

Cycling Forum

2 September 2010, 6:30pm, CR5

Minutes of Meeting

Attendees

Councillor Richard Willis (Chair)
Councillor Ricky Duveen
Councillor Paul Gittings
Councillor Rachel Eden
Keith Elliott (RCC)
Greg Payne (Reading CTC)
Alex McKnight (Sustrans)
Lottie Matthews (Sustrans)
Simon Beasley (RBC)
Cris Butler (RBC)
Hannah Budnitz (RBC)

Apologies

Councillor Tim Harris
Adrian Lawson (RCC)
Richard Pearson (Reading CTC)
Ralph Marlow (RCC)

1. Minutes from 20 May 2010 and Matters Arising (not on agenda)

The minutes were accepted as a true record.

It was reported that the legal issues surrounding the Napier Rd underpass have now been addressed, but the developer funding the scheme went into receivership. The scheme cannot be built until another developer takes over the application.

Cllr Willis requested an update on the options discussed at previous meetings for Bath Road, particularly in terms of costs. **Action:** Update to be provided.

Plans for cycling information within the concourses/interchanges at Reading Station cannot be confirmed until the suspended £15million Regional Funding Allocation for the interchanges or other funding is agreed.

2. Traffic Signal Review

Cllr Willis reported that the current status of this is being reported to TMAP: (<http://www.reading.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy/committee/committeelist/meeting.asp?id=5X9452-A784C4D5&committee=22492>). Consultation responses and a high level of investigation has been undertaken, resulting in 20 junctions that will be subject to further investigation for either change or removal. Any results of these investigations will be reported through TMAP. It was noted that cyclists do not have a default position on preferring one junction type over another.

The possibility of removing signals arises if they are no longer fit for purpose due to changed circumstances, but road safety and the needs of pedestrians and cyclists must be prioritised. Changes to junctions where signals are retained may include additional cycle facilities such as advanced stop lines or toucan crossings. Options such as turning on red, flashing amber or part-time signals are common in continental Europe, but are generally not possible under UK legislation. However, there may be design solutions, for example, to allow cyclists to bypass junctions.

3. Updated cycle strategy actions chart (standard item)

The chart was circulated and action completions noted. KE raised various actions which were still pending that had been scheduled for Spring 2010. **Action:** HB to revisit dates, remove items if completed some time before and state 'no fixed date' if timescale cannot be confirmed.

It was discussed that the ambition remains to build a new pedestrian/cycle bridge over the Thames as was included in the TIF/UCF bid, but funding was withdrawn and any new funds will be announced only after the Government spending review. Crossing the Thames is becoming more difficult as conflicts between cyclists and residents along the Thames Towpath has become so inflamed that Sustrans have diverted NCN5 over Reading Bridge. This bridge is narrow and busy and police can fine cyclists on the footway. RBC Legal are currently looking into the situation.

There will be a Broad St event in September and RBC is participating in Liftshare Week in October, rather than European Mobility Week/In Town Without My Car Day.

4. Update on Cycle Strategy Actions

a. Shinfield Road Local Centre Enhancement (road safety audits)

This is nearing completion, but the signals are still being tested and there are further works on the footways to complete. It was requested that the group is patient until the scheme is done before judging its impact.

Stage 1 (concept) and Stage 2 (detailed design) Safety Audits were completed and Stage 3 will be undertaken soon after completion. Further Stages 4 and 5 will be undertaken 12 and 36 months after scheme opening and look at accident stats.

b. A327 Study and Royal Berkshire Hospital/Reading University

SB noted that the edge of carriageway markings along Shinfield Rd were installed to help enforce the reduction of the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and provide a more comfortable area for cyclists, even though they are not cycle lanes (there was insufficient space). A review of the Highway Code and various regulations and legislation from which it is derived indicated no restrictions of cyclists using an area outside the edge of carriageway markings, nor any penalty for doing so.

This lining scheme and the one on Henley Rd where parking bays were installed to encourage cars off the ped/cycleway have been successful in slowing traffic speeds. Both were experimental and further experimentation on Peppard Rd has enabled advisory cycle lanes. Officers will continue to experiment with advisory cycle lanes or edge of carriageway markings, although delivery of lining schemes is tied to projects like the resurfacing programme to minimise costs.

HB circulated a plan of the area now agreed by Ward Councillors for a transport study, particularly looking at road safety and parking issues. The UoR and RBH will be partners in this study and Cycling Forum members

should send comments to HB. KE noted the difficulty in crossing Craven Rd, and SB said that is a key junction being considered by the signal review.

c. Links to Schools R6

Improvements to the surface of Southcote Farm Lane are complete and the programme for improving the path alongside the railway from Coley is confirmed, with ground surveys underway, procurement starting by the end of the month and construction in Oct-Nov, with completion in December.

d. Oxford Road Area Study

The Ward Member meeting for this was postponed, so no update can be confirmed. However, ideas include a 20mph limit from Grovelands Rd to the town centre, further decluttering and creating a ped/cycle friendly area. Enforcement of pavement parking and banned turns, accommodating the volume of buses and allowing cyclists to stay off the pavement are all issues to consider. The Cow Lane improvements are still programmed and will create an even better route parallel to Oxford Rd, but Oxford Rd still needs to work for cyclists who live/work/shop along it. The issues raised by the Cycling Forum regarding Salisbury Rd/Reading West Station and the Bedford Rd junction are also still to be considered within the study. **Action:** Update to be brought to next meet.

e. North Area Access Study

The completion of the scheme at Gravel Hill to finish the closure is being reported to TMAP (see link above). Access for cleaning will be retained. Work on the Lowfield Rd proposals is ongoing and plans have been modified due to comments from the Forum. It is not yet built due to lack of funding.

f. Cycle Parking

Substantial additional cycle parking is agreed for the Shinfield Rd scheme.

The layout of the cycle stands at Whitley Wood Rd was queried. **Post-meeting note:** Officers have checked and are satisfied that there is sufficient width for pedestrians and no complaints from pedestrians have been received since the stands were installed.

AM requested cycle parking on Church Rd Caversham by the library.

KE requested more cycle parking in the town centre. CB showed plans that increases cycle parking through the current town centre works (93 stands). Cycle parking in Town Hall Square was part of another scheme, which now lacks funding, but officers will investigate funding the cycle parking first.

5. Progress on Major Transport Schemes

a. Reading Station/Town Centre Routes

West St has been reconstructed but the old road markings were replaced to manage the area. In April 2011, the top surface will be laid with new road markings on West St, Friar St, St Mary's Butts, etc for the new arrangement to come into force as one change. The temporary surfacing and kerb works are all planned so there is sufficient room for 2-way working, parking and

other proposals previously discussed. The Friar St/West St junction is a key consideration of the signal review and is turned off at present. Engineering drawings are available online at <http://www.reading.gov.uk/station> and in the drop-in centre on Cross St. **Action:** To be discussed at next meeting after members have reviewed plans.

b. M4 J11 update

This is substantially complete, but there are still lane closures which will open in the next couple weeks and the foot and cycle ways should open by the end of September at the latest. Publicity will be organised.

6. Mapping

HB reported that the 3rd edition draft, which includes the new routes over J11 has been circulated for comment by the group by 22nd September. Some of the routes were reviewed by officers with group members, but now all routes have been reviewed for signing by officers, so any comments should be sent to HB. HB explained that Wokingham have now agreed to extensions of the east and southeast routes into their areas, which changes the direction of some routes. A sponsor for the cycle maps is also being sought. Sustrans noted that the cycle maps are very popular at their events and offered to assist with putting up route stickers on-site.

7. Monitoring Data Exchange

HB circulated the results and analysis of RBC's annual cordon count, which took place in May from 7am to 7pm. KE circulated RCC's annual count during Bike Week in June. The trend appears to be a gradual increase in cycling, but officers will investigate whether there is modal shift to cycling as from car to public transport.

8. AOB

Cllr Willis noted that he is interested in cycle hire in Reading like the London scheme, but will need to look into the cost and sponsorship.

HB noted that a list of 'Quick(ish) Wins' from KE had been passed to her by Cllr Willis and most had been discussed under other agenda items. Most of the suggestions related to junctions, and will be considered as part of the traffic signal review or a wider study (e.g. Oxford Rd) if that junction is within the study area. The issue of crossing the Thames had also been discussed, and KE proposed a dropped kerb onto George St. Although this is possible and the cost is being investigated, HB noted the safety concerns of dropping cyclists into heavy traffic.

Planners put a condition on the previous application for Green Park Village for a cycle route along the railway, and will do so again, but would appreciate supportive comments from forum members.

Cllr Willis noted that Cycling is on the agenda of the next TUF on 28 September and he has received a question regarding the status of the Cycling Forum.

9. Date of Next Meeting

15 December 2010 at 6:30 in Committee Room 2