

CLEANER AIR AND SAFER TRANSPORT (CAST) FORUM AGENDA

Date:	Thursday 12 th June 2025	
Location:	Reading Council Chamber), Civic Offices, Reading Borough Council, Bridge Street, Reading	
Time:	6:30pm - 8pm	
Chaired by:	Councillor Cross	
Attendance:	Cllr Will Cross (Chair) Cllr John Ennis Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward Cllr Jacopo Lanzoni Cllr Karen Rowland Cllr Jenny McGrother Cllr Andrew Hornsby-Smith Cllr Mohammed Ayub Ross Jarvis (RJ) James Turner (JT) No RBC Attendees Redacted	Reading Borough Council (RBC) RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC
Agenda Items:		
No:	Item:	Action:
1.	Introduction and Apologies: Apologies had been received from: Cllr Meri O’Connell - RBC Cllr Sarah Magon - RBC Emily Talib - Community Development Officer RBC	

2.

Air Quality Update

Air Quality Monitoring Report

Ross Jarvis (RJ) provided an update on Air Quality following publication of the 2025 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR).

The ASR presents a number of graphs outlining Automatic Monitoring Stations Annual Mean NO₂ since 2024 as well as Historic Diffusion Tube Trend.

NO₂ levels are still of concern due to being elevated in some busy roadside locations, but for the last couple of years NO₂ no longer exceeds the national annual mean objective. PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} are also pollutants of concern due to their effects on health even at low concentrations.

The Council's monitoring of these pollutants indicates that the levels are now falling. Levels of air pollution fell significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic because of less traffic being on the roads during the lockdown restrictions. Levels rose again in 2022 as people returned to normal routines. Since then NO₂ levels have fallen in successive years, this is most likely, predominantly due to the continuing gradual improvements in vehicle emissions as more older vehicles are replaced with EURO6 and electric vehicles.

The report also notes all monitoring results within existing AQMA have been below the air quality objectives for the past 2 years. If the downwards trend continues in 2025 and all the data collected is compliant with air quality objectives, Reading Borough Council will revoke the AQMA.

A link to the ASR is here:

https://images.reading.gov.uk/2025/10/ReadingBC_ASR_2025.pdf

Question: *A question was asked from the forum if air quality improvements had been matched to traffic levels (decreasing). RJ answered that the general trend is led by vehicles getting cleaner with the advent of Euro 6 engines making a particularly big improvement to air quality.*

Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Update

Reading Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) Strategy has outlined a target to install 2,500 - 3,000 on-street chargers to meet this demand.

Reading Borough Council has been awarded £866,000 Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) capital funding. The funding is designed to encourage the roll-out of low charge on-street electric vehicle charging for residents who do not have access to off-street charging at their residence. This includes people living in terraced streets or in flats where parking is predominantly on-street and Reading has a high proportion of these types of residencies.

The Council has started a 2-stage procurement exercise to appoint a supplier to deliver on-street EV charging.

Stage 1 (shortlisting) has been completed with 5 suppliers shortlisted to receive the Invitation to Tender.

- Shortlisting was based on the demonstration of minimum and added value experience, similar to RBC's scheme.
- Tender preparation has been completed, and documents have been approved.
- Tender documents have been published - Stage 2 is now LIVE!

The tender exercise will run over the summer and into the Autumn and the Council intends to appoint a supplier before the end of 2025. Delivery of on-street infrastructure is planned for 2026/27.

Question: *A member of the forum asked if we have procurement professionals and energy experts involved in the tendering process. RJ*

confirmed that there are and that the Office for Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) as well as the Energy Saving Trust (EST) are involved and will sign off all contracts prior to these being entered in to.

Berkshire Revolution - EV Awareness Event

In co-ordination with the other Berks LAs the Council is hosting a free event at Winnersh Business Park for people to view and test drive a range of EV vehicles, find out more about grants and financing, listen to live presentations and talk to experts. The event is on Friday 11th July 10am-2pm.

Clean Air Living Matters (CALM) Update

The CALM project has now finished and RJ provided a summary of its impact.

- CALM activities at 18 different primary schools out of a reduced target of 16
- CALM activities at 6 different secondary/private/independent schools out of a target of 9
- A cumulative total of 1,260 pupils with an increase in knowledge through in class activities and a further 70 children through other engagements including careers fairs, community events etc., totalling 1,330 (reduced target is 1,400 pupils - 95%).
- A cumulative total of 4,145 pupils with increased awareness through attending CALM assemblies and a further estimated 2,164 pupils through other engagements including careers fairs, community events etc., totalling 6,309 (reduced target 8,000 - 79%).
- A cumulative engagement of 4,309 parents through activity sheets from primary schools, community events and school gate interviews (reduced target 1,500 parents - 287%). This number includes 860 interviews at school gates, and 2,458 adults indirectly engaged through wider distribution of CALM booklets.
- Deployment of 27 indoor (static) and 25 outdoor sensors (static) in schools (target 10 static and 20 mobile). We also have 30 mobile sensors which are taken to the schools when activities are run and have been loaned to four families on a fortnightly basis.

Discussion with the Institute of Education at the University of Reading to produce lesson plans that can be used by schools long-term following completion of this project.

End-of-project video/animation. The aim of the video is to signpost air quality resources after the project ends, to give a summary of the CALM programme and to act as a call to action for behavioural change and improving local air quality.

Final workshop on 24th June to coincide with Clean Air Day following the success of a similar workshop last year. This will likely be the final delivery of the CALM programme.

More information can be found on the website:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/climate-and-pollution/clean-air-living-matters-exploring-reading-with-schools/>

3. Strategic Transport Update

James Turner (JT) provided an update on the following Strategic Transport items.

Active Travel Update

ATF2 Shinfield Road Scheme - JT confirmed that the outstanding lining required for Shinfield Road will be undertaken later this month. This will address any safety issues, particularly at the end of the scheme near Cressingham Road where the hatching was directing vehicles too far left after the island and the double yellow lines will provide additional demarcation for the cycle scheme.

ATF3 Bath Road - Following discussions with members the following has been agreed with regards to the delivery of the ATF3 Bath Road scheme.

- the scheme should be delivered commencing from the town centre and working west out of town as far as the funding enables to link to existing facilities on the Bath Road.
- Redesign arrangements at the Castle Hill-IDR Roundabout to take cyclists around the perimeter of the roundabout rather than through the middle as per original design.
- Review arrangements at the Bath Road - Coley Avenue junction and assess overall impact on traffic with further modelling.
- Incorporate plans for an extension of the scheme in to Castle Street as far as Cusden Walk and existing facilities.

A further members session is planned for July and updates will be provided following this.

Active Travel Schemes - Revenue Update

- Active Travel Officer role continues working with school promoting active and sustainable travel
- Free adult cycle training courses offered to all residents continues
- Free bicycle maintenance training offered to all residents continues
- Monthly 'Dr Bike' pop-up sessions continue in town centre as well as now also in local communities.
- Support for Reading Cycle Festival - taking place Sept 2025.

Wellbeing Walks Leaflets

The Council has now produced 3 Wellbeing Walks Leaflets and is in final design review of the 4th. These provide guided walks throughout Reading where people can enjoy the history, nature and scenery in different areas of Reading. The leaflets are available to pick up in the libraries, Town Hall and Museum, Reading Station and can also be downloaded as a pdf form the Council's website - www.reading.gov.uk/walk.

Whitley Street Cycle Lane - the issue of delivery vehicles and general parking blocking the Whitley Street cycle lane was raised. This is a known issue and has been discussed previously. Enforcement officers have been patrolling the area and issuing FPNs and will continue to do so.

Bus Service Improvement Plan and Zebra

The Council has continued delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme to promote and improve bus use throughout Reading. This programme has included:

- **A33 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - continuing construction of the A33 BRT scheme phase 5 element to deliver further bus lanes and priority between central Reading and Green Park and Mere oak to the south on the A33. This work also includes the delivery of a brand new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Kennet and is scheduled to open in the autumn.
- **Bus Stop Audio System** - Introduction of audio push buttons which will provide an audio announcement of the next bus services to call at the bus stop at 100 bus stops throughout the borough.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New bus lanes at Oracle Roundabout and London Road (Sidmouth St to London St). • Bus stop enhancements and upgrades. • Signals upgrade - Basingstoke Road Bennet Road junction • Service enhancements <p>Zero Emission Bus Regional Area 2 (ZEBRA 2) - Update</p> <p>The Council has successfully bid for funding through the ZEBRA 2 scheme for the delivery of 32 new electric double deck buses in Reading. The first 24 buses due later this year will service the routes 17 and 21 and these will be followed by a further 8 buses in summer 2026 to serve route 26.</p> <p>The funding provides 75% of the extra cost of the electric buses compared to the diesel equivalent as well as 75% of the infrastructure costs. Technical info noted below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.5MVA grid connection • 16x 150kW dual vehicle chargers • 1x 180kW dual vehicle charger as spare • 1x 30kW mobile vehicle charger for workshop • 472kWh battery • 260-mile theoretical range when new (buses on these routes do 140-180 miles a day) • modelling for summer and winter extremes undertaken • no changes to 24/7 operation required • 3hr fast charge or 6.5hr normal charge for 0% to 100% • Reduces carbon emissions by 84% based on current grid electric (and will improve) • Current biomethane gas buses also reduce carbon emissions by 84% (but are not quite zero emission) 					
5	<p>Active Travel Task and Finish Group</p> <p>Cllr Cross provided a summary of the Active Travel Task & Finish group which has recently been set up as reported through SEPT Committee.</p> <p>A report regarding the Task and Finish Group as well as the Terms of Refence can be seen in the minutes from March's SEPT Committee.</p> <p>https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&MId=5529&Ver=4</p> <p>The Group will submit a report containing its findings and recommendations to the meeting of the Strategic Environment and Planning Committee in November 2025.</p>					
8.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Blocked Footways</p> <p>A comment was made about footways being blocked, particularly by wheelie bins or pavement parking. Reference was made to BS 5906 - Waste Management in Buildings. Code of Practice. Cllr Rowland noted that this had been previously discussed, and the Council is aware of this issue.</p>					
	<p>Date of Next Meetings:</p> <p>All meetings are scheduled for 18:30 at the Council's offices.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>CAST Forum:</td> <td>Cycle Forum:</td> </tr> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Dec 2025 • 31st Mar 2026 </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Sept 2025 • 11th Feb 2026 </td> </tr> </table>	CAST Forum:	Cycle Forum:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd Dec 2025 • 31st Mar 2026 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4th Sept 2025 • 11th Feb 2026 	All to Note
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