

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

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| TO: | TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 12 MARCH 2015 | AGENDA ITEM: | 11 |
| TITLE: | MAJOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS PROJECTS - UPDATE | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLOR: | TONY PAGE | PORTFOLIO: | STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT |
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on the current major transport and highways projects in Reading, namely:

- A33 and Reading Bridge Pinch Point schemes
- The new Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge
- Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle park and ride schemes
- Reading Station Area Redevelopment.

1.2 This report also advises of any future key programme dates associated with the schemes.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Sub-Committee note the report

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

4. THE PROPOSAL

A33 Pinch Point Scheme

- 4.1 The scheme comprises of a range of measures to improve journey time reliability and reduce congestion along the corridor. This includes extending the left-turn filter lanes for exiting the A33 onto Rose Kiln Lane (north and southbound); providing more direct pedestrian and cycle links alongside the A33 crossing of the Kennet and providing an alternative pedestrian and cycle route to negotiate seasonal flooding along the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road.
- 4.2 Works commenced in December 2014 with completion expected in June 2015. The project team has continued to review the current programme in order to reduce any disruption while the improvement works take place. This has included some recent night time working and limiting any necessary lane closures to off peak hours only (09.30 to 15.30).
- 4.3 The wider scheme will includes more direct pedestrian and cycle links alongside the A33 crossing of the River Kennet. A new raised pedestrian and cycle route along the A33 between Rose Kiln Lane and Bennet Road will also be built. The current path is affected by seasonal flooding and this new path will be built up at road level which will be usable all year round, as well as being safer for cyclists and pedestrians alike.

Reading Bridge Pinch Point Scheme

- 4.4 In November 2014 essential work began to strengthen Reading Bridge. The bridge is a 92 year old structure and is on a major strategic route, both through Reading and the wider region. The structure is in need of essential strengthening and waterproofing to ensure it can continue to carry the amount of traffic it does in future years without the need for vehicle restrictions. The Department for Transport awarded Reading Borough Council capital grant funding from their Pinch Point Fund to enable to works to be carried out.
- 4.5 The initial phase of the work in November and December 2014 involved a large void underneath the southern approach structure being filled with foam concrete. Since January the contractor has been erecting scaffolding on both ends of the structure. Once all the scaffolding is in place the process of strengthening the bridge using carbon fibre and concrete repairs will begin.

- 4.6 As of February concrete repairs underneath the bridge are being carried out, as well as a specialist sub-contractor carrying out stone repairs on the western footway of the bridge.
- 4.7 Currently the work is being carried out under off-peak lane closures which are in place Monday to Friday between 9am and 4pm. These lane closures are scheduled to continue throughout the works period. Some weekend off peak working will also take place as and when required, but we will look to keep this to a minimum.
- 4.8 Over Easter it will be necessary to have a closure on one side of the bridge, (both one lane of the carriageway and the adjacent footway), for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for up to 20 days. The lane closure is required in order to carry out some of the carbon fibre strengthening work and to keep vehicle vibrations away from the works areas. As with the previous lane closures there will still be two running lanes and one of the footways available throughout this period. Following the Easter period off peak lane closures will continue. Towards the end of the project it will be necessary to have a full 24 hour closure of the bridge. The date of this closure is provisionally set for 18 May for a maximum two week period. Following the full closure work will continue under off peak lane closures until the end of the project which is expected to be late June / early July 2015.

Reading Station

Cow Lane Bridges - Highway works

- 4.9 As previously reported to the Sub-Committee in January 2015, the Public Inquiry was held and completed on 13th January 2015. The inspector is in the process of preparing the report to the Secretary of State and the Inspector's target date is 24th March 2015. Once the Planning Inspector has also reviewed the Inspector's report, the report is then sent to the Department for Transport for the Secretary of State to make a final decision.
- 4.10 All the objections to the CPO have now been withdrawn but as they were outstanding when the public inquiry was held, the Department for Transport will not make a decision until they have received the Inspector's report.
- 4.11 The Council remains hopeful the highway improvements can commence in the Summer 2015.

Cycle Parking on the North side of the Station

- 4.12 A new cycle parking hub with a minimum of 300 racks is due to be introduced in the area currently used as a site compound on the corner of the multi-storey car park. Works are due to commence later in the Spring 2015 with completion planned in the Summer 2015. In the interim, cycle parking for 212 bikes has been introduced to cater for the high demand in this area.

Pedestrian and Cycle bridge

- 4.13 The major construction works for the pedestrian cycle bridge over the River Thames are well underway with expected scheme completion in summer 2015. Once complete, the bridge will provide a key new route for pedestrians and cyclists between Caversham, Reading Station and central Reading.
- 4.14 Over the coming months, site activities will include completion of the foundations on north bank and piling on southern bank to widen the towpath. Bridge sections are expected to arrive in April with works continuing until the summer in order to prepare and lift the bridge into position.

Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride schemes

- 4.15 Construction works are underway for the new park & ride sites at Mere oak and Winnersh Triangle, which together will deliver nearly 1,000 parking spaces. The two sites are being constructed simultaneously with a planned completion date of summer 2015.
- 4.16 The Mere oak Park & Ride site, located south of M4 junction 11, will provide 579 parking spaces and will be served by the regular Greenwave bus service to and from Central Reading, as well as serving GreenPark and Reading International Business Park. The site will include a terminal building and improved pedestrian and cycle paths alongside the car park, linking to the provision at Junction 11 to connect over the M4.
- 4.17 The Winnersh Triangle Park & Ride site, located near to Winnersh Station, will have 390 spaces and users will have the choice of travelling by bus or train into central Reading. The site will replace the existing Park & Ride site at Loddon Bridge which is prone to flooding.
- 4.18 Members are asked to note the contents of this report.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

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

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1 The projects have been communicated to the local community through local exhibitions and Council meetings.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None relating to this report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 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, 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;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

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

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The costs associated with delivery of the A33 and Reading Bridge Pinch Point Schemes are met by the DfT Pinch Point project.

- 9.2 The costs associated with delivery of the Pedestrian Cycle Bridge, and the Park and Ride schemes are met by the DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee reports.