

# Traffic Management Sub-Committee

11 September 2024



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	CIL Locally Funded Scheme (Northcourt Avenue): Proposal for Statutory Consultation
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To make a decision
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Report author</b>	James Penman, Network Services Manager
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	John Ennis – Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Healthy Environment
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note the content of this report.</li><li>2. Agree that the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake the statutory consultation and notification processes for the proposed speed reduction scheme in Appendix 1, described in Section 3.2, in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) regulations 1996.</li><li>3. Agree that the Highways and Traffic Services Manager (or delegated officer), in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and in consultation with Ward Councillors, be authorised to make minor alterations to the agreed proposals.</li><li>4. Agree that subject to no objections being received, the scheme be implemented and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to seal the resultant Traffic Regulation Order.</li><li>5. Agree that should a scheme receive objection(s) during the statutory consultation period, that these be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee for consideration and a decision regarding scheme implementation.</li><li>6. That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.</li></ol>

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions have enabled development of a number of local Transport-related schemes, following allocations agreed in 2022.
- 1.2. This report seeks approval for officers to undertake statutory consultation and notice processes necessary to progress a scheme of speed reduction (20mph) and traffic calming on Northcourt Avenue and Wellington Avenue.
- 1.3. The proposed scheme on Appendix 1 has been developed following officer investigation and meetings with Ward Councillors and representatives from the Northcourt Avenue Residents Association (NARA).

## 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 proposal aligns with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The speed reduction scheme will complement the Council's Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by removing barriers to the greater use of sustainable, healthy transport options.

### **3. The Proposal**

#### Current Position

- 3.1. At Policy Committee in March 2022, the Council agreed to allocate local CIL funding to enable the development and intended delivery of initiatives across many Council service areas. Within these allocations were traffic management schemes, all of which had been previously captured within the 'Requests for Traffic Management Measures' report that is updated to this Sub-Committee twice annually. A total of £200k was allocated to deliver the scheme 'Northcourt Avenue speed reduction'.
- 3.2. Speed survey data and officer investigations informed initial concept scheme designs and there have been some useful and constructive meetings held with officers, Ward Councillors and representatives of NARA (Northcourt Avenue Residents Association).

Through these discussions, a scheme has been agreed for proceeding to statutory consultation. The scheme is on Appendix 1 and includes the proposed introduction of a 20mph zone on Northcourt Avenue and Wellington Avenue. This zone will be made compliant (and reduce traffic speeds) via the installation of full-width speed humps of a 'sinusoidal' influenced design that is intended to lessen the initial impact. This design has been recently used on Boston Avenue and Shaw Road for new humps that were added, and is intended to be more cycle-friendly and a less noise-generating design.

It is the intention that the raised features at either end of Northcourt Avenue will be of a flat-top/table design to create informal/uncontrolled at-grade pedestrian crossings. Due to space constraints between driveway accesses and other features, there have been limitations on the placement of further features of this design within the scheme area, however we are additionally intending to implement flat-top/table features around the junction with Wellington Avenue, on the following priority, subject to final feasibility and available funding:

- a. Northcourt Avenue, southern side of the junction
- b. Wellington Avenue, near to the junction with Northcourt Avenue
- c. Northcourt Avenue, northern side of the junction

Regulatory road signing will be implemented, including the 'gateway' (entrance/exit) signs and smaller repeater signs along the streets. It has been initially requested that painted '20' roundels are not installed along the roads, so these will be used only for the zone entrance.

### Options Proposed

- 3.3 It is recommended that the scheme on Appendix 1, and described in Section 3.2, proceed to statutory consultation, following independent Road Safety Audit. Due to the different regulatory processes, there would be two separate – but concurrent – consultations covering the 20mph proposal and the traffic calming features (humps and tables).
- 3.4 Officers will provide advance notice to Ward Councillors and NARA and have agreed to provide large-scale plans to enable wider resident engagement during the consultation. Officers will support a potential Q&A session where resourcing permits.
- 3.5 Should there be any objections received to either consultation during the statutory consultation period (minimum 21 days), officers will prepare a further report to this Sub-Committee so that they may be considered and a decision made regarding the delivery (or otherwise) of the scheme.

Should no objections be received during the statutory consultation period, officers recommend that this scheme is agreed to be implemented as advertised. In this case, the Traffic Regulation Order can be sealed/made and the scheme proceed to delivery planning.

- 3.6 It is recommended that the Highways & Traffic Services Manager (or delegated officer), in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and in consultation with Ward Councillors, be authorised to make minor alterations to the agreed proposals. These may be necessary, depending on the outcome of the Road Safety Audit or due to unforeseen engineering reasons.

### Other Options Considered

- 3.7 None at this time.

## **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

Speeding and inappropriate driving, or the perception/risk thereof, can be a barrier to the use of active and sustainable transport choices such as walking and cycling. Anecdotally, this type of driving is seen more regularly on routes that are perceived to provide a useful shortcut between destinations, especially when they are straight and well-sighted, as is the case with Northcourt Avenue and Wellington Road.

The implementation of a 20mph scheme along with regular speed calming measures throughout will introduce an environment that is very different and forces a different behaviour from motorists. The scheme is expected to reduce both the average speed of traffic, but particularly the peak speeds of vehicular traffic and act as a potential deterrent to vehicles using the area as a short-cut.

### **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. A climate impact assessment has been conducted for the recommendations of this report, resulting in an expected 'Net low-positive impact'.

Any civil engineering scheme will create an element of negative impact through material use and the vehicles involved for delivery. However, the scheme has been designed with environmental and ongoing maintenance considerations from the outset and will therefore not be using specialised materials/surfacing, high-maintenance items, nor have any electrical works involved (e.g. illuminated signs).

The initial negative impacts are therefore one-off for delivery, for a scheme that is expected to be very low maintenance and have significant longevity. Given that the scheme is expected to reduce barriers to using sustainable/active transport modes and be a deterrent to local shortcut traffic (improvement to immediate air quality), the longer-term benefits are expected to outweigh the very short-term negative impact.

### **6. Community Engagement**

- 6.1. Officers have been meeting with Ward Councillors and NARA (Northcourt Avenue Residents Association) throughout the development of the scheme proposals. Officers will continue to ensure that Ward Councillors and NARA are kept informed of progress.
- 6.2. 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.
- 6.3. 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 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. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not anticipated to have a differential impact on people 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.

## 8. Other Relevant Considerations

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

## 9. Legal Implications

- 9.1. The draft Traffic Regulation Order for the 20mph zone will be consulted under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 9.2. Notice will be given for the implementation of vertical traffic calming features under Section 90C of the Highways Act 1980.
- 9.3. This report seeks agreement for the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to undertake these processes and to seal/make the resultant Traffic Regulation Order should no objections be received during the statutory consultation period.

## 10. Financial Implications

### 10.1 Revenue Implications

	<b>2024/25 £000</b>	<b>2025/26 £000</b>	<b>2026/27 £000</b>
Employee costs	NIL	NIL	NIL
Other running costs			
Capital financings costs			
<b>Expenditure</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL
Income from:	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Total Income</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL
Net Cost(+)/saving (-)	NIL	NIL	NIL

Staff costs are capitalised. CIL contributions do not provide additional revenue funding for maintenance, and officers have considered revenue implications in the scheme design by avoiding the use of specialist materials and new electrical supplies (e.g. for illuminated signs).

### 10.3 Capital Implications

<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>2024/25 £000</b>	<b>2025/26 £000</b>	<b>2026/27 £000</b>
Proposed Capital Expenditure	£195	£5	NIL
Funded by	Local 15% CIL funding allocation 2022	Local 15% CIL funding allocation 2022	N/A
Total Funding	£195	£5	NIL

The is based on the assumption of full scheme delivery in the financial year 2024/25, followed by an estimate for the post-implementation speed survey and Road Safety Audit. The Sub-Committee is asked to note that there is a risk of slippage into financial year 2025/26, dependant on a number of factors including consultation outcome/implementation decision and contractor availability.

#### 10.4 Value for Money (VFM)

Officers consider that the recommended proposal will provide the best outcomes based on the funding available and the purpose to which it has been allocated – speed reduction.

The scheme has been investigated and designed by officers of Reading Borough Council and all civil engineering work will be undertaken by the Council's in-house delivery team. The exceptions will be specialisms that currently lay outside of the Council's current resources, such as new regulatory lining implementation, regulatory sign creation and supply. However, these will be appointed through existing contracts and using contractors that conduct these works to a scale that provides value for money through their chargeable rates.

Road Safety Audits have been outsourced to a contractor with these specialisms, but also provide an independent perspective and professional, constructive scrutiny of the scheme designs, which can assist in defending potential challenges.

#### 10.5 Risk Assessment

There will always be an element of financial risk regarding more complex works that require excavation and adjustment to the Highway layout. These risks should be minimised pre-excavation, as officer investigations have included colleagues from the delivery team. However, there is a risk of unforeseen engineering challenges, even following the receipt of utility plans. It is beneficial that the civil engineering work is being conducted by Reading Borough Council (and the maintenance thereafter), as this ensures close communication and true joint working throughout delivery.

### 11. Timetable for Implementation

- 11.1. Should a decision be made to proceed the recommended scheme to statutory consultation, there will be activities to undertake beforehand. The independent Road Safety Audit has been instructed, but will need to be undertaken. Thereafter, the draft Traffic Regulation Order and the statutory notice will need to be created from a combination of detailed site measurements and Legal Services input.
- 11.2. Given the relatively short period between this September meeting of Traffic Management Sub-Committee and the reporting deadlines for November's meeting, it is likely that the consultation results will be reported to the January 2025 meeting at the earliest, unless no objections are received.
- 11.3. Subject to the receipt of objections, the remaining milestones will be as follow:
  - a. Provide contractors with detailed implementation drawings
  - b. Instruct sign production and delivery
  - c. Instruct and programme civils work delivery
  - d. Arrange a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order for any temporary restrictions that may be required for delivery (e.g. parking restrictions, road closures)
  - e. Arrange sealing and statutory advertising for the resultant Traffic Regulation Order
  - f. Mark out the locations of features on street and supervise delivery
  - g. Arrange post-implementation speed surveys
  - h. Arrange post-implementation Road Safety Audit (RSA)
  - i. Review report and arrange necessary remedial works

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1. There are none.

## **Appendices**

1. **Plan of recommended scheme.**