

MEETING NOTE

Reading Cycle Forum

Wednesday 12th February 2025 @ 18:30 (Council Chamber)

Attendance:	Cllr Will Cross Cllr Paul Gittings Cllr Adele Barnett-Ward Cllr Wendy Griffith Cllr Jacopo Lanzoni Cllr Rob White James Turner Mark Lyford	RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC RBC/Sustrans	Kat Heath Joe Edwards John Lee Tony Carr Sam Hatfield Karen Robertson Brian Oatway Michael Pickles	Kidical Mass Reading Cycle Campaign Reading Cycle Campaign Reading Cycle Campaign Reading Cycle Campaign Avanti Cycling
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Apologies:	Cllr John Ennis Cllr James Moore Brian Morely	RBC RBC	Grenville Edwards Reading Bike Kitchen
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No:	Item:	Action:
1.	<p>Welcome and Apologies:</p> <p>Cllr Cross opened the meeting and apologies were recorded.</p>	
2.	<p>Officers Update</p> <p>Transport Officer provided an update on the following items:</p> <p>Reading Station Hill and Station Underpass Access</p> <p>The Reading Station Hill and associated public realm opened to the public and JT shared some photos taken since then. This includes the Friars Walk link from the station to Friar Street over Garrard Street and this link can also be used by cyclists as it is shared space. JT noted that as this is not public highway / council land, the Council has limited control over what signage and surface marking is installed here. We will review the entrance and exit points to it as part of the overall town centre signage.</p> <p>The use of the station underpass by cyclists remains well received by forum members and JT noted that the works to bury electrical supply cables to the coffee vans on the north side remain outstanding. It is also Transport Officers intention to review, with RCC, the signage on either side of the underpass particularly now that Station Hill has opened.</p> <p>Following a question, it was confirmed that the station underpass is a shared space and cannot be separated with a central line to mark a cycling and a pedestrian side as it is not wide enough.</p> <p>Streetpods</p> <p>The Council has ordered 36 Streetpods as part of a pilot project to be installed in various location throughout Reading Town Centre as well as at Reading West Station on the Oxford Road (a picture of these was shared in the presentation). This is utilising funding from the Active Travel Fund Capability programme which was previously</p>	<p>Transport Officers / RCC</p>

allocated to the Cycle Hub. The Council is interested in the views of members of the cycle forum on the Streetpods and whether they are an enhancement on traditional cycle stands.

Streetpods are a new type of on-street facility to lock bicycles too, which could be more secure than the traditional 'Sheffield' stands that are common across Reading. Each Streetpod unit holds two bikes in a 'high-low' configuration, which stops handlebars and pedals clashing. There is space for the front wheel to fit neatly into a secure shell made from recyclable materials and a ring of reinforced solid steel to secure the rear wheel and frame, using the cyclist's own lock. This secures the bikes in a more secure and tamper-proof configuration, and they have been successfully installed in other locations including Oxford and Milton Keynes.

It is hoped that the installation of the Streetpods will take place in March.

A question around cycle hangars was raised. JT confirmed Transport Officers would like to proceed with a small pilot following the current focus on Streetpods and options will be shared with Councillors.

Town Centre Public Realm Consultation

The Council, with support from external consultants, has prepared a new town centre public realm strategy. This work has included:

- An audit of existing public realm
- An overall pedestrian and cycle movement framework
- Design manual to guide planning apps and investment decisions
- Design examples for specific areas of the town*
- Action plan

There is currently a consultation on the strategy which is open until Wednesday 26th February and all members are encouraged to share their views.

A link to the consultation can be found here:

<https://www.reading.gov.uk/tcpsr>

A33 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) works and new cycle-pedestrian Kennet Crossing

An update had been requested on the new cycle-Pedestrian Kennet Crossing that has been installed next to the A33 as part of the BRT works. JT shared some photographs recently taken by the contractor and updated that the link will open as part of the full scheme opening in late spring/early summer.

It was agreed to publish the new cycle links on the A33 and how these fit within the wider network.

Active Travel Schemes Update

ATF 2 - Shinfield Road

The scheme remains on hold whilst further funding is sought. However, there are a couple of issues that the Council is aware of and is working to rectify.

The ponding issue at the Christchurch Green junction has been investigated by RBC Highways with a large amount of debris and

detritus removed by a suction vehicle. However, the underlying issue remains with Thames Water system and the Council is working with Thames Water on this issue. It was noted that since the Council has visited with its suction vehicle an improvement has been noticed with the ponding, but the problem remains.

Another issue has been noted at the entrance to the cycle track on the left-turn exit from Queens Drive has caused an issue with uneven kerb that causes cycle accidents as noted from a recent Kidical Mass ride. This has been reported to the Council and Transport Officers are liaising with Highways colleagues on a solution.

There remains signage and lining works to be completed, and JT updated that these are being planned to occur during the school holidays in April for easter to cause least disruption.

Joe Edwards commented that there were sections that were covered in leaves in the Autumn making the cycle track slippery and potentially dangerous. It was also commented that the cycle track requires regular sweeping as well as gritting when the temperature is low enough to require it and councillors have previously raised this with Highways.

ATF 3 Bath Road - Castle Hill

The Council is undertaking a design review of the ATF3 Bath Road Castle Hill scheme with a new design looking at providing a cycle route around the outside of the Castle Hill- IDR roundabout. These designs will be shared with members and then will be circulated with stakeholders including cycle forum members as well as residents for further consultation. It was agreed to share the design with RCC and seek comment prior to opening a further public consultation to enable any changes to be made.

Future Funding for Active Ravel Schemes

Only published in the morning of the forum Reading Borough Council has been awarded £838,609 funding from Active Travel England in a mix of Capital ad Revenue allocation. The Council has not received the grant conditions so cannot comment further on what the funding will be used for, but it is anticipated that it will enable us to continue with the general active travel capital and revenue programme we have used the previous funding for.

Post meeting note: The funding award is a combination of the 24/25 Active Travel allocation and 25/26 allocation, the latter of which includes both Active Travel funding for capital infrastructure schemes and Capability revenue funding for behavioural change and capability building measures.

Capability and Ambition Programme 25

The capability and ambition funded programme continues including the following themes:

- Active Travel Officer Post continues to June 2025.
- Continuation of free adult cycle training courses
- Continuation of free bicycle maintenance training.
- Monthly 'Dr Bike' popup sessions continue in town centre and local communities.
- Support for Reading Cycle Festival.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycle Security Enhancements - Streetpods and Cycle Hangars • Walks Leaflet <p>JT circulate the first walks leaflet which is the first of a series of 4 the Council is planning. We would welcome feedback on these as well as ideas on where they could be distributed. Ideas including local hotels, libraries, Reading Station and the leisure centre. A link was also requested to an online pdf.</p> <p>The proposed dates for the town centre Dr Bike sessions are as follows (Broad Street adj Sainsbury's):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 6th March • Thursday 3rd April • Thursday 1st May • Thursday 5th June • Thursday 3rd July • Thursday 4th September • Thursday 2nd October • Thursday 6th November <p>A communications campaign will be produced to promote these sessions and the other activities.</p>	
<p>3.</p>	<p>Requested Agenda Items</p> <p>Cycle Safety</p> <p>A number of issues had been raised under the heading of Cycle Safety including pavement cycling (particularly on the Oxford Road), the use of illegal e-scooters and illegal e-bikes. JT highlighted some recent articles of activities undertaken by Thames Valley Police and REDA on anti-social cycling etc..</p> <p>It was agreed to make clear the distinction between electrically assisted pedal bikes which are legal and illegally modified electric bikes which are not. It was noted that the anti-social use particularly of illegally modified bikes is unfairly giving all cyclists a bad reputation when most are responsible and law abiding. It was suggested that there could be a communication campaign promoting safe and responsible cycling and educating more as to the difference between legal and illegal bicycles. This could also include information and advice on staying seen in dark weather with lights and high-visible clothing. This is something Transport Officers will discuss with colleagues in Comms.</p> <p>Following a number of close passes of bicycles by taxis the issue of safety and good driving practice promoted. A number of cycle forum members also commented that they had similar experiences with buses. This is something that can also be included in a comms and information campaign. It should also be noted that any specific incidences can be reported to the Council and/or local bus operators and colleagues in licensing have taken previous action against licensees.</p> <p>Sonning Common Cycleway</p> <p>RCC updated that colleagues in Oxfordshire are working on plans for a cycleway to the north of Reading borough including agreements with landowners. JT updated that Transport Officers too have had previous discussions on this. Should these plans come to fruition the</p>	

	<p>Council can look at improvements that could be made within the borough to provide a link to the new facility.</p> <p>Highway Resurfacing Programme - Advanced Stop Lines</p> <p>As part of the Council’s highway resurfacing programme, it was requested whether advanced stop lines for cyclists could be added where they are not currently. JT commented that Transport Officers do liaise with colleagues in highways over the resurfacing programme and where there is opportunity to provide provision for cyclists this is discussed (as happened at Castle Hill - summer 2023) however at junction the provision of ASLs can require the repositioning of detection loops that manage junctions and therefore this is not as straight forward. However, Transport Officers will continue to liaise with Highways on this matter to discuss any opportunities that arise.</p> <p>RCC Live Issues</p> <p>The Reading Cycle Campaign maintain a list of ‘live issues’ which are cycling related matters that need discussing and addressing in Reading. This was shared with Transport Officers prior to the forum but due to the agenda already being full there was insufficient time to discuss. It was agreed that these issues would be discussed with RCC either through separate meeting discussions or via email.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Bike Library</p> <p>Kat Heath commented that members from Reading’s Kidical Mass, along with the Bike Kitchen are looking to set up a bike library. IF any members of the Cycle Forum would like to also get involved, they would be welcome.</p> <p>RCC Wants List</p> <p>John Lee requested update on RCC Wants List as well as town centre signage.</p> <p>Reading Cycle Campaign EGM</p> <p>Joe Edwards notified that the Reading Cycle Campaign is holding an Extraordinary General Meeting next Wednesday 19th February at RISK and all are welcome.</p>	<p>JT</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Date of Next Meeting:</p> <p>The date for future Cycle Forums will be set as part of the Council’s municipal calendar.</p> <p>The date of the Council’s next Cleaner Air and Safer Transport (CAST) forum is Tuesday 1st April 2025.</p>	<p>All to note</p>