contribution to strategic aims

4.1. Healthy environment

The recommendation of the previous report in November 2022 was intended to remove a potential barrier to cycling, and one that has been raised by Reading Cycle Campaign. Following the identification of funding and further discussion following further investigation and design work, it is expected that resulting alterations within the area will further enhance the cycling, walking and environmental experience.

These alterations could lead to an increase in uptake of active and healthy transport modes in the area. This can lead to a reduction in motor-vehicle journeys, particularly short local journeys, which can be some of the most polluting, improving air quality by reducing emissions. This is expected to be particularly evident along Redlands Road, which should be a key linking route to and from the Shinfield Road segregated cycle lane scheme.

The recommendation should also unlock some of the localised congestion and more aggressive driving that has been reported at certain busier times of the day, which would also have an additional positive impact on the environment for residents and users of the Highway.

5. Environmental and climate implications

- 5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).
- 5.2. It is considered that the recommendations and decisions of this report do not currently require a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA). The recommendations will not directly lead to the proposed delivery of changes and the nature of any changes (e.g. the feasibility of the requested changes, extent of funding and agreement to the feature types) is yet to be determined.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. A full statutory consultation for the original scheme of measures was conducted in accordance with appropriate legislation. Notices of intention were advertised in the local printed newspaper and erected on lamp columns within the affected area. The Police, and other defined organisations, are a statutory consultee and were directly notified.

The Sub-Committee considered the feedback received before the resultant scheme was approved for delivery. The scheme has been delivered accordingly.

- 6.2. Officers considered scheme feedback that had been received since delivery, which formed a basis of the scheme evaluation report at the November 2022 Sub-Committee meeting (linked [here](#)).
- 6.3. Officers have met with Ward Councillors, representatives from Reading Cycle Campaign and a number of local residents since November's report. The feedback and findings from this meeting have formed the basis of this further report.
- 6.4. Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting. 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, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, 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;
 - 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 (EIA) is relevant to the recommendations and decisions required for this report, as they are not anticipated to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics.

8. Other relevant considerations

- 8.1. The primary considerations are as follow:
- 8.1.1. Procedural Requirements and Regulatory Duties – None expected from the recommendations and decisions of this report, however, Section 9 refers to the statutory consultation requirement that many of the requested changes (if agreed and when funded) would require as part of the future scheme development. Resultant feedback will be reported back to this Sub-Committee to inform the implementation – or otherwise - decisions.
- 8.1.2. Risk Management Implications - None expected from the recommendations and decisions of this report, however, many of the requested changes should be subject to independent road safety audit (if agreed and when funded) as part of the future scheme development.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. None arising from the recommendations of this report. However, references have been made to requested alterations that would – if agreeable, feasible and funded – be subject to statutory consultation.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. There is currently no identified funding to develop or implement an agreed scheme of alterations within the Redlands 20mph zone. Capital funding will need to be identified and additional reporting for scheme and spend approval may be required for this.
- 10.2. The requested alterations in Section 3 remain subject to resourcing detailed feasibility investigation, agreement, design, and independent road safety audit, it is not currently possible to provide an indication on the likely level of funding required, nor provide commentary on anticipated value for money and financial risks.
- 10.3. The scheme evaluation report at the November 2022 meeting of this Sub-Committee (linked [here](#)) provided high-level cost estimates on the then-proposed replacement of the Redlands Road priority flow feature with speed cushions (Section 3.5.1 of this report refers).

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1. It is regrettable that, at this time, it is not possible to anticipate when funding will become available to develop and potentially deliver changes that have been requested, if feasible and agreeable.
- 11.2. It is expected that resources may become available later in 2023 to undertake investigations, design and high-level feasibility checks against the requested changes.

12. Background papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices

- 1. The original scheme drawings, as advertised during the statutory consultation