

Highways and Transport Committee

Date of Meeting:	16 June 2022
Report Title:	Local Transport Development Plans – Tranche 2
Report of:	John David, Interim Director of Highways & Infrastructure
Report Reference No:	HT58/22-23
Ward(s) Affected:	All wards in Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Middlewich, Poynton and Wilmslow

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1.** The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the second set of Local Transport Development Plans, which have been prepared as part of the Council's transport strategy framework. The first five plans were approved by the Committee in March 2022. This report presents Local Transport Development Plans for Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Middlewich, Poynton and Wilmslow for approval.
- 1.2.** In October 2019, the Council adopted a new Local Transport Plan (LTP), outlining the role that transport plays in delivering long-term strategic outcomes of Cheshire East Council. To complement the adopted LTP strategy, a set of Local Transport Development Plans have been prepared to identify priority schemes and initiatives to support towns and surrounding areas.
- 1.3.** Local Transport Development Plans have been prepared for the two principal towns (Crewe and Macclesfield) and nine Key Service Centres (Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Middlewich, Nantwich, Knutsford, Poynton, Sandbach, Wilmslow). Each plan extends to the surrounding rural areas, ensuring that all parts of the borough are included in at least one LTP Development Plan.

- 1.4.** Local Transport Development Plans integrate with other investment programmes to support delivery of the outcomes defined in the Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2025. This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan priority outcomes:
- 1.4.1.** **OPEN** – plan development has been informed by public consultation and stakeholder engagement to ensure that plans reflect the views of the community and that the approach to plan preparation is open and transparent.
- 1.4.2.** **GREEN** – the plans include proposals to improve sustainable travel across the Borough, enabling greater uptake of walking, cycling, public transport and electric vehicles. These initiatives positively contribute to the Council's response to the climate emergency and to reducing air quality problems, especially in urban areas.
- 1.4.3.** **FAIR** – the proposals are intended to create improved accessibility to schools, employment, key services and leisure opportunities. The plans consider how accessibility can be improved in both urban and rural areas across the Borough for all members of the community.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1.** The Local Transport Development Plans outlined in this report and appendices set out projects and schemes to improve our local transport networks across all modes of transport in Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Middlewich, Poynton and Wilmslow.
- 2.2.** These plans have been developed in consultation with local stakeholders through an interactive consultation portal

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/council_and_democracy/council_information/consultations/local-transport-and-car-parking-engagement-2020.aspx

This consultation engaged residents, community groups, businesses and collaborated with Town and Parish Councils with a strong focus on supporting delivery of Neighbourhood Plans and other local priorities.

- 2.3.** The plans have been developed in collaboration with the Council's regeneration team to ensure the transport improvements complement wider regeneration plans, including the emerging Town Centre Vitality Plans. There has been close coordination with teams preparing the Vitality Plans to ensure consistency between the two suites of documents. The LTDP plans are also complementary to strategic road and rail infrastructure schemes, such as Poynton Relief Road, Middlewich Eastern Bypass and the emerging surface access strategy for Crewe HS2 Hub Station.
- 2.4.** The plans are aligned with the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) which was approved in October 2021. However, following the Department for Transport (DfT) announcement on funding awards in April 2022, the Local Transport Development Plans have been updated to reflect

there is no additional BSIP funding as a result of the DfT settlement. Cheshire East will continue with scaled-back plans to improve bus services and will continue to develop an Enhanced Partnership with local bus operators, although limited funding will impact scheme delivery significantly.

- 2.5.** The LTP Development Plans for Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Middlewich, Poynton and Wilmslow are appended to this report, at

- 2.5.1. Appendix A – Alsager
- 2.5.2. Appendix B – Congleton
- 2.5.3. Appendix C – Handforth
- 2.5.4. Appendix D – Middlewich
- 2.5.5. Appendix E – Poynton
- 2.5.6. Appendix F – Wilmslow

- 2.6.** This set of plans plus those that were approved by the Committee in March 2022 provide coverage of the entire borough. Whilst the Local Transport Development Plans are centred on the two principal towns and nine key service centres, as designated in the adopted Cheshire East Local Plan, they have been prepared to reflect the wider functional areas around each place. In some instances, these areas overlap where there is evidence that our more rural communities interact with more than one key service centre. The intention is to provide a framework for transport programmes that reflects how the borough functions in terms of day-to-day travel patterns.

- 2.7.** Where plans are adjacent to one another, the transport development programmes have been carefully coordinated to reflect that transport networks and larger projects often span the plan boundaries. For example, a number of our active travel programmes intend to create better cycling routes between towns. In this case, as an example, the proposals for active travel improvements along Manchester Road- between Wilmslow and Handforth – are referenced in LTDP's for both Wilmslow and Handforth. There are numerous similar examples which reflect the Councils desire for enhancing networks for all modes of travel between towns in Cheshire East.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1.** The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:
- 3.1.1. Approve the Local Transport Development Plans as in Appendices A – F, which will become part of the Council's policy and programme planning framework for transport.
 - 3.1.2. Note that individual projects in any Local Transport Development Plan will be subject to programming of the annual highways and transport capital budgets. Projects will be progressed only after funding has been agreed

and subject to all necessary scheme design and development works, including consultation with stakeholders.

- 3.1.3. Authorise the Interim Director of Highways & Infrastructure to update the first tranche of Local Transport Development Plans, as approved at Committee in March 2022, to take account of Government's confirmation that no additional Bus Service Improvement Plan funding will be available to the Council (see paragraph 2.4).

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. The Local Transport Development Plans have been developed in line with the principles established in the Council's adopted Local Transport Plan to achieve the Council's wider strategic aims and objectives noted in the Corporate Plan 2021- 2025, most notably regarding environmental, economic and community objectives.
- 4.2. The Local Transport Development Plans have been developed through engagement with local communities in each area of the borough to reflect local priorities and opportunities.
- 4.3. Approval of the Local Transport Development Plans will enable the Council to use the plans as part of the annual business planning cycle for the Highways & Transport Programme. Furthermore, the aim is to proactively seek opportunities for developer funding and external funding from central government and other sources.

5. Other Options Considered

- 5.1. An alternative option is noted below in the table alongside information on why this has not been pursued.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing – there is the option of not progressing or approving the plans.	This option would not enable the Council to use the plans to seek external funding and may lead to uncoordinated investment in the transport network.	High risk the Council may not receive some external funding or there would be uncoordinated investment. There is also a risk that the Council would be in breach of its duty to keep up to date the Local Transport Plan

6. Background

6.1. The Council adopted a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) in October 2019. The LTP strategy considers all forms of transport over the period of 2019-2024 and outlines the role transport will play in supporting the long-term goals of Cheshire East. The LTP strategy includes a comprehensive set of actions to address strategic transport challenges for Cheshire East including:

- Protecting and improving our environment;
- Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity;
- Ensuring accessibility to services;
- Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity;
- Maintaining and managing our network assets; and
- Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

6.2. These Local Transport Development Plans have now been developed to complement these strategic actions, setting out priority schemes to support towns and surrounding rural areas.

7. Consultation and Engagement

7.1. A public consultation on a range of scheme options for improving local transport networks in each area of the borough took place between 23rd November 2020 and 31st March 2021. This consultation set out the Council's understanding of objectives for improving local areas, issues, and options to improve the transport network. The consultation used an interactive mapping system to present information in a user-friendly format. Materials were made available to stakeholders in alternative formats, where requested, including printed materials posted to stakeholders.

7.2. To enable all interested stakeholders to view materials and comment given the pandemic restrictions, the consultation period was extended by two months from the end of January to the end of March 2021.

7.3. In total, 1,041 responses were received, including 881 online survey responses, 31 paper survey responses, and 129 email responses. Consultation respondents included many town and parish councils who submitted detailed feedback, members of the public, community groups, and MPs. Consultation feedback has been analysed and reviewed to inform the final Local Transport Development Plans. Further to this, targeted engagement has been conducted in late April / early May 2022 with Town Councils on Local Transport Development Plans presented in this report and accompanying appendices.

8. Implications

8.1. Legal

- 8.1.1. As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. It must develop and implement policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within Cheshire East. "Transport" includes transport to meet the needs of people living, working, visiting or travelling through Cheshire East, the transportation of freight and facilities & services for pedestrians. The Local Transport Development Plans will form part of the Local Transport Plan framework and in part discharge this legal duty.
- 8.1.2. In developing and implementing Local Transport Development Plans, the Council must have regard to the transport needs of disabled persons and of persons who are elderly or have mobility problems. Proportionate development of schemes will need to be in accordance with statutory and legal requirements for Community Engagement, Equalities Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
- 8.1.3. Members must be fully aware of the equalities implications of the decisions they are taking. This will ensure that there is proper appreciation of any potential impact of any decision on the Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum, this requires decision makers to carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by officers.
- 8.1.4. There is no statutory duty to consult on proposals to change the way in which a local authority carries out its duties but there is an expectation enshrined in case law that any local authority making decisions affecting the public will do so fairly and in a way that cannot be said to be an abuse of power.

8.2. Finance

- 8.2.1. There are no direct finance implications from the adoption of the Local Transport Development Plans, however, adoption will put the Council in a stronger position to secure external funding.
- 8.2.2. Upon adoption by the Council, the Transport Development Plans will provide a framework of prioritised schemes to be considered for inclusion within the approved Capital Programme for Transport and Highways. This would be subject to a funding stream being formally agreed, the schemes are affordable and ensuring the necessary financial approvals are in place.
- 8.2.3. Schemes are anticipated to be funded from a range of sources including: Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Block; developer funding such

as Community Infrastructure Levy, Section 106 & 278 Agreements; the Council's own funds if resources are available, and any other external funding that the Council can secure.

8.3. Policy

- 8.3.1. Development of the Local Transport Development Plans is being undertaken to ensure there is a consistent policy-fit with all relevant adopted and emerging local policies including: the Local Transport Plan, Corporate Plan 2021 – 2025; Town Centre Vitality Plans; Cycling Strategy 2017; Education Travel Policy; Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy; Speed Management Policy; and Car Parking Strategy.

8.4. Equality

- 8.4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix G) has been completed for the LTP to ensure that the needs and impacts on all residents are understood, especially individuals or groups with identified protected characteristics.

8.5. Human Resources

- 8.5.1. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

8.6. Risk Management

- 8.6.1. A Project Board has been established chaired by the Head of Strategic Transport & Parking to ensure appropriate project governance and strategic direction. A project risk register is maintained detailing mitigation measures.

8.7. Rural Communities

- 8.7.1. The Local Transport Plan includes detailed consideration of transport issues in rural areas throughout the Borough. In principle, the objectives and issues highlighted in the plan apply throughout the Borough, including all rural areas. However, it is also recognised that there can be specific challenges that are of heightened importance in rural areas. Consideration of these is aided by the place-based approach to the planning process. This has put greater emphasis on how our key towns act as service centres which must be accessible to residents of rural areas. As part of the place-based approach, Local Transport Development Plans consider rural areas surrounding towns.

8.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

- 8.8.1. Specific transport issues relating to children and young people are incorporated into the Local Transport Plan. Development of the Local Transport Development Plans has taken full account of the Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools (SMOTS) strategy and identified options to improve journeys to schools and education.

8.9. Public Health

- 8.9.1. The boroughwide LTP and Local Transport Development Plans have been aligned with the Council's stated policies and action plans relating to air quality management. They consider the impact of transport on issues affecting public health, most notably air quality and the contribution that walking and cycling can make to health and wellbeing. The Local Transport Plan has been coordinated with the Council's wider strategic approaches to addressing public health outcomes.

8.10. Climate Change

- 8.10.1. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2025 and to encourage all businesses, residents and organisations in Cheshire East to reduce their carbon footprint. The Council's Environment Strategy 2020-2024 includes a commitment to produce an Electric Vehicles Infrastructure Strategy and supports the strategic objective to increase sustainable transport and active travel. The boroughwide LTP and Local Transport Development Plans have been aligned with wider Council strategies and includes the key objective 'protecting and improving our environment'. The LTP includes a wide range of actions to reduce the need to travel and to promote greater reliance on sustainable travel including walking, cycling, public transport and zero emission vehicles. The Local Transport Development Plans have a strong focus on identifying sustainable travel improvements that are required to decarbonise the transport system including encouraging walking and cycling, improving local buses and public transport, and transitioning vehicle fleets to electric vehicles.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	A. Alsager Transport Development Plan B. Congleton Transport Development Plan C. Handforth Transport Development Plan D. Middlewich Transport Development Plan E. Poynton Transport Development Plan F. Wilmslow Transport Development Plan G. Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2019-2024 www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/local_transport_plan/local_transport_plan.aspx