

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL  
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES**

<b>TO:</b>	<b>TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>11 SEPTEMBER 2019</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>RED ROUTE - ROUTE 17</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLOR:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRANSPORTATION &amp; STREETCARE</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>TILEHURST, KENTWOOD, BATTLE</b>
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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To update the sub-committee on the introduction of a *Red Route* waiting restriction along the Reading Buses Route 17 corridor.
- 1.2 The *Red Route* waiting restriction has been in place on the west side Reading Buses Route 17, from the junction of Park Lane with Mayfair in Tilehurst to the IDR, since late summer 2018.
- 1.3 Initial enforcement was limited to busiest periods and focused on drivers pulling up onto the footway. Since October 2018 enforcement has been increased to daytime operations using the camera vehicle.
- 1.4 Relatively few comments have been made on the use of the no stopping restriction and of those that have been received they are very specific to individual experiences.
- 1.5 A sample of bus journey times taken in March 2019 and comparing them to the same journey in the same period in March 2018 shows promising benefits to public transport.
- 1.6 This report seeks to make permanent the west side *Red Route* restriction which has been in place and camera enforced for just under a year.
- 1.7 This report also addresses a petition submitted to TM Sub-committee in March 2019 from residents of 275 to 291 Norcot Road, which contains 11 signatures, on behalf of 14 persons at 9 addresses.

1.8 Appendix 1 - consultation sample material used

Appendix 2 - requests for change.

Appendix 3 - Bus journey times from the east side

Appendix 4 - Proposed amendments to the Red Route for statutory consultation (Norcot Road and Oxford Road)

## **2. RECOMMENDED ACTION**

2.1 That the Sub-Committee note this report.

2.2 That the Sub-committee agree to:

2.2.1 The Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the appropriate experimental Traffic Regulation Order into a permanent Traffic Regulation Order under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

2.2.2 That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake a statutory consultation in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, for the permanent implementation of the parking bays (Norcot Road) and loading bay (Oxford Road) within in Appendix 4.

2.2.3 That subject to no objections received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.

2.2.4 That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

2.2.5 That the Head of Transportation, in consultation with the appropriate Lead Councillor, be authorised to make minor changes to the proposals.

2.2.6 That no public enquiry be held into the proposal.

## **3. POLICY CONTEXT**

3.1 The provision of waiting/parking restrictions and associated criteria is specified within existing Traffic Management Policies and Standards.

## 4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The west side *Red Route* restriction from the junction of Park Lane with Mayfair in Tilehurst to the IDR has been in place since late summer 2018. Appendix 1 is a sample of the material used during the initial consultation of the Red Route.
- 4.2 As this west side of the Reading Buses Route 17 *Red Route* has been in place for around a year the initial objection period has now elapsed. The restriction remains under an experimental order where the council now needs to decide whether it shall become permanent or the experimental order be allowed to elapse at 18 months. On completion of the west side *Red Route*, enforcement had been increased to cover the busiest periods of the day by the camera vehicle. The increase of enforcement commenced in October 2018. Since commencement of enforcement action over 2200 penalty charge notices (PCNs) have been issued to the west side of the route. A *Red Route* is a no stopping restriction and enforcement initially focused on drivers pulling up and stopping on the footway. The current PCN issue is broken down as: Oxford Road 1761; Norcot Road 259; School Road 221; Park Lane 8.
- 4.3 In the main the *Red Route* replaced yellow line restrictions already in place to manage parking and permitted stopping activities. Many of the double yellow line restrictions along the whole corridor included loading bans either at all times or during the busiest periods of the day. The replacement of the yellow line restrictions with the *Red Route* is intended to improve the management of parking and journey times along this important public transport corridor. The number of PCNs issued demonstrates the level of abuse of the waiting restrictions that, in essence, have existed for many years. However, a part of Norcot Road did not have any restriction present prior to the Red Route and as the initiative has to be continuous this part of the *Red Route* is entirely new. As a result of enforcement this prompted a petition from residents of 275 to 291 Norcot Road submitted to the March meeting of the Sub-committee.
- 4.4 Relatively few comments have been made on the use of the no stopping restriction when considered within the overall context of the route and the diversity of the communities that it passes through. Of the comments received most are very specific to loading/unloading activities alongside the concerns raised by the residents of Norcot Road who petitioned against the restriction applying to the verge outside their homes. Where additional consideration is required for loading/unloading activities special authorisation may be granted. Appendix 2 is a summary of requests for change received since the introduction of the *Red Route* to the west side of the Route 17.
- 4.5 Parking on the footway or verge has been raised by residents of 275 to 291 Norcot Road through a petition. Prior to the *Red Route* residents routinely parked on the highway verge and outside of their own property boundary. Driving onto the pavement to park is illegal, but there is an issue about how widely this is enforced as it is a criminal offence (i.e. enforced by the police) rather than a civil offence (enforced by us under civil enforcement powers). Almost all other parking offences are now civil ones. Although parking is generally permitted at

the side of the road, except where there are restrictions or a specific offence has been committed, driving onto the highway verge (pavement or footway) (with the intention to park or otherwise) is an offence under section 72 of the Highways Act. Determining illegal parking within the highway verge is often linked to obstruction where the police and local authority both have powers to remove obstructions. However, wilful obstruction of the public highway by parking on a grass verge is defined as an offence within case law: Parking for five hours on a grass verge between the footpath and the wall was held to cause an unnecessary obstruction in *Worth v Brooks* [1959]. Waiting restrictions apply to the whole of the highway consequently the *Red Route* now renders parking on the grass outside numbers 275 to 291 Norcot Road enforceable under civil enforcement powers through the issue of a penalty charge notice (PCN).

As a local highway authority we could create parking bays to allow parking but these cannot be applied to grass for obvious reasons. We have, however, created some on-street bays close to this area providing unrestricted parking. Appendix 4 shows the current bay locations and part of our recommendation, for completeness, is for these bays - and the loading bay on Oxford Road - to proceed to statutory consultation.

- 4.6 Once the experimental Order is made permanent, future alterations to this section of the Red Route restrictions may be considered in the Waiting Restriction Review programme.
- 4.7 Appendix 3 is a sample of bus journey times for the east side *Red Route* taken in January 2019 and comparing them to the same journey in the same period in January 2018. These samples of actual journeys made show promising benefits to public transport. As can be seen public transport journeys have improved and, most importantly, journey times are more consistent. Consistent journey times are significant to public transport operators in providing a reliable service. These are just sample counts and it is a little early to make any meaningful assessment. As is demonstrated by the numbers of PCNs being issued there is significant abuse of the restriction with vehicles stopping on the *Red Route*. This will only improve through enforcement but the expectations are journey times for all users will continue to improve. It has been difficult to demonstrate the benefits of the *Red Route* to the west side due to the Cow Lane works. It is clear that the route 17 has significantly improved since the opening of Cow Lane following the disruption caused by the works themselves. The PCN issue rates shows the amount of contravention where in the main the Red Route replaced load bans previous employed as a yellow line restriction.
- 4.7 In conclusion; with relatively minimal feedback, little formal objection and signs of improved public transport journey times the recommendation is to make the west side *Red Route* restriction permanent and consult on free to park bays within Norcot Road and the loading bay on Oxford Road (Appendix 4).

## 6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

6.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and helps to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

7.1 Initial informal consultation and feedback from events as previously reported. A year of use of the west side *Red Route* has provided the opportunity for users to comment and object.

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Order will be made, and the statutory consultation conducted, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

## **9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization 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;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 The Council has carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The making permanent of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) will be funded from within existing transport budgets.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 Policy Committee 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, TM Sub-committee March 2017, TM Sub-committee September 2017. TM Sub-committee March 2018.