

## **REQUEST FOR A REVIEW OF THE TRANCHE 1 ACTIVE TRAVEL SCHEMES**

### **1. Paragraph 2.41 of the Cheshire East Council Constitution**

In accordance with this provision arrangements to implement Tranche 1 Active Travel Scheme be reviewed by the Highways and Transport & Transport Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021, I request that two particular Schemes introduced in 2020 be reviewed

**2. Background:** In 2020 Emergency Temporary Active Travel Schemes were implemented across Cheshire East. Two schemes, in Sandbach and Congleton remain in place in spite of significant representations by the public and other interested parties that they be removed and the areas restored to the position before the schemes were implemented.

**3. Old Middlewich Road, Sandbach,** an Officer Decision Record has been prepared which indicates that an amended scheme will be implemented in October or November 2021. The Amended scheme was rejected by Sandbach Town Council which called for so-called the ‘Pop-Up’ cycleway to be removed and for parking spaces removed as part of the original and proposed revised scheme to be restored. I made a similar request to Cabinet in December 2020, shortly after implementation of the Scheme, and again to full Council in March 2021.

The ‘Have your Say’ Survey in respect of the original and revised schemes show that these were overwhelmingly rejected by residents and businesses for valid and cogent reasons. The one assessment of the use of the cycleway that has been undertaken by Cheshire East Council showing that three cycles used it in one short period on one day in April 2021 is wholly inadequate upon which to base a decision.

The ODR records the overwhelming rejection of the scheme yet seeks to attempt to justify the amended scheme despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Of particular concern is where the ONR even claims that car parking will be restored on one side. This is highly misleading as this was available before being removed as part of this scheme. Several car parking spaces have been removed and in spite of clear public opinion requiring that these be restored, the ODR indicates that these views are to be ignored. This temporary scheme seems destined to be made permanent unless there is appropriate member involvement through the Committee.

My request as Cheshire East Councillor for Sandbach Town Ward is that in view of the perverse and unreasonable interpretation of the public responses this matter must now be returned to the Highways Committee for review.

Option 2 in the ONR refers to the removal of the cycle lane in Sandbach should be discounted, citing at (2) the Council's Cycling Strategy 2017 and the Government's Local Transport Note 01/2 (which supports the provision of segregated cycle lanes). It is now clearly a matter for members of the Highways & Transport Committee to review the application of (2) and (3) above. In (3) of the ODR, it is also claimed that the amended scheme would substantially address the practical concerns raised during consultation. An examination of the responses shows that there is no substance to this claim.

Accordingly, I request that this request be placed on the agenda of the next Highways and Transport Committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.

#### **4. Congleton High Street**

Congleton town Council has also called for the "Share with Care" cycling scheme to be abandoned. Public views are overwhelmingly against this proposal but after nearly twelve months it remains in place. Owing to current regulations requiring distances to be maintained between market stalls on market days, the cycling scheme is effectively undermining the operational efficiency of the markets. This scheme also requires review by the Highways and Transport Committee.

I should make it clear that as a cyclist I approve of improvements to cycling but the introduction of such schemes must attract clear public support. Asking for representations and then ignoring them undermines the reputation of Cheshire East Council as a whole and the reasonable prospects of other more worthwhile schemes.

My request is that both schemes be placed before the Transport & Highways Committee for review and before any further steps are taken to change the status of such unsupported schemes from temporary to permanent.

Cllr Mike Benson  
6<sup>th</sup> September 2021