

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 NOVEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	WEST READING TRANSPORT STUDY - UPDATE		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	SOUTHCOTE / MINSTER
LEAD OFFICER:	CHRIS MADDOCKS/ STEPHEN WISE	TEL:	0118 937 4950 / 0118 937 3735
JOB TITLE:	TRANSPORT PLANNING MANAGER/ SENIOR TRANSPORT PLANNER	E-MAIL:	chris.maddocks@reading.gov.uk / stephen.wise@reading.gov.uk

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Sub-Committee on progress with the West Reading Transport Study.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the contents of this report and agrees that officers continue to work up specific proposals for transport projects in the study area.
- 2.2 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to carry out a statutory consultation and advertise the proposed set out in para 5.1 of this report in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 2.3 That subject to no objections received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.

2.4 That any objections received following the statutory consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 The proposals are in line with Reading Borough Council's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for the period 2011-26 and current traffic management policies and standards.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 The Council, as the Local Highway Authority, is responsible for the provision, improvement and maintenance of transport infrastructure within the Borough. In support of this work the Council has developed a number of area transport studies to investigate transport improvements for the area in line with the Council's objectives as set out in the Local Transport Plan 2011-26.

4.2 The West Reading Transport Study was established in June 2015, with the purpose of identifying, defining and prioritising transport schemes within Southcote and the western section of Coley Park. The overriding objective of the study is to take a balanced approach to enhancing the local area and connecting links, through measures that improve accessibility, road safety for all users, better managing traffic and parking, and encouraging the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

4.3 The West Reading Transport Study Steering Group has been established to direct progress of the study. The group is chaired by the Lead Member for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, and includes membership from the Ward Councillors for Southcote and Minster. Representatives of other organisations are invited to attend Steering Group meetings as appropriate.

5. THE PROPOSALS

Southcote

5.1 A summary of responses received from the public exhibition in Southcote in July was reported to this Committee in September. The feedback has subsequently been reviewed by the Study Steering Group and the following proposals have been developed for statutory consultation:

a. Installation of raised tables at the side road junctions off Southcote Lane to reduce the speed of turning traffic and provide a level crossing point for pedestrians, including those with wheelchairs or pushchairs.

- b. Installation of two additional zebra crossings on Southcote Lane and a pedestrian refuge island near Fawley Road to assist Hugh Faringdon pupils to walk safely from the bus stop to school.
- c. Installation of herringbone pattern road markings at the roundabout junctions at Southcote Lane/Circuit Lane and Southcote Lane/Virginia Way to create informal crossing points and encourage motorists to see any pedestrians looking to cross the road at these locations.
- d. Removal of the pedestrian refuge island from Southcote Lane outside Priory Point to improve the flow of buses passing parked cars in this location.
- e. Introduction of an area wide 20mph zone to include all roads within Southcote south of Bath Road and east of Burghfield Road.
- f. Installation of westbound bus lane on Bath Road from Circuit Lane to Honey End Lane to improve flow of buses and reduce speeding on Bath Road.
- g. Upgrade the crossing point from the Gainsborough Road path to Prospect Park to a toucan crossing to encourage walking and cycling to/from Prospect School.
- h. Enhance the informal crossing point at Bath Road/Honey End Lane junction and the existing underpass to facilitate safer crossing points for pedestrians on the Bath Road.
- i. Reconsider effective enforcement of the old AM peak entry restriction to Southcote Lane eastbound. This was originally at Ashampstead Road (west end) junction to prevent traffic from Burghfield Road rat running through Southcote on the way to Reading town centre.

5.2 In addition to the proposals outlined above, a number of ideas have been put forward to reduce traffic on Silchester Road outside Southcote Primary School and stop instances of the dangerous u-turn at Fawley Road. These ideas include: a) relocating the bus gate further east to the junction with Faircross Road; b) implementing a westbound one-way system on Faircross Road and Silchester Road; c) re-instating the historic road closure on Faircross Road; d) removing the centre splitter island on Southcote Lane to facilitate a normal right turn from Faircross Road onto Southcote Lane. It is considered that further analysis of the vehicles currently using Silchester Road and Faircross Road in the AM peak should be undertaken in order for officers to put forward their professional views for consideration.

- 5.3 It is proposed that statutory consultation through a Traffic Regulation Order will be undertaken for the proposals outlined above, with any objections reported to the meeting of this Committee in January.
- 5.4 It should be noted that implementation of the measures in Southcote as outlined in this report is subject to funding being made available from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contribution from the developer of the former Elvian school site on Southcote Lane.

Coley Park

- 5.5 A public drop-in exhibition was held at Coley Park Baptist Church on 20th September 2016. Visitors to the exhibition were shown initial possible ideas and invited to offer comments. There were 29 names on the exhibition sign in sheet. 15 feedback forms were completed and 5 post it notes attached to the plans. In addition the exhibition materials were made available online until the 18th October and 12 responses have been received through the online feedback form.
- 5.6 Five questions were proposed on the feedback and online forms:
Main concerns.
Comments regarding traffic and parking.
Comments regarding public transport.
Comments regarding walking and cycling.
Further comments.
- 5.7 **Main concerns:** Feedback from those consulted consistently raised parking on Holybrook Road as a major problem. The width of Holybrook Road is insufficient to permit the safe and easy passage of buses or lorries with opposing vehicles due to the parking of commuter and residents' cars on the north side of the road. The problem is made worse by the existence of a blind summit half way along the road and as there are only limited exits from Coley Park this problem is expected to worsen with increase in traffic from the DEFRA site development. Other issues raised consistently included on-street parking along Wensley Road which impacts the flow of buses and other traffic by reducing the road width to one lane. In addition parking on Boston Avenue by non-residents was a consistent complaint raised, however there was a lack of consensus on the best way to deal with this issue.
- 5.8 **Traffic and parking:** Concern was expressed that commuters, taxis and commercial vehicles are increasingly using Coley Park roads for free parking. In some cases as noted above the parking restricts the safe passage of vehicles, and in other cases the 'out of area' parking restricts residents' ability to access drives or park outside their houses.

- 5.9 **Public Transport:** The bus service was seen as good although reduced to hourly after 7.45pm. The efficient operation of buses is affected by the problems of parking at Holybrook Road.
- 5.10 **Cycling and walking:** No major issues were raised regarding cycling or walking but there was support for the improvement of access to and from the new development site including upgrading the link to Southcote. Concerns were raised at crossing Wensley Road to get to the park and near the old 'Roundhead' i.e. getting to/from the shops from the south east area.
- 5.11 **Further comments:** Comments were made regarding solving the parking issues on Holybrook Road before the extra traffic from the new development creates further congestion. Concerns were also expressed regarding the capacity of the traffic lights at Berkeley Ave/St Saviours Road to cope with the growing Coley Park traffic. In addition there was concern at the DEFRA development and an expectation that this should be provided with new accesses that didn't use Wensley Road and Holybrook Road. One online respondent stated that everything was fine and there were no problems at all.
- 5.12 It is intended that scheme proposals will be developed in further detail based on this feedback by the Study Steering Group, with measures for statutory consultation reported to the meeting of this Committee in January.
- 5.13 It should be noted that implementation of any measures in Coley Park will be subject to funding being made available from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contribution from the developer of the former DEFRA offices site.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 6.1 The delivery of schemes outlined in this report help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:
- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
 - Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 Informal consultation has been undertaken as described above.
- 7.2 Statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Any resultant Traffic Regulation Order will be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 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.

9.2 The Council will carry out an equality impact assessment for transport project proposals in the study area.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None at present. The proposals outlined in this report cannot be implemented until funding has been made available from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions from the developer of the former Elvian school site on Southcote Lane and the former DEFRA offices site in Coley Park.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 West Reading Transport Study, Traffic Management Sub-Committee Reports from June 2015.