

## CLEANER AIR AND SAFER TRANSPORT (CAST) FORUM AGENDA

<b>Date:</b>	Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2025	
<b>Location:</b>	Reading Council Chamber), Civic Offices, Reading Borough Council, Bridge Street, Reading	
<b>Time:</b>	6:30pm - 8pm	
<b>Chaired by:</b>	Councillor Cross	
<b>Attendance:</b>	Cllr Will Cross (Chair) Cllr John Ennis Cllr Jenny McGrother Cllr Meri O'Connell Cllr Adele Barnet-Ward Cllr Karen Rowland Cllr Sarah Magon Cllr Andrew Hornsby-Smith Cllr Jacopo Lanzoni Ross Jarvis James Turner  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Non-RBC Attendees Details Redacted</b></p>	Reading Borough Council (RBC) RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC
<b>Agenda Items:</b>		
<b>No:</b>	<b>Item:</b>	<b>Action:</b>
1.	<b>Introduction and Apologies:</b> Apologies had been received from:	

2.

## Air Quality Update

### Particulate Monitoring Update

Ross Jarvis (RJ) provided presentation on the Council's intention to run a project on Particulate Monitoring. RJ Noted that the Council has been monitoring air quality for over 20 years in Reading but with a focus on NO<sub>2</sub> and we currently only have 2 monitors for PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The National Air Quality Strategy (2023) set targets for the reduction of PM<sub>2.5</sub> with the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended average level is 5µg/m<sup>3</sup>

#### **Project Aim(s)**

- To understand hyper local variation in PM<sub>2.5</sub>, Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) air pollutant concentrations across Reading. We aim to identify trends and potential sources that improve knowledge of their contribution to varying temporal profiles; to evidence the effectiveness of prevention and mitigation interventions.
- To use the monitoring data derived from the network data to inform public health interventions that help raise awareness of how to reduce and mitigate risk of exposure; to identify effective mitigation and incentivise behavioural change to reduce exposure in local neighbourhoods

#### **How**

- Procure and install 30 low-cost sensors
- Locate near to high risk/ vulnerable populations; high pollution locations; schools; solid fuel burning; close to healthcare and social care setting; strategic points on outskirts.
- Maintain the network over a minimum period of two years
- Data analysis and interpretation by University of Reading.
- Engagement Portal - for residents to access, use of data and Public Health messaging.

The timeframe for this project is for the Council to procure a contractor early 2026 with contract award and deployment from April 2026. The two years of data collection will then follow through to April 2028.

**Questions/comments** - ██████████ made a point that 30 sensors throughout the whole of Reading may not seem like enough and the key will be finding the best locations for these. Most residents are aware of the issues surrounding air quality and the accompanying communication campaign will be key so as to convey the message without causing alarm.

██████████ noted that the WHO figures state that the difference between 10µg and 5µg translates to an extra 4 deaths per 100,000 and we should be aiming for the WHO levels. It was also noted that electric vehicles produce tyre and brake dust contributing to PM<sub>2.5</sub> so the transition to greater EV use will still have issues for air quality.

With regards to the sensor locations RJ confirmed that these will be published on the council's website through a map which will also have the data readings from each sensor. It has not currently been decided where these locations will be.

### Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Update

The LEVI project will see the delivery of a minimum of 1,500 on-street electric charging points across Reading to predominantly serve residents who do not have access to off-street parking.

The Stage 1 and Stage 2 tender evaluations are now complete with 5 suppliers being shortlisted from the 10 original applicants at Stage 1.

Following Stage 2 a preferred supplier has been selected and we are currently in the standstill period through to 8th December.

Following the standstill the award letter will be issued, and it is intended that a final contract will be executed by the end of January 2026.

On completion of the contract the successful bidder must submit an implementation plan within 3 months of contract award, to be agreed by the Council.

As well as the on-street lamp column chargers funding has also been awarded for a cross pavement solution, such as the pavement gully, where residents can still charge from their home supply.

Questions - Cllr Barnet-Ward asked if residents understood that the pavement channel solution would not enable them to have a dedicated parking space on the highway. RJ confirmed this is the case and is included in the information. It is a common misconception though as was evident in the recent highways trial.

RJ confirmed that all the lamp column charge points will be Type 2 which are suitable for electric motor bikes but not electric bicycles.

The question was asked what the costs to the residents for opting for the pavement channel option. RJ replied that the grant only covers the infrastructure costs and residents are required to pay for the installation (approx. £500) and there is a £75 annual license fee.

The proximity of residents to the new on-street chargers was discussed and in particular the requirement within the contract, derived from our EVCI strategy, that 90% of residents are within 100m of a publicly accessible charger. RJ clarified that this is 90% of residents without off-street parking, not all residents. It is also anticipated that where there is high density population the LEVI contractor will have commercial interest in ensuring there is adequate charging provision for the residents and not just meeting the minimum 100m provision through one charger.

Cllr Lanzoni asked what powers the Council had to ensure the charge per KW was kept low or competitive when compared to at-home charging. RJ confirmed that through the contract there would be 2 benchmarking opportunities per year for the supplier to propose amending the rate. The charging rate was also part of the tender process with suppliers assessed on their proposed rates. Unfortunately, the rate would not be as low as at-home charging as there are costs and overheads involved.

██████████ commented whether there would be powers to stop people parking petrol or diesel vehicles in front of chargers. RJ replied there would not be and that parking would remain as it is currently. However the intention of the LEVI project is to ensure there are a high number of charge points installed throughout streets so if one is not accessible or being used then others will be available.

## **Clean Air Living Matters (CALM) Update**

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

The final report can be seen on the Council's website here:

<https://images.reading.gov.uk/2025/11/CALM-Impact-Report-reduced.pdf>

██████████ asked if the resources for the lesson plan developed for this project were available and RH confirmed that they would be. They are available through the Council's website under the heading **CALM:ER for educators:**

<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 and ATF4 Upper Redlands Road Scheme

JT noted that signage has recently been installed on the Shinfield Road cycle scheme and the Council will now be requesting Active Travel England (ATE) undertake a review of both schemes as part of their design review process. This will gain us valuable feedback and help in the preparation and design of future schemes.

#### ATF3 Bath Road - Castle Hill Scheme

JT updated the forum with the latest update on work on the ATF3 Bath Road - Castle Hill scheme. Following various design reviews a revised proposal is now in place for the Castle Hill - IDR roundabout element and for most of Castle Hill section. The key design element still to be determined are the proposals for the Bath Road - Cole Avenue junction.

Following a Members working meeting earlier in the summer it was agreed that further modelling work was needed on the impact this scheme would have on this junction. Traffic surveys were undertaken in September and modelling work carried out using this data. Officers are currently waiting for this report.

The design and implementation of any priority measures for pedestrians or cycles at this junction will inevitably impact the overall capacity of the junction. The modelling will identify what the likely impacts will be on the rest of the junction. Whichever design is taken forward there will inevitably need to be some trade off between user groups. By giving priority measures to one arm of the junction, or to one user flow or group, we would need to take priority away from another. The modelling report will identify what impact this has on the overall junction including queue lengths as well as the time it takes for vehicles to traverse through the junction.

To put this in context it was agreed that a key element of the design was to include a safe segregated pedestrian crossing at the end of Coley Avenue where there is currently only an informal crossing. However, by providing this priority it takes priority away from other arms of the junction which impacts the overall capacity of the junction.

The next step for this scheme will be for officer to present the output of the modelling report to members with the impact of the options identified as well as the benefits of each. This will lead to further discussion and recommendation on appropriate options to take forward.

**Question** - ██████████ asked if the Council had data on the number of cycle trips currently being made on this corridor and how the scheme would be monitored. JT commented that a number of classified surveys had been undertaken which would include cycle counts and we would continue to survey the area at the same time each year in May as the town centre cordon count. It was also discussed that an intention of the scheme is to generate new cycle trips where they currently do not exist, in part due to the lack of safe and segregated facilities. It was agreed that this section of the A4 corridor is harder to navigate on a bicycle, and the scheme would provide a valuable missing link.

**Question** - ██████████ asked if the traffic signals would take account of traffic levels and flows and adapt accordingly. JT answered that the traffic signals should, depending on their age, have this functionality to adapt to real world traffic conditions. However, the modelling and forecasting work is based on the traffic counts and that all arms are at capacity during the peak periods.

JT confirmed that the design included in the slides is the previous version and has not been amended to reflect the modelling work. A discussion over advising cyclists to dismount and walk with the pedestrian priority was had however the impact to the capacity of the junction is largely from the reduced capacity in the approach arms rather than through the junction. ATE would also not fund a scheme that is not compliant with LTN 1/20.

### **Active Travel Discussion**

**Comment** - ██████████ noted that the University of Reading has installed some impressive cycle parking facilities with secure enclosure with controlled access etc... JT noted that officers were aware of this having regular meetings with the team at the University and therefore can discuss information such as costs, suppliers etc to gain better understanding. This is the type of facility the Council would like to deploy, costs depending, but a key element of this is having a footprint of land available and this is difficult within the town centre.

**Cycle Hangars** - following the discussion over cycle security the status of the cycle hangar pilot scheme was raised. JT commented that each cycle hangar can only hold 6 bicycles on a subscription basis and, with only a budget for a small number the location of these is going to be key to the success of any trial. Installation in the town centre or near the station would likely be popular but only benefit a very small number of people whereas installation in the local neighbourhoods would require consultation to identify demands and also careful planning not to displace parking. Further consultation work on this is needed.

### **Wellbeing Walks Leaflets**

JT noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> Wellbeing Walk has now been produced and all 4 leaflets are available from the library, town hall and Museum. If any members of the forum would like to have some or knows an organisation or venue to distribute these we have a large amount in boxes upstairs at the Bridge Street offices and can arrange for these to be delivered.

## **Bus Service Improvement Plan and Zebra 2 Fund**

The Council has continued delivery of its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) programme to promote and improve bus use throughout Reading. Over the Autumn following programmes have been delivered.

### **BSIP Schemes - recent initiatives**

- **A33 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - opening of the latest phase of the A33 BRT scheme phase 5 delivering further bus lanes and priority on this corridor. This phase 5 included the construction of a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Kennet providing a spacious and well-lit attractive option for both pedestrian and cyclists.
- **Real-Time Bus Information Audio Announcements** - 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.

Question - Cllr Lanzoni asked if there is a list of stops or locations where these can be found. JT stated they were installed at all stops with an existing real-time display in Reading, but officers would look in to providing more information on our website.

It was also confirmed that throughout this project officers have engaged with the Access and Disability Working Group for both feedback on positioning and design and publicity. Cllr Hornsby-Smith requested that officers attend the next ADWG on March 5<sup>th</sup> to talk about the scheme.

	<p><b>Zero Emission Bus Regional Area 2 (ZEBRA 2) - Update</b></p> <p>Following the previous successful bid for funding through the ZEBRA 2 scheme Reading Buses has taken delivery of the first electric buses. This includes one which in a zebra livery as well as one with the University's climate stripes. The first 24 buses for routes 17 and 21 are all ready and will be introduced early in 2026 following testing of all the charging infrastructure. The project has been delayed due to issues with the distribution network operator (DNO) SSE providing power upgrades to the bus depot.</p> <p>A further 8 electric buses will be delivered in summer 2026 and will be introduced on the route 26 ensuring that more arms of Reading's transport corridor benefit from electric buses.</p> <p>JT shared some slides from Reading Buses which included the forecast fleet composition from June 2026. This shows an improving picture with the new electric buses now included, a larger number of Bio-Gas buses and no Euro V buses remaining. A further slide showed the green credentials of the various type buses and it was noted of the good performance of not only the electric but also the Bio-Gas buses which make up a large element of the fleet.</p>	
5	<p><b>Active Travel Task and Finish Group</b></p> <p>Cllr Cross provided a summary of the Active Travel Task &amp; Finish group. A report, summarising the findings and recommendations, was taken to the last SEPT Committee in November with member recommendations. This is now for officers to review and respond to at the next SEPT Committee in March 2026.</p> <p>The report regarding the Task and Finish Group can be seen here:</p> <p><a href="https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&amp;Mid=5706&amp;Ver=4">https://democracy.reading.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=139&amp;Mid=5706&amp;Ver=4</a></p> <p><b>Question</b> - ██████████ noted that under Recommendation 8 in the report regarding Demand Management Measures the prospect of further exploring the potential for a Workplace Parking Levy (WPPL) in Reading was referenced but not any other demand management measures and would these be considered. It was noted that the Council has recently introduced an emissions-based parking scheme.</p>	
8.	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p><b>Traffic Mgt Measures List</b></p> <p>This item was requested by both RCC and CADRA specifically the decision taken at last week's Transport Management Sub-Committee's to remove several items from the Principal Transport Measures List including some of the 20mph zones put forward. It was also repeated in the meeting that there were rumours that there are going to be other measures taken out of the principal list.</p> <p>The Committee resolved that all cycling related requests would be removed from the principal list and would be collated and retained on a new strategic list for consideration in other programmes/workstreams.</p> <p>It was also noted that in the absence of 20mph zones, which cover larger areas and are relatively costly to introduce, these could be replaced by the introduction of smaller 20mph speed limit change schemes. Whilst these do not have the same overall impact as 20mph 'zones' there is still some evidential research showing that these do have some impact therefore making these still worthwhile interventions.</p>	

	<p><b>Footway Blocking</b></p> <p>The issue of footways (pavements) being blocked, in particular by bins, was raised as a requested item. It was also commented that this is an ongoing problem and in particular for partially sighted people. The example of Hemdean Road was referenced as particularly bad for footway blocking.</p> <p>Cllr Rowland commented that the Council is looking into this issue particularly in streets with terraced houses where this problem is evident. There are many people who do take out and return their bins as they should but there are a lot that do not that and this needs to be enforced or communicated with.</p> <p>Residents have been sent information letters written in some areas where bins are being left out on pavement, including a section of Hemdean Road.</p> <p>The question was asked if the binmen could/should return the bins to inside the property and off the footway. Cllr Rowland commented that this has been looked at but, although it is only a few seconds for each property it does have a very large impact on the overall time and therefore not practical.</p> <p>It is residents responsibility to comply and if they do not enforcement action could be taken. Where there are specific issues it was stated members would inform the council who will review and take action.</p> <p><b>London Road Crossing</b></p> <p>██████████ commented that the new pedestrian and cycling crossing on the London Road outside the hospital is excellent. The phasing changes within 4 seconds on call for pedestrians to cross. Compliments to the Council.</p>	
	<p><b>Date of Next Meetings:</b></p> <p>All meetings are scheduled for 18:30 at the Council’s offices.</p> <p><b>CAST Forum:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 31<sup>st</sup> Mar 2026</li> </ul> <p><b>Cycle Forum:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026</li> </ul>	<p><b>All to Note</b></p>