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Introduction
Foreword

This Development Framework has been prepared by the University of Chester to create a clear and shared framework for the University, the local planning authority and the local community to consider investment and development at the University of Chester’s sites in Chester.

The Development Framework is founded on the view, shared by both the University and Cheshire West and Chester Council, that the University is of significant importance to the economic, cultural and social life of the City.

This Framework is therefore intended to establish a clear basis upon which the future physical enhancement and development of the University’s assets in the City can be considered not just in the context of the University’s own priorities, but also the strategy for the City as a whole and the well-being of the local communities, of which the University is part.

The Framework is also intended to inform the Cheshire West and Chester Local Development Framework—Core Strategy. This is the statutory document produced by the Council which will guide all future growth across the Borough.

Accordingly, the Framework reflects established and emerging planning policy at national and local level. Importantly, it also reflects the University’s Corporate Strategy and the University’s evolving Estates Strategy.

The Framework focuses on the University’s three sites in Chester, namely Parkgate Road, Kingsway and Riverside. Other assets held by the University in the City are referred to in relation to future plans. The Framework also sets out the University’s position on the management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within its control and more broadly considers the likely future requirement for student accommodation.

The University’s site in Warrington is not considered in this Development Framework.

The Framework specifically considers the period to 2016 (in parallel with the University’s Corporate Strategy). However, longer term principles are also established. The Framework will be formally reviewed by the University in conjunction with the Council on a regular basis and will be updated in 2016.

The Framework will be presented to the Strategic Planning Committee and Planning Committee and will subsequently be the subject of extensive public consultation.

The University of Chester is a successful place of learning – this Framework intends to contribute to that continuing success to the benefit of students, staff, our local community and the City.
University of Chester
Corporate Objectives
The University Mission, Vision and Strategic Objectives

The University of Chester has a long and distinguished history. Chester College was established in 1839 as an institution dedicated to the training of teachers, an innovative concept in the early nineteenth century, and is one of the oldest institutions in higher education, pre-dating all universities in England except Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and London. The Founders of the institution, a distinguished array of leading figures of the nineteenth century, were motivated by high moral purpose, reflecting the social conditions and philanthropic moral climate of the age.

Whilst the date of its establishment is now somewhat distant, the principles and main purposes of the College at the time of its foundation have endured and continue to inform the work of the University, embodying the concept of traditional values in a modern setting. The University’s mission of service to the community continues as an expression of the Christian foundation and its spirit and ethos now, as then, influences its life and work.

Our Mission

The mission of the former College has remained constant throughout its history and, as a University institution since 2005, it continues to seek: ‘...within an open, inclusive and supportive environment, guided by Christian values, to provide students and staff with the education, training, skills and motivation to enable them to develop as individuals and have lives of service in the communities within which they live and work. This mission, which has helped shape our development and diversification, continues to inform our future planning and enrichment as a University.’

Our Vision

At the heart of the University’s vision is our commitment to ensuring a rewarding student learning experience; developing the expertise of our staff; teaching excellence; and our growing research and scholarly profile. Fundamental to these ideals and aspirations is the positive impact that the University has on the lives of our students, our staff, and our community, all of which underpin the institution’s significant and growing contribution to the City, the region and beyond. In valuing and celebrating our long history and traditions, the University remains dynamic and enterprising in its approach to developing new opportunities. In particular, we are committed to engendering a sense of pride and shared ownership in all those associated with us and with what we do.

Our Objectives

The University’s objectives are set out in the Corporate Strategy 2012-2016 Defining Our Future: Chester 2016.

The Corporate Strategy is necessarily a wide ranging document, centred around the continual enhancement of the learning experience, fostering research, enterprise and knowledge exchange, promoting partnership, diversity and inclusion.
Of direct relevance to the Development Framework are the University’s objectives for the University’s physical environment which specifically seek:

‘To provide a modern learning and working environment that meets the diverse needs of our staff, students and other users in a flexible, cost effective, environmentally sustainable and efficient manner.’

The University is committed to providing our students and staff with an environment that meets the needs of a flourishing higher education academic community. This will be achieved in ways that complement the aesthetic character and environmental commitments of the University whilst at the same time creating an estate which is financially efficient and sustainable into the future.

The quality of the University’s estate is particularly important in helping to promote the image of the institution. This, in turn, impacts upon student and staff recruitment, income generation and institutional development capabilities. Recent years have seen considerable investment in the University’s estate, with several significant capital development projects. These additions to the University’s estate, combined with changes to the nature of the student learning experience and new learning and teaching methodologies, demand creativity and prudence in the management of our primary physical resource to ensure that we maximise efficient space utilisation. In particular, we recognise the need to be increasingly flexible and innovative in the way in which our learning and teaching facilities are developed and utilised.

Through all of its educational activities, the University is committed to promoting greater awareness and engagement in respect of environmental sustainability in order to improve the quality of life now and for future generations. We continue to seek to influence staff and students to embrace the opportunities they have to contribute to social progress, economic growth and environmental improvement. This is achieved through a number of activities including a commitment to improve our environmental performance, minimising waste and promoting resource efficiency, and, where practicable, favouring the purchasing of more sustainable goods and services.

Within this context, the University is committed to the following strategic objectives:

- providing an environment which supports effective teaching and learning;
- providing facilities and services that support and maintain a high quality learning environment and which meet or exceed the changing requirements of our students and staff;
- ensuring that the University’s estate is used in an efficient and cost effective manner at all times;
- pursuing best practice and securing value for money in all our estates activities;
- providing a safe working environment for all our staff and students.

In support of the physical estate, the University has made significant investment in learning resources, information technology, and student support services in order to enhance the overall learning experience of our students. In spite of challenging economic circumstances, this investment will continue, reflecting the University’s commitment to provide all our students with every opportunity and encouragement to support them in their individual learning and personal development journeys. The University’s pledge extends beyond its students to include its staff, ensuring that they are provided with the appropriate facilities and resources to pursue their teaching, research and scholarly interests. The University is conscious of its obligations under health and safety legislation and will at all times ensure that it provides a safe working environment for all our staff and students.
The University in Chester
Introduction

The existing estate of the University is, as noted earlier, the outcome of over 170 years of continual investment, development and enhancement to meet changing needs within the consistent themes of service to the community and educational excellence.

The University of Chester operates from three sites in the City, namely Parkgate Road, Riverside and Kingsway. These are considered in more detail later in the Framework document. The University’s site in Warrington, which is not considered in this Development Framework, provides a particular focus for Public Sector and Creative Industries studies.

In Chester, the University provides a wide range of courses for approximately 9900 full time and part time undergraduates and postgraduates. The University is a significant asset and presence in the City.

Excellence in Education

Importantly, the University enjoys a very good reputation, as indicated by its ranking in national league tables, the assessment of its courses by national agencies such as Ofsted, and the employability of graduates.

League Tables

In the Sunday Times University Guide 2012 the University is placed sixth highest institution in the North West, ahead of much larger institutions such as Liverpool John Moores University, Edge Hill University and Manchester Metropolitan University. In addition the University comes second regionally for teaching excellence (78.9%), and fourth for the percentage of students gaining graduate level jobs, which use their degree (73.8%). The quality of teaching and employability of graduates are among the University’s priorities for ensuring that it delivers high added value for its students.

Ten subjects taught at the University of Chester have been singled out by three major national newspaper league tables as representing the very top of their field in key areas of their work. The 10 leading subjects are as follows:

- Archaeology;
- English;
- Food Science;
- French;
- Geography;
- Maths;
- Theology and Religious Studies;
- Social Work;
- Sport and Exercise Sciences;
- Subjects Allied to Medicine.

Ofsted Assessment 2011

The University of Chester is an ‘Outstanding Provider’ of Initial Teacher Training. The recently published Ofsted Initial Teacher Education Inspection report found that the overall effectiveness of Primary teacher training scored an ‘Outstanding’ Grade 1 and Secondary teacher training received a

Students at the University of Chester rate their courses extremely highly. In the 2011 National Student Survey (NSS), which is anonymous and independent, the overall satisfaction rate for the University was 84%. This is the highest score the University has ever achieved and 2% higher than the national average.
‘Good’ Grade 2. The employment-based training route (Graduate Teacher Programme or GTP) also scored an ‘Outstanding’ Grade 1, while the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programme for Further Education received an award of ‘Good’ Grade 2.

This assessment of the University is reflected in its ranking as the 12th best university in the country for its delivery of Initial Teacher Training in the annual and nationally recognised Good Teacher Training Guide 2011. This makes it the highest ranking institution in the North West for teacher training.

**Graduate Employability**

The University of Chester is listed in the Sunday Times University Guide 2012 as having the second lowest graduate unemployment figures in the North West. The independent Unistats website shows that for the second consecutive year the University of Chester is the highest ranking university in the North West for former students securing a graduate level job after completing their programme of study. 81% of graduates in 2011 gained graduate level employment, which is an increase on the 78% achieved last year.

In addition, figures released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) show that students from the University of Chester were ‘bucking’ the national unemployment trend, with the number of those finding jobs within six months of graduating continuing to increase. The HESA statistics showed that 93% of the University’s degree students secured employment or further study after graduating last year (09/10) – an increase from 91.2% the previous year (08/09).
The Growth of the University in Chester, 1995 - 2008

In the period to the 1990s, measured and steady change took place in the University’s estate reflecting the established context for higher education.

However, the pace of change in higher education has accelerated in recent decades, requiring the University to adapt and innovate in order to respond to changing demands and expectations both of policy makers and of the broadening range of client groups which now extends beyond the student body to include significant stakeholders from the business, industrial, social and cultural sectors.

The pattern of incremental growth over many decades was radically altered from the mid-1990s by Government policies designed to increase the number of undergraduate students engaged in higher education to 50% of the Age Participation Rate. The pace of change slowed only with the onset of recession, a tightening of Government spending, and latterly, the changes to the funding regime.

The trend in student numbers in Chester over the period 2002 to 2011 is set out below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Full and part time post and undergraduates studying in Chester</th>
<th>Full time undergraduates studying in Chester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002/3</td>
<td>5547</td>
<td>3954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003/4</td>
<td>6133</td>
<td>4366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004/5</td>
<td>6518</td>
<td>4684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005/6</td>
<td>8150</td>
<td>5242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>8618</td>
<td>5600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007/8</td>
<td>9230</td>
<td>5832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008/9</td>
<td>9469</td>
<td>5676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009/10</td>
<td>9610</td>
<td>5763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010/11</td>
<td>9899</td>
<td>5963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011/12</td>
<td>10188*</td>
<td>6182*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic Benefits

The expansion of undergraduate student numbers within the University from the mid 1990s to 2008 has had, and continues to have significant benefits for the University, the City of Chester and the region. These include the broadening of educational opportunity, the growth of the institution, both in size and reputation, and the substantially increased economic impact of the University in terms of jobs and inward investment on the City, the borough and the region. The University has become a major economic generator, not solely by bringing academic, commercial and research interests and expertise into the City, but also by exporting the value of the City and its potential to the wider world. The University has also added to the vitality and cultural diversity of the City.

A draft Economic Impact Assessment prepared on behalf of the University underlines the contribution it makes to the City and region:

- The employment of over 1800 (1220 fte) members of staff;
- An annual pay roll of approximately £45,500,000;
- Payments to suppliers of around £27,000,000;
- An overall contribution to the economy of some £298,000,000.

Whilst the growth of the University has generated significant benefits, the University is conscious of the need to manage the environmental and community impact of our activities, both to deliver our own sustainability agenda, but also to ensure a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with the communities within which we work, and with the City as a whole. The University pursues this approach across a number of areas and by various means, but of particular relevance to the Development Framework are the approaches to transport and student accommodation.
A Sustainable Approach to Transport

The University, as a significant employer and centre of learning, inevitably generates a substantial number of trips into and around the City. However, every effort is taken to minimise the number and length of trips and to encourage the use of public transport, cycling and walking instead of the private car. Car parking and the use of cars by students is also actively managed, to ensure that, as far as possible, local residents are not adversely affected by on-street parking generated by University staff or students. This is particularly the case at the Parkgate Road site. Given the residential location of Kingsway, car parking at the site is controlled to respect local amenity, whilst the City centre location of Riverside is reflected in the approach to car parking management at that site.

The University agreed a Travel Plan with the local authority in 2005 and this is reviewed and refined as part of any new, significant development proposals requiring planning permission. The Travel Plan commits the University to:

- ensuring that lack of access to the private car does not represent a barrier to accessing the University of Chester and its resources. This is addressed through the promotion of a wide range of travel options at the University that are available to all;
- raising employee, student and visitor awareness regarding travel to work impacts and the range of travel choices available at the University;
- encouraging the improvement of existing public transport access, both directly available from the University and from within the immediate catchment;
- encouraging increased walking and cycling access to the University through the management and improvement of a network of safe and convenient routes to/from the University campus;
- seeking to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips to the University and encouraging the most efficient use of those car trips that must continue to be made by car sharing schemes;
- minimising the impact of University related activities (in terms of congestion, noise, pollution, and parking) upon local residents around the University campus;
- encouraging the continuing health and welfare of all students, staff and visitors.

The University’s commitment to managing its travel demands is reflected in a number of its policies:

- Permanent staff are required by their contract of employment to live within 30 miles of their place of work;
- Students in University managed accommodation in the City are required to sign a commitment not to bring their car to the City;
- Car parking is managed by a permit system. Some passes are provided to students, but generally only those with a particularly mobility requirement or with a commute of 10 miles or more are eligible;
- In connection with the recent approval for a 196 bed accommodation block at the Parkgate Road site, the University has committed to a local survey of on-street parking;
- The University provides a significant amount of cycle parking facilities at all its sites.

Student Accommodation Strategy

Since the mid-1990s, throughout the country, there has been a significant increase in the number of young, full-time undergraduate students living away from home. However, the proportion of students living in accommodation owned or managed by universities has declined in the last two decades, in part because provision could not maintain pace with the rapid growth in student numbers, but also because students have increasingly opted to live in mainstream rather than purpose built accommodation.

As noted earlier, significant growth at the University took place between the mid 1990s and 2008. Since 2008, student numbers have remained broadly stable. Full-time undergraduate student numbers in Chester increased from 3954 in 2002/3 to 5832 in 2007/8. The University currently has 16,800 students (c. 10,000 fte) on all sites, including a major campus in Warrington.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of University bed spaces in Chester</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>1004</td>
<td>1006</td>
<td>1017</td>
<td>1054</td>
<td>1057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOURCE: University of Chester</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of private bed spaces in Chester occupied by University of Chester students (estimated)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2090</td>
<td>2560</td>
<td>2109</td>
<td>2655</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students studying from own home or living with parent/guardian (estimated)*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2117</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>2050</td>
<td>2075</td>
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*This data reflects consistency in terms of how the latter two categories were defined from 2008/9 onwards by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). It is also reliant on information being supplied to the University by its students in accordance with these HESA definitions.
Throughout this period of rapid growth, the provision of suitable and suitably-located residential accommodation has remained a continuing challenge. Whilst there are significant benefits to residential areas and to the City as a whole deriving from the presence of students (added dynamism, cultural diversity and other positive effects, including the major impact on the local economy), instances of over concentrations of student housing in residential areas can have an adverse influence on amenities and services, impacting on local residents particularly on matters such as an increase in the demand for on-street parking leading to congestion and competition for parking places; problems with the accumulation of refuse and other forms of rubbish; issues of noise disturbance; and the effects of an increasingly transient population changing the demographic composition of such neighbourhoods.

In Chester, the expansion of higher education up to the current level, first reached in 2008, has had the effect of increasing concentrations of students in residential areas, particularly adjacent to the Parkgate Road site leading at times to concerns amongst the local community.

In 2011-12, there are approximately 6,182 full time undergraduate students on courses at the three University sites in Chester. 67% (4138) of these lived in Chester, as defined by CH1 to CH4 postcode area, reflecting the preference for accommodation close to campus. Of these:
- 61% lived in privately rented accommodation;
- 28% lived in accommodation managed by the University or in privately-managed halls of residence;
- 4% lived with a parent or guardian;
- 5% remained in their own home (these were mainly mature students).

(This is a snapshot at March 2012.)

The University managed accommodation comprises 1053 University owned accommodation bed spaces and 90 University managed beds. The University accommodation ranges from rooms in converted Victorian houses to modern purpose-built units. The University owned accommodation is exclusively used for first year undergraduate and international students. Returning and postgraduate students are housed in University managed accommodation or in the private sector.

The University has increasingly recognised that the acquisition of existing residential properties for use as student accommodation (often referred to as HMOs), as the primary response to the increased demand for residential accommodation in the period from 1995-2008, has placed progressively increasing pressures upon local communities. As a consequence, a number of communities adjacent to the University have experienced (and continue to experience) both the benefits and detrimental effects of ‘studentification’.

Since 2008 the University has no longer regarded the acquisition of existing houses as an adequate solution to student accommodation requirements and has been proactively considering alternative approaches to this issue. In the process, a wide range of options has been considered. Two important factors have influenced the University’s approach, namely:

- the strong preference amongst students to live very close to the University, notably the Parkgate Road site; and
- the University has concluded that further major growth of the scale experienced in recent years is unlikely, and a static position or possibly small-scale reduction in student numbers is the most likely outcome.

Future strategy will take account of this position and is reflected, as appropriate, in the Development Framework.

**Issues for the Future**

As noted earlier, the purpose of the Development Framework is to establish a shared basis for considering how the development of the University estate will be considered in the future. Clearly, in developing the Framework, it is important to establish the factors which may influence change in the years to come.

Following a number of years of reasonably strong and consistent government support and funding for the growth of the higher education, there is now an extremely volatile policy environment and it is likely to remain so for several years. This will generate significant uncertainty with regard to investment funding and student numbers.

The recent change from the block grant funding of institutions, to a system in which funding is derived from students through higher course fees with an institutional quota determined by adherence to fee limits, has created an unpredictability both in overall student demand, and the demand at individual institutions. These matters are subject to recent policy changes which link the setting of fee levels by institutions with the potential to secure additional student numbers, only available to those institutions setting average fee levels at below £7500 per year.
Views on the impact on future demand of this shift from block grants to higher tuition fees for individual students vary widely and the impact on recruitment of individual university strategies on fee levels across the English higher education sector is not yet apparent.

Some commentators believe the substantial increase in the cost of higher education to students to compensate for reductions in direct grant aid from government will reduce demand. Despite universities being required to maintain or, in some cases, increase the intake of students from lower income backgrounds, many consider that these groups will actually be discouraged from entering higher education by the prospect of high levels of debt. The contrary view suggests that the economic climate and rising unemployment will generate increased demand to enter higher education. The impact of students opting to reduce their costs and debt burden by studying at university, whilst remaining living with parents is, as yet, unknown.

These radical changes to the funding of higher education, both for individuals and institutions, have created major uncertainties for universities across the sector in all the key areas of the planning of future provision (student demand, curriculum development, facilities, accommodation, staffing levels). Predictions of future demand in such a climate, and particularly the commitment of major investment to support such predictions with this range of unknown variables, demands particular caution.

Notwithstanding this approach, and in the interests of its students, those of the local residential communities and of the City, the University will continue to consider any and all feasible proposals, contributing actively through the provision of advice on changing student demand and information on its own plans for residential provision. This process will be undertaken in collaboration with Cheshire West and Chester Council, whose role is to guide future growth across the Borough and to determine any future planning applications in accordance with the development plan (in this case, currently and principally the Regional Spatial Strategy 2008 and the Chester District Local Plan 2006) unless there are other overriding material considerations that indicate the permission should not be given.

This approach is reflected in the Development Framework, notably as it relates to the Parkgate Road site.
Development Framework
Policy Context
UK Government - Plan for Growth

In 2011, HM Treasury and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills published its ‘Plan for Growth’. The Plan is intended to create a path for the UK towards sustainable long term economic growth and as an overarching strategy for Government Policy.

The Plan establishes four ‘ambitions’, including the creation of ‘a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe’.

The Government recognises the role of higher education institutions in delivering on this agenda which it intends to facilitate through initiatives, such as the amended Higher Education Innovation Fund.

Higher Education Policy

In Autumn 2011, the Government published a White Paper on the future of higher education, entitled “Students at the Heart of the System”, which proposed radical changes to the funding of higher education, designed to deliver a more responsive higher education sector, in which funding will follow the decisions of learners. The White Paper was withdrawn in January 2012, although its central policy imperatives have been retained.

The proposed changes, representing the most radical transformation of higher education funding in decades, will have extensive impact on the sector and, in the course of the next three years, at least, will generate a degree of uncertainty in the planning of student numbers for individual institutions and are set to change the shape of the sector as a whole.

This White Paper proposes that the public money that supports higher education will shift from block grants that universities and colleges receive from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) towards repayable tuition loans made to students to take to the institution of their choice. A two-stage consultation period is underway, to be concluded in 2012, on the longer-term method for allocating teaching grant in 2013/14 and beyond, to take account of the progressive implementation of these funding reforms.

The consequence of these changes is that from year to year, every institution will have to compete for the student numbers outside its core allocation and the core will reduce every year. The stated aim is to create an open, dynamic and affordable higher education system, with more competition and innovation and a level playing field for new providers, including further education colleges and private institutions that wish to be part of the English higher education system.

As part of these reforms, controls have been removed on those places, taken by students who achieve AAB grades or above at A-level or equivalent, the intention being that, in 2012/13, institutions should be able to recruit as many of such students as they can, with the longer-term aim being to widen the threshold, ensuring that the share of places liberated from number controls altogether rises year on year whilst balancing the need to drive improvement in the sector with protection for taxpayers and the avoidance of unnecessary turbulence.

In addition, Hefce has been instructed to redistribute up to 20,000 new entrant places in 2012/13, to make it easier for high quality, good value providers to offer more places, introducing competition into the higher education market, to incentivise...
In terms of both institutional and sector planning, it is not possible to know at this stage exactly how students’ and institutions’ behaviour will be affected by these proposals, and, in the light of the funding reforms and economic climate, historic trends are unlikely to be an effective guide to future behaviour. These uncertainties and gaps in the evidence also make it difficult to quantify the risks to students’ opportunities.

Government assumptions about students’ preferences, and institutions’ provision that may underpin these proposals, are therefore also very uncertain. Such assumptions extend to the impact on overall levels of student demand, the attractiveness and sustainability of lower-priced provision, the move for further education colleges to extract themselves from partnerships with universities, and the effectiveness of the regulatory control to be exercised across a much broader, more diverse range of institutions (including private providers) that students are likely to consider.

The principles of a planning and development framework, set out in this document, will continue to inform the University’s approach to the management of its student numbers and the related developments of the administrative and residential estate. However, in the context of these imminent radical changes, in the period to 2015, or until the evidence of the effects of these reforms has been monitored and evaluated, the future remains uncertain and, consequently, the ability of individual institutions to plan student numbers and the associated development of the physical estate and organisational infrastructure with any degree of confidence, is impaired.

### Planning Policy

Planning Policy establishes the context within which development proposals are considered and therefore is of direct relevance to the Development Framework.

Planning policy is established at both national and local levels.

### National Planning Policy

In 2011 the Government published the draft National Planning Policy Framework. This document establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The planning system is used to protect and enhance the natural, built and historic environment whilst providing for the needs of the economy and communities. Planning policies and decisions are, amongst other things, to:

- make effective use of land;
- protect and enhance environmental and heritage assets;
- manage development to promote sustainable transport patterns.

### Chester District Local Plan

The existing Local Plan for Chester is the Chester District Local Plan, adopted in 2006. The majority of the Plan will remain in force until such time as it is replaced by the Local Development Framework which is considered later in this section.
A number of policies are relevant to the University’s sites in the City. However, the key policies are as follows:

Parkgate Road – part of the eastern side of the site is within the Liverpool Conservation Area. The Glenesk site, to the north of the Parkgate Road site, is identified as being removed from the Green Belt, to cater for the expansion of education facilities at the University of Chester. Land to the west of Glenesk, also in the ownership of the University, and immediately to the west of the Deva Link, is designated as Green Belt.

Kingsway – the site, including existing buildings, is designated as green space, which is generally to be protected.

Riverside – the site is within the Chester City Centre Conservation Area and in an area, identified as being a cultural area and historic site.

**Draft Cheshire West and Chester Local Development Framework**

The Local Development Framework is the emerging statutory planning policy document for the Borough. The Core Strategy is the key document within the portfolio of Local Development Framework (LDF) documents.

The Core Strategy is intended to set out the spatial vision for the Borough of Cheshire West and Chester area over the whole Plan period (up to 2026), together with objectives and policies designed to achieve the vision. It will be made up of a number of key parts, including the vision and objectives for the area, together with a spatial strategy, policies, and a framework to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan. The Core Strategy will provide the framework for the production of other, more detailed, LDF documents that will cover specific areas and topics.

The Core Strategy seeks to assist in the creation of a vibrant economy for Cheshire West and Chester and sets the following objectives:

- To ensure sufficient school places are available for all age groups and to facilitate improvements to the quality of facilities for education and skills development.
- To attract inward investment and promote a dynamic, competitive economy.
- To attract major retailers to the key City and town centres in the Borough and to protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the town, district and village centres.
- To support and improve tourist attractions and facilities.
- To provide the necessary employment land and associated infrastructure to enable provision of a wide range of well-paid employment opportunities in a variety of sectors.

The University has an important role to play in contributing to the economy and will help the Council achieve the objectives set out in the Core Strategy. In so doing, the University will contribute to the LDF and also seek to retain existing rights and land designations and, where appropriate and subject to planning constraints, will also seek to extend such designations in accordance with the changing requirements of the University.

**One City Plan**

Chester West and Chester Council is in the process of preparing a City-wide plan known as ‘The One City Plan’. Although it is a non-statutory document it is intended that the Plan will be used by Chester Renaissance, CW&C Council and partners to guide the City’s development.

It will co-ordinate and drive a programme of public and private investment and development activity into Chester City centre over the next 15 years. The draft document sets the overarching vision and direction of travel for the City, under which all projects should sit. It is driven by prioritisation, implementation and delivery.

The One City Plan makes reference to the importance of the University and rightly considers that it is a significant asset for the City of Chester.

The draft Plan states that in order to support growth, the City must work better with its educational institutions, in particular the University of Chester.

The draft Plan commits the Council to supporting the University of Chester to place itself at the heart of a ‘University City’ – building relationships with local businesses and communities, and encouraging entrepreneurship.

It is also recognised that the University’s graduates have the potential to be the City’s future residents thereby retaining their skills, spending power and relationship with the City, all of which is which is beneficial for the City over the long term.
University of Chester
Sites
The University of Chester currently occupies the following three sites in Chester:

1. Parkgate Road
2. Kingsway Campus
3. Riverside

This section of the Development Framework sets out an overview of the physical context, role and building character of each site. This, in the context of the University’s vision and objectives, the policy background and the issues facing the University in the years to come, provides a basis for establishing a land use framework for each site in the following section – ‘The Development Framework’.

The approach to the management of the University’s residential accommodation is also considered.

**1. Parkgate Road, Chester**

Parkgate Road is the University’s main site in the City. The University, and formerly as Chester College, has had a presence on the site since 1839. It is therefore a well established feature in this part of the City.

The site is on the northern edge of the City Centre and lies predominantly to the west of Parkgate Road (A540). The Parkgate Road site also comprises a number of administrative buildings off Liverpool Road (A5116) to the west of Parkgate Road, notably Holly Bank, Rockmount, the Rigg Building, and 24 Liverpool Road.

The site also includes land to the north of the former Mickle Trafford to Marsh Railway line, known as the Glenesk site.

This land has been reserved in the City of Chester Local Plan for expansion land for the University. The University also owns a parcel of land to the west of the Glenesk site and the Deva link. Both of these sites are currently open land.

Parkgate Road is a primary route into the City of Chester, well served by public transport with bus stops available in close proximity to the main entrance of the campus. The Parkgate Road site lies on an important gateway to the City from the north, including from the M56.

The Shropshire Union Canal runs along the western side of the main Parkgate Road site and as noted earlier, the former Mickle Trafford railway line runs to the north of the existing built area of the site.

The landform generally falls away from the City centre and Parkgate Road to the north and west towards the canal. The landform rises reasonably steeply to the east of Parkgate Road with a number of residential areas, notably Abbots Bank, being at a significantly higher level than the land of the Parkgate Road site.

The principal site access is at the Exton Park access on Parkgate Road. Secondary entrances on Cheyney Road are used for servicing and providing pedestrian access to Halls of Residence.

The areas around the Parkgate Road site are predominantly residential.
01 Existing sports/leisure facilities
02 Historic built environment
03 Primary parking areas
04 Main entrance
05 Modest scale residential properties of traditional design and construction
06 Canal corridor and public footpath
07 Longer term potential/aspirations
08 Newer, high quality buildings
09 Older buildings
Function / Uses

The site covers approximately 13 ha and provides a variety of accommodation to cater for the everyday needs of the students, which includes the following key uses/accommodation:

- University Hall of Residence;
- The Students’ Union;
- Learning Resource Centre;
- Laboratories;
- Lecture theatres;
- Teaching rooms;
- Staff rooms;
- Staff offices;
- General University reception area;
- Administrative offices; and
- Sports and leisure facilities.

Local Area - Built Character

The south-eastern section of the campus is located within the Parkgate Road Conservation Area and has considerable heritage value. Its character is derived principally from the predominance of Victorian architecture in the form of large villas and terraces. The area contains several listed buildings, including the Grade II* University Chapel, and a large number of the older properties have Article 4 Directions.

The buildings in the surrounding area date predominantly from the mid-nineteenth century to early twentieth century when the principal routes into Chester became popular residential locations. The villas located on Parkgate Road are typical Victorian architecture with attractive bay windows and decorative door surrounds. There are also a significant number of mid to late Victorian properties which are larger, often providing a third storey at roof level. In addition there are also a number of Edwardian villas in this area, which are characterised by simpler architectural detailing and modest proportions.

Residential properties to the south of the University are more modest, generally two storey terraced town houses.

Although there are differing architectural styles in the surrounding area, there is commonality in the use of building materials with the local red brick and slate predominating, and a high level of consistency in the scale of buildings, most of which are predominantly two and three storeys.

Architecture and Materials

The Parkgate Road site has grown incrementally over the years, adapting to changing times and increased pressures and demands. Consequently, the built environment of the Parkgate Road campus is extremely varied and is made up of a collection of buildings of varying architectural style, form and function, reflecting how the University has evolved and developed over time.

There are a number of historic buildings within the site, reflecting the University’s long and established history. This historic core of the site is focused along the Parkgate Road frontage between Cheyney Road and Exton Park. A notable building in this area is the University Chapel, located on the corner of Cheyney Road and Parkgate Road, which is a Grade II* listed building.

The University’s historic buildings are predominantly constructed from traditional red brick, which is characteristic of the surrounding area. As the University has grown and developed over time contemporary buildings have been constructed, adopting the building styles reflective of the period of time in which they were constructed. This incremental and organic development of the campus has created an extremely varied urban form with a variety of materials used across the campus. Newer buildings have been added throughout the years and although the style varies considerably, there is a relatively consistent use of red brick to reflect the historic character of the area (such as the newly constructed Binks Building for example). The exceptions are Price Tower which is a 1960’s concrete construction (although this has now been re-clad) and the modern teaching accommodation buildings located in the northern part of the site, which have large amounts of glazing.

Scale and Massing

The campus incorporates a wide range of buildings, which varies hugely in terms of form, function, scale and mass. The range of building size varies from large footprint, four and five storey functional education buildings to small scale individual houses. The large functional buildings, are primarily located in the northern part of the campus, but there are also a number of taller buildings, such as the Binks Building and the nine storey Price Tower, located close to the site entrance on the eastern side of the campus.

Price Tower, which was constructed in the 1960’s, is the tallest structure and owing to the building’s height it is
visible from all points of the campus and from outside of the campus forming a dominant feature in the local area. This building has recently been refurbished to a high standard and re-clad with modern materials and glazing, which has considerably improved its visual appearance.

Notwithstanding the nine storey Price Tower, the scale of buildings across the campus can generally be described as four and five storeys. However, there are also a number of two to three storey buildings which occupy large footprints and make relatively inefficient use of the site and could be put to better use as the campus is improved over time.

**Estate Condition/Quality**

The University has grown incrementally over a period of 170 years, and, as a consequence, the urban form of the campus is extremely varied. Owing to the limited space on campus there are currently few opportunities for new development without major intervention/redevelopment of existing buildings or areas of surface level car parking.

The quality of the buildings on the site varies considerably. The site does benefit from some high quality modern premises and a number of good quality buildings providing teaching accommodation. In addition, there are a number of good quality historic buildings on the site, which create an attractive character.

However, there are a number of buildings on the site, which are underutilised and are approaching the end of their life span. Some of these buildings are also in a poor state of repair and provide poor quality accommodation. Over time and subject to funding and other matters, the opportunity will be taken to demolish the poor quality buildings, which are nearing ‘end of life’, to release development opportunities.

**Accessibility and Access**

The main entrance to the campus is from Parkgate Road on the eastern side of the campus. The University currently lacks a high profile main site entrance, with the existing entrance point being relatively discreet with limited signage. In addition, this entrance into the site is narrow and results in some conflict between traffic and pedestrians.

There are secondary entrances on Cheyney Road, utilised for servicing and pedestrians and to gain access to Halls of Residence. Circulation around the Parkgate Road site could be improved, with pedestrian only areas and clear, defined cycle routes.

**Green Space**

The campus has a relatively green feel, owing to the sports pitches, mature landscaping and trees and a number of smaller, more intimate landscaped amenity areas providing opportunities for recreation. Views over the sports pitches towards the canal are particularly attractive, with a number of mature trees along the western boundary of the University.

The Shropshire Union Canal directly adjoins the western boundary, providing an attractive canal side setting to this part of the site. However, the canal is not accessible from the site, since the adjacent footpath is a public right of way. There is a fence along the western boundary of the Parkgate Road site, to prevent access to the campus for security reasons.
2. Kingsway Campus

The University acquired the former Kingsway High School in 2006, which has undergone extensive maintenance work and improvement to create a modern, high quality educational facility. There is a high quality public realm and circulation spaces within the heart of the site.

Existing Role / Uses

The Kingsway site is a 20-minute walk from the Parkgate Road Campus, and is focused on the creative arts. The campus provides for the following:

- Drama;
- Dance;
- Photography;
- Fine Art;
- Graphic Design;
- Journalism;
- Popular Music.

The site accommodation includes:

- seminar rooms fully equipped with iMacs, data projectors and interactive white boards;
- 4 large rehearsal and performance studios, with extensive lighting rigs and projection facilities;
- dedicated fine art studios;
- printmaking, sculpture wood and textile workshops;
- sculpture metal workshop and foundry;
- photographic shoot studio and darkroom;
- music equipment, including instrument amps, electric and acoustic piano and synths, electric and acoustic drum kits and PA gear;
- sound proofed music rehearsal studios;
- 3 interactive journalism newsrooms;
- 11 state-of-the-art IT laboratories; and
- a virtual library with DVD viewing screens.

Owing to its former use, the site benefits from an extensive area of playing field to the rear of the main building.

Massing

The main building has a large footprint and is up to three storeys in height.
Landscaping

The site itself has a green feel, owing to the large grass playing pitches, mature trees and landscaping around its borders.

Character of the Area

The Kingsway site is located within a residential area, with modest scale family dwelling houses directly adjoining each boundary. The surrounding area is characterised by modest, two storey, terraced housing of post war construction. The housing is predominantly red brick construction, but there are also a number of pre-fabricated dwellings.

There are some older 1930’s semi-detached properties to the west of the site, which are constructed from red brick with tiled roofs and traditional architectural detailing.

Architecture and Materials

The Kingsway Building is of post war construction and has recently undergone a comprehensive refurbishment to a high standard, providing high quality teaching accommodation. The Building has been re-clad in modern materials, greatly enhancing its visual appearance.

In addition, the car parking and circulation areas between the buildings have recently been upgraded as part of the refurbishment works.

The majority of the campus is occupied by the playing fields and the existing building and therefore there are limited opportunities for further development of the site. The refurbishment of the existing buildings makes best use of the existing building and owing to the proximity of residential properties there are limited opportunities for further expansion.

Car parking

The existing car park is to the north of the main building and caters for those visiting or utilising the site, with additional pick up and drop off turning space to the west of the main building.
3. Riverside

The University’s Riverside site, the former County Hall Building, was acquired and opened in 2010 and accommodates the Faculty of Health and Social Care and the Faculty of Education and Children’s Services, together with a number of administrative and support departments.
Character of the Area

The Riverside site is located on the edge of the historic core of Chester and directly adjacent to Chester Castle. Consequently, the character of the surrounding area is an historic urban environment. The site fronts onto the River Dee and is in close proximity to the old City Walls. The Riverside site has a strong presence and is highly visible, since it fronts onto public open space and the River Dee.

Massing

The Riverside Building has recently been refurbished and is an attractive four storey period structure with grand proportions and a strong presence in the area. The Building occupies almost the entire site and therefore there is very limited opportunity for further development on the site, which is also constrained by the close proximity of historic buildings and the site topography.

Accessibility

The site is located within the City Centre and is therefore within a highly sustainable location, benefiting from excellent access to public transport and a host of services and facilities all within walking distance.

Car Parking

The University provides 230 car parking spaces in three locations, immediately adjacent to the Building.
The Development Framework
The Development Framework

The Development Framework for the University of Chester is presented to form a shared view of the development of the University’s estate in the future.

This is intended to foster a mutually beneficial relationship between the University, the Council and the community. As noted earlier, the Development Framework is intended specifically to cover the period to 2016, with general principles established for the longer term. Given the uncertainty over higher education funding, it is not envisaged that the University will grow to any significant extent in the period to 2016. Specifically in terms of student numbers and accommodation requirements, it is the University’s view that, based on close analysis of the anticipated patterns of recruitment, undergraduate student numbers will remain broadly static over the next five to eight years.

Therefore, in terms of the management of the estate the focus will be on, where possible and appropriate, the improvement of our existing resources and environment in the context of the University’s Corporate Plan and the effective management of our student accommodation at broadly current levels.

Within this context, the Development Framework will focus on each of the main sites in Chester and also consider the future management of the University managed, residential accommodation.

Parkgate Road will continue to be the University’s main site in the City. It will remain a focus for investment in the existing estate and will be the location for the limited amount of new development, which may take place to 2016. This approach reflects the scale and importance of the site to the University, its accessibility and the potential development opportunities at the site. It is also a reflection of the relatively constrained nature of the Kingsway site and the clear conservation context at Riverside.

Parkgate Road Campus

Role

Parkgate Road will remain the main University site in the City and will continue to accommodate a full range of functions covering teaching, administration, student and staff welfare, sports and leisure facilities and student accommodation.

Priorities to 2016

The priorities for Parkgate Road to 2016 will be:

- To maintain and improve, where possible, the existing built estate and environment through appropriate investment;
- To accommodate the limited new development envisaged by the University beyond current plans (namely the 196 bed student accommodation block and the Food Resource Centre);
- To maintain and improve, where appropriate and possible, the accessibility and safety of the site and its access points for pedestrians, cyclists and drivers;
- To maintain the planning policy designation of the Glenesk site as a longer term opportunity for University development;
- To continue to implement, review and refine the agreed Travel Plan, to encourage sustainable transport patterns;
- To manage the car park resource, within the twin aims of encouraging staff and students to travel to the site by means other than private car and minimising the occurrence of on-street parking generated by visitors to the Parkgate Road site;
- To maintain residential amenity through the appropriate design and location of improvements to the environment or built estate or new development;
- To contribute, as appropriate, to the preservation and enhancement of the Parkgate Road Conservation Area;
- To deliver current proposals, in addition to the Price Tower refurbishment, principally the Food Resource Centre and Student Accommodation block developments, subject to confirmation of funding; and
• To consider, following the completion of the current student accommodation project, the need for, scope for, and deliverability of, additional student accommodation on site, consistent with this Development Framework and the approach to managing the University student residential portfolio.

Development Framework

The Development Framework plan outlines the spatial strategy for the Parkgate Road site. Key elements of this are:

1. The focus on preserving and enhancing, where possible, the character of Parkgate Road Conservation Area through the maintenance and, where necessary, investment in those buildings, which make a positive contribution to character.
2. Maintaining Exton Park as the principal access to the site and to identify appropriate opportunity for improvements.
3. Seeking to establish the area around the entrance to the Binks Building as the reception and focal point for visitors.
4. Considering in the longer term the potential for an additional access point off Parkgate Road to the north of the site, in association with the Parkgate Road North opportunity site.
5. Respecting the ecological corridor role of the Canal and former railway through sensitive consideration of lighting, development proposals and other matters.
6. Generally identifying the scope for any new development, away from sensitive site boundaries and focusing any development in the foreseeable future on one of seven opportunity zones:

   1. North West Car Park;
   2. Parkgate Road North;
   3. Central Car Park;
   4. Alexandra House adjacent accommodation blocks;
   5. Former Rugby Pitch (part of) and car parking;
   6. Small Hall;
   7. Former De Bunsen Building;
   8. Glenesk.

7. Establishing a long term, viable and sustainable new use for the Rockmount building, which is consistent with the character of the building, its location in a Conservation Area and the protection of residential amenity.

Opportunity Sites

The Development Framework identifies a series of potential opportunities sites at the main campus. Other than the Glenesk site, these are predominantly car parking or increasingly outmoded University buildings. The development of any of the car parking sites would need to be considered within the context of the agreed Travel Plan, the need for on-site car parking and the potential impacts of on-street car parking.

North West Car Park

This is one of the main car parks, although a little detached from the heart of the site. This location may be suitable for development in the long term, although its use as car parking, perhaps intensified through the use of decking, is likely to remain the principal use of the site.

The site is relatively secluded and is not adjacent to any residential areas and so is relatively unconstrained. The ecological corridors of the canal immediately to the west and the former railway line to the north will need to be considered in any future development proposals.

The University does not presently envisage the development of this site in the foreseeable future.

Parkgate Road North

This site is currently occupied by a number of residential bungalows, used by University staff. In design terms the properties are out of keeping with the character of Parkgate Road and are an inefficient use of land on the University’s principal site in the City.

Land to the rear of this area has recently received planning approval for the Food Resource Centre.

In the longer term, the site offers the potential for additional development and importantly the development of an additional vehicular access point to the University. This would need to be carefully considered, taking account of amongst other things sight lines along Parkgate Road, the proximity of the former railway bridge to the north and local residential amenity.

Development of the site would need to enhance the character of Parkgate Road and prevent the overlooking of existing properties to the east of Parkgate Road. Two or three storey development of teaching, administration or similar uses or car parking may be acceptable in this location.
Central Car Park

This is a centrally located opportunity site, currently used for car parking. The site is suitable for a range of University related uses. Its development would need to respect the proximity of adjacent residential properties, some of which are privately owned, and the Parkgate Road Conservation Area. Two storey development, perhaps rising to three storey toward the heart of the site, may be acceptable in this location.

Alexandra House adjacent accommodation blocks

This site is currently occupied by three, increasingly outmoded, residential accommodation blocks. These offer a redevelopment opportunity from the medium term.

Former Rugby Pitch

Part of this site, adjacent to the Seaborne Library, is suitable for development and has approval for a 196 bed student accommodation block.

Small Hall

The site of Small Hall is suitable for the development of a range of uses, including teaching, administration and residential. Development could be to the order of four storeys and would need to reflect the site’s position adjacent to the focal point to the front of the Binks Building, the proximity of the principal access to the site and the nearby Conservation Area.

Former De Bunsen Building

The De Bunsen Building was demolished in 2008. The site is partly located within the setting of Astbury and Fisher accommodation blocks. The site is suitable for uses compatible with these adjacent uses, such as car parking, teaching or administration uses.

Glenesk site

The Glenesk site is a green field development opportunity, reserved for University development. The site is specifically allocated for the expansion of the educational facilities at the University of Chester. Consideration in the development of this site will include linkages to the main site, access onto Parkgate Road and residential amenity. The site is likely to be suitable for development at a scale of three to four storeys.
The University of Chester Development Framework, 2012

All-weather facility
Running Track
Tennis Courts

Opportunity Sites:
1. North West Car Park
2. Parkgate Road North
3. Central Car Park
4. Alexandra House
5. Former Rugby Pitch
6. Small Hall
7. Former De Bunsen Building
8. Glenesk Site

KEY
- Parkgate Road Conservation Area
- Opportunity Sites:
  1. North West Car Park
  2. Parkgate Road North
  3. Central Car Park
  4. Alexandra House
  5. Former Rugby Pitch
  6. Small Hall
  7. Former De Bunsen Building
  8. Glenesk Site
- Focal Point
- Current Principal Access
- Current Secondary Service Access
- Potential New Access
- Forthcoming Food Resource Centre
- Habitat Corridors
Riverside

Role

Riverside will remain a prestigious teaching and administration site in the heart of the City.

Priorities to 2016

The priorities for Riverside to 2016 will be:

• To maintain, and where appropriate improve, the existing built estate and environment through appropriate investment reflecting the site’s historic status;
• To continue to implement, review and refine the agreed Travel Plan, to encourage sustainable transport patterns; and
• To contribute, as appropriate, to the preservation and enhancement of the City Centre Conservation Area.

Development Framework

The Riverside site is a significant asset of the University in an established, historic location in the City Centre. No significant development is envisaged in the foreseeable future at the site. Investment in the site will focus on improvements in the existing accommodation, respecting heritage constraints.

Kingsway

Role

Kingsway will remain an important teaching and community activity and sports site for the University in the context of its suburban residential location.

Priorities to 2016

The priorities for Kingsway to 2016 will be:

• To maintain, and where appropriate improve, the existing built estate, facilities, and environment through appropriate investment, reflecting the site’s existing character and suburban residential location;
• To continue to implement, review and refine the agreed Travel Plan, to encourage sustainable transport patterns; and
• To reflect the site’s suburban residential location in the approach to managing the site and to protect residential amenity, whilst seeking to maximise the site’s role as an educational, cultural and sporting resource.

Development Framework

The Development Framework for Kingsway envisages little or no development for the foreseeable future. Investment will be focused on improving existing facilities. Where new development does take place it will be broadly within the general extent of the existing, developed footprint.

A short term objective will be to reinstate the former playing fields to a high standard, to support greater use by University sports teams.

To facilitate this, notably at weekends and to support the teaching role of the site, the University, in consultation with the Council and the local community, will take the opportunity to consider whether current hours of use restrictions could be amended to allow for additional use in the evenings and weekends.

It is accepted that this is only likely to be appropriate with the introduction of acoustic fencing in key locations and enhanced landscaping reasonably to protect residential amenity. Any changes to the hours of use of the car park would need to be the subject of a planning application, which would be considered by the local planning authority on its merits, taking account of the views of local residents.
University Managed Student Accommodation – Framework Strategy

The University recognises its obligation to work closely with the Council and other stakeholders, to monitor the impact of student accommodation in the community and to respond accordingly within financial and other constraints.

It is important for the University to work closely and productively with Cheshire West and Chester Council and the local community in the provision of appropriate solutions, which may include appropriate new provision, including on the Parkgate Road site and the evolution of a strategy to mitigate the worst effects of 'studentification' in the local residential communities through a managed approach.

This approach will be discussed and developed with the Council and other stakeholders commencing in 2012. Elements of the Framework Strategy for the management of the University’s residential accommodation will include:

- Realising proposals for additional on-site provision of student accommodation, as approved for a 196 bed development;
- Active management by the University of the University-owned HMO properties in areas where the community is concerned about over concentration of student accommodation and where such a strategy would deliver real benefits;
- Considering, following the completion of the current proposals for student accommodation at Parkgate Road, the scope for additional on-site provision within the context of financial and other constraints and the wider requirements of the University;
- The robust application of the University’s expectations on students as tenants to respect the property and the community, within which they live, and to act responsibly and with consideration for others; and
- An on-going dialogue between the University and the local planning authority regarding the University’s future plans and forecasts of student numbers to inform the authority’s approach to the consideration of planning applications for privately managed student accommodation in the City.

The University would also expect the Council to consider its approach to encouraging best practice by landlords as part of a wider management strategy for HMO and private, rented accommodation in the City.
Development Principles and Process
Development Principles and Process

The University of Chester acknowledges its important role in the economic and community life of the City. The University is committed to the sustainable development of its estate and in fostering a positive and mutually beneficial relationship with the local community and other key stakeholders including Cheshire West and Chester Council.

Principles

In managing its estate at the Parkgate Road, Kingsway and Riverside sites and its residential accommodation, the University will:

1. Reflect the principles established in this Development Framework and other relevant documents, such as the local Development Framework and the One City Plan;
2. Aim to attain the highest achievable standards of design and sustainability in all developments;
3. Develop proposals, which reflect the character and role of each site and preserve and / or enhance local character;
4. Maintain, and wherever possible enhance, the relationship between University sites with nearby residential areas, whilst managing the estate in an efficient and effective manner;
5. Continue to manage travel and parking demands and encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car;
6. Continue to work with the Council, the community and other stakeholders, to ensure a positive relationship between the University and City as a whole.

In turn, and given the consultation with the Council on this Framework and the shared view of the importance of the University to the City, it is expected that Cheshire West and Chester Council, will, without prejudice to their statutory functions and legal obligations:

1. Work positively with the University to deliver shared objectives;
2. Consider and respond to the development needs of the University in the light of its position as a key asset in the life and future of the City;
3. Reflect the key elements of the Framework in relevant planning and other policy documents;
4. Take account of the Framework in the consideration of planning applications put forward by the University;
5. Directly consult the University on any policies or proposals which may be of relevance to its corporate strategy and this Development Framework.

Process

In considering development proposals the University will:

1. Work closely with the local planning authority;
2. Take account of the approach and principles established in this Development Framework;
3. Reflect and respond to local planning, design policy and other relevant policies;
4. Undertake pre-application public consultation on proposals, to seek input on design options and solutions.