



The University of Central Lancashire has revealed major investment plans

THE University of Central Lancashire has revealed ambitious plans to transform its Preston campus over the next decade.

The institution, known as UCLan, says its total investment will be some £200m to create a high quality facility for its students, and one that is integrated "seamlessly" with the rest of Preston and provides a spark to future economic growth.

Subject to planning approval, the first stage of the development will see the construction of the £30m-plus Engineering Innovation Centre (EIC) beginning in January 2016.

At the same time, work will begin on the creation of an iconic gateway to the University. At its heart will be a remodelled Adelphi roundabout with the construction of a new public space, provisionally known as Adelphi Square.

UCLan's vice-chancellor Professor Gerry Kelleher said: "Over the coming decade we will invest in the region of £200m to create a world-class campus environment which blends new facilities with the creation of public, green spaces to encourage people from all over the City to visit and enjoy the campus.

"Developing a skilled workforce which meets local, national and international needs is central to our development plans. Future investments like the Engineering Innovation Centre will reflect that goal, helping to create jobs, kick-start regeneration and attract inward investment into the city."

A public engagement process to gather views on the proposals has begun. The public engagement process will run until March 6.

Work will then begin on finalising the key aspects of the proposals involving further consultations with project partners Preston City Council and Lancashire County Council.

Cllr Jennifer Mein, leader of Lancashire County Council, said: "The University's plans reflect the county council's vision for an attractive, well-connected and walkable city, which is easy to get around using all modes of transport.

"Our engineers have been working alongside the university for several months over these proposed changes to the Adelphi roundabout and we believe we have developed a solution which will cater for everyone, including walkers and cyclists or those using buses and cars."

Cllr Peter Rankin, leader of Preston City Council, said: "This is a significant development in the continuing success story of the University. A successful university is crucial for Preston. We now have an opportunity to create a lasting legacy for future generations of students, academics, local people and for the City as a whole."

Babs Murphy, chief executive of the North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce, also welcomed the university's plans, stating: "The economic role played by an expanded and strengthened University will aid our regeneration efforts by bolstering the local economy and underpinning long-term sustainable economic growth."

Other key aspects of the plan include:

- The creation of a new student services building which will link to the existing UCLan library via an elevated glass walkway. This will replace the demolished Fylde building, which borders the Adelphi roundabout.
- The landscaping and conversion of the historic canal basin on Maudland Bank into a public walkway with a specially designed trail and cycle route.
- Encouraging communities and businesses to work with the University to regenerate the area around Corporation Street and Friargate. The aim is to boost inward investment and deliver new business and commercial opportunities for the City.
- Relocating car parking from the centre to the edge of the campus in safe, well lit locations whilst retaining a small number adjacent to buildings and open spaces, to ensure provision for mobility impaired staff and students, visitors, deliveries and maintenance.
- Reconfiguring and improving the environmental quality of the resulting spaces through landscaping. The vision is to create a unified, green campus where internal and external events and exhibitions could be located, transforming the functional into social, communal and recreational.
- Creating a healthy, safe, active and sustainable campus.