

From the Lookout Post June 2013

New Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

Discussion of a third road bridge over the Thames has vanished from the agenda but planning for a pedestrian and cycle bridge is moving apace. This is to be funded by the Reading area Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and so must meet the timescale laid down.

A map and an indicative image are now available. The proposed style is similar to the pedestrian bridge at Junction 11 of the M4. A consultation and drop in event were held in May. It will then be necessary to apply for planning permission. The proposed plans show the bridge to the east of Fry's Island between the Caversham and Reading bridges. This would provide a new link to the existing foot/cycleway path from central Caversham and a new foot/cycleway is proposed, to link to the existing footpath running north to south through Christchurch Meadows.

On the Reading side, the bridge will lead to land behind the Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) site and by a ramp to the riverside path. The surface of the riverside foot/cycleway will be improved to provide a link via Norman Place to the new pedestrian crossing on Vastern Road. This will connect through to the new northern entrance to the Railway Station and pedestrian subway leading to the Town Centre.

Bus changes from July

The new Northern Interchange is due to open on 1st July 2013. All 'Pink routes' (22, 23, 24) and Vitality 2, will call at the Northern Interchange on their way out of Reading, after the stop at Apex Plaza, and on their way into Reading, before coming into town either via Caversham Road (Pink 22 & 24) or via Vastern Bridge, (Pink 23, and Vitality 2). A decision on the 27/29 has still to be confirmed.

Care for older people

Residential and day care services are set to change in Caversham. This is an important local issue as many parts of Caversham have a higher proportion of older people. The Council is consulting on the best way to provide day services for older people in the borough and the future of the Arthur Clark care home. Both consultations close on 14 June 2013.

As people are live longer with healthier lives, expectations of day care are changing and the demand for traditional day services is reducing nationally. In Reading, the numbers of people attending the Council's day care facilities have fallen over the past six months. At Albert Road in Caversham, on average only 13 places out of 20 are taken up and at the Phoenix Centre in Southcote, 29 out of 45 places.

The Albert Road building is in need of investment, so the Council propose that the two services are merged to make better use of spare space at Phoenix. At the same time, the Council is seeking to make sure that the pattern of services meets changing needs. The preferred scheme is to provide an Older People's Resource Centre, which could offer more flexible facilities that go beyond traditional day care to include:

- Facilities with easy access
- Activities providing opportunities for people to socialise, stay fit and well and develop new interests
- Easy access to advice and support services
- Specialist support to help people maintain and restore independence
- Support which enables people to take part fully in day services and give family or carers a well earned break
- Opportunities to take part in volunteering

There are many alternatives and the Council is looking for ideas and suggestions about how day care services could change for the future. You can give your views online at : www.reading.gov.uk/letstalkcare, or attend a meeting at **Friday 31st May 2013, 10am - 12.30pm** at the Civic Centre, Reading.(call 0118 937 2969 to book a place) You can request a large print version of the questionnaire or help completing the form, by calling 0118 937 3747. The consultation will close on **14 June 2013**.

The Arthur Clark Care Home in Caversham provides permanent care services for up to 24 frail elderly people as well as two beds for respite care. The building does not meet modern standards and room sizes and facilities do not meet new regulations. It is estimated that upgrading the building would cost around £1 million. Work would need to be carried out in the next 12-18 months to meet new regulations. The home would have to be vacated and the new layout would provide fewer beds and hence an increase in fees.

The Council considers there are other care homes in the Reading area which could provide suitable alternative accommodation, offering better facilities and an equivalent quality of care. To keep unsettling disruption to a minimum, they propose to support Arthur Clark residents and respite users to find suitable alternatives and then close the Arthur Clark home.

Views from service users and their families are invited. Meetings will be arranged on the Arthur Clark site for residents, their family members and others to give their views on these proposals. All residents will be offered a personal interview to including a friend, a relative to help put their views

On line responses can be made at: www.reading.gov.uk/council/Consultations/improving-residential-services-arthur-clark-care-h/

The consultation will close on **14th June, 2013**.

CADRA AGM and Trading Standards

The deadline for this column came before the CADRA AGM on 7 May and the talk on Trading Standards but look out for a report in a later edition.
