



Welcome

Cllr Richard Beacham, Leader's Champion for the OCP

I am delighted to publish our first newsletter and hope it will be the start of further dialogue with you on how the OCP is evolving across our five working groups. Since its first publication in 2012 and a subsequent update in 2022, the One City Plan has evolved to become our blueprint for collaboration and civic participation in Chester.

In 2015, the council consulted on a proposal to licence buskers in Chester city centre. The proposal would have seen a self-appointed board to assess the quality of street performers and then determine who should be allowed to play. Unhappy with the idea of restricting artistic expression, thousands of local people opposed the plan at the consultation stage. So instead, the council embarked on a series of meetings with businesses, buskers and performance artists to negotiate a new code for street performance in the city. Years later this approach has been recognised as best practice for other cities also looking to balance thriving and engaging performance art with commercial activity and residential living in their city centres.

The Chester code has been used as a foundation for other codes around the country and it is testament to the principle that if you try something new, you can learn from your mistakes and work together to find a solution. Like with the One City Plan, at the heart of developing the new busking code was compromise, participation, negotiation and collaboration. It is an approach that recognises that not everyone has to be right or wrong, and instead focuses on people's talents and experiences, harnessing the belief that we can achieve more together than by working alone.

The One City Plan captures in 45 broad actions the voices of many Chester residents and businesses. Whilst it is a plan for economic growth, this is balanced with actions which promote fairness, quality jobs, education opportunities, health, well-being, culture, environmental and heritage protection alongside civic pride.

Every day, by accident and by design, citizens and organisations in our city work towards delivering these actions and when I hear people say that nothing ever changes, or nothing ever happens, I am reminded of the story of the butterfly. The butterfly only lives for a few days and standing on the leaf of a tree, which lives for hundreds of years, the butterfly is asked if he believes the object on which he is standing is alive. The butterfly says "No, I have been here all my life, and this tree hasn't done a thing."



The One City Plan is a flexible living document, it is a break away from traditional place plans and it will take many projects and many years to achieve some of the actions.

Indeed, some of them will never be fulfilled as we will always want to be attracting investment, growing our tourism offer or maintaining our heritage for example. That's why although I take great pride in the big shiny projects, it is the marginal gains I love most - the incremental changes that carry our city one step forward. You won't always see them, not unless you look hard enough, but they are happening all of the time and as long as there are people in our city who remain committed to a shared vision, working hard together with purpose, then I feel assured that Chester will just keep getting better and better.

I am very grateful for everyone's time to date in helping us ensure the OCP can evolve into a dynamic and crucial process, helping to make Chester a fairer, stronger, and greener city by 2045.

Each group has been busy with stakeholder meetings involving the public, private and community sector with an interest in each respective theme; and a core group of leaders with a responsibility for partnership delivery, who meet regularly. The following updates from each group Chair outline recent activity and progress.

Being | Group Chair: Jane Makin

The Being group is responsible for four of the OCP actions all relating to the safe, clean and welcoming operation of the city and its heritage.

The group includes multiple key stakeholders including Cheshire police, Chester BID, CRAG and Pubwatch. Our key projects include:

- Operation Momentum focused on support for homeless people and wider enforcement-based interventions where necessary
- Alternative giving to drive funding to organisations supporting homeless people, a robust housing strategy and coordination of third sector support
- Purple Flag – an accreditation confirming our safe night-time economy and conserving Chester's rich heritage through establishing a new fire protection system for Chester's Rows, a Rows Spring clean and many other activities.



Chester One City Plan Update

Spring 2024

Connecting | Group Chair: Jack Hubert-Mayhew

Our remit focuses on creating a city accessible for all users, with seamless transport links which improve quality of life and help create a healthier, greener and fairer Chester. Some of our key projects include:

- Improving sustainable and active travel links between our neighbourhoods and the city centre
- Improving air quality and speed management in the city core
- Delivering a better bus network and making Park and Ride the best option for travel into the city.

We have already conducted an audit of the existing cycle routes across the borough, introduced a 20mph limit on Grosvenor Bridge and commenced a review of the Park & Ride. We are feeding into regional partnerships such as GrowthTrack360 to boost rail connectivity across the region. Through the development of the borough's next Local Transport Plan, we will set out a vision for an integrated future transport network across the city.

Experiencing | Group Chair: Bense Burnett

The remit of our group covers what it is like to experience a vision of an emotive, creative city environment, living, working, playing and learning within our city.

The steering group comprises those with an interest in building a creative city of the future, including residents' associations, Chester BID, the University, the Racecourse, the Cathedral and Young Storyhouse to ensure the views of young people are included along with Public Health team linking residents Health & Wellbeing. Some of our key projects include:

- Developing a cultural quarter around the Town Hall
- Supporting creative collaborations such as working and maker spaces
- Greater cultural hubs in the city, enhancing play facilities for relaxing and socialising
- Improving health opportunities and providing safe spaces for young people to flourish in the city.

Scoping for the Experience group has now been completed and key stakeholders are being engaged to ensure they are on board with the core vision and aims of the group before an initial kick-off meeting at the beginning of April.

Coming soon... www.chesteronecityplan.com



Cheshire West
and Chester



Chester One City Plan Update

Spring 2024

Making | Group Chair: Andy Farrall

Our remit covers the regeneration, physical development, economic growth, enterprise and skills; and environment actions of the OCP. Some of our key projects include:

- City Heart – the area in and around Town Hall Square
- City Centre Living – enhancing the city centre’s neighbourhoods
- Reimagining the High Street – rejuvenating the principal commercial streets
- Chester Gateway – the regeneration of the railway station, Boughton canal and Hoole Way areas
- Invest Chester – promoting further inward investment in the city.

Although we are still in our ‘mobilisation’ stage and our remit is large, actual project activity is happening with examples being: developing the approach for the regeneration of the Northgate Phase 2 area, positive discussions regarding the future of the Castle and the imminent production of the Living over the Rows investor ‘How-to-Guide’.

Visiting | Group Chair: Colin Potts

Destination Chester, an existing partnership of Chester’s main tourism businesses and organisations, is also responsible for improving visitors’ pre and post arrival experience through the One City Plan.

Our specific OCP actions are to promote overnight stays and to develop a better events programme, however our remit as Destination Chester is broader and includes developing a long-term City Tourism Plan. We have already produced a Current State of Play paper that lays the foundations for future actions by ensuring they are based on sound evidence, and reflect the thinking emerging from other OCP groups, particularly Making and Experiencing. Our short-term actions have included:

- Running a series of Destination Showcases promoting Chester’s events to its visitor economy businesses
- Developing a much-improved events database and producing a quarterly tourism performance monitor so that we know just how well the city is doing and how it can improve
- We have also been working on a major proposal that could unlock significant new resources to improve the marketing of the city and provide extra reasons to visit.

Coming soon... www.chesteronecityplan.com