

Frequently asked questions

What is going on in Cathedral Square? Why?

Improvement works to Cathedral Square aim to revitalise the heart of the city centre. The planters, underground toilets and road surface will be removed and replaced with fountains and seating areas. The Corn Exchange will be demolished to create a new square and St John's Church opened up with the removal of the surrounding railings. Dramatic lighting at night will emphasise the historic buildings and water features, creating a welcome and focal point for pedestrians day or night.

This is part of plans to create a vibrant and attractive city centre; encouraging residents and visitors to use the city centre, particularly in the evening; supporting economic activity; and promoting a positive image of Peterborough.

How much will it cost and who is paying?

The budget for the entire works is £6million, funded by regional and national bodies, primarily the East of England Development Agency and Government's Department for Communities and Local Government. It is being delivered in partnership between Peterborough City Council and Opportunity Peterborough, our urban regeneration company.

How long will it take?

The project will take about a year. It is hoped the main Cathedral Square works will be complete for the Christmas shopping season and work in the Corn Exchange area, dubbed St John's Square, will be finished by Easter next year.

Will the shops stay open?

Yes, all the shops will stay open. While there is likely to be some disruption to local businesses and anyone walking through the square, we are working hard to minimise this by creating walkways to allow access to shops, and by opening up parts of the square when work is complete. The area cordoned off by hoardings will move and change shape as the four different phases of work continues. Much of the work will take place in the night and out of hours to minimise disruption and avoid any loss of power or water to retail premises.

Why is this happening now in the recession?

Work on this project started in 2007 and work has continued to secure funding, consult with members of the public, fine-tune designs and select contractors. At this time of economic difficulty, it's more important than ever that Peterborough is seen to be investing in its city. It has been demonstrated elsewhere in the country, such as Sheffield, Leicester and Birmingham, that this sort of investment in our public spaces generates a considerable up-turn in the local economy, encouraging new businesses to open and bringing new investment to the city, as well as supporting existing businesses through increased numbers of visitors to the city centre.

Who said they wanted this?

Members of the public, local businesses and organisations, community groups and many more were consulted as part of these plans that stem from the Public Realm Strategy. Throughout 2007 and 2008 public engagement was carried out via workshops, presentations, exhibitions, questionnaires, business briefings and in the media.

Who is doing the work and will it mean any new jobs?

A number of organisations have been involved in developing the scheme, including some from the city and surrounding area, for example LDA Design based in Minster Precincts. Civil engineering firm Osborne is carrying out the visible work in Cathedral Square. Over the year, about 100 people will be employed on the construction works, including at least 50 per cent

from within 10 miles radius of the city centre. It will mean a number of new jobs for the city for the duration of the project.

Are you chopping trees down? Is this project good for the environment?

Only one tree will be removed – a birch tree in Cumbergate that is in poor condition. Half a dozen or more will be planted in the area as part of the scheme.
A great deal of effort is going into ensuring this project does not significantly adversely affect the environment, both during construction and once complete so its carbon footprint is reduced from current levels, for example by using energy efficient lighting.

What about events and festivals that usually take place in the square?

All events and festivals currently planned will still go ahead but will move to areas such as Bridge Street, Long Causeway and the Cathedral Precincts. Once complete the improvement works will mean a far superior area with greater, more flexible, space and high quality seating and street furniture, creating a more attractive backdrop to events and promoting increased community activity.

What security will there be?

The construction area is contained behind hoardings to protect the public. No equipment will be stored on site. CCTV will monitor the area.

Will vehicles still be able to access the square for deliveries?

Yes, although vehicles are subject to a traffic restriction order limiting access to certain hours and only by permit. For more info contact Peterborough City Council parking services on 01733 452514.

What is Zero Waste Place?

It means as much waste as possible will be recycled back into the project or given away. For example paving slabs and hard core will go to community groups for use in their car park and community garden. This saves more than 1,000 tonnes of material going into landfill.
Peterborough was chosen as is one of six Zero Waste Places across the UK and is a boost to our aspirations to become the UK's Environment Capital. These Environment Capital ambitions are about delivering truly sustainable growth for the city, ensuring a cleaner, greener and healthier future for the people of Peterborough.

What if I smell gas, spot a water leak, have an accident?

Ring the emergency number for the utility in question.

Water 08457 145145

Gas 0800 111 999

Electricity 0800 783 8838

For more information on any of the above ring Peterborough Direct on 01733 747474 and an operator will advise the best person to contact.