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**Date**

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Gillian Merron MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, is to unveil a plaque to officially open the new Eldon Square Bus Station on Prudhoe Street at 11.45 am on Tuesday, March 20.

The city council's £11m glazed bus station offers passengers a modern, comfortable waiting area with upholstered seating, temperature control and automatic entrance doors. Electronic travel information will be displayed at each of the nine boarding areas and the bus station management team will also have offices in the bus station to offer passengers face-to-face information and help. CCTV cameras and regular security patrols will add to the feelings of public safety.

The bus station also provides some stunning artwork produced by architectural glass artist, Dan Savage.

Based in York, Dan was commissioned by the City Council to blend public artwork into the glasswork chosen as a major part of the design by architects CDA. Dan has produced 19 internal glass bay screens, screen-printed with enamels in blue, deep pink and black. The designs are based on the hustle and bustle of a busy city and include some of Newcastle's iconic landmarks.

Following a successful bid by the city council for £11m of government funding construction work began early last year. All bus services currently based in Eldon Square bus concourse will transfer to the new bus station from Sunday, March 18.

By next spring, a new, street-level shopping mall will have been created in place Eldon Square bus concourse. Designed to the same high quality as the rest of Eldon Square Shopping Centre the new mall will provide a direct route from the bus station to Old Eldon Square and link to the existing malls with lifts and escalators in the new atrium in Chevy Chase.

Leader of the City Council, Councillor John Shipley who will be attending the official opening said

“The new bus station will provide a first-class waiting area for passengers, further improving the comfort and convenience of travelling by bus.

“The importance of its role in encouraging greater use of public transport cannot be overstated, but high praise also has to be given to the stunning design work of the building. With its light and airy glass walls and glass artwork it presents an eye-catching landmark where once stood only a blank wall.”

The new bus station is part of a massive remodelling and redevelopment scheme for Eldon Square Shopping Centre by a partnership involving the City Council and Capital Shopping Centres.

Note to News Editors

Itinerary for official opening of Eldon Square Bus Station

11.30am	Minister meets assembled guests at Eldon Square Management Suite where she is shown Eldon Square proposals and model
11.45 am	Introduction by Marie Fallon, Director of Regeneration, Newcastle City Council. Speech by Leader of the Council, Councillor John Shipley Speech by Gillian Merron MP Minister unveils plaque