



Latest news from the Northgate project team

October 2020

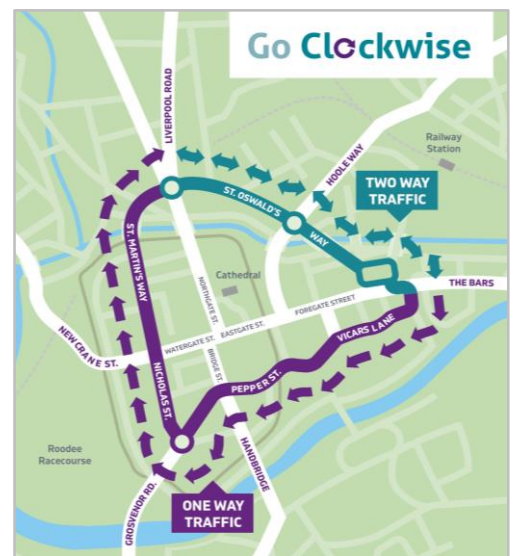
Drainage Tunnel Update - Chester's inner ring-road is going clockwise from 16th November

For approximately 12 months, there will be a clockwise one-way route for most of the inner ring road in order to allow for essential infrastructure works to install a new city centre drainage tunnel through Chester.

The new rainwater drainage tunnel will be a significant investment in Chester's future and is a necessary requirement ahead of major regeneration schemes and vastly improved city centre facilities, including the first phase of the Northgate development.

The tunnel will run from Princess Street south along St. Martin's Way, Nicholas Street, Grosvenor Road and Castle Drive, and will end with a new outfall into the River Dee; it will be almost 1km in length, 1.2m in diameter and require access shafts 5.5m wide and 7m deep.

Over 85% of the new drain will be installed via tunnelling rather than an open cut to minimise disruption above ground, but will require 9 access shafts along the route for the tunnelling equipment to operate from.



After careful planning and consultation, including with the emergency services and bus operators; the Council's highways team concluded the most efficient and practical solution would be to make the inner ring road primarily a two-lane clockwise route to ensure traffic can be kept moving, and Chester open for business. The 'clockwise' plan will create:

- Northbound only route up Nicholas Street and St. Martins Way from the Grosvenor Roundabout to the Fountains Roundabout
- Southwest bound only from The Bars past the Amphitheatre, along Vicar's Lane, Pepper Street and Grosvenor Street.

However, St. Oswald's Way between Fountains Roundabout and The Bars will remain in two-way operation as normal. Click on the map to watch the clockwise video.

More information on the clockwise plan is available at: www.clockwisechester.com

Drainage Tunnel & Clockwise FAQs

What arrangements are there for city-centre residents and businesses?

For homes and businesses within or near to the inner ring road, dedicated access-only routes will be provided, and all city centre car parks will remain open although the Market car park will only be accessible from the northbound St Martin's Way via the existing undercroft.

Was any traffic modelling carried out on the 'clockwise' plan?

Yes, modelling was carried out to assess the likely impact of the one-way scheme on the wider road network around the city. This modelling suggested a shift in traffic towards the east of the city, away from the affected areas. Some additional traffic at the junctions at each 'end' of the one-way section was also predicted. The clockwise plan provided the optimal balance of keeping traffic flowing and providing access to the city centre from existing trunk roads to ensure Chester remains 'open for business'.

Why can't the tunnel shafts be in the central reservation and allow one lane in each direction on St. Martin's Way/Nicholas St.?

The locations of each tunnel shaft have been carefully planned to avoid existing underground utility pipes, cables and sewers as well as buried structures and archaeological sites, plus allowing for optimal flow of the surface water drainage and links with the existing drain network. The cost of moving these would be prohibitive; in addition, the tunnel shafts cannot operate safely in the central reservations due to the size of the shafts (5m in diameter), deliveries to each shaft, collection of the excavations plus site access for the workers.

Furthermore, one lane in each direction would be more easily be blocked by hold-ups and provide reduced traffic flow; and emergency vehicle access would be hindered with one lane for the length of this section of the inner ring road. One-way also enables us to reallocate traffic signal timings from unused junction approaches to maximise green time and thus increase the flow of traffic.

Why can't peak or off-peak adjustments be made to ease traffic flow?

The tunnel shaft locations cannot be moved so it would be impractical to make traffic lane adjustments, plus the logistics of moving large numbers of cones and signs would also make this impractical and dangerous for staff working in live traffic, it would also lead to confusion as to what was in operation and when. However once shafts are completed; phased reopening of traffic lanes may be possible subject to safety criteria and traffic modelling.

Are there any environmental benefits of installing the new drain?

Yes, the new drain will also result in significant future proof environmental protections and benefits, including reducing instances of flooding and drain bursts in the city centre; reducing the volume of water requiring sewage treatment and in turn, reduce the energy used as a result; plus reducing the number of untreated sewage discharges into the river due to heavy rainfall when the current network is already at capacity.

Roman stone recovered from Northgate to be used in city walls



Roman stone blocks found in excavations during construction are to be used to repair the city walls.

We believe the red sandstone blocks are likely to have been quarried locally around two thousand years ago.

The blocks will be dressed ready for use in repairs to provide a perfect match with sandstone used when the walls were first built.

Hunter St. Update

From Monday 19th October we expect the work on Hunter St. to be completed and to provide access onto St. Martin's Way.

Thereafter Princess St. will then close permanently, however access to Trinity St. will remain open from St. Martin's Way.