

## Plans in Hand for Station Developments near Reading



Theale, Reading West and Tilehurst stations will all get much needed improvements under an £18 million project designed to see two distinctly disabled-unfriendly train stations given new access for passengers but Reading West station will still not have lifts installed despite being included in the refurbishment plan.

While details have been released of some improvements for passengers using Reading West station, lifts for disabled people are still not included but it is better news for passengers using Theale and Tilehurst stations, where lifts will be installed.

Reading West MP and Business Secretary Alok Sharma has been working with Network Rail and the Department for Transport over improvements to Theale station for a number of years and is delighted to see the much-needed improvements finally announced. He said: "I recently met with representatives from the partner organisations at Theale station to discuss the planned improvements and to see the newly developed ticket office at the site. Having raised these issues on behalf of constituents over many years, I am delighted that passengers at Reading West, Theale and Tilehurst stations will benefit hugely from the improvements that are underway and I am delighted that funding has been made available by the Department for Transport to ensure this has been possible."

Mike Gallop, western route director at Network Rail, added: "Following our meeting with Alok Sharma MP and the minister last year I am really glad to see the funding being made available by the Department for Transport so we can deliver these improvements. An enhanced travel experience is at the heart of us welcoming passengers back to the railways."

Disabled campaigners have repeatedly revealed their frustrations at the lack of facilities at the three stations, which meant passengers in wheelchairs or who had difficulty walking would have to go to the main station in Reading if they wanted to catch a train.

### ***Theale station***



***Theale station is set for a revamp (Getreading)***

Theale Station will see improvements including:

- A new, fully accessible footbridge with lifts
- A station building with a new ticket office, toilets and possibly a café
- Twice as many car spaces in a new decked car park
- Improved access for buses and taxis with a turning circle and drop-off area

### ***Reading West station***



***Reading West station (BerkshireLive)***

- A new station building with improved facilities
- Ticket gates to help dissuade anti-social behaviour
- Improved accessibility

### ***Tilehurst station***



***Tilehurst station is set for a revamp***

- New lifts will be connected to the footbridge at the station which was installed as part of a recent electrification programme.

The work will be done in phases and will start at Theale and Reading West early in 2021. Alison Webster, chief executive at Thames Valley Berkshire local enterprise partnership, explained: "The LEP has already invested nearly £30m of its Local Growth Funds directly into rail projects across the county – building on Berkshire's already strong connectivity. We are delighted to be partners in the Theale station project and have provided £4 million towards this important upgrade. As part of our planning for a green economic recovery from Covid-19, LEP funding is also supporting other sustainable transport options which will further enhance local connectivity and encourage people to have confidence to get back onto public transport and away from individual car use."