

## Winnersh Triangle Park & Ride FAQs

### Why is the whole car park not yet open?

The ground floor of Winnersh Triangle Park and Ride is now open to allow access to disabled spaces and EV chargers and allowing rail and business park users to park closer to the station end of the car park. There is currently low demand for parking here and so the decked area is closed to prevent need for unnecessary maintenance.

### Why is there no bus service?

Unfortunately, there has been a drastic decline in the demand for Park and Ride Services since the start of Covid-19, for instance, Mere oak Park and Ride was operating with below 50% of the pre-pandemic number of passengers in May 2023; this is not an issue specific to Wokingham with Park and Ride across the country struggling. Because of this, Reading Buses will not be able to provide a service as there would be a huge gap in the cost to provide the service compared to the amount people pay which they, and the Council, cannot afford to fill.

### When will a bus service run from Winnersh Triangle?

This is dependent on the demand for a service at this location.

### How will you know when there will be sufficient demand?

Wokingham Borough Council is continuing to liaise with Reading Buses and monitoring the performance of other Park and Ride sites nationally. We are aware that there is demand from many people who wish to use the service, however, at present this is not enough to clearly demonstrate to the bus company that they will make them enough money to operate without a loss.

### Who will provide the bus service?

Reading buses provided the service prior to the pandemic and, as the main bus operator in the area, it is likely that they would provide the new service. However, because the service is commercial, any bus operator is able to register a service here and pick up passengers.

### Who decides when the bus service will operate?

The bus operator. There might be a situation where Wokingham Borough Council subsidises the service, however, WBC are facing significant financial

pressures and so any service here will need to prove sustainable and run at no cost to the council in the longer term. There might be an opportunity for Wokingham to provide a fund to initiate the service and support the bus operator until the service becomes self-sustaining, however, the cost and timing of this will depend very much on demand for the service; the decision for providing this funding would be made by our Councillors.

**Why was the park and ride site expanded?**

The park and ride car park was expanded as the car park was often full prior to the Covid pandemic. The demand for spaces was forecast to increase in future years and consequently a Business Case was developed showing that expanding the car park would alleviate this issue and generate enough future income to provide a successful investment on the money spent on building the car park. The funding of the car park expansion was predominantly provided by the Local Enterprise Partnership rather than Council funding.

**Why has the car park expansion taken so long?**

Work started in spring 2021 and was set to have finished in 2022 but was delayed for several reasons, mostly related to technical issues with a large water main. This forced building work to stop and parts of the project to be redesigned to fit around it. The council recognised that residents and commuters were keen to see the site re-open and has done all it can to ensure the project was completed as soon as possible with construction work being accelerated to better the previously communicated timescales of summer 2023. The new car park was completed in March 2023.

**How much has the new car park cost taxpayers?**

The majority of the works at Winnersh Triangle have been funded by HM Government's Local Growth Fund and Frasers Property, the owners of Winnersh Business Park. £4.3million was provided in Local Growth Funds through the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and £1.5million from Frasers Property. The final cost of the project is not yet known as the final construction costs need to be agreed with the contractors.

**Is this spend justified?**

Business Cases were produced justifying the expenditure on the upgrade works. These were reviewed and audited by an independent consultant working for the

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Pandemic has clearly had an impact on the relevance of these business cases; it is hoped that in the long term, the Park and Ride will return to being a successful facility for our residents. The business case for the work can be found here:

[Winnersh Triangle \(myjourneywokingham.com\)](http://myjourneywokingham.com)

Until the bus service is provided, what is the best way to get into Reading by public transport?

Residents are able to park at the newly opened car park and either use the train service into Reading or walk under the rail bridge and to the A329 in order to take the X4/4, Reading Buses' express service into Reading. Alternatively, customers can drive to MereOak Park and Ride (south of M4 J11 off the A33) and take the park and ride bus into Reading town centre from there.