

# News

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## Topping out is just the ticket for the interchange

South Tyneside Council and partners have celebrated a major milestone with the 'topping out' of a multi-million pound facility.

The roof of South Shields' new transport interchange has now been installed.

The £21 million building will bring together a modern bus station and relocated Metro station.

The interchange forms Phase Two of the £100 million South Shields 365 regeneration masterplan.

Councillor Iain Malcolm, leader of South Tyneside Council, said: "We've been watching this building take shape since construction started in April and it's fantastic to see our plans coming to fruition.

"Now that the steel structure of the building is up and the roof is in place we are starting to see what an impressive gateway into our revitalised town this facility is going to be.

"Work is progressing on schedule and within less than a year the interchange will be welcoming its first passengers."

The council is working with partners Muse Developments and Nexus, along with construction contractor Bowmer and Kirkland, to deliver the project.

David Wells, regional director at Muse Developments, said: "It's great to join our partners on site, to mark this important milestone in the progress and delivery of this fantastic facility, which builds on the success of The Word.

"This project with the council highlights what can be achieved when the best of both the public and private sector work together - creating the country's national centre for the written word in South Shields and developing greater transport links by bringing the town's main transport services into one area."

The building has been constructed with 175 tonnes of locally-fabricated steel. Work is ongoing to make it watertight and to install cladding and insulation before the internal fitout, including dry lining, tiling and decoration begins.

Andy Kinnear, construction director at Bowmer and Kirkland, said: "We are delighted to reach this milestone, on time, on such a prestigious project.

"To see the new facility taking shape in the town centre in full view of the local residents and businesses that will benefit from it, is extremely rewarding for B&K, and we feel very proud and honoured to be a partner in this fantastic scheme."

The interchange is scheduled for completion next summer. Demolition of the existing Metro station will be completed following the construction of the interchange.

Planning permission was granted in 2015 for the transport interchange, as well as outline planning permission for phase three, new retail and leisure development.

The project received £9.4m from the Local Growth Deal through the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. The Local Growth Deal is supporting major capital investments to promote innovation, economic and skills infrastructure and sustainable transport across the North East LEP area.