

REQUEST FROM MID & WEST BERKSHIRE LAF ABOUT THAMES VALLEY CIRCULAR WALK

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Forum of a request from the Chair of Mid & West Berks LAF (MWBLAF) to consider a new long-distance route known as the Thames Valley Circular Walk.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Chair of the Mid & West Berks LAF (MWBLAF) seeks to inform RBWM LAF about an unofficial long-distance walk called the Thames Valley Path. This is a circuit of around 180km around Reading, with access by public transport from Reading to the start and end of each leg. It is therefore of particular interest for Reading, though it does not pass at all through Reading Borough.
- 2.2 The paper at Appendix 1 was submitted for information to the recent meeting of MWBLAF, and there was interest in potentially promoting this walk. However, it passes through several other Local Authority areas, so the MWBLAF would be interested in views from the relevant LAF's about the sections in their area, and especially any parts of the route that raise particular issues.
- 2.3 The route appears to pass through the following authority areas: West Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Slough (a short distance), Windsor and Maidenhead, Bracknell, Wokingham (appears to skirt the border), Hampshire.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 has links to route descriptions on both a dedicated website and Visorando - on Visorando, you can click on 'bigger map' and then zoom in to OS 1:50,000 and 1:25,000 mapping, so you can see the route in detail together with your local authority boundaries.

Proposed action –members are invited to investigate the route where it passes through Windsor and Maidenhead and provide feedback to MWBLAF.

APPENDIX 1

DATE OF MEETING: 20 September 2023

AGENDA ITEM X: The Thames Valley Circular Walk

Prepared by: Simon Pike

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To inform the Forum of a new long-distance walk that circumnavigates Reading

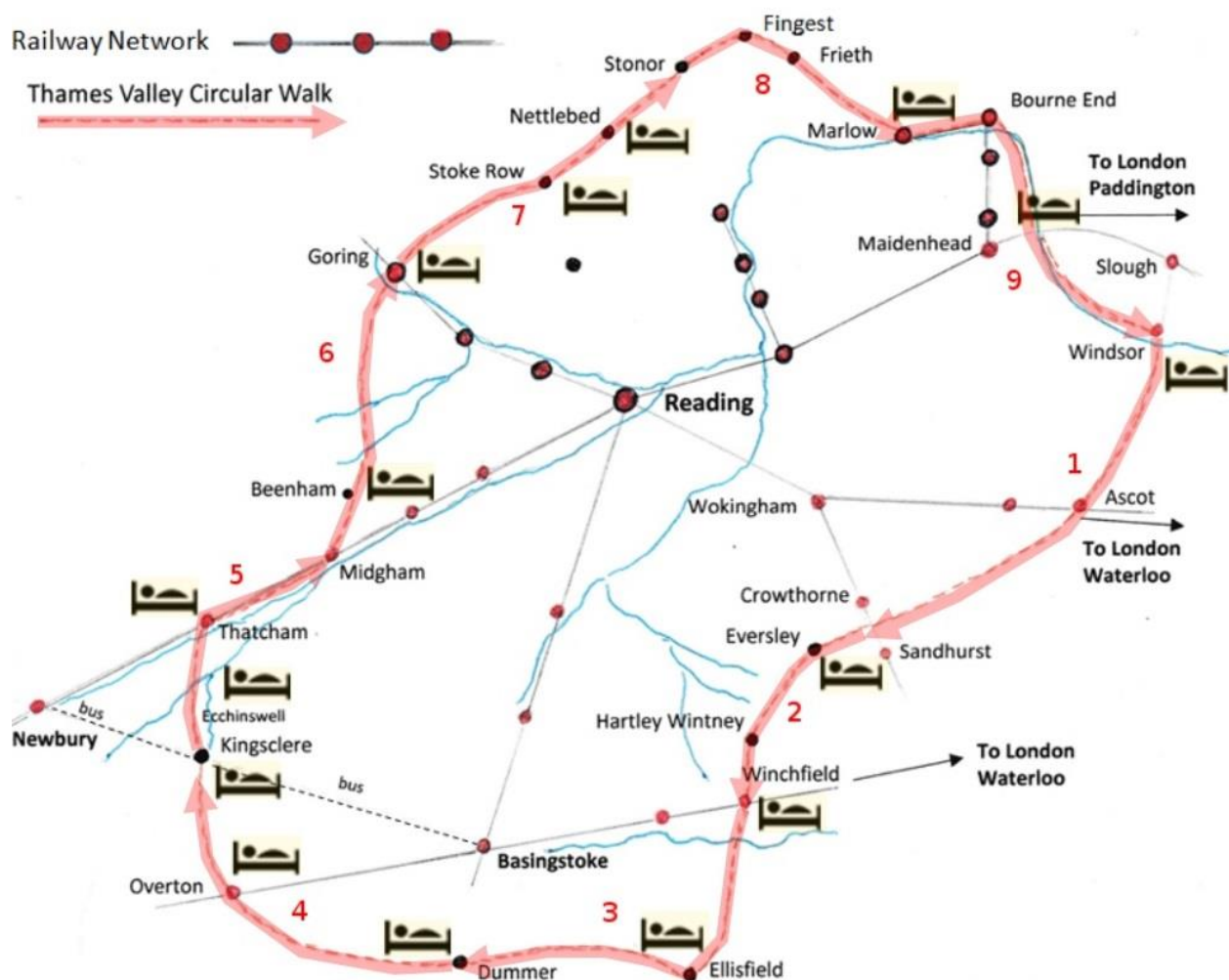
PROPOSED ACTION

- 1) This meeting to note this report.
- 2) Members are invited to provide comments on the quality of this walk to a future meeting of the Forum - which could then consider whether this route might be promoted
- 3) The Chair to inform other Forums through whose area the walk passes.

BACKGROUND

I recently came across a new circular walk on the internet, called the Thames Valley Circular Walk. It is 125 miles long, and passes through the districts of West Berkshire and Wokingham.

Thames Valley Circular Walk



Click the red arrows for details of the stages.
Click the beds for accommodation information.

However, it may be of particular interest to Reading BC, because it is divided into day sections with starts and ends that are all accessible by public transport from Reading.

I found it because the walks have recently been added to the Visorando Website, although it has apparently been available for some time on a dedicated website (the map above is taken from this website).

This route looks interesting, especially as it is entirely accessible as day walks by public transport from Reading. The website also has other circular day walks from railway stations accessible from Reading.

Interestingly, this website is run by supporters of Oxfam. See:

<https://www.roundreadingwalk.co.uk/>

<https://www.visorando.com/en/walk-walks-around-reading/>

The route descriptions have hand-drawn maps; the Visorando site provides Ordnance Survey mapping on both printed route cards and on a smartphone app (you may need to register to see these, but registration and use is free).

I suggest that this route merits further investigation and walking. If it is sufficiently interesting, the Forum (together with other Forums through which it passes) might consider recommending that it is promoted as a long-distance walk, especially given its accessibility by public transport.