

APPENDIX 1

BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PILOT – READING BOROUGH COUNCIL PROPOSAL

Background

Reading Borough Council welcomes recognition that considerable work is required to develop strategic transport schemes. The Council is therefore supportive of the proposed allocation of £100,000 revenue funding to each Berkshire authority from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP) Scheme for the purpose of developing transport infrastructure projects which support or enable the development of housing, employment, leisure and/or retail projects.

Significant levels of development are being planned both within and on the outskirts of the Borough through the emerging Local Plan process. It is therefore essential that sufficient transport infrastructure is delivered to support this level of development and ensure the impacts are managed sustainably.

The Proposal

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Timetable

- Stage 1 Start: 1 December 2018
- Stage 1 Finish: 28 February 2019
- BLTB Progress Report 1: 14 March 2019 (including identification of named schemes)
- Stage 2 Start: 1 April 2019
- BLTB Progress Report 2: 18 July 2019 (seeking feedback on draft initial business cases)
- Stage 2 Finish: 31 October 2019
- BLTB Final Report: 14 November 2019

Our proposal is to undertake a two-stage process to identify and develop new transport infrastructure projects for Reading, as set out below:

Stage 1

High-level feasibility work to identify specific transport schemes that are consistent with the emerging Local Plan requirements. It is envisaged that the following priorities will be investigated as part of this initial feasibility work:

- Further phases (including Phases 5 and 6) of the South Reading Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme to contribute towards our overall vision of a fully segregated public transport route between the town centre and MereOak Park & Ride site.
- Opportunities to implement park & ride facilities and public transport priority measures in the west of the Reading urban area, following completion of the highways works to relieve the bottleneck at Cow Lane.
- Opportunities to implement park & ride facilities and public transport priority measures in the north of the Reading urban area.

- Further opportunities to join-up strategic cycle connections throughout the urban area, linking to the existing National Cycle Network (NCN) routes and the new NCN Route 422.
- Opportunities to enhance strategic connections within the town centre, particularly relating to walking and cycling facilities.
- Opportunities to invest in new technology to make best use of the local transport network and build on the existing Smart City project.

In addition to the Local Plan, this initial work will be undertaken in line with the emerging new Local Transport Plan and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan which are currently being developed for the urban area.

Stage 2

A list of specific schemes prioritised through the first stage will be reported to the BLTB for approval to proceed to the second stage. In line with the funding requirements, this report will include the following details:

- Name of each scheme.
- Local Plan (or emerging Local Plan) references.
- Approximate Capital Value of the project (a. up to £2m b. £2m-£5m c. £5m-£10m d. £10-£20m e. over £20m).
- The housing, employment, leisure or retail development to be enabled.
- Partner organisations involved (if any).
- Brief description of the project (100 words max).
- How the resource will be used to develop the outline business case (in-house? Retained consultant? Other?).
- Lead officer contact.
- Timetable start and end date for developing the specified schemes.

Following BLTB approval, the second stage of work will be undertaken to produce outline business cases for each scheme to ensure they represent good value for money. This work will help to establish a strong pipeline of future infrastructure schemes for the Reading urban area, which will enable high quality funding proposals to be prepared for each scheme in response to any future call for bids.