

Councillors Rose Williams (Chair),  
Eden, Grashoff, Khan and Singh

To all Members of the Access &  
Disabilities Working Group

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5 September 2016

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**NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY  
15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on **Thursday 15 September 2016 at 3.00pm** in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading.

**PLEASE NOTE: There will be a town centre walkabout starting at 2pm, please meet outside John Lewis on Broad Street. The Access and Disabilities Working Group meeting will start following the walkabout at 3pm.**

The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

**AGENDA**

	<u>PAGE NO</u>
1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS	-
2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	-

Councillors to declare any personal and prejudicial interests they may have in relation to the items on the agenda.

*CIVIC OFFICES EMERGENCY EVACUATION: If an alarm sounds, leave by the nearest fire exit quickly and calmly and assemble on the corner of Bridge Street and Fobney Street. You will be advised when it is safe to re-enter the building.*

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JUNE 2016 1-4
4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES -
5. SIMON PROJECT UPDATE - Marian Marsh (RBC) -
6. MASS RAPID TRANSIT (MRT) SCHEME -  
  
Information on Transport Schemes and Projects can be found at:  
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport-schemes-and-projects>
7. DISABILITY PRIDE DAY - Helen Bryant (RBC) -
8. PROPOSED CHANGES TO CONCESSIONARY FARES SCHEME -  
  
The consultation can be found at:  
[https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/proposed-changes-to-concessionary-fares/consult\\_view](https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/proposed-changes-to-concessionary-fares/consult_view)
9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS -
10. DATE AND TIME OF FUTURE MEETINGS -  
Thursday 1 December 2016 at 2pm  
Thursday 9 March 2017 at 2pm

## ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 30 JUNE 2016

### Present:

Councillors Rose Williams (Chair), Eden, Grashoff and Singh.

### Also in attendance:

Alan Fleming	Enrych Berkshire
Kathy Porat	Reading Association for the Blind
Diane Goodlock	MS Society Reading
Trish Wright	MS Therapy Centre & Readibus
Lisa Bamsey	Readibus & Service User
Jenny Turner	Readibus & Service User
Liz Cheyney	Member of the Public
Carol Pearson	Member of the Public
Mike Pearson	Member of the Public
Martijn Gilbert	Reading Buses
Peter Absolom	Readibus
Helen Bryant	RBC - Access Officer
Richard Woodford	RBC - Committee Services

### Apologies:

Councillor Khan	
Bob Bristow	Reading Association for the Blind
Sian Hooley	Berkshire Phab

## 1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

## 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Further to Minute 2 of the previous meeting, Alan Fleming reported that the toilets in the Broad Street Mall had not been working for two weeks.

## 3. READIBUS POSITIVE IMAGES LAUNCH - FEEDBACK

Peter Absolom, General Manager, Readibus, talked to the Group about the Readibus Positive Images Campaign launch that had taken place on 6 June 2016. Three buses had been used in the launch which had taken place in Broad Street and had been organised in response to a need that had been identified by disabled people at the Council's Tackling Poverty Event in November 2015 regarding the positive portrayal of disabled people. The campaign sort to portray disabled people in a positive way by showing them doing ordinary day to day things as well as the exceptional things that some could achieve. The message was to help to counter negative stereotypes and help to make more of a level playing field for disabled people.

Peter told the Group that more events were planned and personal stories would be used in order to promote a positive image. The aim was also to get more partners involved.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

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### 4. CHANGING PLACES - UPDATE

Councillor R Williams reported that she had attended a meeting on 31 March 2016 about rail services to London where the Managing Director of Network Rail, the General Manager of GWR and the Regional Performance Manager had also been present. The General Manager, Rob Smith, had said that Changing Places would be provided at the station when Crossrail came to Reading in 2019. The facility would be provided on the north side of the station and would include toilets and changing facilities for disabled people.

Councillor R Williams also reported on recent press articles about the former manager of Broad Street Mall who had been charged with fraud.

**AGREED:** That the position be noted.

### 5. ACCESS ISSUES

#### (a) Reading Buses - Update

Martijn Gilbert, Managing Director of Reading Buses, updated the Group on upcoming service improvements to Reading Buses routes and vehicles as follows:

Route 9 - A community action group had carried out some comprehensive research with Reading University in Whitley about better cross Whitley routes. In the previous year the frequency of services had been reduced due to the introduction of the number 3 Leopard service along the Shinfield Road. The findings of the project had recommended the rejuvenation of the route and as a result a new timetable would be introduced from September 2016. The Leopard bus would also have its route extended into the new housing in Spencers Wood and there would be a comprehensive customer communication process. In the future the increase in housing on the former garrison site to the south of the Borough would see all routes increased.

Routes 13 and 14 - New buses would be introduced on this route, doubling the service and frequency from the town centre. A third screen in front of the wheelchair bay would also be trialled on this service in September/October 2016 and, if successful, would then be deployed elsewhere.

Route 17 - There had been a trial on this service of the new Routemaster bus which had double doors, one for boarding and one for exiting the bus, which had benefits in terms speeding up the boarding process. There would be a trial at the end of the year to test buses with centre doors ahead of new buses being introduced on the route during summer 2017. Although the centre doors would be used by passengers to get off the buses wheelchair users could use the centre doors to get on the buses.

Yellow 26 - This route would be extended to the new IKEA store as would the number 15 route which would be extended to Sava Centre and IKEA.

With regard to the opening of the new IKEA store at Calcot, the opening would take place on 14 July 2016 and a free bus service from Tilehurst Triangle would

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start on 15 July 2016. It was expected that traffic would be very busy during the opening weeks of the store and extra recovery time would be built into timetables.

Route 28C - This route would no longer run on Saturday.

Route 33 - There would be a slight change to the service at the end of July 2016 and a trial would take place in November 2016 with new buses which would have double wheelchair bays. Priority seating would still be in place as would side seating.

Audio Announcements - All new buses would have on-board audio announcements and visual screens and work was being carried out to check all existing screens and audio announcement systems to ensure they were working. Currently around 70% of the fleet was fitted with audio announcement systems and screens and this would increase to 100% in 2018.

### AGREED:

- (1) That the position be noted;
- (2) That Martijn Gilbert be thanked for attending the Group meeting.

### (b) Access Issues

Northern Interchange of Reading Station - It was reported that there were still no rails on the steps at the northern interchange of the station.

Broad Street - It was reported that there were still ongoing issues with cycling in Broad Street and with noise issues which made navigating the street particularly difficult for blind people.

Hedges - Issues with hedges growing over pavements was reported and it was suggested that this could be logged via the Love Clean Reading app.

AGREED: That Helen Bryant inform the relevant officers of the access issues outlined above.

## 6. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No future agenda items were suggested by the Group.

## 7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

### Former Reading Prison

Helen Bryant reported that the UK charity Artangel would be submitting plans to hold an international art exhibition in the former Reading Prison from 2 September to 30 October 2016. The plans would be considered at the meeting of Planning Applications Committee on 20 July 2016.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

## ACCESS & DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP MINUTES - 30 JUNE 2016

### 8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Access & Disabilities Working Group would next meet on Thursday 15 September 2016 at 2pm.

The September 2016 meeting would be preceded by a tour of the town centre which would begin at 1.00pm at the Readibus stop outside John Lewis.

(The meeting opened at 2.00pm and closed at 3.38pm)