

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

06 March 2025



Title	Petition Response - Request for Parking Control Measures in Southcote
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Report author	Jim Chen, Assistant Engineer, Network Services
Lead councillor	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Sub-Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of this report.2. Agree the recommendations in Sections 3.11 – 3.13 not to progress the identified schemes at this time.3. Agree to the lead petitioner being informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the agreed minutes of the meeting.4. Agree that no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. To provide the Sub-Committee with officer recommendations in response to the written petition requesting the Council to implement parking control measures in Southcote. This follows the petition receipt report at the March 2024 meeting of this Sub-Committee, which is available to view [here](#).
- 1.2. Officers have considered the content of the petition and make a recommendation against each requested item in Sections 3.11 – 3.13, namely:
 - 1.2.1. That the request for individually marked parking bays is not taken forward;
 - 1.2.2. That the request for a Traffic Regulation Order restricting access to Silchester Road and Faircross Road is not taken forward, but that Southcote Primary School and Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School – in conjunction with the local community – may wish to consider developing a School Street application; and
 - 1.2.3. That the request for a parking permit scheme is not taken forward.
- 1.3. Appendix 1 - A parking beat survey result table for Fawley Road, Aldworth Close, Southcote Farm Lane and Shepley Drive of survey conducted on Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th February.

2. Policy context

- 2.1. The recommendations of this report will not directly lead to changes being introduced. However, the implementation of school street would be expected to align with the following theme in the Council's Corporate Plan for the years 2022/25:
 - Healthy Environment

2.2. School street may encourage using sustainable transport modes for travel to/from the school, such as walking and cycling.

3. The proposal

Current Position

3.1. On 20 February 2024, a petition was submitted to the Council containing 16 signatures, which states:

We the undersigned residents and organisations within the Borough of Reading would formally request that Reading Borough Council implement the following parking control measures:

- *Marked parking bays along the Southcote Lane, between Southcote Farm Lane and Circuit Lane.*
- *A new traffic order prohibiting traffic from entering Silchester Road between 07:30-08:45 and 14:15-15:30 Monday through Friday with an exemption for residents of Silchester Road & Faircross Road who register their vehicles and school staff who register their vehicle via Southcote Primary School.*
- *Explore the expansion of a Parking Permit Scheme with local residents and Councillors to protect Fawley Road, Aldworth Close, Southcote Farm Lane, and Shepley Drive.*

3.2. In response to the petition, officers carried out site visits and conducted parking survey on Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th February to gauge the level of parking on Fawley Road, Aldworth Close, Southcote Farm Lane and Shepley Drive. The results of the survey can be found in appendix 1 of this report.

Marked parking bays along the Southcote Lane, between Southcote Farm Lane and Circuit Lane.

3.3. The Council does not typically mark individual on-street parking bays due to the large variation in vehicle sizes necessitating that the bays accommodate the largest likely vehicles, leading to a decrease in potential parking capacity.

3.4. Upon site observation, the majority of vehicles are parked wholly on the carriageway and there is currently no evidence of footway/verge parking nor signs of vehicle obstruction. The section of Southcote Lane between Southcote Farm Lane and Circuit Lane is not generally heavily parked, with the only exception being during school drop off and pick up hours.

3.5. Residents are encouraged to report inconsiderate and illegal parking to the Council to aid enforcement activities and there is a tool on the Council's website for doing so.

A new traffic order prohibiting traffic from entering Silchester Road between 07:30-08:45 and 14:15-15:30 Monday through Friday with an exemption for residents of Silchester Road & Faircross Road who register their vehicles and school staff who register their vehicle via Southcote Primary School.

3.6. There has been a long history of school traffic concerns on Silchester Road and Faircross Road due to its proximity to Southcote Primary school. Such issues are experienced on most streets near schools nationally and can cause inconvenience to residents for a short period of time during school drop off and pick up.

The Council has previously consulted and added parking restrictions, made later adjustments to these and consulted on a one-way reversal and each proposal has been met with a level of local objection.

3.7. The requested change is essentially describing a 'School Street', enabling dynamic management of vehicular traffic during the relatively short periods around school pupil arrival and departure times. Implementation of alternative restrictions would require very

costly CCTV enforcement implementation and have implications for registering and maintaining exemptions for permitted users, which will at times include unknown delivery/maintenance vehicles for the school and residents.

Explore the expansion of a Parking Permit Scheme with local residents and Councillors to protect Fawley Road, Aldworth Close, Southcote Farm Lane, and Shepley Drive.

- 3.8. Resident permit schemes do not guarantee nor allocate individual parking spaces for residents and is typically considered as an area wide scheme to avoid displacement parking. In addition, consideration is only given where kerbside spaces are at its capacity.
- 3.9. An area wide number plate parking survey covering Fawley Road, Aldworth Close, Southcote Farm Lane and Shepley Drive was conducted on Tuesday 4th and Thursday 6th February 2025. The survey was carried out at different times of the day to capture any signs of commuter parking. Assumptions are made when determining non-resident vehicles and the survey result is a best estimate. The total number of kerbside spaces on each street is determined by taking measurements of the length of the kerbside where vehicles can legally park wholly on the carriageway without causing obstruction to dropped kerbs and passing traffic. The results of the survey can be found in tables as shown in appendix 1.
- 3.10. The parking results suggest that although there is some evidence of non-residents parking in all the surveyed streets, especially during school pick up as expected, at no point did parking reach its full capacity. This is an important factor when considering the compromises that permit parking schemes *can* introduce to residents and their visitors.

Options proposed

3.11. *Marked parking bays along the Southcote Lane*

It is not recommended that this request be implemented for the reasons stated in Sections 3.3 – 3.5 of this report.

3.12. *A new Traffic Regulation Order for Silchester Road*

It is recommended that Southcote Primary School and Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic school may consider the application of a 'School Street' and that local residents could assist in supporting such a scheme, should it be desirable, as per Sections 3.6 – 3.7.

The Council launched a school street application process in 2020 in support of the Councils' visions for a healthy environment and to provide a lower-risk environment during school drop off/pick up. A number of schools across the Borough have since applied and had a school street scheme implemented. Should an application of school street be successful, it will be subject to school street assessment and road safety audit. This can be implemented under an experimental order for a minimum operational period of 6 months.

As with all school streets the success of the scheme will be dependent on the school leadership team working with parents, carers to promote active travel and, where travel by car is necessary, appropriate locations in the surrounding network be promoted and considerate parking behaviour be observed. The Council will continue to invite schools to apply for school street scheme, however, the decision is ultimately with the school – and subject to local volunteer support - on whether the scheme is viable. More information can be found on our website [here](#).

3.13. *Permit Parking*

It is not recommended that this request be developed for the reasons stated in Sections 3.8 – 3.10.

Other options considered

3.14. 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. The recommendations in this report align with the Council's values and objectives in the Corporate Plan, namely:

Healthy Environment

The Road Traffic Regulation Act enables the Council to introduce measures like speed limits, low-emission zones, or restrictions on certain vehicles. These provisions directly support reducing pollution, improving air quality and creating spaces where people feel the benefits of clean air and active travel like walking and cycling.

By implementing TROs, the Council can create more green spaces and pedestrian friendly areas, aligning with its goal of promoting a healthy environment which has a positive impact on the life of every resident – making Reading a greener, more attractive place to live, with a tangible impact on physical and mental health and life expectancy.

Thriving Communities

TROs can enhance road safety through measures like traffic calming, safer pedestrian crossings, or reduced speed limits, making neighbourhoods safer and more liveable. This fosters a sense of connectivity in communities.

These actions also support accessibility and mobility, which are key to thriving, connected communities, ensuring everyone including the vulnerable and excluded can safely use public spaces, regardless of age or ability.

Inclusive Economy

By managing traffic to reduce congestion and improve public transport flow, the Council can boost local economic activities and make it easier for everyone to access education, skills and training and good jobs.

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. The recommendation of this report does not directly deliver changes, so a Climate Impact Assessment has not been considered necessary at this time.

6. Community engagement

- 6.1. The lead petitioner will be informed of the decision of the Sub-Committee regarding the request that they have made, following publication of the meeting minutes.
- 6.2. Meeting reports and minutes are published on the Council's website and Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting that can be attended. Recordings of the meetings are also available via the Council's website (www.reading.gov.uk).

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 is relevant at this time as the report recommendation does not directly lead to any physical change. Assessment will be considered once funding for development and delivery of a scheme is identified.

8. Other relevant considerations

- 8.1. None expected from the recommendations and decisions for this report.

9. Legal implications

- 9.1. There are no foreseen legal implications relating to the recommendation of this report.

10. Financial implications

- 10.1. None arising from the recommendation of this report.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1. Not applicable.

12. Background papers

- 12.1. There are none.

Appendices –

1. Parking beat survey result table