

DEVELOPING A TECHNOLOGIES CAMPUS FOR CHESTER

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Plans for a new Technologies Campus for the City of Chester are being developed. Having agreed the vision in Spring 2007, Chester Strategic Task Group is working with the West Cheshire College to finalise the plans which will help to bring about a brighter future for Chester's young people and meet the skill needs of employers and adults and so contribute to the continued development of the City.

The Strategic Task Group consists of leading representatives of Chester City Council, Cheshire County Council, West Cheshire College, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), a local school, Visit Chester and Cheshire tourism board and local employers. Its purpose is to work with the College to ensure delivery of the new campus to replace the existing College buildings at Handbridge, whilst ensuring there is no pre-determination of planning matters.

Bill Rutter, who chairs the Strategic Task Group said, "The City of Chester and its people deserve to have a College campus that will meet the needs of the community and the local economy. I have been greatly encouraged by how people have been working together to achieve this aim.

"The Chester Strategic Task Group is pleased that West Cheshire College has listened to the concerns of local people and planners and is pursuing a development in line with local planning policy."

West Cheshire College, Principal, Sara Mogel said: "West Cheshire College is committed to investing in Chester. We have taken on board the representations from local Councillors and others that we should remain at Handbridge and are planning a smaller building on the existing footprint with fewer people and cars visiting the site. We have done everything we can to meet the requirements of the City. We believe that Chester people deserve the best when it comes to facilities for vocational education and training."

Liz Davis, Area Director for the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in Cheshire and Warrington said, "The LSC were instrumental in forming the task group and a member of our board currently chairs the group. We welcome and support the work of members in developing the plans to extend the impact of further education on the local area.

"Further Education Colleges have an increasingly important role to play in meeting the skill needs within their areas. The Leitch Review of Skills confirmed that skills are an essential contributor to a successful, wealth creating economy. They help businesses become more productive and profitable. They help individuals achieve their ambition for themselves, their families and their communities."

Most colleges across Cheshire and Warrington have now benefited from the LSC's ambitious investment plans including the £28m rebuild of Warrington Collegiate, and the innovative and ambitious Macclesfield Learning Zone, both opened in September 2007.

Every one of the eight Further Education Colleges across Cheshire and Warrington has building work underway or well advanced plans to create flagship new buildings that will be an asset to their local areas and the people they serve.

The Ellesmere Port Campus of West Cheshire College has already benefited from such investment and exciting plans are well advanced to take the campus on to the next stage of its development.

Ends

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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