

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

06 March 2024



Reading
Borough Council
Working better with you

Title	Wensley Road Introduction of Waiting and Loading Restrictions, Relocation of Speed Cushions and Introduction of a Bus Cage at Locations Surrounding the Site and Introduction of a One Way Road - Results of Statutory Consultation
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Darren Cook, Transport Development Control Manager
Lead councillor	John Ennis – Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of this report2. That objections noted in Appendix 1 are considered and the Sub-Committee agrees to either implement, amend, or reject the proposals.3. That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order, if applicable.4. That respondents to the statutory consultation be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee accordingly, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.5. That the Highways & Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the Lead Councillor and Ward Councillors, be allowed to make minor alterations to the proposals as may be necessary.6. That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultation/notification processes.7. That subject to no objections being received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order for the proposed scheme.8. That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.9. That no public inquiry be held into the proposals

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Planning permission was granted on 16th December 2020 for the demolition of 29 garages and development of 46 new dwelling units, including the provision of affordable homes, provided in a mixture of houses and apartments. The relevant planning application reference is 200122. The development has been under construction for some time and is due to be completed in 2024.

- 1.2. The proposal subject to this report consists of the introduction of numerous changes surrounding the site and these have been broken down into smaller areas for ease of reference. The drawings of these can be found at Appendix 2-6 with the full description of each found at the 11th January 2024 Committee Report from Paragraph 3.3 to 3.14, which can be found [here](#).
- 1.3. The developer is undertaking the works required through the S278 Highway Works Agreement.
- 1.4. This report informs the Sub-Committee of a minor alteration required to the proposal identified shortly prior to the consultation taking place which was as a result of a residential property having a dropped crossing erected that conflicted with the speed hump to be relocated. An updated design was therefore prepared changing the speed hump to a speed cushion and relocating the feature away from the dropped crossing. Although this design was party to the consultation that took place Legal have advised that we require members to consider the minor change to the scheme and agree to a further Notice being advertised under section 90C of the Highways Act to formalise this change of location and type of speed reducing feature. The proposed design can be found at Appendix 7 with the original design provided at Appendix 2.
- 1.5. This report also informs the Sub-Committee of objections resulting from the statutory consultation for the proposals agreed at the January 2024 Sub-Committee meeting. Members are asked to consider the objections at Appendix 1 and conclude the outcome of the scheme.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The proposals align with the following theme in the Council's Corporate Plan for the years 2022/25.
 - Healthy Environment
- 2.2. If agreed for implementation, the proposals are expected to align with the Council's Local Transport Plan, Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by improving local public transport accessibility and improving accessibility for users of the currently constricted footway.

3. The proposal

- 3.1. The full set of changes to the area around the Wensley Road development are extensive and so a full description has not been provided within this report but this can be found in the 11th January 2024 Committee Report from Paragraph 3.3 to 3.14, which can be found [here](#).
- 3.2. Alterations to Highway waiting and loading restrictions and traffic require statutory consultation, and following agreement to do so at the January 2024 Sub-Committee meeting, officers undertook this process between 20th June 2024 and 11th July 2024.
- 3.3. The statutory consultation process is a consultation with the public and other statutory consultees to create and seal a Traffic Regulation Order. Traffic Regulation Orders underlie on-street restrictions and allow them to be implemented and enforced.

The statutory consultation process is the Council proposing a new Traffic Regulation Order and in doing so, it must seek any objections so that these may be considered as part of the decision on whether the restrictions be implemented.

Statutory consultations are not voting processes, where a higher number of objections compared with comments of support would necessarily lead to proposals not being implemented. Rather, it is expected that the responses will be balanced toward objections and the Council needs to consider the reasons provided in the objections and decide whether a scheme is amended, removed or installed as advertised.

Statutory consultations are open for anyone considered to be impacted to respond, meaning that the respondent's address and other personal information is irrelevant. Under Data Protection law, capturing this information is not necessary and therefore is not a requirement.

- 3.4. The Sub-Committee is asked to consider the consultation feedback in Appendix 1 and decide whether the scheme may be implemented or be amended.

If agreed for implementation, it is recommended that the Highway & Traffic Services Manager, in agreement with the lead Councillor and Ward Councillors, be allowed to make minor alterations to the proposals as may be necessary and within the scope of the advertised Traffic Regulation Order.

- 3.5. When considering the outcome for this scheme, the Sub-Committee is asked to note that the proposal does have planning permission that secured the physical changes included within the January Sub-Committee report and these would be retained irrespective given they facilitate the wider access and movements required for the Wensley Road development. The only matters for consideration within this report are those relating to the Traffic Regulation Orders themselves.
- 3.6. Given that the physical alterations to the Highway have been secured through the planning application not implementing any alterations to the Traffic Regulation Orders would not be recommended as this will result in areas of Wensley Road having no control of parking and loading creating obstructions to traffic flow and visibility to the detriment of Highway safety. As well as permitting two-way traffic flow along a new carriageway that would not be designed to accommodate such movements safely.
- 3.7. The proposal also seeks the Sub-Committee to agree to the minor alteration to the scheme previously agreed at the January 2024 Sub-Committee meeting with updated design changing the existing speed hump to a speed cushion and relocating the feature away from a dropped crossing installed post the initial design. We also require approval to undertake a further Notice which is advertised under section 90C of the Highways Act. The proposed design can be found at Appendix 7 with the original design provided at Appendix 2.

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. 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

- 4.3. 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.

- 4.4. This proposal contributes to the Council's Corporate Plan Themes as set out below:

Healthy Environment

The proposal, if agreed for implementation, is expected to improve accessibility along the currently constricted footway, making the area easier to travel around and reducing risks to users. It brings additional bus stop capacity to improve access to public transport.

5. Environmental and climate implications

5.1. The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers) and as such recognises the need to minimise the climate impacts of its decisions.

5.2. A climate impact assessment has been undertaken and concludes that consultation and implementation of the proposals would have a 'Net Low Positive' impact.

There will be some negative impact from energy use, waste generation and use of transport associated primarily with the implementation of the scheme (if agreed). However, these will be 'one-off' impacts, with there being no expected additional ongoing impacts.

It is expected that these delivery impacts would be outweighed by the positive ongoing impact of the scheme. This is primarily in relation to the increased loading and bus stop provision, which will reduce emissions through seeking alternative/unnecessary waiting for access to these facilities.

5.3. The construction works will be delivered by the Council's Highways & Drainage team who include carbon reduction targets and improved sustainability within works programmes. The intent is to reduce the amount of carbon used to produce the materials at source, using recycled materials where possible, lower temperature bitumen, reducing the uncontrolled waste in the environment to reduce pollution of the natural environment, and using electric vehicles and plant where possible.

5.4. The Council on 15th October 2019 formally adopted of the 'Unite Construction Charter' where the Authority supports the 'Get Britain Building' campaign, which is aimed at supporting and sustaining the British construction industry. As a result, all relevant construction projects will be required to comply with the Authority's Sustainable Buying Standard for Highways and Construction Materials, which requires structural steel and other relevant materials to be covered by BES 6001 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Product certification, or equivalent.

5.5. The Council is committed to a tree planting programme to increase canopy cover, improve biodiversity and reduce localised flooding. The Council has committed up to 1% of the value of the road resurfacing programmes towards this initiative and the Town Centre will also benefit from this programme.

5.6. The Reading Climate Emergency Strategy, which was endorsed by the Council in November 2020, highlights the importance of adapting to climate impacts as well as reducing the emissions which are driving climate change. The Council will regularly review design standards for roads, in conjunction with industry bodies, to take into account the extreme weather events (both extreme heat and extreme cold) to ensure sustainability of the public highway network.

6. Community engagement

6.1. The planning applications (Section 1.1 refers) where the Highway alterations were proposed in principle have previously been available for public viewing and have been subject to Council Committee consideration.

6.2. Statutory consultation(s) have been carried out in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, advertised on street, in the local printed newspaper(s) and on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'). Notices were advertised in the local printed newspaper and have been erected on street, as close as possible to affected areas.

6.3. Where this report contains petitions that have not been separately reported, the lead petitioner(s) will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed meeting minutes. Respondents to statutory consultations will also be informed of the Sub-Committee decisions.

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.

8. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics. A statutory consultation will be conducted, providing an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals. Waiting Restrictions can have a positive impact whereby the roads are made safer for all users as locally problematic parking issues are reduced.

9. Other relevant considerations

9.1. Procedural Requirements and Regulatory Duties – Section 9 refers to the regulatory requirements for advertising and sealing Traffic Regulation Orders.

10. Legal implications

10.1. The proposed alterations to waiting restrictions and traffic direction reversal required statutory consultation, whereby the new Traffic Regulation Order(s) were drafted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

The resultant Traffic Regulation Order(s) will be made under the same regulations, if agreed.

10.2. Following the making of this Order, the public must be afforded a period of six weeks to raise any legal challenge, prior to the implementation of any elements contained within.

10.3. This report seeks agreement for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to undertake these processes.

10.4. Notice will be given for the implementation of vertical traffic calming features under Section 90C of the Highways Act 1980.

11. Financial implications

10.1 All works are to be undertaken by the developer with funding also secured for the consultation process therefore there are no funding implications for the Council.

12. Timetable for implementation

12.1. Should the Sub-Committee agree to the implementation of the alterations, the Traffic Regulation Order(s) will be sealed and, following a six-week period for any legal challenges to be raised, the scheme will be lining and signing of the Traffic Regulation Orders will be fully delivered by the developer.

13. Background papers

13.1. There are none.

Appendices

Appendix 1. - Wensley Road – Objection Report

Appendix 2. - Area 1

Appendix 3. - Area 2

Appendix 4. - Area 3

Appendix 5. - Area 4

Appendix 6. - Area 5

Appendix 7. – Area 2 Amended Proposal