

## Oxford Railway Station plans unveiled

An ambitious programme of improvements to Oxford Railway Station has been initiated by Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail, in conjunction with the West End Partnership. The proposed enhancements are an important strand of the government-funded Access to Oxford project, a core aim of which is to facilitate travel to and from Oxford by train.

At the heart of the proposed improvements is Network Rail's plan to create a new bay platform on a section of the Becket Street car park. This would be used by trains terminating at Oxford from the south and would help to increase station capacity and free up the existing platforms for other services.

Oxfordshire County Council have also committed to replacing the existing pedestrian and cycle bridge over Botley Road, the design of which, it is hoped, will help create a more imposing western gateway to Oxford. There are also plans to enhance the station forecourt area to better accommodate buses and taxis.

These plans form the first phase of a 'masterplan' for Oxford station being developed by the County Council. The masterplan will outline a long term vision for the station taking into account other rail proposals announced over recent months, which include Chiltern Railways' 'Evergreen 3' plans to run trains from Oxford via Bicester and High Wycombe to London Marylebone, the East-West Rail Consortium's plans to reopen the line from Oxford to Milton Keynes as well as Network Rail's plans to electrify the railway between London and Oxford.

Ian Hudspeth, the council's cabinet member for infrastructure, said: "The masterplan will ensure each of the proposals complement one another and contribute to an improved Oxford station that the city can be proud of, both in terms of capacity for trains and station buildings, which improve the experience for passengers.

"The masterplan also considers the wider role of the station as part of the regeneration of Oxford's West End, particularly the redevelopment of Frideswide Square under the West End Renaissance programme."

The scheme is also part of Network Rail's Action Stations scheme, which involves a national investment programme of £3.25bn.

Chris Rayner, Network Rail's western route director, said: "Oxford station is a vital transport hub.

"Our plans will make a lasting difference to passengers in Oxford and pave the way for further improvements to the station."

Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail are planning a joint public consultation exhibition at the station in April 2010 to give people an opportunity to comment on the plans and feed into the design process. A planning application will be submitted to Oxford City Council in the Spring. It is hoped the new platform and bridge will be operational in 2011/12.

## **ENDS**

For more information contact:

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## **NOTE TO EDITORS**

**Network Rail** owns and operates Britain's rail infrastructure.

**Oxford's West End Renaissance** is a long-term regeneration programme set to transform the currently under-exploited central western area of Oxford into a modern, vibrant and stylish city quarter.