

Work Begins To Transform Reading West

August 16, 2021



Preparatory works for major improvements to Reading West Station have started this week with roadworks on the Oxford Road to make space for a brand new station building.

Reading Borough Council is leading on a £3.3 million project to transform Reading West, working in partnership with Great Western Railway and Network Rail. A new station building on the Oxford Road forms the centerpiece of the improvements, which include new ticket gates at the Tilehurst Road and Oxford Road entrances, new toilets and a retail facility, all which will significantly improve safety and security. A new bus interchange and improved cycle parking also form part of the scheme, as do improvements to the Tilehurst Road entrance.

From Monday (August 16th) highway works and realignment works started to pave the way for the new station building on the south side of the Oxford Road. Works will involve temporary lane closures and traffic signals which will be manually controlled during peak periods to help traffic flow better. Working hours are 07:30 to 14:30 from Monday to Saturday.

A number of the parking bays on the Oxford Road will be suspended and, in consultation with Reading Buses, the inbound and outbound bus stops on the Oxford Road at the station will be relocated for the duration of the works. There will also be a closure and diversion routes for exit from Salisbury Road and

entry to Gower Street.

Advanced warning signs have been placed on the Oxford Road. The preparatory works are expected to run for 16 weeks, at which point partners Great Western Railway will take possession of the southern side of the Oxford Road for construction of the new station building. The new station facilities are expected to be open to the public next summer.

Tony Page, Reading Borough Council's Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, said: "These preparatory works effectively mark the start of construction of the new and much improved station environment at Reading West. Local residents and passengers will be all too familiar with the regular instances of anti-social behavior which have blighted the station over very many years. A key element of this project is to tackle those issues through the design and day to day operation of a new station.

"New ticket gates at both the Tilehurst Road and Oxford Road entrances will mean access to the station is limited to paying passengers only, which is not currently the case. New lighting, CCTV, toilets, a retail facility and better waiting areas, will all combine to significantly improve safety and security.

"At the planning consultation stage, the Council took into consideration concerns expressed about access into and in front of the station. By marginally moving a bus stop and kerb lines on both sides of the road, the footpath directly in front of the station has been widened. These preparatory works begin next week, alongside physical work to create a new bus interchange to make it easier for commuters to easily swap from bus to train, and additional cycle parking.

"Road users who regularly travel along the Oxford Road are asked to build in extra time for their journeys, particularly through the autumn months when the roads are likely to become busier. We thank local residents for their patience whilst this important project takes shape."

Tom MacLachlan, GWR's Regional Development Manager, said: "These works will enable us to deliver a major upgrade to facilities at Reading West, with a new station building that will provide benefits for our customers as well as improving the area for local residents. We will continue to run trains to and from Reading West throughout the works, and hope to open the new station building next summer."

Victoria Bradley, Network Rail Sponsor, said: "We welcome the start of this work which will greatly improve the station environment and experience of passengers when travelling to and from Reading West station.

"We are working with our partners to support these improvements and look forward to seeing the benefits this upgrade will bring to both passengers and the local community once complete."

Reading West Station sits just off the busy Oxford Road and is on the Reading to Basingstoke and Reading to Newbury line. The project aims to attract even more commuters to the rail network as it will be a significant upgrade to the current facilities at Reading West.

Designs for Reading West show a brand new station building with a distinctive brick and glass exterior. The footpath immediately in front of the new station building will be widened to make access easier for both

passengers using the station, and for pedestrians walking past. The Council's proposal for Reading West was approved at Planning Applications Committee in January.

The scheme is being funded through £3.1m of Local Growth Fund secured from the Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, as well as £200,000 Section 106 developer contributions.

More information on the Reading West Station improvement scheme is available at <https://www.reading.gov.uk/council/policies-finance-and-legal-information/transport-schemes-and-projects/reading-west-station/>

Photo credit: Reading Borough Council