

Press Release
8th September 2005

Transport Solution For Westgate Unveiled

The Westgate Transport Working Group (TWG) has today launched its report outlining the technical transport solutions which would enable the proposals for the Westgate area of Oxford City Centre to go ahead.

The TWG report forms an important part of The Westgate Partnership's *Response to Consultation* on the overall masterplan prepared by architects Allies and Morrison, which was also launched today.

Speaking on behalf of the TWG, Jane McFarland, Group Development Manager for The Westgate Partnership explained; "A huge amount of work has gone into examining all the possible options for transport provision for the new Westgate Centre as well as wider transportation issues in Oxford. I am delighted that the TWG has now reached a practical working solution which will enable us to progress our plans. It has also produced a series of key conclusions and recommendations that could provide additional park and ride spaces and enable the pedestrianisation of Queen Street."

The TWG report identifies a number of key components which will improve public transport accessibility to the area as well as improving existing facilities for car users. These include:

- A new and improved bus priority route connecting Castle Street and Speedwell Street via Norfolk Street (replacing Old Greyfriars Street) with high quality bus stops around the new Westgate
- A new bus turning, layover and drop off or pick up facility at Abbey Place to improve the bus stop provision on Castle Street and Norfolk Street, to relieve pressure on other locations within the City and to improve penetration to the City Centre from bus services from the north and west which at present stop at Magdalen Street

- Additional layover bays will be provided on Speedwell Street so that some services extended from the north and west can turn via Butterwyke Place without the need to wait there
- A requirement for a new turning and layover facility to the north west of Westgate if Queen Street is to be pedestrianised. The TWG report has examined both medium and longer term solutions to provide such a facility
- A new 1335 space multi storey car park in a secure environment which will include new Shopmobility facilities for the City
- The provision of new east-west streets free from motorised traffic
- The need to review new facilities for cyclists, blue badge parking bays and provision for taxi pick up and set downs

The TWG has also examined the capacity of existing park and ride facilities and has concluded that there will be a requirement to provide additional spaces by 2010 as a result of cumulative requirements for schemes in Oxford including Westgate. Work is being undertaken to identify where these spaces could be provided and the TWG is now working with the City and County Councils to identify a solution for taking this forward.

McFarland continued; "The Westgate development does not in itself require the pedestrianisation of Queen Street. However, the complete removal of buses from Queen Street is an agreed aspiration of all parties on the TWG and the report identifies a number of options that could provide the bus facilities to enable this to happen."

The TWG will continue its ongoing discussions and explore possible solutions in the run up to the completion of the new development. A full copy of the report and the Westgate masterplan proposals is available on www.westgateoxford.co.uk.

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Notes to editors:

The Westgate Transport and Working Group (TWG)

The TWG comprises Officers of the County Council in its role as highway authority; Officers of the City Council in its role as local planning authority; the bus companies, Stagecoach in Oxfordshire and the Oxford Bus Company and planning and transportation consultants representing the Westgate Partnership (TWP).

The Westgate Partnership

The re-development and extension of the Westgate Centre is being carried out by The Westgate Partnership, a joint venture between Capital Shopping Centres and La Salle Investment Management.

Capital Shopping Centres PLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty International PLC, is the leading company in the UK specialising in the ownership, management and development of regional shopping centres. It specialises in retail-led town centre regeneration, providing mixed-use schemes which respond to the needs of particular locations. Schemes it has developed and still owns and manages include The Glades (Bromley), The Harlequin (Watford) and The Chimes (Uxbridge)

LaSalle Investment Management, one of the UK's largest investment fund managers, is responsible for the British Coal Industry Pension Funds' property portfolio, which includes The Westgate Centre.

The Westgate Masterplan

The Westgate Partnership's Masterplan for the re-development of the Westgate area of Oxford received support from Oxford City Council's Strategic Development Control Committee in October 2004. Since then, The Partnership has been working on reviewing and responding to issues raised during the consultation process with a view to publishing a response to consultation document which will sit alongside the existing masterplan. Work has recently started on the detailed design process with a view to submitting a planning application at the end of 2005. Further consultation is planned to take place this Autumn.

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