

**Traffic Management  
Sub-Committee  
05 March 2026**



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	Sidmouth Street Cycle Lane – Request to Consult on reduction in Cycle Lane
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To request authority to undertake a statutory consultation for the partial removal of the segregated cycle facilities on Sidmouth Street, required to provide additional capacity for northbound vehicle movements.
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report</b>	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
<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>	Katesgrove, Redlands
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The Sub-Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. note the content of this report.</li> <li>2. Authorise the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood services in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to undertake the statutory consultation for the proposed amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order for Sidmouth Street.</li> <li>3. Authorise the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood services to make minor amendments to the agreed proposals if required prior to the implementation, in consultation with the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport and the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub Committee.</li> <li>4. That subject to no objections being received the scheme be considered as approved and the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to amend the Traffic Regulation Order.</li> <li>5. That should the scheme receive objection(s) during the statutory consultation period, that these be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee for consideration and decision regarding scheme implementation.</li> </ol>

**1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Sub-Committee of proposals to reduce the width of the cycle infrastructure on Sidmouth Street, and to seek approval to undertake a statutory consultation to amend the Traffic Regulation Order as required.
- 1.2 In making this proposal consideration has been given to several factors, including:
- The availability of alternative cycle facilities within the local cycle network, which are more desirable and provide more direct, or linked routes.
  - The underutilisation of the infrastructure implemented on Sidmouth Street.
  - The impact of the approved bus lane, due be implemented between Sidmouth Street and London Street

## 2. Policy Context

- 2.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) sets out the legal basis for making TROs. It gives local authorities the power to make TROs to regulate or restrict traffic as needed for:
- (a) avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising, or
  - (b) preventing damage to the road or to any building on or near the road, or
  - (c) facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), or
  - (d) preventing the use of the road by vehicular traffic of a kind which, or its use by vehicular traffic in a manner which, is unsuitable having regard to the existing character of the road or adjoining property, or
  - (e) preserving the character of the road in a case where it is especially suitable for use by persons on horseback or on foot, or
  - (f) preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs or
  - (g) any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995
- 2.2 The Council Plan for the years 2025/28 includes priorities of delivering a sustainable and healthy environment and to reduce our carbon footprint, which align closely with the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA), as both seek to improve public wellbeing and sustainable development.
- 2.3 Full details of the Council 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 Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) is a sub-strategy and core element of our emerging Reading Transport Strategy, which sets a vision to make Reading a greener and healthier town by providing better sustainable travel choices, including buses. The transport strategy also contributes towards the vision of a net zero carbon Reading by 2023, as set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy
- 2.5 Reading Borough Council's Transport Strategy 2024 is a statutory document that sets a vision to make Reading a greener and healthier town by providing better sustainable travel choices, including buses. The transport strategy also contributes towards the vision of a net zero carbon Reading by 2023, as set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy. It also includes guiding policies and principles including those

related to Network Management (RTS17), Parking (RTS20), Enforcement (RTS21) and Demand Management (RTS22).

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 This report sets out the proposals for reducing the width of the existing cycle lane on Sidmouth Street. This is proposed on the basis of the current performance of the cycle facilities, but also to accommodate increased motor vehicle capacity. -vehicle capacity

#### ***Current Situation***

- 3.2 The cycle lane facility on Sidmouth Street was installed following the allocation of 'Tranche 1' funding through the government's emergency Active Travel Fund, which was received in 2020. It was one of the short-term proposals that specifically addressed the immediate need to promote active travel and facilitate social distancing based on the government advice around the COVID19 pandemic at the time. The cycle lane on Sidmouth Street was initially installed as a temporary measure, which later became permanent following a statutory consultation and approval by Traffic Management Sub-Committee in September 2022.
- 3.3 As a result of the cycle scheme being implemented, the southbound traffic lane was removed and replaced by a 2-lane cycle facility. However, the lack of linking routes, and the provision of alternative cycle routes, including London Street and Watlington Street, has resulted in the cycle lanes (on Sidmouth Street) being underutilised.

#### ***Options Considered***

- 3.4 As part of the ongoing review of the transport network, Officers have undertaken an optioneering exercise, to consider various changes that could be made to improve the overall network performance in this area.
- 3.5 As part of this optioneering, Officers considered the potential impact of the previously approved BSIP scheme, to introduce a new bus lane on London Road, and the possible impact this could have on London Road and the wider network.
- 3.6 Sidmouth Street functions as a key distributor road within the local highway network, linking London Road to Queens Road, and is commonly used as an alternative route during peak periods.
- 3.7 The new bus lane on London Road is designed to improve public transport reliability and journey times, and although minimal reallocation of road space is necessary (to facilitate the new bus lane), it is expected that some general traffic may be displaced onto Sidmouth Street.
- 3.8 As well as the improvements for public transport, the implementation of the bus lane will also create another shared space for cyclists travelling westbound towards the town centre, and will provide safer facilities for cyclists travelling through the London Street junction, towards the town centre.
- 3.9 Regarding the loss of cycle provision as a result of this proposal, Officers have considered whether this change could be expected to have a significant impact on Active Travel opportunities in the area.
- 3.10 As part of the scope of this optioneering exercise, officers considered the existing road layout, and in particular the benefits of the existing cycle infrastructure. At this stage

officers have not conducted a cycle survey of this route, however through communication with the local cycle groups, we understand that this route is used for southbound movements, connecting cyclists from London Street, via South Street. However, due to the lack of northbound connections, it is not clear how well used the route is for travelling towards town. Officers also note the existing cycle provisions on Watlington street, and in particular the facilities for crossing Queens Road.

3.11 In preparing a suite of options for consideration, the primary design principle applied was to maximise the carriageway widths and to provide additional northbound vehicle capacity. The secondary design principle was to retain as much Active Travel provision as possible. Following these principles, officers have worked with design consultants to develop 4 options.

3.12 Each of the options proposed has the following similar characteristics, being:

- Sidmouth Street remains a one-way road.
- Introduces 2 lane entry to Sidmouth St from London Road which requires amendment of the traffic signals in that area and two northbound lanes for general traffic
- Introduces 2 lanes of traffic between London Road and South Street
- Introduces 3 lanes of traffic between South Street and Queens Road (1 left turn, 2 right turn).

3.13 However, alongside this, the specific options proposed include:

- Option 1 - Retain Existing cycle lanes (South of South Street Only), two northbound lanes, P&D parking removed.
- Option 2 – Retain a southbound (contra-flow) cycle lane (South of South Street Only), two northbound lanes, P&D parking retained
- Option 3 – Remove cycle lanes, replace with shared path provision on western footway. two northbound lanes, P&D parking retained
- Option 4 – Remove cycle lanes, two northbound lanes, retain P&D parking. This option allows 3 lane split before South Street.

3.14 Having reviewed the options presented by the design team, Officers are recommending that option 2 provides the best balance of benefits / value for money. This would provide additional vehicle capacity on Sidmouth Street, and would improve flows onto Queens Road (subject to further traffic surveys taking place). Alongside this, it would still provide a valuable southbound active travel connection from the town centre towards the shared path facilities on London Road, and Southbound towards the cycle infrastructure on Shinfield Road, and would complement the existing provisions on Watlington Street.

3.15 Officers are proposing to develop the detailed designs in parallel to this proposed consultation, which include further analysis and traffic surveys to support the initial assumptions, both in terms of use of the cycle facilities, as well as understand potential impacts on traffic flows both on London Road (as a result of the change to 2 entry lanes to Sidmouth Street) and Queens Road (as a result of the 2 eastbound lanes from Sidmouth Street).

3.16 We are taking this holistic approach, which considers Public Transport, Active Travel and general traffic flows, with the aim of ensuring that the local network continues to

operate efficiently, while maintaining safe provision for all road users.

### **Recommendations**

- 3.17 Officers are recommending that on the basis of the option appraisal conducted, and the expected wider benefits to the local transport network, that the sub-committee approves officers to undertake a statutory consultation on Option 2.
- 3.18 As the design is currently at concept stage, officers are also seeking delegated approval to make minor non-material changes to the final designs. Any changes will remain consistent with the approach set out within this report and will only be made where necessary, and to accommodate any constraints or to improve the outcomes of the scheme.

## **4. Contribution to strategic aims**

- 4.1 The Council Plan has established five priorities for the years 2025/28. These priorities are:
- Promote more equal communities in Reading
  - Secure Reading's economic and cultural success
  - Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint
  - Safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children
  - Ensure Reading Borough Council is fit for the future
- 4.2 In delivering these priorities, we will be guided by the following set of principles:
- Putting residents first
  - Building on strong foundations
  - Recognising, respecting, and nurturing all our diverse communities
  - Involving, collaborating, and empowering residents
  - Being proudly ambitious for Reading
- 4.3 Full details of the Council Plan and the projects which will deliver these priorities are published on the Council's website - [Council plan - Reading Borough Council](#). These priorities and the Council 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 priorities, namely, to **Deliver a sustainable and healthy environment and reduce our carbon footprint**
- 4.5 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 enables the Council to introduce measures like speed limits, one way systems, bus lanes, 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.
- 4.6 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.
- 4.7 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.

- 4.8 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 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.
- 5.3 A climate impact assessment has been undertaken, and it has been assessed that this proposal will have a **Net Positive** impact. The purpose of this scheme is to support growth in sustainable transport, through the introduction of a bus lane on London Road. Whilst acknowledging the reduction in active travel provisions, it is expected that an overall net benefit will be achieved, due to the frequency and volume of use of the new bus lane. This is accompanied by a reduction in congestion, through the provision of additional vehicle capacity on Sidmouth Street.

## 6. Community engagement

- 6.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee are public meetings. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.
- 6.2 The consultation was conducted between 26 September 2025 and 16 October 2025, during which residents were invited to complete the questionnaire and provide any additional comments.

## 7. Equality impact assessment

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, a public authority must 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, and
  - 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 proposal is not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics and statutory consultation provide an opportunity for the content of objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

7.3 Further EIA assessments, where necessary, may be undertaken once the schemes are developed in detailed design.

## **8. Other relevant considerations**

8.1 None

## **9. Legal implications**

9.1 The Council has considered all of its legal obligations when seeking to make Traffic Regulation Orders.

9.2 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 sets out the legal basis for making TROs. The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 provides for the statutory processes to be followed in making TROs.

9.3 Before making a TRO, the local authority must carry out a statutory consultation, engaging with the Chief of Police, residents, businesses, emergency services and transport operators. A notice detailing the proposed restrictions and the reasoning behind them is published in a local newspaper and displayed on site in the areas where the restrictions would apply. Members of the public have 21 days in which to submit objections or comments on the proposal. In order for any comments to be valid, it must be in writing, state the grounds on which it is made and sent to the address specified in the notice.

With any traffic regulation order proposals, the Council (either via delegated authority, or by agreement of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee) may decide whether to proceed with the TRO as published, modify it, or abandon it. If it is agreed to proceed, the TRO is formally made and a further notice is published giving the date when the order comes into force. The final step is to implement the restrictions by installing the necessary signage and road markings.

9.4 The Council has considered its Network Management Duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and its Section 122 duty under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

### **Network Management Duty**

9.5 Part 2 Section 16 (1) of The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a duty on the Council as a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives—

- (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and
- (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

(2) The action which the authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing—

- (a) the more efficient use of their road network; or
- (b) the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority;

and may involve the exercise of any power to regulate or co-ordinate the uses made of any road (or part of a road) in the road network (whether or not the power was conferred on them in their capacity as a traffic authority). This duty places an ongoing obligation in ensuring overall traffic efficiency and network performance and not only applies to vehicles but all to pedestrians and cyclists.

## Section 122 duty

9.6 Further Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 places a duty on the local authority so far as practicable to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway. In carrying out this exercise the Council must have regard to the following:

- Desirability of securing and maintaining reasonable access to premises.
- The effect on the amenities of any locality effected and (without prejudice to the generality of this paragraph) the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles, so as to preserve or improve the amenities of the areas through which the road(s) run.
- The strategy prepared under Section 80 of the Environment Act 1995 (the national air quality strategy).
- The importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles.
- Any other matters appearing to the local authority to be relevant.

9.7 This duty focuses on the making of individual traffic regulation decisions.

9.8 Each of these duties has been considered in detail in relation to the schemes identified in this report.

9.9 Patricia Tavernier has cleared these Legal Implications.

## 10. Financial Implications

10.1 The costs associated with the delivery of this scheme are captured within the Councils Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP) and will be fully funded through the associated BSIP Government Grant.

10.2 Whilst detailed design is required to determine the full cost of this scheme, an initial budget estimate of £200k has been allocated. There is limited civil engineering works required as part of this scheme and the budget estimate includes risk contingency, should the works become more complex, following full design.

## 11. Timetable for Implementation

Line	Milestone	When
1	Undertake statutory consultation	March 2026
2	Review responses received from consultation	April 2026
3	Report back to TMSC with results of consultation (if required)	May/June 2026
4	Design Programme	February – July 2026

5	Scheme Implementation	July – September 2026
6	Subject to receiving a delegated decision, arrange to seal the TRO in accordance with statutory process.	September 2026

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1 None

### **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 – Sidmouth Street Scheme Design – Option 2**