

# Traffic Management Sub-Committee

06 March 2024



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	Civitas Academy School Street Scheme
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	James Clements, Transport Programme Manager
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Cllr John Ennis – Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
<b>Ward</b>	Abbey
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Healthy Environment
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. That the sub-committee notes the detail of this report.</li><li>2. That the sub-committee approves the making of an experimental School Street on Great Knollys Street, Reading at Civitas Academy.</li><li>3. That the sub-committee approves that in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy &amp; Transport and Ward Councillors, that the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the appropriate (experimental) traffic regulation order for the proposed School Street on Great Knollys Street in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.</li><li>4. That the sub-committee approves the commencement of a six-month statutory consultation from the commencement of the experimental scheme.</li><li>5. That the sub-committee approves that subject to no objections being received during the statutory consultation period, that the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the experimental order permanent.</li></ol>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Traffic Management Sub-Committee to make an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the implementation of a School Street scheme on Great Knollys Street for the Civitas Academy.

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1. 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 accommodating the significant levels of planned economic growth. The Council's approved Capital Programme provides capital funding for key infrastructure projects.

Funding is provided from grants received from the Local Enterprise Partnership and Central Government including the Department for Transport and Active Travel England, developer contributions, investment from Network Rail and Great Western Railway (GWR), and Council borrowing.

- 2.2. The Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for Reading up to 2026. Reading's new LTP, the Reading Transport Strategy 2040 has been developed and a Statutory Consultation complete. Its core principles of the strategy are 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.
- 2.3. Whilst the LTP sets the context and overarching vision for future transport provision in Reading, sub-strategies provide more detailed implementation plans for specific topics. These form the basis for preparing funding proposals to deliver key elements of each sub-strategy, including the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 2.4. The Civitas School Street scheme aligns with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by addressing safety and parking issues that can impact in pupils and parents during drops-off and picks-up as well as promoting active and sustainable travel.

### **3. The Proposal**

- 3.1. The Council launched a School Street application process and guidance in 2020 and has subsequently engaged with several schools which have expressed an interest in the potential implementation of a School Street outside their school. The Council now has 4 school street schemes in operation across the borough.
- 3.2. In the autumn 2023 Civitas Academy, situated in Great Knollys Street next to Reading Transport Ltd depot, undertook an informal consultation with affected properties and parents/carers on the proposal to implement an experimental School Street on Great Knollys Street.
- 3.3. A School Street application was then submitted by the school in January 2024.
- 3.4. The proposal is for the closure of Great Knollys Street to all but eligible vehicles immediately to the east of its junction with Bedford Road as per the attached traffic management plan. The closure will be from this point eastward for the length up to the point of Great Knollys Street where there is an existing traffic restriction and pedestrian and cycle link through to the eastern end of Great Knollys Street. There would be no obstruction to access to Reading Buses as this is already inaccessible to vehicles.
- 3.5. Apart from the school the only properties that would be affected within the closure area would be residential and under the terms of Reading's school street scheme these vehicles would retain access under the eligible vehicle category. There is a 2-hour free parking bay adjacent to the school which would be inaccessible to ineligible vehicles throughout the closure although vehicles already parked here would be able to exit the area during the closure.
- 3.6. The proposed time of the road closure for the School Street would be 8.30 to 9.00 for morning drop-off and 14.55 to 15.40 for afternoon pickup, Monday-Friday during term time only.
- 3.7. Officers have assessed the application including carrying out parking surveys on the proposed School Street and neighbouring streets, to determine the current baseline usage of the streets. Based on these reports there it is determined that there is adequate capacity on the highway network surrounding the area to accommodate any displaced vehicles.

- 3.8. A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) was undertaken by an independent road safety auditor on the proposed School Street. The only safety concern raised regarded the amount of advanced warning signage which has subsequently been addressed in the traffic management plan (see Appendix 1).
- 3.9. There is strong support from the school's leadership and senior management team with particular support from the head teacher and governors.

#### **4. Contribution to Strategic Aims**

- 4.1. The Council's new Corporate Plan has established three themes for the years 2022/25. These themes are:
  - Healthy Environment
  - Thriving Communities
  - Inclusive Economy
- 4.2. This School Street will directly support the Council's vision for a Healthy Environment, and will have a positive impact for students, school staff, parents and residents, providing a safer environment during school drop off / collection.
- 4.3. The initiative is part of the Council's wider ambitions for encouraging more active travel, such as cycling and walking, and as a result support better physical and mental health, lower carbon generation and improved air quality.

#### **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. Proposals set out in this paper seek to support a step-change in transport infrastructure and services and a shift towards walking and cycling as attractive alternatives to private vehicles. This builds on the considerable success of increasing the number of walking, cycling and public transport trips into Reading town centre to 80% as part of the delivery of previous Local Transport Plans.

#### **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. An informal consultation was undertaken by the school, in partnership with local ward councillors, and a letter outlining the proposed scheme was sent to both parents and carers of children attending the school as well as to local residents both within the closure point and the surrounding network.
- 6.2. A drop-in event, attended by Councillors, Transport Officers and School Staff was held on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September during the afternoon. This also covered the afternoon pick-up time. A number of local residents and parents/carers attended this and discussed how the school street would work. The discussion and feedback in general was positive with strong support for the scheme.
- 6.3. In total 9 formal responses were received in support of the school street scheme with 1 objection.

#### **7. Equality Implications**

- 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. The Council has reviewed the scope of the proposals as outlined within this report and considers that the proposals have no direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

## **8. Other Relevant Considerations**

8.1. There are none.

## **9. Legal Implications**

9.1. The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and has been advertised in accordance with the procedure laid down by Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Any comments or objections to the order can be made during the first 6 months of operation during the consultation period, after which the Council can consider and decide to either continue with the experiment for a further 12 months, remove the experiment or make the scheme permanent.

9.2. If agreed to become permanent, the Traffic Regulation Order will be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

9.3. If once the permanent TRO is made the school is no longer able to marshal the school street, Officers will decide in consultation with Legal Services and the School as to whether the Order should be revoked, or whether this is a temporary situation. Officers will also consider whether alternative methods of enforcement can be introduced.

## **10. Financial Implications**

10.1. Funding for the Civitas Academy School Street has been allocated from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Capability Fund allocation for Reading.

10.2. The Council will continue to provide the necessary PPE, signage, marshal training and any ancillary equipment required and general Transport Officer support to maintain the School Street. This is not expected to exceed £10k.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

11.1. Subject to committee approval for the experimental traffic order it is anticipated that the school street scheme will commence from the start of the second half of the summer term 2024 on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2024. This will be dependent on the traffic management and signage being installed, marshal's being trained and appropriate publicity to communicate the scheme being released.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1. Policy Committee report – 18th May 2020.

## **Appendices**

### **1. Civitas School Street Traffic Management Plan**