

New Plans for Reading West find some Friends and Some Less Happy People!



These pictures have been released to show the designs for the “new and improved” Reading West Station. The project is expected to cost £3.3 million and include a new station building, with ticket gates at both the Tilehurst Road and Oxford Road entrances, new toilets and a café. What the plans do NOT include is a lift that would provide accessibility for people with mobility problems. This seems strange when the station platforms are well above pavement height and will still mean that passengers with these problems will still have to travel into the main station in the centre of Reading.

The platforms serve the Reading to Basingstoke and Newbury lines and, if the plans that have been submitted are approved, it is hoped to start work in March 2021 and should take about one year to complete. The new layout will provide better bus interchange and cycle parking. The planning application has been made by the Great Western Railway in partnership with Reading Borough Council and Network Rail.

Nicola Scott, from GWR said, “We are delighted to be working with Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to modernise Reading West station. These changes will not only improve the station for our customers, they will also support the local and regional economy once it starts to recover, and will mean a cleaner, greener environment from better transport integration.”

The Reading West Station project is funded by £3.1m local growth funding from Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, £200,000 Section 106 funding secured by Reading Borough Council and stations improvement funding from GWR.

However, the outside appearance has not pleased everyone, with many likening the new building being “a row of shipping containers just dumped by the side of the road!” Time will tell as to whether the Council will require alterations to the design and whether there will be sufficient antipathy that a change may be necessary. There is no doubt that improvements are required sooner rather than later to a rather tired old station but it is disappointing that more could not have been done to improve accessibility.