

Traffic Management Sub-Committee

10 September 2026



Reading
Borough Council
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Title	Portman Road Parallel Crossing – Proposals for Statutory Consultation
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	James Penman – Network Services Manager
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 Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake the statutory notification and consultation process for the proposed parallel crossing, in compliance with Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. 3. That the Director of Environment and Commercial Services (or delegated officer), in agreement with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, and in consultation with Ward Councillors, be authorised to make minor alterations to the proposed scheme. 4. That subject to no objections being received, the scheme be implemented as advertised. 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 a decision regarding scheme implementation. 6. That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval to undertake statutory notification and consultation processes necessary to progress a new, controlled crossing on Portman Road, near to the roundabout with Cow Lane.
- 1.2. The proposed design is a parallel crossing, which is a variation of a zebra crossing that provides parallel routes for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme also seeks to implement some footway enhancements on the southern side of the road to better support shared use by pedestrians and cyclists, linking with existing facilities.
- 1.3. This proposal is being funded by a 15% Local Community Infrastructure (CIL) allocation agreed by Policy Committee (the report is available [here](#)) and the proposal within this report has been developed in consultation with Ward Councillors.

- 1.4. The design proposal is being independently Road Safety Audited, so officers are seeking delegation to make any resulting minor design changes that may be necessary, prior to undertaking the statutory consultation and notification processes.

2. Policy Context

- 2.1. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTA) sets out the legal basis for making Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), including Speed Limit Orders (SLOs). 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 section 87(1) of the Environment Act 1995.
- 2.2. Reading Borough Council's Transport Strategy 2024 is a statutory document that sets the plan for developing the Borough's transport network. It includes guiding policies and principles including those related to Network Management (RTS17), Parking (RTS20), Enforcement (RTS21) and Demand Management (RTS22). Reference to the Borough's Red Route is contained within this strategy.
- 2.3. 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 (RTA), as both seek to improve public wellbeing and sustainable development.
- 2.4. Borough Council's Transport Strategy 2024 is a statutory document that sets the plan for developing the Borough's transport network. It includes guiding policies and principles including those related to Network Management (RTS17), Parking (RTS20), Enforcement (RTS21) and Demand Management (RTS22).
- 2.5. 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 (RTA), as both seek to improve public wellbeing and sustainable development.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. An allocation of £85k was agreed for the delivery of a new zebra crossing on Portman Road, opposite Milk & More (near to the roundabout with Cow Lane).
- 3.2. Officers have developed a proposal that varies the zebra crossing to a parallel crossing, providing a parallel route for cyclists to cross within the same facility. The proposal will include some footway widening on the southern side, although this element will be subject to remaining funds, and/or identifying additional funding, once the crossing is installed.

The overall scheme seeks to provide a link from the existing shared-use footway/cycleway on the north side of the road, across to the south side of the road and

to a new shared-use footway cycleway on the southern side, delivered with Section 106 developer funds.

Appendix 1 provides the drawing for proposed scheme.

- 3.3. The proposals have been developed in consultation with Ward Councillors and are undergoing independent Road Safety Audit. This is a standard procedure and officers are not expecting concerns to be raised, however, there is the potential for minor adjustments to be considered necessary.

Decisions Being Sought

- 3.4. The Sub-Committee is asked to agree to the undertaking of the statutory notification and consultation processes necessary for proposing this new parallel crossing.
- 3.5. The Sub-Committee is asked to agree to a delegation that enables minor adjustments to be made to the scheme design, ahead of undertaking the consultation process. This is being requested only if minor changes are considered necessary, particularly following the receipt of the independent Road Safety Audit Report.

This delegation will enable officers to consult with the Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport, and Ward Councillors, to agree the changes. It will avoid potential delays to the scheme as a result of requiring further Sub-Committee agreements for this purpose.

- 3.6. The Sub-Committee is also asked to agree that where no objections are received during the consultation period, that the scheme is considered to be agreed for implementation as advertised.

Should objections be received during the consultation period, officers will provide a further report to the Sub-Committee seeking a decision for the outcome of this 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 proposal seeks to create an improvement in the linking of routes used for active and sustainable transport modes, namely walking and cycling. It supports the expeditious movement of walkers and cyclists, by providing a controlled crossing, and reduces the risks associated with crossing a busy carriageway.

- 4.5. While the proposal itself may not substantially influence an increase in uptake of healthy active travel options, it strengthens the network for existing users, and may remove some of the barriers that others may have in taking up these transport options.

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. A climate impact assessment has been conducted for the recommendations of this report, resulting in an expected 'net low-positive impact'.
- 5.3. Any civil engineering scheme will create an element of negative impact through material use and the vehicles necessary for delivery. However, the scheme has been designed with environmental and ongoing maintenance considerations from the outset and will therefore not be using specialised materials/surfacing nor high-maintenance items, although it is acknowledged that the scheme will introduce new electrical requirements, though the implementation of flashing beacons and lighting required for regulatory compliance.
- 5.4. The initial impacts of the scheme implementation will be one-off for delivery, with very low ongoing impact from electrical requirements, mitigated through the use of very low energy LED lighting. However, it is a scheme that is expected to be very low maintenance and have significant longevity. Given that the scheme is expected to reduce some barriers to using sustainable/active transport modes, the longer-term benefits are expected to outweigh these negative impacts.

6. Community Engagement

- 6.1. The proposals have been developed in consultation with Ward Councillors.
- 6.2. Statutory notification will be carried out in accordance with Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, advertised on street, in a local printed newspaper and on the Council's website.
- 6.3. Respondents to the notification will be informed of the outcome of the proposals.
- 6.4. Traffic Management Sub-Committee is a public meeting. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.

7. Equality Implications

- 7.1. It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant to the recommendations or resultant decisions arising from this report as the proposals are not anticipated to have a differential impact on people with protected characteristics. The statutory notification process provides an opportunity for objections/ support/ concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

8. Health Implications

- 8.1. 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.
- 8.2. A HIA screening has been undertaken and indicated that an assessment will not be necessary for the recommendations of this report.

9. Other Relevant Considerations

- 9.1. There are none.

10. Legal Implications

- 10.1. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Section 23, sets out the legal basis for consulting on the proposal to install a new controlled road crossing.
- 10.2. Before the crossing can be installed, the local authority must publish a statutory notice for the proposals, in consultation with the Chief of Police and other statutory consultees. A notice detailing the proposals is published in a local newspaper and displayed on site in the area where the crossing is proposed to be installed. 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.

The Council may decide whether to proceed with the implementation of the crossing as published, modify it, or decide not to make the Order. If it is agreed to proceed, the crossing may be implemented, subject to the implementation of necessary signage and road markings and any other necessary Order associated with the compliant delivery of the scheme.

- 10.3. 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

- 10.4. 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 on the Council to consider overall traffic efficiency and network performance and applies not only to vehicles but also to pedestrians and cyclists.

Section 122 duty

- 10.5. 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 affected 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.

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

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

10.8. Patricia Tavernier has cleared these Legal Implications.

11. Financial Implications

11.1. Local 15% CIL contributions (capital funding) have been allocated to this scheme, totalling £85k. It is anticipated that this will be spent in full.

11.2. Subject to the implementation decision, it is possible that the scheme can be delivered in 2026/27, accounting for the majority of spend. Post-implementation elements, including a further independent Road Safety Audit, will likely be undertaken in early 2027/28.

11.3. Officers consider that the recommended scheme will provide the best outcomes based on the funding available and the purpose to which it has been allocated.

The scheme has been investigated and designed by officers of Reading Borough Council and all civil engineering work is expected to be undertaken by the Council's in-house delivery team. The exceptions will be specialisms that currently lay outside of the Council's current resources, such as regulatory sign creation and supply. However, these will be appointed through existing contracts and using contractors that conduct these works to a scale that provides value for money through their chargeable rates.

Road Safety Audits have been outsourced to a contractor with these specialisms, but also provide an independent perspective and professional, constructive scrutiny of the scheme designs, which can assist in defending potential challenges.

11.4. Ongoing maintenance of the resultant scheme is expected to be minimal but the scheme does introduce new electrical elements, as the beacons and specific lighting for the crossing will be new. These will, however, be of a low energy LED type to mitigate this additional revenue burden.

11.5. Andy Stockle has cleared these Financial Implications.

12. Timetable for Implementation

12.1. Should the recommendations of this report be agreed, it is anticipated that scheme development will proceed as follows:

Milestone	When (subject to change)
Undertake statutory notification	Late autumn (October/November 2026)
Consider objections and agree outcome of the proposals.	December 2026
Should the scheme be approved for implementation:	February/March 2027
Commence implementation	
Undertake post-implementation processes (e.g. Road Safety Audit)	May 2027

13. Background Papers

13.1. There are none.

Appendices

1. Drawing of the proposed scheme.