

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE & SPORT

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ADVISORY PANEL		
DATE:	24 MARCH 2009	AGENDA ITEM:	7
TITLE:	NETWORK MANAGEMENT UPDATE - SIGNIFICANT UTILITY WORKS PROGRAMME AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This report aims to update the Panel on a number of significant utility roadwork schemes planned for 2009, which will have an impact on the Road Network.
- 1.1.2 The report also updates the Panel on the recent work towards implementation of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and follows on from the report to the Panel in March 2008.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Advisory Panel notes the contents of this report.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The proposals are in line with current Transport and Planning Policy. Traffic Management Advisory Panel reports and minutes 28th March 2008

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Roadworks. The following major roadworks schemes are being planned by utility companies in the next 6-9 months:

4.1.1 Southern Gas Networks (SGN) Gas Main Renewal Programme 2009/10.

SGN are now compelled by the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) to replace all the old cast iron gas mains on their network. Unfortunately, there are a number of these in Reading and a number of these are programmed for renewal this year.

- Three Tuns crossroads. The work involves replacing the main which runs diagonally across the crossroads. The majority of the work falls within the Wokingham Borough Council area and their Streetworks team have been coordinating the programming and traffic management measures which the work requires.

RBC Streetworks have been involved in the planning stages of the work and at an early stage suggested that the work be carried out during the summer holiday period when traffic volumes are significantly lower than normal. Unfortunately, the nature and extent of the work means it will run from 16th March to the 6th May 2009. Extensive diversions will be put in place, both in the immediate local area and in the wider area as Wilderness Road and Church Road will be closed during this period. Wokingham Road will remain open and will be controlled by temporary traffic signals.

Information about the works and the diversions has been sent by letter to all the Reading residents who live in the streets immediately adjacent to the works, giving contact details for further information.

The No. 17 and 65 bus routes, contrary to press reporting, will not be adversely affected by the works, and as with all such schemes, officers have liaised closely with Reading Transport.

- Cemetery junction. Replacement of the cast iron main on the northern side of the A4 from Cemetery Junction eastwards as far as Cholmeley Road. Once again, this work will need very close liaison between RBC and SGN to minimise disruption, but there will be times when the Network will be affected. Further details will be brought to the Panel when a definite timetable has been agreed, but clearly, these works cannot continue at the same time as the works described above.
- St. Mary's Butts/Bridge Street junction gas main renewal. RBC and SGN are also in the planning stage for the renewal of the gas main which crosses this busy junction. The work is likely to take place during the school summer holidays.

4.1.2 High Voltage Electricity cable installation.

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) are due to lay a new high voltage cable from the A4 via Culver Lane and into the Borough via Palmer Park Avenue, Wokingham Road, Talfourd Avenue and Whiteknights Road to the University. This work will start after the Three Tuns gas main work is completed and will run through the school holidays. Once again, Streetworks have worked closely with the SSE, Reading Buses and Wokingham Borough Council to find the least disruptive route for the cable and to programme the works outside the peak traffic flow periods. Some disruption is inevitable, but this will be minimised.

4.2 Traffic Management Act Implementation update.

The Panel was updated at its meeting in March 2008 on the powers and responsibilities imposed on the Council by the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the work carried out by the Network Management towards its implementation. Since then the following progress has been made:

- Upgrade of the Streetworks noticing system to ETON (Electronic transfer of Notices) 4. This means that the Council can receive and process streetworks notices from all utilities and our works unit electronically, making notice tracking, issue of random inspections and defects and charging more easy and efficient.
- Proof of concept on a wireless communication network for CCTV and traffic signal data. This research project, sponsored in part by SEEDA (South East England Development Agency) and a consortium of private firms, used a previously unreleased frequency and a network of wireless infrastructure to create a system which can send CCTV images and traffic controller data to the central traffic computer in the Civic Offices without using telephone lines. Now the concept has been successfully proven the system has the potential to reduce fixed telephone line costs as well as providing a free communications network for all users.
- Further live traffic data has been added to that already available on mobile phones via the MetroTV service.
- Display screens showing live bus information have been installed in the Civic Offices foyer, Hexagon and Broad Street Mall with further site being planned.
- The Reading travel information website, www.reading-travelinfo.co.uk, is currently being developed to improve its accessibility and the quality of the information it contains.
- A monthly liaison meeting with Reading Transport has been set up to ensure works such as utility and resurfacing work is carefully planned so as not to impact adversely on bus services.
- Officers are working with the organisers of the new festival event, Heavenly Planet, to ensure a robust traffic management plan is in place for the event.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley.

To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.

5.2 Sustainable Community Strategy, Transport and Accessible Places section.

- To improve bus punctuality and reliability to improve non-car access to all areas.

- Promote cycling and walking for shorter local journeys to improve non-car access to district centres.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 Information letters were delivered to all Reading residents in the streets directly affected by the Three Tuns gas main works and the SSE cable works.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The utility works are subject to the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. Any temporary Traffic Regulation Orders will be advertised under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Costs incurred by Network Management due to roadworks will be re-charged to the utility contractor in question. Network Management systems upgrades will be funded from within existing Transport budgets.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Reports to Traffic Management Advisory Panel 28th March 2008
Minutes of Cabinet 14th April 2008