

**Traffic Management  
Sub-Committee  
26 November 2025**



**Reading**  
Borough Council  
Working better with you

<b>Title</b>	<b>A33 Bus Rapid Transit Statutory Consultation</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To inform the Sub-Committee of the results of the Statutory Consultation
<b>Report status</b>	Public report
<b>Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report</b>	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
<b>Report author</b>	Miriam Fuertes, Transport Planner
<b>Lead Councillor</b>	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
<b>Ward</b>	Whitley, Coley and Katesgrove
<b>Corporate priority</b>	Thriving Communities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>The Sub-Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Note the content of this report., including the consultation feedback in Appendix 1.</li><li>2. Agree to the Officer recommendations and authorise the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make the Traffic Regulation Order.</li><li>3. Agree that that no public inquiry be held into the proposal.</li></ol>

## **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Sub-Committee of the feedback received from the statutory consultation process, associated with the amendments required to the traffic regulation order, to incorporate the new sections of the bus lane implemented on the A33; and to make recommendations on whether these changes should be implemented.

## **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 BSIP is a sub-strategy and core element of our emerging Reading Transport Strategy, which sets a vision to make Reading a greener and healthier town by providing better sustainable travel choices, including buses. The transport strategy also contributes towards the vision of a net zero carbon Reading by 2023, as set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy
- 2.5 Reading Borough Council's Transport Strategy 2024 is a statutory document that sets a vision to make Reading a greener and healthier town by providing better sustainable travel choices, including buses. The transport strategy also contributes towards the vision of a net zero carbon Reading by 2023, as set out in the Reading Climate Emergency Strategy. It also includes guiding policies and principles including those related to Network Management (RTS17), Parking (RTS20), Enforcement (RTS21) and Demand Management (RTS22).

### **3. Proposal**

- 3.1 This new section of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along the A33 will make travelling around Reading faster, easier, and more sustainable. The enhancements to this key route are designed to improve bus flow through busy areas, especially during the peak hours, by giving them dedicated space to avoid traffic queues. This will mean more reliable and quicker journeys for passengers. By improving public transport, the Council aims to encourage more people to choose the bus instead of driving, helping to reduce congestion, cut carbon emissions, and support a cleaner, greener Reading.
- 3.2 This phase of the BRT scheme delivers essential new sections that enhance the overall performance of the BRT corridor. These additions connect with earlier phases to ensure continuous southbound bus priority and address a key pinch point of the overall scheme by constructing a new crossing over the River Kennet.
- 3.3 Delivering this phase of the South Reading BRT supports the aspirations of the Reading Local Plan and Local Transport Strategy. It is key to increasing the capacity of the network to deliver the journeys that will support the economy and levels of proposed growth while contributing to the wider region's public transport ambitions.

- 3.4 On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the sub-committee approved for a statutory consultation to take place relating to this scheme, and the revision of the traffic regulation order, to incorporate the new sections of bus lane being implemented, as part of the Councils Bus Service Improvement Plan.
- 3.5 The statutory consultation process took place between 26 September 2025 and 16 October 2025. A summary of the results can be found in the table below, with the full consultation results included in Appendix 1.

	Support		Object		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Results	1	25%	3	75%	0	0%

- 3.6 In total the Council received 4 responses to the consultation, with 3 objections, summarised as follows:
- The effectiveness and use of bus lanes, with some residents observing that buses do not consistently use the designated lanes
  - Suggestion that the funding should be directed towards repairing and improving existing roads rather than developing new bus rapid transit infrastructure
  - Concern that prioritising buses over cars could negatively impact local business and deter people from commuting into Reading, suggesting that the council's approach may be unfavourable to car drivers
- 3.7 Responding to these concerns, officers note that:
- On occasions buses will exit the bus lanes, when they need to be in a turning lane, such as on the approach to Bennet Road Gyratory, however in the most part, these bus lanes are used frequently.
  - The funding associated with the delivery of this phase of the A33 BRT was provided by the Department for Transport (DfT), to support the delivery of the Councils Bus Service Improvement Programme, and was ring-fenced by DfT for this purpose.
  - The Aim of the Councils Local Transport Plan, the Reading Transport Strategy, is to deliver a sustainable transport system in Reading, which will create an attractive, green and vibrant town which promotes healthy choices and wellbeing. The provision of public transport improvements, such as the implementation of bus lanes, supports this objective. In the case of the bus lane on A33, no general traffic capacity was removed, and the bus lane was created by maximising the existing highway space.

## Recommendations

- 3.8 Although noting the objections received in relation to this statutory consultation, on the basis of the benefits delivered by the bus lane, and its contribution to the wider strategic aims of the Council, through its Council Plan and Reading Transport Strategy, Officers are recommending to the sub-committee that the Traffic Regulation Order be approved.

## 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**
- 4.5 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 enables the Council to introduce measures like speed limits, one way systems, bus lanes, or restrictions on certain vehicles. These provisions directly support reducing pollution, improving air quality and creating spaces where people feel the benefits of clean air and active travel like walking and cycling.
- 4.6 By implementing TROs, the Council can create more green spaces and pedestrian friendly areas, aligning with its goal of promoting a healthy environment which has a positive impact on the life of every resident – making Reading a greener, more attractive place to live, with a tangible impact on physical and mental health and life expectancy.
- 4.7 These actions also support accessibility and mobility, which are key to thriving, connected communities, ensuring everyone including the vulnerable and excluded can safely use public spaces, regardless of age or ability.
- 4.8 By managing traffic to reduce congestion and improve public transport flow, the Council can boost local economic activities and make it easier for everyone to access education, skills and training and good jobs.

## 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 not been considered necessary for the recommendations in this report. If the recommendations are agreed, and the TRO made, there will be minimal changes to on-street signing and there will be negligible negative impact from the creation of some weatherproof on street notices required to be displayed when making the TRO.

## **6. Community engagement**

- 6.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee are public meetings. The agendas, reports, meeting minutes and recordings of the meetings are available to view from the Council's website.
- 6.2 The consultation was conducted between 26 September 2025 and 16 October 2025, during which residents were invited to complete the questionnaire and provide any additional comments.

## **7. Equality impact assessment**

- 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.
- 7.3 Further EIA assessments, where necessary, may be undertaken once the schemes are developed in detailed design.

## **8. Other relevant considerations**

- 8.1 None

## **9. Legal implications**

- 9.1 The Council has considered all of its legal obligations when seeking to make Traffic Regulation Orders.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 Before making a TRO, the local authority must carry out a statutory consultation, engaging with the Chief of Police, residents, businesses, emergency services and

transport operators. A notice detailing the proposed restrictions and the reasoning behind them is published in a local newspaper and displayed on site in the areas where the restrictions would apply. 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.

With any traffic regulation order proposals, the Council (either via delegated authority, or by agreement of the Traffic Management Sub-Committee) may decide whether to proceed with the TRO as published, modify it, or abandon it. If it is agreed to proceed, the TRO is formally made and a further notice is published giving the date when the order comes into force. The final step is to implement the restrictions by installing the necessary signage and road markings.

- 9.4 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.

### **Network Management Duty**

- 9.5 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**

- 9.6 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.

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

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

9.9 Patricia Tavernier has cleared these Legal Implications.

## **10. Financial Implications**

10.1 The only immediate financial implications resulting from the recommendations of this report will be for the advertising of proposed Traffic Regulation Order, which is a requirement as part of the statutory consultation process.

10.2 It is considered that the recommendations of the report provide value for money as the benefits of the proposal can be realised with very modest costs.

10.3 There are no foreseen financial risks related to the recommendations of the report.

## **11. Timetable for Implementation**

<b>Line</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>When</b>
1	Undertake statutory consultation	Complete
2	Review responses received from consultation	Complete
3	Report back to TMSC and seek decisions on making order permanent.	November 2025
4	Subject to receiving a delegated decision, arrange to seal the TRO in accordance with statutory process.	December 2025

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1 None

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix 1 – Consultation results – Bus Rapid Transit A33**