

QUESTION NO. 1

Councillor Whitham to ask the Chair:

School Crossing Patrol Saved

Green Councillors are opposed to cuts to school crossing patrols. In Redlands Ward where I am a Councillor the crossing patrol was going to be cut on Addington road on the way to Redlands primary school. The same was due to happen in Park Ward on Crescent Road outside Alfred Sutton. I understand that following our campaigning the Council has had a change of heart. Please can the Council confirm that these crossing patrols are not being cut ?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:**

I thank Cllr Whitham for his question.

The Council works with all schools in the borough to promote safe and sustainable travel to school through a comprehensive programme of initiatives, including:

- The provision of Bikeability cycle training for children aged 10 onwards and Bikeability Plus additional training modules which include cycle maintenance courses and Learn to Ride sessions for younger children.
- Road safety roadshows for primary schools and the Safe Drive Stay Alive annual road safety event for secondary schools.
- No idling campaigns to improve air quality outside schools.
- Membership of the Modeshift Stars national accreditation scheme to provide resources and incentives for schools to develop, implement and monitor school travel plans to encourage active travel to school and promote healthy lifestyles.
- Infrastructure enhancements to create safer routes to school including the implementation of 20mph zones, safe crossing facilities and enhanced street lighting.

This programme also includes working with schools to provide school crossing patrols, usually through employing local residents with connections to the school given the short hours involved with the position. However, the take-up rate for these positions has been low, with only two patrols currently operating in the borough at Caversham Primary and Redlands Primary Schools. Historically patrols have also been provided at Alfred Sutton and St Mary's & All Saints Primary Schools.

In view of the low take-up rate, and in order to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable, in February 2018 Policy Committee approved a review of possible savings to the school crossing patrol budget as part of the overall Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the Council.

This review of the Council's policy for the provision of patrols and safe crossing facilities on routes to school is on-going. Progress was reported to this Sub-Committee in June, which highlighted the new crossing facilities being implemented at St Mary's & All Saints and Caversham Primary Schools, and investigations into the feasibility of providing enhanced crossing facilities at Alfred Sutton Primary School. No changes to the provision of existing school crossing patrols in the borough are proposed while this review is being undertaken.

QUESTION NO. 2

Councillor Whitham to ask the Chair:

Pause Implementation of Wokingham Road Cycle Scheme

Green Councillors raised many concerns about the new Wokingham Road cycle scheme with transport planners. We organised a meeting on site with the Council, Councillor Rob White and a representative from the cycle campaign where more concerns were raised. These issues were not listened to and so Green Councillor Josh Williams voted against the scheme when it went to the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee. Sure enough now it is being implemented residents are raising more road safety concerns as we have seen with the Wokingham Road Tiger crossing petition this evening. Will the Council agree to pause implementation of this scheme so it can be improved ?

**REPLY by the Chair of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee.**

I invite Councillor Page, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport to make the response on my behalf.

**REPLY by Councillor Page, Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport:**

I thank Cllr Whitham for his question. His assertion in the question that Cllr Williams voted against the scheme at the SEPT Committee last November is incorrect and not borne out either in the minutes or in viewing a webcast of the whole of this item.

The new National Cycle Network (NCN) 422 scheme is being implemented with over £1 million of external funding secured by the Council from the Local Enterprise Partnership and developer contributions through the planning process. We are working in partnership with neighbouring authorities to deliver the full scheme which will run across Berkshire from Newbury to Ascot.

In Reading, the scheme will provide significantly enhanced cycle facilities from the east to west of the Borough, linking to existing NCN routes which run north to south. The scheme has been developed in three phases, including consultation undertaken with the public, ward councillors and local interest groups. The final designs for each phase have been approved by Committee for implementation.

The final designs for the third phase of the scheme on the Wokingham Road were approved by the Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport Committee in November 2018, and implementation is on-going. The scheme has been refined in response to comments received where this has been feasible, including within the Wokingham Road local centre and retention of the existing refuge island near the junction with Melrose Avenue. In addition, it should be noted that no concerns regarding the new tiger crossing outside Palmer Park were received during the consultation on the designs of the scheme.

Specifically regarding the tiger crossing, a road safety audit was undertaken by independent experts in July which was attended by Thames Valley Police and

Council officers. Concerns raised by members of the public following implementation of the crossing were shared with the independent road safety experts prior to the audit taking place.

The audit did not recommend any fundamental changes to the crossing, however it did set out three recommendations which are currently being progressed: (1) the application of anti-skid surfacing on the approach to the crossing; (2) additional tactile paving outside the park to warn those with visual impairments that cyclists are joining the foot/cycle way; and (3) reducing the overhang of the tree on the northern footway outside the park to improve visibility of pedestrians/cyclists to eastbound traffic.

It is not considered necessary to pause implementation of the scheme and the remaining elements will be delivered in the autumn, including the completion of on-carriageway cycle facilities on Berkeley Avenue and Wokingham Road. In addition, outstanding works to widen the footway for the initial phase of the scheme on the Bath Road, at the pinch point between the junctions with Greenwood Road and New Lane Hill, will be undertaken when the preferred engineering solution for the existing retaining wall in this location has been identified. This will create a shared facility and complete the route in Reading, linking directly to the shared facility in West Berkshire.

Following completion of the scheme, on-going monitoring will be undertaken in line with the Road Safety Audit process to ensure the facilities remain fit for purpose, as is standard practice with all new schemes delivered in the borough.