

# Cabinet welcomes proposals to move Chester City Gateway vision forward

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Cheshire West and Chester Council's Cabinet agreed to take forward ambitious plans for the Chester City Gateway project, a regeneration and infrastructure programme for the city with multi-modal transport links at its heart.

The programme would see a range of proposed improvements to the area in and around Chester station, creating stronger links between the station, the bus interchange and the city, and ensuring Chester remains a key gateway to north Wales, Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds, whilst significantly improving local infrastructure like the Hoole Bridge.

Potential enhancements for Chester rail station include an additional platform and new east junction that would allow up to nine more train movements to and through the station.

A report on the programme, which is in the very early stages, asked permission from Cabinet to progress three key aspects of the proposed Chester City Gateway vision.

- Investment in rail infrastructure to enable more rail services to come to and through Chester.
- Production of a masterplan for the land around Chester rail station to identify opportunities for improved links to the city centre.
- Improved access to the city via the Hoole Bridge, looking at the transport links for road, pedestrians and bikes from the M53 to the Fountains Roundabout.

Councillor Richard Beacham, Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Growth, said: “This project is about bringing forward a bold vision for a new gateway into Chester. It is about looking for opportunities to address some of the key challenges we face in terms of road, bike, train and pedestrian travel in this area of the city and thinking about how we can overcome these whilst simultaneously identifying land for new housing and commercial premises to grow our local economy.

“Regeneration of the public estate in the area will be the missing link, joining the railway station, the bus interchange and the city centre.

“The Chester City Gateway has the potential to attract significant investment into Chester, delivering on the One City Plan. This is the next step in the process; but this recent decision is a giant leap in the right direction to deliver on this very exciting project for our borough.”

Cabinet approved the submission of an outline business case to the Department for Transport for further investment as part of the national development process for rail schemes.

Approval to produce a masterplan and spatial plan for the Chester City Gateway area, together with consideration of the financial viability was unanimously agreed. The plans will be brought forward by the Council in partnership with Network Rail and London Continental Railways. All three partners will contribute equally to the development costs, around £68,000 each.

The development phase is scheduled to take up to one year. The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) has prepared a major transport scheme study to identify local priorities. One of their priorities is to improve local connectivity around the Chester City Gateway area. The Council has secured a funding contribution of £65,000 from the LEP to commission a ‘Hoole Bridge/A56 Corridor’ study to match fund the £65,000 identified from Council funds.

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