



CADRA Monthly Roundup: June 2020

The CADRA committee held its third 'virtual' meeting this month. There are still many issues to address as summarised in this update. Please share it with anyone you feel might be interested.

Covid-19

As small steps are taken to ease restrictions, [Government Guidelines](#) are being updated to reduce the risk of infection rates rising again. We have not attempted to show each step on our [Covid-19 Response page](#), but there is wide range of information there which you may find helpful.

CADRA's AGM

Members will have received an email giving notice of the alternative arrangements for the 2020 AGM. A second email will follow shortly with details of points raised under Any Other Business and asking members to vote on the formal business. This should only take a couple of minutes of your time and we would appreciate your help in ensuring that CADRA complies with its formal obligations.

Transport

As indicated in May, CADRA has contacted Councillors on both Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council to express grave concern that the [Oxfordshire Local Transport & Connectivity Plan](#) makes no mention of its neighbours in Berkshire. It was encouraging that a number of SODC Councillors responded with an understanding of the issues in Caversham.

RBC's Consultation on the [Reading Transport Strategy 2036](#) extends to the end of August and we are developing a response to the many issues it raises. A major issue for Caversham is the proposed new orbital route ([shown on p90](#)) linked to new Park & Rides and a third Thames Crossing. Congestion in Caversham has long been a major problem. It results in very poor air quality with significant health issues, a hazardous environment and severance of the community.

Caversham suffers because it is, effectively, the bottleneck that protects South Oxfordshire from longer distance through traffic. Potential solutions are not straightforward and may bring their own issues. We would very much welcome comments from members as we formulate our response.

RBC Policy Committee approved [temporary measures](#) on the reallocation of road space to manage road networks in response to the coronavirus outbreak. These measures include creation of a cycle lane on Reading Bridge – likely to be implemented next week – and a one-way system on the western section of Gosbrook Road and Westfield Road ([see para 5.3](#)). CADRA appreciates the difficulties for social distancing of the very narrow pavement on that part of Gosbrook Road but is concerned about potential permanent change.

Finance

The committee has undertaken to review the financial reserves every year. This year, on an exceptional basis, it has agreed to release funds to support the local response to Covid-19. £1000 is to be donated to the [Weller Centre](#) in Caversham to assist their excellent work in supporting the local community through this difficult time. £500 is to be donated to [Thames Valley Air Ambulance](#) who have launched an urgent appeal in response to an anticipated shortfall of £1 million in fundraising income, due to the coronavirus pandemic alongside the additional demands on their service.

Planning

We continue to follow the major schemes in Reading north of the station. In Caversham, a decision is awaited concerning a new cinema in the space currently occupied by the gym above Waitrose. A new application has been submitted to convert the New Directions building – once the Parish School – into a gym. CADRA welcomes the retention of this building and will be reviewing the details.

The draft [Local Plan for South Oxfordshire](#) is being reviewed by a Planning Inspector on behalf of the

Secretary of State ([Examination Details 14 July](#)). CADRA will again be commenting on potential development near the Reading border and is reviewing the submission regarding a further 250-350 homes on Reading Golf Club's land in South Oxfordshire.

Crime

The North Reading Neighbourhood Police Team have reported on their recent challenges. Arrests have been made regarding shed break-ins and thefts from vehicles, but please continue to be vigilant.

Consultations

The following consultations remain open:

- [Reading Climate Emergency Strategy](#) closes 28 June
- [Draft Tree Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan](#) closes 10 July
- The [Local Government Boundary Commission Review](#) of Reading Ward Boundaries closes 20 July