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PRESS RELEASE

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New Street must open a gateway to Longbridge, says local MP

The Birmingham New Street redevelopment needs to ensure the station is a gateway to the entire region, and urgently improve connectivity to areas like Longbridge, said Northfield MP Richard Burden when visiting the site today. The New Street sight has been the focus of a £600 million redevelopment since 2009, which aims to make Birmingham a transport hub for the West Midlands.

"It's great to see the changes to the station become a reality. But for New Street to be a real gateway to the West Midlands we urgently need to improve connectivity with the Longbridge redevelopment", Richard said.

Work at Birmingham New St has been angled towards improving links with the regeneration of the Eastside area and Curzon Street, the proposed station for the High Speed Two (HS2) Rail network that will provide fast inter-city transport throughout the UK.

But there are vocal concerns that New Street and plans for HS2 need to connect with the redevelopment of the former MG Rover plant at Longbridge, one of the biggest regeneration projects in the region. It's position on the Birmingham/Worcestershire border, proximity to M42 and M5 motorways, and location on the Cross City line give the Longbridge redevelopment national significance.

But local stakeholders are arguing that the potential it gives the area is undermined by poor facilities at the railway station and not enough consideration given to connectivity between different types of transport in the area. The Longbridge Connectivity Group – which involves representatives from the private sector and community, as well as public authorities such as Centro, Network Rail, London Midland and local authorities – is calling for significant improvements to link Longbridge with the wider public transport network.

Visiting New St on the 10 June, Richard remarked that *"There is a huge redevelopment going on at Longbridge – a new college, a new town centre, and a high-tec park with bags of potential for investment. Longbridge station is a vital gateway to Longbridge both as a destination and as a link to other regional centres of economic activity. Close to the Lickey, Waseley and Clent Hills, Longbridge has a unique access to the two of the region's beauty spots and is an important hub for commuter traffic."*

"It would make no sense to spend 600 million pounds on New Street without looking at wider connectivity issues. I have been working with local stakeholders to put forward a Transport Bid to the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Transport Board. It has support from the public sector, private sector and from representatives from the local community. We have practical proposals that will help unlock Longbridge's potential as an attractive and competitive destination, stimulating jobs and inward investment, as well as improving the journey experience for passengers and ensuring environmental sustainability in the long term."

“The transformation of New St station is an opportunity to tackle urban isolation and improve prosperity throughout the wider Birmingham area, and to put Longbridge on the map. After the University Train Station redevelopment opened up access to the East Midlands, Wales and the South West, we need to be looking ambitiously at how Longbridge connects to the region, and to the rest of the country.

I urge the GBS Local Transport Board to consider our bid, and take action to make Birmingham New Street a true gateway for the entire region.”

ENDS
