

Consultation launched on improved Chester Railway Station experience

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A four-week consultation has been launched by the partnership leading the Chester City Gateway regeneration project on its draft Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), that will shape future development within the regeneration area over the next decade.

A series of public engagement events will be held during the four-week consultation period by the partnership, consisting of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Network Rail and LCR.

Councillor Richard Beacham, Cheshire West and Chester Council's Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economy & Regeneration said: "The Gateway offers a pivotal opportunity for transformational change in Chester, both for the area around the Railway Station where there is the potential to create a new high-quality living quarter in the heart of the city, and also for transport improvements which will better connect Chester with Cheshire, North Wales, Merseyside and beyond.

"Over the next 10 years, this new Strategic Regeneration Framework will help the Council achieve our ambitions for The Gateway to deliver new homes, jobs, community assets, and public realm and transport improvements.

"We are keen to hear the views of the local community on the draft Framework and I would encourage

people to get involved and have their say.”

Chester City Gateway provides the opportunity to transform the area around Chester Railway Station into a high-quality new destination for sustainable living and working. It provides significantly enhanced green travel connectivity to the city for all visitors and residents, particularly those communities to the north of the station.

The project will also provide a new arrival experience to the city and a ‘gateway’ to Cheshire, North Wales, Merseyside and beyond.

The draft SRF sets out the strategic vision, key initiatives, and overarching principles for the Chester City Gateway, which will be used to attract inward investment, support future funding bids and inform future planning applications.

The plan’s five key initiatives will underpin development in the gateway area:

1. An improved Chester Railway Station experience – creating an enhanced gateway into the city with improved public realm.
2. Supporting greater accessibility and prioritisation of walking and cycling – introducing a new pedestrian and cycle bridge, improved walking and cycling routes to create an integrated transport hub.
3. Consolidating and improving car parking – positioning car parking to better reflect the needs of station users.
4. Delivering high quality placemaking and public realm – creating a place where people want to live, spend time or work.
5. Meeting local housing need – diversifying the housing offer for local people in an area of high demand but low supply.

Robin Dobson, Group Property Director at Network Rail, said: “Network Rail is working in partnership with key stakeholders on how the framework can unlock this strategic regeneration opportunity for Chester.

“Future plans would transform the area surrounding the station and at the same time continue to highlight the pivotal role the railway can play in unlocking sites such as these to deliver lasting growth and community benefit for both the city and the wider region.”

Peter Rowe, Senior Development Manager at LCR, said: “The area around Chester Railway Station is currently widely used by the local population and tourists but is not fit for purpose. Through these ambitious plans we want to create a place that more accurately reflects the design of the wider city and offers a more welcoming gateway for those who live, work and visit the area.

“The vision for the site goes beyond just surface level improvements and will create real change to the wider area, better connecting it to the surrounding communities and making it more accessible for those who use it.

“But we also want to make sure that the needs of the community are being fully met, which is why the

consultation programme is so important. We're looking forward to hearing the views and creating a more welcoming and effective gateway to the city for everyone."

Consultation events will be held on:

- Tuesday 17 January - Chester Railway Station - 11am - 6.30pm
- Wednesday 18 January - Christ Church Chester - 11am - 2pm
- Wednesday 18 January - Hoole Community Centre - 3.30pm - 7pm
- Saturday 21 January - Storyhouse, Chester - 10am - 3pm

The draft SRF can also be viewed on the dedicated website and people can comment online.

The consultation will run until 3 February.

Anyone with queries about the SRF or consultation should contact 0800 089 0361 or email srfconsultation@chestercitygateway.co.uk

Photo credit: Cheshire West and Chester Council