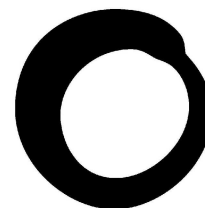


Reading Borough Council



**Friends of
the Earth**

Re: TC2850/667 THE A329 INNER
DISTRIBUTION ROAD ONE-WAY
SCHEME

23 Mar 2006

Dear Mr Brookes,

After careful consideration of the Council's plans to make the IDR one way, Reading Friends of the Earth oppose the Council's plans. If the council persists in its intention to go ahead with the scheme we request a public inquiry into the proposal to make public the full environmental impact, to explain the cost-benefit analysis and to show what alternatives have been evaluated.

Reasons for objection

Principal argument

The proposal is not presented as part of a coherent transport and land use strategy to achieve a significant reduction in traffic and therefore to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least the government's target of 60% by 2050. The plan does not appear to have been subject to either a sustainability appraisal or an environmental impact assessment. It appears likely to create additional capacity to accommodate extra traffic to proposed redevelopments in the town centre. Developments that increase central Reading's catchment area will increase vehicle use. Redevelopment should aim to reduce traffic.

Through traffic

We are not convinced that making the IDR one way will reduce through traffic. If congestion is reduced then it seems likely – in the absence of other measures – that through traffic will increase. If journey times on the IDR as stated will be more reliable and will not increase by a non substantial time for a long/external journey a perception that the one way system is not good for through traffic will quickly wear off.

If the changes to the IDR – in conjunction with other measures – are expected to reduce through traffic then there should be assessment of where the current through traffic will go and what the environmental impacts of its new routes will be.

External effects

We are concerned that traffic will be displaced from the IDR onto other roads less suited to higher volumes of traffic, to the disadvantage of local residents including pedestrians and cyclists.

Making the IDR one way to address congestion at peak times will result in all journeys all day being longer and thus generate more emissions than necessary.

Reading Friends of the Earth

Alternatives

Given the high level of investment in the IDR scheme the benefits to public transport are minimal. We think that Reading Borough Council hasn't considered alternatives sufficiently. These alternatives should start with a vision to reduce overall traffic and improve the conditions for sustainable modes of transport. We would like to see a serious consideration of road user pricing and/or charging for work place parking combined with sustainable transport enhancements as an alternative.

Investments in the order of £10 million in other councils has made significant changes to public transport schemes and encouragements to additional use of bicycles for commuting. The IDR proposal needs reconsideration in light of this.

Reduction of through traffic is an aim we support and we hear that the council are considering measures not related to the IDR for this. Those measures should be considered on their own and not as part of a package with a one-way IDR. Likewise the aesthetic impact of taking away the flyover to the west of London St is recognised but doesn't defend the required budget.

With kind regards

Ulrik Egede, on behalf of Reading Friends of the Earth

Reading Friends of the Earth