Why now?
The area around Williamson Square has been transformed by major investment. In the past decade more than £100m has been invested into high profile improvements to neighbouring Clayton Square and Church Street as well as the Royal Court Theatre, St George’s Hall and St John’s Shopping Centre and Market. Williamson Square feels like it has been left behind. It could be a huge asset and provide the city centre with a missing element – a high quality public space and gathering place.

With more major investment in the pipeline it’s time to re-imagine Williamson Square as a place that will help knit the city centre together and become a vibrant new destination.

What next?
The future of Williamson Square is in your hands. The people of Liverpool, these ideas help redefine the square over the coming year and decade. Fill in one of the forms available at Liverpool Playhouse Theatre and Marks & Spencer café. Or send an email to: contact@regeneratingliverpool.com Or you could even tweet your suggestions, using the hashtag #NewWilliamsonSq

The public consultation will run from Friday, 23rd February until Monday, 30th April

Thank you for your time.

A NEW FUTURE FOR WILLIAMSON SQUARE

Challenges

Despite its key city centre location and high footfall, there is a real need to bring fresh energy and ideas forward to re-shape the potential of Williamson Square as an attractive and vibrant open space.

The key challenges are:

• How do we make the square more than a through route, and make it a place where people want to stay and spend time?

• How can we improve the night-time economy in the area to support the Playhouse Theatre and nearby Royal Court and Empire theatres?

• How do we make the most of the fountain or do we need a new attraction or public art centrepiece?

• Can we improve lighting in the square and surrounding areas to make it feel safer and more attractive?

• How can we improve a sense of connectivity between the square and its neighbouring areas including Church Street and the St George’s Quarter and its venues and events?

• How do we ensure the square supports a thriving and varied daytime economy which attracts and retains visitors?

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City squares are vibrant meeting places – spaces where people congregate to celebrate, relax, exchange ideas or do business. They are still to the experience and enjoyment of urban life.

Williamson Square is one of the main public spaces in Liverpool city centre. It should be a vibrant and attractive hub but is seen by many people today as “a square that people walk through, rather than meet and gather.”

Past – Initially laid out as a residential square in 1745, Williamson Square has been an entertainment venue since 1772 when the Liverpool Theatre Royal opened on the northern side of the square. The Playhouse Theatre was built in 1866, originally as a music hall, and was later converted to a theatre in 1911. The square became traffic-free in the late 1980s.

Present – Today Williamson Square is the city centre’s largest pedestrianised open space at the heart of a busy retail area and is well connected to both major bus and rail stations. The square benefitted from a £5.75m regeneration investment in 2004 creating a new fountain, new granite paving, semi-mature trees and new seating. The square is home to the award-winning Playhouse Theatre, Marks & Spencer, Matalan and Liverpool Football Club store, as well as a mix of cafes, bars and street traders. It also currently hosts commercial events managed by the Liverpool BID Company.

Future – In 2012 the Liverpool City Centre Strategic Investment Framework set out a 15-year blueprint to transform and revitalise the city centre through major investment and regeneration projects. Williamson Square was identified as a key priority. On 23rd February 2018, businesses and stakeholders in Williamson Square came together to start a conversation to bring new life and energy to the square and asset for the people of the city.

Williamson Square, Liverpool, England

Latitude: 53° N. Longitude: 2° W

Vision

Our vision is built on four key principles and six objectives:

Re-imagine the square’s potential – both day and night.

Re-animate the square with a revitalised Playhouse Theatre at its heart.

Re-connect the square to its surrounding areas.

Re-engage the public and surrounding businesses with an imaginative events programme.

These cornerstone principles are underpinned by six objectives to:

1. Bring all the partners and players together to create a new vision.

2. Provide a vibrant cultural leisure destination.

3. Market the square as a visitor attraction.

4. Make better connections and access.

5. Create a square that is beautiful and environmentally sustainable.