

# Leicester's railway station revamp plans get major cash boost

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Ambitious plans to transform the entrance to Leicester's historic railway station have been given a major boost with the award of almost £18million of Government funding.

Leicester City Council has successfully bid for £17.6million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund towards a £22million scheme to remodel the station's entrance and create a more attractive new gateway to the city centre.

The station would be effectively restored to its Victorian glory by forming a new entrance onto Station Street, directly facing the city centre, and restoring the booking hall to its original size to create more space for train passengers.

The area immediately outside the new entrance will be remodelled with a ramp and steps leading to a large new glazed entrance to the main concourse. The building's original Station Street façade will also be restored.

The covered entrance hall areas on London Road – known as a port cochère – would be transformed into

an attractive new plaza for retail, food and drinks, with the existing taxi ranks reallocated nearby on Station Street.

Leicester City Council has ringfenced £5million of capital as match-funding for the project.

The railway station revamp is seen a first phase of regeneration in the area which, in the longer term, could help attract more private investment and new development in the area.

City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: “The award of almost £18million from the Government’s Levelling Up Fund is a tremendous endorsement of the importance of this project.

“The railway station is a beautiful building but badly in need of improvement to meet the modern needs of a city the size of Leicester. This exciting project will make a huge difference, helping to transform the area into a vibrant gateway that will make a major contribution to Leicester’s prosperity.

“I want to congratulate officers on their hard work with their successful bids to the Government’s Levelling Up programme which has helped attract over £45million of new investment into the city.”

Mark Lambert, Head of Infrastructure & Property at East Midlands Railway, said: “This is fantastic news for the people of the city and our customers that use Leicester station. We are looking forward to working closely with the council to help turn these exciting plans into a reality.”

The proposals will be subject to planning permission and detailed design and development work is now underway. It is expected that construction will begin in early 2023 and be completed by mid-2024.

Leicester City Council was successful in bidding for over £45.5million from the Government’s Levelling Up Fund for three major projects that will support the city economic recovery and growth, and help create hundreds of new jobs.

Along with the transformation of the Leicester Railway Station, the city council has been awarded £8.5million to transform former factory buildings at Pilot House, on King Street, into new start-up units for creative businesses, and £19.4million for three projects in and around Pioneer Park and Exploration Drive, complementing The University of Leicester’s Space Park development.

*Photo credit: Leicester City Council*