

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

10 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Active Travel Scheme Bath Road and Castle Hill – Traffic Restriction Proposals for Statutory Consultation
Purpose of the report	To make a key decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	James Turner, Strategic Transport Team
Wards	Abbey, Coley
Lead Councillor	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Council priority	Deliver a sustainable & healthy environment & reduce Reading's carbon footprint
Recommendations	1. That the Sub-Committee notes the content of this report. 2. That the Sub-Committee approves the Statutory Consultation to take place. 3. That subject to no objections being received, the Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order(s). 4. That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Sub-Committee to undertake a statutory consultation for the implementation of parking restrictions in the form of double yellow lines, to protect access to residents drives on Castle Street, as well as for the reduction of an existing eastbound bus lane on the A4 Bath Road, necessary for the implementation of this Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 scheme.
- 1.2. The Traffic Management Sub-Committee has previously authorised a statutory consultation for these changes as well as subsequently approving the implementation following the statutory consultation. However, the maximum time limit for implementation of the scheme and sealing of these traffic regulation orders, to finalise the legal process, has now passed, and it is necessary to undertake another statutory consultation.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA) 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 proposals align with the principles of the Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP), Local Cycling, Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), Climate Emergency Strategy and Health and Wellbeing Strategy by delivering safety improvements promoting active travel, walking and cycling. The resulting improvements can support mode shift from private vehicle use with reduced emissions and the removal of barriers to the greater use of sustainable, healthy transport options.
- 2.5. Creation of cycle facilities on this busy route between Southcote Lane and the Inner Distribution Road/Castle Street, to and from the town centre, resolves the current 'missing link' on the existing network, and will link with the new NCN route 422 and connect it with existing routes west of the railway bridge

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. The active travel scheme for Bath Road/Castle Hill includes major improvements stretching from Southcote Lane and Berkeley Avenue, along the Bath Road to Castle Hill, continuing over the IDR to Castle Street. It proposes reallocation of road space from general traffic to create segregated lanes for cyclists to and from the town centre. The scheme also delivers improvements for pedestrians with additional formal crossings throughout the corridor.
- 3.2. In order to progress this scheme, officers are seeking authority to undertake a new statutory consultation for the implementation of traffic restrictions detailed below.

Alteration to residents' parking bays on Castle Hill (Double Yellow Lines)

- 3.3. The existing eastbound lane on Castle Hill has two sections of residents' parking bays (Permit Holders zone 08R). These are approximately 27m and 15m in length and in theory provide up to 8 parking spaces. However, the existing bay of 27m includes dropped kerbs, providing access to 156 Castle Hill, and therefore reducing the useable parking space to approximately 6 or 7 cars.
- 3.4. The active travel plan for the segregated cycle track on the eastbound carriageway formalises the need for a gap for access crossovers and Officers are proposing that parking restrictions totalling 11m be implemented in the location identified in Appendix 1. The result of which will be to reduce the overall capacity for Residents Parking from 7 to 6 cars, however, will ensure that driveways remain clear and accessible for residents in the area.

Alteration to eastbound bus lane on Bath Road.

- 3.5. The existing layout of Bath Road includes a bus lane for eastbound buses from 48 Bath Road to Janson Court, a distance of 538m. In order to accommodate two segregated cycle tracks at the west end of Bath Road it is necessary to adjust the bus lane to start at 40 Bath Road where the carriageway width becomes sufficient to provide a LTN1/20 compliant 'wide' combined bus and cycle lane. This reduces the length of the bus lane by 66m.
- 3.6. Alternatively the bus lane could be retained, however this would compromise the active travel scheme and would require a section of the cycle lane to be moved onto the footway as a directional shared path as the highway has insufficient width to accommodate both the bus lane and on-street cycle facilities. Officers are therefore recommending that this consultation proceed, whilst officers consider whether an alternative solution could be implemented.
- 3.7. Provision of continuous cycle tracks segregated from traffic (or in widened bus lanes) is necessary to enable a safe cycle route to be provided to and from the Southcote Lane junction. Officers are therefore recommending that the bus lane should be shortened, but undertake to continue to assess whether a suitable alternative solution could be provided.
- 3.8. The proposed changes to the eastbound bus lane on Bath Road are shown in Appendix 2.

Updated Proposals

- 3.9. Transport Officers and consultant design engineers have undertaken work to review the scheme since the original design was produced. The key changes include extending the scheme into the town centre to link with an existing cycle scheme at Cusden Walk, amending the design at the Castle Hill roundabout with the Inner Distribution Road and proposing the implementation of light segregation measures instead of the stepped cycle track scheme that was originally proposed.
- 3.10. Following these design changes an informal consultation was undertaken from 14th July to 25th August 2026 and the preliminary results of these are outlined in para 6.5. Transport Officers will produce a separate report outlining the results of this consultation, which will be shared with Councillors and published on the Councils Consultation hub, in due course.
- 3.11. The revised proposals for this scheme do not impact on the overall principle of scheme, to provide segregated cycle lanes in each direction along this corridor as well improvements for pedestrians. They do not affect the previously approved changes required to the parking restrictions or the required reduction to the bus lane, which we are now proposing to reconsult on.

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***

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 conducted for the recommendations of this report, resulting in an expected 'net low-positive impact'.
- 5.4. Any civil engineering scheme will create an element of negative impact through material use and the vehicles and construction plant necessary for implementation. However, the scheme has been designed with environmental and ongoing maintenance considerations from the outset and will minimise the amount of civil works required with use of more sustainable measures. The replacement and upgrade of traffic signals at key junctions will enable new technology to be installed which improves the performance of these junctions, reducing delays and congestion.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The scheme has been subject of a number of formal and informal consultations over the past few years. This has included an informal consultation in early 2021 followed by a further consultation in summer 2022. Following updates to the scheme design a second informal consultation was undertaken in July and August 2026 which included detailed discussions with Reading Cycle Campaign and other stakeholders through the Cycle Forum.
- 6.2. A previous statutory consultation for the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders was undertaken in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. The Consultation commenced on 2nd February 2023 and ended on 23rd February 2023.
- 6.3. The results of the first consultation were that 148 responses to the consultation were received, of which 79.73% were in support of the implementation of traffic restrictions in the form of double yellow lines along Castle Hill between its junction with Russell Street with Jesse Terrace. 75% in support to alteration to the length of the existing eastbound bus lane on Bath Road.
- 6.4. Approval was granted at the Councils Traffic Management Sub-Committee in March 2023 for the proposed traffic restrictions on Castle Hill/Bath Road and authorisation granted to make the Traffic Regulation Order. Whilst the removal of the contra-flow lane on Castle Hill was implemented, as noted within this report, the remaining elements were not completed within the defined timescales, and therefore a new consultation is required.
- 6.5. Further to para 3.11, the results of the informal consultation held in July and August 2026 have now been received with over 100 respondents. These show that 55.3% of respondents either strongly supported or supported the improvements proposed for pedestrians and cyclists through the Bath Road - Castle Hill scheme. A further 54.3% of respondents support the proposal to reallocate road space away motor vehicles for better pedestrian and cycle facilities.

7. Equality Implications

- 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.

8. Health Implications

- 8.1. The implementation of the Bath Road Castle Hill active travel scheme is:
- likely to have a direct impact on the health and wellbeing of the population in Reading; and
 - has the potential to influence the Building Blocks of Health, such as housing, transport, education, employment, or the environment.
- 8.2. Health in All Policies (HiAP) ensures council decisions across all services consider their impact on people's health and wellbeing, especially those most exposed to the risks of poor health outcomes. Some people live longer, healthier lives than others, not because of their personal choices alone, but because of the circumstances they are born into, grow up in, live, work and age in. By applying HiAP and the HIA process to council services such as housing, transport, education and economic policy, the Council can help create the conditions that extend healthy lives, reduce avoidable demand on vital public services, and support stronger, more prosperous communities.
- 8.3. Officers have undertaken a Rapid Health Impact Assessment for this scheme. The delivery of this scheme may have a positive health impact, by removing or reducing some of the perceived barriers that residents and visitors may have to utilising more healthy and sustainable transport modes. It may, however, be challenging to quantify the likely benefits.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. None

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. The Council has considered its legal obligations when seeking to make Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 10.2. 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.
- 10.3. The proposed orders will introduce no waiting at any time restrictions and amend the existing bus lane. Therefore, the Council must carry out the statutory consultation process prescribed by the 1996 Regulations, including consultation with statutory consultees, publication of the relevant notices and consideration of any objections or representations received. Following consultation, the Council is under a duty to consider all duly made objections that have not been withdrawn, together with any other representations received during the consultation process, before determining whether the Order should be made, not made or modified.

Network Management Duty

- 10.4. 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
- 10.5. 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

- 10.6. 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.
- 10.7. This duty focuses on the making of individual traffic regulation decisions.
- 10.8. Each of these duties has been considered in detail in relation to the schemes identified in this report.
- 10.9. Patricia Tavernier has cleared these Legal Implications.

11. Financial Implications

This scheme is funded through the award of £2.3m from Active Travel England Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 and £488,577 from the Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF). The total budge available for the scheme is £2,488,577.

12. Timetable for Implementation

Line	Milestone	When
1	Undertake Statutory Consultation	September 2026
2	Review responses received from consultation	October 2026
3	Report back to TMSC with results of consultation (if required)	November 2026
4	Scheme Implementation	April 2027 – April 2028
5	Subject to receiving a delegated decision, arrange to seal the TRO in accordance with statutory process.	Upon conclusion of the associated works.

13. Background Papers

13.1. None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Alteration to Residents Parking Bays on Castle Hill (Double Yellow Lines)

Appendix 2 – Alteration to Eastbound Bus Lane on Bath Road

Appendix 3 – Rapid Health Impact Assessment