

To: Councillor Eden (Chair)
Councillors R Williams, Khan and
Manghnani

e-mail:
helen.bryant@reading.gov.uk

Your contact is: **Helen Bryant**

NOTICE OF MEETING - ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP 26 NOVEMBER 2020

A meeting of the Access and Disabilities Working Group will be held on Thursday, 26 November 2020 between 1.00 pm and 2.30pm via Microsoft Teams. Please note the change of time. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Or phone in by dialling +44 20 3443 8928
and then the Phone Conference ID: 986 817 725#

(Please be aware that if you phone in, your phone provider may apply charges for the call. You are advised to check with your phone provider in advance.)

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7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 4 March 2021

If you need support with your internet or your device to access the meeting, please let Clare Muir know on 0118 9372119 Clare.Muir@reading.gov.uk

Tips if you have trouble: Microsoft teams works best on Google Chrome

- 1) Right Click on [Click here to join the meeting](#)
 - 2) Copy the link
 - 3) Open Google chrome
 - 4) Paste the link into the web browser
 - 5) Microsoft Teams will open - click on join the meeting
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- 1) Make sure your laptop/PC speaker is on

ACCESS AND DISABILITIES WORKING GROUP - THURSDAY 5 MARCH 2020 2.00 PM

Minutes

Present:

Cllrs Eden, R Williams, G Khan, Manghnani, Rowland, Hoskin

Stuart Pearce - Guide Dogs

Angie Burnish - Peapods

Professor Sophie Bowlby - Chair, Board of Directors, Readibus

Peter Absolon - General Manager, Readibus

Bob Bristow - Reading Association for the Blind

Douglas Dean - Thames Valley Pensioners' Convention

Nigel McAlister - Member of the Public

Barbara McAlister - Member of the Public

Isabel Edgar-Briancon - Assistant Director for Corporate Improvement and Customer Services, RBC

Carolyn Jenkins - Landscape Services Manager RBC

Ben Stanesby - Leisure & Recreation Manager - RBC

Chris Woods Architect, Saunders Boston

Lucy Murray- Robertson: GLL Project Manager

Paul O'Sullivan: GLL Rivermead General Manager

Tracy Allen - Senior Occupational Therapist - BfC

Apologies

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Cllr Eden welcomed everyone.

2. COUNCILLORS' DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None

3. MINUTES

Notes of the meeting held on were agreed as a correct record, with an amendment to Matters Arising 1 to remove the word 'to'.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Item 7. The Chair was still awaiting a response from Reading Buses.

5. LEISURE FACILITIES

Chris Woods, Architect presented on the proposed new leisure facilities. He reported that the new facility at Rivermead will be constructed on the car park and the current building demolished, to maintain continuity of service. He provided images of what the building would look like including zoned areas and the reception area.

He showed images of the proposed facility at Palmer Park including swimming pool, grandstand and reception.

He said that a transport consultant had been appointed. There would be accessible parking bays and drop off near the front of the centre. They were following Sports England design guidance and referring to dementia- friendly design guidance. There would be easy read signage in Reception and colour zoning to make internal arrangements as clear as possible for navigation.

Assistance dog toilet areas would be incorporated in the design. Changing Places facilities would be provided at both venues and wheelchair accessible lockers and vanity units would be provided.

Self-operated pool pods would be installed in the swimming pools. Two types of wheelchair would be provided - standard and extra support, suitable for children.

The Chair asked for a written confirmation on the provision of wheelchairs and on the emergency procedures provision.

Fitness suites would have social areas with storage for wheelchairs and would have a sports wheelchair zone.

Wheelchair spectator spaces would be mingled with seating.

Palmer Park would have a 25m community pool and spectator seating will be in the community café.

An induction loop would be provided in reception.

GLL will have staff training on serving disabled people in place.

The presentation was followed by a Q&A

Q. How many Blue badge parking bays will be provided?

A. There will be a formal assessment for allocation later down the line.

Q. How can people get involved in the detailed design?

A. Plans will be published for feedback

Q. What will happen to the day centre currently at Rivermead?

A. This will be relocated.

Q. What will happen to the Bowling Hall?

A. The new site will not include the Bowling Hall. RBC is talking to the Bowling Club. However the facility will remain for 2 further seasons.

The group requested:

- Audio described toilets
- An internal grid system for navigation
- That a navigation route be provided for blind people arriving by bus
- 2 spaces to be provided for Readibus.

The Chair said that it would be helpful for disabled users to be able to test and feedback prior to completion of the buildings.

The Chair said she would talk to Reading Association for the Blind about options for the Bowling Club.

Chris was thanked for his presentation

6. ACCESSIBLE PLAY EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES

Carolyn Jenkins reported that a successful capital funding application had been made for the play area at Palmer Park. The Task and Finish group had selected a scheme which could accommodate about 70 children. The order had been placed with a lead time of 8 weeks. A further meeting of the Task and Finish group was to be held 19/20 March. Cllr Rowland asked for members of the group to notify which of the dates was most suitable. It was confirmed that the disabled parking provision would continue.

The rope swing at Christchurch Meadows was being repaired.

Angie Burnish fed back on the designs. The chosen design enabled disabled children to get up high on the equipment and look down. It also made provision for people to pass easily on the equipment and gave a choice of routes. She reported that the process had been a positive experience and Carolyn and George were thanked for their work.

7. CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY

Isabel Edger Briancon presented on the Council's Customer Experience Strategy which had been adopted by Policy Committee in January 2020. https://www.reading.gov.uk/media/10504/Customer-Experience-Strategy/pdf/Customer_Experience_Strategy.pdf

She said the Council was looking at having one telephone number. It was introducing innovative technologies and setting up user groups to test and feedback.

Bob Bristow asked that the current screen reader used by the Council be improved.

There was some discussion about whether the use of the term 'Customer' was appropriate for Council services. Isabel responded that the term was considered best practice.

8. WEBSITE 2020

Adam Bevington reported that at the end of March 2020 the Council would move to a different website platform which would incorporate newer technologies that react better on smart phone.

The Council was partnering with the Shaw Trust to ensure accessibility for visually impaired people and the new website would be accessible to screen readers. All the web designers were required to use screen readers to understand how the design worked with them.

The new website would include positive images of disabled people. There would be a designated page for disabled people providing easy access to information such a toilets and parking.

Adam said he was aiming to have a map of parking bay locations.

The Chair asked Adam to extend the invite to test the website to Reading Association for the Blind and the Access and Disabilities WG members.

9. BLUE BADGES

Paul Davis presented on the investigation on Blue Badge Fraud. He said that parking enforcement would send cases to the Anti Fraud Team, who went through a process of checks to establish if there was evidence of fraud. Lawyers would review whether there was intention to defraud. He said that between April 2015 and January 2020 54 referrals of suspected fraud had been made to his service, 4 of which had ended in prosecution.

Nigel McAlister pointed out that Buckinghamshire County Council partnered with a specialist firm and succeeded in making considerably more prosecutions.

Angie Burnish asked if more could be done to educate people on the use of blue badges.

10 AOB

It was raised that lines had been recently been painted of blue badge parking spaces. The Chair agreed to raise this with the lead councillor.

Cllr Rowland reported that she and others had reviewed the Braille signage at the station and would be making suggestions for improvement and possible funding for these.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 1pm

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Changes to the design and appearance will be made and are being discussed at the moment. In the meantime I would refer you to the Q&A on the RBC website: (<https://www.reading.gov.uk/council/policies-finance-and-legal-information/transport-schemes-and-projects/reading-west-station/>)

Reading West Station Upgrade

This scheme is the proposed enhancements to Reading West Station in west Reading on the Reading to Basingstoke and Reading to Newbury line as well as associated highway improvements to the Oxford Road. The scheme includes new station building, multi-modal interchange and highway amendments and will improve the environment, accessibility and connectivity of the station to the surrounding area. The proposals aim to attract new users to the rail network and open up new journey opportunities as the current environs at Reading West Station are recognised as poor-quality and act as a barrier to accessing the rail network.

The proposals will provide a new station building on the Oxford Road, with potential ticket gates and a new retail unit, creating a presence on the Oxford Road and dramatically changing the nature of the area in terms of safety and security. There will be minor changes to the road layout to facilitate the station building and to provide a high-quality bus interchange facility and improved cycle parking. A new access has already been provided from the Oxford Road to the Basingstoke bound platform 1.

Improved integration with bus stops, provision of cycle parking and improved security are important to facilitate the area surrounding Reading West station not only as an interchange but a place where people want to spend time. Encouraging passengers to use Reading West will also relieve pressure on interchanges at Reading Central station.

[Reading West Station upgrade – full business case](#)

[Reading West Station upgrade – economic appraisals report](#)

Planning Application Submitted – October 2020

A planning application has now been submitted by Great Western Railway for the scheme and it is anticipated that this will be reviewed at the Council's Planning Committee before the end of this year. Should the scheme be granted planning approval it is fully funded and work on site is expected to start in Spring 2021 starting with the highway works.

Press Release: <http://news.reading.gov.uk/application-submitted-reading-west-station/>

Reading West Station Upgrade – Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the scheme?

Reading West Station has suffered from underinvestment over many years and has generally poor-quality surroundings, with concealed entrances, very limited waiting and ticket facilities and low natural surveillance.

A station upgrade scheme has been developed by Reading Borough Council, Great Western Railway (GWR) and Network Rail. GWR are leading on the station enhancements of the scheme the main components of the scheme will include:

- New building and interchange facilities on Oxford Road entrance;
- Improvements to platform waiting facilities;
- Improvements at the Tilehurst Road entrance and
- Better safety and security across the station;

The scheme also includes highway improvements on the A329 Oxford Road outside the station. These works will involve some realignment of Oxford Road and create space for the new station building footprint, cycle parking spaces and relocation of bus shelters.

The upgrade plan is funded by the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) through £3.1m from the Local Growth Fund money from central Government and £200k from Section 106 contributions secured by Reading Borough Council. The upgrade plans form part of a wider masterplan with Great Western Railway and GWR which will deliver long overdue investment in Reading West Station to match investment in other stations in Reading including at Reading

Station, the new station at Green Park and improvements planned at both Tilehurst and Theale stations.

What will the new station building look like?

The appearance of the new station building was conceived as a simple rectangular building to be located under the railway bridge on the south side of the Oxford Road. Its primary function is to operate as ticket office with the facilities expected of similar sized stations on the GWR network.

The entrance to the station will be large glazed entrance doors and screens which provides visibility to and from the street with also an opportunity as a non-station user to be aware of the buildings function as well as natural light in to the building. Rail users will enter the building centrally from the South side of Oxford Road, pass through the ticket gate-line and then access the desired platform. If required, there are opportunities to utilise the additional facilities that are provided, such as the self-service ticket vending machines, retail offering or WC facility.

The design of the station building itself – which has been submitted by GWR's architects as part of the application – is still subject to the usual planning processes and consultations. This process will also include approvals of the materials, cladding and colour schemes. In the meantime, Council planners will liaise with GWR and its architects over its proposed choice of materials and finish for the station building as these have not been finalised.

The shape of the plan has also been arranged to reduce the potential of loitering with CCTV provided throughout.

Why is there a retail unit? Could it be scrapped to reduce the size of the building?

A retail unit is proposed to enhance the current facilities at the station for passengers. The intention is also to feature a 'serving hatch' so that members of the public can purchase refreshments, also contributing to the local economy. The aspiration will be to source a local supplier for the unit.

What measures will there be to prevent people climbing on to the roof?

From the Oxford Road public side, the exterior of the building has been designed to minimise potential grab/climbing points in combination with a high-level overhanging soffit. The out-of-hours gates are within metal screens with anti-climb top. From the platform access routes inside the Station demise, the existing palisade fencing located on the embankment walls will be adapted to prevent access to the new building roof. CCTV is also provided around the new Station building.

How will the scheme improve safety and security of the station?

The scheme will improve security and aims to reduce crime incidents at the station, as barrier systems will only allow rail users with tickets into the station area from both the Oxford Road and Tilehurst Road entrances. The station facilities are also relocated to a visible location on Oxford Road, therefore improving natural surveillance.

The scheme will provide enhanced CCTV cameras at the station to cover both platforms and station buildings. GWR has an aspiration to change the operational model to increase manned hours at the station.

Why do the plans not include the installation of lifts?

The station upgrade does not include the installation of lifts at the station as, due to Network Rail safety regulations, the addition of lifts at Reading West Station would require the full rebuild of the station platforms to meet the regulations and this is currently unaffordable. However, these plans do include the 'passive provision' for the installation of lifts to each platform in the future subject to the amendment to the Network Rail regulations and if funding is identified.

The Council will continue to liaise with Network Rail and GWR to identify possible solutions that will allow for the installation of lifts at Reading West Station.

What are the plans for the transport interchange improvements on Oxford Road including the bus stops and cycle storage?

The plans include the enhancement to the street scape on the Oxford Road and improvements to the transport interchange. The bus shelters will be moved slightly to accommodate the changes to the highway and new cycle storage will be installed on both the north and the south side of the Oxford Road. The enhancements to the transport interchange will also compliment wider sustainable transport improvements planned on the Oxford Road corridor including bus and cycle lanes and pedestrian enhancements.

Once the new station building is in how wide will the pavement be?

The highway and interchange enhancements have been designed to compliment the new station building on the Oxford Road. This includes realigning the road to move it north to create space for the new building and new footway on the south side. The revised pavement width would be 2.0m at its narrowest point.

What is the current status and programme for the scheme?

A planning application has been submitted by Great Western Railway for the scheme and it is anticipated that this will be reviewed at the Council's Planning Committee

before the end of this year. Should the scheme be granted planning approval it is fully funded and work on site is expected to start in Spring 2021 starting with the highway works.

How can I make comments on the scheme?

Comments regarding the Reading West Station scheme can be submitted through the planning application process and the full planning application can be found on the Council's Planning Portal at <http://planning.reading.gov.uk/>

The [**planning application number is 201448**](#)

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