

Public Engagement for the Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity Scheme

This public engagement closes on Friday 10 June 2022.





Caption: Artist impressions of the Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity Scheme

Foreword

I am pleased to present this public engagement on the proposed Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme (PCCS) in Crewe town centre.

The anticipated arrival of HS2 in 2033 and other regional rail improvements in Crewe provide a real opportunity for investment and development within the town, and Cheshire East as a whole.

As part of this investment, we are planning to improve access and connectivity across Crewe town centre with several new routes for pedestrians and cyclists proposed. The changes will deliver safer, more attractive, and more convenient walking and cycling routes to make it easier for people to get around the town, reducing congestion and journey times. By prioritising walking and cycling, these projects will also contribute towards Cheshire East Council's ambition to be a carbon neutral borough by 2045.

The Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity Scheme (PCCS) will deliver a new pedestrian walkway/cycleway between High Street and the Lifestyle Centre in Crewe town centre.

It will transform this part of the town by establishing a new arrival gateway into the town. As well as connecting Forge Street to High Street, it will extend south to make the existing roundabout that links High Street, Mill Street, Oak Street (A5078) and Vernon Way (A5019) pedestrian and cycle friendly. Once built, the route will become the most direct walking and cycling route into the town centre from Crewe Station.

This brochure presents information on the preferred option and how you can share feedback on the scheme.

This is an exciting time for Crewe and its residents. I would urge you to provide your views on the scheme through the questionnaire that sits alongside this brochure or by completing it online by visiting www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CreweCPS and following the links provided. Your feedback will be considered and used to help refine the design and junction choices before a planning application is finalised.

Councillor Craig Browne, Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council and Chair of its Highways and Transport Committee

Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme (PCCS)

Introduction

Cheshire East Council has ambitions to improve pedestrian and cycle links across Crewe to encourage an increase in walking and cycling across the town. The changes will make it easier for people to get in and out of the town, reducing congestion and journey times.

To help achieve these ambitions, several different schemes are being developed, including the Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme (PCCS), the Nantwich Road Bridge Enhancement Scheme and the Mill Street Corridor.

In this brochure you will find out more information about the proposed Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycleway Connectivity Scheme (PCCS), the other options and environmental considerations. You will also find information on Cheshire East wider ambitions through the Crewe Cycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Schemes. This is your opportunity to share your views and suggestions before we submit our planning application.

The window to provide your feedback will be open for six weeks, from Friday 29 April 2022 to Friday 10 June 2022.



Caption: Images of the current site

Your views are important to us

Sharing your thoughts and views with us at this stage will help to develop the scheme design. We want to know what works and what concerns you may have, as well as any local or specialist knowledge that may help us to improve our design.

Your feedback will be considered and used to help improve the final design of the Southern Gateway PCCS where appropriate. There will be an opportunity for you to comment further on the scheme as part of the statutory planning process.

We are holding two public information events where you can find out more about the scheme and speak to the project team. The events will be held on:

- Tuesday 17th May, between 2pm and 7pm, at Crewe Lifestyle Centre, Moss Square, Crewe, CW1 2BB
- Thursday 19th May, between 2pm and 7pm, at the Nantwich Road entrance of Crewe Railway Station, Crewe, CW2 6HR

How to respond

There are several ways that you can provide your feedback.

- Online: by visiting www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CreweCPS and following the links provided.
- Email: ask questions, email your response or send through your questionnaire to SGPCCS@cheshireeast.gov.uk

- Exhibition: visit us at one of our public information events detailed above and complete a questionnaire.
- Post: you can post your response to:

Freepost Plus RSJJ-YTHC-CHZK, Research and Consultation, Cheshire East Council, Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach, CW11 1HZ

Printed copies of this brochure and questionnaire are available at Crewe Lifestyle Centre and within the Nantwich Road entrance of Crewe Railway Station. Alternatively you can download and print the documents by visiting www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CreweCPS and following the links.

If you require the documents in an alternative format please email webteam@cheshireeast.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 5020.

All responses should be received by 11:59pm on Friday 10 June 2022. Any responses received after this date, sent to other addresses or submitted by other means may not be considered as part of the engagement process.

For more information on our other current and future projects, see the following page: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/major-projects.aspx

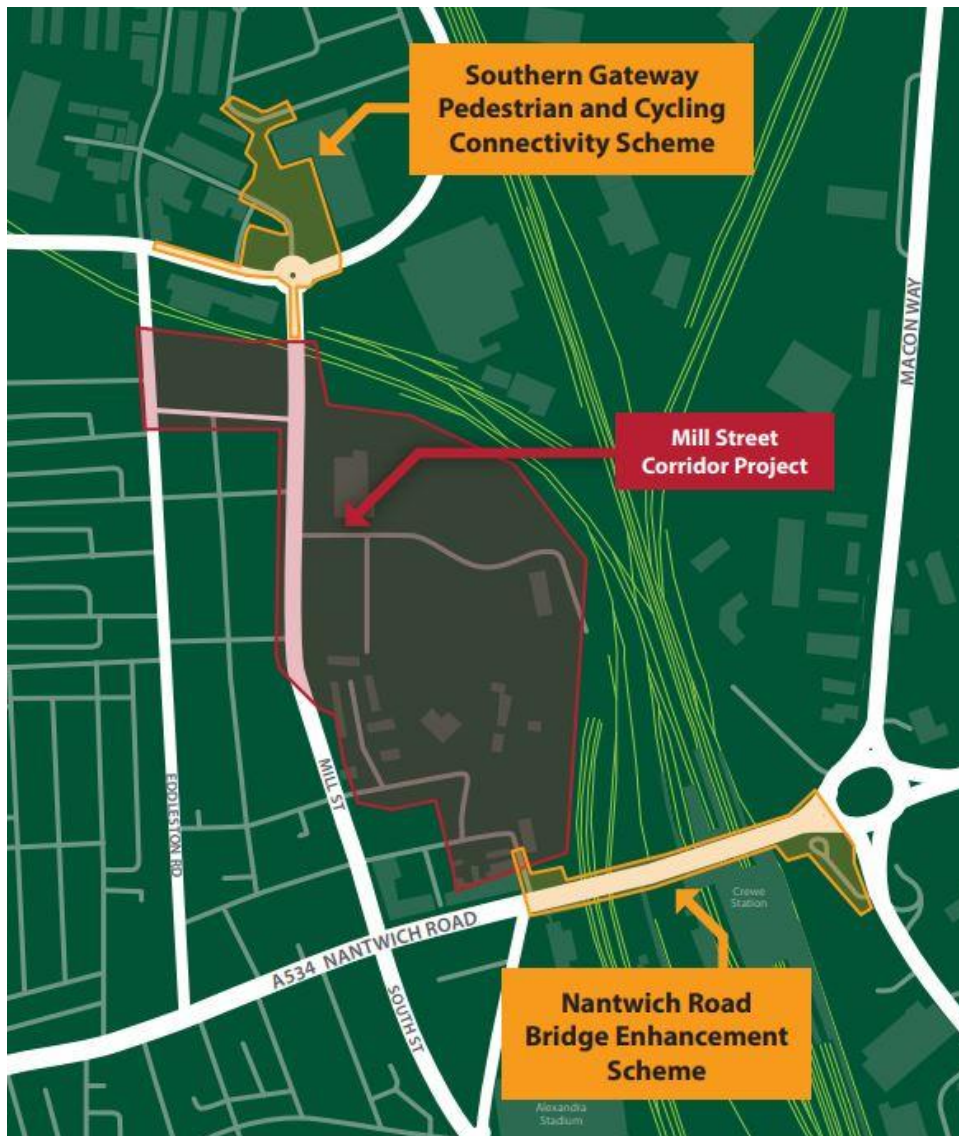
Scheme Background

Cheshire East Council is responsible for delivering and maintaining a safe and high-quality highway network for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

The Crewe town centre Regeneration Framework highlights that some visitors are deterred from visiting the town due to poor connectivity between key areas such as the train station and town centre and unappealing environments. This poor perception reduces the time people spend in the town, which impacts businesses and facilities.

Our vision for the new off-road cycle path and pedestrian link and other public realm improvements such as new street lighting, trees and shrubs proposed at Southern Gateway PCCS would provide a high-quality arrival point into the town, addressing the issues identified above. The project is considered vital to the successful future of this part of the town, with a clear connected walking route and upgraded spaces. The proposed Southern Gateway PCCS will help to regenerate High Street and Oak Street as well as improve the area around Christ Church, making journeys into the town centre easier and more pleasant. We are also exploring the reallocation of road space below Mill Street Bridge to better tie into the Southern Gateway PCCS scheme.

By improving accessibility into the town and enhancing the local environment for visitors, it is hoped that the number of car trips between Crewe Station and the town centre will reduce and local people will be encouraged to stay longer in the town centre.



Caption: Map of the Southern Gateway PCCS, Nantwich Road Bridge Enhancement Scheme and Mill Street Corridor

The Scheme Design

The proposed Southern Gateway PCCS will link High Street and Forge Street with a new shared cycleway/footway immediately behind the Lifestyle Centre. This will deliver a new active travel link in the form of a new gateway into Crewe town centre from the south.

The scheme will consist of the following elements:

- A new 3-metre-wide shared cycleway/footway between High Street and Forge Street
- A raised crossing to make it easier for pedestrian and cyclists to cross Forge Street
- The resurfacing of High Street, with the road realigned to provide enough space for the cycleway/footway
- The existing roundabout connecting High Street to Mill Street, Oak Street and Vernon Way will be retained, with an improved parallel crossing installed between Vernon Way

- New street lighting, trees and shrubs and other features such as a rain garden between Forge Street and High Street. This would be a small area of planted shrubs and flowers that collects water more easily to reduce water runoff elsewhere
- A connection to the Mill Street corridor scheme – a proposed active travel route linking the town centre with the existing railway station and proposed HS2 hub including via possible changes to the footpath arrangements underneath Mill Street bridge

The following variations have been considered with the aim to best balance cycle and walking provision under Mill Street Bridge:

Mill Street footway retention (Variation A – Preferred Option)

- Retains existing footways on Mill Street.

Benefits

- Pedestrians can keep using both footways on Mill Street.
- Removes the risk of having two-way cyclists and potentially pedestrians sharing the same narrow path adjacent to live traffic.

Disadvantages

- Cyclists heading south will have to join the carriageway on Mill Street, go under the railway bridge and then re-join the off-carriageway cycle route which will be part of the Mill Street corridor scheme. Cyclists heading north may choose to go through the roundabout rather than cross Mill Street and join the shared path that links with High Street. This will introduce a break in the route linking the town centre with the railway station and may impact road safety as cyclists will need to share the carriageway with live traffic.

Two-way cycle path only on east side (Variation B)

- Need to widen the existing east footway from 2.0m to 2.5m in order to make it meet the minimum design standards for a two-way cycle route only.
- The above will result in having to narrow the west footway down to 1.5m and potentially the carriageway as well.

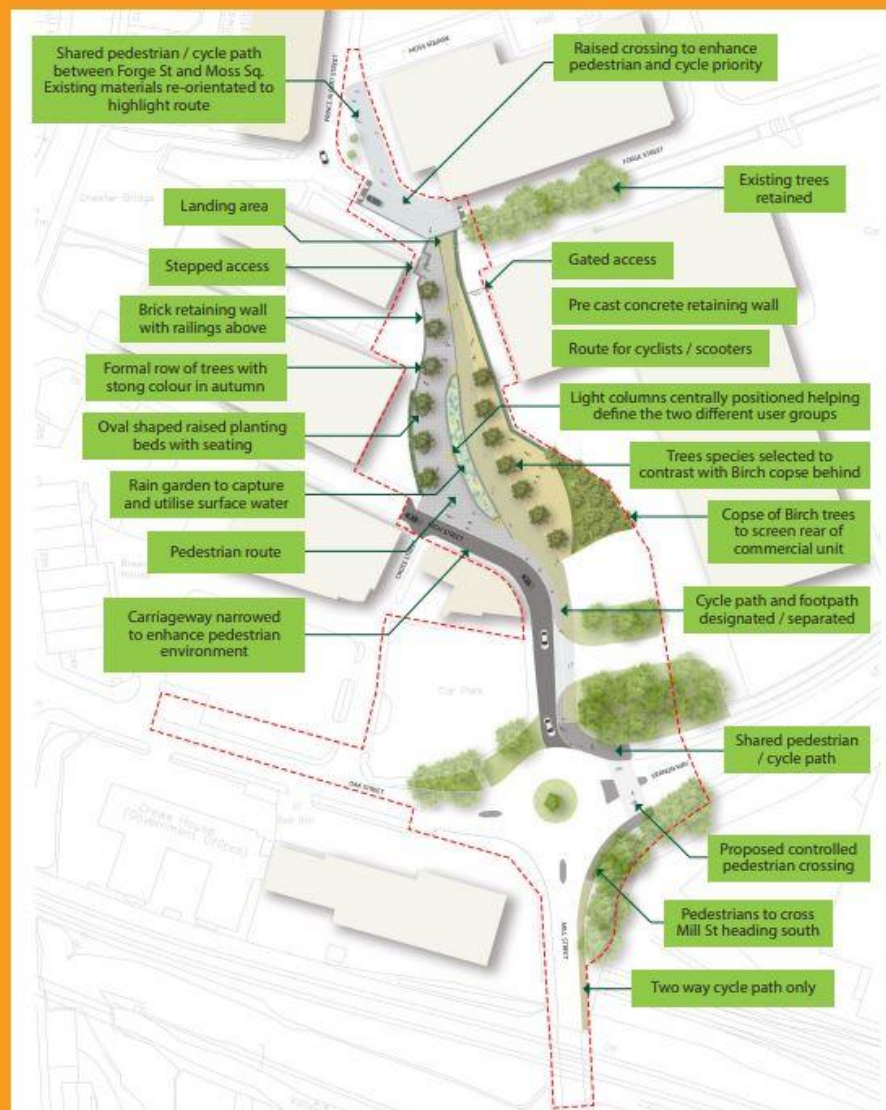
Benefits

- Keeps cyclists off the carriageway by providing a uniform off-carriageway route linking the town centre with the railway station

Disadvantages

- Pedestrians walking on the east side of Mill Street are asked to cross and use the west footway in order to avoid the two-way cycle path. However, there is a risk that pedestrians will still use the two-way cycle route (former east footway), despite signage, essentially creating a very narrow shared space path that may impact road safety.
- Even if a 2.5m wide cycleway is provided on the east side under the railway bridge, there is risk of collision between cyclists travelling in opposite directions and adjacent to live traffic.

Southern Gateway Pedestrian and Cycling Connectivity Scheme Highlights



Caption: Southern Gateway PCCS Masterplan

Alternative Design Options Considered

Two alternative options were considered for the roundabout connecting High Street to Mill Street, Oak Street and Vernon Way. The information provided below explains the two options and the reasons why they were not chosen over the preferred option. We'd welcome your feedback on the alternatives as part of this exercise.

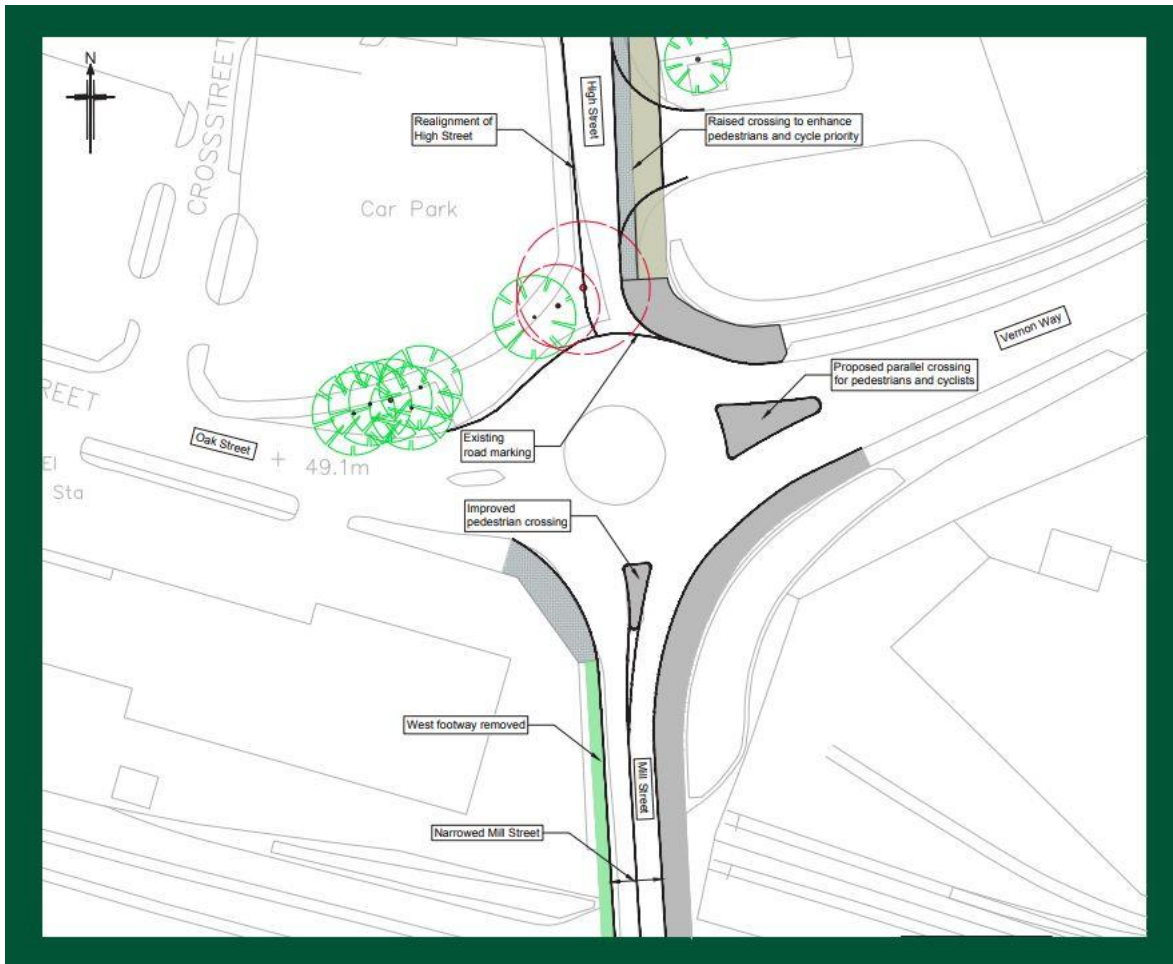
Alternative design option 1 – Removal of Western Footway below Mill Street Bridge

This option would mean that Mill Street is realigned and narrowed by removing the footpath on the west side of the street and replacing it with a 3m wide shared cycleway/footway on the east side.

This option was not chosen as the preferred option for the following reasons:

- Mill Street would be narrowed from 3.2m to 3.06m which would make HGV maneuvering more difficult
- The west footway on Mill Street would be removed completely

- Although the new cycleway/footway would be much wider, it would not be able to achieve the normal required standards for a shared path due to the presence of the railway bridge
- There are concerns around the safety of pedestrians and cyclists on Mill Street as all of them would need to share the same 3.0m wide route on the east side



Caption: Alternative Design Option 1

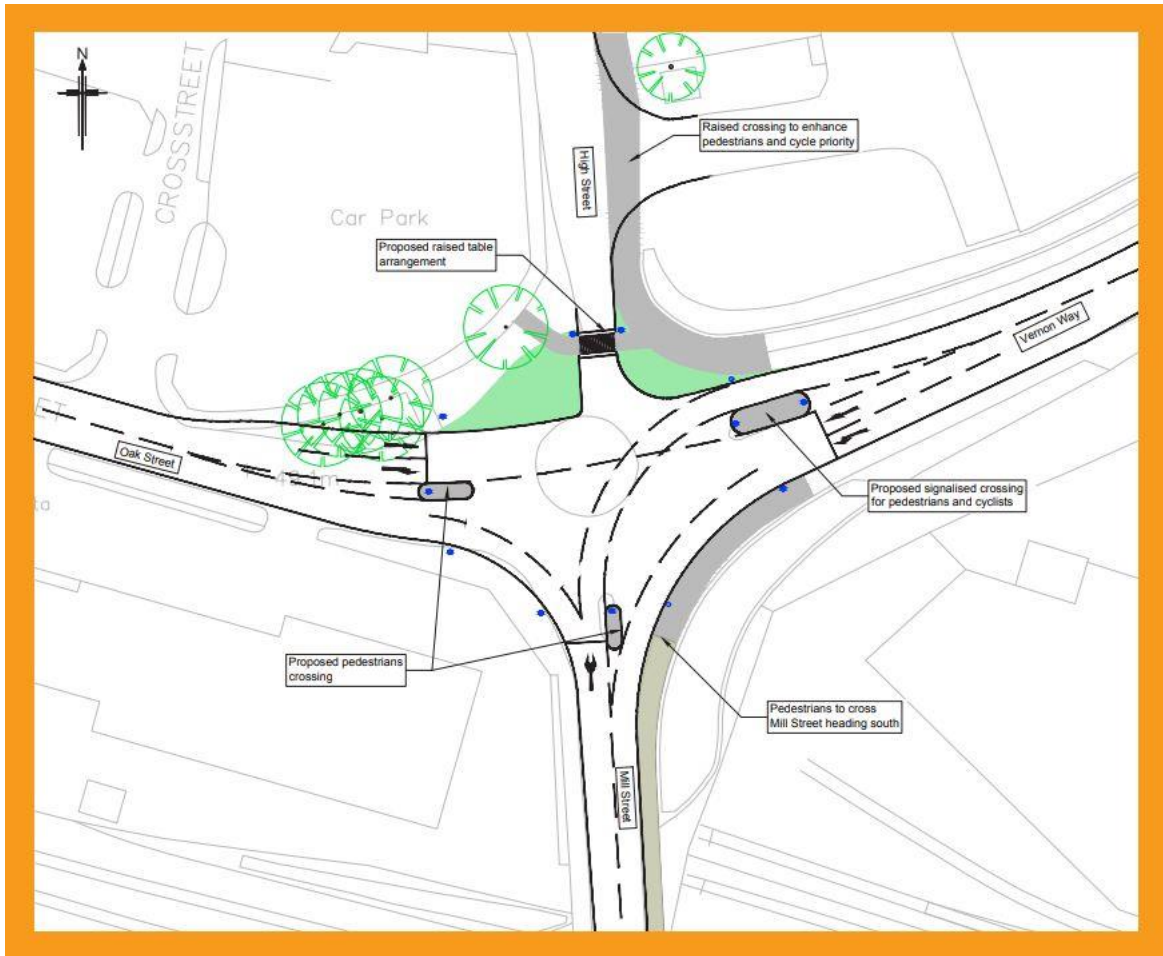
Alternative design option 2 – Signalised Crossroads

This option would convert the existing roundabout to a signalised crossroad.

This option was not chosen as the preferred option for the following reasons:

- It would have been considerably more expensive
- It would worsen traffic congestion and therefore air quality
- It does not allow for a shared cycleway/footway route on the east side of Mill Street

However, we recognise that this arrangement would allow additional improvements for cyclists and pedestrian crossings.



Caption: Alternative Design Option 2

Scheme Materials

Crewe is a town created by the railways and as this will be the most direct link between the town and station, we are looking at opportunities to use artistic features that are inspired by this cultural identity.

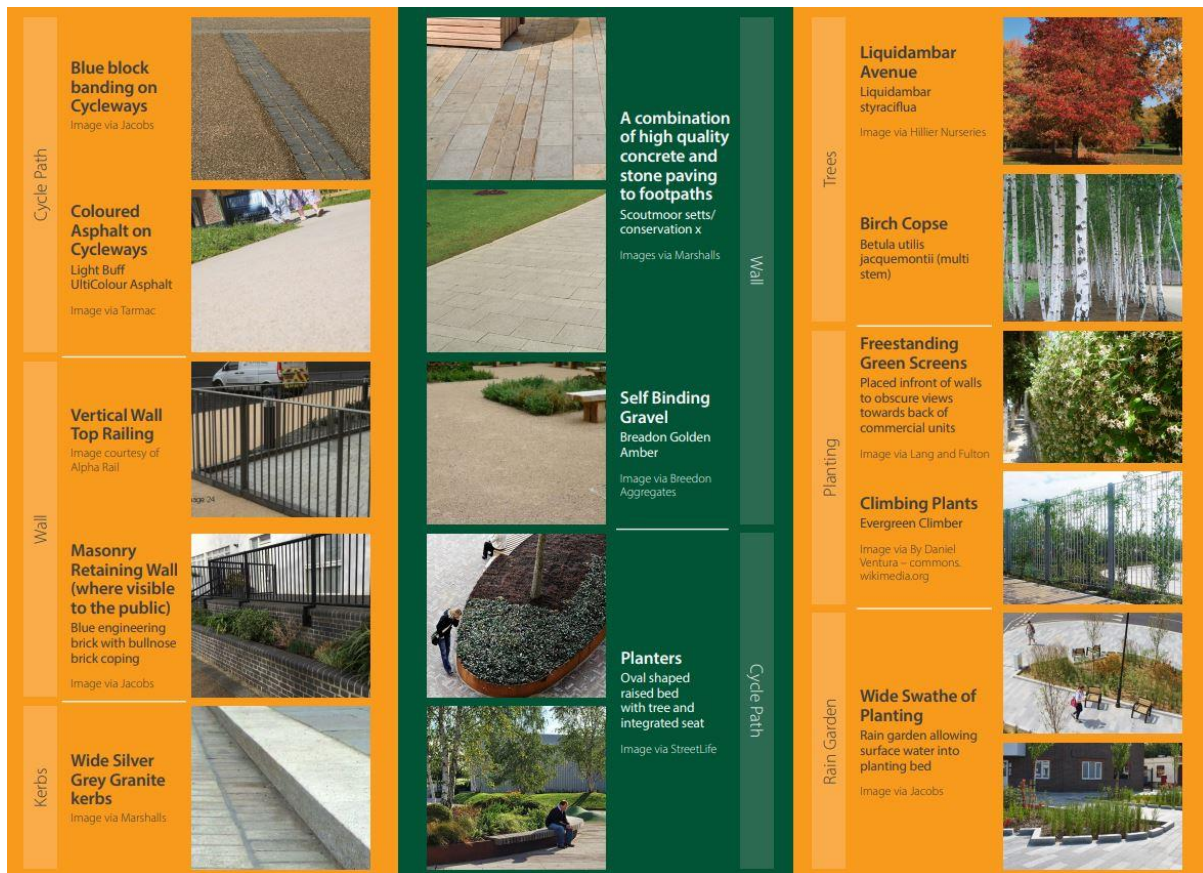
Creative ideas include:

- Railway tunnel - working with artists to create the feeling of travelling through a tunnel. This could be a gateway feature which is lit.
- Lighting form through the central space to be symbolic of the over rail components of the railways.
- Re-purposed railway components combined into the public realm as moment of interest, for example in furniture/signage/seating/paving inlays.

Natural sandstone and granite can be found across Crewe and so to reflect this existing heritage, they are the main materials that are proposed to be used.

We are also proposing to use coloured asphalt on the cycle paths, with blue block banding at transitional spots. The use of bands of block pathing will create a subtle rhythm within the cycle path which will echo the sound associated with train movement.

Sandstone paving will be used for the footpaths, as well as self-binding gravel. Sandstone curbs will also be delivered.



Caption: Scheme materials proposed to be used

Environmental Considerations

Air Quality

Our assessments show there may be improvements in air quality, from reduced traffic emissions, as the scheme encourages more people to walk and cycle between the Crewe town centre and the train station. This assessment applies to the preferred junction.

Noise and vibration

The area currently experiences noise from local road traffic. Our initial assessment shows that the scheme is unlikely to significantly increase noise, however there may be a temporary increase in noise during the construction phase. There is also the potential for vibration impacts during the construction. of the scheme on nearby sensitive receptors. The noise and vibration impacts will be managed using best practice guidelines, with mitigation measures introduced where appropriate.

During construction, there is also likely to be some short-term disruption of traffic in the surrounding road network. We will let you know in advance when work is planned to take place and will aim to minimise disruption as much as possible. Where road closures are required, we will try to undertake these overnight or at weekends when traffic levels are lower.

Landscape and visual

Some trees and hedgerows will be removed to allow the schemes construction; however, these will be replaced with new trees and plants along with other public realm improvements.

Ecology and conservation

Due to the scheme's location, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the ecology of the area. Where impacts are identified, we will look to minimise or mitigate these through our scheme design.

Water environment

Our initial assessments show that the scheme will have no significant effects on flooding, road drainage or watercourses.

Public Rights of Way

The development of the Southern Gateway PCCS will not affect any Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

How will the scheme be funded?

The scheme is fully funded from the UK Government's Towns Fund / Future High Streets Fund. Overall the construction costs are anticipated to be £c2M. If the planning application is successful, and subject to land negotiations, we expect work to begin in Summer 2023 and be complete by Spring 2024.

How does the Southern Gateway PCCS fit into the wider vision for Crewe?

Cheshire East Council has ambitions to improve pedestrian and cycle links across Crewe to increase active travel across the town. The Southern Gateway PCCS is one of several projects which make up the Crewe Cycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Schemes. The aim of these Schemes is to deliver new and improved pedestrian and cycle links across Crewe, which once established will create a sustainable and connected travel network.

We are currently engaging on the Southern Gateway PCCS, as well as the Nantwich Road Bridge Enhancement Scheme and would like to hear your feedback before we submit planning applications for each project.

The proposed Nantwich Road Bridge Enhancement Scheme would see the existing bridge extended to create a dedicated pedestrian and cycle pathway. The purpose of the scheme is to improve the connection between the railway station and the town centre as well as the public realm around the station and other travel facilities such as car parks, bus stops, taxi ranks and drop-off areas.

To find out more about this scheme visit www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CreweCPS

We are also currently designing a scheme which will provide walking and cycling improvements along Mill Street.

The Mill Street Corridor project aims to deliver an active travel route linking the town centre (via the Southern Gateway PCCS) with the Crewe railway station (via the Nantwich Road Bridge Enhancement Scheme) - encouraging more people to cycle and walk through the provision of a more attractive and accessible facility and provide better wayfinding from the station to the town centre. Work is still taking place to identify the best route, but a key aspect of the project will be the ability to unlock future development opportunities. As part of looking at the options, we are also considering a potential redesign of the highway network underneath Mill Street bridge, which will allow us to redistribute the existing space under the structure, to create more space for pedestrians and cyclists.

Whilst we are not directly consulting on the specific scheme proposals for the Mill Street Corridor as part of this engagement, we would welcome feedback on our vision for how our improvements to this corridor will help to shape the wider network, and the two schemes mentioned above.

The schemes will all complement each other via a shared vision and together they will transform Crewe by connecting its main areas, improving the attractiveness of the town, and encouraging more people to walk and cycle in Crewe. The schemes are also part of a wider plan to prepare Crewe for the arrival of HS2.

Next Steps

Once the engagement closes on Friday 10 June 2022, we will analyse your responses and prepare an engagement findings report which will be published on the Council's webpage at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/CreweCPS

Your responses will help to inform the final design where possible and practical, and the findings of this engagement will be submitted alongside the planning application.

We plan to submit a planning application to Cheshire East Council in Summer 2022. There will be an opportunity for you to comment further on the scheme as part of the statutory planning process. The figure below provides our current timeline for the scheme.

Project Timetable

- Engagement exercise April to June 2022
- Review submitted feedback June 2022
- Submit planning application Summer 2022
- Planning application to be determined Autumn 2022
- Construction 2023 to 2024