

Traffic Management Sub-Committee



26 November 2025

Title	Motorcycle use of BSIP Bus Lanes – Statutory Consultation Results
Purpose of the report	To inform the Sub-Committee of the feedback
Report status	Public report
Executive Director/ Statutory Officer Commissioning Report	Emma Gee, Executive Director Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services
Report author	Miriam Fuertes, Transport Planner
Lead Councillor	Cllr John Ennis, Lead Councillor for Climate Strategy and Transport
Ward(s)	Abbey, Battle, Norcot, Southcote, Katesgrove, Redlands and Park
Corporate priority	Healthy Environment
Recommendations	<p>The Sub-Committee is asked to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of this report., including the consultation feedback in Appendix 1.2. Agree to the Officer recommendations and authorise the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services to make permanent the existing Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.3. Agree that that no public inquiry be held into the proposal.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Sub-Committee of the feedback received from the statutory consultation associated with the experimental traffic regulation order, allowing motorcycles to access the bus lanes delivered through Bus Scheme Improvement Plan (BSIP), and to make recommendations on whether this should be made permanent.

2. Policy context

2.1 The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) 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 (RTA), 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 The proposal

3.1 Officers reported results of the initial BSIP Bus Lane Consultation to the sub-committee in 27 January 2024, which included a recommendation to make an experimental traffic regulation order, permitting motorcycle access to the BSIP bus lanes.

3.2 Following the approval of the sub-committee, this experimental order was sealed, and a corresponding six-month statutory consultation period commenced, and ran between 13 September 2024 and 13 March 2025, seeking feedback and objections on the experimental order.

3.3 If agreed by this sub-committee, the permanent TRO would grant permission for motorcycles to use the following three bus lanes, which have already been implemented:

- A329 Oxford Road – Outbound bus lane between Zinzan Street and George Street,
- A329 Oxford Road – Outbound bus lane between Pangbourne Street and Norcot and
- A4 London Road – Inbound bus lane between Liverpool Road and Cemetery Junction

Further to this, this permission would also be granted to the remaining bus lanes, subject to their implementation

- A327 Southampton Street – Inbound bus lane from Pell Street to The Oracle roundabout,
- A4 London Road – Inbound bus lane between Sidmouth Street and London Street)

The sub-committee is asked to note that access to the proposed Bath Road bus lane was also included within the experimental order, however as approved by this sub-committee on 27 November 2024, this scheme has been removed from the current programme of works, subject to future funding becoming available, and therefore will not be included within the permanent traffic regulation order being made.

3.4 A summary of the statutory consultation results can be found in the table below:

	Support		Object		No Response	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Results	83	77.6%	24	22.4%	0	0%

3.5 The full consultation results can be found in Appendix 1

3.6 The consultation responses raised a number of common themes, including:

Positive responses	
Reduced congestion and improved traffic flow	Many residents believe motorcycles in bus lanes will ease congestion for all road users, referencing studies (e.g., the Leuven report) and Transport for London's experience, which suggest a modal shift to motorcycles could significantly cut congestion and emissions
Safety for motorcyclists	Many Reading residents expressed the view that bus lanes provide a safer environment for motorcyclists, who are vulnerable road users, by separating them from general traffic and reducing the need for lane-filtering on busy routes
Environmental benefits	Many Reading residents, particularly motorcyclists, expressed support for allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes. They highlighted that motorcycles are typically more fuel-efficient than cars, produce fewer emissions, and reduce idling in traffic. They suggested that enabling motorcycles to use bus lanes could help improve air quality in Reading, especially on congested corridors
Consistency and clarity	They reported that inconsistent access rules are confusing and can create uncertainty, which may increase risk when navigating Reading's road network. Residents who regularly commute by motorcycle emphasised the importance of having clear, uniform access arrangement
Support for local deliveries	Others highlighted the growing number of motorcycle-based delivery and courier services operating in Reading. They suggested that providing bus lane access would support these services, improve journey reliability, and benefit local businesses and customers.

Government guidance and best practice	Many residents also pointed to national and regional trends, noting that Transport for London's approach and wider government guidance increasingly support motorcycle access to bus lanes. They argued that Reading should align with these standards to promote safer and more efficient travel for motorcyclists.
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Negative responses	
Noise and speed concerns	Some object to motorcycles in bus lanes due to noise pollution and to be able to speed up which will make an impact at cyclists and pedestrians
Cyclist safety	A few residents expressed concerns about allowing motorcycles in bus lanes. These residents mentioned potential noise impacts and raised fears that a minority of motorcyclists may travel at higher speeds, potentially compromising the safety of cyclists and pedestrians.
Increased congestion and pollution from bus lanes generally	Residents objected to the bus lanes themselves, arguing they have increased congestion, increased air pollution, and caused delays for all road users, including buses
General opposition to bus lanes	Residents believe the lanes disadvantage car users and question whether they are delivering the benefits expected.
Other points raised	Residents also raised several practical suggestions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving road surfaces in bus lanes to make them safer, particularly for cyclists • providing clear data and greater transparency about the impact of bus lanes on congestion and pollution • adding better signage and safety measures where bus lanes merge back into general traffic

Recommendations

3.7 Officers recommend making the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order, into a Permanent Traffic Regulation Order for each of the bus lanes that have been implemented already and would be extended to the remaining lanes, subject to their implementation authorising their use by motorcycles.

3.8 Allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes offers potential advantages:

- Improved Safety for Motorcyclists
- Motorcyclists are among the more vulnerable road users.
- Access to bus lanes provides a safer environment by reducing their exposure to congestion and conflicts with larger vehicles in general traffic lanes.
- Reduced Congestion in General Traffic Lanes:
- Diverting motorcycles into bus lanes can ease pressure on general traffic lanes, helping to improve overall traffic flow during peak periods.

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 experimental TROs made permanent, there will be no expected changes to on street signing or lining – the recommendations do not seek to change the restrictions from how they are currently presented – 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 is a public meeting. 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 from 13 September 2024 to 13 March 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, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—

- 7.1.1 eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- 7.1.2 advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- 7.1.3 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 (EIA) is required at this time as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics, and the proposals will help the travel needs of users. The Statutory Consultation provided 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 Experimental Traffic Regulation Order came into force on 4 September 2024 and has now been in operation for approximately 14 months. Under Section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, such order can only remain in force for a maximum of 18 months, so a decision is required before expiry.

9.3 If approved to become permanent, the Traffic Regulation Order will be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

9.4 The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and advertised in accordance with the procedure laid down by Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1996. Any comments or objections to the order could be made during the first 6 months of operation during the consultation period, after which the Council can consider and decide to either continue with the experiment for a further 12 months, remove the experiment or make the scheme permanent.

9.5 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

9.6 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

9.7 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.

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

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

9.10 Patricia Tavernier has cleared these Legal Implications.

10 Financial implications

10.1 Funding for the detailed designs and statutory consultation has been funded through the BSIP funding allocation.

10.2 The Council has secured £15.9m in capital funding through its BSIP, however inflationary pressures have had a significant impact on the cost of individual schemes within the overall BSIP package.

10.3 The cost of making this experimental TRO, permanent, is expected to be limited to internal staffing resources, as well as the advertising costs for the statutory notices. This is estimated to total less than £1,000.

11 Timetable for implementation

11.1 The following table provides the intended timeline for implementation:

Line	Milestone	When
1	Undertake statutory consultation	Complete
2	Review responses received from consultation	Complete
3	Report back to TMSC and seek decisions on making experimental order permanent.	Complete
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

1. Appendix 1 – Consultation Results