

Highways and Transport Committee

Agenda

Date:	Thursday, 18th September, 2025
Time:	10.30 am
Venue:	The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall, Macclesfield, SK10 1EA

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the foot of each report.

It should be noted that Part 1 items of Cheshire East Council decision making meetings are audio recorded, and the recordings will be uploaded to the Council's website.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To note any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 18)**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2025.

For requests for further information

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4. **Public Speaking/Open Session**

In accordance with paragraph 2.24 of the Council's Committee Procedure Rules and Appendix on Public Speaking, set out in the [Constitution](#), a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to speak are required to provide notice of this at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

Petitions - To receive any petitions which have met the criteria - [Petitions Scheme Criteria](#), and falls within the remit of the Committee. Petition organisers will be allowed up to three minutes to speak.

5. **First Financial Review of 2025/26 (Pages 19 - 90)**

To consider a report on the first financial review for year 2025/26.

6. **Local Transport Plan - Strategy and Investment Framework (Pages 91 - 208)**

To consider the Local Transport Plan – Strategy and Investment Framework.

7. **Development of a Lane Rental Scheme (Pages 209 - 216)**

To receive an update on the development of a Lane Rental Scheme (LRS) for Cheshire East Council (CEC) and consider the proposed future approach.

8. **Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026-36 (Pages 217 - 294)**

To consider a report on the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026 – 36.

9. **Work Programme (Pages 295 - 296)**

To consider the Work Programme and determine any required amendments.

10. **Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 - Part III s53 - Application MA-5-259 - Addition of 2 Public Footpaths to the Definitive Map & Statement in the Parish of Bexton & Town of Knutsford (Pages 297 - 318)**

To consider an application for the addition of two public footpaths in the Parish of Bexton and Town of Knutsford.

THERE ARE NO PART 2 ITEMS

Membership: Councillors S Adams, L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair), C Browne, A Burton, R Chadwick, P Coan, A Coiley, H Faddes, A Gage, M Goldsmith (Chair), M Muldoon, M Sewart and M Warren

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Highways and Transport Committee**
held on Thursday, 19th June, 2025 in The Capesthorne Room - Town Hall,
Macclesfield, SK10 1EA

PRESENT

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)
Councillor L Braithwaite (Vice-Chair)

Councillors S Adams, C Browne, A Burton, R Chadwick, A Coiley, H Faddes,
A Gage, M Muldoon and M Sewart

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Phil Cresswell, Executive Director Place
Mark Greenhough, Public Path Orders Officer
Richard Hibbert, Head of Strategic Transport & Parking Services
Adele Mayer, Definitive Map Officer
Tom Moody, Director of Transport, and Infrastructure
Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager
Steve Reading, Principal Accountant
Karen Shuker, Democratic Services Officer
Mandy Withington, Solicitor

The chair paid tribute to the late Councillor Chris Hilliard who had served the council and the community with dedication, integrity, and compassion. The Chair passed on the Committees condolences to their family and friends and asked all to stand for a minute of silent reflection in memory of Councillor Hilliard.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor S Adams requested that it be noted that she had not received the Public Rights of Way Training before the last meeting so therefore abstained from the vote on those items.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2025 be approved as a correct record.

4 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

Mr Newstead addressed the Committee in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). He stated that Cheshire East Council (CEC) had received approximately half as much funding per capita as Cheshire West in the recent funding allocation from Active Travel England because Cheshire East had a lower Capability Rating than Cheshire West.

Mr Newstead asked if CEC had a formal strategy to improve its capability rating. If it did, was this available publicly, and when did it expect to improve its rating?

Mr Newstead also asked what specific active travel projects in Macclesfield; CEC would be funding in the 25/26 financial year?

It was agreed that a written response would be provided outside of the meeting.

Mr T Melhuish addressed the Committee in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Mr Melhuish outlined evidence from national guidance, the impact on road safety, cost comparison, the limitations of the current Speed Management Strategy and the broader benefits. Mr Melhuish asked when the Council would be joining the growing number of places that have adopted the introduction of default 20mph using the cost-effective approach used in towns and cities across England.

In response officers stated that the Council had adopted a Speed Management Strategy which was formally agreed by the Highways and Transport Committee. The strategy did not endorse a blanket or unilateral approach to 20mph speed limits. Instead, it reviewed each case on an individual basis.

Mrs V Scaresbrook spoke in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Mrs Scaresbrook asked what proportion of the Consolidated Active Travel Fund of around £800K would be spent in Congleton and what on?

In respect of School Travel Plans Mrs Scaresbrook asked how many schools currently had those plans and were there proposals to increase uptake by making it easier to create them?

In respect of 'Making safe spaces for people of all abilities to walk, wheel and cycle.' Mrs Scaresbrook asked was 20mph proposed to help achieve

that and as most pavements were in a hazardous condition were comprehensive pavement repairs and pavement parking bans also proposed to reduce damage and restore safe space for users?

In response officers stated that there were approximately twenty schools within Cheshire East who had school travel plans. Officers had been working with schools and had retained the services of a national advisory body to help schools with the plans. It was a valid expectation of schools if the Council was to invest capital funds in seeking to support active travel initiatives, aligning within the Councils Home to School Travel Policy.

In respect of the 20mph proposal officers stated that this would be reviewed on a site by site and scheme by scheme basis rather than a blanket policy.

A pavement parking ban was still under consideration. The Council was awaiting national guidance from the Secretary of State for Transport which may be included in the upcoming National Transport Policy in response to a consultation ran by the DfT.

Mr M Bunte spoke in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Mr Bunte stated that he supported the draft Strategy in relation to cycling in general, but that he would like to see a focus on on-road cycling which should be enabled by lower speed limits, the Close Pass initiative and cycle training. Mr Bunte asked if this kind of focus on on-road cycling could be included in the Strategy.

Officers requested that Mr Bunte feed those comments into the consultation process.

Mr J Knight spoke in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Mr Knight welcomed the consideration of the transport plan but shared the concerns of residents of Macclesfield Central about the lack of provision for safe cycling in the town, the need for reduced speed limits and the general poor state of the roads.

In response officers requested that those comments be fed into the consultation process.

Councillor M Muldoon spoke on behalf of Sarah Bradley in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Mrs Bradley was leading a campaign for a pedestrian crossing on The Hill, Sandbach. The crossing had been assessed via a desktop exercise and had come out as second in Cheshire East for priority. Mrs Bradley requested that the pedestrian crossing be included in the plan and that officers write to her on future consultations and decisions in order that she could keep the community updated.

Officers agreed to provide a written response outside of the meeting.

Ms S Helliwell spoke in relation to Item 6 - Bus Service Improvement Plan - 2025/26 Delivery Programme. Ms Helliwell stated that at the September meeting of the Highways and Transport Committee she was informed by officers that the Council had received the S106 money from the developer and would be using that funding to provide a Saturday day service to Leighton so the timetable would mirror the Monday to Friday operation which would follow through to Leighton hospital. This would be built into the service specification for the 317 service.

Ms S Helliwell stated that this had not yet happened and that there was scope to include a Saturday service to Leighton through Alsager and Sandbach as that service was desperately needed as patients needed to get to Leighton hospital for appointments. Ms Helliwell asked that Alsager did not become the forgotten town and that as residents were being encouraged to use public transport to address the climate emergency, she stated that this was an ideal opportunity to ensure the 317 bus did go the Leighton and do a full circuit of Alsager and Sandbach.

In response officers stated that a procurement process had been completed and confirmation had been received from the bus operator that the 317 service would start a Saturday service this summer with a commencement date to be confirmed.

Ms L Roberts spoke in relation to Item 5 – Draft Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Ms Roberts raised a concern that the draft strategy excluded horse riders despite the fact that the government included horse riding within the broader definition of active travel. Ms Roberts argued that this exclusion was discriminatory, particularly because 75% of horse riders were female and therefore omitting equestrian travel from the strategy disproportionately affected women

In response officers agreed to provide a written response.

Ms C Jones was unable to attend the meeting, so the Chair agreed to read out her question in relation to Item 6 - Bus Service Improvement Plan - 2025/26 Delivery Programme. Ms Jones asked that when looking forward to devolution, how would BSIP funding be distributed across Cheshire and Warrington if the money was all in one pot?

In response officers stated that it was far too early to say how any funding streams will be allocated through a combined authority.

Mrs A Lawrence spoke in relation to item 8 - Item 8: Application CN-7-24 - Deletion of Public Footpath 19 in the Parish of Audlem. Mrs Lawrence explained to the committee how the poor behaviour of inconsiderate dog owners had impacted on her and her late husband since they had applied

to have Footpath 19 deleted in 2005 and how they had both felt immeasurably let down by the authorities opening of Footpath 19, 20-years ago and the significant delay by the authorities to progress the application for deletion.

In response the Chair explained that the officers and committee had a process that had to be followed and whilst he understood it was an emotive issue the decision would be based on a legal and evidence-based process and not driven by emotion.

Parish Councillor David Swan spoke in relation to item 9 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Part III Section 53; Application MA/5/250 for the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley. Councillor Swan stated that when he first submitted the application those residents whose properties backed on to the field that the footpath crossed had not purchased the extensions to their gardens. Since the purchases had taken place users had formed a new path a few metres further down the field around the perimeter of the new garden fences. Councillor Swan urged the Committee to request that officers seek approval from landowners, Peel Holdings to accept the slight deviation to the route so that this would avoid the need to install stiles which would be inconvenient and unnecessary given the minimal deviation.

The Chair thanked all those who had taken the time to speak at the meeting.

5 DRAFT ACTIVE TRAVEL STRATEGY AND LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS (LCWIPS)

The Committee considered a report which provided an overview of work to date on updating the Cheshire East Active Travel Strategy and progress in developing Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) across the borough.

The report sought approval to launch a public consultation over the summer to enable local communities to comment and shape the emerging strategy and infrastructure proposals.

It was noted that those authorities performing at a higher level would have greater access to funding so developing a new strategy and infrastructure plans was a key part of demonstrating the Councils ambition and commitment.

Officers agreed to consider the suggestion of making a video or film to market the strategy as it was a powerful medium which would help get the message across quickly and would engage a wider audience.

Officers explained the difference between capital and expenditure so that it was clearer for people to see what money was available to spend and on what.

In response to a question in respect of the committee having sight of the consultation before it went live officers agreed to provide members with a briefing.

In response to a question about what the terminology 'wheeling' meant officers clarified that it did not refer to electric scooters. Instead, it encompassed the use of wheelchairs, prams, push chairs and non-motorised scooters, aligning with terminology recommended in national active travel guidance.

There was a request that it was made clear the nature of active travel funding when doing the publicity around the public consultation, specifically that funding for active travel was competitive, discretionary and ring fenced therefore the council would have to comply with the terms of any grant or the funding would be returned.

Councillor Hilliard's contribution to the Manchester road through Wilmslow scheme was acknowledged, and it was hoped that the project would be seen as a lasting part of their legacy.

The committee expressed their support for the integration of plans across towns and the political leadership being shown in this area and members were encouraged to engage with developers to advocate for the allocation of S106 contributions towards active travel infrastructure.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

The Highways & Transport Committee:

1. Approve the draft Active Travel Strategy at Appendix 1 and the LCWIPs summarised in Appendix 2 as a basis for public consultation, taking into account the desire to improve the Councils performance rating in future ATE assessments.
2. Approve the proposed approach to consultation in line with the Consultation & Engagement Plan at Appendix 3 and Communications Plan at Appendix 4.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to finalise the consultation material and undertake the public consultation.
4. Approve the fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding £248,273 and capital funding £565,019.

5. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to spend the Council's Consolidated Active Travel Fund (CATF) allocation of £813,292 (£565,019 capital and £248,273 revenue) in line with our strategy and infrastructure delivery plans.

6 BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - 2025/26 DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report on the Cheshire East Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Delivery Plan 2025/26. The plan was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) as a draft document on 31 March 2025, in line with DfT requirements. Any amendments required by Committee would be incorporated and a final version submitted to DfT by the end of June 2025.

Cheshire East Council had been allocated £5,444,474 from the DfT as Local Bus Grant 2025/26. A summary of the proposed schemes for delivery using the revenue and/or capital funding was set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

It was noted that most bus routes were now close to the level they were at pre pandemic which was seen as a positive indicator of recovery. The use of available funding, both revenue and capital had supported a range of initiatives aimed at incentivising bus use.

Councillor H Moss addressed the committee as a visiting member and requested an amendment to the proposal for the continuation of the 16-19 Pass scheme in the draft plan. Councillor Moss stated that the incentive would do nothing to assist the younger age group in the community who used public transport to attend school and requested that the lower age restriction be removed from 16 years to include everybody under the age of 19. This would have a positive impact on the environment and every child would be able to benefit from the initiative.

The Committee asked a question in respect of what the logic was for selecting the cohort of 16–19-year-olds over a younger cohort for a £1 flat fare.

In response officers stated that the primary rationale for focusing on the 16 – 19 age group was that this cohort was typically no longer in compulsory education and at this stage in life began to acquire driving licences and access to cars. That made them a key target for interventions aimed at encouraging public transport use. The introduction of the £1 fare for that age group was a trial initiative to assess whether fare incentives could influence travel behaviour before driving became a regular option.

Affordability also remained a significant factor. Extending the £1 fare offer to all under- 16s would require substantial additional funding primarily to compensate transport operators for lost revenue. Officers had conducted an initial estimate of the current position to understand the financial

implications of expanding the scheme to younger age groups and that was circa £500k. The reduced fare was likely to increase ridership and generate extra trips which would add to this cost.

In response to a question about whether alternative options could be explored in the absence of current funding – such as negotiating with operators to extend the junior season ticket – officers confirmed that related work was ongoing. They were drawing on insight from the multi-operator ticketing initiative and exploring what types of schemes could be developed for under 16s to enhance accessibility and affordability. Assurance was given that the suggestion regarding junior season tickets would be taken forward for further discussion with the relevant operators.

A question was raised in respect of the cost effectiveness of targeting the 16 – 19-year age group and whether it would be more equitable to consider the cumulative amount paid by young people who began paying full fare from the age of 12 and whether providing equivalent support to that group might be more impactful.

The Chair acknowledged the importance of the issue but noted that any decision on changes to the scheme would need further consideration.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways & Transport Committee:

1. Approve the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Delivery Plan 2025/26 (see Appendix 1) for final submission to the Department for Transport (DfT) by the end of June 2025.
2. Recommend to Full Council approval of the associated, fully funded Supplementary Revenue and Capital Estimates for the value of revenue funding £2,879,963 and capital funding £2,122,646.
3. Approve the proposals for spending the Council's allocation of Local Bus Grant funding (value £5,444,474) for the financial year 2025/26 (see Appendix 2) and delegate the authority to spend the funding to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Enhanced Partnership Board.
4. Approve the specification (see Appendix 3) for a modernised Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) service as part of the Council's transformation programme and delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure to deliver the service in line with the specification.

7 FINAL OUTTURN 2024/25

The Committee received the report which provided an overview of the Cheshire East Council final outturn for the financial year 2024/25 and the financial performance of the Council relevant to the committee remit.

The Third Financial Review (FR3) forecast revenue outturn was an adverse variance of £18.3m (prior to the application of any Exceptional Financial Support) an improvement of £1.8m from FR2.

- The Overall Service outturn was +£10.2m overspend compared to £22.9m forecast at FR3 which was an improvement of £12.7m.
- Place overall outturn was -£8.6m under compared to -£4.9m at FR3 which was a £3.7m improvement.
- Highways and Transport were £1.8m underspent as a result of vacancies, managing spend and additional income which was a £1.3m improvement.
- The key reasons for the underspend were outlined as:
 - Car Parking: £0.3m overspend, £0.4m vacancies are offset by reduced car park income £0.7m. This represents a £0.6m worsening since FR3 from reduced income.
 - Strategic Transport is a £1.2m underspend, largely due to vacancies, which represent a £1.1m improvement from FR3, there has also been a delay in new bus contracts taking effect.
 - An underspend of £0.8m across Ansa Transport commissioning, Infrastructure, Highways and Rail Transport Integration due to vacancies.
- Overall Cheshire East Councils position was £17.6m overspend allowing for transfers to reserves of £7.4m which would be funded from Exceptional Financial Support.

In response to a question about the current position and targets for the general fund and earmarked reserves officers reported that the MTFS projects a substantial increase in general reserves, estimated at approximately £30m.

In response to a question raised in respect of whether borrowing money to fill up reserves and lending to money to other local authorities was considered as long term or short-term borrowing It was confirmed that lending was short term and borrowing was long term. Following a request for more information on the interest rates connected to borrowing and lending officers agreed to provide further information outside of the meeting.

Officers agreed to provide a written response to a question raised in respect of the amount of funding required in the current year to prevent further deterioration of the road network.

The committee expressed frustration that despite the Highways and Transport committee operating with one of the smallest budgets any underspend was reallocated to other areas rather than retained for future use within the service.

Officers stated that they could not predict future funding allocations but aimed to position the council to be in the strongest possible position to access additional funding when available. Responsibility for managing and reallocating underspend lay with the Section 151 Officer.

Following a request to have information at the end of each year on what had been spent in each area to be able to do a comparison each year officers agreed to explore how to provide members with clear breakdowns of expenditure across categories, information on funding guidelines, restrictions and the decision-making process for revenue and capital expenditure and provide clarification on how spending is allocated on a day to day basis and within the infrastructure programme.

RESOLVED (by Majority)

1. Consider the overall financial performance of the Council in the 2024/25 financial year, as contained within the report, as follows: a) A Net Revenue Overspend of £17.6m against a revised budget of £365.8m (4.8% variance) funded by conditional Exceptional Financial Support (Capitalisation Direction) via borrowing. b) General Reserves closing balance of £6.3m. c) Capital Spending of £88.4m against an approved programme of £215.8m (59% variance).
2. Note the contents of Annex 1.
3. Approve the new Reserves in the Reserves Section (Annex 1, Section 5, Table 1) which includes proposed movements to reserves.
4. Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Revenue Estimate (SRE) Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per Annex 1, Section 3, Table 1.
5. Approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) and Capital Virements between £500,000 and £1,000,000 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules for the following Committee's as detailed in Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4.
6. Recommend to Council to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCE) over £1,000,000 in accordance with Budget and Policy Framework Rules as detailed in Annex 1, Section 4, Table 5.

The Committee adjourned for a short break.

Councillor A Gage left the meeting and did not return.

8 WILDLIFE & COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 - PART III S53 - APPLICATION CN-7-24 - DELETION OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH 19 IN THE PARISH OF AUDLEM

Officers passed on the thanks of the family of the applicant to the committee for voting to defer the application at the meeting in April to the June Committee.

The Committee considered a report which outlined the investigation of an application to amend the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way by deleting Public Footpath 19 Audlem.

The investigation included a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect of the claim, the historical evidence, witness evidence and the legal tests for a Definitive Map Modification Order to be made.

The evidence consisted of the application from the landowner, supporting statements from two neighbours and documentary evidence in the form of letters, maps and photos sent to the Council.

It was noted that the submission of comments from Audlem Parish Council had been delayed due to the deferment of the report. However, the Parish Council subsequently confirmed their support for the officer's recommendation.

Officers reported a correction to the report in respect of paragraph 30 onwards which related to a Finance Act field record and stated there was a claim for a deduction for one footpath, and it was assumed that this footpath was footpath 19. The field record acreage for the farm included other land which was also crossed by part of public footpath 18 which was not shown on the plan. It was explained the details in the field book were supplied by the landowner and were not subject to external valuation so whilst the field book says one footpath it also says in the valuation calculation rights of way in the plural. There were no further details on the record to suggest which footpath was the valuation.

Officers acknowledged that there were some practical difficulties around the management of the farm when it was fully operational as outlined by Mrs Lawrence in earlier in the meeting. However, the officer clarified that the issues of convenience and safety could not be considered valid grounds for deleting the public path.

The Committee considered whether on the balance of probabilities the Public Footpath was registered on the Definitive Map and Statement in error.

The Committee agreed that the evidence that had been submitted with the application and that considered during the subsequent consultation and investigation was considered insufficient in showing that the details contained in the Definitive Map and Statement should be modified.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways and Transport Committee:

1. Decide that a Modification Order not be made under Section 53(3)(c)(iii) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement to delete Footpath 19 as shown on Plan No. WCA/40 at Appendix 1.

2. The application be refused on the grounds that there is insufficient evidence to overturn the legal presumption that the Definitive Map and Statement are correct.

3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

9 WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 PART III SECTION 53; APPLICATION MA/5/250 FOR THE ADDITION OF TWO PUBLIC FOOTPATHS BETWEEN PUBLIC FOOTPATHS 13 AND 21 IN THE PARISH OF MOBBERLEY.

The Committee considered a report which outlined an application submitted on behalf of Mobberley Parish Council, which sought to amend the Definitive Map and Statement for Cheshire East Borough Council. The application requested the addition of two public footpaths between Public Footpaths 13 and 21 in the Parish of Mobberley ("FP13" and "FP21") under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (the "81 Act").

The report included an analysis of the claim, comprising of a review of user evidence, an assessment of historical information and consideration of the relevant legal context. It also outlined the legal tests required for a Definitive Map Modification Order ("DMMO") to be made.

Councillor H Moss addressed the committee as a visiting councillor in support of the application but raised concerns in respect of routes B to C on the plan in appendix 1 of the report and asked that common sense was applied. Councillor Moss explained that residents in 2014 who backed on to the route were able to purchase some of the land to extend their gardens.

The purchase of the land had meant a minor realignment of the travel route, and the route now followed the perimeter of the new gardens. The new travel route had not been in situ for the required 20 years, whereas

the rest of the routes had. Councillor Moss requested that officers engage with the landowner to request that the route followed the perimeter of the gardens and not allow the route to enter the gardens for a sake of a few meters.

In response to a question in respect of what options the committee had to address the issue raised by Councillor Moss it was agreed that the application should go through due process then officers would engage with the landowner.

The Committee considered the evidence and on the balance of probabilities agreed that there was sufficient evidence that there was a reasonable allegation that public rights should be recorded and that a DMMO should be made to add the two footpaths between FP13 and FP21.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways & Transport Committee

1. Agree that a Definitive Map Modification Order is made under Section 53(3)(c)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement by the addition of a public footpath between Point A-C-D on Plan WCA/051 and a public footpath between Point B-C on Plan WCA/051.

2. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council will be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or public inquiry

10 HIGHWAYS ACT 1989 SECTION 118: PROPOSED EXTINGUISHMENT OF PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO. 29 IN THE PARISH OF KNUTSFORD

The Committee considered a report which outlined the investigation to extinguish Public Footpath No. 29 in the Parish of Knutsford following receipt of an application from Puro Property Partnership.

The report included a discussion of the consultations carried out in respect to the proposals and the legal tests to be considered for a diversion order to be made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

The Committee considered the evidence set out within the report and agreed that that a public path extinguishment order be made under section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 on the grounds that they were satisfied that it was necessary to do so as it is no longer needed for public use, based on DEFRA guidance, *Government guidance on diversion or extinguishment of public rights of way that pass through private dwellings, their curtilages and gardens, farmyards and industrial or commercial premises, published in August 2023.*

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways and Transport Committee

1. Agree that a public path extinguishment Order be made under section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 for Knutsford Public Footpath No.29 in the Parish of Knutsford, on the grounds that the Public Footpath is no longer needed for public use.
2. Agree that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, the Order be confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.
3. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council be responsible for the conduct of any hearing or Public Inquiry.

11 APPOINTMENTS TO SUB-COMMITTEES, WORKING GROUPS, PANELS, BOARDS AND JOINT COMMITTEES

The Committee received the report which sought to nominate members to the bodies outlined in the report.

The proposed nominations for the Public Rights of Way Consultative Group were noted as follows: Councillors L Braithwaite and H Faddes.

The proposed nominations of the Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group (Joint T & F Group with Highways & Transport Committee) were noted as follows: Councillors M Goldsmith and H Faddes.

It was further agreed that Councillor M Muldoon would be nominated for the Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group.

The committee were also asked to note the Terms of Reference (Appendix 1 of the report) of the Home to School Transport Joint Committee Task and Finish Group.

RESOLVED: (Unanimously)

That the Highways and Transport Committee:

1. Appoints the sub-committees, Task and Finish Groups, working groups, panels, boards, and joint committees for 2025-26, and the member appointments to them, as set out above.
2. Where appropriate, agrees to submit member nominations to the bodies below to the Head of Democratic Services.

3. Note the Terms of Reference for the Home to School Transport Joint Committee Task and Finish Group.

12 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Work Programme.

Following a request to include a standing item on the work programme for progress updates on major schemes across the borough, officers agreed to explore the most effective way to keep members informed. It was suggested that this may take the form of regular monthly briefings rather than formal update reports, to ensure the most current information was shared in a timely manner.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 8.55 pm

Councillor M Goldsmith (Chair)

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OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

18 September 2025

First Financial Review of 2025/26

Report of: Executive Director of Resources, Section 151 Officer

Report Reference No: HTC/04/25-26

Ward(s) Affected: Not applicable

For Decision or Scrutiny: Both

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report provides the current forecast outturn for the financial year 2025/26 based on our income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of June 2025. It also identifies actions that are being taken to address adverse variances to urgently address our financial sustainability.
- 2 The report provides the forecast outturn for all services, to provide Members with contextual information on the position for the whole Council. Members are asked to focus their scrutiny on the forecasts and supporting information relating to services within the remit of the Committee whilst understanding the overall context.
- 3 The report highlights any changes and external pressures that are impacting the Council since setting the budget in February 2025.
- 4 As set out in previous Financial Reviews, the requirement to continue to identify further actions to bring the Council back to a position where we are living within our means remains, and it will be important that these actions are closely monitored, and appropriate action taken to manage our resources. This report includes information on the actions that are currently underway.
- 5 Reporting the financial forecast outturn at this stage, and in this format, supports the Council's vision of being an effective and enabling Council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025-2029.

- 6 The report also requests member approval for amendments to the Council's budget in line with authorisation levels within the Constitution.
- 7 The full report to Finance Sub Committee on 10 September 2025 includes additional information on debt, Council Tax and Business Rates collection, Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators. The report can be found here: [Finance Sub Committee meeting 10/9/2025](#)

Executive Summary

- 8 This is the First Financial Review monitoring report (FR1), showing the forecast outturn position for the 2025/26 financial year.
- 9 The report provides the current forecast outturn position for the revenue budget, capital budget and Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for the financial year 2025/26 based on our income, expenditure and known commitments as at the end of June 2025.
- 10 The First Financial Review (FR1) forecast revenue outturn is an **adverse variance of £3.1m** (after the application of planned use of conditional Exceptional Financial Support **£25.3m** as set out in the approved budget in February 2025). Further details are shown in **Table 1** in paragraph 23.
- 11 All Directorates continue to work on mitigation plans to improve the overall forecast overspend position and in doing so, are highlighting any risks associated with mitigations currently reflected in the reported £3.1m overspend.
- 12 The value of additional mitigation plans not yet reflected as delivered at FR1 are estimated at £2.8m, giving a potential improved overall forecast of £0.3m overspend. However, should the current mitigations included in the FR1 forecast not materialise, alongside further risks identified, then the forecast overspend position could increase to £18.7m adverse. Further updates will be provided at FR2.
- 13 Each Directorate have plans underway to deliver approved budget changes (growth and savings) identified as part of the 2025/26 approved budget per MTFS line – see paragraph 31 below and **Annex 1, Section 2** of the report.
- 14 The opening DSG deficit is £112.1m with an in-year projected movement of £33.5m to forecast a year end deficit of £145.6m – refer to paragraphs 40-42 for further details. Further reporting on the DSG Management Plan is being taken to the next Children's and Families Committee which outlines the plan to stabilise the DSG and start reducing the deficit.
- 15 The capital programme for the current year is forecasting expenditure of £205.5m in year, an underspend of £3m against a budget of £208.4m at

Outturn. This is an increase against the approved MTFS budget of £173m due to increases in Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) of £22.3m as well as some reprofiling of projects.

- 16 The overall forecast revenue overspend of £3.1m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council when considered in addition to the planned use of Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) of £25.3m. Reserves at out-turn were £29.4m, being £6.3m of General Fund Reserves and £23.1m of Earmarked Reserves. A planned net use of Earmarked Reserves and the General Fund Reserve is forecast at £3.3m leaving £26.1m total available reserves. The Council's level of reserves is therefore insufficient to cover the current forecast revenue outturn for the year without further action. Further details are also available in the following Annexes to the main report.

Annex 1: Detailed First Financial Review 2025/26

- **Section 1** 2025/26 Forecast Outturn
- **Section 2** 2025/26 Directorate Revenue Commentary and update on 2025/26 Approved Budget Change Items
- **Section 3** Revenue Grants for approval
- **Section 4** Capital
- **Section 5** Reserves

Annex 2: Detailed Capital Programme 2025/26

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee to:

1. Review the factors leading to a forecast adverse Net Revenue financial pressure of £3.1m against a revised budget of £440.5m (0.7%). To scrutinise the contents of **Annex 1, Section 2** and review progress on the delivery of the MTFS approved budget policy change items, the RAG ratings and latest forecasts, and to understand the actions to be taken to address any adverse variances from the approved budget.
2. Review the in-year forecast capital spending of £205.5m against an increased capital budget of £208.5m. This was adjusted at outturn following an approved MTFS budget of £173m.
3. Approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 as per **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 4**.

4. Note that Council will be asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimate Request for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000 as per **Annex 1, Section 4, Table 5**.
5. Note the available reserves position as per **Annex 1, Section 5**.

Background

- 17 The Council operates a financial cycle of planning, review, management and reporting. This report ensures that we review where we are and provide a forecast outturn position for the 2025/26 financial year, whilst also identifying the actions that need to be taken to manage our overall resources. The information in this report also supports planning for next year's budget by identifying issues that may have medium term impacts.
- 18 The Council set its 2025/26 annual budget in February 2025. The budget was balanced, as required by statute, with planned use of EFS, by way of a capitalisation direction, totalling £25.3m, plus £24.3m of transformation savings to achieve in year, and included important assumptions about spending in the year. The budget is part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025 to 2029.
- 19 This single view of the financial picture of the Council provides the overall financial context.
- 20 The management structure of the Council is organised into the following directorates:
 - Adults, Health and Integration
 - Children's Services
 - Place
 - Resources
 - Chief Executive's Office
 - Governance, Compliance and Monitoring
- 21 The Council's reporting structure provides forecasts of a potential year-end outturn within each directorate during the year, as well as highlighting activity carried out in support of each outcome contained within the Cheshire East Plan. Budget holders are responsible for ensuring they manage their resources in line with the objectives of the Council and within the approved budget.

- 22 For the purposes of each committee, these directorate budgets are aligned to a specific committee and the appendices to this report provide information at a level that should enable the committee to scrutinise the causes of any variations in budget and appropriate actions needed to bring the Council back into line in terms of managing its resources.

2025/26 Revenue Outturn – Financial Review 1 (FR1)

- 23 Overall, the First Financial Review (FR1) forecast revenue outturn is an **adverse variance of £3.1m** (after the application of planned use of conditional Exceptional Financial Support **£25.3m** as set out in the approved budget in February 2025). Further details are shown in **Table 1 below**.

Table 1 2025/26 FR1	Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Service Committee			
Adults and Health	167.257	166.962	(0.295)
Children and Families	97.352	106.350	8.998
Corporate Policy	43.671	43.734	0.062
Corporate Policy- Cross Transformation	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631
Economy Growth	28.741	26.456	(2.285)
Environment and Communities	43.670	41.125	(2.545)
Highways and Transport	17.151	17.265	0.114
Total Service Budgets	384.390	398.071	13.681
Finance Sub:			
Central Budgets	56.068	45.535	(10.533)
Funding	(415.197)	(415.197)	-
Total Finance Sub	(359.129)	(369.662)	(10.533)
Exceptional Financial Support	(25.261)	(25.261)	-
TOTAL	0.0	3.147	3.147

- 24 All Directorates continue to work on mitigation plans to improve the overall forecast overspend position and in doing so, are highlighting any risks associated with mitigations currently reflected in the reported £3.1m overspend.
- 25 The value of additional mitigation plans not yet reflected as delivered at FR1 are estimated at £2.8m, giving a potential improved overall forecast of £0.3m overspend (see Optimistic forecast Table 2). However, should the current mitigations included in £3.1m FR1 forecast not materialise,

then the pessimistic forecast position could increase to £18.7m (see Table 3). Further updates will be provided at FR2.

26 Table 2 Optimistic position

Table 2 – Optimistic position 2025/26 FR1	Revised Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Service Committee			
Adults and Health	167.257	166.562	(0.695)
Children and Families	97.352	105.050	7.698
Corporate Policy	43.671	43.734	0.062
Corporate Policy- Cross Transformation	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631
Economy Growth	28.741	26.456	(2.285)
Environment and Communities	43.670	40.125	(3.545)
Highways and Transport	17.151	17.265	0.114
Total Service Budgets	384.390	395.371	10.980
Finance Sub:			
Central Budgets	56.068	45.400	(10.668)
Funding	(415.197)	(415.197)	-
Total Finance Sub	(359.129)	(369.797)	(10.668)
Exceptional Financial Support	(25.261)	(25.261)	-
TOTAL	0.0	0.313	0.313

27 Table 3 Pessimistic position

Table 3 – Pessimistic position 2025/26 FR1	Revised Budget (NET) £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Forecast Variance £m
Service Committee			
Adults and Health	167.257	171.862	4.605
Children and Families	97.352	108.050	10.698
Corporate Policy	43.671	43.734	0.062
Corporate Policy- Cross Transformation	(13.452)	(0.821)	12.631
Economy Growth	28.741	26.456	(2.285)
Environment and Communities	43.670	41.525	(2.145)
Highways and Transport	17.151	17.265	0.114
Total Service Budgets	384.390	408.071	23.681

Finance Sub:			
Central Budgets	56.068	51.083	(4.985)
Funding	(415.197)	(415.197)	-
Total Finance Sub	(359.129)	(364.114)	(4.985)
Exceptional Financial Support	(25.261)	(25.261)	-
TOTAL	0.0	18.696	18.696

- 28 As indicated above in Table 1, the forecast overspend of £3.1m remains a significant financial challenge for the Council when considered in addition to the planned use of EFS of £25.3m. Reserves levels are insufficient to cover this level of overspending and should not be used as an alternative to undelivered savings or management actions to constrain and contain in-year pressures. Any drawdown in year to fund unmitigated pressures is not a sustainable approach and will take the Council further into financial distress.
- 29 The key areas causing an overspend at FR1 include a projected overspend of £9.0m within Children and Families, this is largely due to increased costs of placements (£6.4m adverse) and staffing (£2.2m). A shortfall of £9.7m is forecast against in-year cross-directorate Transformation savings, details of all Transformation related savings can be found in paragraphs 47-50 below.
- 30 Offsetting these pressures, there is a favourable variance of £4.7m within the Place Directorate due to vacancy management and various one-off income items expected in year. The contingency budget is contributing a further £7.2m to the overspend position (including the use of £1.6m to cover the pay inflation pressure), whilst interest and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) are forecast to be £3.3m under budget due to lower than expected borrowing, increased levels of investment and slippage in the capital programme. More detailed narrative explanations of variances are included in Section 2 of Annex 1.

Overall mitigations planned to manage pressures

- 31 Work is underway across all Services to look at mitigating actions which can be taken to reduce the forecast position in-year, some of the actions below have contributed to date or are being considered:
- Line-by-line reviews of all budgets to further identify immediately any underspends and/or additional funding.
 - Actively manage vacancies, particularly agency usage and reduce any overspends on staffing as soon as possible.

- Review the borrowing elements of the capital programme to minimise the minimum revenue provision and interest payable.
- Review of capital receipts available and potential surplus assets that can be sold (for best consideration).
- Children & Families – reviewing costs of placements, establishment reviews, Reunification of children, and Work on Edge of Care Service proposals to identify early intervention and cost reduction.
- Place Services – mitigations in year through further vacancy management, reducing expenditure and maximising funding opportunities.
- Corporate – Vacancy management.
- Finance Sub – potential further bad debt reviews generating one-off in year contributions to assist in reducing the in year overspend and review/reset process moving forward.
- Contingency Budget - the remaining balance of £5.7m (after general pay inflation pressure of £1.6m) has been released from Contingency to support the overall Council over commitment.

Capital Programme

- 32 The MTFS budget of £173m was set at Full Council in February 2025. Following that approval, and the completion of the outturn position of 2024/25, the MTFS position was increased to £208.4m. This was driven by increases in Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) of £22.3m as well as some reprofiling of projects.
- 33 The FR1 forecast position for capital spending for 2025/26 indicates forecast capital expenditure of £205.5m against the revised MTFS budget of £208.4m, showing a small forecast underspend.
- 34 **Table 4 below** sets out the capital programme position for 2025/26 as at FR1:

Capital 2025/26	Actuals FR1	Forecast Spend	Funded by:					Total
			Government Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adults and Health	-	0.132	0.132	-	-	-	-	0.132
Children and Families	0.030	47.746	39.054	6.812	-	0.050	1.830	47.746
Corporate Policy	1.014	16.481	-	-	-	-	16.481	16.481
Economy & Growth	3.036	44.420	23.082	1.394	0.183	0.328	19.433	44.420
Environment & Communities	0.451	24.371	8.340	1.193	0.647	-	14.191	24.371
Highways & Transport	4.730	72.392	57.795	4.762	-	0.825	9.010	72.393
Total	9.261	206.541	128.403	13.603	0.344	1.203	60.945	205.543

- 35 Detailed Committee tables are set out in **Annex 2**.
- 36 A full update is being provided to the Capital Programme Board.
- 37 Changes to the capital programme will impact the capital financing budget in year through the costs of interest payable where borrowing is incurred. Minimum Revenue Provision (repayments for the capital borrowing) impacts in subsequent years once an asset has become operational. Therefore, reductions in borrowing achieved through capital programme budget changes, whether through delay, budget reduction or alternative sources of financing, will be reflected in the revenue position each year in the MTFS for 2025-29 and beyond.
- 38 The current Capital programme remains unaffordable and ongoing scrutiny of the capital programme will be undertaken by the Capital Programme Board.
- 39 The current forecast for achievable capital receipts in year is £1m at FR1 – in line with budget - however further receipts are in the pipeline and a further update will be provided at FR2. Any additional receipts above budget can be used to reduce revenue pressures from borrowing in year or could be used to assist with funding of transformation activity.

Dedicated School Grant

- 40 The key pressure on DSG relates to the high needs block where SEND service continues to see a significant increase in the number of pupils with an Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs), and the associated school placement costs. The deficit in 2024/25 was an improvement on the budget gap, the in-year pressure being £33.5m increasing the cumulative deficit balance to £112.1m with an additional £1.6m Early Years payback increasing the cumulative deficit to £113.7m.
- 41 The cumulative deficit is currently being managed by an accounting override, which has recently been extended until 2028, allowing it to be treated as an un-usable reserve. At this stage the position is not recoverable unless there are significant changes to funding, national policy and demand. The cumulative deficit position is adding to the pressures of the Council as borrowing is required to cover the cumulative deficit which results in annual interest costs of around £5.6m in 2024/25 with an estimated cost of £5.8m in 2025/26.
- 42 The updated DSG Management Plan in July 2025, which will be reported at Children and Families Committee in September 2025, reduces the growth rate of EHCP based on the lower in year deficit at the yearend outturn. The mitigated forecast for 2025/26 is £145.6m (in year position of a deficit of £32.1m) after including mitigations of £14.8m. This plan

continues to reduce the previous planned mitigated deficit by 2031/32 from £236.7m to £205.4m.

Progress on delivery of the 2025/26 approved budget change items

- 43 Each Directorate have plans underway to deliver approved budget changes (growth and savings) identified as part of the 2025/26 approved budget per MTFS line – see **Annex 1, Section 2** of the report.
- 44 Table 5 presents a summary of the progress on the delivery of the 2025/26 approved budget change items. For items rated as Amber these are for items where there are risks and/or mitigating actions in place. For items rated as red these are for items where services are projecting an adverse variance and there is risk of in year non delivery/achievement. New mitigation items have also been included that have come forward since the approval of the MTFS to help the in-year position where identified.
- 45 The green and blue columns show budget change items that are either delivered or on track to be delivered or even exceed in some cases. However, there is also a pressure of £23.1m as shown in the red column that has a high risk of not being achieved within this financial year. There are new, in year mitigations of £8.9m, unrelated to the change item rows that have been identified to assist the outturn position. The table overleaf summarises the progress by Committee:

Table 5: Summary of the progress on the delivery of the 2025/26 approved budget change items:

Committee	Approved Change Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Complete £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	EFS £m	Mitigate £m
Adults & Health	21.494	21.199	(0.737)	20.148	3.350	2.961		(4.523)
Children & Families	8.659	17.657	(0.487)	1.981	0.203	16.033		(0.073)
Corporate Policy	1.078	1.140	(0.726)	0.310	-	1.893		(0.337)
Corporate Policy Cross Transform	(13.452)	(3.821)	-	-	(1.446)	(2.375)		-
Economy & Growth	0.534	(1.751)	(1.009)	0.668	(0.148)	1.187		(2.449)
Env & Communities	(2.741)	(5.286)	(0.159)	(8.048)	0.401	3.324		(0.804)
Highways & Transport	1.061	1.175	0.161	1.667	(0.025)	0.124		(0.752)
Finance Sub - Central	35.294	24.761	16.681	8.080	-	-		-
Finance Sub - Funding	(26.666)	(26.666)	-	(26.666)	-	-		-

Exceptional Financial Support	(25.261)	(25.261)	-	-	-	-	(25.261)	-
TOTAL	-	3.147	13.724	(1.860)	2.335	23.147	(25.261)	(8.938)

46 A complete list of all approved budget change items, with progress noted against each item, can be found in **Annex 1, Section 2**.

Transformation Savings Update

47 The FR1 forecast outturn position against the approved Transformation budget changes for 2025/26 is outlined in Table 6 below:

Table 6 - Transformation Budget Saving	Saving included in Council's 2025/26 budget £m	Forecast Outturn position at FR1 £m	(Under)/Over £m
Access to Services & Corporate Core (Cross cutters including Digital/Workforce/3 rd Party Spend/Fees & Charges)	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631
Service Delivery – Adults Social Care	(7.000)	(7.000)	-
Service Delivery – Children's	(3.788)	(1.368)	2.420
Service Delivery – Place	(0.175)	(0.175)	-
Total	(24.415)	(12.364)	12.051

48 The FR1 forecast outturn position against Access to services and Corporate Core projects is outlined below in Table 7:

Table 7 - Transformation Budget Saving	2025/26 Budget £m	2025/26 FR1 £m	2025/26 Variance £m
Digital Customer Enablement Invest	(0.750)	-	0.750
Digital Acceleration – Invest to Save	(0.600)	(0.200)	0.400
Digital Blueprint – Invest to Save	(4.000)	(1.000)	3.000
Fees and Charges	(0.750)	(0.821)	0.071
Third Party Spend	(3.000)	(0.625)	2.375
Target Operating Model (TOM)	(3.000)	(0.999)	2.001
Agency Staffing	(0.352)	(0.176)	0.176
Workforce Productivity	(1.000)	-	1.000
Total	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631

- 49 Within the cross cutting Corporate Core Programme, the Fees and Charges project has reached agreement with relevant budget holders to deliver savings of £0.821m, which is £0.071m in excess of the £0.750m planned budget saving. Across the other cross cutting projects within the Corporate Core and Access to Services programmes, delays in agreeing business cases and associated savings mean that the anticipated full year savings can now no longer be delivered in 2025/26. Savings across the Workforce, Digital and Third Party spend projects for the remainder of the financial year are forecast at £3.0m against the budget saving of £12.7m. This forecast is based on a projection of delivery for each project, which collectively results in the achievement of approximately 24% of the 2025/26 budgeted savings.
- 50 The Adults Social Care Transformation programme is forecasting a shortfall of £2.7m against the four Transformation projects but this has been completely offset by in year mitigating actions, with maximisation of client income and management of vacancies the main contributors. The Children's Service Delivery programme is forecasting total savings of £0.5m against savings of £3.8m included in the 2025/26 budget. One off mitigating actions of £0.9m have been identified to date, to reduce the net shortfall to £2.4m.

Revenue Grants for Approval

- 51 Approvals for Supplementary Revenue Estimates for allocation of additional grant funding are detailed in **Annex 1, Section 3**.

Reserves Position

- 52 On 1 April 2025, Earmarked Reserves totalled £23.1m and the General Fund Reserve Balance totalled £6.3m. Of the total earmarked reserves, £3.3m (11.2%) will be spent in 2025/26, on supporting the revenue budget for 2025/26.
- 53 Table 8 below shows the position on reserves forecast level of Earmarked and General reserves by the end of 2025/26.
- 54 As set out in the 2025/26 Budget/MTFS approved in February 2025, the overall level of reserves held by the Council remains insufficient.

Table 8: Total Reserves

Table 8 Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Expenditure	Additional Contributions to Reserves	Balance Forecast at 31 March 2026
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Earmarked Reserves	(23.114)	14.888	(11.341)	(19.567)
General Fund Reserve	(6.299)	0	(0.186)	(6.485)
Total Usable Reserves	(29.413)	14.888	(11.527)	(26.052)

- 55 The Council is currently forecast to have £26.1m of earmarked reserves at the end of the financial year 2025/26. Of this £3.0m can be considered ringfenced, with specific conditions limiting their use.
- 56 A full list of all earmarked reserves per Committee can be found in **Annex 1, Section 5**.

Consultation and Engagement

- 57 As part of the budget setting process the Pre-Budget engagement process provided an opportunity for interested parties to review and comment on the Council's Budget principles.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 58 The overall process for managing the Council's resources focuses on value for money, good governance and stewardship. The budget and policy framework sets out rules for managing the Council's financial affairs and contains the financial limits that apply in various parts of the Constitution. As part of sound financial management and to comply with the constitution any changes to the budgets agreed by Council in the MTFS require approval in line with the financial limits within the Finance Procedure Rules.
- 59 This report provides strong links between the Council's statutory reporting requirements and the in-year monitoring and management processes for financial and non-financial management of resources.

Other Options Considered

- 60 None. This report is important to ensure Members of the Committee are sighted on the financial pressure the Council is facing and the activity to date to try and mitigate this issue, and are given an opportunity to

scrutinise this activity and identify any further actions that could be taken to learn to live within our means Do nothing. Impact – Members are not updated on the financial position of the Council. Risks – Not abiding by the Constitution to provide regular reports.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 61 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget and require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.
- 62 The provisions of section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.
- 63 The Council should therefore have robust processes in place so that it can meet statutory requirements and fulfil its fiduciary duty. It must ensure that all available resources are directed towards the delivery of statutory functions, savings and efficiency plans. Local authorities are creatures of statute and are regulated through the legislative regime and whilst they have in more recent times been given a general power of competence, this must operate within that regime. Within the statutory framework there are specific obligations placed upon a local authority to support communities. These duties encompass general and specific duties and there is often significant local discretion in respect of how those services or duties are discharged. These will need to be assessed and advised on as each circumstance is considered.
- 64 The financial position of the Council must therefore be closely monitored, and Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings or alternative mitigations.
- 65 This report provides an update on progress for 2025/26 for all services.
- 66 It also provides updates and comments regarding the Council's use of Exceptional Financial Support under The Levelling-up and Regeneration

Act 2023 which inserted an amended Section 12A as a trigger event within the Local Government Act 2003, in relation to capital finance risk management. The legislation also provides for risk mitigation directions to be given to the Council which limit the ability to undertake certain financial action. The limitations are based on identified risk thresholds.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 67 The Council's financial resources are agreed by Council and aligned to the achievement of stated outcomes for local residents and communities. Monitoring and managing performance helps to ensure that resources are used effectively, and that business planning and financial decision making are made in the right context.
- 68 Reserve levels are agreed, by Council, in February each year and are based on a risk assessment that considers the financial challenges facing the Council. If spending associated with in-year delivery of services is not contained within original forecasts for such activity it may be necessary to vire funds from reserves.
- 69 The unplanned use of financial reserves could require the Council to deliver a greater level of future savings to replenish reserve balances and / or revise the level of risks associated with the development of the Reserves Strategy in future.
- 70 As part of the process to produce this report, senior officers review expenditure and income across all services to support the development of mitigation plans that will return the outturn to a balanced position at year-end.
- 71 Forecasts contained within this review provide important information in the process of developing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. Analysis of variances during the year will identify whether such performance is likely to continue, and this enables more robust estimates to be established.
- 72 The risk associated with the scale of these challenges is that the Council could act illegally, triggering the requirement for a s.114 report from the Chief Financial Officer. Illegal behaviour in this context could materialise from two distinct sources:
 1. Spending decisions could be made that exceed the available resources of the Council. This would unbalance the budget, which is unlawful.
 2. Spending decisions to restrict or hide pressures could be made that avoid an immediate deficit, but in fact are based on unlawful activity.

- 73 The consequences of the Council undermining a budget with illegal activity, or planned illegal activity, is the requirement to issue a s.114 report. Under these circumstances statutory services will continue and existing contracts and commitments must be honoured. But any spending that is not essential or which can be postponed must not take place.
- 74 Further consequences would be highly likely and could include the appointment of Commissioners from the MHCLG, and potential restrictions on the decision-making powers of local leaders.

Human Resources

- 75 This report is a backward look at Council activities at outturn and states the year end position. Any HR implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Risk Management

- 76 Financial risks are assessed and reported on a regular basis, and remedial action taken if required. Risks associated with the achievement of the 2024/25 budget and the level of general reserves were factored into the 2025/26 financial scenario, budget, and reserves strategy.

Impact on other Committees

- 77 All Committees will receive this financial update report.

Policy

- 78 This report is a backward look at Council activities and predicts the year-end position. It supports the Council's vision of being an effective and enabling Council as set out in the Cheshire East Plan 2025-2029
- 79 The forecast outturn position, ongoing considerations for future years, and the impact on general reserves will be fed into the assumptions underpinning the 2026 to 2030 Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 80 The approval of supplementary estimates and virements are governed by the Finance Procedure Rules section of the Constitution.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 81 Any equality implications that arise from activities funded by the budgets that this report deals with will be dealt within the individual reports to Members or Officer Decision Records to which they relate.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
Statutory Officer (or deputy):			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	28/08/2025	
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Monitoring Officer	28/08/2025	
Legal and Finance			
Julie Gregory	Legal Manager	28/08/2025	01/09/2025
Other Consultees:			
Executive Directors/Directors:			
CLT			

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Chris Benham – Director of Finance Chris.benham@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Annex 1 - Detailed First Financial Review 2025/26: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1 2025/26 Forecast Outturn • Section 2 2025/26 Directorate Revenue Commentary and update on 2025/26 Approved Budget Change Items • Section 3 Revenue Grants for approval • Section 4 Capital • Section 5 Reserves Annex 2 - Detailed Capital Programme 2025/26
Background Papers:	The following are links to key background documents: MTFS 2025-2029

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First Financial Review 2025/26

Results to end of June 2025

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Section 1: 2025/26 Forecast Outturn

- 1.1. Table 1 provides a service summary of financial performance based on information available as at the end of June 2025. The current forecast is that services will be £13.7m over budget in the current year.
- 1.2. It also shows that central budgets are forecast to be £10.6m under budget resulting in an overall outturn of £3.1m overspend against a net revenue budget of £440.5m.
- 1.3. The forecast outturn position is based on a full financial management review across all service and reflects the following assumptions:
 - 1 Includes those savings that have been identified as non-achievable though the tracker on our High Level Business Cases (HLBC) with no/some alternative actions currently presented;
 - 2 A review of the on-going impacts of adverse variances identified in 2024/25;
 - 3 Any identified, emerging items of significance:
 - 4 Within Adult Social Care, significant growth is forecast for care costs, less mitigations linked to delivery of savings;
 - 5 Within Children's Services, the rising cost and number of placements is a continuing trend and the Directorate are reviewing governance in this area in order to mitigate the overspend.
 - 6 Forecast impact of the confirmed increased 2025/26 pay award £1.6m (assumed to be covered from the contingency budget);
 - 7 Detailed review of any vacancy underspends in all areas;
 - 8 One-off items that have been identified so far through line by line reviews and/or identification of additional funding that has been announced since the MTFS was set.
 - 9 Mitigation activities delivered or forecast to be delivered by 31 March as reflected in paragraph 28 of the main covering report.
- 1.4 Further items impacting on the level of the Council's balances are detailed in **Section 5**.

Committee	Service Area Tier 3	Revised Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance
		£m	£m	£'m
Adults and Health	People	0.000	0.000	0.000
Adults and Health	Adults Health & Integration	-5.205	-5.205	0.000
Adults and Health	Communities and Integration Total	3.085	2.640	-0.445
Adults and Health	Integrated Commissioning - MH, LD & Families Total	0.798	0.798	0.000
Adults and Health	Integrated Commissioning - New Models of Care Total	0.000	0.000	0.000
Adults and Health	Integrated Commissioning - Thriving & Prevention Total	1.561	1.636	0.075
Adults and Health	Integrated Urgent Care Total	-8.453	-8.453	0.000
Adults and Health	Adult Safeguarding Total	1.844	1.844	0.000
Adults and Health	Care4CE Total	17.918	17.956	0.038
Adults and Health	Community Care – Short Term Intervention Total	3.254	3.254	0.000
Adults and Health	Community Care – Locality Teams Total	77.742	75.979	-1.763
Adults and Health	Mental Health and Learning Disability Total	75.409	77.209	1.800
Adults and Health	Operations Total	-1.251	-1.251	0.000
Adults and Health	Social Care Reform, Practice Assurance and Development Team Total	0.555	0.555	0.000
Adults and Health	Health Improvement Total	0.394	0.394	0.000
Adults and Health	Health Protection Total	0.000	0.000	0.000
Adults and Health	Infection Prevention & Control Total	0.354	0.354	0.000
Adults and Health	Joint Strategic Needs Assessment Total	0.246	0.246	0.000
Adults and Health	Public Health Total	-0.994	-0.994	0.000
Adults and Health		167.257	166.962	-0.295
Children and Families	Children Prevention and Support Total	0.000	0.000	0.000
Children and Families	Childrens Improvement and Development Total	0.345	0.350	0.004
Children and Families	Early Start Total	2.446	2.398	-0.048
Children and Families	Education and 14-19 Skills Total	-55.251	-55.118	0.133
Children and Families	Education Infrastructure and Outcomes Total	0.498	0.498	0.000
Children and Families	Education Participation and Pupil Support Total	19.758	20.053	0.295
Children and Families	Educational Psychologists Total	1.804	1.804	0.000
Children and Families	Preventative Services Total	4.373	4.128	-0.245
Children and Families	SEND Total	60.531	60.535	0.003
Children and Families	Children's Services Total	1.169	2.398	1.229
Children and Families	Childrens Social Care - Safeguarding Total	2.424	2.433	0.009
Children and Families	Cared for Children Total	9.204	9.250	0.046
Children and Families	Children in Need, Protection and Disabilities Total	9.874	10.821	0.947
Children and Families	Childrens Social Care Total	1.429	1.364	-0.065
Children and Families	Provider Services and Fostering Total	36.447	42.913	6.466
Children and Families	Integrated Front Door & Domestic Abuse Total	2.022	2.194	0.172
Children and Families	Social Worker Academy Total	0.276	0.330	0.054
Children and Families		97.352	106.350	8.998
Corporate Policy	Corporate Total	1.302	0.967	-0.335
Corporate Policy	Customer Services Total	2.671	2.571	-0.100
Corporate Policy	Human Resources Total	2.823	2.583	-0.240
Corporate Policy	Finance Total	5.718	5.718	0.000
Corporate Policy	Procurement Total	0.584	0.554	-0.030
Corporate Policy	Revenues and Benefits - Rent Allowances	1.218	2.475	1.257
Corporate Policy	Revenues and Benefits Other	2.685	2.382	-0.303
Corporate Policy	Digital Total	12.136	12.045	-0.091
Corporate Policy	Audit and Risk Total	3.241	2.868	-0.373
Corporate Policy	Democratic and Governance Services Total	4.118	3.749	-0.369
Corporate Policy	Legal Services Total	4.117	4.306	0.189
Corporate Policy	Business Change Total	1.985	2.460	0.475
Corporate Policy	Engagement & Communications Total	1.072	1.054	-0.018
Corporate Policy		43.671	43.734	0.062
Corporate Policy	Cross Transformation Savings	-13.452	-3.821	9.631
Corporate Policy - Cross Transformation Savings		-13.452	-3.821	9.631
Economy and Growth	Economic Development Total	1.492	1.082	-0.410
Economy and Growth	Estates Total	17.715	16.937	-0.778
Economy and Growth	Growth and Enterprise Total	0.150	0.262	0.112
Economy and Growth	Housing Total	4.063	3.595	-0.468
Economy and Growth	Rural and Cultural Directorate Total	4.752	4.281	-0.471
Economy and Growth	Place Directorate	0.570	0.300	-0.270
Economy and Growth		28.741	26.456	-2.285
Environment and Communities	Environment and Neighbourhood Services Total	0.334	0.750	0.416
Environment and Communities	Environmental Services Total	7.964	5.068	-2.896
Environment and Communities	Environmental Operations Total	23.741	23.958	0.217
Environment and Communities	Neighbourhood Services Total	4.532	4.952	0.420
Environment and Communities	Regulatory Services and Health Total	2.971	2.826	-0.145
Environment and Communities	Planning Total	4.128	3.571	-0.557
Environment and Communities		43.670	41.125	-2.545
Highways and Transport	Highways Total	11.980	11.730	-0.250
Highways and Transport	Infrastructure Total	0.110	0.138	0.028
Highways and Transport	Infrastructure and Highways Directorate Total	0.605	0.620	0.015
Highways and Transport	Strategic Transport Total	4.457	4.778	0.321
Highways and Transport		17.151	17.265	0.114
SUMMARY - SERVICE BUDGETS		384.390	398.071	13.681
Finance Sub - Central Budgets	Financing and Investment	34.039	30.759	-3.280
Finance Sub - Central Budgets	Movements in Reserves	1.304	1.304	0.000
Finance Sub - Central Budgets	Parish Precepts & Other Operating Expenditure	12.772	12.772	0.000
Finance Sub - Central Budgets	Contingency Budget	7.953	0.700	-7.253
Finance Sub - Central Budgets		56.068	45.535	-10.533
TOTAL		440.458	443.605	3.147
Finance Sub - Funding Budgets	Council Tax	-320.086	-320.086	0.000
Finance Sub - Funding Budgets	Business Rates Retention	-57.122	-57.122	0.000
Finance Sub - Funding Budgets	Revenue Support Grant	-0.849	-0.849	0.000
Finance Sub - Funding Budgets	Unringfenced Grants	-37.140	-37.140	0.000
Finance Sub - Funding Budgets		-415.197	-415.197	0.000
Exceptional Financial Support		-25.261	-25.261	0.000
SUMMARY TOTAL - OVERALL POSITION		0.000	3.147	3.147

Section 2: Directorate Revenue

Commentary and update on 2025/26

Approved Budget Change Items

The following section provides an explanation of the key drivers behind variances to Budget and the tables below provide detailed commentary on the progress against the approved budget change items that were agreed as part of the approved budget in February 2025. These are split by relevant committee.

Adults and Health favourable variance of £0.3m

- 2.1 The Adults, Health and Integration budget is forecast to underspend by £0.3m at FR1. This position is based on several early-year assumptions and estimates and is therefore subject to a potential range, from an optimistic underspend of £0.7m to a pessimistic overspend of £4.6m.
- 2.2 The MTFS 2025/26 targets were based upon the Inner Circle Deep Dives completed in July 2024, which provided a high-level estimate of savings that could be potentially achieved through the ASC Transformation Programme.
- 2.3 Business cases are now being progressed, helping us better understand when the savings are likely to come through to the budget. For two of the transformation programmes, pilots are being run to ensure the models adopted deliver the intended outcomes, and resources are being mobilised to support full implementation.
- 2.4 There is confidence that transformation plans are on track and that the full year effect of the targets remains achievable but when profiling the delivery of savings, it is clear some in year mitigation is required.
- 2.5 It is estimated that a further £3.9m of the planned savings will be delivered in 2025/26 through the Transformation Programme (see table below). Areas have been identified to mitigate the shortfall of £3.5m through increase in client contributions, use of one-off funding and efficiencies.
- 2.6 £0.5m of savings have been verified as delivered in Q1, these are linked to the Health and Social Care Partnership Case Reviews and the introduction of the Guide Price.

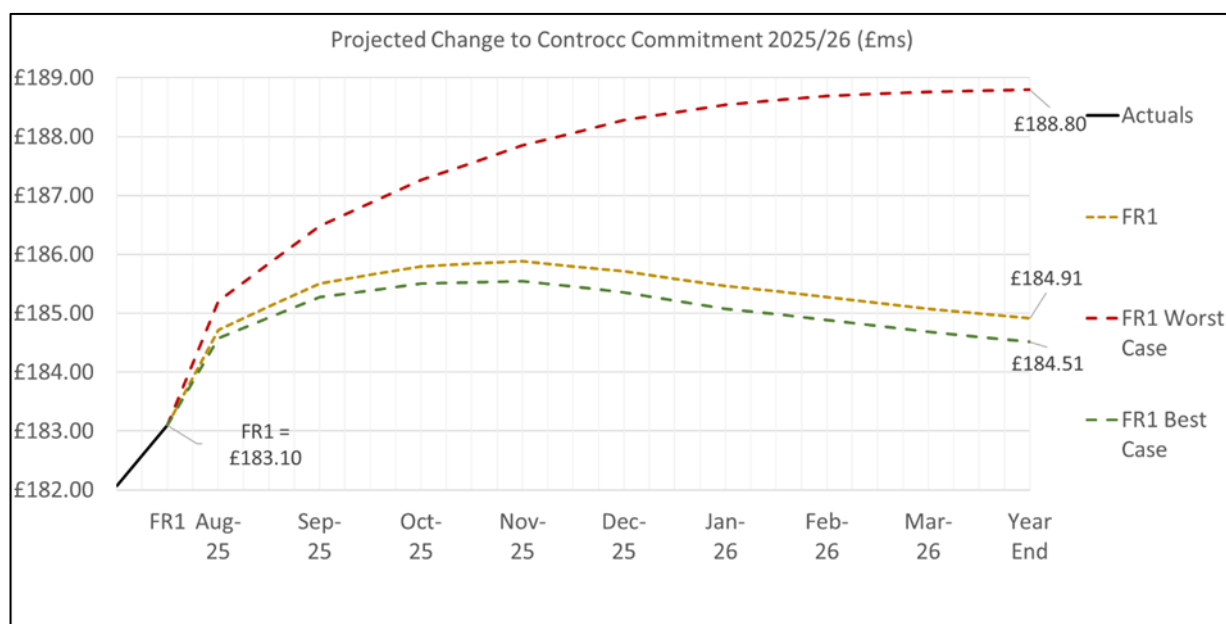
MTFS Saving 2025/26	Budget Target (£ms)	FR1 - Assumed Delivered (£ms)	FR1 - Estimate for remaining 2025/26 (£ms)	FR1 - Total Forecast (£m)	Budget Variance (£ms)
Prevent, Reduce, Enable	-1.500	0.000	-0.650	-0.650	0.850
Learning Disability transformation	-2.500	0.000	-1.000	-1.000	1.500
Commissioning and Brokerage	-0.500	-0.125	-0.375	-0.500	0.000
Partnership Case Review	-2.500	-0.343	-1.857	-2.200	0.300
Preparing for Adulthood	-0.868	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.868
Total	-7.868	-0.468	-3.882	-4.350	3.518

- 2.7 **Staffing:** The forecast assumes that staffing levels remain consistent with the June payroll. Underspends in year are currently being driven by held vacancies, which are forecast at FR1 to continue throughout 2025/26.
- 2.8 **Client income:** The position assumes that the overperformance in client income that we saw at the end of 2024/25 continues into 2025/26, supported by pension and benefit uplifts in 2025/26.

The forecasted full year effect of this is £3.5m and is expected to be a recurrent benefit. As the transformation plan continues to be implemented there may be implications for client income, and this will be monitored throughout the year.

Risks and Assumptions

- 2.9 **Demographic growth:** The forecast assumes externally commissioned care growth of £5.7m between FR1 and year end. This estimate matches the trend seen in 2024/25 and is based on comparable conditions and internal constraints for expenditure growth. The graph below projects the £5.7m growth and the forecasted delivery of savings from FR1 to the year end. The FR1 projection includes the estimated delivery of the £3.9m savings, the worst-case excludes this.



Summary of 2025/26 Controcc Financial Commitment as 7th July (FR1):

Primary Support Reason	Age Band	Accommodation with Care	Supported Living	Care at Home	Direct Payment	Day Care	Shared Lives	Total
Physical Support	18-64	£ 2,720,086	£ 2,165,280	£ 3,503,173	£ 2,431,986	£ 94,362	£ 79,229	£ 10,994,115
Physical Support	65+	£ 32,199,738	£ 605,400	£19,415,261	£ 802,415	£ 17,534	£ 42,454	£ 53,082,803
Learning Disability Support	18-64	£ 11,289,150	£ 26,447,204	£ 8,218,397	£ 5,504,444	£2,069,914	£ 234,976	£ 53,764,085
Learning Disability Support	65+	£ 1,682,844	£ 4,287,642	£ 1,241,728	£ 12,848	£ 96,873	£ 32,517	£ 7,354,453
Memory & Cognition	18-64	£ 1,880,712	£ 354,544	£ 256,178	£ 159,062	£ 9,892	£ 11,598	£ 2,671,986
Memory & Cognition	65+	£ 27,998,543	£ 245,213	£ 2,769,315	£ 676,097	£ 74,889	£ 57,148	£ 31,821,205
Mental Health	18-64	£ 2,115,946	£ 5,575,481	£ 1,867,532	£ 426,628		£ 80,739	£ 10,066,326
Mental Health	65+	£ 5,622,329	£ 572,751	£ 1,045,293	£ 73,570		£ 41,196	£ 7,355,139
Sensory Support	18-64	£ 157,900	£ 529,779	£ 205,021	£ 389,485	£ 44,627		£ 1,326,811
Sensory Support	65+	£ 574,533	£ 1,044	£ 186,454	£ 33,529		£ 3,842	£ 799,402
Social Isolation Support	18-64	£ 183,971	£ 774,437	£ 284,706	£ 263,482	£ 100,571	£ 53,052	£ 1,660,219
Social Isolation Support	65+	£ 182,072	£ 32,200	£ 74,560	£ 16,373	£ 2,818	£ 26,735	£ 334,760
Substance Misuse Support	18-64	£ 98,029	£ 177,287	£ 26,306			£ 1,932	£ 303,554
Substance Misuse Support	65+	£ 133,515		£ 66,456				£ 199,970
Support for Carer	18-64			£ 3,635	£ 77,684			£ 81,320
Support for Carer	65+				£ 80,045			£ 80,045
Block Contract Commitments								£ 1,203,386
Total		£ 86,839,370	£ 41,768,263	£39,164,013	£ 10,947,648	£2,511,479	£ 665,419	£ 183,099,578

- 2.10 **Use of grants:** The position assumes it will be possible to replicate the 2024/25 use of grants against eligible criteria.
- 2.11 **NHS:** A significant area of financial risk which is not reflected in the FR1 position, as it is impossible to quantify at this time, is the potential implications for Local Authorities as a result of changes in the NHS.

2.12 The NHS will be undergoing significant restructuring during 2025/26 following the announcement of the abolition of NHS England. In addition, all Integrated Care Boards (ICB) are required to make a 50% reduction in their administrative costs, primarily staffing. Cheshire and Merseyside ICB is one of the most financially challenged ICBs in the country and is formally in financial turnaround and required to make cashable savings of approximately £170m. This has the potential to drive costs to local Authorities through areas such as Continuing Health Care, S117 Mental health aftercare, changes to Service Level Agreements, as well as through the Better Care Fund.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Adults and Health Committee	21.494	21.199	(0.295)	
1	Client Contributions	(5.182)	(5.182)	-	Green - Income target for 2025/26 has been achieved.
2	Revenue Grants for Adult Social Care	(0.220)	(0.220)	-	Completed
3	Pensions Cost Adjustment	(0.517)	(0.517)	-	Completed
4	Demand in Adult Social Care	5.000	5.000	-	Amber - We have completed a model to forecast cost and demand in adult social care which will form the basis of future growth and saving requirements.
5	Pay Inflation	2.251	2.961	0.710	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025. Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council. Updated at FR1 to include additional pressure from the 2.5% not previously identified.
6	Funding the staffing establishment	3.800	3.800	-	Green - Increases in the number of social care staff to maintain safe services and to meet increasing demands.
7	Fully Funding current care demand levels 2024/25	24.500	24.500	-	Green - Growth, recognising the full year effect of current pressures on the externally commissioned care budget.
8	Remodel extra care housing catering service	(0.270)	(0.270)	-	Green - Work is ongoing to remodel the catering offer in extra care facilities.
9T	Prevent, Reduce, Enable - Older People	(1.500)	(0.650)	0.850	<p>Amber - The Prevent Reduce Enable programme has been established in accordance with the Council's Strategic Transformation programme. The pilot began on 16 June.</p> <p>The Prevent, Reduce, Enable programme is focused on ensuring that people are supported to live independent lives for as long as possible, delaying the need for commissioned social care services.</p> <p>The business case for year one anticipates a realisable saving of</p>

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					£650k. This is a shortfall of £850k against the MTFS. Offsetting savings are being identified.
10T	Learning Disability service transformation	(2.500)	(1.000)	1.500	Amber - Programme status has been updated to Amber due to continued challenges identified within working groups about delivery targets. The full year effect of the transformation programme remains at £2.5m as per the MTFS savings target, however, it is acknowledged the delivery of the full target will not be achieved this year due to a time lag in converting business cases into delivery. The forecast has been amended to £1m to reflect this. A breakdown of how the £2.5m (full year effect) savings target will be achieved is in development, covering the three key areas of the programme, Supported Living, Care4CE, and Shared Lives contributions. Work is also underway to confirm savings from the decommissioning of one of our Supported Living buildings, (estimated at £154k) this to be recorded against this target once validated.
11T	Commissioning and brokerage transformation	(0.500)	(0.500)	-	Green - The Guide Price Policy is now in place and a tracker has been set up to monitor savings against the MTFS target. there is a high confidence level that this can be achieved.
12T	Preparing for Adulthood	(0.868)	-	0.868	Red - This saving will be realised in children's services, it is likely that this is double counting with saving identified in the Birth to Thrive transformation group. We are reviewing as part of 'plan B' savings.
13T	Health and Social Care Partnership Case Review	(2.500)	(2.200)	0.300	Green - This is now part of BAU and the service will provide updates via a tracker as to the progress against the target. To date this year we have achieved 684k.
In year	Other forecast mitigations within the Adults services	-	(5.304)	(5.304)	Mitigations linked to maximisation of eligible grants, careful management of vacancies, and client income. To reconcile to FR1.
In year	Other forecast pressures within the Adults services	-	0.781	0.781	Other variances to reconcile to FR1 position.

Children and Families adverse variance of £9.0m

- 2.13 The Children's Services budget is forecast to overspend by £9.0m in FR1 based on the June 2025 reports. This is mainly due to increased costs in placements and staffing, and are the focus of this commentary.
- 2.14 The forecast placements cost for 2025/26 is £6.4m adverse to budget, this continues the year end outturn pressure which was £3.4m adverse to budget. The number of children in care at FR1 was 549 (at June 2025) compared to 550 at March 2025. Placement costs are increasing higher than inflation and £1.18m of net growth is forecast which was not factored into the budget. The forecast reports an overspend based on actual and committed costs which includes planned changes to specific client packages at this point in time.
- 2.15 This overspend is partly due to the increase in Care Leavers (Post 18) with a 54% growth in 2025 (£7.4m) to 2024. There were 95 post 18 placements at a weekly cost of £102k in June 2025 decreasing to 87 in July 2025 at a weekly cost of £95k. The weekly cared for children summary report on 25 July reported 546 children and included placement changes for 12 children which had a cost increase of 105% which highlights the costs are continuing to be a pressure.
- 2.16 The MTFS set out savings in relation to placements for Right Child Right Home £1.3m and New Accommodation with Support Offer for 16-25 Young People of £1.1m. Due to these increased placement costs the forecast has assumed these saving will not be met in 2025/26.
- 2.17 The Directorate are undertaking work to review and manage the placement governance with the aim to reduce the cost of this overspend in year.
- 2.18 The establishment staffing costs for 2025/26 is £2.2m adverse to budget, this continues the year end outturn pressures on the staffing base cost. This is offset by underspends on other staff related cost of £0.5m. The use of agency staff who are contracted to cover vacancies, sickness absence and maternity leave, especially in cared for children and children in need, protection and disabilities, continues to be a significant cost. This is due to ensuring staffing levels are safe and meet our statutory duties.
- 2.19 The forecast assumes positions covered by agency staff will continue, whilst vacant post with no agency workers assigned are assumed to be a budgeted position cost. The international social workers programme has begun with 4 staff commencing in June and 4 staff in July. The agency staff supporting their induction period should be removed after 6 months, this has not been included in the forecast and will be revisited in FR2 as a potential cost reduction.
- 2.20 The Directorate are working to reduce the reliance on agency staff by promoting recruitment campaigns to attract permanent staff instead of extending agency contracts.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Children and Families Committee	8.659	17.657	8.998	
14	Pension costs adjustment	(0.050)	(0.037)	0.013	Red - Teacher's pension legacy costs are not reducing as anticipated.
		(0.487)	(0.487)	-	Completed - CEC pension reduction.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
15	Growth to deliver statutory Youth Justice service, and meet Safeguarding Partnership duties	0.203	0.203	-	Amber - It is incumbent upon the three statutory safeguarding partners, the police, health and the Local Authority, to ensure that adequate funding is allocated to the Children's Safeguarding Partnership so it can fulfil its statutory functions in delivering the multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. An internal audit identified the Local Authority had not reviewed its contributions to the partnership and was insufficiently contributing to the delivery of the partnership arrangements. As a result, growth was approved by committee. This has been supported by an increase in contributions from all partner agencies. A vacancy has also been held in the business unit.
16	Growth in School, SEND and Social Care Transport budget	1.501	1.501	-	Red - Being reviewed as part of ongoing SEND improvement
17	Pay Inflation	2.624	2.874	0.250	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025.Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council.
18	Fully Funding current care demand levels 2024/25	3.295	7.313	4.018	Red - Will need to be closely monitored throughout the year to ensure that funding is sufficient to meet demand and complexity. This is also part of transformation work to ensure Edge of care/Right Child Right home.
19	Court Progression Improvement	0.023	0.023	-	Red - Some of this will be covered in the new structure build and re-design which may not require a separate court team, there is increased oversight on applications court delays at Director level, to minimise delays to court work.
20	Growth for annual contribution to the Regional Adoption Agency	0.213	0.213	-	Green
21	Growth for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children due to emerging pressures	0.500	0.500	-	Green - Growth in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children.
22	Reversal of a one year policy change for traded services	0.120	0.120	-	Green - Reversal of non-permanent 2023/24 policy change CF23-27 42.
23	Schools Improvement	0.175	0.175	-	Green - Due to staffing previously been paid out of the school improvement grant and this grant is now ceasing there is insufficient budget to cover the existing staffing

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					in the service to cover our statutory duties.
24	Funding the staffing establishment	2.739	4.885	2.146	Red - A families First transformation area of work has commenced and the re-structure will be delivered as part of this.
25	Safe Walking Routes to School	(0.250)	(0.026)	0.224	Red
26T	New accommodation with support offer for 16-25 young people	(1.100)	-	1.100	Red - This reduction in expenditure relates to commissioning work that has identified lower cost accommodation for this group of young people. Savings will be achieved through accessing lower unit cost places. A paper has been approved at C&F committee on the 9 June. There is a delay in this saving, for 2025/26.
27T	Birth to Thrive	(0.500)	(0.500)	-	Red - This is delayed by SRO capacity and needs a review by Transformation Board.
28T	Right Child, Right Home	(1.320)	-	1.320	Red - The oversight of placements now in place should now support the future savings. This is unlikely to be delivered in 2025/26.
29	Extended Rights to Free Transport	0.388	0.388	-	The Extended Rights to Free Travel grant is being rolled in to the Local Government Financial Settlement. This growth item is offset by additional grants within the central budgets. Amount confirmed and updated as at provisional settlement 18/12/2024.
30	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant – Expenditure	0.905	0.905	-	Green - Expenditure relating to the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.
31	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant – Grant Income	(0.905)	(0.905)	-	Green - Grant announced in 2025/26 financial settlement.
32	Foster4	0.114	0.114	-	Green
33	Foster Carers uplift of National Minimum Allowance (NMA)	0.471	0.471	-	Green - 3.55% NMA foster carer uplift.
In-year	In year variances not included in MTFS Proposals.	-	0.889	0.889	In Year variances mainly relating to Inspection of Local Authority Children's services (ILACS) overspend £0.7m.
In-year	In year variances not included in MTFS Proposals.	-	(0.214)	(0.214)	Quality Assurance, Commissioning and Partnership - Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review Position.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
In-year	In year variances not included in MTFS Proposals.	-	(1.058)	(1.058)	Family Help & Children's Social Care - mitigations to balance back to finance review position.
In-year	In year variances not included in MTFS Proposals.	-	0.310	0.310	In year variances mainly relating to Youth Service.

Corporate Policy adverse variance of £0.1m

2.21 Corporate Services has a net budget of £43.7m, at First Financial Review, the budget is forecast to be overspent by £0.1m. This includes the pay award pressure.

2.22 The budgeted pay award is held centrally on a corporate code at this stage. Now the pay award has been agreed, the budget will be distributed to services before the increased amounts become payable, so they match up. This will change individual service forecasts but not the overall figure for Corporate.

2.23 Key issues with the FR1 variance:

- Vacancy management in Corporate Services has resulted in the majority of services forecasting an underspend on staffing budgets which is being partially offset by the use of agency staff in some services. The net underspend on staffing costs is forecast at approximately £1.9m;
- Vacancy management has been combined with tighter control on non-pay spending across all services which is achieving a forecast underspend of £0.3m;
- ICT underspend of £0.1m. The ICT forecast is based on:
 - April to August where the existing shared service continues
 - September to March where a reduced shared service will operate.
 - These have been compared to the existing budget breakdown and hence there are considerable variances due to the new structure and business model that will be introduced from September.
- There are several risks around the forecast, including:
 - It is unclear whether the service has sufficient resource to deliver the 50,000 hours of project work assumed in the projected figures.
 - The cost model has been changed by Gemini and Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) so that the chargeable rate against the 50,000 hours is no longer viable and therefore the subsidisation of revenue by income has now changed and a new cost model to cover costs is yet to be agreed;
 - The Memorandum of Understanding with CWaC for the second half of the year has not yet been agreed, and hence the level of recharge cannot be guaranteed; and
 - There are risks around the revenue consequences of the shared Gemini capital programme and the lack of transparency – whilst these areas are becoming clearer they are not yet agreed.

2.24 However, these underspends have been offset by the following pressures:

- a forecast £1.3m under-recovery on Rent Allowances;
- a forecast under-recovery of income of £0.6m within several services particularly within Transformation and Improvement, Legal Services, and Audit & Risk;
- a £0.1m pressure due to unachievable savings from previous year's MTFS; and
- a staff budget pressure of £0.4m across Corporate Services relating to the estimated impact of the latest pay award offer versus the amount included in the MTFS.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Corporate Policy Committee	1.078	1.140	0.062	
34	Enforce prompt debt recovery and increase charges for costs	(0.077)	(0.077)	-	Completed - The award of costs is a matter for the Magistrates at each court hearing. However, only by exception will they vary from the level already agreed by us with the Court Manager. The approach to the Court Manager has been made and the revised level agreed. The action is therefore complete, but the financial benefits will accrue as we continue the regular recovery process during the year.
35	Pension costs adjustment	(0.396)	(0.396)	-	Completed
36	Pay Inflation	1.494	1.893	0.399	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025. Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council.
37	Shared Services Review - Move to Hybrid Model for ICT	(0.733)	(0.733)	-	Completed - The Shared Service continues to reduce third party costs and agency spend as per the Business case.
38	The achievement of additional Registration Service income, over and above that which is currently identified as required	(0.350)	(0.350)	-	Green - Additional Registration Service income. To be reviewed in year as the season progresses.
39	Recognising the annual receipt of £45k of Police and Crime Panel grant income	(0.045)	(0.045)	-	Green - This reflects a grant payment from the home office that is received each year in the Council's budget subject to adequate justification being provided.
40	Remove unspent element of phones budgets in corporate services	(0.060)	(0.060)	-	Completed. The phone budgets were reduced accordingly following approval of this proposals to align budgets with spend levels.
41T	Digital Acceleration Revenue Growth	-	-	-	No proposal in 2025/26
42T	Digital Blueprint Revenue Growth	-	-	-	No proposal in 2025/26
43	Transactional Shared Services stabilisation plan	0.270	0.270	-	Green - To provide TSS with additional capacity in 2025/26 - impact of this item and further review to be determined.
44	Additional cost of External Audit Fees	0.265	0.265	-	Green - Additional cost of External Audit Fees - based on 2024/25 fee level.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
45	Reduce Members Allowances budget	(0.100)	(0.100)	-	Green - Reduce Members Allowances budget for previous years pay award that was not taken.
46	Additional Cost of Bank Charges from 2025/26	0.120	0.120	-	Green - Based on current expectations of the 2025/26 charge this is deliverable.
47	Reverse reduction in leadership and management costs as posts are being retained	0.540	0.540	-	Completed. This reversal was necessary in light of the LGA review of decision making and the need to put an appropriate senior management structure in place in the corporate areas.
48	Reinstatement of a one-off saving of £150,000 from election budgets for 2024/25	0.150	0.150	-	Green - Reinstatement of a one-off saving of £150,000 from election budgets, for the 2024/25 year. Noted that the election costs will exceed the reserve and that difference will form a pressure on outturn. The next big local election is May 2027.
In year	Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position	-	(0.337)	(0.337)	Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Corporate Policy Committee - Council Wide Transformation	(13.452)	(3.821)	9.631	
49T	Digital Customer Enablement Invest to Save	(0.750)	-	0.750	Red - Delivery of a Digital Enablement Framework which directly supports the ambitions of the Corporate Plan. This existing initiative is a key enabler for deliverables within Customer Experience Workstream, putting customer considerations at the centre of ongoing service delivery. It additionally provides transformational capabilities for ongoing change management and increased efficiencies within the end-to-end service delivery processes including keeping customers informed and corporate case management options.
50T	Digital Acceleration Invest to Save	(0.600)	(0.200)	0.400	Red - The Digital Acceleration Project is now rated RED to reflect a material delay in Senior Stakeholder decision making. This delay stems from the absence of committed

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					<p>business ownership within services, which is significantly impacting the sign-off of benefits. To mitigate this, strategic alignment with the Workforce Programme is being actively explored to secure accountable ownership and embed benefit realisation into service planning. This alignment is critical to unlocking the value of the projects within the programme and ensuring sustainable adoption and benefit realisation across directorates.</p> <p>The Acceleration enablement process remains broadly on track except for the above-mentioned blocker, with notable progress achieved this period. The AI Transformation Platform contract is now in place and the design and delivery planning is being kicked off across all directorates. Realisation of the associated savings are dependent on the various Directorates adopting the solutions within the same financial period and continued delays in this area are likely to have a significant impact on the 25/26 benefit realisation forecast. Any potential impact will be identified and assessed during the detailed design activities which will complete over the coming period.</p>
51T	Digital Blueprint - Invest to Save	(4.000)	(1.000)	3.000	<p>Red - Digital Adoption is now rated RED to reflect a material delay in senior stakeholder decision-making. While quality and resource indicators remain green, the overall programme has shifted from amber to red due to persisting delays in business case approvals and the absence of committed business ownership within services.</p> <p>Phase 1 business cases have been drafted but are still awaiting sign-off. These delays—occurring at both service and board levels—are impacting delivery momentum and continued delays in this area are likely to have a significant impact on the 25/26 benefit realisation forecast.</p> <p>The initiative is designed to fast-track digital solutions that deliver council-wide service improvements and efficiencies. However, hesitancy from</p>

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					service areas and the absence of a streamlined approval process are slowing the transition from planning to delivery. Realisation of the associated savings are also dependent on this process and ongoing delays in this area are likely to have a significant impact on the 25/26 benefit realisation forecast. Any potential impact will be identified, assessed and reported during the detailed design process which is continuing and will complete over the coming period.
52T	Target Operating Model (TOM)	(3.000)	(0.999)	2.001	<p>Red - At FR1 the forecast for this transformation proposal is nil achievement.</p> <p>A significant amount of work is taking place to establish a basis for making savings.</p> <p>This includes a line by line review and a number of other projects to identify savings.</p> <p>WF1 has seen good progress to date with the Operating Model, it has recently been re-scoped and delivered a draft People Strategy in preparation for the next phase of work around spans and layers across the Council.</p>
53T	Agency Staffing	(0.352)	(0.176)	0.176	<p>Red - At FR1 the forecast for this transformation proposal is being set at nil against this corporate line.</p> <p>There are expected savings of £690,000 from the first round of the purchase of additional annual leave scheme and from holiday payments to agency staff.</p> <p>These will be included in service figures so are not included here to avoid any double counting.</p> <p>A significant amount of work is taking place to establish a basis for making the savings.</p> <p>This includes a line by line review and a number of other projects to identify savings which will include reducing agency spend, increasing uptake of benefits through our Vivup Employee Benefits Platform (which increases income to us).</p>

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
					WF2 is focusing on delivery of tangible and non-tangible benefits. Savings modelling work is progressing with all Directorates.
54T	Workforce Productivity	(1.000)	-	1.000	<p>Red - At FR1 the forecast for this transformation proposal is nil achievement.</p> <p>A significant amount of work is taking place to establish a basis for making savings.</p> <p>This includes a line by line review and a number of other projects to identify savings.</p> <p>WF3 has delivered an Employee Engagement Strategy and refreshed Council Values. A new Employee Lifecycle is under development to support our People Strategy and delivery of our Cheshire East Plan 2024 - 2029.</p>
55T	Fees and Charges	(0.750)	(0.821)	(0.071)	<p>Amber - The project has identified business activities where fees and charges can be increased in order to meet the target and this was approved by the Transformation Board.</p> <p>There have since been suggested changes provided approved at the May 2025 Transformation Board which allow for additional income of £0.821m to be raised. Where necessary, the approval processes are being undertaken.</p>
56T	Third Party Spend	(3.000)	(0.625)	2.375	<p>Amber - An allocation approach has been agreed at CLT and further work is being undertaken to identify which areas the £3m savings are going to be delivered from. Additional resources have been provided to the Project Team in order to complete previously planned activity in order to identify potential contract savings. A report is being considered at Transformation Board in July 2025.</p>

Economy and Growth favourable variance of £2.3m

2.25 Growth and Enterprise Directorate and Place Directorate are forecasting an underspend of £2.3m against a budget of £28.7m.

2.26 The key reasons for the underspend are:

10 Assets Service: £0.6m underspend (vacancies and one-off invoicing for backdated rent).

11 Economic Development: £0.4m underspend (vacancies, use of grants and additional recharges to capital).

12 Housing: £0.5m underspend (vacancies, income and reduced spend).

13 Other £0.5m underspend (Tatton Park £0.2m staffing, Green infrastructure and cultural economy – vacancies £0.3m).

14 Directorate £0.3m (reduction in expenditure and use of reserves).

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Economy and Growth Committee	0.534	(1.751)	(2.285)	
57	Office estate rationalisation	(0.150)	(0.100)	0.050	Amber - due to the timeline for the transfer of buildings being extended. Risk associated with the transfer of Westfields to Education for a SEND school. This item is being mitigated by in year savings.
58	Pension Costs Adjustment	(0.164)	(0.164)	-	Completed
59	Tatton Park ticketing and EPOS upgrade	0.001	0.001	-	Green - A procurement process is currently underway to source a supplier who can ensure onsite and web-based delivery of a new system which aligns with present and future needs. Improved functionality should enable future savings delivery.
60	CEC Archives	0.014	0.014	-	Green - All elements of the programme are progressing well, on time and on budget.
61	Rural and Visitor Economy Electricity costs	(0.021)	(0.021)	-	Green - In line with wider national industry price caps, the projections of energy reduction costs to users were due to be introduced during 2025/26 and therefore consideration to reduce the budget provision has been carried out in the base budget.
62	Minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) - Estates - Revenue Adjustment	0.023	0.102	0.079	Amber – Prioritised negotiations with 3rd parties/tenants occupying premises being expedited to avoid delays on obtaining access for surveys, completing necessary improvement works and legally completing lease renewals.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
63	Pay Inflation	1.064	1.187	0.123	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025. Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council.
64	Maintenance and operation of new assets in Crewe town centre	0.205	0.205	-	Green - Expected to spend to allocated budget.
65	Land Fill Site Assessments Revenue Adjustment - Estates – Review and Risk Assessment of Council owned Landfill sites (53 sites) Review and Risk Assessment completions	0.010	0.010	-	Green - Environment Service capacity identified. 2nd stage review underway.
66	Tatton Park Estate Dwellings Refurbishment	0.015	0.015	-	Completed - Provision for response maintenance issues for 8 onsite dwellings to ensure properties meet standards required as part of tenancy agreements and the National Trust lease.
67	Improving Crewe Rented Housing Standards	0.188	0.100	(0.088)	Green - Due to the progression of the Governments Renters Rights Bill which will bring forward improvements to the private rented sector and the struggle to recruit to Housing Standards Officers posts this project has been currently placed on hold. To understand the current condition of the private rented sector within Cheshire East will require the commissioning of a Stock Condition Survey, which will influence future direction and plans. It is therefore the intention to utilise a proportion of the funding to undertake this commission to help to formulate a robust plan to improve the private rented sector.
68	Maximise potential of Countryside Access Management System	0.020	0.020	-	Green - Contract negotiation in progress following Procurement Engagement.
69	Assets - building and operational – Energy	(0.860)	(0.860)	-	Completed - This was a known reduction as agreed last year as part of the overall MTFS savings target.
70	Assets - building and operational – Maintenance	0.465	0.465	-	Green - Whilst Inflation limits have stabilised, the additional funding is required to offset known increases in material costs and labour rates that were inadequate in previous financial years and to mitigate the impacts moving forward. The overall backlog of maintenance still remains a challenge, alongside the continued holding costs associated with managing vacant premises, pending the implementation of the future use / operation.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
71	Tatton Park - Increase Fees and Charges	(0.126)	(0.126)	-	Green - Following the strategic pricing review in 2020, Tatton Park continues to monitor and review parkland and attraction admission prices on an annual basis. Appropriate adjustments are made after considering the wider national economic situation, local competitor pricing and visitor dynamics to ensure that Tatton is able to achieve its budget targets.
72T	Corporate Landlord Model Refresh	(0.050)	(0.050)	-	Amber - This is a notional target saving allocation, based on the potential reduction of assets, linked to the disposals programme. Budget savings have been allocated from both the Assets Disposal programme and existing Facilities Management revenue funding.
73T	Asset Strategy Refresh	(0.100)	(0.100)	-	Amber - This was a notional target saving allocation, based on the potential reduction of assets, linked to the disposals programme. Several of the key sites are subject to planning consents or contractual conditions as part of the disposal strategy and may therefore be a challenge to achieve within year. Provisional budget has been identified from additional income and savings within the investment portfolio.
In-year	Place Directorate Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position	-	(0.270)	(0.270)	Place Directorate Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position
In-year	Growth & Enterprise Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position	-	(2.179)	(2.179)	Growth & Enterprise Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position

Environment and Communities favourable variance of £2.6m

2.27 Environment and Neighbourhood Services is forecasting an underspend of £2.6m against a budget of £43.7m.

2.28 The key reasons for the forecast underspend are:

15 Development Management: £0.6m underspend mainly from additional income.

16 Environmental Services: £2.9m underspend:

17 Extended Producer Responsibility Grant £1.4m one-off benefit.

18 Ansa management fee £0.2m – one-off benefit from vacancies.

19 Improved company reserves £0.8m one-off benefit.

20 General underspending £0.4m from vacancy management and additional income.

21 Leisure Commissioning: £0.6m overspend from delay in delivery of MTFS savings and shortfall in income.

22 Other service issues: £0.4m overspend (Pay award pressures).

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Environment and Communities Committee	(2.741)	(5.286)	(2.545)	
74	Strategic Leisure Review (Stage 2)	0.403	0.626	0.223	Red - Initial savings secured via committee decision on 11 March 2024. Proposals are being developed with EHL and town and parish councils to secure the residual £250k amount - dialogue is ongoing. Delays to disposing of Middlewich and Holmes Chapel Leisure Centres in year are having a negative impact on savings position.
75	Libraries Strategy - Stage 1	(0.100)	(0.061)	0.039	Committee approval to implement final Strategy secured on 27th November 2024, implementation now ongoing with revised opening hours at Tier 3 sites going live from January 2025 and Tier 2 sites as of 1st April 2025. Staff consultations now complete, new structure implemented from 7th July. Engagement with Town and Parish Councils undertaken to shape the Strategy proposals and seek funding contributions, which has resulted in a total of 8 sites being supported to a total of c.£154k enabling over 2,150 hours of library opening time per annum. Budget gap of £39k yet to be found, mitigated through in year savings from ongoing staff vacancies.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
76	Reduce revenue impact of carbon reduction capital schemes	0.171	0.171	-	Green - Carbon Neutral Council target 2030 for the Council to be Carbon neutral with minimum of offset.
77	Pay Inflation	2.270	2.698	0.428	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025.Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council.
78	Pension Costs Adjustment	(0.159)	(0.159)	-	Completed
79	Explore a Trust delivery model for Libraries and other services	(0.150)	(0.150)	-	Green - Growth item to cover one off costs relating to implementation of alternative delivery model(s) for libraries service. Aligned to development of Libraries Strategy.
80	Land Charge Income Adjustment	0.147	0.147	-	Amber - Uncertainty around implementation timescales of HM Land Registry changes to centralise some aspects of land charges functions hence understanding of actual impact, to be regularly monitored.
81	Local Plan Review	0.315	0.315	-	Amber - Reprofiled budget adjustment to provide additional funding towards development of new Local Plan which has now commenced.
82	Review of CCTV service - service efficiencies and income generation from existing services	(0.040)	(0.040)	-	Green - On target. Restructure has been subject to recruitment process with final outcomes communicated. Establishment to be updated on Unit 4.
83	Environmental Services Growth 2025/26 onwards	3.041	1.808	(1.233)	Green - Environmental Services Growth 2025/26 onwards.
84	Environmental Services Savings 2025/26 onwards	(2.366)	(2.170)	0.196	Green - Environmental Services Savings 2025/26 onwards.
85	Environmental Services Growth - Pensions	0.727	0.727	-	Green - Environmental Services Growth - Pensions (2025/26 onwards). This is net nil for the Council and forms a housekeeping item to ensure the budgets for staff who have transferred in from the ASDVs, at different pension contribution rates, are consistent in advance of changes for all employees.
86	Environmental Services – expected income from Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging	(7.000)	(8.394)	(1.394)	Green - New Central Government Legislation Extended producer responsibility (EPR) 2025-26, Deposit Return Scheme 2027-2028 and Waste Disposal Carbon Tax UK Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) 2027-28.
In year	Libraries Strategy Stage 1 (mitigation)	-	(0.039)	(0.039)	Savings mitigated through in year vacancy saving. 2025/26 RAG rated amber.
In year	Environment & Communities Mitigations	-	(0.925)	(0.925)	Environment & Communities Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review position

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	to balance back to Finance Review position				
In year	Fees and Charges	-	0.160	0.160	Adjustment for fees and charges - presenting Lyon Review items centrally

Highways and Transport adverse variance of £0.1m

2.29 Highways and Infrastructure are forecasting an overspend of £0.1m against a budget of £17.2m.

2.30 The key reasons for the overspend are:

23 Car Parking £0.5m overspend (reduced income offset by back dated rent reviews).

24 Transport Policy £0.2m underspend from vacancies to address pressures in parking.

25 Highways £0.2m underspend from increased income to address pressures in parking.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Highways and Transport Committee	1.061	1.175	(0.114)	
87	Increase parking charges	(0.450)	(0.450)	-	Green - Annual inflation adjustment to existing Pay & Display tariffs was implemented on 5th July 2024, in advance of bringing charges into effect in the "free towns" on the 2nd December 2024. A further inflation adjustment took effect in May 2025.
88	Safe Haven outside schools (Parking)	0.010	0.010	-	Green – Introduction of CCTV camera enforcement of waiting/loading restrictions at school gates on a trial basis using bespoke equipment that is type approved and proven for these purposes in order to improve road safety and increase enforcement capacity at these high risk locations.
89	Parking PDA / Back Office System contract - fall out of one off set up cost	(0.030)	(0.030)	-	Green - Introduction of a new system to administer the Council's parking services and process Penalty Charge Notices which will reduce administration costs and improve service response times.
90	Parking - Part-year effect of strategy changes	(0.720)	(0.139)	0.581	Red - Following decisions in January 2024, tariffs were uplifted from 1st July 2024 to extend pay and display to car parks in "free towns" from 2nd December 2024.
91	Parking - Staff and member parking	(0.250)	-	0.250	Red - Proposals for a new scheme of staff and members parking permits, integrated with the corporate travel plan, are being developed for consultation in 2025.
92	Transport and Infrastructure Strategy Team – Restructure	-	-	-	Green - The proposed changes will develop a more resilient in-house team and reduce reliance on agency / consultancy staff. The changes meet the needs of the Council, as it moves towards a new statutory Local Transport Plan and the development of transport functions in a new Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
93	Local Bus	1.545	1.545	-	Green - A network of new bus service contracts has been procured and services started on 30 March 2025. Extra evening and weekend services are planned to complement our Bus Service Improvement Plan.
94	FlexiLink Service Improvement Plan - invest to save	0.592	0.592	-	Green - Bus service review is complete and specification for a revised flexible transport service (DRT) have been prepared. Flexible transport will be designed to fill gaps in local bus service provision, especially in rural areas, and over extended hours of operation, to open up the service to more users.
95T	Advertising Income. Initial project scoping work being undertaken to understand scale/complexity and resourcing needs	(0.025)	(0.025)	-	Amber - Proposal for the transformation of the Council's approach to on-street sponsorship and advertising have been prepared as part of the Transformation Programme.
96	Pension Costs Adjustment	(0.055)	(0.055)	-	Completed
97	Pay Inflation	0.228	0.263	0.035	Red - LGS pay offer for 2025. Full and final offers of 3.20% increase resulting in overspend of c.£1.6m across the Council.
98	Flood and Water Management Act 2010 SuDS and SABs Schedule 3 Implementation	-	-	-	Amber - The requirement is to be ready to implement changes when regulations are implemented nationally. A training plan for existing staff has been identified. Recruitment is to be progressed.
99	Highways: Revenue Service	0.216	0.216	-	Completed - This provides investment in highway infrastructure that will arrest the deterioration of the asset. This will reduce costs of reactive maintenance, improve safety and reduce risks of significant incidents. It will also control revenue budget pressures and work towards addressing customer dissatisfaction
100	Highways: Depots	-	-	-	Green - The highways depots need investment to reduce the risk that facilities could be unusable for reactive and winter maintenance. Investment will enable some operational efficiencies, provides winter service resilience and a reduction in highways depots from 3 to 2, delivering a capital receipt.
In year	Highways and Transport Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review positions	-	(0.968)	(0.968)	Highways and Transport Mitigations to balance back to Finance Review positions.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
In year	Fees and Charges	-	0.216	0.216	Adjustment for fees and charges - presenting Lyon Review items centrally

Finance Sub favourable variance of £10.5m

2.31 The variance relating to the Finance Sub Committee is due to the use of £5.7m contingency budget to assist the overspend position. The variance shown below of £7.3m also includes a favourable variance of £1.6m which offsets the unbudgeted costs of the pay award being included in the service lines. In addition, there has been an improvement in the capital financing budget of £3.3m, this is in part due to a reduction in the cost of borrowing and also some slippage in the capital programme leading to a reduction in Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) payable in year.

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Finance Sub-Committee (Central Budgets)	35.294	24.761	(10.533)	
101	Capital Financing Budget	3.387	0.107	(3.280)	Green - Improvement against MRP of £0.5m, linked to slippage in capital programme. Improvement on net interest cost due to lower than expected borrowing (int cost) and slight improvement on rates/levels of investments (int income) of £2.7m.
102	Creation of Contingency Budget	15.953	8.700	(7.253)	Green - Creation of Contingency Budget as per Finance Sub Committee June Budget Assumptions Report (virements of £0.7m for C&F and £8m for A&H approved at FSC 10/03/2025). Assumed general pay inflation pressure of £1.585m to be taken from this budget to offset pressure in service budgets.
103	Risk of unachievable budget savings or growth demands exceeding estimates	-	-	-	Green - Risk of unachievable budget savings or growth demands exceeding estimates.
104	Pension adjustment – linked to E&C growth item	(0.727)	(0.727)	-	Green - Linked to growth item in E&C. ASDVS coming back into house but currently paying lower pension contribution rate than the standard CEC rate.
105	Use of Earmarked Reserves (reversal of 2024/25 one off use of central EMRs)	3.723	3.723	-	Completed – Budget adjustment

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
106	Top up of Earmarked Reserves	-	-	-	Completed – Planned budget adjustment not until 2026/27
107	Use of General Reserves (reversal of one off use in 2024/25)	11.654	11.654	-	Completed – Budget adjustment
108	Top up General Reserves	1.304	1.304	-	Completed

MTFS Ref No	Detailed List of Approved Budget Changes – Service Budgets	2025/26 MTFS £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn £m	2025/26 Forecast Outturn Variance £m	Progress 2025/26 (RAG rating and commentary)
	Finance Sub-Committee (Funding Budgets)	(26.666)	(26.666)	-	
109	Council Tax increase % growth	(14.326)	(14.326)		Green - Council tax and business rates income collection is managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target if actual amount collected was to vary from budget.
110	Council Tax increase base growth	(5.852)	(5.852)		Green - Council tax and business rates income collection is managed through the Collection Fund therefore no impact on current year funding target if actual amount collected was to vary from budget.
111	Business Rates Retention	(0.495)	(0.495)		Green - S31 Grants to be received in line with final settlement from MHCLG plus net income from NNDR1. Increase related to inflationary forecast increase in settlement funding assessment (related to business rates baseline)
112	Unringfenced general grants change	(3.012)	(3.012)		Green - grants to be received in line with final settlement from MHCLG
113	National Insurance increase contribution	(2.981)	(2.981)		Green - grants to be received in line with final settlement from MHCLG

Section 3: Revenue Grants for approval

- 3.1. Cheshire East Council receives two main types of Government grants; specific purpose grants and general use grants. Specific purpose grants are held within the relevant service with a corresponding expenditure budget. Whereas general use grants are held in central budgets with a corresponding expenditure budget within the allocated service area.
- 3.2. Spending in relation to specific purpose grants must be in line with the purpose for which it is provided.
- 3.3. General use grants, also known as unring-fenced grants, are funds provided by the Government to local authorities without specific restrictions on how the money is spent. They allow councils to determine how best to utilise the funding to address local needs and priorities.
- 3.4. **Table 1** shows additional grant allocations that have been received over £1m that **Council** will be asked to approve.
- 3.5. **Table 2** shows additional grant allocations that have been received which are over £0.5m and up to £1m and are for **Committee** approval.

Table 1 – Council Decision

3.6. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£m	Details
Environment and Communities	Extended Producer Responsibility Grant (Specific Purpose)	2.591	This is an increase on the MTFS forecast position. This grant is a policy approach where producers are given significant responsibility (financially and physically) for the management of their products and packaging at the end of their useful life. This shifts the burden of waste management away from local authorities and places it on those that create the waste. The fees collected from the producers are distributed to local authorities to help them manage packaging waste collection and recycling programs.
Economy and Growth	Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington (ECW): Skills Bootcamp (Specific Purpose)	1.371	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. It is for the delivery of and management of Skills Bootcamps in geographical and neighbouring areas in agreement with relevant local authorities. This element of skills bootcamp is being delivered through Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington.

Table 2 – Committee Decision

3.7. Supplementary Revenue Estimate Requests for Allocation of Additional Grant Funding over £500,000 up to £1,000,000

Committee	Type of Grant	£m	Details
Children and Families - Schools	Delivering Better Value in SEND (Specific Purpose)	0.767	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. Its purpose is to support the ability to carry out relevant data analysis and assurance required during Phase 1 of the programme, as part of overall participation in the Delivering Better Value (DBV) in SEND programme.
Children and Families – Schools	Early Years Expansion Grant (Specific Purpose)	0.634	This is a new grant from the Department for Education. This grant provides funding to support the early years sector as it prepares to deliver the final phase of expansion of the working parent entitlement from September 2025.

Committee	Type of Grant	£m	Details
Adults and Health – Public Health	OHID SSMTR Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant (Specific Purpose)	0.525	This is a new grant from the Department for Health and Social Care. The SSMTR (Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery) Grant, also known as the Drug and Alcohol Treatment and Recovery Improvement Grant (DATRIG), is a funding initiative by the DHSC to enhance drug and alcohol treatment and recovery services across England. It aims to increase access to treatment, improve the quality of provision, and support individuals in their recovery journey
Environment and Communities	Transitional Resource Grant (Specific Purpose)	0.871	This is a new grant from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. It covers the implementation of the weekly food collections and the cost of resources to implement this such as officer time, public communications, distributing food waste containers and project management related costs.
Environment and Communities	High Speed 2 (HS2) Ltd (Specific Purpose)	0.850	This grant is from High Speed 2 (HS2) Ltd and is for landscape and environmental improvements in the Wybunbury area.

Section 4: Capital

Table 1: Financial Parameters for 2024/25 to 2027/28

Parameter	Value (£m)			
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Repayment of Borrowing				
Minimum Revenue Provision*	15.327	17.977	21.920	23.934
External Loan Interest	19.412	18.359	19.271	20.995
Investment Income	(4.329)	(3.300)	(2.747)	(2.704)
Contributions from Services Revenue Budgets	(0.977)	(1.311)	(2.261)	(2.494)
Total Capital Financing Costs	29.433	31.725	36.183	39.731
Use of Financing EMR	(2.100)	0.000	0.000	0.000
Actual CFB in MTFS	28.508	35.039	38.758	41.860
Budget Deficit /(Surplus)	(1.175)	(3.314)	(2.575)	(2.129)
Capital Receipts targets*	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Flexible use of Capital Receipts	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

*Anticipated MRP based on achieving capital receipts targets

- 1.1. The revised programme is funded from both direct income (grants, external contributions) and the Council's own resources (prudential borrowing, revenue contributions, capital reserve). A funding summary is shown in **Table 2**. For detailed tables by Committee please see **Annex 2**.
- 1.2. **Table 3** lists details of Delegated decisions up to £500,000 for noting.
- 1.3. **Table 4** lists Capital Supplementary Estimates over £500,000 and up to £1,000,000 for committee approval and Capital Virements over £500,000 and up to and including £5,000,000 that require Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee to approve.
- 1.4. **Table 5** lists Supplementary Capital estimates greater than £1,000,000 for recommendation to Council.

Table 2: Capital Programme Update

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY					
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29					
	Forecast 2025/26 £m	Forecast 2026/27 £m	Forecast 2027/28 £m	Forecast 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast 2025-29 £m
Committed Schemes - In Progress					
Adults and Health	0.132	0.424	0.000	0.000	0.556
Children and Families	46.836	20.285	16.945	13.403	97.469
Corporate Policy	12.991	3.265	2.377	0.600	19.233
Economy & Growth	44.420	39.649	47.806	49.559	181.434
Environment & Communities	23.822	2.646	6.033	9.285	41.786
Highways & Transport	64.245	64.629	32.495	93.317	254.686
Total Committed Schemes - In Progress	192.446	130.898	105.656	166.164	595.164
CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29					
	Forecast 2025/26 £m	Forecast 2026/27 £m	Forecast 2027/28 £m	Forecast 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast 2025-29 £m
New Schemes					
Adults and Health	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Children and Families	0.910	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.910
Corporate Policy	3.490	1.663	1.377	0.000	6.530
Economy & Growth	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Environment & Communities	0.549	0.370	0.214	0.349	1.482
Highways & Transport	8.147	12.960	13.069	11.502	45.678
Total New Schemes	13.096	14.993	14.660	11.851	54.600
Total	205.542	145.891	120.316	178.015	649.764
Funding Requirement					
Indicative Funding Analysis: (See note 1)					
Government Grants	128.403	93.235	39.007	102.750	363.395
External Contributions	14.160	21.230	26.673	40.606	102.669
Revenue Contributions	0.830	0.660	0.000	0.000	1.490
Capital Receipts	1.203	1.931	20.979	11.840	35.952
Prudential Borrowing (See note 2)	60.946	28.835	33.658	22.819	146.258
Total	205.542	145.891	120.316	178.015	649.764

Note 1:

The funding requirement identified in the above table does not currently represent a balanced and affordable position, in the medium term. The Council will need to transform the capital programme to reduce the number of schemes requiring Cheshire East Resources and the need to borrow.

Note 2:

Appropriate charges to the revenue budget will only commence in the year following the completion of the associated capital asset. This allows the Council to constantly review the most cost effective way of funding capital expenditure.

Table 3: Delegated Decisions – Supplementary Capital estimates and Budget virements up to £500,000

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £m	Reason and Funding Source
Supplementary Capital Estimates that have been made up to £500,000		
Adults and Public Health		
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	0.088	New allocation for 2025-26 Rural UKSPF funding
Children and Families		
Family Hubs Transformation	0.105	New capital grant allocation for 2025-26 for Family Hubs Transformation
Economy & Growth		
Economic Development		
UKSPF E22 and E29 capital interventions	0.350	SCE to be approved to reflect 25/26 allocation of UKSPF and should be in place for FR2. Funds to be transferred from Revenue
Culture & Tourism		
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	0.248	
Highways & Transport		
Bus Priority	0.132	To be funded by BSIP Phase 3 grant
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	0.923	
£m		
Capital Budget Virements that have been made up to £500,000		
Children & Families		
Education and 14-19 Skills		
Macclesfield Planning Area - secondary new places	0.200	Transfer budget to Tytherington High school project (CAP-10468)
Macclesfield Academy Resource Provision	0.100	Budget from CAP-10278 to be transferred to central High Needs allocation (CAP-10106)
New AP Free School	0.025	Transfer budget from New SEN Additional AP places (CAP-10599) to New AP Free School as no longer required as a separate project.
School Condition Grant	0.001	Return of remaining budget in School Condition Grant - Catering Block to central School Condition Grant allocation (CAP-00106)
Facilities Management		
Premises Capital (FM)	0.111	Virement from PSDS - 3B - Lot 1 programme aborted and no additional grant claims to be made, the Prudential Borrowing funding was allocated as match funding and there is a risk that SALIX request clawback, therefore the need for this funding to remain in the Capital Programme.
Total Capital Budget Virements Approved	0.436	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	1.360	

Table 4: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) and Capital Virements

Committee / Capital Scheme	Amount Requested £m	Reason and Funding Source
Service Committee are asked to approve the Supplementary Capital Estimates above £500,000 up to and including £1,000,000		
Highways & Transport		
A500 Corridor OBC Update	0.903	Final tranche of DfT development grant funding to fund the production of an update OBC Update for the A500 scheme. The A500 Scheme is one of 42 schemes under review by DfT which should report back this Autumn. No spend on this grant will be incurred ahead of the review's anticipated conclusion
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	0.903	
Service committee are asked to note Capital Budget Virements above £500,000 up to and including £5,000,000 for approval by Relevant Member(s) of CLT and Chief Finance Officer in consultation with Chair of the relevant Committee and the Chair of Finance Sub-Committee		
Corporate		
ICT Hybrid Model	0.750	Virement from Infrastructure Investment Programme to ICT Hybrid Model to support Gemini Phase 2
Highways & Transport		
A500 Corridor OBC Update	0.764	Virement from "A500 Dualling" project in respect of acquiring land. This land requirement now falls under "A500 Corridor OBC update" .
Total Capital Virements requested	1.514	
Total SCEs and Virements	2.417	

Table 5: Requests for Supplementary Capital Estimates (SCEs) for Recommendation

Committee	Amount Requested £m	Reason and Funding Source
Finance Sub Committee are asked to recommend to Council the approval of the Supplementary Capital SCEs over £1,000,000		
Highways & Transport		
Public Transport Infrastructure	0.700	To add BSIP Phase 4 grant of £2,122,646 to the Capital Programme, distributed over four projects.
Bus Priority	0.623	
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	0.750	
Macclesfield Bus Station	0.050	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates Requested	2.123	
Total Supplementary Capital Estimates and Virements	2.123	

Section 5: Reserves

Management of Council Reserves

- 5.1 The Council's Reserves Strategy states that the Council will maintain reserves to protect against risk and support investment.
- 5.2 The opening balance at 1 April 2025 in the Council's General Fund Reserves was £6.3m, as published in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.
- 5.3 At FR1, the closing balance at 31 March 2026 in the Council's General Fund Reserve is forecast to be £6.5m.
- 5.4 The current balance on reserves is insufficient in order to provide adequate protection against established and newly emerging risks, particularly the DSG deficit, which is projected to rise to £146m by year end and has been highlighted in the MTFS as having no alternative funding.
- 5.5 The Council also maintains Earmarked Revenue Reserves for specific purposes. The opening balance at 1 April 2025 was £23.1m.
- 5.6 During 2025/26, £14.9m will be drawn down to fund expenditure specifically provided for by services. This includes £3.8m to fund one off Transformation costs, £2.2m for Capital expenditure and £6.2m to support the collection fund. These balances fall within the forecasts approved during the MTFS budget setting process. £11.5m will be added back to reserves, this is predominantly related to the collection fund and will be used to mitigate future legislative changes over the short to medium term. Net movement on reserves is therefore £3.4m.
- 5.7 The indicative closing balance on Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2026, is forecast at £19.6m. With the General Fund reserves of £6.5m, total reserves available for Council use at 31 March 2026 are forecast at £26.1m.
- 5.8 Unspent schools' budgets that have been delegated, as laid down in the Schools Standards Framework Act 1998, remain at the disposal of the school and are not available for Council use. These balances are therefore excluded from all reserve forecasts.

Reserves Balances**Table 1 – Adults and Health Committee**

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Adults and Health Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Public Health Reserve	(3.204)	0.207	0	(2.997)	Ring-fenced underspend to be invested in areas to improve performance against key targets.
PFI Equalisation - Extra Care Housing	0	0	(0.113)	(0.113)	Surplus grant set aside to meet future payments on existing PFI contract.
Adults and Health Committee Total:	(3.204)	0.207	(0.113)	(3.110)	

Table 2 – Children and Families Committee

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Children and Families Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
ILACS Spending Plan	(0.456)	0.456	0	0	To address the findings from the Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services.
Children and Families Committee Total:	(0.456)	0.456	0	0	

Table 3 – Corporate Policy Committee

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Corporate Policy Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Collection Fund Management	(5.120)	6.199	(10.035)	(8.956)	To manage cash flow implications as part of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.
Capital Financing Reserves	(2.234)	2.234	0	0	To provide for financing of capital schemes, other projects and initiatives.
Insurance Reserve	(0.314)	0	0	(0.314)	To settle insurance claims and manage excess costs.
Elections General	(0.432)	0	0	(0.432)	To provide funds for Election costs every 4 years.
Digital Solutions Architect	(0.074)	0.074	0	0	To help fund the Digital Customer Enablement programme and will be key to realising the cost savings and efficiencies across the Council through a number of digital initiatives.
2025/26 Transformation Reserve 1	(3.500)	3.500	0	0	To support a group of projects across the Council's four Directorates to deliver improved service delivery through efficiency and revenue savings.
2025/26 Transformation Reserve 2	(5.300)	0.323	0	(4.947)	The Transformation Programme 2 reserve has been created to help mitigate one-off costs of the change delivery programme over the next two financial years.
ICT Programme	(0.300)	0.300	0	0	To support the costs associated with the Gemini project, including potential redundancies.
Corporate Policy Committee Total:	(17.274)	12.660	(10.035)	(14.649)	

Table 4 – Economy and Growth Committee

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Economy and Growth Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Place Directorate Reserve	(0.418)	0.418	0	0	To support a range of projects within the Place Directorate.
Investment (Sustainability)	(0.549)	0.050	0	(0.499)	To aid investment that can increase long-term financial independence and stability of the Council.
Legal Proceedings	(0.179)	0.025	0	(0.154)	To respond to insolvency/legal proceedings on land and property matters.
Tatton Park Trading Reserve	(0.050)	0.050	0	0	To support Tatton Vision capital project and for the replacement of vehicles
Economy and Growth Committee Total:	(1.196)	0.543	0	(0.653)	

Table 5 – Environment and Communities Committee

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Environment and Communities Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Strategic Planning	(0.287)	0	0	(0.287)	To meet costs associated with the Local Plan - site allocations, minerals and waste DPD. - Reserve needed in 26/27
Trees / Structures Risk Management	(0.084)	0	0	(0.084)	To help respond to increases in risks relating to the environment and adverse weather events.
Air Quality	(0.036)	0.036	0	0	Air Quality Management - DEFRA Action Plan. Relocating electric vehicle chargepoint in Congleton
Licensing Enforcement	(0.010)	0.010	0	0	Three year reserve to fund a third party review and update of the Cheshire East Council Taxi Licensing Enforcement Policies.
Flood Water Management (Emergency Planning)	(0.002)	0.002	0	0	Grant relating to Public Information Works.
Neighbourhood Planning	(0.041)	0.041	0	0	To match income and expenditure.
Street Cleansing	(0.022)	0.022	0	0	Committed expenditure on voluntary litter picking equipment and electric blowers.
Environment and Communities Committee Total:	(0.482)	0.111	0	(0.371)	

Table 6 – Highways and Transport Committee

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+)	Additional Funds to Reserve (-)	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026	Notes
Highways and Transport Committee	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Flood Risk and Adverse Weather Events	(0.400)	0.911	(1.193)	(0.682)	To help the service manage risks such as the impact of adverse weather.
Highways Procurement Project	(0.083)	0	0	(0.083)	To finance the development of the next Highway Service Contract. Depot mobilisation costs, split over 7 years from start of contract in 2018.
LEP - Local Transport Body	(0.019)	0	0	(0.019)	Contribution to LEP transport studies/consultancy . Ongoing working around Transport Legacy issues.
Highways and Transport Committee Total:	(0.502)	0.911	(1.193)	(0.784)	

Table 7 – Earmarked Reserves Summary

Earmarked Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2025 £m	Drawdowns to Support Service Costs (+) £m	Additional Funds to Reserve (-) £m	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2026 £m
Adults and Health Committee	(3.204)	0.207	(0.113)	(3.110)
Children and Families Committee	(0.456)	0.456	0	0
Corporate Policy Committee	(17.274)	12.660	(10.035)	(14.649)
Economy and Growth Committee	(1.196)	0.543	0	(0.653)
Environment and Communities Committee	(0.482)	0.111	0	(0.371)
Highways and Transport Committee	(0.502)	0.911	(1.193)	(0.784)
Earmarked Reserves Total	(23.114)	14.888	(11.341)	(19.567)
General Fund Reserve	(6.299)	0	(0.186)	(6.485)
CEC Total Usable Reserves	(29.413)	14.888	(11.527)	(26.052)



First Financial Review 2025/26

Results to end of June 2025

Capital tables by Committee

Adults & Health

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26-2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025/29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Adults Services													
Community - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	0.449	0.361	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.088	0.088	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.088
Electronic Call Monitoring System	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.389
People Planner System	0.094	0.043	0.026	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.051
Replacement Care4CE Devices	0.093	0.065	0.018	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.028
Total Committed Schemes	1.025	0.469	0.132	0.424	0.000	0.000	0.556	0.167	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.556
Total Adults and Health Schemes	1.025	0.469	0.132	0.424	0.000	0.000	0.556	0.167	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.000	0.556

Children and Families

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025/29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	Total Funding £m
Committed Schemes in progress													
Childrens Social Care													
Foster Carer Capacity Scheme	0.534	0.468	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.067
Crewe Youth Zone	5.135	0.570	3.718	0.847	0.000	0.000	4.565	3.718	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.847	4.565
Family Hubs Transformation (Early Years - C110120)	0.387	0.282	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.105
Children's Home Sufficiency Scheme	1.404	0.358	1.046	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.046	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.046	1.046
Strong Start, Family Help & Integration													
Early Years Sufficiency Capital Fund	1.036	0.985	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Childcare Capital Expansion	0.749	0.009	0.640	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.740	0.740	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.740
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Adelaide Academy	0.904	0.069	0.835	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.835	0.665	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.170	0.835
Basic Need Grant Allocation	7.401	0.017	7.384	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.384	7.384	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.384
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (1)	2.209	0.179	2.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.030	0.764	1.266	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.030
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (2)	0.628	0.579	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.049
Congleton Planning Area - Primary (3)	7.504	0.004	0.049	0.500	2.000	4.950	7.499	4.299	3.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.499
Devolved Formula Grant - Schools	1.143	0.443	0.391	0.310	0.000	0.000	0.701	0.701	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.701
Energy Efficiency Grant - Schools	0.541	0.541	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Future Schemes - Feasibility Studies	0.400	0.124	0.150	0.126	0.000	0.000	0.276	0.276	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.276
Gainsborough Primary - Flooring	0.304	0.017	0.287	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.287	0.287	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.287
Handforth Planning Area - New School	13.003	0.010	0.040	0.500	4.000	8.453	12.993	0.129	12.864	0.000	0.000	0.000	12.993
Leighton Academy – Resourced unit (New SEN places	0.193	0.141	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.052
Leighton SEND Reception Adaptations	0.026	0.000	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026
Little Angels Satellite Sites	0.029	0.021	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008
Macclesfield Planning Area - Secondary New	0.531	0.006	0.525	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.525	0.525	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.525
Macclesfield Planning Area - New School	4.001	0.002	0.000	0.000	4.000	0.000	4.000	0.000	4.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.000
Malbank High School	1.922	1.897	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025
Mobberley Primary School	1.208	0.037	0.050	0.861	0.259	0.000	1.170	0.870	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.000	1.170
Nantwich Planning Area (Primary Schools - 210	9.061	0.793	6.768	1.500	0.000	0.000	8.268	5.308	2.960	0.000	0.000	0.000	8.268

Children and Families

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Forecast Budget 2028/29	Total Forecast Budget 2025/29	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
New AP Free School	0.525	0.003	0.521	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.521	0.521	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.521
New Satellite school - 2	9.000	0.013	0.987	5.000	3.000	0.000	8.987	8.987	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	8.987
New SEN Free School	0.998	0.010	0.740	0.248	0.000	0.000	0.988	0.988	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.988
New SEN places - 1	1.089	0.004	1.086	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.086	1.086	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.086
Oakfield Lodge & Stables	0.050	0.013	0.037	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.037	0.037	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.037
Poynton Planning Area	1.500	0.021	0.479	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.479	0.676	0.803	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.479
Provision of Sufficient School Places - SEND	7.182	6.974	0.208	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.208	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.208	0.208
Sandbach Primary Academy	1.583	0.912	0.671	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.671	0.671	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.671
Schools Condition Capital Grant	6.497	1.037	3.460	2.000	0.000	0.000	5.460	5.460	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.460
SEN/High Needs Capital Allocation	4.860	0.187	4.673	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.673	4.673	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.673
Shavington Planning Area - New Primary School	8.040	0.162	0.500	3.692	3.687	0.000	7.879	5.549	2.330	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.879
Springfield Satellite Site (Dean Row)	6.112	5.820	0.292	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.292	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.292	0.292
Springfield Satellite Site - Middlewich	6.000	0.017	3.983	2.000	0.000	0.000	5.983	5.983	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.983
The Dingle PS Expansion (Was Haslington PA- Tytherington High School	1.395	1.373	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.022	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.022
Various SEN Sites - Small Works/Adaptations	3.006	0.208	2.797	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.797	2.797	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.797
Wheelock Primary School	0.150	0.001	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.149	0.149	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.149
Wilmslow High School BN	2.411	0.890	0.521	1.000	0.000	0.000	1.521	1.062	0.460	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.521
Wilmslow Primary Planning Area	14.179	12.788	1.391	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.391	0.193	1.150	0.000	0.000	0.048	1.391
	0.626	0.001	0.025	0.600	0.000	0.000	0.625	0.125	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.625
Total Committed Schemes	135.456	37.986	46.836	20.285	16.945	13.403	97.469	64.960	29.532	0.000	0.300	2.678	97.469
New Schemes													
Education and 14-19 Skills													
Chelford Primary School	0.340	0.000	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.340	0.340	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.340
Park Lane Refurbishment additional SEND places	0.200	0.005	0.195	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.195	0.195	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.195
Alderley Edge Primary - 25-26 Condition Project	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Rainow Primary - 25-26 Condition Project	0.025	0.000	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.025	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025
Ruskin - 25-26 Condition Project	0.200	0.000	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.200	0.200	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.200
Styal primary - 25-26 Condition Project	0.100	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
Total New Schemes	0.915	0.005	0.910	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.910	0.910	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.910
Total Children and Families Schemes	136.371	37.991	47.746	20.285	16.945	13.403	98.380	65.870	29.532	0.000	0.300	2.678	98.380

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding
	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Forecast Budget 2028/29	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Committed Schemes in progress													
ICT Services													
Accelerate Digital	5.719	0.282	2.709	1.350	1.377	0.000	5.436	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.436	5.436
Care Act Phase 2	6.314	5.256	1.058	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.058	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.058	1.058
Digital Customer Enablement	3.102	2.939	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.163	0.163
ICT Device Replacement	3.762	1.136	1.776	0.250	0.200	0.400	2.626	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.626	2.626
ICT Hybrid Model	3.449	1.758	1.690	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.690	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.690	1.690
IADM (Information Assurance and Data Management)	19.465	17.456	2.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.009	2.009
Infrastructure Investment Programme (IIP)	34.429	31.376	2.223	0.830	0.000	0.000	3.053	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.053	3.053
Vendor Management	1.006	0.767	0.239	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.239	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.239	0.239
Finance & Customer Services													
Core Financials	13.143	10.259	1.099	0.785	0.800	0.200	2.884	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.884	2.884
Vendor Management - Phase 2	0.099	0.024	0.025	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075
Total Committed Schemes	90.488	71.255	12.991	3.265	2.377	0.600	19.233	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	19.233	19.233
New Schemes													
ICT													
Digital BluePrint	6.530	0.000	3.490	1.663	1.377	0.000	6.530	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.530	6.530
Total New Schemes	0.000	0.000	3.490	1.663	1.377	0.000	6.530	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.530	6.530
Total Corporate Policy Schemes	90.488	71.255	16.481	4.928	3.754	0.600	25.763	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	25.763	25.763

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Facilities Management													
Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund - FM 3	5.148	5.144	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.003
PSDS - 3B - Lot 3 (schools)	4.390	3.353	1.036	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.036	0.969	0.000	0.067	0.000	0.000	1.036
PSDS - 3C	1.672	0.086	1.586	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.586	1.363	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.223	1.586
Septic Tanks	1.585	0.291	0.094	0.400	0.400	0.400	1.294	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.294	1.294
Schools Capital Maintenance	8.315	5.788	1.797	0.730	0.000	0.000	2.527	2.257	0.000	0.271	0.000	0.000	2.527
Premises Capital (FM)	48.241	34.609	3.787	3.984	2.700	3.161	13.632	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	13.632	13.632
Housing													
Crewe Towns Fund - Warm and Healthy Homes	2.126	0.161	1.965	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.965	1.965	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.965
Disabled Facilities	26.244	14.040	3.486	2.906	2.906	2.906	12.204	11.302	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.902	12.204
Green Homes Grant	2.647	2.449	0.198	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.198	0.198	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.198
Gypsy and Traveller Sites	4.136	4.058	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.078	0.078
Home Repairs Vulnerable People	1.797	0.987	0.271	0.339	0.200	0.000	0.810	0.374	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.436	0.810
Home Upgrade Grant Phase 2	2.894	2.094	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.800	0.800	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.800
Local Authority Housing Fund	0.732	0.422	0.309	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.309	0.309	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.309
Sustainable Warmth - Home Upgrade Grant	0.843	0.829	0.014	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.014	0.014	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.014
Temporary Accommodation	1.479	1.076	0.403	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.403	0.000	0.287	0.116	0.000	0.000	0.403
Warm Homes Fund	0.239	0.218	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.021
Warm Homes Local Grant (DESNZ)	7.793	0.000	1.354	3.252	3.187	0.000	7.793	7.793	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.793
Estates													
Corporate Landlord - Non-Operational	1.336	0.000	1.336	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.336	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.336	1.336
Malkins Bank Landfill Site	1.360	0.782	0.080	0.497	0.000	0.000	0.577	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.577	0.577
Farms Strategy	2.910	1.689	0.152	0.065	0.335	0.669	1.220	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.220	0.000	1.220
WorkplaCE	1.000	0.255	0.745	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.745	0.745	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.745

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Forecast Budget 2028/29	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Economic Development													
Crewe Towns Fund - Repurposing Our High Streets	1.132	0.526	0.390	0.216	0.000	0.000	0.606	0.606	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.606
Crewe Towns Fund - Flag Lane Baths	1.969	0.603	0.012	1.353	0.000	0.000	1.365	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.353	1.365
Crewe Towns Fund - Mill Street Corridor	4.477	1.479	2.998	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.998	2.998	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.998
Crewe Towns Fund - Mirion St	1.190	1.066	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.125	0.125	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.125
Crewe Towns Fund - Crewe Youth Zone non-grant	0.351	0.246	0.067	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.105
History Centre Public Realm & ICV (Crewe Towns Fund) CTC1	0.580	0.028	0.152	0.400	0.000	0.000	0.552	0.552	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.552
Handforth Heat Network	13.219	0.035	0.695	0.450	12.039	0.000	13.183	2.569	7.428	0.000	0.000	3.187	13.183
Demolition of Crewe Library & Concourse CTC10	3.396	3.237	0.159	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.159	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.159	0.159
Future High Street Funding - CEC Innovation Centre	4.251	3.961	0.291	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.291	0.291	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.291
Crewe Town Centre Regeneration	32.333	31.010	1.323	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.323	1.000	0.064	0.000	0.000	0.259	1.323
South Macclesfield Development Area	34.630	3.283	0.176	0.000	0.000	31.171	31.347	10.000	10.000	0.000	11.347	0.000	31.347
North Cheshire Garden Village	57.866	9.530	6.991	17.810	23.535	0.000	48.336	17.693	0.000	0.000	21.700	8.944	48.336
Handforth Garden Village s106 Obligations	6.841	0.000	0.000	2.740	0.000	4.101	6.841	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.841	6.841
Leighton Green	2.096	1.495	0.000	0.601	0.000	0.000	0.601	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.601	0.601
Connecting Cheshire Phase 3	8.000	0.720	0.850	1.200	2.000	3.230	7.280	0.000	7.280	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.280
Digital Projects	9.250	5.680	0.070	0.000	0.000	3.500	3.570	3.570	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.570
UKSPF E22 and E29 capital interventions	1.654	1.304	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.350	0.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.350
Macclesfield Indoor Market Refurbishment (MIMR)	2.496	1.898	0.598	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.598	0.500	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.098	0.598
Nantwich Town Centre Public Realm Improvements	0.100	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.100
Culture & Tourism													
Countryside Vehicles	1.579	0.726	0.070	0.300	0.300	0.182	0.852	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.852	0.852
Culture & Tourism S106 Schemes	0.664	0.075	0.143	0.387	0.010	0.049	0.589	0.000	0.589	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.589
Green Structures Investment	0.896	0.000	0.271	0.239	0.195	0.191	0.896	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.896	0.896
New Archives Premises CTC1	10.256	1.566	8.362	0.328	0.000	0.000	8.690	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	8.690	8.690
PROW Capital Works	1.138	1.127	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011
PROW CMM A6 MARR	0.100	0.070	0.001	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.030
Visitor Economy - Rural Shared Prosperity Fund	0.713	0.465	0.248	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.248	0.248	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.248
Tatton Park Investment Phase 2	3.280	1.446	0.500	1.334	0.000	0.000	1.834	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.834	1.834
Total Committed Schemes	331.345	149.912	44.420	39.649	47.806	49.559	181.434	68.768	25.747	0.454	34.267	52.197	181.434
Total Growth & Enterprise	331.345	149.912	44.420	39.649	47.806	49.559	181.434	68.768	25.747	0.454	34.267	52.197	181.434

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Environment Services													
Bereavement Service Data System	0.035	0.007	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028	0.000	0.000	0.028
Booth Bed Lane, Goostrey	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.140	0.100	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.140
Bosley Village Play Area	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020
Browns Lane Play Area 2024/25	0.012	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012
Carbon Neutral 2030 Investments	13.980	0.104	0.297	0.300	4.000	9.279	13.876	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	13.876	13.876
Carbon Offset Investment	0.568	0.539	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.029
Carnival Fields	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042
Chelford Village Hall Phase 2	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061
Closed Cemeteries	0.152	0.000	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.152	0.152
Crewe Crematorium Flue Modifications	0.030	0.019	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.011
Crewe Crematorium and Macclesfield Crematorium Major	0.030	0.018	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.012	0.012
Elworth Park	0.052	0.002	0.035	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Energy Improvements at Cledford Lane	0.985	0.914	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.071	0.071
Fleet EV Transition	6.897	0.990	3.580	0.327	2.000	0.000	5.907	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.907	5.907
Fleet Vehicle Electric Charging	0.585	0.159	0.286	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.426	0.426
Future High Street Funding - Sustainable Energy Network	1.566	1.349	0.216	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.216	0.216	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.216
Green Investment Scheme (Solar Farm)	4.150	3.459	0.536	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.691	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.691	0.691
Green Spaces Wilmslow - Mersey Forest	0.021	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Grounds Maintenance Management ICT System	0.121	0.060	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.062
Household Waste Recycling Centres	0.860	0.084	0.776	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.776	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.776	0.776
Jim Evison Playing Fields	0.161	0.019	0.120	0.022	0.000	0.000	0.142	0.000	0.142	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.142
Litter and Recycling Bins	0.208	0.119	0.010	0.052	0.027	0.000	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.089	0.089
Longridge Open Space Improvement Project	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.066
LTA - Tennis Facility Improvements	0.124	0.039	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.085	0.060	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.025	0.085
Macclesfield Chapel Refurbishment	0.629	0.022	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.607	0.000	0.000	0.607
Main Road, Langley	0.259	0.003	0.160	0.097	0.000	0.000	0.257	0.000	0.257	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.257
Newtown Sports Facilities Improvements	0.099	0.093	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006
Park Development Fund	0.846	0.670	0.089	0.087	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.176	0.176
Park Play, Meriton Road & Stanley Hall	0.010	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.010
Pastures Wood De-carbonisation	0.051	0.038	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.013
Queens Park Bowling Green	0.017	0.002	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015
Review of Household Waste Recycling Centres	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.000	1.000
Rotherhead Drive Open Space and Play Area	0.141	0.117	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.024	0.000	0.024	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.024
Rugby Drive, Macclesfield	0.071	0.024	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.047	0.000	0.047	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.047
Shaw Heath Recreation Ground	0.022	0.016	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.006	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.006
Stanley Hall Improvements	0.055	0.053	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
The Carrs Improvement Project	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061
The Moor, Knutsford	0.036	0.032	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.004

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget	Prior Years	Forecast Budget 2025/26	Forecast Budget 2026/27	Forecast Budget 2027/28	Forecast Budget 2028/29	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29	Grants	External Contributions	Revenue Contributions	Capital Receipts	Prudential Borrowing	
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	
Unsafe Cemetery Memorials	0.035	0.009	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.026	0.026
Victoria Park Amenity Improvements	0.020	0.012	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.008	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.008
Victoria Park Pitch Improvements	0.029	0.028	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
Weekly Food Waste Collections	8.209	0.192	7.517	0.500	0.000	0.000	8.017	2.519	0.000	0.000	0.000	5.497	8.017
West Park Open Space & Sports Improvements	0.120	0.045	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.000	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.075
Woodland South of Coppice Way, Handforth	0.089	0.068	0.005	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.021	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.021
Wybunbury Parish Open Space	0.005	0.001	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.004	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.004
Wybunbury St Chad's Closed Cemetery	0.219	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.219	0.219
Neighbourhood Services													
Congleton Leisure Centre	13.000	12.973	0.027	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.007	0.027
Crewe Towns Fund - Cumberland Arena	3.173	0.404	2.768	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.768	2.769	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.769
Crewe Towns Fund - Pocket Parks	1.481	0.954	0.527	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.527	0.527	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.527
Crewe Towns Fund - Valley Brook Green Corridor	3.339	0.590	2.748	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.748	2.748	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.748
Middlewich Leisure Centre	0.060	0.051	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.009	0.009
Libraries - Next Generation - Self Service	0.374	0.336	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.038	0.038
Strategic Leisure Review	3.400	1.329	1.421	0.650	0.000	0.000	2.071	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.071	2.071
Planning & Regulatory Services													
Regulatory Systems & Environmental Health ICT System	0.313	0.279	0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.034	0.034
Total Committed Schemes	68.030	26.244	23.822	2.646	6.033	9.285	41.786	8.940	0.991	0.647	0.000	31.208	41.786
New Schemes													
Environment Services													
Parks	1.483	0.000	0.549	0.370	0.214	0.349	1.483	0.000	1.483	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.483
Total New Schemes	1.483	0.000	0.549	0.370	0.214	0.349	1.483	0.000	1.483	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.483
Total Environment and Communities Schemes	69.513	26.244	24.371	3.016	6.247	9.635	43.269	8.940	2.474	0.647	0.000	31.208	43.269

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Committed Schemes in progress													
Highways													
A532 Safer Road Fund Scheme	1.466	1.395	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070
A536 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2.404	2.353	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051
A537 Safer Road Fund Scheme	2.490	2.346	0.144	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.144	0.144	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.144
Air Quality Action Plan	0.523	0.522	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.002
Alderley Edge Bypass Scheme Implementation	60.411	60.360	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.051	0.051
Bridge Maintenance Minor Wks	12.463	11.672	0.792	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.792	0.374	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.418	0.792
Client Contract and Asset Mgmt	0.693	0.547	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.146	0.146
Footpath Maintenance - Slurry Sealing & Reconstruction Works	1.323	1.323	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Highway Maintenance Minor Wks	69.622	69.552	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.070	0.070
Highway Pothole/Challenge Fund	11.669	11.497	0.172	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.172	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.172	0.172
Jack Mills Way Part 1 Claims	0.307	0.307	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Local Highway Measures	7.255	7.105	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.151
Ward Members Local Highway Measures	0.872	0.319	0.553	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.553	0.177	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.376	0.553
Programme Management	1.547	1.546	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.002
Road Safety Schemes Minor Wks	6.423	6.260	0.163	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.163	0.034	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.128	0.163
Traffic Signal Maintenance	1.095	0.795	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.299	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.300
Traffic Signs and Bollards - LED Replacement	1.259	1.259	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Winter Service Facility	0.957	0.771	0.097	0.089	0.000	0.000	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.186	0.186
Managing and Maintaining Highways	4.712	0.000	4.712	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.712	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.712	4.712
Pothole Funding	17.397	0.000	5.799	5.799	5.799	0.000	17.397	17.397	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	17.397
Integrated Block - LTP	6.009	0.000	2.003	2.003	2.003	0.000	6.009	6.009	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	6.009
Maintenance Block - LTP	19.476	0.000	7.878	5.799	5.799	0.000	19.476	17.397	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.079	19.476
Incentive Fund - LTP	4.350	0.000	1.450	1.450	1.450	0.000	4.350	4.350	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	4.350
Infrastructure													
A500 Dualling scheme	88.692	11.117	0.050	0.150	0.000	77.375	77.575	74.125	3.450	0.000	0.000	0.000	77.575
A500 Corridor OBC Update	3.371	0.064	0.700	1.391	0.451	0.764	3.307	2.543	0.764	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.307
A50 / A54 Holmes Chapel	0.604	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.503	0.503	0.000	0.503	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.503
A54 / A533 Leadsmithy Street, Middlewich	0.564	0.177	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.387	0.387	0.000	0.387	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.387
A6 MARR CMM Handforth	1.088	1.046	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042	0.042	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.042
A6 MARR Technical Design	0.473	0.285	0.188	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.188	0.070	0.119	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.188
A556 Knutsford to Bowdon	0.504	0.373	0.060	0.071	0.000	0.000	0.131	0.000	0.131	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.131
Peacock Roundabout Junction	0.750	0.036	0.516	0.000	0.000	0.198	0.714	0.000	0.714	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.714
Congleton Link Road	83.991	72.920	0.700	1.750	1.000	7.621	11.071	0.316	10.756	0.000	0.000	0.000	11.071
Crewe Green Roundabout	7.500	7.059	0.441	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.441	0.000	0.441	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.441
Flowerpot Phs 1 & Pinchpoint	4.249	1.516	0.100	0.488	0.336	1.808	2.732	1.719	1.014	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.732

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29

Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
Future High Street Funding - Adaptive Signals	0.509	0.455	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.054	0.000	0.054	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.054
Future High Street Funding - Flag Lane Link	1.481	1.481	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Future High Street Funding - Southern Gateway	5.303	5.101	0.202	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.202	0.202	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.202
Highways & Infrastructure S106 Funded Schemes	5.113	1.316	1.176	1.268	0.000	1.354	3.798	0.163	3.635	0.000	0.000	0.000	3.798
Transport & Infrastructure Development Studies	0.350	0.043	0.307	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.307	0.307	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.307
Middlewich Eastern Bypass	96.600	27.679	18.000	37.682	13.240	0.000	68.921	46.779	14.611	0.000	0.000	7.532	68.921
Mill Street Corridor - Station Link Project	0.847	0.263	0.584	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.584	0.000	0.284	0.000	0.000	0.300	0.584
North-West Crewe Package	51.366	49.055	1.411	0.300	0.300	0.300	2.311	0.000	2.311	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.311
Old Mill Road / The Hill Junction	1.325	0.188	0.100	1.036	0.000	0.000	1.136	0.000	1.136	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.136
Poynton Relief Road	54.848	47.293	0.500	3.355	1.435	2.265	7.555	2.236	4.219	0.000	1.000	0.100	7.555
Sydney Road Bridge	10.501	10.112	0.014	0.375	0.000	0.000	0.389	0.000	0.390	0.000	0.000	-0.001	0.389
Strategic Transport and Parking													
Active Travel Fund	3.109	0.525	2.584	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.584	2.584	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.584
Active Travel (Cycling / Walking Route) Investment	2.920	2.854	0.066	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.066	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.065	0.066
Available Walking Routes	0.151	0.000	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.151	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.151
Car Parking Review	0.895	0.570	0.325	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.325	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.325	0.000	0.325
LEVI Capital Fund 23/24	2.172	0.000	0.217	0.652	0.652	0.652	2.172	2.172	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.172
On-street Residential Charging	0.551	0.389	0.162	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.162	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.011	0.162
Park Lane – Ayresshire Way, Congleton Walking and Cycling	0.482	0.433	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.049	0.049	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.049
Sustainable Travel Access Prog	2.245	2.059	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.186	0.186	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.186
Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools Strategy (SMOTSS)	1.117	0.883	0.234	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.234	0.234	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.234
Public Transport Infrastructure	2.765	1.586	0.800	0.379	0.000	0.000	1.179	1.179	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.179
Bus Priority	0.755	0.000	0.413	0.341	0.000	0.000	0.755	0.755	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.755
Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI)	0.750	0.000	0.600	0.030	0.030	0.090	0.750	0.750	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.750
Macclesfield Bus Station	0.050	0.000	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.050
Local Access - Crewe Transport Access Studies	0.400	0.088	0.312	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.312	0.312	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.312
Local Access - Macclesfield Transport Access Studies	0.300	0.061	0.239	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.239	0.239	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.239
Local Transport Grant	7.754	0.000	7.754	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.754	7.754	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	7.754
Middlewich Rail Study	0.020	0.000	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.020
LTP Development & Monitoring Studies	0.900	0.460	0.220	0.221	0.000	0.000	0.441	0.441	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.441
Digital Car Parking Solutions	0.140	0.097	0.044	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.044	0.016	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.027	0.044
Pay and Display Parking Meters	0.620	0.607	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.013
Car Parking Improvements (including residents parking)	0.322	0.266	0.056	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.056	0.056
Total Committed Schemes	683.171	428.486	64.245	64.629	32.495	93.317	254.686	191.877	44.917	0.000	1.325	16.566	254.686

Highways & Transport

CAPITAL

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025/26 - 2028/29													
Scheme Description	Forecast Expenditure							Forecast Funding					Total Funding £m
	Total Approved Budget £m	Prior Years £m	Forecast Budget 2025/26 £m	Forecast Budget 2026/27 £m	Forecast Budget 2027/28 £m	Forecast Budget 2028/29 £m	Total Forecast Budget 2025-29 £m	Grants £m	External Contributions £m	Revenue Contributions £m	Capital Receipts £m	Prudential Borrowing £m	
New Schemes													
Highways													
Highways Maintenance Capital	41.846	0.000	7.340	11.502	11.502	11.502	41.846	27.773	0.000	0.000	0.000	14.073	41.846
Highways: Depots (Macclesfield)	2.386	0.000	0.411	0.750	1.225	0.000	2.386	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	2.386	2.386
Highways: Depots (Wardle)	0.696	0.000	0.146	0.458	0.092	0.000	0.696	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.060	0.636	0.696
Strategic Transport & Parking Services													
Strategic Transport Model	0.750	0.000	0.250	0.250	0.250	0.000	0.750	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.750	0.750
Total New Schemes	45.678	0.000	8.147	12.960	13.069	11.502	45.678	27.773	0.000	0.000	0.060	17.845	45.678
Total Highways & Transport	728.849	428.486	72.392	77.589	45.564	104.819	300.363	219.650	44.917	0.000	1.385	34.411	300.363

OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

18 September 2025

Local Transport Plan – Strategy and Investment Framework

Report of: Tom Moody, Director of Transport and Infrastructure

Report Reference No: HTC/14/25-26

Wards Affected: All wards

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 As a statutory Local Transport Authority, the council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP). This report provides an update on progress in developing a new LTP for Cheshire East, which will provide a policy framework for transport across the borough and guide investment in the local transport network.
- 2 The work completed since the last [report to committee in January 2025](#) includes a consultation on the LTP vision, aims and priorities, analysis of the feedback, and development of both the LTP strategy and strategic investment framework. This report seeks approval to undertake a second round of consultation on the draft LTP.

Executive Summary

- 3 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory policy document of the Council. The LTP sets the policy framework to guide investment priorities to meet the transport and travel needs of the borough. The LTP shapes priorities within budget constraints.
- 4 The LTP needs to be relevant to national, regional and local priorities. It set out the role of transport in contributing to overall policy outcomes, including new housing and employment growth, environmental sustainability, and health and wellbeing.
- 5 The first round of consultation on the draft vision, aims and priorities took place between 24 February and 21 April 2025. Appendix 1 summarises the consultation results which demonstrates broad levels of agreement

with the vision, aims and priorities. The results have helped shape the strategy and have informed and influenced the development of the LTP. Appendix 1 sets out a “you said, we did” table to summarise the amendments as a result of the consultation.

- 6 Since the consultation, the LTP strategy has been drafted which develops the vision, aims and priorities into a strategic framework. Alongside this, an investment framework has been developed to guide the first 5-year investment plan.
- 7 Subject to approval by committee, a consultation is proposed in Autumn 2025 to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the draft LTP strategy and investment framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the outcomes from the first round of public consultation on the Local Transport Plan (LTP) vision, aims and priorities (see Appendix 1).
2. Approve the proposed approach to a second round of public consultation on the LTP Strategy and Investment Framework, in line with the Consultation & Engagement Plan at Appendix 2 and Communications Plan at Appendix 3.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, to finalise the consultation material and undertake the public consultation.

Background

- 8 The vision for the new LTP is:

A well-connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East.

- 9 The four aims of the LTP are: 1) growing the economy, 2) improving the wellbeing of our community, 3) reducing environmental impacts, and 4) improving connections for all. The strategy has been developed around these core aims to ensure alignment with wider strategic priorities.
- 10 Alongside the strategy, an investment framework has been developed which enables potential schemes to be sifted, packaged and prioritised in line with a multi-criteria analysis to determine a set of priorities.

- 11 It is proposed that the draft LTP strategy and investment framework are published for consultation, to enable residents and stakeholders to continue to inform and influence the plans. The final documents are expected to be submitted to committee and full council in 2026.
- 12 It is important to note that any Cheshire and Warrington devolution agreement could have many opportunities for transport. Whilst the impacts of this are still to be worked through, there could be potential for a wider sub-regional approach to transport in future. The current LTP work will feed into any future Cheshire and Warrington transport plans and will place the borough in a strong position with a robust framework.

Consultation and Engagement

- 13 Between 24 February and 21 April 2025, a consultation was undertaken to seek views on the draft vision, aims and priorities for transport. In total, 720 consultation responses were received. The feedback has helped define the new LTP strategy and investment framework. The full consultation report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 14 The consultation was mainly hosted online, with paper versions available at libraries and leisure centres and on request. The consultation was promoted widely, for example: residents of Cheshire East and the public through press releases and social media promotion, the Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel, businesses, specialist transport user groups, equality groups, town and parish councils, elected members and neighbouring authorities.
- 15 Most respondents agreed with the draft vision, aims and priorities, as well as the key challenges and opportunities. Improving public transport within the borough and connections to other areas were mentioned as a key priority for many, as well as improvements to the road, walking and cycling network. The importance of considering accessibility of all modes for all users, including those within rural areas, when drafting detailed transport plans was raised. Respondents were keen to see more detail of how the plans will be achieved and mentioned the benefits of continued collaboration / joined up thinking.
- 16 A second round of consultation is proposed in Autumn 2025, and a consultation and engagement plan has been developed in conjunction with the council's Research & Consultation Team (see Appendix 2), as well as a communications plan (see Appendix 3).

Reasons for Recommendations

- 17 Consulting on the LTP strategy and investment framework will ensure that the council is giving due consideration to the public's views and therefore have a robust plan for the future of transport in the borough that

the public have fed into. Consulting at this stage will mean there is time for amendments to be made ahead of adoption (anticipated for 2026).

- 18 It is important that the consultation follows the ‘gunning principles’, and consulting on the LTP strategy and investment framework at this stage will ensure these are followed. The principles include ensuring adequate time is given for people to respond and for responses to be considered before a final decision is made.

Other Options Considered

- 19 As the LTP is a statutory document, there is a requirement to update the strategic policy framework, and consultation is an essential part of policy development. Without consultation on the draft LTP strategy and investment framework, this could hinder the robustness of the LTP and risk a lack of public support. Consulting now will ensure views are heard and can be incorporated ahead of adoption.

Option	Impact	Risk
Progress without consultation (do nothing)	LTP strategy and investment framework progress without public input/review.	Public views not fully considered and potential lack of support for the future adopted LTP.
Progress with a consultation	Public given a chance to feedback and shape final versions.	Limited risk – public given an opportunity to input.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

- 20 As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the council must maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) to provide a framework for local transport improvements.
- 21 The new LTP must comply with Part II of the Transport Act 2000 and meet requirements for Community Engagement, Equality Impact Assessment, and Strategic Environmental Appraisal.
- 22 Members must fully consider the equalities implications of their decisions to meet obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. This includes reviewing any Equality Impact Assessments.

- 23 While there is no statutory duty to consult on changes to service delivery, case law requires that decisions affecting the public be made fairly and without abuse of power.
- 24 To ensure fairness, the Council should consult on any changes that remove existing benefits. This includes engaging affected individuals and representative groups, and giving due weight to consultation responses in decision-making.
- 25 Failure to consult properly may lead to legal challenge. Any consultation must:
- a) take place at a time when the proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - b) give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit of intelligent consideration and response;
 - c) give adequate time for consideration and response;
 - d) ensure the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising the proposals.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 26 The LTP development work is funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Resource Fund 2025/26 and the council's rail and transport integration budget. The estimated cost during 2025/26 is £350,000. This programme of work has been built into the service plan for 2025/26 and will be delivered within existing revenue budgets and the LTP capital programme with no impact on the MTFS.
- 27 Upon completion and adoption by the council, the next LTP will provide a policy framework to inform the annual capital programme for transport. The LTP will be implemented utilising applicable funding from a range of sources including: LTP Integrated Transport Block funding; Section 106 & 278; the council's capital and revenue programmes, one-off funding programmes and external funding.
- 28 The Council will also receive a DfT Local Transport Grant totalling £47.150 million between 2026/27 and 2029/30. There is also the opportunity for the LTP to inform and influence other investment programmes across the council, including public health, regeneration, carbon reduction etc.
- 29 The council's capital programme remains under review with any schemes requiring council resources being challenged in order to reduce the call on prudential borrowing.

Human Resources

- 30 There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

- 31 In terms of governance and corporate oversight, a steering group has been established including cross service representation. A member reference group has also been established to guide development of the LTP. The above will ensure that the process of undertaking the LTP is robust, as well as providing oversight of the LTP process.
- 32 A risk register for the project has been developed and will be maintained throughout the life of the project. The risk of not developing a new LTP is poor investment decisions which are not aligned with wider strategic priorities and missed opportunities for funding.

Impact on other Committees

- 33 No impact anticipated.

Policy

- 34 The adopted LTP (2019-2024) outlines the role transport plays in supporting the goals to improve the economy, protect the environment, improve health and wellbeing and the quality of place. However, as this expired at the end of 2024, production of a new LTP is required.
- 35 The Cheshire East Plan recognises the importance of transport for the borough within the three commitments – the LTP vision aligns with this document. Having an up-to-date LTP will ensure that the council maintains a robust transport policy framework.

Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LTP contributes to all sub-commitments in the Cheshire East Plan through the 4 aims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the LTP aims is 'improving the wellbeing of our community' which aligns with commitment 2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LTP strategy sets out our approach to transport and methodology for prioritisation.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 36 The council will fully evaluate the equality implications of the proposed LTP through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The draft EqIA has been developed and is included at Appendix 4.
- 37 Impacts of the proposed LTP strategy and investment framework at this stage are anticipated to be positive for all. Feedback from the first round of consultation in relation to the protected characteristics are outlined in Section 3 and 4 within Appendix 4. Specific feedback was mostly observations in relation to age and disability, and how lack of public transport (mostly bus) impacts access to services.
- 38 The EqIA will be updated again following the LTP strategy and investment framework consultation in Autumn 2025 when there will be further understanding of any impacts/required mitigations.

Other Implications

- 39 The Council's Rural Action Plan (2022) highlights the importance of public transport links to support small businesses access markets and skilled workforce and the contribution to the visitor economy.
- 40 The LTP strategy considers home to school transport, including the current transformation programme that is working to optimise travel to and from schools and colleges.
- 41 There are pockets of deprivation in Cheshire East related to income, health and life chances. Transport enables a greater proportion of residents to access important services and reduce inequalities.
- 42 The LTP takes account of the council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2027 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough in order to become a carbon neutral borough by 2045.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	02/09/25	02/09/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Director of Law and Governance	02/09/25	05/09/25

	(Monitoring Officer)		
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Andrew Poynton	Senior Lawyer (Place)	08/07/25	11/07/25
Steve Reading	Finance Manager (Place)	08/07/25	10/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director, Place	02/09/25	02/09/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Richard Hibbert, Head of Strategic Transport and Parking Service Richard.Hibbert@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	1 – Consultation Report 2 – Consultation and Engagement Plan 3 – Communications Plan 4 – Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None

Appendix 1 - A summary of responses to the Council's Vision for Transport Consultation 2025

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FINAL

Engagement and Communications | Cheshire East Council

Executive summary and conclusions

Introduction

Between 24th February and 21st April 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on its draft vision, aims and priorities for transport in the borough. Feedback received will help refine the new Local Transport Plan (LTP). In total, 720 consultation responses were received.

Key transport challenges and opportunities

The majority of respondents agreed that the six transport challenges identified were the key ones in Cheshire East. Agreement (those selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) ranged from 91% for 'insufficient travel options lead many residents to rely on private cars' to 69% for 'severe weather increasingly challenges network resilience'.

In terms of the six identified opportunities, 'tailoring transport solutions to our local areas' received the highest agreement – 90% of respondents agreed that this was a key transport opportunity for Cheshire East. Respondents seemed to be less sure that 'new technology can help us meet our transport needs' – whilst 56% agreed, 30% selected neither agree nor disagree or unsure / do not know.

Within the comments, many respondents mentioned that the current public transport options were a key challenge. This included concerns related to reliability, frequency and affordability as well as lack of connections to other transport options, to key services or to areas inside and outside of the borough. Maintenance and perceived safety of roads, pavements and cycle routes was also seen as a key challenge, making active travel feel dangerous. Improving public transport options and promoting its usage was a key opportunity identified, alongside improving active travel routes — ensuring walking and cycling feels safer through better maintenance, dedicated routes, and / or appropriate speed regulations or road management. Consideration of accessibility (including for people with disabilities, elderly and those in rural areas) for all transport options was also mentioned – this included use of the private car for those who find other transport options difficult.

Our vision and aims

79% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 12% disagreed. There were respondents who would like to see more details on how the vision would be achieved and a greater focus on sustainability. Others were sceptical as to whether the vision could be achieved, believing it needed to be more realistic in accepting that the private car will remain the preferred transport mode for many.

The majority of respondents agreed that the aims were the right areas to focus on. Agreement ranged from 86% for 'improving connections for all' to 73% for 'reducing environmental impacts'. Similar to comments related to challenges and opportunities, within the comments respondents mentioned that improving public transport should be considered as a key aim alongside better walking, cycling routes and road maintenance / safety. Having consideration of those in rural areas as well as accessibility was also mentioned.

Our priorities

The majority of respondents felt that the priorities identified under each of the aims were important - responses ranged from 91% (selecting extremely or very important) for the aim 'improving accessibility to essential services such as healthcare, education, employment and leisure' down to 59% for the aim 'reducing transport related emissions through a reduction in vehicle miles to respond to the climate emergency'.

Conclusions and recommendations

The majority of respondents agreed with the draft vision, aims and associated priorities as well as the key challenges and opportunities identified. Improving public transport within the borough and connections to other areas was mentioned as a key priority for many as well as improvements to the road, walking and cycling network. It will be important to consider accessibility of all modes for all users including those within rural areas when drafting detailed transport plans. Respondents were keen to see more detail of how the plans will be achieved and also mentioned the benefits of continued collaboration / joined up thinking including within planning.

The details within this report should be thoroughly reviewed and considered alongside other key evidence when finalising the vision, aims and priorities and whilst drafting the full Local Transport Plan.

Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

Between 24th February and 21st April 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on its draft vision, aims and priorities for transport in the borough. Transport and travel play a crucial role in our everyday lives. To ensure our continued success and prosperity, we need to plan a transport network that is fit for the future – one that connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and leisure facilities, while supporting a healthier and more sustainable environment.

Feedback received will help feed into the development of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP). Since our current LTP was adopted in 2019, there has been considerable change in transport movements and trends. So, now is the right time to update our plan to ensure that the council maintains a policy framework that is robust and relevant to the needs of Cheshire East.

This report summarises responses received during the consultation.

Consultation methodology and number of responses

The consultation was mainly hosted online however paper versions were made available at libraries and leisure centres throughout Cheshire East. Paper copies were also available on request. The consultation was promoted widely, including:

- Residents of Cheshire East and the public through press releases and social media promotion
- The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel
- Businesses in Cheshire East and in neighbouring authorities
- Specialist transport user groups
- Equality groups
- Town and Parish Councils
- Elected Members
- Neighbouring Authorities

A copy of the full stakeholder engagement log can be viewed in Appendix 5. As part of wider engagement, online focus groups / 1-to-1 discussions were offered to certain stakeholders to gain further insight and to support the promotion of the consultation. A summary of the feedback obtained during these sessions can be viewed in Appendix 4.

In total, 720 consultation responses were received (674 survey responses and 46 email responses). A summary of the email responses can be viewed in Appendix 3. A breakdown of survey demographics and travel habits can be viewed in Appendix 1. There was a good distribution of response from across the borough – a map of respondent postcodes can be viewed in Appendix 2.

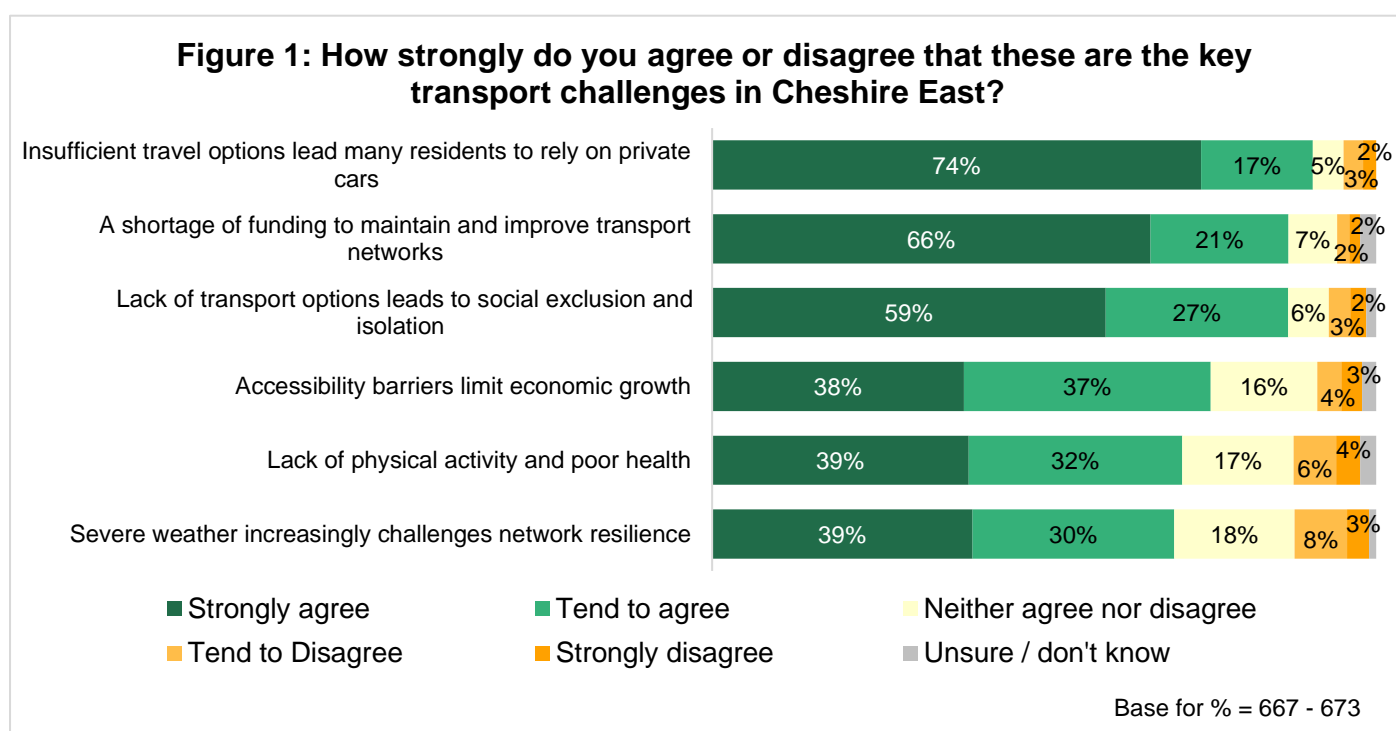
Section 1: Key transport challenges and opportunities

Key transport challenges

The consultation material identified six key transport challenges which Cheshire East is facing currently:

- Lack of transport options leads to social exclusion and isolation
- Lack of physical activity and poor health
- Insufficient travel options lead many residents to rely on private cars
- Accessibility barriers limit economic growth
- Severe weather increasingly challenges network resilience
- A shortage of funding to maintain and improve transport networks

The majority of respondents agreed that the six transport challenges identified were the key ones in Cheshire East. Agreement (those selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) ranged from 91% for 'insufficient travel options lead many residents to rely on private cars' to 69% for 'severe weather increasingly challenges network resilience'. Figure 1 shows the full breakdown of results.



Respondents were asked if they would like to raise any other transport challenges that should be considered. 307 respondents chose to leave a comment.

The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 1. Please note that some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore the total mentions will not add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment.

Table 1: Would you like to raise any other transport challenges that should be considered?		
Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Public transport		
Lack of public transport options	Residents will use their cars as public transport in Cheshire East is insufficient / need more buses (includes specific references to no public transport in Disley and High Legh, more buses needed in Styal, cuts to the bus timetable in Morley Green, removal of bus services in Audlem, services from Shavington to Nantwich poor, hardly any trains stop in Alsager, train station needed in Middlewich, Crewe, Nantwich and Sandbach need a tram system). Need more buses that take routes through housing areas. Need buses that allow people to get to schools, out of town shopping areas (larger stores away from the centre can be cheaper), healthcare and hospitals (including links to Leighton, Macclesfield, Wythenshawe and Stepping Hill hospitals). Local transport should be a seven-day service (including buses that run on a Sunday). Need buses that run later, on all routes, especially to places of employment and towns with nightlife. There are also challenges around getting to leisure attractions and places of interest. Residents in outlying communities who do not drive can become very isolated due to the lack of public transport. Need public transport options in rural areas (not just urban areas) / remote villages / cross country services needed. Lack of public transport options disproportionately impacts young people and older people as well as others who do not have access to a car / is a barrier to accessing skills, life-long learning and thus opportunity. If transport issues restrict employment opportunities that can lead to low income, impact on health and potentially social exclusion.	59
Lack of public transport connectivity / transport links	There is a lack of connectivity between different transport offerings. Need to join up buses with train timetables, have easy connectivity to Crewe Rail Station as a main line and integrate car journeys to public transport hubs. There is a lack of connectivity between and within urban areas (e.g. Disley has no links to other areas, connectivity between Leighton hospital to Nantwich & Congleton is poor, there is no direct bus from Congleton to Macclesfield hospital, limited transport to work for employees living outside of Wilmslow). Timing of buses regarding hospital transport is very important. Collaborate with educational establishments and workplaces to ensure transport options meet demand (e.g. lack of bus connectivity to AstraZeneca) and can get them there at the time their work starts / ends. Improving transport links to the leisure centres will encourage physical activity, improve health, and social inclusion. There is a lack of cross border transport into nearby authorities for work, education and leisure (particularly problematic for those in Wilmslow, Handforth and Poynton). Need bus and train connections to outlying areas (including into Cheshire West, Manchester, greater Manchester and Stockport).	45

Frequency / reliability of public transport	The low frequency of public transport may result in people using other means of transport. Need more frequent buses (e.g. buses in Knutsford not regular enough, one bus per hour from Northwich to Crewe via Sandbach is insufficient, a bus every two hours is poor, increase the frequency of route 19 Macclesfield to Upton Priory). Reliability of transport (buses and trains) is of great concern. The levels of bus routes being cancelled have a negative impact on local rural business – unable to recruit from larger towns. Buses seem to change details without warning. Need reliable buses that run on time (including more reliable transport into Manchester city centre / airport, starting a job at 9am in Macclesfield - Bollington is difficult because buses sometimes do not turn up). When buses fail to show up, we need a robust mechanism for providing onwards travel via another route. Disabled people need reliable transport.	38
Affordability of fares	The affordability of public transport, fares are too high (rail and bus). People will use their car if it is the cheaper option. The £2 fare scheme was good. Consider free bus travel.	14
Improvement to bus stops / bus information	Should provide toilets at all bus stations and train stations, also need lighting and shelters at bus-stops. When the service is not running or changed due to unforeseen problems some way must be found to inform the public. Need better access to bus times and "live" progress of a bus on a route by means of technology / apps etc, also using it to integrate with the vital transport services which are provided by community groups. Place timetables at a suitable height.	7
Lack of integrated ticketing	The lack of unified ticketing over multiple transport providers makes getting around more difficult and expensive. Consider tickets for different bus providers on the same route/ sector (for example on TfL you can tap on/pay and use multiple transport within the hour).	6
Issues with demand responsive services / community transport	The Go Too bus is not fit for purpose / demand responsive services are not a solution. Community group transport services will also face challenges in the future as costs increase and the numbers of volunteers varies. The challenge to these niche services for vulnerable residents needs to be considered alongside those faced by the wider public transport service.	4
Roads		
Maintenance of the roads	The state of the roads is an issue for any form of transport. Poor maintenance standards and post work completion leaves the highway in a quickly deteriorating condition. Fix the existing roads / potholes, make signs and road markings more legible, keep the drains and gullies clear to help prevent flooding. Maintenance of existing schemes is a priority, before implementation of new schemes (e.g. traffic calming schemes in Church Minshull & Worleston are in poor condition, fix the bridge in Adlington).	46

Traffic / road works	Lack of sufficient planning for increase in road traffic (e.g. planning of the Congleton bypass has led to increased traffic on the narrow lanes of North Rode). Traffic congestion an issue (including specific references to traffic on the A6 in Disley, along the A51, in and around Nantwich, and Knutsford needing a bypass). Badly arranged road works is an issue (including the number of roads closed in Crewe in last six months).	23
Road safety	Safety of pedestrians and road users. The perception of road safety for vulnerable users is a clear barrier to mode shift towards active travel. Active travel feels dangerous around Crewe, the roads encourage drivers to drive dangerously. Sensible speed limits needed. There is a lack of adherence to speed limits - no enforcement of 20mph speed limit on local roads. 20 is plenty. Need salt bins on steep road inclines / bends. The increasing use of SUVs / heavy vehicles / oversized private vehicles on unsuitable roads is a challenge.	21
Parking / parking charges	Provide parking facilities for people who want to use public transport but are too far away from stations / bus stops to walk to them – consider park and ride options. Engaging with major employers and agreeing remote park and ride opportunities to reduce bottlenecks. Improve parking provision in rural settlements as well as in towns. Parking areas at the side of the roads need marking out properly - consider a ban on pavement parking. The removal of residents parking permits for the Disley community centre has been an issue – on street parking is very hard to rely on. Car parking charges (including in Audlem) are having a detrimental effect on its businesses so run counter to the aims of the development plan. Exorbitant parking charges are making the option of working (e.g. in Alderley Edge) a less attractive proposition, 'cashless' methods need to be reconsidered.	15
Walking / cycling / active travel		
Lack of sufficient / safe cycling routes	There are insufficient safe cycling routes between major towns, communities or leading to bus / train stations (including from AstraZeneca, between Crewe and Nantwich). Need safer cycle paths that are suitable for children - make cycling to school safe. Cycling is too dangerous on main roads (need separated bike paths around Crewe). The maintenance of existing cycle ways / lanes is a key point, on road cycle lanes are not kept clean of debris. Cycle routes are not fit for purpose (e.g. Middlewood Way no good for commuting in wet weather - lighting and drainage is very poor in places). Why are cycle lanes not mandatory for new roads / estates that are built? Consider dedicated rail carriages for bikes.	28
Lack of sufficient footpaths / pavements	Lack of maintenance means footpaths / pavements are poor quality. Some pavements are not wide enough, and pushchairs and wheelchairs are forced into the road (e.g. in Styal). Drivers often park on them which blocks safe access. There is a lack of dropped curbs (e.g. in older areas of Macclesfield). In some areas there is a lack pavements and crossing points (e.g. for AstraZeneca this hinders access via Charter Way and Hulley Road, it is a challenge to walk safely on county lanes). Consider frequent walking routes for access to schools and nurseries. Grit the pavements in winter.	17

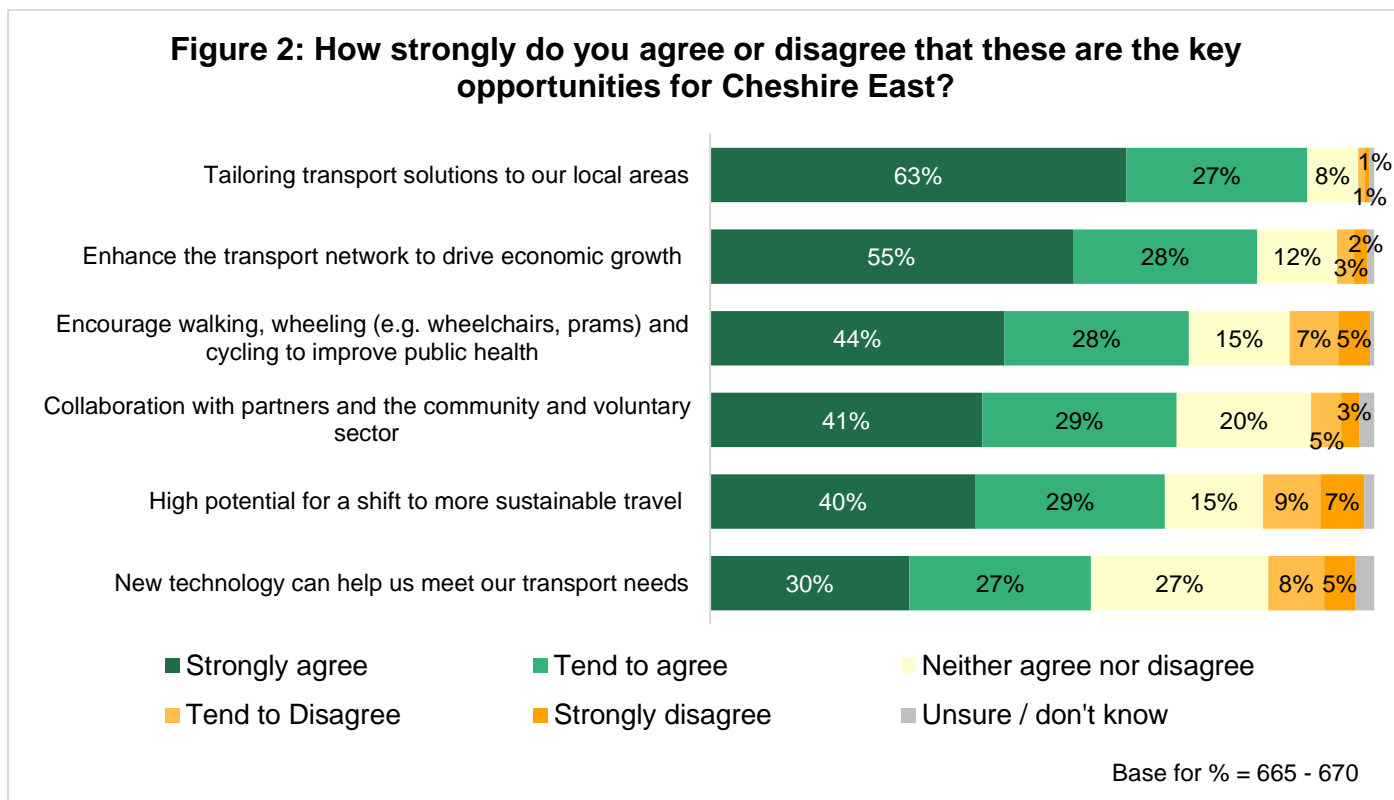
Prioritisation of vehicles above active travel routes	Motorised transport is prioritised in towns and villages making them feel unsafe and inaccessible especially for those in wheelchairs and pushchairs. A change in attitude needs to begin if walking / cycling is to become safer and more attractive. Create routes over and around roads so that the public can continue their journeys without waiting around busy roads. Train officers in the planning, design and implementation of active travel infrastructure.	6
Other / general comments		
Accessibility / equality considerations	Accessibility for disabled people is not always there. Lack of accessible transport especially for those using electronic wheelchairs / mobility scooters (in Congleton there are no wheelchair accessible taxis that take powered wheelchairs). Inaccessible train stations lead to exclusion from train travel – they need lifts. Pavements are not always accessible. There needs to be an understanding that a private vehicle may be required, and public transport may not be an option. The older age profile of Cheshire East residents should be considered when active transport solutions are being proposed – certain towns are far too hilly for the older generation.	12
Planning considerations	Force developers to improve the infrastructure - need safe and enjoyable active transport opportunities for all new developments. There have been car first presumptions on various new construction (e.g. 'out of town' employment sites, 'out of town' retail parks), without thoughts on how to link these to existing town centres, schools, doctors, hospitals, railway stations etc. Changes to retail outlet locations and the decline in town centres is a challenge.	10
Environmental concerns	Transport is a large contributor of carbon emissions. Need to decarbonise transport, particularly bus services. Pollution and noise from freight trains on Crewe Manchester trainline, there are no plans to electrify engines soon. Need to meet climate change commitments and reduce air pollution - pollution levels near overcrowded roads are too high.	8
Funding and resources	Funding is the greatest challenge, should have funding comparable to major cities. Funding for development and long-term maintenance of green/blue infrastructure needs to be incorporated into this plan. Staff shortages could be a challenge.	5
Overall comments on the challenges / plan	Not sure that lack of options makes people take the car – it is convenient and quick. Do not see that lack of physical activity and poor health is related to a transport challenge. The plan needs to have better metrics so that success can be monitored.	4
Other comment	Maintain what you have. Do not waste money on cycle lanes as they cause more traffic congestion - cycling to work is impractical for a majority of workers. Need flexibility and rely on the use of cars / car ownership will not fall. Need to recognise that the borough is predominantly rural / access in rural areas is important. Some council decisions go against the plan e.g. closure of tips, car parking situation, bus service cancellations. The lack of funding is self-imposed. Do not penalise residents with more charges.	22

Key transport opportunities

The consultation material identified six key transport opportunities for Cheshire East which could benefit the borough:

- High potential for a shift to more sustainable travel
- Encourage walking, wheeling (e.g. wheelchairs, prams) and cycling to improve public health
- Enhance the transport network to drive economic growth
- New technology can help us meet our transport needs
- Tailoring transport solutions to our local areas
- Collaboration with partners and the community and voluntary sector

'Tailoring transport solutions to our local areas' received the highest agreement – 90% of respondents agreed that this was a key transport opportunity for Cheshire East. Respondents seemed to be less sure that 'new technology can help us meet our transport needs' – whilst 57% agreed, 30% selected neither agree nor disagree or unsure / don't know. Figure 2 shows the full breakdown of results.



Respondents were asked if they would like to raise any other transport opportunities that should be considered. 172 respondents chose to leave a comment.

The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 2. Please note that some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore the total mentions will not add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment.

Table 2: Would you like to raise any other opportunities?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Public transport		
Improve the current public transport system	<p>Improve the current public transport system we have - must be quick, reliable, and affordable. Encourage bus use for everyone, consider a tram system. Return public transport to public ownership. Introduce tap on, tap off rides with price caps. Provide a consistent public bus service to small areas, there is a lack of buses and bus routes (e.g. in areas like Audlem, Styal, Aston, Wrenbury, Whitchurch, Tytherington and High Legh). Provision of more school transport to reduce traffic at peak times, need a bus service to hospitals. The lack of transport cuts people off from key amenities and leaves people isolated. Areas that were once accessible by the local bus no longer easy to reach (e.g. the 130-bus used to call at Wythenshawe Hospital - now takes two buses, Haslington has been cut off from the shops on the retail park in Crewe since the K37 was altered). The return of evening and Sunday buses will spur economic activity. Improve the train network (including better options for Knutsford). Important to maintain and improve transport networks for both industry and leisure / tourism. Cheshire East seem poorly served, except for Crewe and the most efficient way of getting to Crewe is by car. Reopen/open a train station (Bunbury). The Go Too bus is not reliable, cannot rely on volunteers you need to provide more regular bus services.</p>	33
Enhance transport links	<p>Enhance transport links before encouraging people to switch from cars to public transport. Public bus services do not coordinate with customer timing requirements, ensure bus services align with people's schedules for work, education, and healthcare, including routes to railway stations and Leighton Hospital. Increasing capacity and ease of movement between the borough is crucial (e.g. AstraZeneca require the necessary transport network capacity for all forms of transport access to improve opportunities). Establish direct routes linking major centres like Wilmslow, Macclesfield, Knutsford, and Stockport, supported by smaller buses for other communities. Work with Greater Manchester Travel Services and the Bee Network to integrate bus and rail networks (e.g. from Poynton to Hazel Grove bus network, direct train route from Chelford to Manchester Airport needed hourly at a minimum). Partner with Mersey Rail, Metrolink, and other networks to create transport hubs and interchanges.</p>	19
Introduce a reliable bus tracking system	<p>Access to a reliable bus tracking system that adds confidence the service will arrive - which bus service is approaching, how far away it is - via apps and at bus stops would enable more people to choose buses as a viable option for their journeys – can also alert visually impaired people to travel information. Our area is behind in information technology for live bus information.</p>	7

Roads		
Improve traffic flow and road safety	Volume of HGVs are increasing as more distribution warehouses are being built (e.g. A51 through Calverly and Alpraham). The bypass to take traffic away from this part to link to the M53 Wales/Chester needs to be urgently revisited. Address the traffic congestion in and around Nantwich / Shavington areas. Get the bypass built and firms will return to Middlewich. Pay attention to dangerous hot spots. Enforce speed limits in villages, speed limits would need to be addressed on link roads. Motorist education on speeds. Introduce 20mph speed limits where people live, work, shop, play or learn to promote better sharing of the road for sustainable non-car road users.	15
Road maintenance	More needs to be done to fix the problems on major routes. Apply preventative maintenance before roads collapse. Potholes are a big part of the problem. Collaborate with utility companies who dig up roads, it is their resurfacing that often creates potholes - they should have to pay for fixing roads where repairs have not been to standard. Flooding regularly causes road closures (e.g. in Styal).	8
Parking / park and ride opportunities	Increased on street parking with on road electric vehicle charging would provide a revenue stream for Cheshire East and options for residents to reduce their environmental impact. Need a park and ride for Leighton Hospital.	4
Walking / cycling		
Improve pavements / footpaths	Improve the maintenance of existing pavements, some are in poor condition and blocked by overgrown bushes. Provide safe means for more walking / wheeling to become a viable option including. more pedestrian crossings. Some pavements are too narrow or close to fast moving vehicles for pedestrians to consider them safe routes (e.g. in Holmes Chapel) and some villages have no pavements. Need well-lit areas to enable safe walking. Need pavements linking new developments to existing pedestrian pavements and wide enough for disabled / wheelchairs. Many routes are hindered by A frame barriers, and many pathways are muddy, especially in the winter. The public footpath network in the countryside should be improved.	15
Improve cycle routes / cycling opportunities	Improve cycle routes (including Middlewood Way - no good for commuting for work in wet weather as it is too muddy). On road cycle lanes are not kept clean of debris. Most people fear cycling on the roads because of traffic, take them off the road or better segregate. Cycle networks need to be improved especially in rural areas, cycling from rural areas into towns is more likely to be adopted if good quiet route maps are available. Where is the plan to connect all towns with cycle lanes? Upgrade some paths to cycleways to link key towns (e.g. Bollin Valley Way from Macclesfield to Wilmslow and Airport should be upgraded to a cycle / multipurpose route). Need safe and complete cycle lanes between housing estates and workplaces. Consider secure, town centre cycle parking and refurbish unused bicycles for community use.	11

Consider cycling to be low priority	Do not waste money on cycling, creating more cycle paths has not produced satisfactory returns on the investment. Not always practical to cycle. Would suggest that cycling is low priority.	6
Other / general comments		
Improve sustainable travel options	Initiatives that make cars a less viable option for local journeys are welcome, attitudes need to change from road users. Sustainable travel options need to be practical, affordable and safe, if you are going to encourage road users to stop using private vehicles. Consider incentives to reduce the number of children being driven to school. Working from home significantly reduces the number of cars on the road. Collaborate with major retailers to make public transport free with a shopping receipt. There is nothing about transport infrastructure to encourage recreational active travel / improve health through reducing pollution and enabling active travel. Active travel must be enforced in residential roads (such as the B5090 in Bollington). There is no cut-across to opportunities to tackle climate change, air pollution or other harmful environmental impacts.	18
Improve accessibility	Improve accessibility for more vulnerable members of the community i.e. the elderly, children and people with visible and invisible disabilities. Wheelchair accessibility is lacking everywhere in east Cheshire, look at how cars park on the pavement / replace steps with ramps. Also consider those that use mobility scooters, recumbent bikes and adaptive cycles in active travel plans. Consider accessible taxis. Remember not everyone uses new technology - especially older people - who tend to use the bus more.	11
Sustainable travel not achievable generally	The potential to shift to more sustainable travel is overrated, people will still use their cars because it is so much more convenient. Bad weather does not help walking and cycling etc. Give up on the electric car push it does not solve the issue of too many cars on the roads.	9
Electric vehicle opportunities	The opportunity to make a success of the switch to electric vehicles. Make the introduction of new technology e.g. EV charging more accessible, zero parking charges for those with an EV. Economic growth should be linked to sustainability.	4
Rural area considerations	Walking and cycling maybe an option for some or those living close to town centres, but better transport in rural areas needs to be provided. Stop cutting off rural communities by scaling service back. Not all are able to walk or cycle, it is just not practical to walk or cycle 5 miles or more into nearby towns.	4
Improve planning / regeneration	Plan to enhance or at least maintain existing public transport services in areas where new housing is being built. Encourage proper travel infrastructure planning and infrastructure funding from housing developers. Regeneration of town centres (especially Crewe).	3

General comments	<p>Opportunities need investment. Sustainable travel can be expensive without support from the government. Spend S106 monies wisely. Devolution offers an opportunity to improve the public transport network. Listen to what the locals want and need, need partners and stakeholders involved. What is the definition of local areas. What is sustainable travel? What is the outcome? The statements do not say anything – no strategy on how to improve things. The opportunities are not deliverable in a timescale that will make a difference. Make better use of the financial resources available. Need fairer funding across the Cheshire East area.</p>	22
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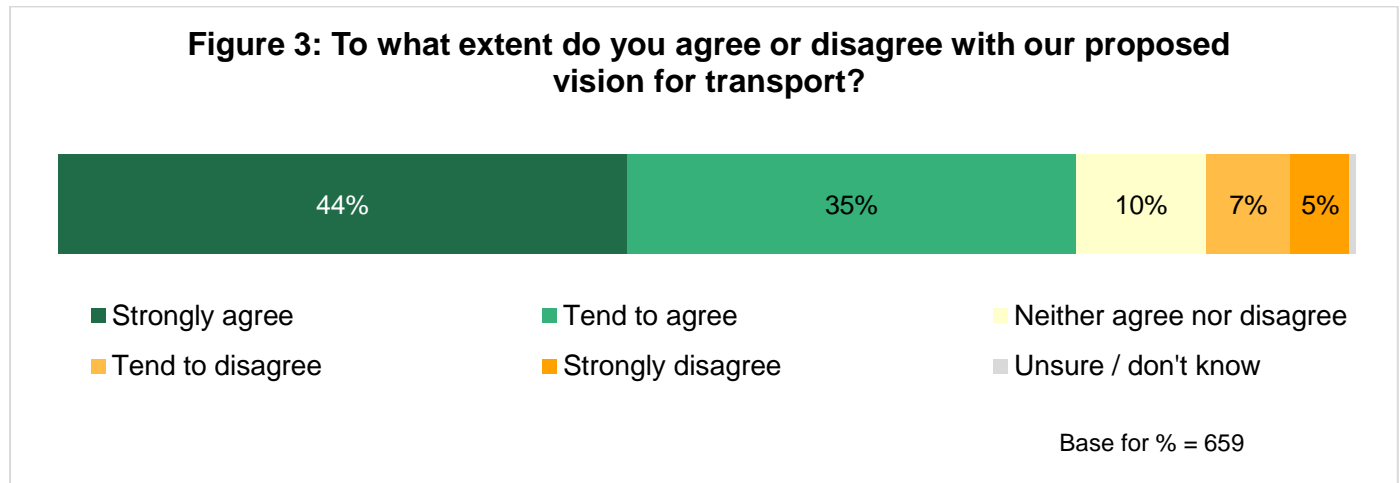
Section 2: Our vision and aims

The vision for transport

The identified vision for the future transport network in Cheshire East was:

A connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East.

79% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 12% disagreed as shown in Figure 3.



Respondents were asked if there were any changes they would like to see to the vision. 239 respondents chose to leave a comment.

The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 3. Please note that some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore the total mentions will not add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment.

Table 3: Are there any changes you would like to see to the vision?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Comments on the vision		
General negative comment on the vision	Sceptical about the value for money this will deliver. The plan is excessively optimistic, do not have much confidence that this can be delivered. Implies that all vehicle users live an unhealthy lifestyle. Planning to reduce reliance on private cars is a fallacy – people will not use buses as too expensive / unreliable. Don't waste money on this vision.	22
Would like to see more detail / measurable plans	Easy to agree with but it is lacking substance / lacking in specifics on for example what it will look like, what will change, how it will be achieved. More detail is required, would like to see some clear and measurable plans and outcomes. How do you propose to encourage people to increase their use of public transport? It is full of nice phrases but where is the action?	20
Specific suggestions on the vision	Include the words 'reliable', 'affordable' and 'efficient' (public transport) and 'resilient' (road network), does not deal with congestion. A vision focused on interventions to address the issues experienced by our most deprived communities would be welcome. Should include reducing travel by private cars, reducing the speed of those cars and a specific vision for schoolchildren to travel by active travel options. Consider amending slightly to read '...that supports healthy and prosperous communities in Cheshire East'. Suggest the following: 'Our vision is a well-connected, safe, efficient, affordable and sustainable, well maintained, resilient transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East.	11
Need a realistic policy	Would like to see a policy that is realistic and accepts that people want convenience / that the private car will remain the primary means of transport for most residents and visitors. Should not exclude private car use as this is only solution for disadvantaged, elderly, very young, and disabled. The emphasis on transport helping to make a prosperous Cheshire East is too great and this should be reduced.	9
Would question sustainability	Would question sustainability, an impossible aim. Reduce net zero thinking and aim for workable solutions. Just need a reliable bus service to the places we need to go to. Need to be able to use the road network we currently have consistently and without interruption before focusing on sustainability Unlikely to be able to meet the demands of rural villages if also attempting to be green.	8

Need more emphasis on sustainability	Needs more emphasis on creating green spaces / being resilient to climate change. Vision does not represent the three 'legs' of sustainability - only represents the economic and the social legs, need to add 'that has minimal effect on the environment'. There is a risk that "accessible to all" could be interpreted as to give equal accessibility to private cars, need a specific focus away from cars. The word 'supporting' is very weak, 'promoting' maybe better. Needs to support healthy lifestyles in the residential roads.	7
Comments on the transport network		
Improve public transport (inc. reliability, frequency, links and affordability)	A better, more reliable and affordable transport service would encourage road users to leave their cars at home. Better public transport connections and links. Integrated ticketing. Buses to run more often, later in the evening, early morning. More transport in rural areas. More automated information available on where the bus is / any delays. More bus stops. More community outreach and engagement (starting in schools) to encourage public transport use (please note detailed comments mentioned here have been covered elsewhere in the report).	106
Improve the road network (inc. maintenance, traffic, road safety)	Maintenance of existing road network should be prioritised (e.g. rural road network in SW Cheshire East is crumbling due to aging and poorly maintained drainage). Sort the roads out, put money on road repairs. Remove choke points and pollution hotspots, start to invest in flyovers and underpasses that eliminate bottlenecks. Appropriate speed limits to reflect the requirements of residential areas (consider 20mph limits). Reduction in traffic pinch points / traffic at peak times. Discouraging the purchase and use of SUVs. Avoid roadworks at peak times. Need a bypass linking Whaley Bridge, to the A555, and the M60 at Bredbury. Make the A6 safer. Offer free parking for residents.	22
Improve active travel / walking and cycling routes	More emphasis on active travel / active travel needs to be worked on / needs to be a change in public perception. Need a real focus on cycling provision that connect places and can integrate into public transport - many cycle paths are unusable, inadequate and unsafe. Need suitable places to park a bike safely. Better footpath maintenance to encourage walking e.g. improve footpath on Sagars Road, improve pavements in Styal for wheelchair and pushchair access. Safe walking routes. Public toilets need to be available. Shared cycle/footpaths.	19
Improve accessibility	Emphasis on accessible to all. Changes that encompass equal facilities for disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents. More choice for elderly and disabled residents. Needs to be a lot more accessible to disabled people, disabled access to railway stations. The older generation proportion in Cheshire East is growing and need some priority focus / consider the elderly who still want to stay independent after they give up driving. More emphasis on isolated groups who cannot access areas by improving accessibility using new technology, funding and education. Focus on regeneration of town centres through increased accessibility.	11
Other / general comments		

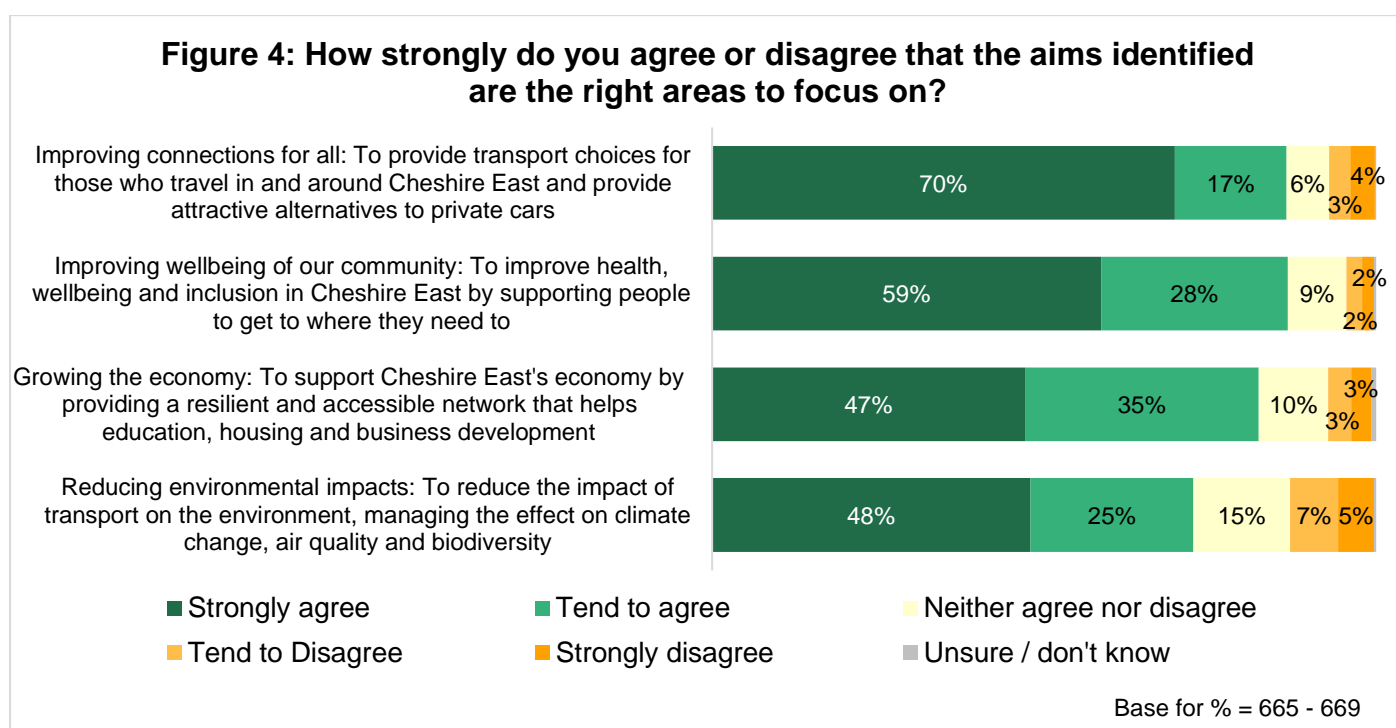
Cycling not a priority	Too much emphasis on cycling. Remove cycle provisions from the plan. No more cycle lanes.	4
Other comments	Vision is good – hope there is budget to proceed. Focus on provided a better service for the majority / monies available to be spent on existing infrastructure. Funds need to be shared equitably around the county. Transport must also be at the heart of the planning process so new housing and business developments have good alternatives to private car. Would like businesses to be represented - focus on encouraging the private sector and people to unlock opportunities and provide solutions to problems.	15

The aims for transport

The consultation material set out four aims to achieve the vision.

- **Growing the economy:** To support Cheshire East's economy by providing a resilient and accessible network that helps education, housing and business development
- **Improving wellbeing of our community:** To improve health, wellbeing and inclusion in Cheshire East by supporting people to get to where they need to
- **Reducing environmental impacts:** To reduce the impact of transport on the environment, managing the effect on climate change, air quality and biodiversity
- **Improving connections for all:** To provide transport choices for those who travel in and around Cheshire East and provide attractive alternatives to private cars

The majority of respondents agreed that the aims were the right areas to focus on. Agreement ranged from 87% for 'improving connections for all' to 73 for 'reducing environmental impacts', Figure 4 shows the full breakdown of response.



Respondents were asked if they had any additional aims, they think should be considered. 170 respondents chose to leave a comment.

The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 4. Please note that some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore the total mentions will not add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment.

Table 4: Do you have any additional aims you think we should consider?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Public transport		
Improve public transport	Improve transport for all areas to provide means other than using private cars (including more buses from Weaverham into Northwich, improved transport in Macclesfield, need a bus service back on Hurdsfield estate, provide easy access to supermarkets, retail parks and leisure facilities). Public transport services need to be more reliable, frequent and cheaper. Buses would benefit from specific bus lanes and roads to lessen the time spent in traffic. Consider half-price tickets for people aged over 60. Provide Sunday and evening services. Good public transport is essential for those unable to drive due to physical disability / health problems. Travel to and from school, GP surgeries and hospitals (including to and from Nantwich to Leighton Hospital, to and from Congleton to Macclesfield and Stepping Hill Hospital) is a huge priority. Rebuild the railways, need more rail companies on the east side of the West Coast Main Line Stoke-Manchester. Increase the train stops (e.g. at Styal train station) to help commuters have more options. Routes that are desirable, but not likely to be profitable, may need subsidy. Invest in a metro link (e.g. between Marple and Macclesfield). Bring buses under council control.	39
Improve connections / travel links	Improve connections between different public transport options / integrate bus, rail services and cycle paths. Make Crewe and Macclesfield major rail hubs - connectivity from all areas of Cheshire East to these hubs is essential for all modes of transport e.g. buses, walking, cycling. Connect communities to neighbouring areas. Need to ensure that local rural villages are well connected to the local towns. Employers/businesses need to be included as they could provide buses for their staff. Need a joined-up approach beyond Cheshire East, with Cheshire West, Liverpool, Manchester (including better coordination with TfGM) and Merseyside. Transport should connect better to Wythenshawe and Stockport (including bus links from Wilmslow direct to airport, Wythenshawe and Stepping Hill Hospitals).	32
Walking / cycling		
Improve cycling and walking routes	Improve cycle routes (including Middlewood Way which needs a proper surface). Need a connected cycle route around and through Cheshire East. Upgrade some paths to cycleways to link key towns (e.g. Bollin Valley Way from Macclesfield to Wilmslow and Airport). Walking and cycling should be the main alternatives to the car. There is no mention of people feeling safe, especially for walking / cycling, cycling is too dangerous on main roads, make the roads safe for children to walk to school, turning off streetlighting does not foster a safe walking route (need a safe cycle route out of Middlewich).	18

Roads		
Improve traffic flow and road safety	Plans that help avoid hold ups and smooth traffic flow. The more houses that are permitted in the area puts more strain on the current transport options and more cars on the road (Sandbach is gridlocked at peak times) Take lorries / tractors off the roads 7-9am and 5-7pm. Alleviate residents and communities from overly busy roads. A specific aim about road safety (e.g. a commitment to Vision Zero) to include reviews of speed limits and education for all road users. Reduce traffic speed (inc. from 40mph to 30mph along A6 between High Lane and Disley, vehicles travel at over 50mph in a 30mph on Buxton Old Road).	13
Maintain the infrastructure / roads	Maintain and enhance the existing infrastructure - roads, bridges, pavements and other assets - to provide a resilient network for all users. Fix the potholes / improve the roads.	8
Other / general comments		
Specific suggestion on the aims	The aims should consider affordability, congestion and maintenance. Under growing the economy, delete housing and include employment. To grow the economy, you need to include leisure activities in the first aim at the first bullet point. Improving connections for all needs to be separated. How do you plan to achieve the aims?	10
Focus on / consider rural areas	Better focus on rural areas including - better infrastructure for parking and electric vehicle charging. Rural communities need adequate and well-maintained drainage systems to avoid flooding. Improve connectivity between rural villages and their local towns provide regular and reliable transport. Last aim not useful around rural areas (e.g. Shavington and Hough). Cars are the only viable transportation in rural areas.	9
Financial impacts	Do not penalise those who need to use their cars, consider the financial impacts on households. Any transport plan should be financially feasible and not over-commit to ambitious schemes that may not deliver the expected success – prioritise maintaining existing infrastructure. Developers should fund improvements rather than the public.	6
Encourage the use of electric vehicles	Encourage the use of electric vehicles. More electric charging points needed. Council vehicles should set an example for greener vehicles. There is good scope to reduce environmental impact through the introduction of Electric or Hydrogen fuelled public transport. With the transition to EVs and ever-increasing electricity generation from cleaner sources, climate change will become less of a consideration for private cars.	7
Will have a limited impact on climate change	Electric cars are not the answer. Human activity has little effect on climate change. The UK is a tiny country which has an equally tiny effect on global carbon emissions.	7
Consider accessibility needs	Consider the needs of the elderly population and those who are disabled (including making areas / transport wheelchair accessible). Give the elderly and vulnerable residents more affordable choice.	5

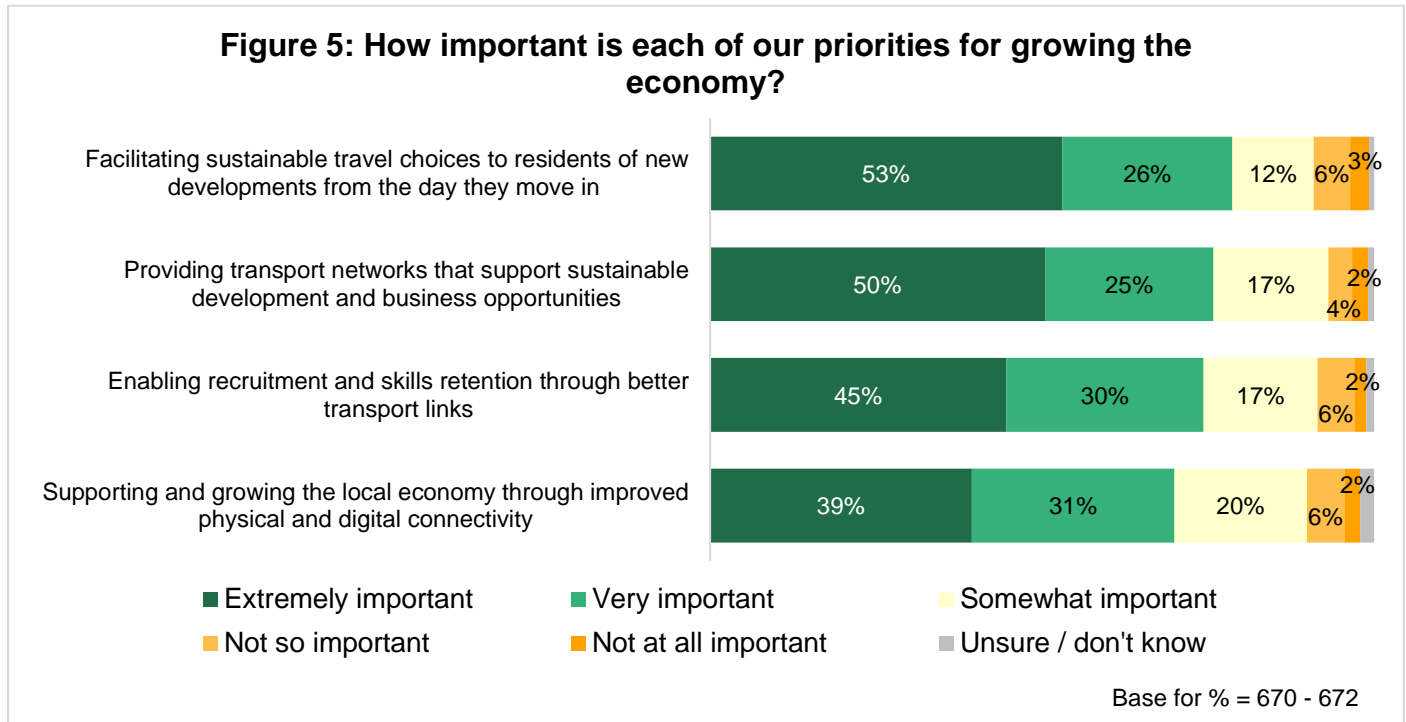
Planning considerations	Until network is in place, traffic likely to get worse as more houses built. New housing developments are poorly served. Our town centres have been allowed to decline and out of time retail parks encouraged. Practical planning needs to go alongside with joined up thinking.	4
Consider schemes that make cars less desirable	Getting people away from being dependent on cars is needed / make private cars less attractive. Must find a way of reducing car use and the number of cars parked on roads and obstructing pavements. Parking should never be cheaper than a return bus fare.	4
Work / collaborate with other authorities	Working with local authorities at a larger county and regional level. Where does devolution fit into this - does the Cheshire East LTP align with the LTPs of Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington councils?	2
Other comments	Ensure the plan is for all areas of Cheshire East / Cheshire East is car dependent. Give value to the majority / reducing costs and efficiency gains are very important. Encouraging cycling needs to be considered carefully. Bring another bus firm into the area to operate the buses. We live in a country where it rains so cannot expect everyone to walk or cycle. No matter what you do people will use their cars in rush hour and other things at leisure time.	19

Section 3: Our priorities

A set of priorities were identified for each aim.

Growing the economy

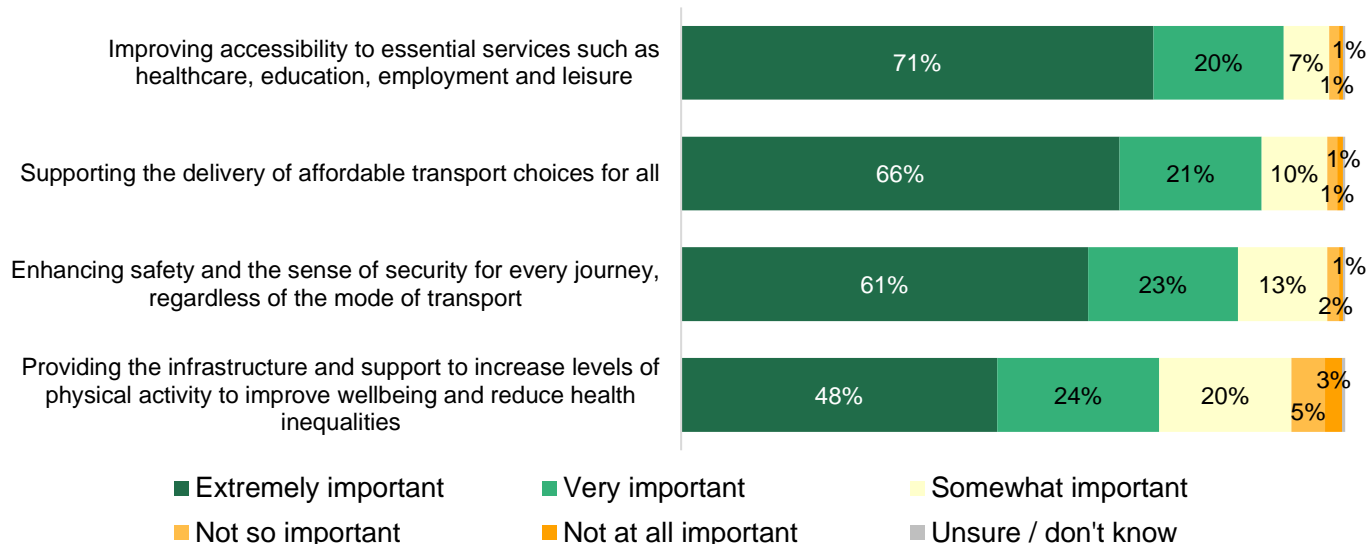
The majority of respondents felt that the priorities under 'growing the economy' were important. Those selecting extremely or very important ranged from 79% for 'facilitating sustainable travel choices to residents of new developments from the day they move in' to 70% for 'supporting and growing the local economy through improved physical and digital connectivity'. Figure 5 shows the full breakdown of results.



Improving the wellbeing of our community

The majority of respondents felt that the priorities under 'improving the wellbeing of our community' were important. Those selecting extremely or very important ranged from 91% for 'improving accessibility to essential services such as healthcare, education, employment and leisure' to 72% for 'providing the infrastructure and support to increase levels of physical activity to improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities'. Figure 6 shows the full breakdown of results.

Figure 6: How important is each of our priorities for improving the wellbeing of our community?

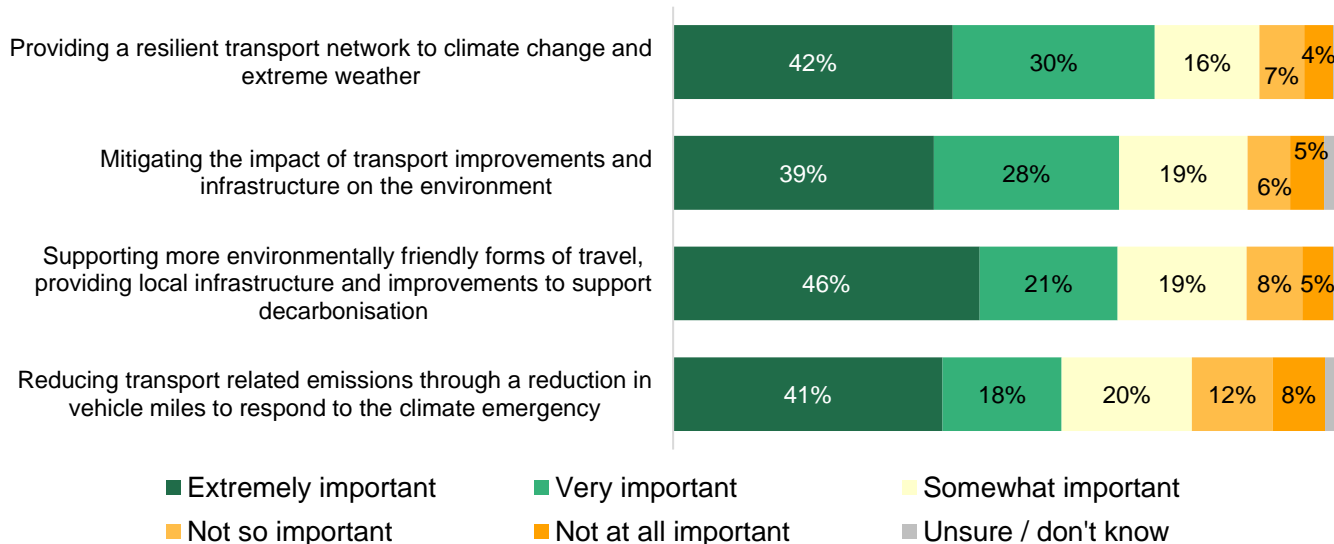


Base for % = 668 - 672

Reducing environmental impacts

The priority with the highest importance was 'providing a resilient transport network to climate change and extreme weather' (72 selected either extremely important or very important). There was more of a mixed response for 'reducing transport related emissions through a reduction in vehicle miles to respond to the climate emergency' (whilst 59% selected either extremely important or very important 20% selected either not so important or not at all important). Figure 7 shows the full breakdown of results.

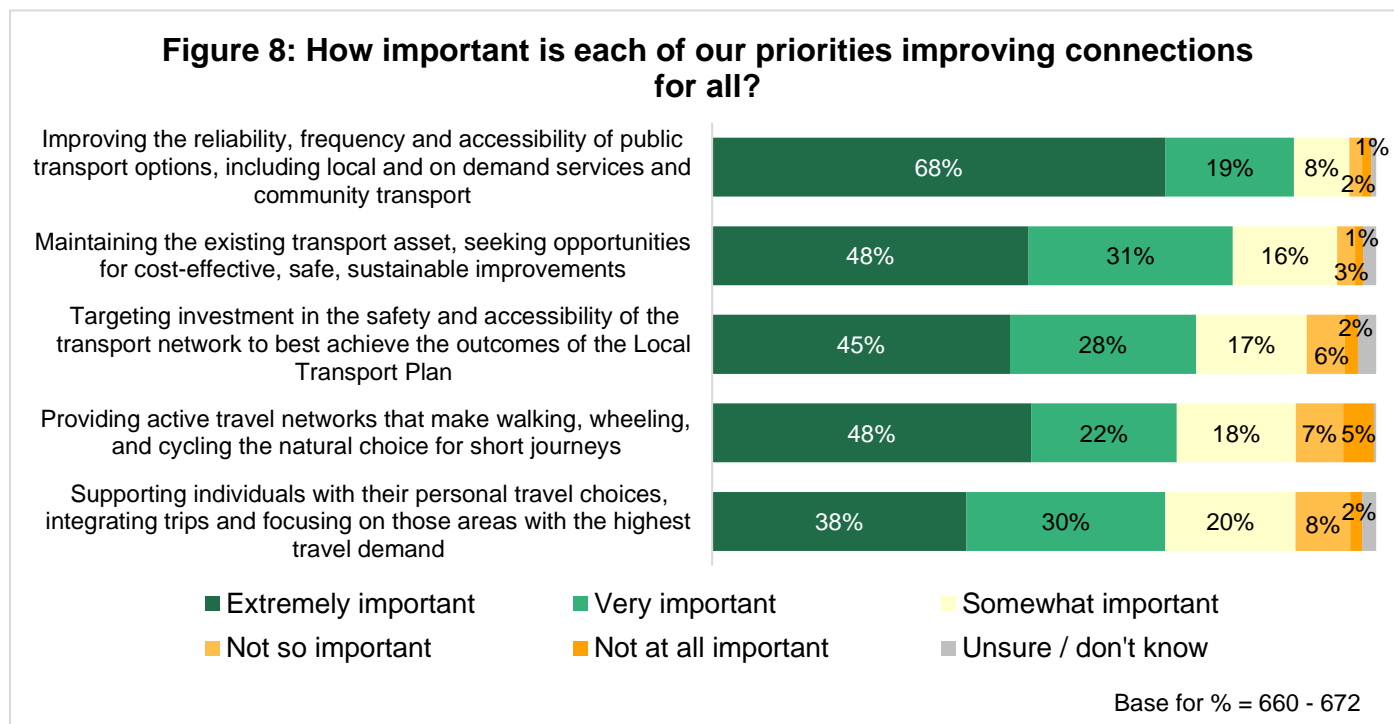
Figure 7: How important is each of our priorities for reducing environmental impacts?



Base for % = 667 - 669

Improving connections for all

The majority of respondents felt that the priorities under 'improving the wellbeing of our community' were important. Those selecting extremely or very important ranged from 87% for 'improving the reliability, frequency and accessibility of public transport options, including local and on demand services and community transport' to 68% for 'supporting individuals with their personal travel choices, integrating trips and focusing on those areas with the highest travel demand'. Figure 8 shows the full breakdown of results.



Section 4: Further comments

At the end of the survey respondents had the opportunity to let us know if they had any further comments to make on the proposal. 348 respondents chose to leave a comment.

The full summary of the comments received by theme and sub theme is presented in Table 5. Please note that some respondents will have referred to more than one theme therefore the total mentions will not add up to the total number of respondents who left a comment.

Table 5: Do you have any other comments to add which we should consider when developing Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Public transport		
Improve connections / travel links	Basic, straightforward connection of communities is key, need to improve connectivity between smaller towns/villages and major towns (e.g. need public transport to the local hospital from Knutsford to Macclesfield, from Crewe / Nantwich to Leighton Hospital, between Disley and Poynton, from Congleton to Alderley Park, from Tytherinton to Macclesfield, connect Nantwich with the train lines). Lack of connections isolates people and forces car use as the only viable option. Solutions that give people and businesses the connectivity required are essential. Integrate bus and rail transport, particularly in Crewe. Make the major railway stations public transport hubs, entrances and exits should be made safe areas for walking and cycling, consider relocating Macclesfield station to a more accessible location to improve rail connection and transport links. Improve cross boundary links to neighbouring Local Authority areas and workplaces, public transport does not end at Cheshire East boundaries. Improve transport on a strategic regional scale (including links / connectivity to other areas such as Manchester, Manchester Airport, Wythenshawe and Stepping Hill Hospitals, Stoke-On-Trent, Liverpool, to the Peak District, Derbyshire, Wales and within Cheshire West and Chester.). Multi operator tickets should be made available.	53
Reliability / frequency / affordability of public transport	Need buses that run more frequently (make all bus services run every 30 mins, the 38 needs doubling service to every half an hour) on the weekends (including on a Sunday) and later in the evening. Reliability is key, need to improve the reliability of existing services. Public transport must be affordable for all - cost of public transport too high. Free bus travel / free bus travel for carers / should not have to pay for 5-year-olds.	47
Improve public transport generally	There is a lack of public transport options (including in areas such as Styal, High Legh, Holmes Chapel, Bunbury, Audlem, Aston, Middlewich, Knutsford, keep the new bus service to Audlem running). More funding is needed to improve bus services, need more double decker / larger capacity buses on busy routes. Senior people need a good bus service it is their lifeline. Re-instate cancelled bus routes (e.g. Congleton to Macclesfield via Buglawton). There is not one mention of railway services, consider opening Middlewich Rail Station. Travelling to schools needs to be easier and cost effective. The 'on demand' buses only work when not many people want to use them and they limited by destination, consider replacing them with good regular buses.	45

Table 5: Do you have any other comments to add which we should consider when developing Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Improvements to bus stops / train stations / technology	The infrastructure of bus stations / bus stops need investment to create new, welcoming and comfortable stations. There should be shelters at every bus stop (no bus shelters in the Nantwich area). Develop more attractive travel hubs / bus stations with real-time travel information. Information is very important when buses do not arrive at the bus station or are cancelled. Design a system to give alerts about cancellations and alternatives - maybe using interactive maps. Crewe train station is outdated - needs modernisation of escalators and digital information.	12
Roads		
Road maintenance / improvements	Improve the roads and repair potholes to a good standard (stop temporary fixes). Repair what we have properly and have clear maintenance programs in place. Bring the entire road network back into a year-round usable facility (roads currently flood in Wrenbury / Marbury / North Rode due to poor drainage). No new developments unless the road network is fixed and increased capacity is provided. Highway infrastructure should be built with public transport in mind - unnecessary inclusion of mini-roundabouts slows bus traffic down.	32
Traffic congestion / road safety	Most of the Cheshire roads were not built to handle the amount of new residential developments and the increase in traffic, so safety is a real concern (sort the horrendous traffic issues along the A6 in Disley). Should have a policy of avoiding building new roads and of single lane dual carriageways, consider the impact of the Congleton bypass on rural communities. The perception and safety cannot be improved without a reduction in traffic speed and measures to ensure legal compliance with speed limits. Get the traffic reduced and slowed down (poor road safety on Buxton Old Road in Disley - speed is a serious issue, need to make roads safer in Styal, speed limit in Flash Lane and half of Prestbury Lane are 60 miles an hour, should be 40). Introduce 20mph zones (consider reducing the speed limit to 20mph along Middlewich Road in Sandbach and in similar areas across the borough. Prioritise safety near schools. Cars are getting too large - reduce the size and weight of private cars by charging extra for SUV's or ban them from town centres. Need better planning when it comes to roadworks to reduce the number of diversions at one time.	30

Table 5: Do you have any other comments to add which we should consider when developing Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Walking / cycling / active travel		
Encourage cycling / improve cycle routes	Encourage more cycling. Develop safe cycle options / routes between major towns (e.g. Crewe to Sandbach, Crewe to Alsager, connections from Reaseheath to Alvaston). Improve and maintain current cycling routes (e.g. Middlewood way, not fit for purpose). Segregated cycle network across Cheshire East needed / install bollards along cycle lanes. Develop a network of longer distance cycle routes for commuting and leisure. There is a huge opportunity for cycle tourism of key traffic routes (e.g. on the A6) - might even cycle into Manchester for work if this was available. Teach safe cycling at schools. Secure cycle storage in towns and in residential areas. Free bikes to hire in the local town centre.	25
Encourage walking / improve walking routes	Put pedestrians at the centre of the plan. Walking opportunities poor / encourage more walking. Need safe walking routes. Consider walking buses to get children to schools / provide safe crossing points (e.g. for primary school children at the top of The Hill, Sandbach). Improve pavements, ensure they are clear of obstructions (i.e. clear of overgrown bushes or cars parked on pavements) and ensure funding for pavement connections. Assess the off-road footpath network and ensure that this is maintained (e.g. restore the bridge in Hall Wood, Handforth), create new longer-distance footpath links (e.g. a River Dean path from Handforth to Woodford, Adlington and Bollington)	17
Active travel / alternative travel improvements and considerations	Active funding plan and mechanisms to deliver the modal shift. Cheshire east has massive potential for active travel with lots of existing "green corridors" in the centre of our towns which would make cost effective, efficient and pleasant journeys with small investments (examples include Sagars Rd/Clay Ln between Handforth/Styal/Airport). When active travel routes are designed it is vital that these are for complete journeys. Need to ensure any improvements made to the network providing 'attractive alternatives to private cars' are accessible to anyone using them (inc. those with mobility scooters). There is no inclusion or consideration of equestrian activity. Concerned about the generalised concept of 'wheeling' - needs managing carefully as there are no clear rules as to when these vehicles (i.e. skateboards, mountain bikes, racing cycles, roller skates, motorised scooters, and small motorised buggies) can use the pavements or the roads.	8

Table 5: Do you have any other comments to add which we should consider when developing Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
Overall considerations		
Consideration of rural areas	Does not seem to address rural areas - rural residents are just as important as urban residents. Emphasising areas of main concentrations of population has the unintended consequences of leaving out rural areas. Rural transport is a must / need better transport links in rural areas. The elderly / youth that live in rural areas need to have a voice and be taken care of in any strategy.	26
Be realistic with plans	Ensure ambitions align with what can really be achieved, do not waste taxpayers' money if there is not sufficient funding form elsewhere. It is not possible to get everyone cycling everywhere. It is up to people themselves to get fit and not for the council to provide cycle lanes that are rarely used. Walking and cycling are not viable options for many disabled or elderly residents. Providing alternative means of transport is unlikely to reduce people's reliance on cars. Cannot see there being any major updates to improve the infrastructure and encourage non-motorized forms of transport. Electric vehicles are not the 'green saviour'. It is not the council's responsibility to fix a planet that has been warming since the last age.	22
Climate / environmental considerations	Environmental, health and inclusion should be the top priorities in any transport strategy. The improvement of sustainable infrastructure should take precedence over private car trips. Active transport should be of the highest priority as this positively impacts on everything. Introduce shared / pedestrian-priority areas and interventions, consider no car days. Consider a more draconian approach to limiting car use e.g. introduction off higher parking charges, introduction of car-free zones, hold events like no car day. Encourage environmentally favourable transport options including electric vehicles for those who cannot make use of active transport solutions, need more EV chargers. Stop and think about the impact on nature with some of the proposed active travel routes – improving the infrastructure means digging up roads damaging the countryside and the environment.	14
Need joined up thinking / financial support	Need joined up thinking, hope that the LTP is being developed in concert with other plans from the town to county level, the car parking strategy must be included. Provide the requirements across all areas - focusing on areas of high demand is not everything. Curious about the possible impact of devolution and the plans of neighbouring authorities. Financial support may be an issue – discuss the possibility of raising money from advertisements on public transport.	12

Table 5: Do you have any other comments to add which we should consider when developing Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan?

Theme	Summary of comments received	Number of mentions
New Build Infrastructure / planning considerations	This plan should be fully integrated with the revised National Planning Policy Framework which brings transport and local engagement to the forefront of development planning. A lot of the environmental impacts of today are caused by lax approach to planning (overcrowded roads in Macclesfield, where vast new housing estates are being built). The council is approving development of new housing but are failing to build up local amenities for residents to be fit and healthy without needing to get a bus or drive (areas such as Leighton have no local gym, doctors, dentist, supermarkets etc). Important to integrate public transport into the development of new residential areas (e.g. development of 300 plus houses in Lyme Green which has limited bus services). Change in design of new developments to have the ambition of delivering sustainably walkable neighbourhoods. Focus on regeneration of town centres (especially Crewe, Crewe Station and surroundings need urgent fix).	12
Need more detail / specifics / refer to relevant evidence	There are no measurable outcomes in the plan, so how will you know when it delivers? How will you measure potential demand / take-up for new or improved transport options? How will implementation in each area work in practice? Should align plans to the 'tartan rug'.	7
Consideration of those who need to use their car / cycling low priority	Do not punish those who need to use their car. There are many residents who support the economy whilst needing to use their car for work and leisure and do not have the luxury of time to walk or cycle everywhere. Would not consider cycling infrastructure as a priority.	4
General / other comments		
General negative comment	Sceptical that the plan can be delivered, waste of time / money. Take notice of resident's views. Council seems to make decisions that go against the plan e.g. closure of waste tips, expensive car parks.	19
Other comment	There is a need for user-friendly payment systems, consider the impact of technical changes on the elderly and low-income families. Ensure the elderly and more vulnerable residents have a choice. There is no simple solution to transport issues, clear communication with residents about decisions is crucial. Need practical actions rather than vague aspirations. Prioritising within the budget will be challenging.	13

Appendix 1: Travel / demographic breakdowns

A number of demographic questions were asked at the end of the survey to ensure there was a wide range of views from across different characteristics. All of the questions were optional and therefore will not add up to the total number of responses received.

Table 6: Number of survey respondents by representation. Respondents could select all that apply.

Category	Count	Percent
As a resident of Cheshire East	608	91%
As a Cheshire East Town/Parish Councillor	17	3%
On behalf of a group, organisation, or club	14	2%
An elected Member of Cheshire East	11	2%
On behalf of a local business	10	1%
Other interested party (inc. Cheshire East employee, visitor, commuter and resident in a neighbouring authority)	11	2%
Grand Total	671	100%

The businesses and organisations that provided a response as part of the survey include: 20's Plenty Cheshire East Campaign, ALIVE (alleviating loneliness in village environments, AstraZeneca Macclesfield Campus, Cotton Tree Inn, CPRE - the countryside charity, Crewe Hall Hotel & Spa, Cycle Wilmslow, Cycling UK, Hospital Street Association Nantwich, Macclesfield Bus Users Group, Malcolm Harrison Auctions Limited, MHA Communities Cheshire East, Reaseheath College and University Centre, Shrigley Hall Hotel and Spa, Stroke Survivors Speech & Language Support Groups, Suburban Green, Tatton Estate.

Table 7: How do you usually travel in or through Cheshire East? Respondents could select all that apply.

Category	Count	Percent
Car/van - driver	493	74%
On foot	375	56%
Bus	252	38%
Train	252	38%
Car/van - passenger	190	28%
Bicycle	153	23%
Motorcycle / scooter	23	3%
Wheelchair / mobility scooter	11	2%
HGV / lorry	< 5	< 1%
Don't travel in or through Cheshire East	< 5	< 1%
Other (inc. taxi, electric bike)	10	1
Grand Total	667	100%

Table 8: What are the main reasons why you travel in Cheshire East? Respondents could select up to four options.

Category	Count	Percent
Travelling to/from shops	534	82%
Health appointments such as visiting the hospital/doctor/dentist	398	61%
Visiting friends/relatives	316	48%
Visiting leisure/recreational facilities	288	44%
Travelling to/from a place of work	254	39%
Visiting tourist attractions/countryside	235	36%
Travelling to/from education/training	54	8%
Visiting places of worship	52	8%
Visiting community care/children's centres (family hub centres)	9	1%
Other (inc. all of them, exercising)	55	8%
Grand Total	653	100%

Table 9: Number of survey respondents by gender

Category	Count	Percent
Female	266	41%
Male	361	55%
Other gender identity	< 5	< 1%
Prefer not to say	27	4%
Grand Total	655	100%

Table 10: Number of survey respondents by age group

Category	Count	Percent
16-24	14	2%
25-34	45	7%
35-44	64	10%
45-54	83	13%
55-64	143	22%
65-74	153	23%
75-84	116	18%
85 and over	15	2%
Prefer not to say	28	4%
Grand Total	661	100%

Table 11: Number of survey respondents by ethnic origin

Category	Count	Percent
White British / English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / Irish	580	89%
Any other White background	15	2%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	4	1%
Asian/Asian British	< 5	< 1%
Black African/Caribbean/Black British	< 5	< 1%
Any other ethnic origin	< 5	< 1%
Prefer not to say	48	7%
Grand Total	653	100%

Table 12: Number of survey respondents by religious belief

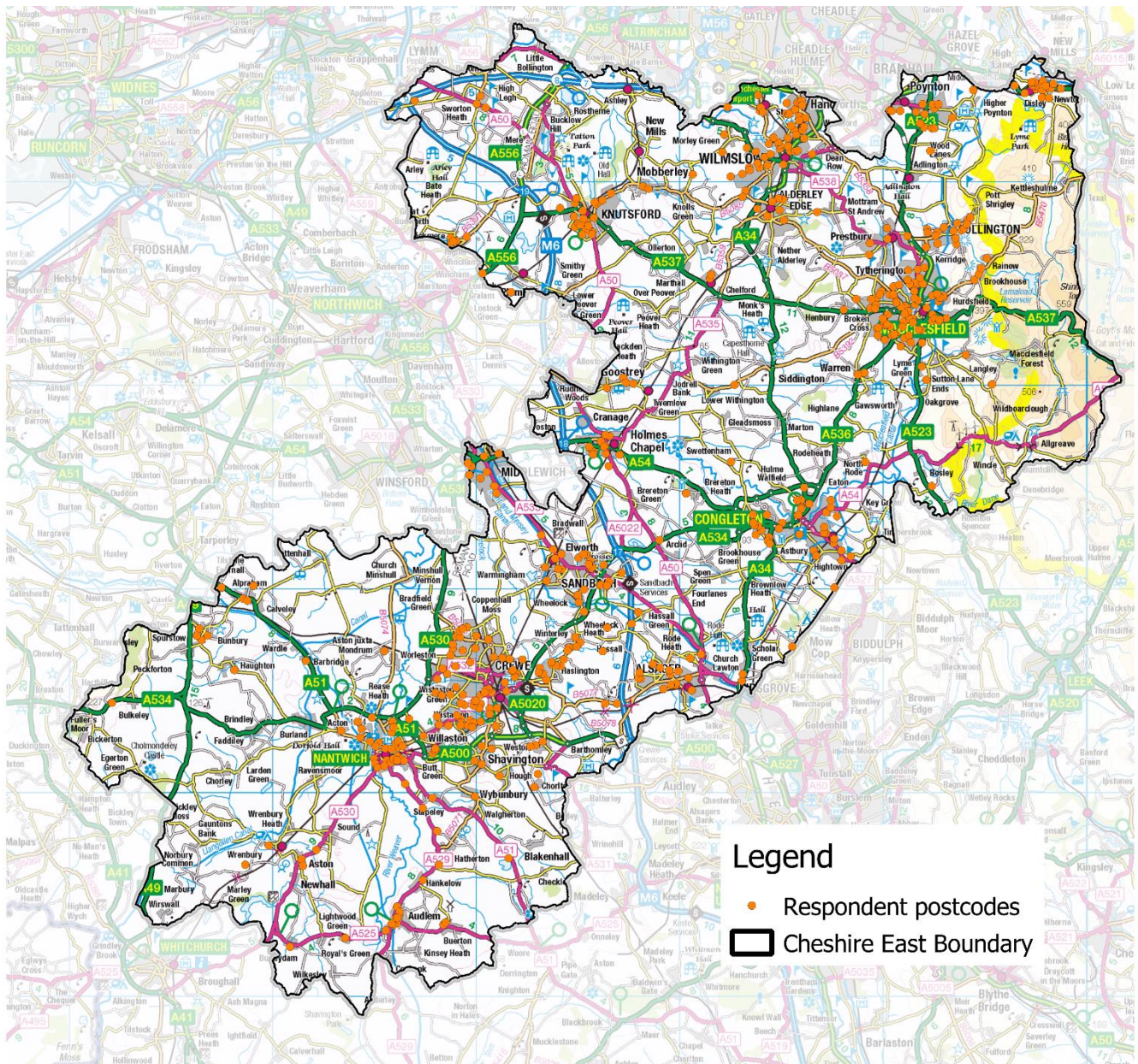
Category	Count	Percent
Christian	323	50%
No Religion	230	35%
Buddhist	< 5	< 1%
Hindu	< 5	< 1%
Muslim	< 5	< 1%
Jewish	< 5	< 1%
Other religious belief	7	1%
Prefer not to say	80	12%
Grand Total	648	100%

Table 13: Number of survey respondents by limited activity due to health problem / disability

Category	Count	Percent
Yes, a lot	130	20%
Yes, a little	71	11%
Not at all	408	62%
Prefer not to say	49	7%
Grand Total	658	100%

Appendix 2: Map of respondent postcodes

The following map plots respondent postcodes that were provided and that are within Cheshire East (556 postcodes).



Appendix 3: Summary of comments received by email

During the consultation period 46 emails were also received, Table 14 summaries the comments provided. Some of the comments received refer to schemes within the Local Transport Development Plans produced in 2022. These can be found on the [Cheshire East Local Transport Plan webpage](#).

Table 14: Summary of comments received by email	
Responding as	Comment summary
An individual	<p>Interesting to read the proposed Local Transport Development Plan for Macclesfield. Reliant on public transport and it is not fit for purpose. Glad to see that some changes are being proposed as part of the LTP i.e. Macclesfield LTDP July 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MAC 34, Alderley Park is effectively unreachable by public transport. Suggest working with the private company at Alderley Park to change timetables of their private bus or add additional journeys. • MAC 38, the public transport system here is poor. The system used to be "adequate" in the late 2000's, look at the provision of buses as it stood in 2010. That would restore a bare minimum workable service.
An individual	<p>The plan is broadly on the right lines regarding integrated transport. A couple of observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working from home should be encouraged and incentivised to reduce miles driven. It might be worth referencing that change. • "Those living in Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Crewe and Macclesfield could reach their closest employment centre by cycling only 5 to 10 minutes" Most people commute outside the town. Commuting by bike could be safer if there was a network of bike lanes.
An individual	<p>Need better public transport in Styal, train is often cancelled, and is expensive, there is no bus service. There are no pavements along Stanneylands to catch a bus from Handforth, and there is no access to Sagars Road as it is always flooded. Access to Wilmslow is difficult due to a flight of steps. Cycling is not an option as the roads are too dangerous (Stanneylands and Styal Road).</p>
An individual	<p>The costs of providing a modern transport system is out of reach. The roads are unsuitable for any form of vehicle. Need to create a workable system that will endure for many years, should be affordable and efficient to run using modern materials and power sources. Electric trams must be used with waystations providing ticket machines. The future is not electric cars which are heavy and need constant charging. Road surfaces will last due to the lack of interference between tracks. Costs can as usual be defrayed through investment models/government grants. All types of customers can be serviced, and the dependability and comfort of tracked systems provide at last a solution to an aging population. Business will thrive along these routes especially around way stations. Cleanliness and affordability, dependability and daily services throughout the week.</p>

An individual	Agree in principle but they are all very vague statements with no real meaning behind them. Request examples from the public on what they think would meet some of these statements, or specific examples that maybe you haven't thought of. For example, there's currently no safe cycle and pedestrian route between Crewe and Sandbach. The roads between the two have no pavement and no cycle path/lane. What about Middlewich railway station, or even opening a second rail station in Crewe closer to the town centre? Making roads around Crewe buses and cycles only is another thing that should have happened instead of opening a car park in the middle of the town centre. The talk of electric buses is not helpful on low frequency routes and a single diesel bus is better for the environment than 30 electric cars since it reduces overall congestion. Until you make town centres bus only, there is no point in electric buses due to all the petrol and diesel cars, vans, bikes, etc.
An individual	Consider using the 'joined up working together' initiative by thinking outside the box and considering widening the choice of Park and Ride which is currently the terminus for buses from Manchester i.e. 192 therefore beyond this the only transport we have is the 351 352 every 2 hrs currently - no bus service along Macclesfield Road from Hazel Grove yet bus stops are in situ.
An individual	Seem to have covered all the bases with regard to the necessary policies for lucid, free flowing transport. However, in it, specific areas to Cheshire East where transport weaknesses exist have not been identified. Hope future plans do not include the idea of providing new roads but at the same time closing vital old roads like Smithie Lane and Minshull New Road, where heavy queuing is now a feature at peak times in Flowers Lane. Need to provide safer roads around schools - a mandatory 20mph limit and zigzag stripes of white paint is not enough. All new schools should be planned to provide a one-way system of drop-off points, defined footpaths and full separation of pedestrians from traffic. Existing school plans should be investigated to see if improvements on user flow can be made.
An individual	CEC along with neighbouring authorities need to play a much greater role in coordinating bus services, timetabling, ticketing and real time information. Make Leighton Hospital a major public transport hub along with Crewe Railway station. When will we see consistent, well-funded improvements to the cycling / walking environment, especially in the face of increased traffic levels, pavement parking and little attempt at speed control? Improve the pedestrian / cycle / visitor experience at Crewe railway station. Currently traffic levels are high, pollution high and crossings set at the maximum delay for pedestrians. Also, there is no suitable cycle access from the main town across to the Western Road employment area.
An individual	Need to maintain the roads we currently have to a reasonable standard – need better pothole management / improved workmanship.
An individual	Nothing is happening regarding potholes.
An individual	Would be a keen cyclist but the roads are dangerous, particularly with all the potholes. The roads are also narrow and busy, drivers do not give enough space. I would support: More dedicated traffic free cycle paths with a decent surface, fixing all the potholes and resurfacing the roads (e.g. Legh Road, Knutsford), making sure road markings are good, cleaning road signs.
An individual	A key issue is mentioned in your document but not addressed with any clear solution — the lack of cross-boundary transport integration between Cheshire East and Greater Manchester, particularly affecting towns like Handforth, Wilmslow, Poynton, and Alderley Edge. Thousands of us travel regularly to Greater Manchester for employment, healthcare, education, shopping, and leisure. Yet the current transport system creates a barrier for us — with confusing, fragmented ticketing, higher fares, and no integration with Greater Manchester's Bee Network. The consultation also makes no mention of the A555 Manchester Airport Relief Road — a key cross-boundary route that significantly impacts how people travel between Cheshire East and Greater Manchester. This road currently

	<p>encourages car dependency because no bus priority measures were built alongside it. Urge Cheshire East Council to include a clear commitment in the next phase of the Local Transport Plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the introduction of peak-time bus lanes and bus priority measures on the A555. Explore bus priority and sustainable travel measures on the A555 to reduce car dependency and improve cross-boundary travel choices. Work with Stockport Council and Greater Manchester Combined Authority to deliver express bus services and Park & Ride facilities along the A555 corridor. • Negotiate a formal cross-boundary fare and ticketing agreement with Greater Manchester Combined Authority and TfGM. Ensure that Bee Network fare caps, contactless tap-in/tap-out ticketing, and integrated travelcards are extended to Cheshire East stations such as Handforth, Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, and Poynton. • Recognise the real travel patterns of border communities and provide clear, practical solutions — not just general statements.
An individual	With the rapid rise in electric bikes are there any plans to provide E-bike charging points around the area. Having cycled around various other locations around the UK I am beginning to see more E-bike charging points appear provided either by the local councils or in collaboration with local businesses.
An individual	Read with interest the LTP for Poynton (published 2022). There is poor pedestrian access along Woodford Road and a high-speed limit in place. I saw that there were several proposed concepts for managing this in the LTP. We were wondering if it is possible to get any updates on how these proposals may be progressing, particularly POY114? Is there a way to advocate to keep these issues as a priority?
An individual	Travel all year round within Macclesfield on foot to GP, hospital, dentist, shops, and gym and hardly ever use my car for local journeys. Encouraged to walk because of the linked paths through Bollin valley, Tytherington woods, Cemetery, West Park, canal paths and Middlewood Way with views of Hills in distance. This is a fantastic opportunity for CEC to use as a blueprint for other walk or wheel initiatives and also to use digital / social media to publicise existing walk/ cycle routes with photos in areas that have these opportunities in place already. Providing a footpath is not enough - it needs to be enhanced by a natural environment too or planting schemes. Also helps having local sports and outdoor shops who sell and promote walking gear
An individual	Is there going to be a shuttle bus service around Crewe, specifically linking the retail park, town centre and train station? Although Crewe has a great train station it can feel quite isolated from places such as the retail park, or even further down Nantwich Road, for people with mobility issues. This would be a fantastic opportunity to encourage people from further afield to come visit Crewe and the many events that we have going on in our Town Centre.
An individual	<p>Regarding the Crewe / Nantwich area: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with Cheshire East's Local Transport Plan and Vision for Transport, but they need to be implemented, funds permitting. With the centre of Crewe town open for development, we have an excellent opportunity to re-vitalise the town centre and improve the walking and cycling infrastructure. • Complete the Crewe to Nantwich Greenway (a.k.a. King's Shilling Way), by constructing a walking/cycling route from Crewe Town Centre to Queen's Park.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the walking/cycling route along the A.530 from the Rising Sun to Leighton Hospital. (I understand that there may have been a land acquisition problem.) • Upgrade the worn-out road markings for the cycle lane on the A534 Crewe Road between Wells Green and the Peacock Roundabout.
An individual	<p>Travelling around Cheshire: Drive further and walk for longer than I cycle. There are many areas of Cheshire which are not accessible by public transport.</p> <p>Transport challenges and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remove the many barriers to cyclists and wheelchairs • increase roads policing • introduce raised tables, sharper radii and possibly informal crossings on urban junctions • focus on extending and connecting existing PROW routes. <p>Future Transport network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have one ticket for all bus routes and integrate with rail services. Have a bike rack external on buses. • Install the real time bus indicator that was planned and funded from the 2015 LSTF carbon reduction fund. • Lobby government to extend the pavement parking ban to include the rest of the country <p>The greatest opportunities for transport: Focus on establishing healthy travel habits early. Schools are too busy teaching to do this kind of non-teaching work which should be simpler and be supported by CEC officers who are more experienced in this field. The big leap in cycling has been largely due to the take up of e-bikes by older people. This deserves a particular focus, which should include some strategies to counter anti-social use of illegal electric motorbikes and scooters.</p>
An individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Vision: The vision is too general and needs medium-term (5-year) priorities. The process of establishing the plan is too slow to gain public confidence. Practical aims should be included in the vision or published shortly after. Transparency and public engagement are crucial. Eco-friendly transport moves are necessary but may be limited by funding. • Structure of the Bus Network: The process of agreeing routes and timetables lacks transparency. An agreed network with defined routes for work commutes is needed. Timetables should accommodate shift workers. • Quality of Service: D&G services are generally good, with courteous drivers and acceptable punctuality. Dropped kerbs and raised pavements are standard and welcome. Macclesfield bus station has issues e.g. Lack of toilets, especially problematic for those waiting for connections and high-level grills create cold conditions in winter. • Information Display: Digital displays of real-time bus movements should be provided at the bus station and along main routes. Bus operators should be required to provide real-time data on their smartphone apps, which D&G currently does not do.

An individual	<p>Omissions from the Vision: No timeframe for achieving the connected, safe, sustainable network. No glossary or definitions for transport network, transport, and active travel. Current focus is on road improvements rather than people-focused solutions. No explicit car-lite vision. Missing mentions of congestion, accidents, poor air quality, and other traffic-related issues. Census data shows 14% of households without car access, highlighting the need for viable alternatives. Priority of effort/money not specified, with pavement and bus users offering the most return on investment. No reference to CE's Bus Improvement Plan. No aim for high % of town populations within a short walk to bus stops. Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) not referenced.</p> <p>Plan for the Future - The following needs addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connected: Bus hubs alongside railway stations or shuttle buses to link rail stations to bus stations and shopping areas. Limited bus routes, frequency, and timings, making public transport unreliable. Fragmented cycling routes, discouraging parents from letting children cycle. Multi-modal travel needs integration, including cycle carriers on buses and cycle racks at bus stops. • Safety and Sustainability: Default 20mph in urban areas and reduced speeds on other roads. Reference case studies from Surrey and Wales. Reduced speeds to improve health, economy, public transport, climate change, and road safety. Active travel should be integral to planning decisions, with an active travel officer involved in housing and commercial developments. Bus services and extra railway stations needed from the outset in new developments. • Accessible: Footways are often damaged and not prioritized for repairs. Banning pavement parking to save costs, generate income, and increase equality. Improving footways for safety and practicality, especially for those with mobility aids. Accessible kerbs and proper pavements at bus stops needed. Pedestrian crossings are insufficient and expensive. Zebras are cheaper and effective, as seen in London. New developments often include steps instead of ramps, creating barriers for people with pushchairs, wheelchairs, and mobility scooters. This should be addressed at the planning stage. Bus travel should be cheaper than car parking to encourage public transport use. Current bus fares in Congleton make car travel more economical for families. • Healthy and Prosperous: Active travel initiatives promote health and green prosperity. Funds should be spent efficiently across multiple projects to minimize waste, focusing on quick wins like linking fragmented walking/cycling routes. CE staff need training in active travel networks, utilizing the Active Travel England grant. <p>Local Transport Plan Member Reference Group: Not in the vision itself but connected to it: See item 53 of Highways meeting 23 Jan 2025 referencing an informal Local Transport Plan Member Reference Group to consist of CE councillors and 'others' who may include Director of Place. The Director of Place should be essential not optional, as planning is so intertwined with transport. Also, the walking/cycling champion is mentioned, but the buses champion and equality champion are also essential and need including.</p>
An individual	<p>The 38 Crewe to Macclesfield and Crewe to Chester bus services are inadequate, needing improvements to meet current demand and encourage broader community use. It is often too full and unreliable. Need increased frequency - a half-hourly service during busy times for both the 38 and 84 routes to ensure passengers can get to work, medical appointments, etc. and there is a need for adequate capacity for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Cheshire East is made up of several large towns and rural villages that need to interconnect and be served by a frequent and reliable service.</p>

An individual	In regard to WLM 140 (Wilmslow Local Transport Development Plan 2022): Improving walkway from Alderley Edge to Alderley Park, suggest a substantial path from Alderley using existing footpaths in the fields. This would avoid the hill out of Alderley on Congleton Road which has poor steep dangerous and narrow footpaths and provide a flat walk and cycle route over the fields to Welsh Row and then to Sand Lane and then to Nether Alderley Church area. Suitable for push chairs, older walkers, travellers from the station to the park and bicycles etc.
An individual	<p>Agree with everything in the vision but can't see how it can be accomplished. There is no vision to reduce traffic and the building of new roads. Other aspects I think should be in the LTP vision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vision to reinstate our pavements by stopping motor vehicles from driving and parking on them, also, stop wheelie bins from blocking the pavements every week. Suffer with short sight - the damage done to pavements creates more trip hazards and unevenness that makes walking dangerous especially at night. The pavement problem is CEC's biggest challenge • A default 20mph speed limit will solve a lot of problems. Safer walking and road crossing (especially for blind or partially sighted people). Safer cycling with more people switching to this mode of travel. Less road traffic injuries and deaths. Less pollution and noise (fighting climate change). Lower health costs. Improve health and wellbeing. A happy and more productive workforce. More trade because shopping would be more pleasant • Use the existing current walking and cycling plans created by the towns in CE • Make sure that CE and its suppliers comply with the equality act 2010. Especially the bus service providers. If you're blind or partially sighted, it is very difficult to travel independently using the buses. There needs to be a lot more buses everywhere with clear information indicating that buses will stop if you are waiting at a bus stop, and you do not have to see the bus to give a signal for it to stop • A vision for Transport pricing equality. Car parking charges should be the same cost as a return bus ticket or lower the bus ticket cost to be the same as car parking charges. For example: The cost of a return journey to town on the bus here in Congleton is £3.00. Then the cost of parking in Congleton should be £3.00
Alderley Edge Parish Council	Would like CEC to recognise that more work is required on the cycle routes that surround our boundaries and need completing. Interested in any plans for a tap on/tap off system. Interested in plans regarding expansion of the Bee network - what would happen if as suggested the bee network is extended to Alderley Edge, would CEC have a say in that?

Bollington Town Council	<p>Key Transport Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree with over-reliance on private cars and lack of funding for transport networks. Tend to agree with social exclusion due to lack of options and poor health linked to inactivity. Neutral on accessibility barriers to economic growth and weather-related resilience • Additional challenges: Need for safer walking/cycling infrastructure, support for older populations, strong advocacy for 20mph zones in residential areas <p>Key Transport Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly agree with shift to more sustainable travel and localised transport solutions. Tend to agree with encouraging walking/cycling for health, new technologies and collaboration • Additional suggestions: Use of electric vehicles in communities and respect for local wishes on speed limits <p>Vision, Aims and Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with vision but seen as too vague • Aims: Strong agreement for wellbeing, environment, and connectivity, tend to agree with growing the economy. Additional comments: Restrict and reduce traffic speed in residential areas and the essential measures that ensure legal compliance. • Priority Areas: Majority of priorities under wellbeing & connections rated as extremely important and under Economy & Environment majority rated as somewhat important <p>Additional Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key requirements of transport – people getting to and from work, schools, shops, hospitals and medical facilities. Access for emergency services, delivery of goods, transport of materials for industry. Leisure including use by walkers, cyclists and equestrians, entertainment, holidays, visits to tourist attractions, visits to friends and relatives. Personal health and fitness of individuals. Maintenance of the condition of the transport infrastructure. Control of speed of users of the transport network to ensure safety.
Bunbury Parish Council	<p>This Council has a number of concerns about strategic transport policy, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bunbury, in common with many rural villages in Cheshire East, is now isolated for anyone reliant on public transport. Such isolation can have a negative effect on residents' mental health, especially in the context of our aging population • Bunbury is designated as a Local Service Centre by the Local Planning Authority, but this is clearly not a role that it can perform if it is inaccessible to anyone not living within the village itself who does not have their own transport. Transport policy needs to reflect the designation of the village in public transport provision (or the designation needs to be removed) • The lack of public transport serving this and nearby villages means that employment opportunities for those without private transport who wish to take up jobs within a standard working pattern in local towns or industrial estates are non-existent. Only a regular daily bus service at appropriate times can correct this. Recent and future housing developments add to the population negatively affected in this way • The lack of public transport provision works against the sustainability objectives of both national Government and CEC

Congleton Town Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision should relate to the Highway Code Hierarchy of road users. 20 mph speed limit is not mentioned. No vision for the reduction in traffic • Under Growing the Economy, it does not highlight transport options that do not rely on motor vehicles also fails to mention improving accessibility for all, the word 'accessible' does not seem to appear often • There is a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by disabled people, must consult with more disabled people to develop an inclusive plan for all • All Cheshire East departments need to have joined up thinking around transport i.e. highways, planning, social care etc • Cheshire East Contracts should follow the principles in the Equality Act 2010, for example awarding bus contracts. Wheelchair-accessible taxis are lacking in Congleton, is this something that can be enforced through licensing or incentivised through the council? • The vision didn't go far enough to recognise the needs of the individual • Semi-rural towns have problems with pavements, camber, uneven road services etc. There is a whole raft of people in our community who can't get where they want to go because of physical barriers • Under Environmental impacts CEC should be leading rather than supporting the transition by providing local infrastructure to encourage travellers to make more sustainable choices and on the second bullet point, it should be reduction in private vehicle emissions rather than transport related emissions • Under Improving Connections for all you could add by maximizing private developer contributions • Needs to adhere to the Transport for New Homes Checklist
Cranage Parish Council	<p>Cranage Parish Council, Dane Valley ward is concerned that connectivity in rural areas such as Cranage is currently sporadic and, in some areas, non-existent, significantly impacting residents' ability to access essential services. The Council calls for any future transport service to include the provision of regular and reliable services within the rural areas. This would enable residents to plan ahead for vital appointments, including those with doctors and at hospitals, and would contribute meaningfully to reducing rural isolation.</p>
Handforth Town Council	<p>General Support and Concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Town Council supports many aspirations of the Plan but doubts their feasibility due to CEC's weak financial status. <p>Specific Comments (Handforth Local Transport Development Plan 2022):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAN 1: Support for Handforth Station Park and Ride Car Park and pedestrian crossing on Station Road. Suggests resubmitting planning application 20/2211M without a light-controlled single carriageway over the railway bridge • HAN 101: Urgent need for refurbishment of the walking and cycle route between Handforth and the Garden Village development, especially the footpath on Hall Road • HAN 102: Upgrade Hall Road and Coppice Way to official cycling and walking status. Improve connections between Garden Village and Handforth village centre • HAN 103: Shared-use path through Handforth Community Woodlands is already in place • HAN 105: Footpath improvement project priority reduced to zero due to abandoned plans for Stanley Green station.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HAN 109: Urgent improvements needed at various junctions on the A34 to improve traffic flow • HAN 110: Increase EV charging points in Handforth • HAN 112: Reconsider parking charges in Handforth village centre due to reduced car park usage and increased side street parking • HAN 114 & HAN 115: Support for bus links and routes in line with BSIP, requesting updates on project status • HAN 116: Support for a more uniform rail pricing structure between Greater Manchester and Cheshire East • HAN 120: Support for community transport specific to local needs • HAN 13: Support for improved bus connections to Spath Lane • HAN 2: Request for updates on roadside parking restrictions on Spath Lane and Knowle Park • HAN 20: Improved accessibility to Handforth Station through lifts and widening footways. Urges prompt action from Network Rail • HAN 21 & HAN 22: Improvements to cycle routes, with concerns about design and potential parking issues. • HAN 25: Support for improving the Manchester Airport orbital walking and cycling loop, including access to Styal and Quarry Bank Mill • HAN 29: Support for pedestrian access and traffic calming improvements near St Benedict's School, with a footpath sign installed but effectiveness yet to be assessed • HAN 34: Support for footway improvements on Clay Lane, recognizing potential land ownership issues • HAN 35: Strong support for implementing double yellow lines on Hall Road, Hallwood Road, and Church Road to address traffic and parking issues • HAN 36: Support for improvements to the underpass connecting Church Terrace to Lower Meadow Road • HAN 38: Support for introducing secure, safe cycle parking within the town centre • HAN 4: Support for A34 Ainslie Way/Coppice Way junction improvements, with a suggestion to reduce the speed limit to 50mph. • HAN 5: Completion of the walking and cycling bridge over Dobbin Brook • HAN 6: Support for improving the walking and cycling route between LPS 34 and Styal Rail Station, with track resurfacing funded by S106 • HAN 7: Strong support for increasing pedestrian crossing points along Manchester Road • HAN 8: Strong support for Dean Row Road / Stanneylands Road junction improvements, facilitated by the closure of the Bluebell BMW agency • This summary highlights the support for various transport improvements in Handforth while expressing concerns about financial feasibility and urging prompt action on several projects
Macclesfield Town Council	<p>Transport for those with disabilities - flexi transport is limited to a few hours during the day and there is no weekend service. Taxis are also an issue for disabled people with many firms not offering journeys for those in wheelchairs, or the wheelchair taxis being of limited availability or booked up many weeks in advance. This massively impacts social inclusion and wellbeing of individuals. No bus services on a Sunday in Macclesfield is an issue for many, plus the lack of buses in the evenings. Macclesfield Town Council pay for free bus days on certain days to encourage behaviour change, lessen the impact of cars in the town plus the rising costs of carparks. More</p>

	electric car charging points (fast ones) are needed if we want people to buy electric cars. Very much agree with working with parish councils and the voluntary sector to encourage more cycling. Bike loan/share schemes may encourage people to try bikes and cycling routes before they make the investment. Safety in paramount with well-lit areas for remote cycle routes.
Poynton Town Council	The Town Council notes the transport challenges and opportunities identified by Cheshire East and notes that these are similar to those set out in the previous transport consultation. As a result of the previous consultation a transport plan for Poynton was developed in 2022. The transport plan for Poynton set out a number of possible schemes. The Town Council is disappointed that only one of the previous schemes for Poynton identified in the 2022 Transport Plan has been undertaken. The Town Council believes that the previous transport plan for Poynton continues to be relevant and would rather that the money being spent to fund this latest consultation is used instead for road maintenance and to increase the bus service.
Sandbach Town Council	<p>Challenges affecting Sandbach residents: Limited Public Transport leads to difficulty accessing work, healthcare, or school, especially for non-drivers. High Car Dependency contributes to traffic congestion and emissions. Only 67% of residents meet recommended activity levels due to fewer people walking, cycling, or using active travel. Mobility challenges for older residents leads to increased demand for accessible and reliable transport options. Flooding and other disruptions are becoming more common and affect travel reliability.</p> <p>Opportunities for Sandbach: Many trips are under 10km, suitable for walking, cycling, or better bus services. Improved Active Travel Routes: Better connections to nearby towns like Crewe, Congleton, and Middlewich. Community Partnerships: Co-create smarter, tailored transport options linking urban and rural areas. Technology: Rise of electric vehicles and shared travel options. Inclusive Travel: Make travel more inclusive for older residents, disabled people, and those without cars. Safe Crossing Points: Install additional safe crossing points, such as at The Hill A533 junction.</p> <p>What the Plan Aims to Deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better Local Travel Options: Safer walking, wheeling, and cycling routes • Stronger Public Transport Links: More reliable, frequent, and accessible buses • Support for Local Business and Jobs: Improved access for workers and customers • Healthier Living: Encouraging activity and reducing transport-related emissions • Inclusivity: Ensuring older and vulnerable residents are not left behind • Tailored Approaches: Specific strategies for rural and urban areas • Regular Communication: Ongoing feedback with the planning inspectorate <p>Conclusion and Summary: The strategy supports better access, inclusion, health, and sustainability, especially for those without cars or with limited mobility. It does not adequately address the essential use of cars in Cheshire, failing to encourage local car sharing and prioritising electric car charging infrastructure. The plan is seen as urban-centric, not benefiting all areas adequately. Simple actions to reduce emissions through better traffic management are missing.</p> <p>Additional Comments:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concerned about traffic from residential developments and the Middlewich Eastern Bypass. Consider a Southern bypass or Northern Sandbach Bypass to alleviate future traffic congestion linking M6 J17 to the east of Elworth, identifying and reserving land for future development Public Transport in Elworth - elderly and disabled residents face challenges with hourly public transport. Propose increasing frequency to every 30 minutes or providing access to electric bikes/scooters Congestion is the number one transport issue for Sandbach residents, causing delays and pollution, car congestion around the Waitrose roundabout is an example of worsening traffic Promote car sharing and volunteer drivers to transport elderly residents to hospital appointments. Add connections to housing, family, and shopping facilities to the Vision / Concept of Connecting People to Jobs, Education, Healthcare, and Leisure The Sandbach-specific document from August 2022 does not reflect the impact of charging for car parking
Weston & Crewe Green Parish Council	<p>The Parish Council supports the transport challenges and vision outlined in the consultation. Key issues highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Parish has an ageing population highly dependent on public transport The D & G Service 85, the only bus service in the Parish, is unreliable and lacks Sunday and late evening services. The Parish lacks convenience shops within walking distance, making residents reliant on car transport Poor public transport connectivity to Primary Health Care facilities and Leighton Hospital is a critical issue The Parish Council urges prioritising adequate public transport facilities in the Plan There is a lack of practical and usable safe routes to school, particularly between Wychwood Village and Weston Primary Infrastructure improvements are needed, including pedestrian facilities and safe crossing points on Main Road Existing infrastructure, such as the footpath link from the bridge over the A531 to Main Road Weston, is incomplete and needs further development to ensure children's safety
Alleviating loneliness in village environments (ALIVE)	<p>Bunbury village has NO transport services at all - is Bunbury the forgotten village?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Our elderly, in the majority of cases, are not users of a computer or smart phone The Go To bus, will not take us where we want to go, such as Tarporley or Leighton hospital. Elderly members find it too difficult to book, so I book it for them. Sometimes struggle with availability although booking one week in advance. The group need to attend numerous hospital appointments however there is no transport in place to facilitate this. <p>This response was received alongside surveys that had been filled out for another purpose 'Rural Together Community Partnership Roadshow' relevant comments from these surveys are summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments in relation to the Go Too bus (in the Bunbury area): service is adequate but not useful for those without a mobile – regular bus service would be better. Go to bus needs to take us further for example into Taporley for connections to other services. Can be difficult to access due to lack of capacity and can be unreliable / it is not often enough. Have a limited bus services in Bunbury. Would be useful to have a connection to the 84-bus service as it is 4 miles away. Difficult to get to hospital appointments.

Bentley Motors	<p>Beyond100+ Strategy</p> <p>Bentley has extended its Beyond100 business strategy to 2035, aiming to launch its first fully electric car by 2027. This model will be produced at Crewe and will be the first of a new Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV) or Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) model launched annually over the next decade.</p> <p>Response Overview</p> <p>Bentley Motors supports the Cheshire East Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultation, emphasising the need for a connected, sustainable, and accessible transport network. As a major employer in Crewe, Bentley highlights the importance of local transport infrastructure for sustainable commuting, economic growth, and talent retention</p> <p>Key Issues and Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentley calls for better direct public transport links between major hubs like Crewe Train Station and Nantwich Town Centre, and key employment sites like Pyms Lane. Current services (number 12 and 85 buses) are limited in frequency and coverage, especially during peak hours • A recent survey revealed that 86% of Bentley's workforce commutes by car, with only 0.37% using bus or train services. Convenience and lack of realistic alternatives are major barriers to public transport use • Bentley suggests seamless transfers between transport modes to improve connectivity • Encouraging broader adoption of sustainable transport options through affordability • Enhancing bus services linking Nantwich, Crewe Train Station, and Pyms Lane • Supporting the switch to EVs with renewable energy-powered charging infrastructure <p>Key Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of Transport Services: Ensuring seamless connections between different modes of transport to facilitate efficient commutes • Affordability of Sustainable Travel: Making sustainable commuting options financially attractive to encourage widespread adoption • Improved Frequency and Reliability of Bus Services: Enhancing service frequency and reliability from Bentley Motors to key hubs to facilitate greater use of public transport <p>Comments on Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentley agrees with the identified opportunities for a sustainable, affordable, and accessible public transport ecosystem, which can catalyse business growth and personal mobility • Improved transport connectivity would make the area more attractive for recruiting crucial skills, addressing a key issue flagged by potential colleagues regarding inadequate connectivity between Crewe Train Station and Bentley's HQ on Pyms Lane <p>Support for Vision</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bentley supports the vision of a connected, sustainable, and efficient transport network in Cheshire East. Emphasizes the importance of affordability and accessibility in public transport and active travel options to reduce carbon footprints. Highlights the need for electric vehicle infrastructure to support the transition to EVs <p>Specific Aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient transport links between Crewe Train Station, Nantwich, and Bentley Motors are crucial for employee commutes and business logistics Investments in active travel infrastructure, such as safe cycling routes and pedestrian pathways, promote healthier lifestyles among the workforce Reliable public transport services connecting key areas Transitioning to low-emission buses and promoting sustainable travel options Providing accessible, ultra-fast, interoperable, and affordable charging infrastructure powered by renewable energy <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Appreciate the direction outlined in the LTP and welcome the Council's commitment to inclusive and sustainable transport. Improved connectivity between local transport hubs and major employment centres, including Bentley's Crewe site, will enhance Cheshire East's appeal as a place to live, work, and invest. Bentley looks forward to continued dialogue and collaboration as the plan progresses.</p>
Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum	<p>Key points include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring active travel and leisure routes are safe and complete, as any perceived unsafe sections can significantly reduce usage, especially for children Clarifying terminology in consultation documents to include a broader range of mobility vehicles, such as mobility scooters, which are zero-emission and suitable for those with limited mobility Strengthening enforcement of pavement parking to enhance safety for walkers, wheelers, and cyclists
Congleton Sustainable Travel	<p>Agree with the challenges listed, although there are some omissions, such as limited adherence to the Equality Act 2010 and the public sector duty of care. The solutions do not seem ambitious enough. We would like to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrians prioritised Default 20mph and assessment of suitability of 40-60mph on our roads, particularly through villages. The knock-on effect of lower speeds would automatically help achieve much of the vision re health, opportunity, economy, public transport, climate change. Also reduce repair costs for roads Enforcement and expansion of weight-restricted roads. Some HGVs use inappropriate routes in Congleton - either ignoring the restrictions or being led by the GPS to use the shortest/quickest route despite the conditions. Emphasis on reducing the volume of car traffic and a moratorium on new roads Emphasis on road maintenance. Potholes are everyone's problem. A trip/fall/injury hazard for pedestrians, potentially fatal for cycle riders, a rough ride for bus users, and damaging to all vehicles Penalties for over-sized cars – higher parking charges to reflect the space used.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of vehicle width limits for narrow roads • Reference to all the Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans already completed. or in progress • Spending on pavement and bus users as that would give the most return on investment regarding sustainable travel • Better pavements. Like many CE towns, Congleton has pavements that are not fit for purpose, partly due to uncontrolled parking obstructing them and damaging them. A default pavement parking ban (with self-financing fines) is essential. Historically extremely narrow pavements could be widened by taking road space, without restricting vehicle use • Better pedestrian crossings. Congleton roads are busy, so they are difficult and dangerous to cross, especially for children and those who are not nimble • Better buses. Congleton has very poor bus provision. Many housing estates are not on bus routes. There is only one evening and Sunday service (38 Crewe-Macclesfield). This limits those wanting to visit inpatients at the local hospital, those wanting to go to evening/Sunday events in town or beyond, or to socialise. It means employees working shifts, unsocial hours, or weekends, do not have a bus option. Residents are forced to use cars • Efficient spending of the Active Travel grant and other funds on quick wins, such as linking up fragmented walking/cycling routes. • Use of unspent s106 funds intended for active travel initiatives that continue to be ignored. S106 funds spent on the original agreed active travel initiatives rather than changes being allowed later • Better train services. Congleton only has an hourly service that does not extend into late evening, and very few trains on Sundays (currently none with bus substitution). Forcing people to use cars if they want to go to an evening event in Manchester, travel on a Sunday, including returning from a trip to be ready for work on Monday • Investment in well-designed, well-lit cycle hubs with free secure cycle storage at strategic points, and e-bike charging points. • Better training of CE staff regarding active travel networks. Currently lip service is used because of their lack of experience of the needs of those walking or cycling • Better integration of planning and highways to ensure that developments have bus, walking and cycling links baked in. Including permeable residential and commercial developments • Involvement of the walking/cycling champion, bus champion and equality champion so that these aspects take priority • Enablement of road scaping of verges with trees and shrubs to filter pollution (currently Highways does not allow this) • A representative from the Place directorate being required to attend the informal Local Transport Plan Member Reference Group, to ensure that all aspects of place are considered, including, but not limited to, Highways and Planning
CPRE - The Countryside Charity Cheshire	<p>Welcome the opportunity to feedback on the Local Transport Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision for Transport: disagree with the proposed vision as it does not represent the three 'legs' of sustainability. It only represents the economic and the social legs • Transport Challenges and Opportunities: agree with most identified challenges but there is a need for climate change commitments and non-car travel options. Support sustainable travel and public health improvements but disagree with enhancing the transport network for economic growth as it relates to highway capacity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and Priorities: suggest reducing the need to travel and better integrating transport and land use. Prioritise sustainable networks, digital connectivity, and facilitating sustainable travel choices • Other: There is a lack of collaboration with environmental NGOs and an insufficient focus on climate change. Need better access to rail stations. Hope the Draft LTP will be properly rural-proofed
Historic England	<p>Welcome the production of the Cheshire East Local Transport Plan. The strategy and its proposals present both challenges and opportunities for the area's heritage, including its historic transport network. Historic England would therefore like to provide support in the development of the Plan and any proposals which may affect the historic environment. The Plan should recognise the challenge of ensuring that transport networks do not produce unacceptable environmental impacts. As the strategy develops and any proposals are progressed, it is important to ensure that the Local Transport Plan accurately assesses all potential impacts on the historic environment to an appropriate level of detail.</p>
Manchester Airport	<p>Manchester Airport welcomes early engagement in Cheshire East's new Local Transport Plan (LTP) to ensure collaborative efforts. The airport is a major regional transport hub and economic driver, employing over 20,000 people, with many residing in Cheshire East. The airport's economic impact and transport connectivity should be key considerations in the new LTP. Acknowledge the challenges and opportunities, some specific matters from an airport perspective:</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of Transport Options: This leads to social exclusion and isolation, making it difficult for Cheshire East residents to access the airport and its job opportunities • Lack of Physical Activity and Poor Health: Car dependency contributes to health issues. The airport aims to encourage sustainable transport and active travel • Accessibility Barriers: Limited travel options hinder economic growth and job access, particularly for non-drivers. • Severe Weather: Local flooding disrupts travel and infrastructure resilience is needed <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift to Sustainable Travel: High potential for mode shift to public and active transport • Enhancing the Transport Network: Improving transport links is crucial for economic growth and job access • Collaboration: Working with partners to develop sustainable transport solutions <p>Support the vision and aims and highlight the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing the Economy: The Local Transport Plan (LTP) should recognise the airport's economic contribution and role as a major employer. Improved transport links, including a new east-west rail connection and faster rail links from Crewe, are essential. • Improving Community Wellbeing: Enhancing public transport options to the airport is crucial for job access and retention, especially for those without private vehicles • Reducing Environmental Impacts: The airport shares the aim of sustainable accessibility and improving air quality. Collaboration on climate resilience and mitigating environmental impacts is welcomed

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving Connections for All: Accessible, frequent, and reliable sustainable transport choices are fundamental. The airport supports active travel routes and has a Sustainable Transport Fund for public transport services <p>Commitment to Sustainable Travel:</p> <p>Committed to improving connectivity and supporting regional economic and transport priorities. Their policies and objectives are outlined in their Surface Access Plan and Staff Travel Plan. They work closely with transport operators and invite the Local Transport Plan team to their Transport Forum meetings.</p>
National Trust	<p>The Trust is supportive of Cheshire East's Vision for Transport, particularly in relation to the identified opportunities available within the district. The vision for "a connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East" aligns with the Trusts ambitions. We would like to support seeing specific inclusion of the Greater Bollin Trail as central to Cheshire East's green travel plans. The trail would provide a high-quality multi-use and primarily traffic-free walking, cycling, and wheeling connection providing a connection across the north of the Borough, and linking into neighbouring authorities. The inclusion of the Greater Bollin Trail would align with the following five opportunities outlined by yourselves within the consultation document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High potential for a shift to more sustainable travel Encourage walking, wheeling (e.g. wheelchairs, prams) and cycling to improve public health Enhance the transport network to drive economic growth Tailoring transport solutions to our local areas Collaboration with partners and the community and voluntary sector
On behalf of Malcolm Harrison Auctions Limited and Prees Storage Limited	<p>Based in Shropshire, operating for over 35 years, with extensive industry contacts in Cheshire. Haulage companies report the need for a goods transfer site between Crewe and Junction 16 of the M6 due to the absence of overnight lorry park facilities along a 24-mile section of the M6. The business owns a 9-acre site at Chorlton Bank Farm, Newcastle Road, CW2 5NG which is ideal to meet the needs of the logistics industry. Crewe is already a major employment area. Its proximity to the M6 corridor is vital for the whole Borough. The largest planned growth in the borough is in the southeast of Crewe, only 2.75 miles from Junction 16 of the M6. This growth triggers the need for logistics hubs (storage and vehicle parking) between Crewe and the M6. All of the land adjoining the A500 to J16 is designated as Green Belt or Strategic Open Gaps resulting in there being very few options for locating a logistics park between Crewe and Junction 16. Malcolm Harrison Auctions owns a site adjoining the A531 (Newcastle Road) being circa 1.35 miles from the A500. This site is ideally located for Crewe, J16 and the West Coast Mainline. It is not within Green Belt or a Strategic Open Gap. As the road frontage is within a 40-mph zone with streetlights it is clearly within a developed area. 4.6 The site is available immediately and deliverable as a logistics hub to meet the evolving needs of businesses. The 9-acre site can accommodate secure storage, logistics transfer and parking for commercial vehicles whilst goods are transferred. 4.7 The site is well situated with significant woodland shelter belts to the east and south. Existing commercial and distribution premises are 150m to the northwest. There are very few dwellings within the locality so scope for land use conflict is limited. The site can meet the identified needs of business and predicted growth. No other suitable sites are available due to land use designations. Cheshire East Council is encouraged to support the principle of a logistics hub between Crewe and J16. This site is the ideal location. The Council is encouraged to include this site and the proposed use within its Vision for Transport and Local Transport Plan.</p>

Transport for the North (TfN)	<p>Key Transport Challenges and opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with the challenges outlined in the consultation document. Fully support social exclusion and isolation being a key challenge. Please reference work on Transport-Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) at the appropriate point in the final Local Transport Plan (LTP) • Recent evidence from their decarbonisation stocktake may support the narrative on challenges like reliance on private cars and network resilience against severe weather • Strongly agree with the opportunities in the draft vision document – strong alignment to their Strategic Transport Plan (STP). <p>Additional Transport Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freight transport efficiency on major routes (M6, A500, A556) and access to rail freight should be considered • Issues with delivery access in town centres and increased use of Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) due to online shopping need attention. Have developed a Consolidation Centre Handbook and are preparing a handbook for lorry parking <p>Vision and Aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree with the vision and aims - align with their strategic ambitions • Suggestion to broaden the aim of improving community wellbeing to explicitly include reducing social exclusions • Support for reducing transport-related emissions by reducing vehicle miles - offer evidence and expertise to support this aim <p>Additional Feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can access further data and modelling support through the TfN Offer • They suggest referencing alignment with the STP in the final Transport Plan to provide pan-regional context for partners
Cheshire West and Chester Council	<p>Cheshire West and Chester support Cheshire East's vision for a connected, safe, and sustainable transport network. A collaborative approach between Cheshire East, Cheshire West, and Warrington Borough Council, will benefit especially with the prospect of a new mayoral Combined Authority for the region. There will need to be a cross-boundary approach to achieve the vision and aims, focusing on sustainable transport solutions, improving public transport services, and promoting electric vehicles. Will also need to address the potential conflicts between different elements of the vision and prioritizing objectives like tackling climate change and reducing social exclusion. Look forward to continued collaboration to create a more connected and accessible transport system for the communities.</p>
Warrington Borough Council	<p>General Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WBC appreciates the opportunity to respond and supports the overarching vision, aims, and priorities of the LTP • Emphasise the importance of collaborative work with CEC and Cheshire West and Chester through the Devolution Priority Programme <p>Comments on Specific Aims and Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing the Economy: Support transport networks that facilitate sustainable development and business opportunities. Advocate for rail's role in attracting talent and investment. Support alternative options to HS2 Phase 2b and Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) to enhance connectivity and economic growth

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving Wellbeing of the Community: Support initiatives to increase active travel and improve health and wellbeing. Will be important to improve cross-boundary routes like the Trans Pennine Trail. Participate in the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership to reduce road traffic collisions • Reducing Environmental Impacts: Welcome efforts to reduce transport's environmental impacts. Encourage sustainable transport improvements to enhance cross-border connections • Improving Connections for All: Support providing transport choices and improving connections through sustainable modes. Advocate for NPR and enhanced rail connectivity in the absence of HS2 Phase 2b. Keen to promote a cohesive and integrated bus network across Cheshire and Warrington, including SMART ticketing and mode integration
Stockport Council	<p>Stockport Council agree with the six key transport challenges and opportunities identified by CEC. They emphasise the need to address connectivity for all modes across borders to prevent severance for public transport and active travel users. Note that congestion on some routes, such as the A34, is a challenge impacting neighbouring boroughs. Advocate for direct mention of collaboration with neighbouring boroughs to address cross-border transport issues and improve connectivity. Emphasise the importance of facilitating sustainable travel choices from the outset in new developments. Support improving accessibility to healthcare, education, employment, and leisure through cross-border improvements. Support actions to address environmental impacts through decarbonization and emission reductions. Highlight the need for a transport network resilient to climate change and extreme weather, including addressing flooding impacts.</p> <p>Specific Areas of Collaboration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-Effective Improvements: Keen to work on safe, sustainable improvements benefiting both sides of the border. • Public Transport: Interested in improving the reliability, frequency, and accessibility of public transport options, including local and on-demand services • Rail Network: Supports improvements to the rail network, such as new facilities like Cheadle Station • Traffic Mitigation: Willing to collaborate on measures to mitigate traffic, especially from new developments • A6 and A34 Corridors: Interested in discussing joint priorities and national funding opportunities for these corridors

Appendix 4: Summary of comments received during further engagement sessions

During the consultation various engagement sessions were offered to certain stakeholders. The aim of these sessions was to gain key feedback from specific groups and to also aid in the promotion of the consultation. Feedback gained during these sessions is summarised in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Summary of comments received during further engagement sessions

Responding as	Comment summary
Alderley Park (representing Burntwood but know the issues of the other businesses on Alderley Park) 1-2-1 engagement session (online)	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to attract talent - graduates want to go to Manchester for work. 30-35+ will come to Alderley Park due to being able to drive but the younger generation struggle • Location of the business park - Alderley Park is hard to get to. Access to the railway stations is a key issue, how can timings of the 130-bus be better? <p>Opportunities / priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An integrated network (inc. buses with the rail arrival times) is the only way that businesses will be able to overcome attracting young talent • People need an affordable and quick way to get to the business park - high quality, fast and direct rail, if not rail it would be tram. Consider cycle lanes from the station to the business park • Alderley Park has 20 EV chargers currently but has capacity to go to 200 chargers - EV buses would be able to charge at Alderley Park • Need a rail line from London to allow people to relocate to the north, attract people from the south of the country and to make it as easy as possible to get people to the front door
Bentley Motors 1-2-1 engagement session (online)	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The location of Bentley on the edge of the urban area presents challenges in connectivity across modes of transport, particularly the frequency of local bus services <p>Opportunities / priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration between rail and bus services, particularly services 85 and 12 and the need for better co-ordination with train arrival and departure times for Bentley employees • Active travel links both locally to residential areas and the town centre, as well as wider gaps in the infrastructure, such as the Crewe to Nantwich Greenway and the extension to serve Bentley • The need to accelerate the roll out of EV infrastructure across the borough (e.g. LEVI funding)

<p>Barclays (Radbroke Campus)</p> <p>1-2-1 engagement session (online)</p>	<p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talent attraction is the main challenge, need to attract and retain the right skilled people. The current workforce is spread across a wide geographical area, including Lancashire, North Wales, Birmingham etc. The cross-boundary travel movements across a large area and the “inter-connectedness” of the transport network is key for the future • Due to the spread of employees across a wide area, access to the railway stations (both Knutsford and Chelford) is important. The frequency of rail services to/from Manchester on the Mid Cheshire Line and Crewe - Manchester Line is a challenge. Barclays commission shuttle services to both railway stations at peak times <p>Opportunities / priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology brings huge opportunities - integrated technology solutions can bring real benefits to the quality and attractiveness of the transport on offer (real time tracking and alert / messenger service) • A new bus service linking the Radbroke campus with both Crewe railway station (for London) and Manchester Airport would improve accessibility on the western side of the borough (A50 corridor) enabling onward travel for Barclays employees and bring wider community benefits (i.e. Knutsford is not connected to any other CE town by rail) • Bike hire at railway stations would be beneficial in increasing options for employees to travel from Knutsford / Chelford to Radbroke with cycle parking on campus. This would be mutually beneficial, and Barclays would be happy to make a funding contribution to this type of scheme • S106 agreement for Barclays most recent development (2-3 years ago) includes a cycle route on the A50 but as yet nothing has been implemented
<p>Space4Autism</p> <p>1-2-1 engagement session (online)</p>	<p>Main mode of travel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of their members are from Macclesfield and get dropped off or use the bus. The children who attend the social clubs usually get dropped off in the car <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middlewich is a congestion challenge. Would always use car due to poor transport options and time savings. • There are some that struggle to attend the centre due to poor public transport options especially for the evening groups, Monday 7-9 is their main group. We then try and get out into their communities more because we are very aware that not everybody can get to Macclesfield • A lot of autistic people struggle with the sensory aspect of public transport, it can be quite stressful and causes anxiety. Not being familiar with timetables and a familiar bus user could be stressful leading more people to use their car

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of general parking spaces can be an issue there is very limited parking where they are located. Pay and displays are nearby but often do not want to pay or cannot pay – they are conscience of the time limit or having to cross a busy the road • Potholes are an issue, people parking on kerbs can be a problem for those with prams etc <p>Opportunities / priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate designated quiet areas in the train station / designated train carriages for example, for those who struggle with noise. Have more visual timetables – more images. • Independent travel training e.g. for young people, those with disabilities to build their confidence to independently travel –supporting them on the journey for a few weeks showing them the safe places to cross / what to do if a bus does not turn up etc • Streets need to be well lit – so people are more comfortable in the dark • Carers passes for local buses, or a discounted rate would be a good idea
<p>AgeUK</p> <p>1-2-1 engagement session (online)</p>	<p>Main mode of transport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with people aged 50+ so a broad age group. Most people travel by car and worry about losing their ability to drive due to poor health thus losing their independence. The car gives people more freedom, can pull up closer to for example shops / health centre so more comfortable especially if the weather is poor. Using the car is often quicker • The bus is the next most common mode of transport. Buses tend to be more local and cheaper than train. The bus service varies in different areas, people will often have to adapt their lifestyles to what days they can get to places <p>Challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who live in very rural areas are more reluctant to give up using their car, if there's only a couple of buses a day, it really restricts the times that they can go to places and how long they can spend somewhere • Practical things like having enough seating at bus stops is important for those than cannot stand. For those without good mobility walking even a small distance can make people exhausted. This can limit where people can get to, buy shopping, and carry it back for example. Location of bus stops is important for those with mobility problems as well as having enough places to sit and rest when tired <p>Opportunities / priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there's awareness of how to support older people – e.g. can be slower to get on/off, make sure people are comfortably sat down before setting off – a training programme may be of benefit • Information at bus stops both paper and electronic should be a good size and font to be able to read it. Electronic can be preferred as it is more up to date

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking – People may do health walks which are on a route which has been researched to make sure it is suitable for older people <p>Other comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> People are supportive of the reinstated bus, so they get a better service to the hospitals The bus service is quite good around Macclesfield – able to use the buses frequently Impressed with range of courses and health groups in CE at leisure centres
<p>Specialist transport groups / individuals</p> <p>Focus group session (online). 14 attendees including but not limited to representatives from Sustrans, Cycling UK, local cycling groups, local bus user groups and 20's plenty.</p>	<p>Key challenges:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transport (bus and rail): Sunday trains are limited, evening services are limited, and there is a lack of rail connectivity, for example between Sandbach and Macclesfield. Buses have limited services and frequencies generally which discourages use (for example no bus between Congleton to the hospital in Macclesfield). Long bus routes mean delays accumulate. There is poor reliability of bus services and times do not link with other modes of transport e.g. rail which encourages people to use their cars. Let down by low quality, uncomfortable buses. There are bus stops without seats or shelters. The bus station in Macclesfield is unheated and has no toilets. Request bus stops cause issues for those with poor sight, as they may not recognise bus or bus number in time. Isolation in some rural areas with no services – it's not always convenient to use flexibus. Bus information is limited and isn't always accessible – many cannot read a timetable. Cycling: Developing cycling as part of the planning process has failed so far. How are problems of 'culture wars' between motorists and cyclists resolved? A lot of people are discouraged by safety concerns e.g. poor driving, volume of traffic, speeds, close overtaking. Poor condition of roads and cycle routes which impact safety and comfort of cycling need to be addressed to encourage people to get on their bikes e.g. missing sections of route, stepped sections, lack of crossings and parking in cycle lanes. Routes are not always suitable for cycles that are used as a mobility aid – for example tricycles / trikes / bikes with a long wheelbase - A frames and other motorbike deterrents cause a barrier. Bike spaces on trains are usually very limited and in competition to wheelchair spaces. Need secure cycle parking at stations. Walking: Pedestrians seem to be forgotten / seem to be an afterthought – they should be top priority. There are no zebra crossings in Congleton and limited light-controlled crossings. Pavements are seemingly never repaired, parking on pavements and tree roots add to the poor condition. Lack of dropped kerbs - often there is a dropped kerb on one side of a junction but none on the other meaning a wheelchair user can leave a pavement but not get back on. Highways and parking: The vision does not address a reduction in traffic which will help with cost of repairs and buses being able to get to their dedicated stops on time. Quality of existing roads should be improved - more road building is not the answer. Sat Nav's can cause traffic to go down unsuitable routes. Speed Management Strategy

is a hindrance to getting 20s plenty. Cheshire East is car-centric, citing its rural status as justification. The current situation means that car ownership is essential for many, and this disadvantages those without one. High streets are still car dominant with high-footfall roads carrying through traffic. When considering crossings or speed reductions, consider perception of safety rather than just rely on collision data.

Key opportunities:

- **Public transport (bus and rail):** More buses between all the towns that cater for all users, including to connect people to work for 9am or when getting home after 6pm. Cheaper fares vs. car parking would encourage use. Bus companies need to use buses with more flexible seating giving more space for buggies, wheelchairs and perhaps even cycle racks (ensuring space for these doesn't disadvantage other users). QR codes at bus stops, on timetables and other literature would be good to gain further information, these are particularly good for those who have difficulty reading. However, consideration needs to be given as QR codes can be easily misused. Improve bus service information e.g. maps, communications in large print. Bus services are not marketed at all by bus companies. Improve bus safety especially for lone passengers (e.g. notification system). S106 monies should be used to create public transport routes in new developments. Train connectivity is good in some areas e.g. Macclesfield. Integrated ticketing between bus and rail and real time bus information.
- **Cycling:** Use S106 monies to create usable cycling routes. Cycling needs to be viewed as a means of transport for everyday use e.g. going to shops and school for example rather than just a leisure activity. Would be good to have bicycle racks on the rear of buses so can take cycle on longer journeys where there is no train option (between Sandbach and Macclesfield for example). However, these would not be suitable inside the bus as space would then be limited for wheelchair users / those with prams. E-bikes present a great opportunity for people who are put off by hills and wind from cycling. Suggestion to implement 'close pass' project to regulate close passing of cars. Ensure all types of cycles are considered when designing routes. Cheshire East is relatively flat, and many country lanes could be cheaply designed for on road active travel (quiet lanes). Cycling Strategy could be reconsidered to increase its useability. LTN 1/20 should be adhered to.
- **Walking:** Many pedestrian interventions (example dropped kerbs) are cheap to implement. Install more zebra crossings as they are cheaper than puffins but have the same safety benefit. Pedestrianising areas of town / suburb centres would boost local businesses, make places feel safer and more friendly, and have improvements for air quality and therefore public health and wellbeing. Focus on extending and connecting existing PRow routes.
- **Highways and parking:** Review speed limits (e.g. changes from 30mph to 20mph, 40mph limit on country roads) to make roads safer for drivers, cyclists. This will facilitate more active travel and will save money on fuel costs, reduce road wear, and lead to better health. Reduce traffic volume to increase bus reliability. Parking charges encourage people to rethink their transport habits. Bus fares vs car parking charges should be balanced so it's financially better for a group to travel on bus rather than drive and park. Focus on reducing traffic rather than road building/improvements. Encourage more freight via rail instead of HGVs to reduce the volume of road freight.

- **Collaboration:** Learn from existing local LTP plans - a lot can be learned from other local authorities e.g. how other areas are successfully incorporating active travel and increasing numbers using active travel. Education for all road users will create benefits at lower cost.
- **Planning:** CEC Active Travel team should get involved with commenting on new build applications in line with LTN 1/20. Cycling England submit comments on planning applications of +100 houses - ensure these are taken seriously. Development control advice should be stronger in relation to sustainable modes for new developments.

Other / further comments:

- The LTP and associated documents need updating – a lot has changed.
- Ensure other documentation e.g. LCWIPs are mentioned in LTP.
- LTP must be applicable to all departments across Cheshire East and have a high corporate profile.
- The vision needs to be people focussed.
- Challenge of implementing the vision with limited funds.
- Communication around transport needs to be improved - engage more with local people. Further consideration of offline consultation methods to ensure whole process is more inclusive and people are aware of the consultation.
- Look at accessibility for those who don't have buses in the area.
- The Speed Management Strategy should be reconsidered and thought about from other perspectives, not just a motor vehicle perspective.
- Consider pedestrian/cycling access during roadworks instead of diversions for all modes of transport.
- Safety needs to be considered generally, as this influences travel choices.
- Generally, those with mobility issues need to be considered.
- Consider the future generation.
- Focus on establishing healthy travel habits early.
- More travel plans for schools and employers.
- Consider an officer dedicated to active travel as part of the planning process.

Appendix 5: Stakeholder engagement log

Various stakeholder engagement activity took place during the consultation. Table 16 below provides an overview of the activities undertaken.

Table 16: Stakeholder engagement log of activities		
Stakeholder	Engagement method	When
Members, Town & Parish councils	Media release distributed via email	25.02.25
General Public	Media release shared on the Cheshire East website & link to the consultation shared via social media	Various throughout consultation period
Cheshire East digital influence panel	Email sharing the link	26.02.25
Town & Parish councils	Email sharing the link and asking to promote	03.03.25
South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce	Webinar recording for businesses	13.03.25
Bus Enhanced Partnership Board	Online Teams session	13.03.25
Health and Wellbeing Board	Online Teams session	18.03.25
T&P Council network meeting	Online Teams session	18.03.25
North Cheshire Chamber of Commerce	Email sharing the link and asking to promote	19.03.25
East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce	Email sharing the link and asking to promote	19.03.25
Care Leaver group	Email sharing the link and asked group to respond	20.03.25
SEND group	Email sharing the link and asked group to respond	20.03.25
LGBTQ+ group	Email sharing the link and asked group to respond	20.03.25
Reaseheath College	Asked to promote to students via email	23.03.25
Cheshire College S&W	Asked to promote to students via email	23.03.25
Macclesfield College	Asked to promote to students via email	23.03.25
Crewe & District BUG	In person meeting	27.03.25
School admissions social media	Asked to promote on social media	01.04.25
Family Information Service social media	Asked to promote on social media	01.04.25
Neighbouring authorities	Email sharing the link and offering a disussion	02.04.25
Equality Groups	Email sharing the link and offering an online focus group to discuss further: 1-2-1 discussions held with those who could attend - AgeUk & Space4Autism (summary notes from these sessions can be viewed in Appendix 4)	02.04.25

Barclays	Email sharing the link and offering an online 1-2-1 Teams Session (summary notes from this session can be viewed in Appendix 4)	02.04.25
Bentley	Email sharing the link and offering an online 1-2-1 Teams Session Session (summary notes from this session can be viewed in Appendix 4)	04.04.25
Crewe Town Board	In person session	04.04.25
Carbon Neutral Programme Board	Email sharing the link	07.04.25
Specialist Transport Groups - focus group	Email sharing the link and offering an online focus group via Teams to discuss further: Group teams discussion held with those who could attend (summary notes from these sessions can be viewed in Appendix 4)	09.04.25
AstraZeneca	Email sharing the link and offering an online 1-2-1 Teams session	09.04.25
Youth Council	In person session and responses submitted via the questionnaire	08.04.25
Alderley Park / Bruntwood	Email sharing the link and offering an online 1-2-1 Teams Session (summary notes from this session can be viewed in Appendix 4)	11.04.25
South Cheshire Chamber of Commerce - meeting with businesses	Online Teams session	16.04.25

Appendix 6: Consultation outcomes

Table 17: You said, we did	
You said	We did
Key transport challenges	
Public transport - lack of options, connectivity, reliability, accessibility and information were raised. Affordability and ticketing were also frequently mentioned.	Challenge updated to reflect elements raised: Lack of safe, accessible or affordable transport options leads to social exclusion and isolation.
Active travel - including that safety for vulnerable road users prevents mode shift, and improved links to key locations is important.	
Roads including maintenance (and the prioritisation of maintaining the existing transport network) was frequently mentioned, alongside planning roadworks and parking.	These points are largely covered through the identified challenges.
Environmental considerations were frequently mentioned including carbon emissions and decarbonisation.	This could be more explicit - new challenge added: Transport is a large contributor to carbon emissions and air pollution.
Key transport opportunities	
Public transport – points raised around improving the existing system, extending the reach of bus networks, improving links to key amenities and providing improved bus tracking.	These points are largely covered in the opportunities identified.
Roads – improve traffic flows and road safety including 20mph areas and importance of maintenance.	These points are covered in the opportunities identified.
Walking and cycling – improvements to existing infrastructure e.g. maintenance, lighting as this prevents mode shift, improved links to key locations.	<p>Opportunity updated, noting there is a need to facilitate usage: High potential to facilitate a shift to more sustainable travel.</p> <p>Opportunity updated to acknowledge the need to: Encourage and enhance opportunities for walking, wheeling (e.g. wheelchairs, prams) and cycling to improve public health.</p>

Sustainable travel / accessibility – improve travel options for the whole community.	These points are largely covered in the opportunities identified.
Vision	
A significant number of suggestions included referencing specific modes of travel including public transport, the road network (including speeds, congestion) and walking and cycling routes.	Reviewed suggestions - the vision should not be mode specific.
Many words and different phrases were suggested for inclusion including reliable, affordable, efficient, resilient, efficient, affordable, well-maintained. Some suggested 'sustainable' was too ambitious, whilst others suggested there should be more emphasis on this.	Reviewed specific suggestions, however the vision should be simple. One minor amendment made: A well -connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East.
Comments that it's too general and more detail is required to understand clear and measurable plans and outcomes, and how this will be achieved.	This detail will be incorporated into the LTP strategy and investment plan, rather than the overarching vision statement.
Aims	
Public transport – improve the reliability / frequency / affordability / extent of the bus network. Integrate transport options. Improve connectivity to hubs / community / employment areas.	These points are largely covered in the aims however one aim has been updated: Growing the economy: To support Cheshire East's economy by providing a resilient, connected and accessible network that supports education, housing, business development and employment opportunities .
Walking and cycling – improve safety and connections to key towns.	These points are largely covered in the aims however two aims have been updated to reflect connectivity and safety. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing the economy: To support Cheshire East's economy by providing a resilient, connected and accessible network that supports education, housing, business development and employment opportunities. • Improving wellbeing of our community: To improve health, wellbeing and inclusion in Cheshire East by supporting people to get to where they need to safely.
Roads – reduce congestion.	This point is largely covered in the aims.

Sustainable travel / accessibility – consider affordability, congestion and maintenance. Consider the elderly / vulnerable.	These points are largely covered in the aims, however, updated minor amendment made: Improving connections for all: To provide transport choices for all who travel in and around Cheshire East and provide attractive alternatives to private cars.
Priorities	
A majority supported the priorities ranging from 91% to 59%.	Considering the comments, one amendment removing 'through a reduction in vehicle miles' to: Reduce transport related emissions to respond to the climate emergency.
Other key comments	
Many specific interventions were suggested throughout the consultation responses.	Suggestions considered as part of investment plan.
Many comments were raised around accessibility and inclusivity. For example, consideration of rural areas, accessibility of different modes and considering those with protected characteristics for example.	Considerations will be given to accessibility and inclusivity throughout the LTP development. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been produced and will be kept up to date as part of the LTP process, including feedback received as part of the consultation.
There were many comments to consider for the LTP development. These suggested having practical actions, measurable targets, a glossary, further collaboration / consultation and funding concerns in relation to delivery of the LTP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions will be incorporated • Targets will be incorporated • Glossary will be incorporated • Future consultation planned on strategy and investment plan • Draft priorities identified for the next LTP period with the view that prioritisation is important given the funding landscape.
Comments in relation to having joined up/coordinated transport linking to/from Cheshire East e.g. Greater Manchester.	Noted and considered – continue to work with partners and neighbouring authorities where appropriate.
The need for transport to be fully integrated with planning (Local Plan).	Liaison with the development management team and Local Plan team throughout LTP development and beyond.

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Consultation and Engagement Plan

Name of engagement / consultation activity:	Local Transport Plan Strategy and Investment Framework – Public Consultation
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):	Richard Hibbert
Project Manager (PM) (if part of a project):	Jenny Marston
Other Project Team members and roles (if part of a project):	Laura Prendeville
Service / team:	Strategic Transport

The outcome of this Consultation and Engagement will report to:	
Name	Role
Jenny Marston	Transport Policy and Strategy Manager

Version control:			
Version	Author	Date	Description
v1	Laura Prendeville	11/06/2025	Consultation, Engagement and Communications Plan for the Local Transport Plan.
V2	TB, LP	01/09/2025	Updates to Consultation, Engagement and Communications Plan for the Local Transport Plan.

Consultation and Engagement purpose and background: An explanation of the issues and the purpose of the project, key information to set the scene.

As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. The previous LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024.

The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared pre-covid, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy including, but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021), Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and Bus Back Better (2021).

Numerous non-transport policies have also come forward which impact transport including the Levelling Up White Paper (2022) and Clear Air Strategy (2019) for example. As a result, the current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. Therefore, the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities.

Following development of an evidence base that identified challenges and opportunities, a vision, aims and priorities were drafted and consulted upon in February – April 2025. Since, the feedback has been analysed the LTP Strategy and Investment Framework have been drafted.

It is expected that the primary purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the draft LTP Strategy and Investment Framework, and the extent to which the public agree with these.

Strategic Objectives: What the key strategic objectives of the project are, and how these relates to the corporate plan.

The objectives of the LTP consultation are to:

- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the draft strategy and policies
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the Investment Framework
- Whether the public and stakeholders have any other comments on the draft LTP Strategy and Investment Framework
- Understand whether the public and stakeholders think there is anything missing or have any other comments/suggestions on the documents

The desired outcomes of the consultation are to inform the public and stakeholders of the new LTP and to obtain a representative picture of local views these documents.

Stakeholders and methods: A summary of the people and groups you want to engage / consult with from your stakeholder analysis including impacted groups from your equality impact assessment. The methods you will use to gather information, based on the best ways to target your key audiences, or impacted groups.

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
Head of Highways / Head of Strategic Transport & Parking	Briefings/meetings	Pre-Consultation Stage
LTP Steering Group (and reporting up to various boards as appropriate)	Meeting	Pre-Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
LTP Member Reference Group	Meeting	Pre-Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
Chair of H&T Committee Vice Chair of H&T Committee	Meeting	Pre-Consultation Stage
Various transport champions e.g. active travel champion, bus and rail champions	Email	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
All CEC Members	Email/briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
MPs	Email	Consultation Stage
Neighbouring local authorities & Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington	Meetings/email	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage
Town & Parish Councils	Email	Consultation Stage
CE residents / Users of the various modes of travel in Cheshire East (bus services, flexible transport, rail, active travel, vehicle driver, freight etc.)	Online survey and paper copies at Libraries	Consultation stage

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
Statutory transport bodies (Active Travel England, Highways England, Network Rail)	Email	Consultation Stage
Specialists e.g. Confederation of Passenger Transport UK (CPT), Sustrans, Canal and River Trust, Rail Users Association	Email	Consultation Stage
Bus Operators	Email	Consultation Stage
Bus User Groups	Email	Consultation Stage
Train operating companies	Email	Consultation Stage
Manchester Airport Group	Email	Consultation Stage
Community and volunteer groups e.g. cycling groups	Email	Consultation Stage
Schools and educational establishments, young people	Email	Consultation Stage
Healthcare	Email	Consultation Stage
Businesses and chamber of commerce	Email	Consultation Stage
Environmental groups e.g. Natural England	Email	Consultation Stage
Equality Groups / vulnerable groups – e.g. older people, those with a disability, deprived areas, younger people as identified in the EqIA	Email	Consultation Stage
Partner organisations including Cheshire Police and emergency services	Email	Consultation Stage
Media	Email	Consultation Stage

A refresh of the previous stakeholder mapping will be conducted ahead of consultation to identify the stakeholders to engage and appropriate communication methods. This will be done through engaging a range of relevant Council service teams within the Council to collate best practice and details of known stakeholders.

Activity plan: The time to take for each stage including preparation, live engagement / consultation, analysis phase and feedback phase.

Activity	Who / team responsible	Estimated date / timescales
Commission work to progress materials for consultation	Strategic Transport	Summer 2025

<p>Progress work to progress consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with comms to promote consultation • Full stakeholder list and contact details • Prepare consultation plan • Draft and finalise consultation materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promotional video ○ Questionnaire ○ Brochure ○ Banner(s) ○ Web page text ○ Emails ○ Poster ○ Press release • Organise paper copies to be at libraries and have additional copies available if requested. • Prepare for and undertake relevant briefings and pre-consultation engagement • Organise pop-up engagement events in Crewe and Macclesfield. 	Strategic Transport	Summer 2025 – October 2025
Conduct Public Consultation (8 weeks)	Strategic Transport	Mid-October – December 2025
Analysis and Feedback	Consultation Team	December 2025

The engagement activities that will take place in the Pre-Consultation Stage and the Consultation Stage:

- Press releases prior to and during public consultation
- Social media posts to encourage participation in the public consultation
- Promotional video to share on social media channels and CEC webpage
- Questionnaire
- Webpage information and link to an online questionnaire
- Pull up banners, poster and a brochure, all linking via QR code and short URL to webpage and questionnaire.
- Information points at indoor market halls e.g. Crewe and Macclesfield
- Conduct engagement with transport interest groups (such as Crewe & District Bus Users Group, Transition Wilmslow, Active Travel Congleton, Travel Cheshire, Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association, Mid Cheshire Community Rail Partnership) – to be conducted by specialist transport officers at Cheshire East

- Conduct Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, Chamber of Commerce and large business/major employer engagement (in combination with CEC's Business Growth and Investment Team)
- Briefings with other key stakeholders enabling them through various different channels such as newsletters and member briefings

Analysis, Reporting and feedback: How will analysis be carried out / how will the draft feedback be reported and shared with participants.

Analysis tools and expertise required:	Strategic Transport Team, E&C Team to lead analysis of text and questionnaire via online tools and alternative means such as paper surveys, emails, letters and or comments left through the customer contact centre.
Reporting required:	A report detailing the outcomes of consultation and community feedback.
Public feedback methods:	Full reporting of consultation findings will be published.

Risk Assessment: What are the anticipated risks and mitigations?

Risk	Mitigation
Public not understanding the purpose of the consultation / inability to interpret	Use of plain English
Wording/jargon is too technical	Use of plain English
Consultation material too lengthy	Keep consultation questions short and concise and in plain English.
Not getting consultation started in October 2025.	Weekly project plan, key milestones identified with sufficient lead in time built in, working collaboratively to hit each tasks deadline.
Limited responses to the consultation	Communications and promotions to encourage responses. Ensure consultation material is engaging. Regular stakeholder engagement to keep interested parties engaged. The questionnaire will be available online and a paper version will be available on request and at libraries.
Unpresented sample/results	Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners. Development of a promotional video for the consultation.
Various transport themed consultations running concurrently	Ensure various consultations are linked together through coordinated communications and ensure staff can answer questions regarding other consultations. Ensure that those who manage the Cheshire East helpline number and email address have approved lines to take on this consultation and others in the area.

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Comms190 – Local Transport Plan

Second Round of Consultation

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Classification, resources and timescale

Service	Strategic Transport		Committee	Highways and Transport	
Corporate Plan Priority	Green – A great place for people to live, work and visit		Communications Strategy for Residents Priority	Promote corporate plan projects, programmes and priorities	
Subject	Planning transformation				
Comms lead	Chris Gibbs		Type	Strategic programme	
Budget	Tbc		Bloom	n/a	
Start	Summer 2025	Go-live	August 2025	End:	May 2026

Background/narrative

As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. The previous LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024.

The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared pre-Covid, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy including, but not limited to: Gear Change (2020), The Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021), Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy (2022) and Bus Back Better (2021).

Numerous non-transport policies have also come forward which impact transport including for example the Levelling Up White Paper (2022) and Clear Air Strategy (2019). As a result, the

current LTP is no longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East. Therefore, it is now time for a new LTP document to ensure that the council maintains a plan that is robust and relevant to national, regional and local priorities.

Following development of an evidence base that identified challenges and opportunities, a vision, aims and priorities were drafted and consulted upon in February – April 2025. Since, the feedback has been analysed the LTP Strategy and Investment Framework have been drafted.

It is expected that the primary purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the draft LTP Strategy and Investment Framework, and the extent to which the public agree with these.

Key contacts

Transport Policy and Accessibility Manager (Cheshire East)
 Head of Strategic Transport and Parking Service (Cheshire East)
 Director of Transport and Infrastructure (Cheshire East)
 Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation Co-ordinator (Jacobs)
 Principal Transport Planner (Cheshire East)
 Project Manager (Jacobs)
 Research Officer (Cheshire East)
 Communications Officer (Cheshire East)

Communications objectives/outcomes

Communications activity tries to change what people:		
Know	→	Provide or clarify information and/or correct misinformation, misconception – in ways that are accessible and easy to understand
Think	→	Put information into context of other knowledge and values, helping people reflect on what information means to them
Feel	→	Nudge emotional response and personal relationship to knowledge
Do	→	Provoke or call to action

Communications-specific outcomes and objectives for this plan

- Clearly describe the draft LTP strategy and Investment Framework in such a way that it encourages residents to engage with it.
- Set the context for why a new LTP is being undertaken and how work has been progressed to date – doing this effectively will then lead to increased engagement with the proposed plan.

Audiences and stakeholders

Communications activity can take people on an engagement journey:					
Unaware >>>>	Aware >>>>>	Informed >>>	Interested >>>	Involved >>>	Leadership
We must consider people's starting attitude and position in relation what we are doing:					
Advocate	Agnostic	Sceptical	Critical	Cynical	

Edit/add new rows as the project requires

Audience / stakeholder	Notes
Residents and visitors	Everyone at some point is impacted by the transport network whether as a pedestrian, motorist, commuter, student, parent, pensioner, etc. The transport network interacts with all our lives so there is a captive audience to appeal to.
Customers	We have customers who are already using the transport network who will understand the importance of a well-planned transport network and want to share their everyday experiences.
Children and young people	This group are also important to engage with as they often rely on public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling. School transport links with bus service provision.
Parents and carers	Notify via schools' newsletter and contacting specialist groups.
CEC Staff	As per 'residents and visitors' above.
Bus user groups	We have a very active bus user group in Crewe and an opportunity to engage with its equivalent in Macclesfield. Sharing the consultation with these groups has a very real prospect of increasing engagement levels.
Mid Cheshire Rail Users Association	We will connect with this group by email at appropriate times through established Cheshire East contacts
The Bus Enhanced Partnership Forum	The Forum itself only meets twice a year but we can share information with them by email - https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/transport_strategies.aspx#enhancedPartnershipAgreement
Public transport member champion	The Cheshire East Council member champion can be a fantastic ambassador for increased engagement of the consultation.
Walking and cycling member champion	The Council's walking and cycling member champion can be a fantastic ambassador for increased engagement of the consultation.
Councillor Mark Goldsmith and Councillor Liz Braithwaite	As chair and vice chair of the highways and transport committee – they can be reasonably expected to champion the consultation to their committee and could also share details through their own channels.
Highways and transport committee	They are all invested in a positive and thriving transport network.
All CEC ward councillors/members	All CEC councillors can and should act as advocates for both the plan and the consultation.
Town and parish councillors	The consultation and the plan impact on every town and village in Cheshire East – they can also be advocates.
Businesses (local, regional and national)	Businesses across the borough have an interest in attracting and retaining talent and the efficient movement of goods to support their business. Transport supports business growth.

Audience / stakeholder	Notes
Service delivery partners	Would envisage the bus operators being more proactive in sharing our plans as they will be motivated to encourage people to use the services. Engagement with rail operators important too.
Schools, colleges, early years providers	Providing a smooth and efficient transport network is of particular importance to schools given the costs associated with private hire. Being able to access transport links to education in a rural economy remains a very important aspect of daily life. Walking, wheeling and cycling opportunities to access schools etc. is important.
Town and parish councils	A key stakeholder. Each of the town councils may have their own transport development plans to promote as was the case when the LTP 2019-2024 was agreed, and this provides incentive to encourage discussion. Would be helpful to develop links in each of the town councils if they don't exist already.
MPs	All MPs operating in Cheshire East will be monitoring engagement with the consultation closely. We could ask them to promote the consultation through their social media channels and perhaps have paper copies in their constituency offices.
Neighbouring Authorities	Could also be advocates especially in towns and villages sharing a border with Cheshire East.
Those with protected characteristics / organisations for people with specialist transport needs (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation)	Important to gain feedback and input from those with protected characteristics to understand their views and any mitigation required in forthcoming stages of LTP development.

Tactics/approach

How we are going to achieve the communications objectives/outcomes

- Outline clearly why there is a new LTP, why the public are being engaged, what the LTP Strategy and Investment Framework is and what the next steps will be.
- Generate interest through referring back to work we have already completed this year with the initial consultation and refer to how we are building on that to deliver a robust plan.
- Keep stakeholders engaged stakeholders in advance of consultation going live and during the first week of consultation.
- Using politicians as spokespeople more prominently.

Products/types of activity

Examples of what we are going to do

- Briefings to key stakeholders
- Press releases prior to and during public consultation to encourage uptake

- Social media posts to encourage participation in the public consultation
- Video
- Questionnaire for people to respond to the consultation
- Webpage information and link to questionnaire for people to respond to the consultation.
- Pull up banners, poster and a brochure, all linking via QR code and short URL to webpage and questionnaire
- Information points at indoor market halls in Crewe and Macclesfield
- Conduct Community Partnerships/Groups engagement
- Potential to conduct engagement with umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs.
- Potential to conduct engagement with transport interest groups.
- Engage Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington, Chamber of Commerce and large business/major employer engagement in the consultation (in combination with CEC's Business Growth and Investment Team).
- Briefings with other key stakeholders enabling them through various different channels such as newsletters and member briefings
- Pull up banners, poster and a brochure
- Information points at local markets
- Secondary school/college engagement
- Community partnerships/groups engagement
- Engagement with umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs
- Engagement with transport interest groups

Key messages

The key messages and lines to take

- We have had a global pandemic since the last Local Transport Plan was adopted in 2019 and as well as the economy having to recover from that, there have been changes to national, regional and local policies. It is essential to produce a new LTP now
- Feedback from consultation on vision, aims and priorities has been considered and factored into LTP process where appropriate
- Opportunity for residents to have their say on the draft LTP Strategy and Investment Framework during the consultation
- Final chance to have their say on the LTP Strategy and Investment Framework ahead of these being finalised and adopted in 2026.

Action plan and timeline

#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes
1.	8 July	Tbc	Draft of initial report to go to committee in September	LP	RH/JM	Email	Transport	H=T	Report submitted for comments	Very early draft – expect changes
2.	Mid to late August	Tbc	Planning of video to support consultation	CG/JM/LP	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Video promoting consultation	This is to be very broad brush approach – must appeal to a wide audience so no jargon or technical language
3.	Early September	Tbc	Agree outline plan for video	CG/JM/LP	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Video promoting consultation	Script needs to be agreed before filming can start
4.	18 September		Highways and transport committee	JM	Committee members	Meeting	Transport	H+T	Gaining permission to go to consultation	
5.	Late September	Tbc	Pre-go live preparation of assets	TB	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Pre-go live preparation	TB to lead from R&I
6.	Late September	Tbc	Provide first draft of printed materials	LP/JM	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	Roll banners, brochure, leaflet
7.	Late September	Tbc	Start producing video	tbc	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	Video length to remain short to give best chance to keep viewers' attention
8.	Late September	Tbc	Comments back on first draft of printed materials	CG/JM/LP	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	May need to organise a meeting around this time to feedback any comments in a timely manner
9.	Late September	Tbc	Director/Exec Director to brief Leader/Deputy Leader on plans	JM	Political leadership	Face-to-face/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
10.	Late September	Tbc	Director/Exec Director to brief committee Chair and Vice Chair	JM	Key committee members	Face-to-face/email	Transport	H+T	Awareness of campaign	Project team to establish who will do this briefing
11	Late September	Tbc	Preparation of second draft of printed materials implement all requested changes	CG/	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Developing the campaign	No director sign off at this stage – design being overseen by Jacobs
12	Early October	Tbc	Initial cut of video	tbc	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	
13	Mid-late September	Tbc	Present second draft of physical assets to project team	CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Fine tuning the campaign	
14	Late September	Tbc	All comments on physical assets to be fed back to team for final tweaks to be made	CG	Project team	Physical materials	Transport	H+T	Fine tuning the campaign	
15	Early October	Tbc	Councillor briefings	JM	Committee members	Highways and transport committee	Transport	H+T	Approval to consult and information on consultation material	
16.	Early October	Tbc	Review of relevant pages on the website to ensure that information is ready to go live	CG	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Connection of website to consultation	Will need to establish a named person in the web team to be ready to make page live when consultation is cleared for publication. Also need to know where on the website the consultation will be published.
17.	1 October	Tbc	Commit all assets to print	CG	General public	All physical assets	Transport	H+T	Preparation for campaign launch	
18.	Early October	Tbc	Physical assets and animation to be approved at director level	CG	RH/TM	Project team decision makers	Transport	H+T	Finalising the campaign	JM to confirm who needs to sign off on assets

#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes
19.	Early to mid October		Receipt of all physical assets for campaign	CG	General public	Physical assets	Transport	H+T	Campaign launch	Assets to be delivered to Delamere House, Crewe unless otherwise stated
20.	13 October		Start of 8-week consultation	JM	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Make website live	
21.	13 October	Tbc	Press release to promote consultation start date	CG	General public	Press	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
22.	13 October	Tbc	Social media post regarding LTP and public consultation start date	CG	General public	Social Media platforms	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	Naturally we will put out a social media post when the consultation goes live but we also need reminder posts once this has happened. Highways can also share posts from their X account
23.	Mid October		Final video ready	CG	Project team	Video	Transport	H+T	Setting the tone for the campaign	
24.	Mid-October	Tbc	Update via Members bulletin (opportunity every two weeks)	CG	Members	Members bulletin	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
25.	October	Tbc	Town and Parish Council newsletter (opportunity every month)	CG	Town and Parish Councils	Town and Parish Council newsletter	Transport	H+T	What the consultation is about and how to participate	
26.	Mid October	Tbc	Launch of LTP Public Consultation – 13 th October	CG	General public	Physical assets	Transport	H+T	Campaign launch	Assets to be distributed from Crewe to locations across Cheshire East prior to Mid-October
27.	Mid October	Tbc	Social media posts to announce launch of consultation	CG	General public	Social media platforms	Transport	H+T	Reminder that the consultation is open	This is complementing the messages that already exist with all the physical assets
28.	Mid to late October	Tbc	Public consultation has launched	CG/AG	Subscribers	Residents' newsletter	Transport	H+T		
29.	Mid-November	Tbc	Press Release at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Press	Transport	H+T	How to participate and consultation end date	
30.	Mid-November	Tbc	Social media post at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Social Media platforms	Transport	H+T	How to participate and consultation end date	
31.	Mid-November	Tbc	Online publication at halfway stage to further encourage participation in public consultation	CG	General public	Online (council webpage)	Transport	H+T	How to participate and consultation end date	
32.	Late November	Tbc	Last chance to engage with consultation – closes on 7 th December	CG	General public	Social media	Transport	H+T	How to participate and end consultation date	
33.	7 December	Tbc	Consultation has closed	CG	General public	Website	Transport	H+T	Explain next steps	Update the web page on this day
34.	December	Tbc	CEC-led analysis of questionnaire responses	TB	LP	Internal	Transport	H+T	Outcomes and next steps	
35.	December	Tbc	CEC-prepared report summarising consultation feedback and analysis	TB	General public and stakeholders	Internal	Transport.	H+T	Outcomes and next steps	
36.	March 26	Tbc	Media release/social media to promote outcome of the consultation	tbc	General public and stakeholders	Website, media release & social media	Transport	H+T	Outcomes and next steps	

#	Date	Time	Activity/Event	Comms lead	Audience(s)	Channel	Service	Ctte	Subject	Notes
37.	2 April 2026	Tbc	Report goes back to committee to recommend approval	CG	Committee members	Committee meeting	Transport	H+T	Adoption of recommendations	From here it would go forward to full council
38.	May or July 2026	Tbc	LTP goes to full council for adoption	JM/RH	Members	Live meeting	Transport	H+T	Adoption of recommendations	

Evaluation, performance, reporting

How are we going to demonstrate how well we have delivered the communications objectives and outcomes?

- Number of detailed email responses received (where respondents have added information that they felt they were unable to include within the survey).
- Report on media pickup indicating what audiences are being reached (this will be measured through media monitoring within the communications team).
- Number of visits to the scheme web page and the number of people linking through to the Smart Survey following on from that initial visit - any opening of the survey will contribute towards engagement figures (partial completion of the surveys is an example of this).

Appendix 1: Communications products

Record/link to final versions of media releases, statements and other products.

TBC

Appendix 2: Notable coverage

List press, online, broadcast and social coverage

TBC

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Age | • Race |
| • Disability | • Religion or belief |
| • Gender reassignment | • Sex |
| • Marriage and civil partnerships | • Sexual orientation |
| • Pregnancy and maternity | |

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as ‘hard to reach’ but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Local Transport Plan
Date of Assessment	01/07/2025
Assessment Lead Officer Name and other officers involved	LP along with contributions from officers in the project team.
Directorate/ Service	Place/ Highways and Transport
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>As the statutory Local Transport Authority, the Council is required to maintain an up-to-date Local Transport Plan (LTP) that provides a strategic framework for planning and delivery of improvements in local transport provision. The previous LTP was adopted in 2019 for the period of 2019-2024. Therefore, now the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities.</p> <p>The existing LTP 2019-2024 for Cheshire East was prepared pre-covid, and prior to many recent changes in transport policy. As a result, the current LTP is no deemed longer fit-for-purpose as a framework for local transport within Cheshire East.</p> <p>In addition, several recent and emerging changes will have impacts on Cheshire East; for example, Bus Service Improvement Plan and Local Cycling and Walking</p>

	<p>Infrastructure Plans. There are potential implications and opportunities for local transport within Cheshire East.</p> <p>To ensure that the Council has a clear, evidence-based position on these matters there is a need for them to be considered as part of our next LTP.</p> <p>Therefore, the time is right for a new LTP document to ensure that the Council maintains a document that is robust and relevant to both national, regional and local priorities.</p> <p>A methodology was prepared which ensures our planning is informed and influenced by robust data and stakeholder consultation. In 2024, we have developed an evidence base along with a vision and objectives document. In 2025, work has included a consultation on the vision, aims and priorities, analysis of this feedback, developing the LTP strategy and development of an investment framework.</p> <p>Between 24th February and 21st April 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on its draft vision, aims and priorities for transport in the borough. Feedback received has helped define the new Local Transport Plan (LTP). In total, 720 consultation responses were received.</p> <p>A second consultation is proposed for 8 weeks in Autumn 2025 on the draft LTP strategy and investment framework. Views will be sought from across the transport industry.</p>
Who is impacted?	<p>All residents of Cheshire East could be impacted by projects which are eventually delivered as part of the LTP.</p> <p>The LTP strategy provides a strategic framework to guide schemes and investment for the future.</p> <p>As such, future work will be undertaken to implement schemes and investment programmes.</p> <p>Further Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted for schemes and investment programmes as they come forward.</p> <p>At time of writing (July 25), the vision, aims and priorities have been finalised and the LTP strategy and investment framework are in development. However, these are in line with the vision, aims and priorities.</p> <p>This EIA will be updated following the next consultation in Autumn 25, ahead of the LTP strategy and investment framework being adopted.</p>

	<p>The new LTP strategy will impact all residents.</p> <p>The following are likely to be affected by a new LTP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public (including residents and visitors to the borough) • Cheshire East Council stakeholders • Public transport operators and staff • Local businesses / organisations • Schools and education establishments • Neighbouring local authorities • Governmental bodies (e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership) • Statutory transport bodies (E.g. Department for Transport, Transport for the North and Highways England) • Partner organisations • Business organisations incl. Chambers of Commerce • Town and Parish Councils • Manchester Airports Group • Ambulance Services • Umbrella organisations for people with specialist transport needs, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Age UK ○ Space4Autism ○ Disability Information Bureau (DIB) ○ Cheshire Centre for Independent Living ○ Deafness Support Network ○ ADCA Medical Transport Service ○ Congleton Disabled Club ○ Care4CE ○ Leonard Cheshire Disability ○ The Stroke Association ○ The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory ○ CEC adult and social care services ○ Disability Info Bureau ○ Beartown Rickshaw • Transport interest groups, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Crewe & District Bus Users Group ○ Transition Wilmslow ○ Congleton Sustainable Travel ○ Travel Cheshire ○ Campaign for Better Transport ○ Local Cycling Groups ○ Active Cheshire ○ Crewe Bus Users group ○ NW Transport Activists Roundtable
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Passenger Transport Consortium ○ Transport Focus ○ Alliance of British Drivers ● Environmental interests, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campaign for the Protection of Rural England ○ Cheshire Wildlife Trust ○ Canals and Rivers Trust ○ The Environment Agency ○ Natural England ○ The Joint Nature Conservation Committee ○ Macclesfield Canal Society ○ Countryside Access Forum ● Transport Charities, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cycling UK ○ Living Streets ○ Sustrans ● Members of Parliament ● Freight transport operators ● National Trust <p>This list has been devised considering those that are impacted by transport across the borough who could be affected positively or negatively by the LTP strategy.</p> <p>Getting input from these groups during the last consultation period, particularly those who share one or more protected characteristics, has helped to shape the final LTP vision and objectives, strategy and investment framework.</p> <p>Feedback as part of the next consultation will also influence the final LTP strategy and investment framework.</p> <p>Until the LTP strategy and investment framework is drafted, it is difficult to assess the impact upon all stakeholders, but particularly those who share one or more protected characteristic. Despite this, the LTP strategy and investment framework is a forward-thinking document that aims for positive change in relation to transport, therefore it is envisaged this would impact people positively.</p>
Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.	Links with the Cheshire East Plan The Cheshire East Plan recognises the importance of transport for the borough within the three commitments; the LTP vision aligns with this document.

	<p>The LTP contributes to all sub-commitments in the Cheshire East Plan for 'Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all' through aims 'growing the economy', 'reducing environmental impacts' and 'improving connections for all'.</p> <p>One of the LTP aims is 'improving wellbeing of our community' which aligns with commitment 2: improving health and wellbeing.</p> <p>In relation to commitment 3, the LTP strategy sets out our approach to transport, noting prioritisation needs to be made.</p> <p>Transport Strategy</p> <p>Like the existing LTP, the new LTP strategy will outline the role transport will play in delivering the key strategic vision, aims and priorities.</p> <p>Consultation on the draft vision, aims and priorities took place in early 2025 to gain feedback on the proposed vision and objectives. A second round of consultation is proposed in Autumn 2025 on the draft LTP strategy and investment framework.</p> <p>Internal steering groups and the Member Reference Group will also be engaged throughout development of the LTP strategy.</p> <p>Local Plan</p> <p>The Cheshire East Local Plan outlines the planning policies and proposals for development in the Cheshire East area. It guides decisions on where new housing, employment, and infrastructure should be located, while also protecting important open spaces and enhancing community facilities.</p> <p>The Local Plan aims to ensure sustainable growth and improve the quality of life for residents. It is important that the LTP and Local Plan are coordinated to enable sustainable development. Planning teams have been engaged throughout the process of LTP development.</p>
<p>How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality</p>	<p>The consultation in early 2025 involved producing a stakeholder list to contact promoting the consultation. This includes representatives and groups who share one or more protected characteristic. This direct engagement has helped to foster good relations and ensure these groups are contacted about the LTP at an early stage and that they can use their experience and influence to help develop the LTP.</p>

Duty?	<p>This list will be refreshed and contacted again for the next consultation in Autumn 2025.</p> <p>The LTP vision is: A well-connected, safe and sustainable transport network, accessible to all, that supports a healthy, prosperous Cheshire East. With this vision in mind for transport provision going forward, the aim will be to make a transport network more equitable including for those with one or more protected characteristics.</p> <p>Several of the LTP priorities under the aim of ‘improving the wellbeing of our community’ are important to note for those who have one or more protected characteristics. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving accessibility to essential services. • Enhancing safety and the sense of security for every journey, regardless of the mode of transport. • Improving wellbeing and reducing health inequalities. <p>These priorities seek to advance equality for opportunity for those with protected characteristics. The LTP strategy and investment framework are positive documents, aiming for positive change to transport for all residents.</p>
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Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	<p>Some information on the protected characteristics is set out below. The LTP strategy and investment plan are positive, forward-thinking documents aiming to improve transport for all residents, including those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>Age</p> <p>The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census¹.</p> <p>Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.</p> <p>Declining health, balance issues, and concerns about falls are significant barriers for older adults. These physical challenges</p>
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¹ [Age by single year - Nomis - ONS](#)

	<p>can make activities like walking and cycling more difficult.</p> <p>Patronage data for the Council's supported bus network reveals that a significant number of passengers use concessionary passes, the age eligibility for a concessionary bus pass in Cheshire East under the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme is tied to the state pension age (currently 66). As of February 2024, this equates to over 24,000 passengers which is 36% of total travellers on supported bus services.</p> <p>Disability</p> <p>According to the National Travel Survey there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%².</p> <p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Pregnancy and maternity</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Race and ethnicity</p> <p>Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%³. The areas with a lower percentage are in and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England⁴. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant difference is the 6% lower percentage</p>
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² [Disability by car or van availability - Nomis - ONS](#)

³ [Household language - Nomis - ONS](#)

⁴ [Ethnic group - Nomis - ONS](#)

	<p>population of Asian/Asian British people in Cheshire East compared to the national average.</p> <p>Religion or belief</p> <p>No information reviewed at present.</p> <p>Sex</p> <p>Research nationally has found that a higher proportion of men cycle due to their willingness to cycle with motorised traffic. Additionally, in countries where high quality cycling infrastructure is provided there is a more even balance of men and women cyclists with greater gender equality. This scheme is being designed with the aim to give higher quality cycle routes that may contribute to addressing this gender inequality.</p> <p>UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey⁵, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The experiences of women and girls in a transport report⁶ produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when planning a journey which influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes.</p> <p>Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%).</p> <p>Sexual orientation</p> <p>No information reviewed at present</p> <p>Marriage and civil partnership</p> <p>No information reviewed at present</p>
Information you used to arrive at the decision	<p>The LTP is an overarching policy for the borough and therefore the document will have the potential to impact everyone across the borough including those with protected characteristics.</p>

⁵ [UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

⁶ [Experiences of women and girls on transport](#)

	<p>The draft LTP vision, aims and priorities were consulted on in early 2025, giving those with protected characteristics to have their say at an early stage. As part of developing the draft vision and objectives, engagement with wider teams within Cheshire East Council such as Public Health and Adults has been conducted to gain a more rounded view across the council of what is required from the LTP vision and objectives. As part of the consultation, a focus groups was offered to numerous equality groups, however due to low uptake, 1:1 meetings were undertaken with two groups: AgeUK and Space4Autism. A meeting with CE Youth Council also took place. This feedback is incorporated into sections 3 and 4.</p> <p>The LTP strategy and investment framework which will be consulted on in Autumn 2025 will provide an opportunity to input and influence these documents ahead of adoption. The impact on those with protected characteristics will be explored in future iterations of this EIA after the next consultation and ahead of adoption.</p>
Gaps in your Information	<p>The LTP evidence base is comprehensive, however given the breadth of the LTP covering all forms of transport, there is some information on some of the protected characteristics that will be unavailable.</p> <p>As detailed in earlier sections, the public consultation in early 2025 provided an opportunity to have greater engagement with these groups to improve knowledge on these protected characteristics and ensure the LTP impacts are understood and mitigated against. A focus group was offered to known groups representing protected characteristics, however there was limited uptake.</p> <p>The consultation on the LTP strategy and investment framework in Autumn 2025 will provide another opportunity to reach these groups.</p>

Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

What did people tell you about your proposals?	<p>The majority of respondents agreed that the six transport challenges identified were the key ones in Cheshire East. Agreement (those selecting either strongly agree or tend to agree) ranged from 91% for 'insufficient travel options lead many residents to rely on private cars' to 69% for 'severe</p>
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	<p>weather increasingly challenges network resilience’.</p> <p>In terms of the six identified opportunities, ‘tailoring transport solutions to our local areas’ received the highest agreement – 90% of respondents agreed that this was a key transport opportunity for Cheshire East. Respondents seemed to be less sure that ‘new technology can help us meet our transport needs’ – whilst 56% agreed, 30% selected neither agree nor disagree or unsure / do not know.</p> <p>Within the comments, many respondents mentioned that the current public transport options were a key challenge. This included concerns related to reliability, frequency and affordability as well as lack of connections to other transport options, to key services or to areas inside and outside of the borough. Maintenance and perceived safety of roads, pavements and cycle routes was also seen as a key challenge, making active travel feel dangerous. Improving public transport options and promoting its usage was a key opportunity identified, alongside improving active travel routes – ensuring walking and cycling feels safer through better maintenance, dedicated routes, and / or appropriate speed regulations or road management. Consideration of accessibility (including for people with disabilities, elderly and those in rural areas) for all transport options was also mentioned – this included use of the private car for those who find other transport options difficult.</p> <p>79% of respondents agreed with the vision whilst 12% disagreed. There were respondents who would like to see more details on how the vision would be achieved and a greater focus on sustainability. Others were sceptical as to whether the vision could be achieved, believing it needed to be more realistic in accepting that the private car will remain the preferred transport mode for many. The majority of respondents agreed that the aims were the right areas to focus on. Agreement ranged from 86% for ‘improving connections for all’ to 73% for ‘reducing environmental impacts’. Similar to comments related to challenges and opportunities, within the comments respondents mentioned that improving public transport should be considered as a key aim alongside better walking, cycling routes and road maintenance / safety. Having consideration of those in rural areas as well as accessibility was also mentioned.</p> <p>The majority of respondents felt that the priorities identified</p>
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	<p>under each of the aims were important - responses ranged from 91% (selecting extremely or very important) for the aim 'improving accessibility to essential services such as healthcare, education, employment and leisure' down to 59% for the aim 'reducing transport related emissions through a reduction in vehicle miles to respond to the climate emergency'.</p> <p>The majority of respondents agreed with the draft vision, aims and associated priorities as well as the key challenges and opportunities identified. Improving public transport within the borough and connections to other areas was mentioned as a key priority for many as well as improvements to the road, walking and cycling network. It will be important to consider accessibility of all modes for all users including those within rural areas when drafting detailed transport plans. Respondents were keen to see more detail of how the plans will be achieved and also mentioned the benefits of continued collaboration / joined up thinking including within planning.</p> <p>Further updates to this EIA will be made following the public consultation in Autumn 2025.</p>
Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>Between 24th February and 21st April 2025 Cheshire East Council conducted a consultation to seek views on its draft vision, aims and priorities for transport in the borough.</p> <p>The consultation was mainly hosted online however paper versions were made available at libraries and leisure centres throughout Cheshire East. Paper copies were also available on request. The consultation was promoted widely, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents of Cheshire East and the public through press releases and social media promotion • The Cheshire East Digital Influence Panel • Businesses in Cheshire East and in neighbouring authorities • Specialist transport user groups • Equality groups via email and offered to attend a workshop (including 1:1 meetings with Space4Autism and AgeUK) • Town and Parish Councils • Elected Members • Neighbouring Authorities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Council (in person meeting) <p>As part of wider engagement, online focus groups / 1-to-1 discussions were offered to certain stakeholders to gain further insight and to support the promotion of the consultation.</p> <p>In total, 720 consultation responses were received (674 survey responses and 46 email responses).</p> <p>The next stage of consultation is planned to run for 8 weeks during Autumn 2025.</p> <p>Groups representing those who share one or more protected characteristics will be included within the stakeholder list and contacted when the consultation goes live. Whilst the specific detail is being worked through, several focus groups could be undertaken to allow them to feed into this process.</p>
Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?	<p>A number of representatives of groups representing those with protected characteristics were offered to attend a workshop, however there was little uptake. The two groups that responded fed back via a 1:1 meeting. All stakeholders contacted previously will be contacted again in the next consultation.</p>

Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? <i>Summary of information used to inform the proposal</i> <u>Refer to Section 2</u>	What did people tell you? <i>Summary of customer and/or staff feedback</i> <u>Refer to section 3</u>	What does this mean? <i>Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential).</i> <i>These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.</i>

Age	<p>The Census 2021 shows there is a significant proportion of the Cheshire East population in the 65+ age category which has increased since the 2011 Census.</p> <p>Cheshire East has a larger proportion of the population in the older age category of over 65 (22.3%) compared to Cheshire West (21.3%), the Northwest (18.7%) and England (18.4%) which demonstrates that Cheshire East has a higher ageing population.</p> <p>Patronage data for the Council's supported bus network reveals that a significant number of passengers use concessionary passes. As of February 2024, this equates to over 24,000 passengers which is 36% of total travellers on supported bus services. These concessionary pass holders are likely to have one or multiple protected characteristics, including disabilities and being of young or old age.</p>	<p>AgeUK feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people worry about losing their ability to drive which gives them independence • Bus is next most common mode used (more affordable than the train). • Those in rural areas are reluctant to stop driving due to infrequency of buses • Need room to sit at bus stops (sit and rest is important) • Ensure bus drivers are aware it takes older people longer to get on/off • Information should be accessible and in a readable format <p>Youth Council feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus system can be difficult to understand and can be daunting • Public transport takes longer to access than car 	<p>It is necessary to ensure residents can access the key services and facilities that are needed in everyday life, such as GPs, hospitals, supermarkets and leisure opportunities. This is increasingly important for older people and more vulnerable groups, helping to reduce social isolation. It is important to recognise that different ages groups have differing needs, of transport.</p> <p>More elderly adults face mobility issues, and therefore rely on more specialised transport services such as community shuttles to maintain their independence.</p> <p>Therefore, it is essential that well connected, accessible bus routes are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some roads aren't suitable for bikes • Affordability is important, transport can be expensive for young people • Reliability impacts whether people choose to use public transport • Safety also important <p>Other feedback from the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of public transport options disproportionately impacts young people and older people • Improve accessibility for more vulnerable members of the community i.e. the elderly, children and people with visible and invisible disabilities. • Remember not everyone uses new technology - especially older people - who tend to use the bus more. • Emphasis on accessible to all. Changes that 	<p>with mobility difficulties.</p> <p>All feedback to be considered as part of drafting the LTP strategy and investment plan.</p>
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		<p>encompass equal facilities for disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents. More choice for elderly and disabled residents. Needs to be a lot more accessible to disabled people, disabled access to railway stations. The older generation proportion in Cheshire East is growing and need some priority focus / consider the elderly who still want to stay independent after they give up driving. More emphasis on isolated groups who cannot access areas by improving accessibility using new technology, funding and education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider half-price tickets for people aged over 60. • Should not have to pay for 5-year-olds (bus). • Ensure transport around schools is 	
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		<p>safe and well planned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on establishing healthy travel habits early. Schools are too busy teaching to do this kind of non-teaching work which should be simpler and be supported by CEC officers who are more experienced in this field. The big leap in cycling has been largely due to the take up of e-bikes by older people. This deserves a particular focus, which should include some strategies to counter anti-social use of illegal electric motorbikes and scooters. • Isolation can have a negative effect on residents' mental health, especially in the context of our aging population. • The elderly, in the majority of cases, are not users of a 	
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		<p>computer or smart phone.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly people find Go Too too difficult to book and limited in terms of connections. • Transport impacts the ability to attract talent/graduates to work in Cheshire East. 	
Disability	<p>According to the National Travel Survey there is little difference between the number of trips taken by bus for those with and without mobility difficulties. However, the number of trips by rail, car, cycle, and walking are significantly lower for those with a mobility difficulty compared to those without.⁷</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East has a lower proportion of residents who have a registered disability compared to the North West, however it is similar to the national average of 17.3%.</p>	<p>Consultation feedback:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regarding disability, (question wording: Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months? – those who stated yes, a little or yes, a lot): Severe weather increasingly challenges network resilience – seen as more of a challenge, 78% of those with a disability / health problem agreed it is a challenge 	<p>It is essential that well connected, accessible bus routes, active travel routes, rail stations and services are provided around Cheshire East to better serve those.</p> <p>There is a need for a cohesive, accessible public transport network for all in the borough – including those with disabilities whom suffer a higher risk of social isolation and poor standards of living</p>

⁷ [National Travel Survey: 2021 - GOV.UK](#)

		<p>compared to 70% of all respondents.</p> <p>Space4Autism feedback included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some struggle to access their organised groups when they're in the evening. • Many autistic people struggle with the sensory aspect of public transport. These could be more visual. • Being able to read/understand a bus timetable can be stressful and put people off using the bus. • Investigate designated quiet areas. • Training for young people to build their confidence to use public transport. • Carers passes for public transport or a discounted rate. • Streets need to be well lit for safety. <p>Other feedback from the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drivers often park on pavements 	<p>with mobility difficulties.</p> <p>All feedback to be considered as part of drafting the LTP strategy and investment plan.</p>
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		<p>which blocks safe access.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of dropped kerbs. • Accessibility for disabled people is not always there. • Lack of accessible transport especially for those using electronic wheelchairs / mobility scooters. • In Congleton there are no wheelchair accessible taxis that take powered wheelchairs (consider accessible taxis). • Improve accessibility for more vulnerable members of the community i.e. the elderly, children and people with visible and invisible disabilities. • Wheelchair accessibility is lacking everywhere in east Cheshire, look at how cars park on the pavement / replace steps with ramps. Also 	
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		<p>consider those that use mobility scooters, recumbent bikes and adaptive cycles in active travel plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on accessible to all. Changes that encompass equal facilities for disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents. More choice for elderly and disabled residents. Needs to be a lot more accessible to disabled people, disabled access to railway stations. The older generation proportion in Cheshire East is growing and need some priority focus / consider the elderly who still want to stay independent after they give up driving. More emphasis on isolated groups who cannot access areas by improving accessibility using new technology, 	
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		<p>funding and education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free bus travel for carers. • There is a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by disabled people, must consult with more disabled people to develop an inclusive plan for all. • Transport for those with disabilities - flexi transport is limited to a few hours during the day and there is no weekend service. Taxis are also an issue for disabled people with many firms not offering journeys for those in wheelchairs, or the wheelchair taxis being of limited availability or booked up many weeks in advance. 	
Gender reassignment	No information reviewed at present	No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.	<i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will</i>

			<i>be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i>
Pregnancy and maternity	No information reviewed at present	<p>No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.</p> <p>Facilities for those walking need to consider those with prams.</p> <p>Potholes can be an issue. If bikes are allowed on buses in future, consider the impact this may have on space for prams.</p>	<p><i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i></p>
Race/ethnicity	<p>Taken from the 2021 Census Cheshire East's households speaking English as their first language is between 90 and 99.6%. The areas with a lower percentage are in and around Crewe, with around 60.9% to 90%.</p> <p>According to the 2021 Census Cheshire East's population is 96.7% white, this is a larger proportion compared to the North West and England, being 6.5% higher than the North West and 10.7% higher than England. The percentage of all other ethnic groups is lower than the national average, the most significant</p>	<p>No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.</p>	<p>It is important transport information is provided in alternative languages, as appropriate, to promote inclusivity.</p> <p><i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively</i></p>

	difference is the 6% lower percentage population of Asian/Asian British people in Cheshire East compared to the national average.		<i>impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i>
Religion or belief	No information reviewed at present	No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.	<i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i>
Sex	<p>UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey⁸, undertaken in 2021, shows that one in two women and one in seven men felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a quiet street near their home, with two out of three women aged 16 to 34 years having experienced one form of harassment in the previous 12 months.</p> <p>The experiences of women and girls in a transport report⁹ produced in March 2022 found that 85% of participants thought about safety when planning a journey which</p>	No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.	<p>Cheshire East need to improve the perception of safety on public transport through inclusive design. This would encourage more women and girls to access the public transport network for example.</p> <p>Factors such as visible staff and lighting were suggested in The experiences of women and girls in a transport</p>

⁸ [UK Opinions and Lifestyle Survey](#)

⁹ [Experiences of women and girls on transport](#)

	<p>influenced routes, times travelled and avoiding certain modes.</p> <p>Furthermore, those that felt very safe across several modes was between 15-30%, much lower than those using a car (59%).</p>		<p>Report produced in March 2022¹⁰ as elements that would improve safety, however the research has emphasised that it is often others behaviour that was the issue.</p> <p><i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i></p>
Sexual orientation	No information reviewed at present	No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.	<p><i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i></p>

¹⁰ [Experiences of women and girls on transport - Transport Focus](#)

Marriage and civil partnership	No information reviewed at present	No unique feedback for this group as part of the consultation in Spring 2025.	<i>Impact of the forthcoming LTP and investment plan not understood at this stage (work in progress). However, this will be a forward thinking document that aims to positively impact all users of transport in Cheshire East).</i>
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Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
<i>Please summarise the impacts listed in section 4 and what will be done to mitigate these impacts</i>	<p>Impacts of the proposed LTP strategy and investment framework are anticipated to be positive for all. Feedback in relation to the protected characteristics are outlined in Section 3 and 4. Specific feedback was mostly observations in relation to age and disability, and how lack of public transport (mostly bus) impacts access to services. There were suggestions of improvements that could support these groups. This is being considered during the process of development of these documents.</p> <p>Another consultation will be undertaken in Autumn 2025 on the draft LTP strategy and investment framework which are in development at time of writing.</p> <p>The recent consultation has helped to understand the potential impact of the LTP on residents including the protected groups and help to identify any mitigation / actions in relation to the protected characteristics that will feed into the LTP strategy and investment framework.</p>


Section 6 – Monitoring and review

Details of monitoring activities	The LTP will be subject to KPIs, monitoring and review. This monitoring will consider whether any negative impacts mitigation has been successful.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	This EIA will be reviewed and updated once consultation on the draft strategy and investment framework is completed in Autumn 2025. The updated EIA will be submitted to Highways and Transport Committee alongside the final LTP for approval.

Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review.

If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Name	Richard Hibbert
Date	21/08/2025
Signature	

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#) for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Help and support - For support and advice please contact the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#)

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OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee

18 September 2025

Development of a Lane Rental Scheme

Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: HTC/14/24-25

Ward(s) Affected: All

For Decision

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update the Committee on development of a Lane Rental Scheme (LRS) for Cheshire East Council (CEC) and seek approval for the proposed future approach.

Executive Summary

- 2 Lane Rental was enabled by the Traffic Management Act (2004). There are five schemes currently active in England.
- 3 An LRS enables local highway authorities to reduce street works disruption by incentivising undertakers through a charging mechanism. This encourages work on key and traffic-sensitive streets during quieter times, easing congestion. With appropriate development, the charging mechanism would enable the Council to cover its costs for the scheme.
- 4 The current Government supports the development of LRSs and has announced intentions to both encourage new schemes and expand the purpose for which authorities may use surplus income. As with any new statutory approach, best practice is evolving and with Government changes will continue to do so.
- 5 This decision recommends that CEC defers developing its LRS to take account of emerging practices and Government changes. This will allow the CEC LRS to be developed and tailored appropriately to local needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the continued development of a Lane Rental Scheme Proposal, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Background

- 6 Lane rental was introduced in the Traffic Management Act 2004 as an extension of Street Works Permits under the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA) 1991. In summary, lane rental:
 - (a) Requires a successful application to the Secretary of State for Transport;
 - (b) Applies to the most traffic-sensitive and busiest areas of a Highway Authority's network – usually no more than 10% by length;
 - (c) Involves charging for permitted occupation of road space, with charges highest at the busiest times;
 - (d) Provides a lower cost alternative for working at the least busy times; and
 - (e) Runs alongside the existing Street Works Permit Scheme, which still applies to the rest of the network.
- 7 Lane rental is designed to encourage behavioural change of street works promoters, changing practices to ways of working that are less disruptive to traffic. The benefits are reduced impacts of traffic. Highway Authorities cannot operate schemes to generate income; any surplus revenue is used to support activities to mitigate the impact of street works.
- 8 The Government is encouraging the development of lane rental schemes, through:
 - (a) Proposing new approval powers;
 - (b) Expanding existing and encouraging new schemes; and
 - (c) Proposing changes to how surplus funds can be used by Highway Authorities, enabling them to allocate 50% or more to repairing roads.
 - (d) This is expected to result in changes in late 2025 or early 2026.
- 9 On 24 April 2024 the Committee approved that officers should:
 - (a) Finalise development of a LRS proposal;
 - (b) Conduct consultation upon the proposed scheme; and
 - (c) Present the proposed scheme (as developed following consultation) to this Committee for approval prior to applying to the Secretary of State.
- 10 Since then, officers have proceeded with reviewing and developing proposals:
 - (a) The proposed streets for the scheme have been identified and a proposal has been developed.
 - (b) A cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken on the proposal, together with a review of affordability and potential impact on the cost of the Council's own works to maintain and develop highway infrastructure.
 - (c) An initial consultation has been carried out on the proposal.
 - (d) The proposal has been reviewed against the latest (April 2025) Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.
- 11 Initial conclusions drawn from developing proposals so far are:
 - (a) Lane rental is still in its infancy, with only five operational schemes in London, Kent, West Sussex, East Sussex and Surrey. These authorities vary significantly from Cheshire East's network.

- (b) Under lane rental, a Highway Authority must treat its works and those of street works promoters equally. This may potentially adversely affect the Council's highway works, by increasing costs or reducing deliverables. Understanding the potential impact is crucial, particularly with additional levels of work being delivered under Local Transport Grant funding for 2025-2030.
 - (c) Even if approved by the Secretary of State, if the Council does not optimise its LRS proposals, this will create further adverse implications. Implementing effective proposals first time will save cost, time, resource and reputation.
 - (d) The Council must be realistic in its expectations of the time required to develop a LRS. Reviewing other authorities' schemes will also help Cheshire East benefit from emerging practices and adapt proposals before submission, avoiding later changes.
- 12 The recommendation from officers therefore is to undertake further work and continue to develop proposals with a view to applying to the Secretary of State at a later point. The proposed areas for further development are described in Appendix 1.
- 13 An outline timetable is set out in Appendix 1. The Committee will be updated on progress periodically and at key milestones.

Consultation and Engagement

- 14 Initial consultation has been conducted on the draft scheme proposals from April to June 2025. The Council does not propose to respond to the comments received in that consultation at this stage. Future LRS proposals will be reviewed against this consultation. Any material changes will be consulted upon as part of taking forward any future proposal.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 15 To ensure that the Council considers development of a LRS that is approved by the Secretary of State, is financially sustainable, achieves its objectives.

Other Options Considered

- 16 The Council is not required to implement a LRS scheme. The alternatives to continuing to develop proposals are:
- (a) Not to do so; or
 - (b) To apply as soon as possible.
- 17 There is no guarantee that a future application will be accepted. However, not applying would mean that the Council would not achieve the objectives and benefits of a scheme.

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing – not develop a Lane Rental Scheme	The benefits in paragraph 6 will not be realised. The Council would not use key tools to manage traffic, congestion, and pollution effectively.	This would avoid the Council's risks in operating an LRS but deliver none of the benefits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging street works at quieter times • Generating surplus revenue to offset their impact in the borough.

Option	Impact	Risk
Apply as soon as possible	<p>Implementing a scheme that potentially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an adverse impact on the Council's capital investment in highway infrastructure; • Requires change; • Does not achieve the anticipated benefits. 	<p>The Council would risk that it would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not be maximising the benefits of a LRS; • Reduce the benefits of the Council's capital investment; and / or • Incur delay or cost related to changing the scheme. • Lose reputation through implementing a sub-optimal scheme.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer / Legal / Governance

- 18 There are no implications during scheme development. The Council's Street Works Permit (SWP) scheme will still apply to streets outside the LRS.
- 19 A future decision to apply to the Secretary of State would seek a Statutory Instrument under NRSWA, amended by the Transport Act 2000 and TMA 2004.
- 20 The Secretary of State may approve, modify, or reject the application. DfT aims to respond within 30 days.
- 21 If approved, it takes at least three months to complete the Order and a minimum period before implementation, which may overlap.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

- 22 This report provides an update on the development of the scheme.
- 23 Lane rental is a tool to manage and improve traffic, congestion and pollution. It is not a tool to generate revenue.
- 24 Surplus lane rental revenue can only be used for prescribed purposes, set out in the [guidance](#). In summary, these are reasonable costs to develop and operate the scheme or schemes to reduce adverse effects arising from street works.
- 25 The costs related to developing the proposal mainly involve staff time. Posts within the Council's Highways team and Cheshire East Highways (CEH) are funded through income from the existing Street Works Permit Scheme. CEH will incur additional costs for implementation, which will be considered in the affordability assessment when deciding whether to apply to the Secretary of State.

Human Resources

- 26 The LRS will be delivered through the Council's Highway Services Contract with CEH, managed by the client team in the Council's Highways service. The latter have already been recruited. Additional posts in CEH to operate a LRS will be introduced as part of implementation.

Risk Management

- 27 Continued development of proposals will reduce the risk in applying to the Secretary of State or implementing a future scheme.

Impact on other Committees

28 There is no anticipated impact on other Committees resulting from this decision.

Policy

29 This decision contributes to the priorities in the Council's Corporate Plan as follows:

30 Commitment 1: Unlocking prosperity for all	31 Commitment 2: Improving health and wellbeing	32 Commitment 3: An effective and enabling council
1.5 Communities connected through an improved, accessible rural and urban transport network including active travel 1.6 Carbon neutral council with minimum offset by 2030, influencing carbon reduction and green energy production across the borough by 2045	2.1 Health outcomes are improved across our diverse borough through a targeted approach that reduces health inequalities	3.1 Financially sustainable council, enabled by council-wide service transformation and improvement

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

33 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required to develop a proposal. A future decision to apply to the Secretary of State will require an assessment. Proposals are likely to have beneficial impact, particularly for people with mobility impairments.

Other implications

34 There are no other implications as a result of this decision.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	21/07/25	25/07/25
Janet Witkowski	Acting Monitoring Officer	21/07/25	25/07/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
James Thomas	Principal Planning & Highways Solicitor	11/07/25	16/07/25
Steve Reading	Finance Manager – Place and Corporate Services	11/07/25	21/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director, Place	06/08/25	06/08/25
Tom Moody	Director of Infrastructure and Transport	04/07/25	11/07/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Domenic de Bechi, Head of Highways (Domenic.deBechi@CheshireEast.gov.uk)
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Further development
Background Papers:	Department for Transport: Lane Rental Schemes: Guidance for English Highway Authorities (3 April 2025)

OPEN**Further development**

35 Continued development of the LRS proposal will include:

- (a) Further review proposals to:
 - (i) Calibrate the charging mechanism to optimise the benefits to the Council (through both charges and exemptions).
 - (ii) Avoid significant adverse impact on the Council's highway works.
 - (iii) Give incentive where possible for active travel and public transport.
 - (iv) Ensure that the proposals remain affordable.
- (b) Recruit staff to develop, implement and manage the scheme in both the Council and Cheshire East Highways (see paragraphs **Error! Reference source not found.** and 26 above).
- (c) Incorporate emerging changes by Government (see paragraph 7 above) and best practice / learning from newly approved schemes.
- (d) Benchmark the Council's proposals against other schemes.
- (e) Develop proposed governance for the scheme, including how surplus funds are used and how scheme evaluation will be undertaken.

Outline timetable

36 The timetable for developing proposals has certain parameters as follows:

- (a) Submission tranches. DfT is considering applications in two tranches annually: applications by 30 September responded to by the following January and applications by 31 March by the following July.
- (b) Newly approved schemes. Will follow from the approvals, initially in early 2026. The schemes will then be analysed and benchmarked against.
- (c) Government Changes. Anticipated in late 2025 or early 2026.

37 These factors practically mean that the Council should assess its readiness to apply in the Summer of 2026, provisionally aiming for the Autumn 2026 tranche. This is with the caveat that the proposal is sufficiently developed and is likely to be approved by the Secretary of State at that time.

Communication and updates

38 Members of the Highways and Transport Committee will be updated through the regular Highways service briefings and at key milestones in developing the scheme (as appropriate). The next briefing on the LRS development is expected to be in Spring 2026.

39 A decision to proceed with applying to the Secretary of State will be brought to this committee once it can be recommended by officers.

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OPEN

Highways and Transport Committee**18 September 2025****Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan
2026-36****Report of: Phil Cresswell, Executive Director - Place****Report Reference No: HTC/44/24-25****Ward(s) Affected: All****For Decision****Purpose of Report**

1. The report presents the work undertaken so far in renewing the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The report seeks approval to launch a public consultation in the autumn to ensure that local communities have the opportunity to help shape the ROWIP.

Executive Summary

2. The Council's current ROWIP covers the period 2011-2026. It is a statutory duty of the Council to prepare and publish a ROWIP, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s60, and therefore a new ROWIP is being developed to cover the period 2026-36. The report presents the work undertaken so far.
3. This comprises the development of an evidence base seeking to assess the extent to which the Public Rights of Way and wider countryside access networks meet the present and likely future needs of the public, the opportunities provided by the networks for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The assessment also considers the accessibility of the networks.
4. A draft vision, objectives and statement of action have been drawn out of the gap identified between the existing networks and the demand for those networks. The draft vision for the ROWIP is:
To contribute to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our residents through inclusive and accessible path networks that encourage outdoor activities, greater active travel and more visitors to Cheshire East.

5. The statement of action of the ROWIP is framed around three objectives: *maintain, improve and promote*.
6. The report now seeks approval to go to public consultation on the draft ROWIP, as required by legislation, and to gather aspirations for improvements to the networks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan set out at Appendices 1 and 2 as a basis for public consultation.
2. Approve the proposed approach to public consultation in line with the Consultation and Engagement Plan in Appendix 3.
3. Delegate authority to the Director of Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Highways and Transport Committee, to finalise the consultation material and undertake the public consultation.

Background

7. The Council's current ROWIP covers the period 2011-2026. It is a statutory duty of the Council to prepare and publish a ROWIP, with [section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) setting out the requirements of the process. The evidence base which comprises an assessment of the gap between the PROW and countryside access network that we currently have, and the demand and use of that network currently seen or anticipated, is summarised in Appendix 1.
8. The draft vision, objectives and statement of action of the draft ROWIP have been drawn up from that assessment and are contained in the draft ROWIP at Appendix 2.
9. The views of internal colleagues, across health, leisure, strategic infrastructure, planning, economic development, visitor economy, property and Cheshire Farms Service, have been sought in drawing up the draft vision, objectives and statement of action, an exercise which prompted constructive discussions between departments. In addition, engagement has been undertaken with key external stakeholders, including the National Trust, Canal & River Trust, adjacent highway authorities and the statutory Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum, a body which advises the Council on matters related to access to the countryside.
10. The ROWIP is aligned with the Local Transport Plan, Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans in recognition of the contribution that Public Rights of Way and other

countryside access networks play in active travel. The ROWIP is also closely aligned with other strategic documents of the Council and its partners, including the Rural Action Plan and Local Plan.

11. Developing a new ROWIP is a key part of demonstrating the Council's ambition and commitment, with clear recognition that increasing levels of active travel and leisure supports the delivery of wider corporate priorities, particularly health improvement and local action to tackle the climate change emergency. The ROWIP will provide support for internal decision makers when prioritising work and captures the links between the work of internal departments. The ROWIP will also provide support for external funding applications and developer contributions sought through the planning system.

Consultation and Engagement

12. Subject to approval by Committee, a 12-week consultation, as stipulated in government guidance, is proposed in late 2025 to engage stakeholders and residents to help further refine the draft vision, aims and objectives. A Consultation and Engagement Plan is included at Appendix 3.
13. Input will be sought from a wide range of stakeholders, including user groups such as the Ramblers, Disabled Ramblers, horse riding associations and cycling groups. In addition, landowners, businesses. Town and Parish Councils, Ward Members and external partners and stakeholders will be invited to engage.
14. It is proposed that public notice of the consultation shall be given including on the Council's website, by press notice, by direct email, via the Cheshire Association of Local Councils and in libraries.
15. Following the consultation, the initial next steps would be to consider the feedback received, refresh the vision, aims and objectives, and produce the ROWIP strategy. The final ROWIP would then be presented to Committee for adoption.

Reasons for Recommendations

16. In accordance with section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a ROWIP. It is also a statutory duty to consult on the draft ROWIP.

Other Options Considered

Option	Impact	Risk
Do nothing	Lack of compliance with statutory duty under Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 s60 Lack of engagement with stakeholders	Risk of legal challenge via judicial review Lack of stakeholder support
Review current ROWIP	Changes in society and the environment since 2011 would not be adequately assessed Lack of engagement with stakeholders	Vision, objectives and statement of action lack relevance to today's issues Lack of stakeholder support

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal/Governance

17. In accordance with section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, the Council as the Highway Authority has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a ROWIP. It also has a statutory duty under section 61 of the Act to consult on the draft ROWIP.
18. Committees are responsible for discharging the Council's functions, monitoring financial controls and making decisions as required. Chapter 2, Part 4 of the Council's constitution details that the Highways and Transport Committee is responsible for discharging all the functions of the Council in relation to Public Rights of Way within the area, and being apprised of, approving and comments on policies relation to Public Rights of Way and countryside matters.
19. Members must be fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered, 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 read and carefully consider the content of any Equality Impact Assessments produced by Officers.
20. 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.
21. It is therefore important to test the fairness of the Council's approach by way of consultation on any changes which would have the effect of withdrawing existing benefits or advantages available to its residents. Such consultation should involve those directly affected by such changes together with the relevant representative groups. The responses to the

consultation will need to be conscientiously taken into account when the Highways and Transport Committee makes any future decisions on the ROWIP.

22. It should be noted that breach of a duty to consult would risk the Council being subjected to legal challenge by way of judicial review.
23. Where local authorities undertake consultations, there is a duty to engage in lawful and fair consultation. The Gunning principles establish the common law principles to be observed when undertaking a consultation will require the following:
 - i) The consultation to be undertaken when the proposal(s) is still at a formative stage;
 - ii) That there are sufficient reasons put forward for the proposals to allow for intelligent consideration and response from consultees;
 - iii) That consultees are given adequate time to respond; and
 - iv) That the product of the consultation was to be conscientiously taken into account when the decision is taken.

Section 151 Officer/Finance

24. There are no financial implications that require an amendment to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The consultation on the draft ROWIP will be funded from core budgets.
25. Upon completion and adoption by the Council, the ROWIP will provide a policy framework to inform the annual capital and revenue investment across Green Infrastructure, comprising Public Rights of Way and the Countryside Ranger Service. The ROWIP will be implemented utilising applicable funding from a range of sources including: LTP Integrated Transport Block funding; section 106 developer contributions; the Council's capital and revenue programmes, one-off funding programmes and external grant funding. There is also the opportunity for the ROWIP to inform and influence other investment programmes across the Council, including public health, regeneration, carbon reduction etc.

Human Resources

26. There are no direct human resources implications.

Risk Management

27. There are no direct risk management implications.

Impact on other Committees

28. There is no direct impact on other Committees.

Policy

29. The work of the Green Infrastructure team contributes to the Corporate Plan 2025-2029:

Corporate Plan 2025-2029	
Vision:	Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East
Commitments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocking prosperity for all • Improving health and wellbeing • An effective and enabling council

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

30. The Council will fully evaluate the equality implications of the proposed ROWIP through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The draft EqIA has been developed which focuses on the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership). There is a need to engage with the protected groups to help better understand any impacts and identify mitigation if required. The draft EqIA included at Appendix 4 will be updated following consultation.

Other Implications

Rural Communities

31. There are direct positive effects from the Public Rights of Way network and countryside access for rural communities, through connectivity, access to services, leisure and active travel.
32. Access to the countryside also has the potential to impact negatively on rural communities and landowners through irresponsible actions and numbers of visitors exceeding the capacity of the local area.

Public Health

33. The work of the Green Infrastructure team contributes to the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents. There are significant health benefits from active travel and active leisure pursuits which are proven and well-documented. Creating and encouraging opportunities to build active travel and leisure into everyday lives will positively impact health outcomes.

Climate Change

34. The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral with minimum offset by 2030 and to influence carbon reduction across the borough by

2045. The objectives of the ROWIP will contribute to a reduction in carbon emissions and increased environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles through active travel.

Consultation

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy):</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	29/08/25	04/09/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer)	29/08/25	05/09/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	29/08/25	04/09/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Andrew Poynton	Senior Lawyer, Place	18/07/25	29/07/25
Wendy Broadhurst	Principal Accountant	18/07/25	23/07/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>			
Peter Skates	Director of Growth and Enterprise	18/07/25	06/08/25
Phil Cresswell	Executive Director - Place	30/07/25	06/08/25
DMT		30/07/25	06/08/25
CLT		06/08/25	20/08/25
Chair / Vice Chair		21/08/25	28/08/25

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Genni Butler Countryside Access Development Manager genni.butler@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Appendices:	Appendix 1: Evidence Base Appendix 2: Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan Appendix 3: Consultation and Engagement Plan Appendix 4: Draft Equality Impact Assessment
Background Papers:	None

Cheshire East Council Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026-36

Evidence base: network assessment

For consultation

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The Public Rights of Way Network

The Definitive Map and Statement together form the legal record of the public's rights to use Public Rights of Way (PROW). The Definitive Map shows where the routes run and which category of Public Right of Way a certain route is, whilst the Definitive Statement describes the route in text, normally its starting and finishing locations.

Cheshire East has a Public Rights of Way network totalling 1947 km or 1210 miles¹, equivalent to nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the length of its road network. The length of the PROW network has increased by 19km since the ROWIP of 2011. This will be due to a range of changes to the Definitive Map and Statement through Public Path Orders, such as diversions requested by landowners and creations of new PROW, and through Definitive Map Modification Orders, through which PROW are 'claimed' to be added to or deleted from the Definitive Map.

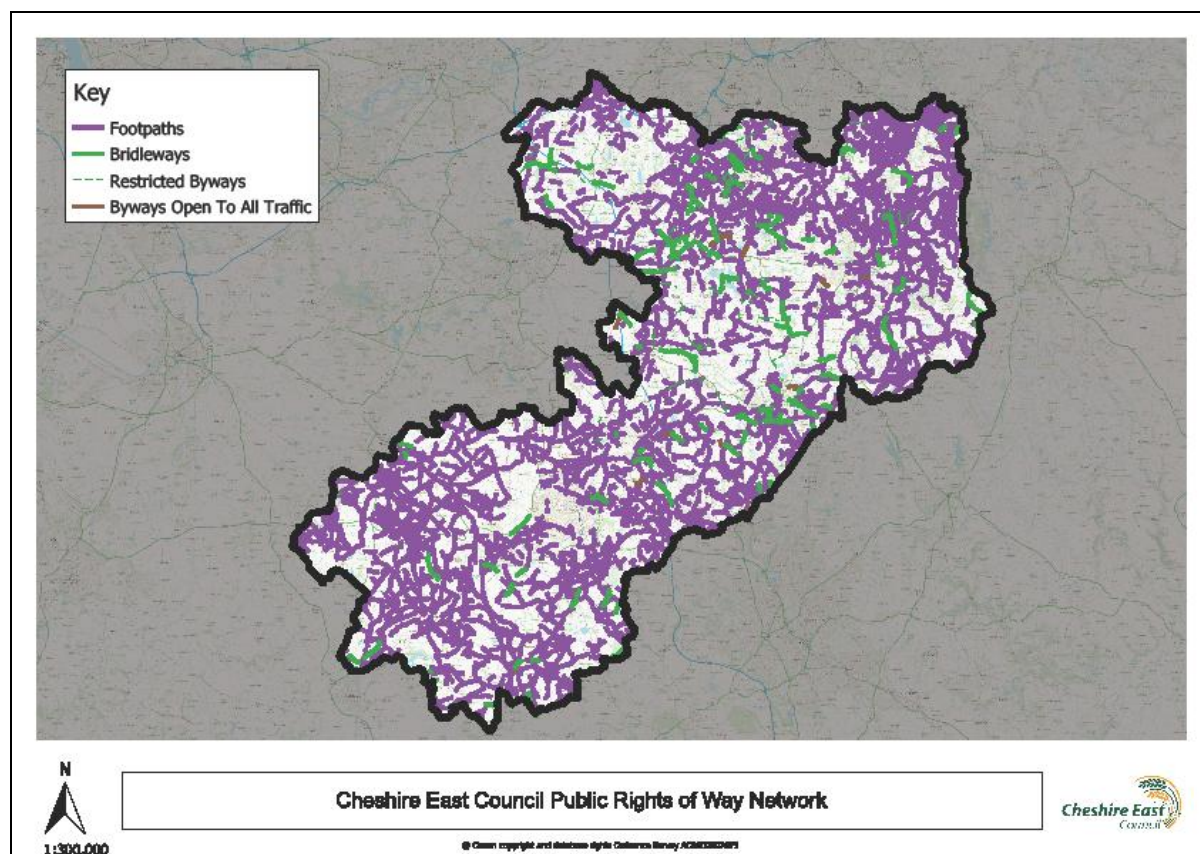


Figure 1 Map of the recorded Public Rights of Way network in Cheshire East

The four different categories of PROW, Footpaths, Public Bridleways, Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic, are available to different categories of user as summarised in the table below. 'Wheelers' are those who use prams, pushchairs,

¹ As recorded on the Countryside Access Management System database and Geographical Information System on 17th March 2025

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rollators, manual and powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters, although this does not mean that all routes are necessarily accessible for all users.

Category	Summary of user groups
Public footpath	Walkers and wheelers
Public bridleway	Walkers and wheelers, horse riders, cyclists
Restricted byway	Walkers and wheelers, horse riders, cyclists, horse-drawn vehicles
Byway open to all traffic	Walkers and wheelers, horse riders, cyclists, horse-drawn vehicles, motorised vehicles

Table 1 Categories of Public Rights of Way and who can use them

There is a variance between the Cheshire East data and the average across England in terms of the proportions of PROW in each category; Cheshire East has a larger proportion of routes available solely for walkers and wheelers and smaller proportions of the network available to other types of user when compared to the average across England. This comparison is set out in the graph and table below:

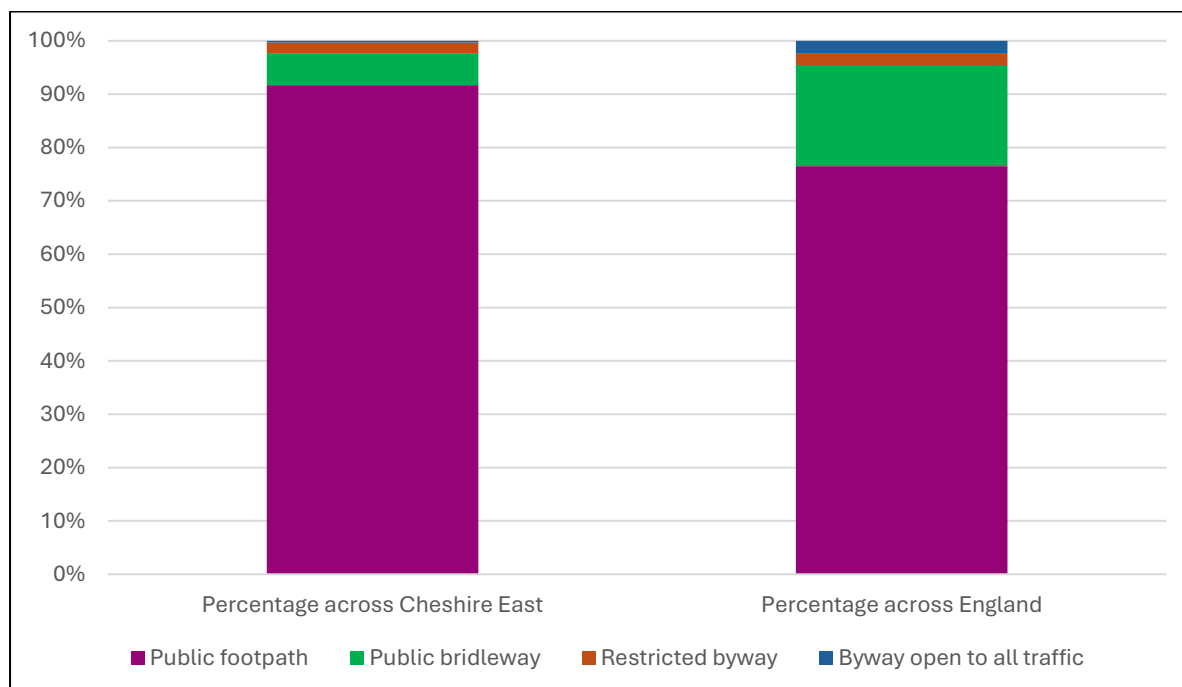


Figure 2 Length of PROW in category as a percentage of total length in Cheshire East compared to the average for England

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Category of PROW	Number of PROW in category ²	Total length of PROW in category (km) ²	Length of PROW in category as % of total length	Percentage across England ³
Public footpath	3194	1,792.9	91.7	76.5
Public bridleway	160	117.0	6.0	19.0
Restricted byway	50	38.8	2.0	2.1
Byway open to all traffic	18	6.4	0.3	2.5

Table 2 Numbers and lengths of PROW in Cheshire East and percentage of each category in Cheshire East compared to the average for England

Further, the distribution of the public rights of way network, and each category of public right of way within that network, is not even throughout the borough. The following map shows the density of public rights of way per kilometre grid square of the Cheshire East area. Whilst this map dates from 2010, the overall density will not have changed at this level of detail. The most densely clustered areas are to the north east of Macclesfield, Disley, Adlington and Mobberley, with isolated areas of high provision elsewhere.

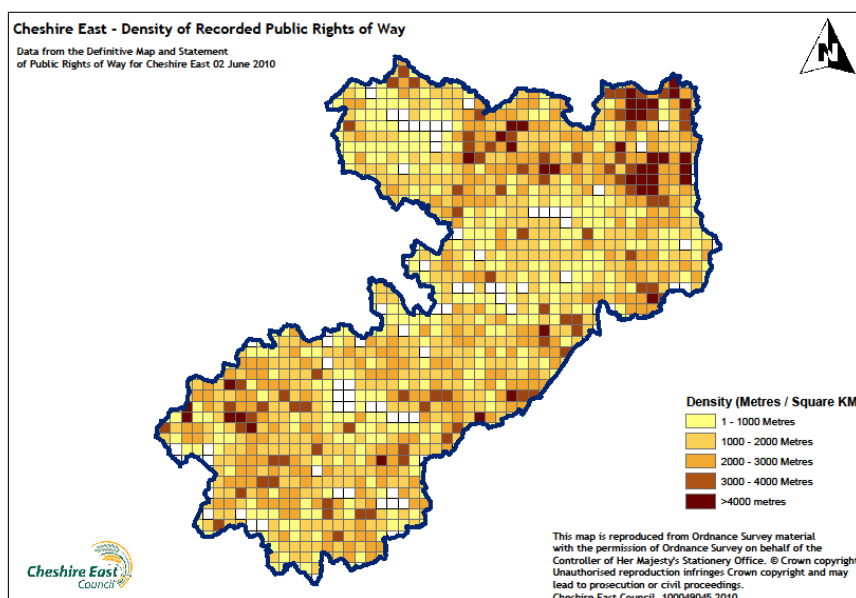


Figure 3 The density of recorded PROW across Cheshire East

² Countryside Access Management System database and Geographical Information System 21/01/2025

³ Ordnance Survey 2023

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The PROW network forms one part of the range of ways the public access the countryside. Other ways include permissive paths, open access land, country parks and linear routes, estate lands and the canal towpath network. Considering countryside access in its widest form, the Cheshire East Green Infrastructure Plan 2019⁴ identifies that the south west part of the Peak District National Park which extends into Cheshire East, *“is important for recreation and tourism due to the extensive open access areas, dense network of footpaths”*.

The Green Infrastructure Plan, under its activity theme of ‘Getting Outdoors Easily’, also identifies the following pinch points where provision of countryside access is limited:-

- land between Lyme Park and the Macclesfield Canal;
- land to the east of Macclesfield;
- land to the south west of Macclesfield;
- land in the Dane Valley between Congleton and Holmes Chapel;
- land to the north of Congleton;
- between Little Moreton Hall and the Macclesfield Canal;
- land near Alsager between the Trent and Mersey Canal and the Salt Line linear country park; and,
- connections between the Wheelock Rail Trail and Salt Line linear country parks linking Wheelock and Alsager.

The Plan explains that these areas *“primarily relate to urban fringes where there is relatively poor access from towns to major Green Infrastructure assets, for example due to public rights of way and other access routes being constrained or fragmented by infrastructure or difficult topography”* (page31).

⁴ [Cheshire East Green Infrastructure Plan 2019](#)

Network Assessment

What have we got for walkers and wheelers?

The 2011 ROWIP identified that provision for walkers is generally good across the borough as a whole, due to the fact that this category of user can access all types of PROW. However local fragmentation remains an issue:-

- routes do not always link together, requiring users to walk along rural roads;
- there is poor provision in the area west of Crewe and along the River Weaver north of Nantwich;
- access to the surrounding countryside is poor from the towns of Crewe, Macclesfield and Middlewich;
- there is a lack of route continuity along the River Weaver valley south of Nantwich to Audlem, other than along the Shropshire Union Canal;
- there is a lack of access in Doddington either side of the A51 to the south of Crewe, where there are a number of attractive landscape features;
- there is a lack of access around Combermere, to the south west of Nantwich, where again there are a number of attractive landscape features;
- access along the River Dane valley is poor, particularly between Radnor Bridge and Holmes Chapel and Holmes Chapel to Middlewich;
- links from Sandbach to Middlewich are lacking (other than via the canal towpath);
- route severance has been caused by the M56, M6 and, in particular, the A556;
- east-west links across the Macclesfield to Stockport mainline railway and the A523 in the Adlington area are poor; and,
- access in the area west of North Rode, either side of the A536, is sparse.

Drilling down to examine the extent of the network available to wheelers, the available data is extremely limited. The Council does not hold an asset inventory of the Public Rights of Way network and so does not have access to a record of its accessibility. Accessibility will depend on the terrain, path surface and width, and path furniture such as stiles, gates and bridges. The accessibility of the network is also impacted by the availability of information to the public about the routes, and the nature of disabilities and equipment used, such as wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

What have we got for horse riders and cyclists?

Even a quick glance at the map below clearly shows that the provision of the rights of way network that is open for use by horse riders and cyclists is a fraction - 8.3% by length - of that available to walkers, and also presents a very fragmented network. The risks posed from traffic using the rural roads which connect the routes that are available is regarded by many user groups and the Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum as a major issue for the borough. A few new Bridleways and Restricted Byways have been added to the Definitive Map through creation projects

Network Assessment

and Definitive Map Modification Order applications, increasing the percentage of the network available from 7.6% in 2011, but the overall provision and connectivity is lacking.

The Green Infrastructure Plan 2019 recognises that “*the Rights of Way Improvement Plans for the National Park and adjacent areas recognise that the bridleway network is generally more fragmented than the public right of way (PROW) network available for walkers*” (page 33).

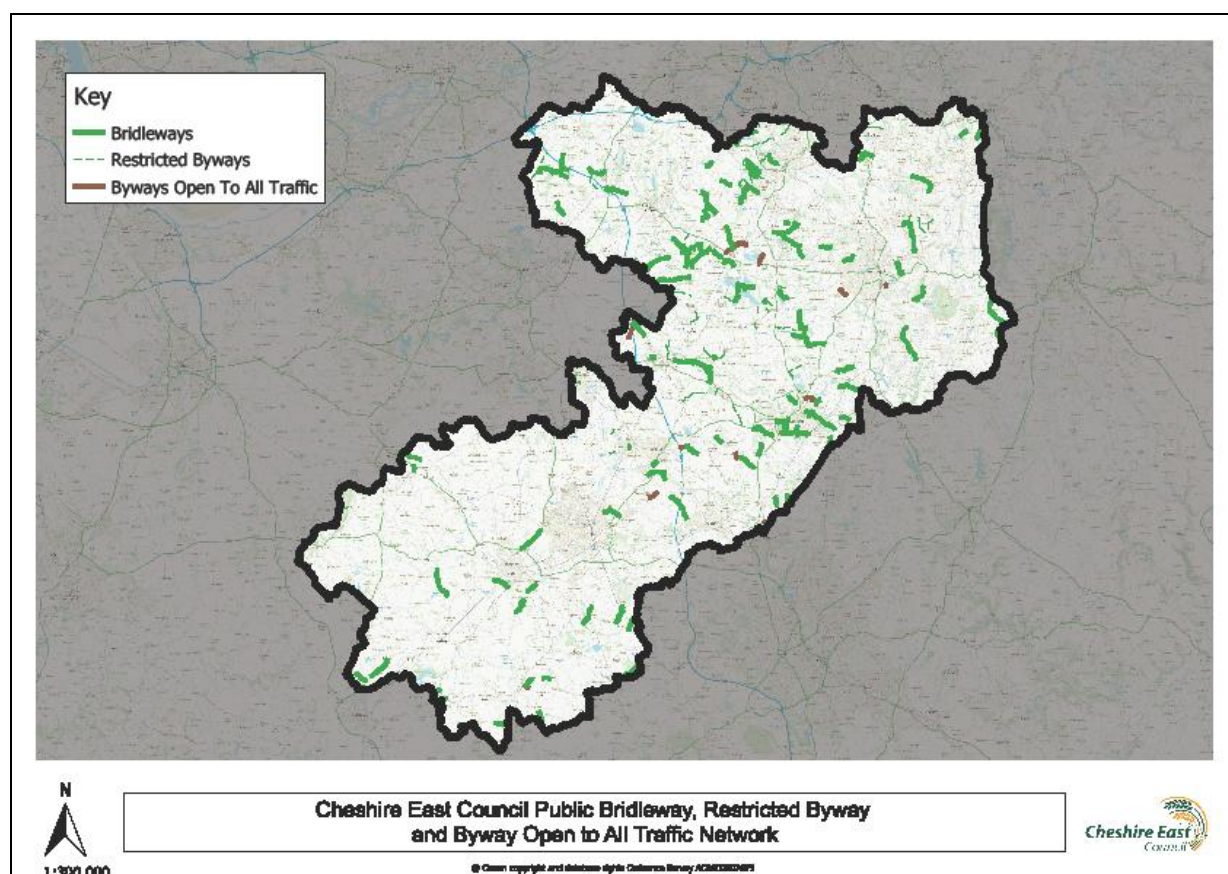


Figure 4 PROW available to horse riders and cyclists

What have we got for carriage drivers and recreational motor vehicles?

Horsedrawn vehicles can use Restricted Byways and Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs). There are few of these in Cheshire East, totalling 2.3% of the network's length. Mechanically-propelled vehicles, such as 4WD vehicles, can use BOATs. There are even fewer in Cheshire East, comprising 0.3% of the length of the network. Such vehicles can also use unsealed unclassified roads in the countryside, but there remains uncertainty about the status of some routes and their maintenance.

Network Assessment

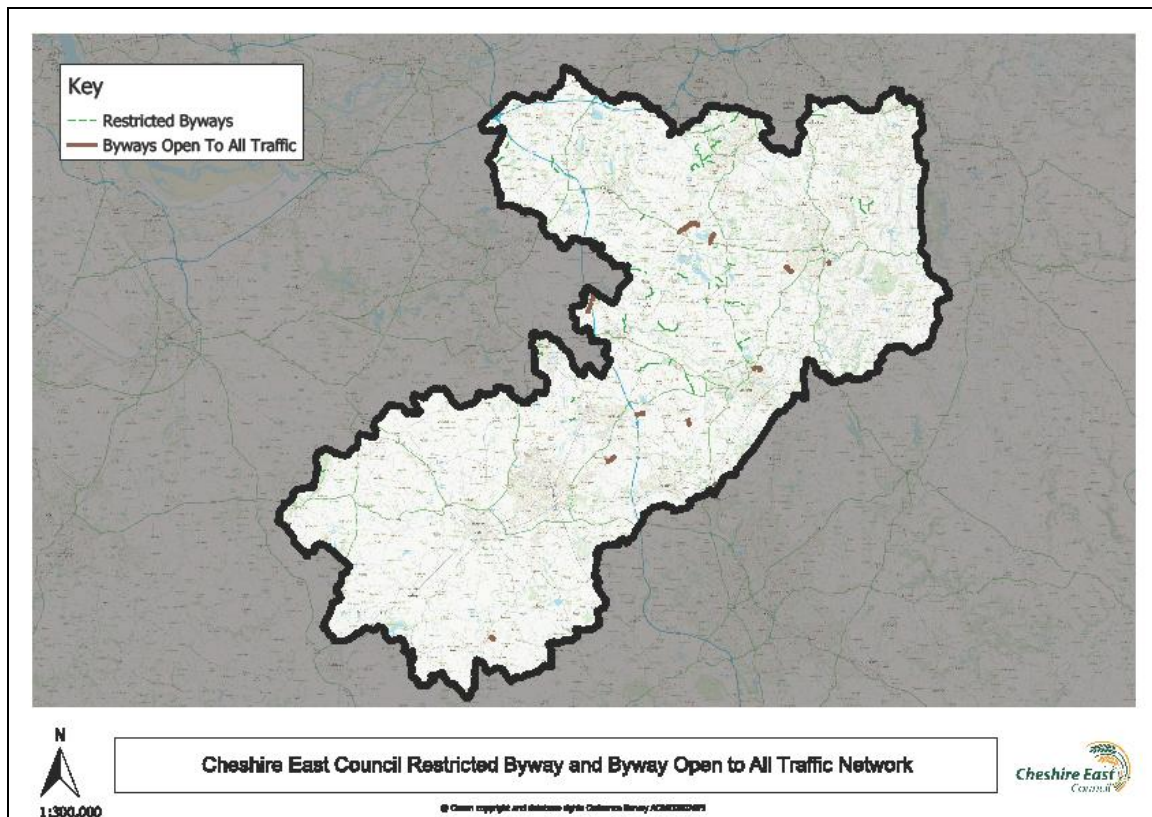


Figure 5 Restricted Byway and Byway Open to All Traffic network

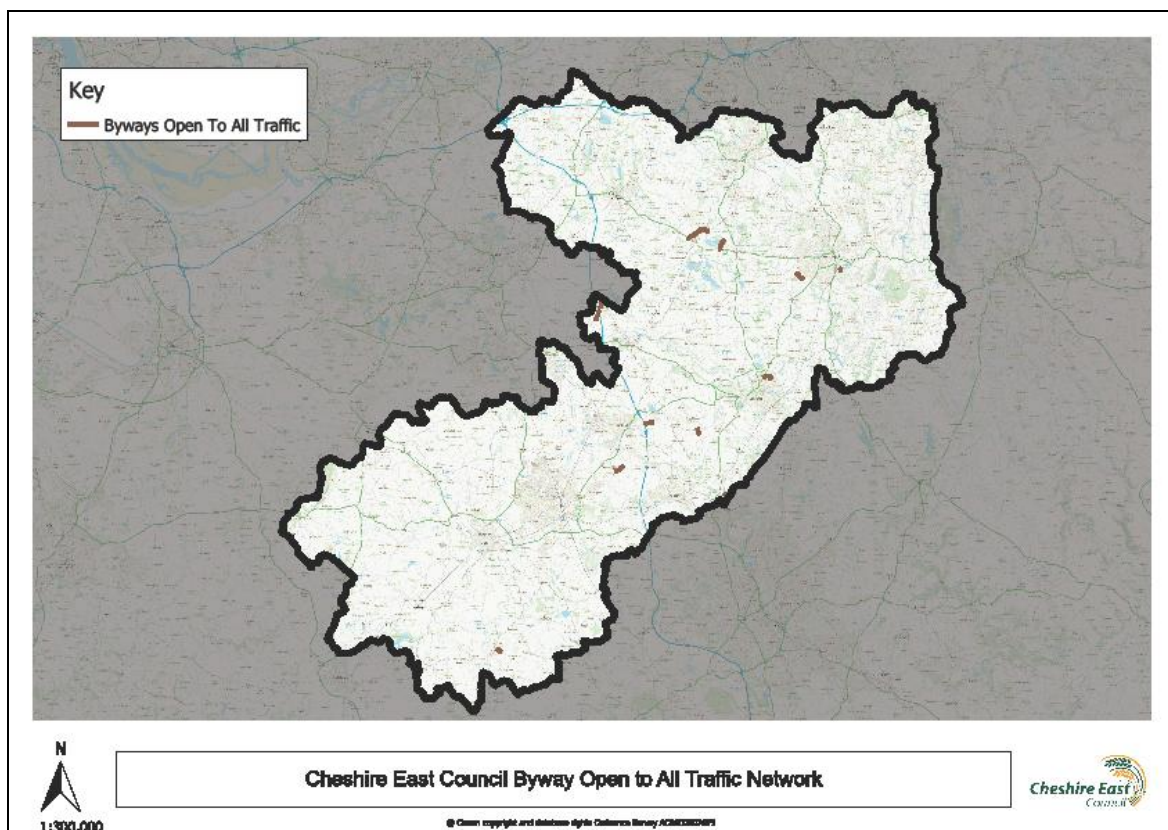


Figure 6 Byway Open to All Traffic network

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Other types of countryside access

As noted above, the public accesses the countryside through a range of routes and sites.

As well as the PROW network, the Council also manages a portfolio of country parks through its Countryside Ranger Service. These range from linear routes to Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and include:-

- Tegg's Nose Country Park, Macclesfield;
- Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve, Congleton;
- Biddulph Valley Way, Congleton;
- Dane in Shaw Pasture Site of Special Scientific Interest, Congleton;
- Wheelock Rail Trail, Sandbach;
- Salt Line, Alsager;
- Lindow Common Site of Special Scientific Interest, Wilmslow;
- Sound Common Site of Special Scientific Interest, near Nantwich;
- Riverside Park, Macclesfield;
- Middlewood Way, Macclesfield-Poynton; and,
- Jacksons' Brickworks Local Nature Reserve, Poynton;

In addition, the Countryside Ranger Service manages sites and projects across the wider Bollin Valley Partnership landscape scale management area in the north of the borough, which includes permissive paths and paths on Council land.

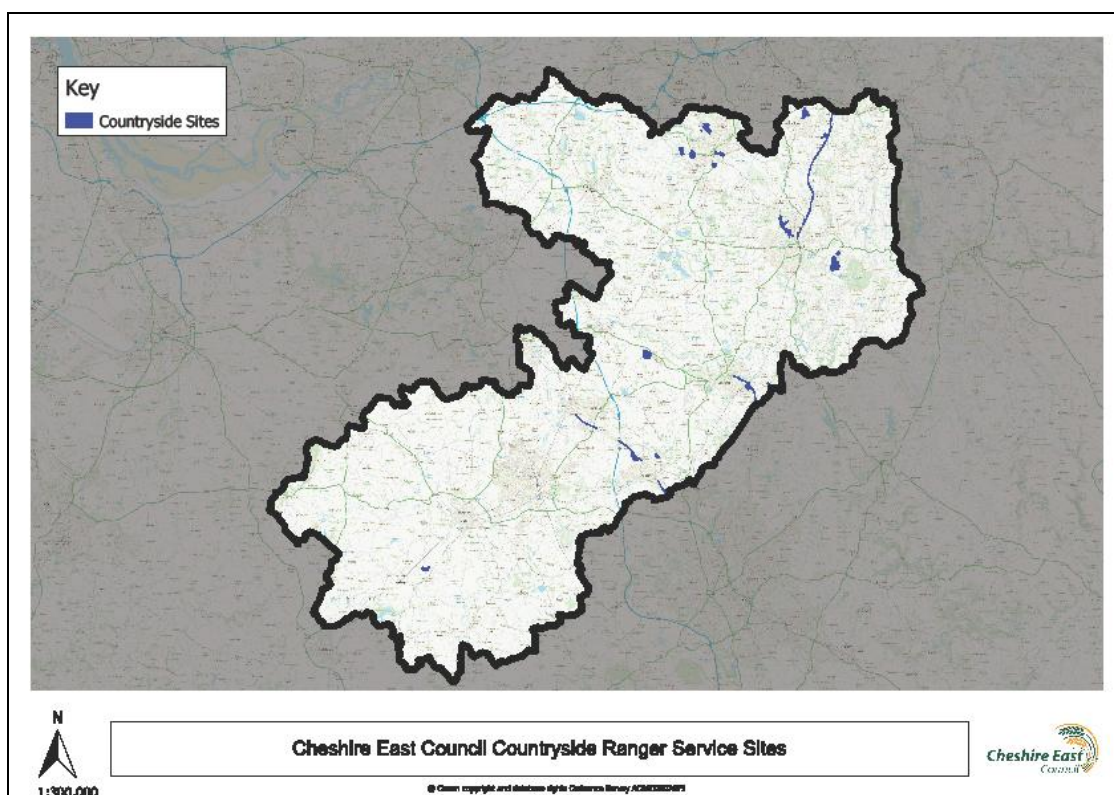


Figure 7 Cheshire East Council Countryside Ranger Service sites

Network Assessment

Woodland

Cheshire East has a limited number of woodland areas where public access is permitted. These include Macclesfield Forest, a site of over 415 hectares (1,025 acres) owned by United Utilities plc. Managed in partnership with Cheshire Wildlife Trust, this site offers a range of walking, wheeling, mountain biking and horse riding trails along with picnic, bird watching and fishing facilities.

Another notable area of woodland is that at Alderley Edge owned by the National Trust, which offers visitors a range of facilities including The Wizard's Wander easy-access circular walk.

The Council, amongst other landowners, is current planting new woodland areas as part of its zero carbon policy. Such projects may present opportunities for securing new public access, though with notable risk and maintenance liabilities..

Towpaths

The Canal & River Trust manage a network of 65 km (40 miles) of canal towpath in Cheshire East, spanning the Macclesfield, Trent and Mersey, Shropshire Union and Peak Forest Canals. Some of these are recorded as PROW, others not, but all offer public access for walkers with varying access opportunities for wheelers and cyclists.

In addition, the private Bridgewater Canal runs along the northern boundary of Cheshire East, offering a traffic-free route for walkers, wheelers and cyclists.

Permissive paths

There are a number of formally recorded permissive paths across the borough, where a landowner allows the public to use a particular route. Some of these are shown on Ordnance Survey mapping, whilst others will be more known to local residents. Such records may be in the format of a permissive path agreement with the Council, or through government agri-environment schemes. There are also a number of permissive paths which are not formally recorded.

Country estates

The public is invited, when walking and wheeling during site opening hours, to access the countryside within some country estates. These include sites managed by the National Trust such as its over 567 hectares (1,400 acres) historic parkland at Lyme Park and its 162 hectares (400 acres) woodland and countryside surrounding the River Bollin at Quarry Bank near Wilmslow.

Promoted routes

There are a large – and growing - number of medium or long distance routes which are entirely within or pass through Cheshire East on the PROW network. Of these routes, few are available for cyclists and horse riders. The majority of these routes

Network Assessment

are developed and promoted by organisations outside of the Council. At present, promoted routes do not receive any additional maintenance over and above the rest of the PROW network unless external grant funding is sourced – as was delivered on the Gritstone Trail as part of the Twin Trails project. However, it is recognised that promoted routes provide information to give potential users the confidence to explore the countryside.

Cheshire's Twin Trails Project

A partnership project, developed by Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council, delivered improvements to the infrastructure of Cheshire's Twin Trails in recognition of their value to the visitor economy.

The project secured £148,524.16 of Rural Development Programme for England (2014-20) funding under the growth programme as part of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

The funding was used to bring the two trails to a consistent and high quality, replacing stiles with gates, improving path surfacing, installing signage and interpretation for visitors.



Network Assessment

The quality of the network

It is notoriously difficult to measure the quality of a public rights of way network. Indeed, The Countryside Agency research⁵ concluded that there were “*no robust, consistent and comprehensive datasets that could be used to measure overall progress*” in defining, maintaining and publicising their PROW networks.

Nationally, an ‘ease of use’ performance indicator was developed to make an overall assessment of an individual path. This included whether it was signposted, unobstructed and with surface and furniture in good repair. The assessment was undertaken by PROW Officers who covered 5% of the network each year. The PROW Team of the Council now works in partnership with volunteers from East Cheshire Ramblers and Peak and Northern Footpath Society who regularly undertake inspections of a wider proportion of the network. It is noted that such assessments consider the PROW network from the point of view of a walker, rather than a wheeler, cyclist, horse rider or horsedrawn vehicle driver.

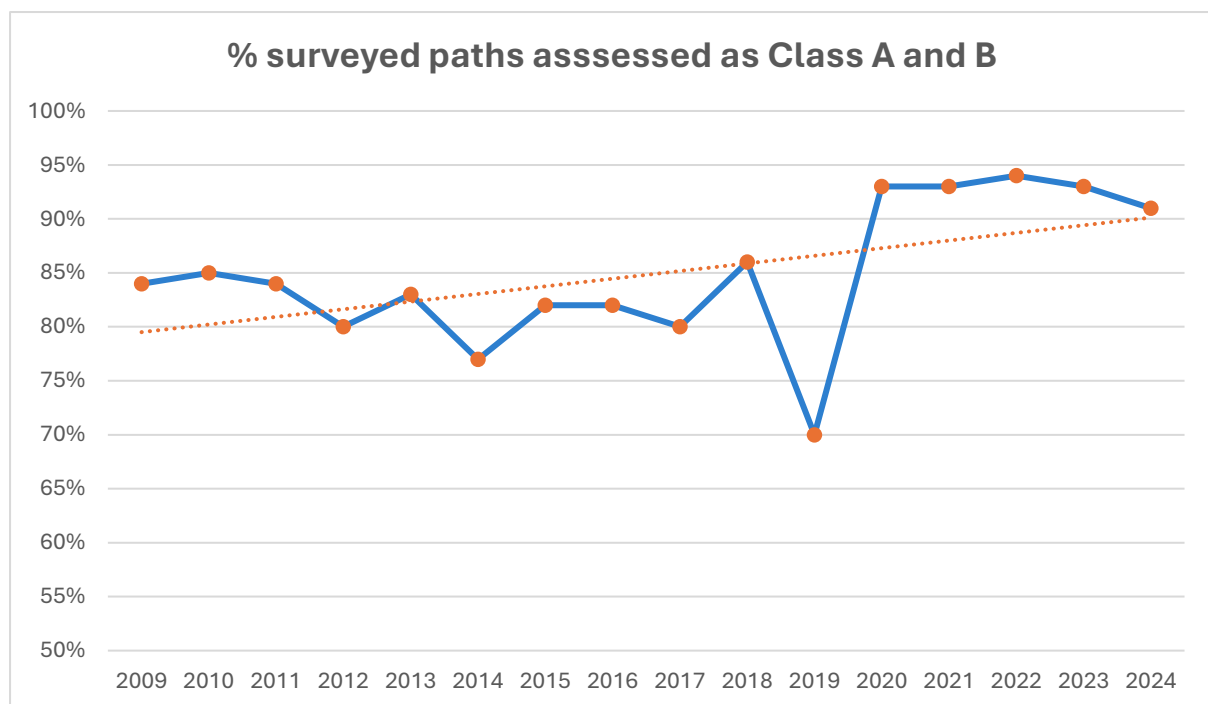


Figure 8 Random PROW ‘Ease of Use’ survey results

⁵ [Countryside Agency 2006 Public rights of way: a review of provision by highway authorities](#)

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Public satisfaction surveys

An indicative performance indicator is offered by the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey. This survey is conducted by post, on behalf of a participating highway authority with a sample size set by that authority. The survey results contain benchmarking indicators relating to walking and cycling including the local Public Rights of Way network. Questions assess the level of satisfaction with various factors relating to Public Rights of Way.

Although a limited data base, the results offer an indication of trends in public satisfaction for PROW within Cheshire East, which are largely in line with national trends shown by the average satisfaction scores of participating authorities. The data covers the period of the COVID pandemic and is therefore not necessarily indicative of trends outside of that time, but many indicate the impact of reduced output of Council resources coupled with the increased use of the network resulting in the deterioration in path surfaces and assets during that time.

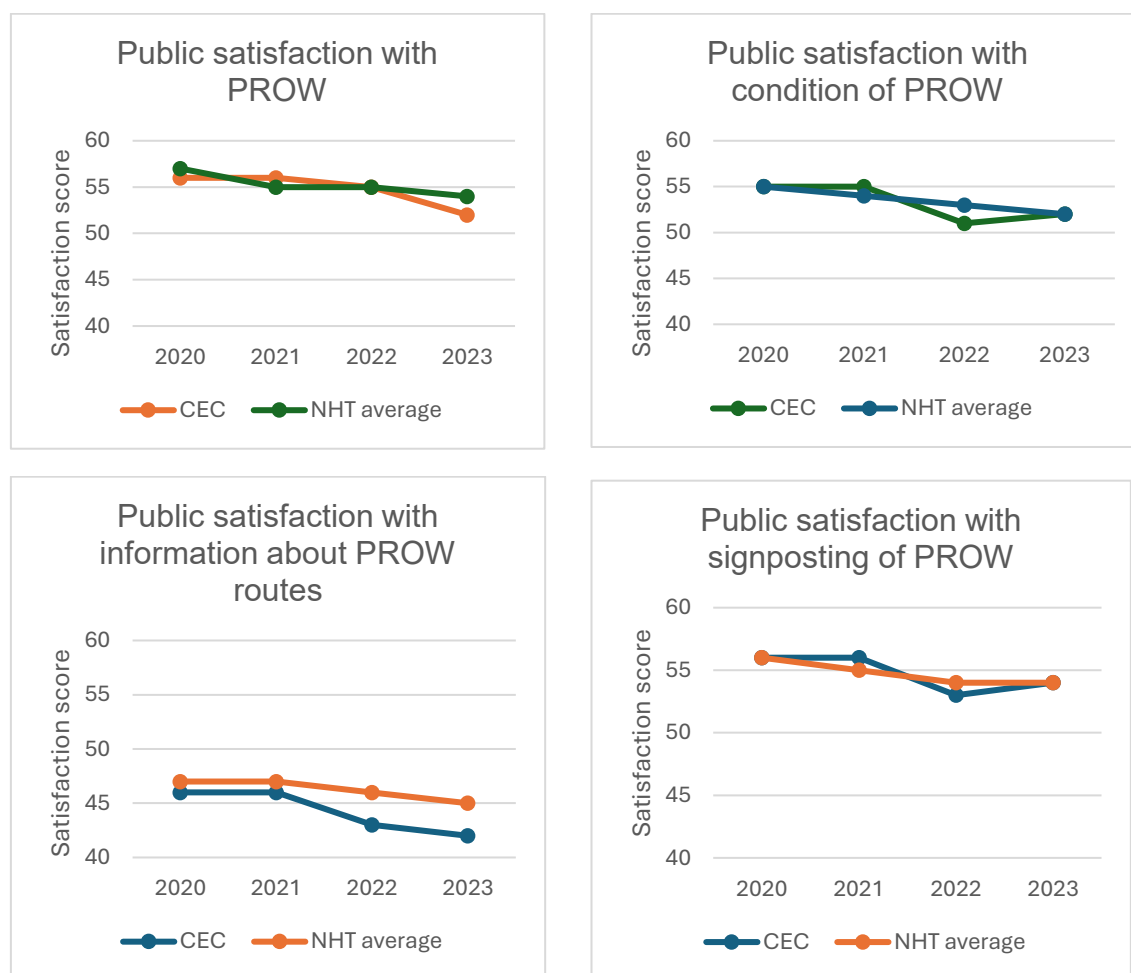


Figure 9 National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey results

Network Assessment

“My sister-in-law, a tough long-distance walker who has experienced paths in all areas of the country from Land's End to John o' Groats (literally!), says she would put Cheshire East at the top of all local authorities for the excellent standard of their footpaths”

Obstructions and temporary closures on the PROW network

Fortunately, through good working relationships, the numbers of obstructions on the PROW are minimal. Issues, which are largely to do with the growing of crops on cross-field paths or the installation of temporary electric fences for livestock management, are normally resolved following a reminder to the farmer. Other, longer term obstructions such as buildings constructed on the line of a PROW, are identified from time to time and are sought to be resolved by the diversion of the PROW.

Temporary closures of PROW are permitted for works by land managers and utility companies, for example, with housing developments also featuring as a high proportion of such closures, normally with the provision of an alternative route for the public to use.

In recent years, temporary closures of some PROW have had to be put in place whilst funding was secured for the repair or replacement of bridges on the network. River erosion of bankside paths is another reason for such closures, the numbers of these fluctuating year on year. Further still, issues arising due to potential risks from trees alongside PROW are increasing in number and also result in short term closures of paths.

Accessibility

The quality of the network will depend on the assessor's viewpoint and is therefore subjective and varying. Different users may be looking for different qualities when using the network depending on their reason for use and their needs. As noted above, the Council does not have an inventory of assets against which to monitor condition or the physical accessibility of the network.

What the Council does record on an annual basis is the numbers of pieces of path furniture, such as stiles and gates, which are installed. The following graph shows the relative numbers of stiles being installed on the PROW network in recent years, compared to the number of pedestrian gates, with nearly twice as many gates installed in 2024-25 than stiles. The PROW team takes every opportunity to work with landowners to seek to replace stiles with more accessible gates. However, as stiles remain the property of the landowner, the landowner can retain the way a PROW crosses a boundary as a stile should they wish. The number of items of path furniture installed can be seen to have reduced during the COVID pandemic, due to

Network Assessment

reduced capacity of PROW Officers as their efforts, under restricted working practices, had to be focussed on the issues caused by the lockdowns. These figures are now increasing.

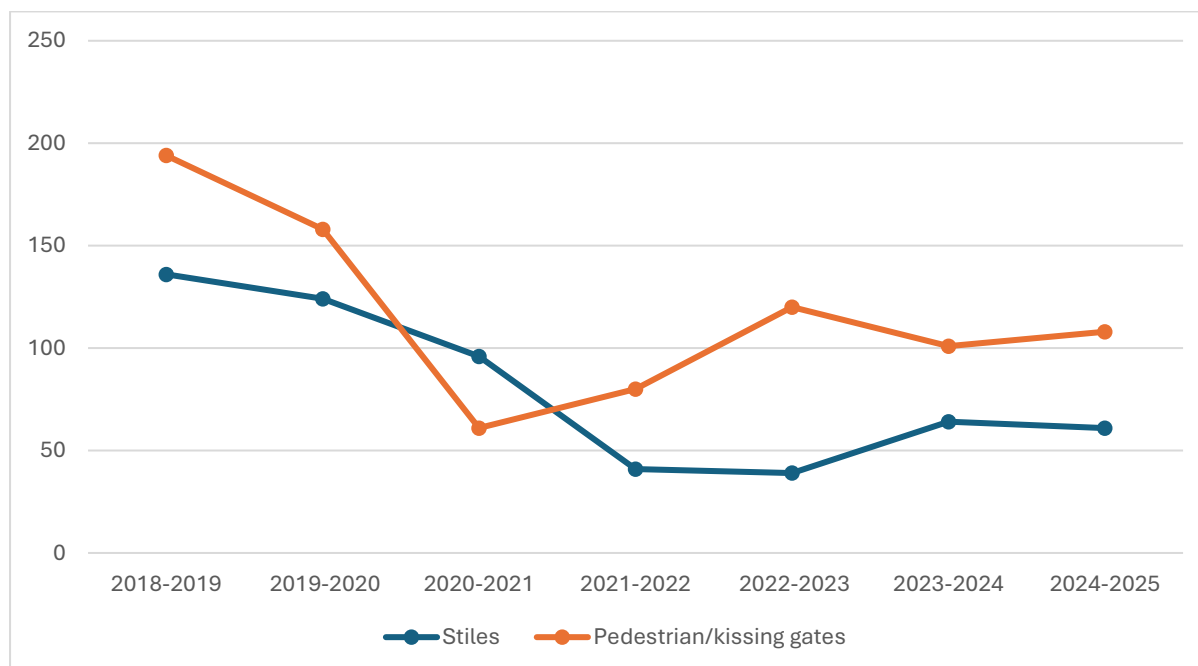


Figure 10 Comparison of numbers of stiles and pedestrian gates installed on the PROW network

The impact of climate change on the condition of the network

The impact of climate change increasing the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events is highlighting the vulnerability of the network to such events. The effects being witnessed include the erosion of path surfaces and the erosion of river banks and bridge abutments. The Met Office⁶ predicts that, compared to the UK's climate in 1990, by 2070 winters will be up to 30% wetter, with an increase in rainfall intensity of up to 25%. It is predicted that summers will be up to 60% drier, depending on the region, with rainfall intensity increasing by up to 20%. Such scenarios will affect path surfaces and cause river erosion issues.

The Met Office⁷ also notes, though with the caveat that forecast models offer less confidence in this area, that there will be a slight increase in the number and intensity of winter storms, in the UK in the future, including disproportionately more severe storms. Such scenarios, particularly when coupled with wet ground conditions, will increase the frequency of tree and branch failures which can obstruct PROW and cause risk to users. To give an indication of this increasing area of work, in the central area of the borough in 2022-23 there were 25 tree issues reported on the PROW network, rising to 44 in 2023-24 and 58 in 2024-25.

⁶ [Climate change in the UK - Met Office](#) 14th April 2025

⁷ [UK and Global extreme events – Wind storms - Met Office](#) 14th April 2025

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The Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum has identified the need to recognise the impact of climate change on countryside access networks, and in turn the usability of those networks for local residents and visitors alike. The Forum also recognised changing patterns in the visitor economy under climate change, and the potential increase in use of the networks, as destinations for outdoor activities alter across the globe. The need to develop an adaption strategy was, therefore, highlighted.

In 2023 the National Trust⁸ published a report which explored the impact of climate change on the land and buildings of the charity which owns many sites offering countryside access. It recognised that climate change affects the carrying capacity of the ground, resulting in changes to path maintenance and approaches being required. By setting out potential options, thresholds and tipping points, the Trust is seeking to assist its site managers in adapting to the impact of climate change.

Amongst a range of policy requests, the document called for a new emphasis on climate adaptation to match that on climate mitigation, which is already taking place through measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

⁸ [A Climate for Change: Adaptation and the National Trust](#)

Network Assessment

Conclusion

The PROW network of Cheshire East is extensive, but not equality distributed in geographic location or availability to the different categories of users. Further, the network is fragmented by roads.

The quality of the network is largely regarded and assessed as being high. However, the accessibility of the network to users with differing needs is, to a large extent unknown, and considered to be relatively restricted.

"During this last year of lockdown, my brother and I have been taking regular weekly walks, covering virtually all of the footpaths in the Poynton area, which we have not done for many years.

We have been so impressed with the standard of all these paths - stiles, gates, waymarks, signposts all in excellent condition, that our walks have been a pleasure.

I am 86, my brother is 79 and has Parkinson's Disease, and we have had no difficulty in walking all the routes"

“

Cheshire East Council Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026-36

Evidence base: demand assessment

For consultation

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Demand assessment

What do we know about the use of the network?

Datasets

Unfortunately, data on the actual usage of the PROW and countryside access network is limited. In the past a number of physical people counters have been installed at fixed points to gather information on the number of people using a route over time, but these have suffered from vandalism. More recently, mobile phone data has become the preferential method of data collection due to it being sourced remotely. This data source uses anonymously tracked signals of mobile phones in to monitor location, dwell time at a site, the origin of the visitor, as well as actual numbers of visitors. However, this method of data collection comes at a cost and is not yet available on the PROW network – data for a limited number of Countryside Ranger Service sites is being gathered when required for specific purposes.

Some survey data is available when collected as part of Environmental Impact Assessments for larger development site proposals or strategic infrastructure schemes. Such information is very specific to particular paths however, and may rely on limited manual counts of usage on a particular day or more. Usage has, not surprisingly, been found to depend on the location of a particular route. For example, Public Footpath No.19 to the south east of Middlewich, was found to have no users during the course of a survey conducted on both weekday and weekend days. In contrast, Public Footpath No. 12, which forms part of circular walking route close to the town of Alsager, was found to have 348 pedestrians during a nine-day census.

The Canal & River Trust monitor use of the towpath of the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal in Middlewich town. Since December 2022, the average daily recorded count is 218 visits, with usage typically higher in the spring and summer months and lower in the winter months, as may be anticipated. 95% of users were pedestrians, with 5% being cyclists.

Strava's Global Heat Map¹, even when viewed at the scale usable by those without Strava accounts, shows clear evidence of routes that are popular with those recording their activities via this channel. Although there are limitations to the use of the data, when the 'hike' activity is selected, popular routes where usage is high include the promoted Nantwich Riverside Loop, the Shropshire Union Canal towpath, the Sandstone Trail, the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal towpath in Middlewich, Joey the Swan public open space in Wistaston, the Wheelock Rail Trail and Salt Line between Wheelock and Alsager, the Gritstone Trail and circular loops including the Macclesfield Canal towpath to the south of Congleton, the Biddulph Valley Way in Congleton, Bosley Cloud, Alderley Edge, Tatton Park, Wilmslow to Manchester Airport, the Macclesfield Canal and Middlewood Way to the

¹ www.strava.com

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north of Macclesfield and multiple routes in the Cheshire Peak District. The map is similar when the 'trail run' activity is selected.

When the 'walk' activity is selected, a denser map of popular routes is revealed, which will include the highway network in towns, as well as those used for countryside access. The Connect2 Crewe-Nantwich Greenway, a traffic-free surfaced bridleway linking the two towns, is evident.

When the 'mountain bike ride' activity is selected, the map is skewed towards the Cheshire Peak District, plus the Biddulph Valley Way and Bosley Cloud near Congleton, a circular route between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport, and multiple routes to the north of Macclesfield.

Other sources of data are available which relate to greenspaces in general, rather than specific locations. These include the Natural England People and Nature Survey² which identified that 26% of respondents spent free time outside in green and natural spaces more than twice a week, but not every day. Also noted was that 15% of respondents did so every day and 28% once or twice a week.

Sport England's Active Lives Survey³ has identified that a person's age, sex, gender, ethnicity, socio-economic group and whether they have a disability or long-term health condition are significant factors influencing a person's activity levels. Longstanding inequalities remain, with women, those from lower socio-economic groups and Black and Asian people still less likely to be active than others.

The survey also shows that where people live also impacts on activity levels, with those living in more deprived places less likely to be active than those in places that are less deprived. For example, 33.7% of residents from the most deprived places within Cheshire East report being active for less than 30 minutes a week, compared to only 20.5% of those from the least deprived areas.

Evidence on the ground

On some popular paths, vegetation being kept at bay or surface erosion can be seen as a sign of use, though not quantifiable. Some of this is visible in aerial photography, such as on Bridleway No. 4 in the Parish of Baddington which forms part of the Nantwich Riverside Loop promoted walk.

² [The People and Nature Surveys for England: Adults' Data Y5Q2 \(July 2024 - September 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

³ [Active Lives | Sport England](#)

Demand assessment



Figure 1 Aerial imagery showing the used line of a Public Right of Way

Country park usage

A limited number of physical people counters have been in operation at fixed points on Countryside Ranger Service sites across the borough. Whilst experiencing frequent issues with the validity of the data, the available results indicate that between October 2022 and October 2023, a total of 126,463 visits were made to the Biddulph Valley Way in Congleton and a similar figure to the Riverside Park in Macclesfield. It was estimated that in 2022-2023 in total over 1 million visits were made to the country parks of Cheshire East.

Again, noting limitations in the use of the data, mobile phone monitoring recorded a total number of 113,260 visits to Tegg's Nose Country Park near Macclesfield in 2024, 115,252 to Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve between Holmes Chapel and Congleton, and 77,149 to the Salt Line near Alsager. Visits varied over the year, with the peaks in the summer months as would be expected, although this variation was only slight, indicating the usage of site by local people for whom the visits form part of their regular regimes, possibly for dog walking.

Demand assessment

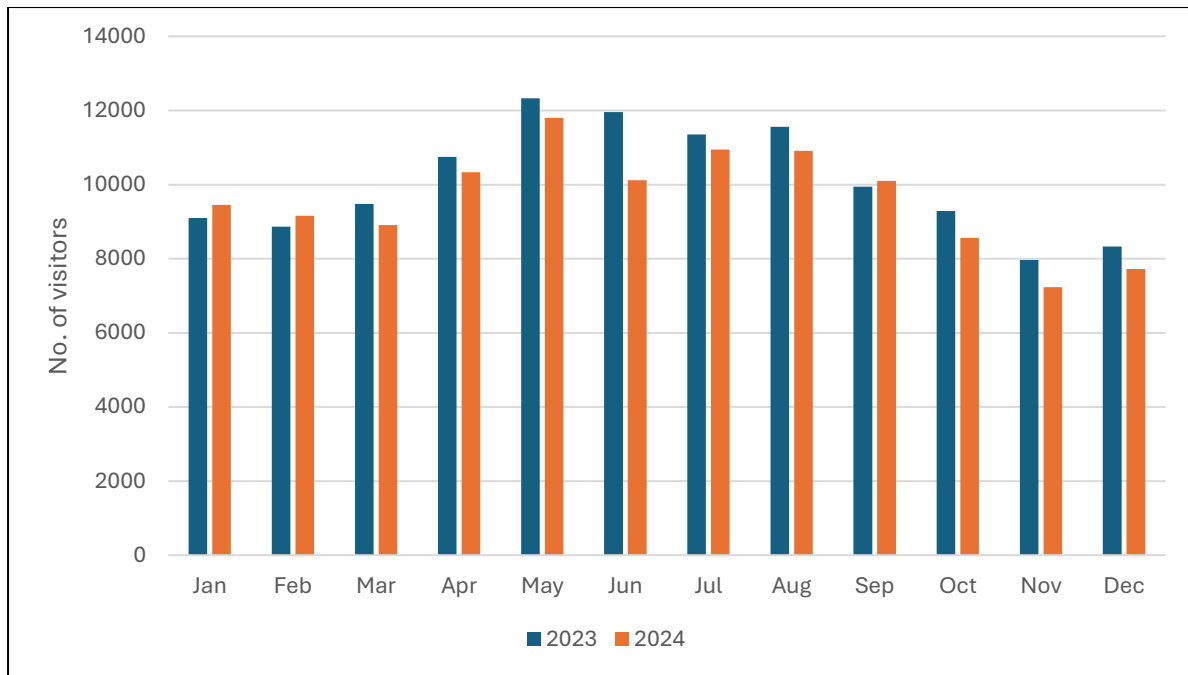


Figure 2 Numbers of visits to Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve

Visits by means other than car to the National Trust's Lyme Park site also vary throughout the year; the data for 2024 recorded a peak of 18,014 visitors in August, and a low of 10,651 in February. On average the Trust estimates that 12,000 visitors go through the 5 main gates each month, with this monitoring including use of the Gritstone Trail promoted walking route. Again, although noting the limitations of the data for specific analysis, the figures are valuable as indicative and in identifying trends.

Demand assessment

Inferred usage

A de facto indicator of usage of the network may be in the form of webpage hits and route leaflet downloads. In 2024-25, there were 140,096 page views of the Countryside Ranger Service and Bollin Valley Partnership webpages. In particular, the Free Walks Leaflets page on the Council's website⁴ received nearly 30,000 views between 2020 and 2025, an average of nearly 6,000 views a year.

The free walks webpage is
"very accessible and informative"

As of March 2025, the Countryside Ranger Service had 23,475 Facebook followers, 4,954 X (formerly Twitter) followers, 1,379 Instagram followers and 3,457 email newsletter subscribers.

The promotional website Visit Chester and Cheshire hosts a number of walks in the county under the banner 'Explore the Countryside'⁵. In the year to March 2025, the page for the Gritstone Trail had 8,273 views whilst that for the Shutlingsloe walk received 13,608 views.



Figure 3 A view of Shutlingsloe hill from a footpath in Wildboardclough

⁴⁴ [Cheshire East Council Free Walks Leaflets](#)

⁵ [Visit Chester & Cheshire | Explore the Countryside](#)

Demand assessment

The impact of the COVID pandemic

During the lockdowns imposed under the pandemic, it was widely accepted, though largely anecdotally, that path usage increased dramatically. One dataset that is available is from Natural England's monitoring of path usage at Wybunbury Moss where they recorded a 167% increase in visits in 2020 compared to the previous year.

The National Trust, a significant owner of countryside land in Cheshire East, has seen visitor numbers to its properties, including paying visitors to historic houses, increase steadily since the end of the lockdowns, though not, as of 2023-24, as high as pre-pandemic figures. The Trust considers that rising inflation, low consumer confidence and cost-of-living pressures, especially impacting families, have influenced this trend⁶.

Tatton Park, a National Trust property managed by the Council, also comprises extensive greenspace within its boundaries. The Park saw monitored visitor numbers rise exponentially as the lockdowns were lifted, though the data does not capture those visitors who were not counted on entering the park, notably those walking, wheeling and cycling.

Estimates for pet dog ownership in the UK range from 10.6 million⁷ to 13.5 million⁸, a figure which showed a rapid increase as a result of the Covid pandemic, with about 36% of households now owning at least one dog⁸. Those dogs need exercising and many will be walked on the PROW and countryside access network around the country, a factor which exacerbated the impact of the pandemic on those paths.

This increased usage with dogs, coupled with the general increase in path usage, resulted in land managers experiencing issues including litter, trespass and dog fouling. Anecdotally, this was considered more impactful because those accessing the countryside included people who had previously not done so, and who were perhaps less aware of the working landscape in which they were exercising, and the need to do so responsibly. Such issues have continued after restrictions were lifted.

The 2024 [NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report](#)⁹ reported livestock attacks from dogs increasing nearly 30% from the previous year. This has an impact not only on the animals concerned, but an economic impact estimated at £2.4m. Another impact of irresponsible dog ownership is in the form of faeces which can cause disease in livestock and humans.

The increased usage caused path surfaces to be degraded, particularly where land managers understandably enclosed paths within fences so as to keep people and dogs within controlled areas.

⁶ [National Trust Annual Report 2024](#)

⁷ [Pet Populations - PDSA](#)

⁸ [Dog population in the UK 2024 | Statista](#), published 15th August 2024

⁹ [NFU Mutual Rural Crime Report 2024](#)

Demand assessment

The Natural England People and Places Survey¹⁰ asked participants about changes to their outdoor activities since the Covid lockdowns. 29% responded to say that they had been visiting local green and natural spaces more, whilst 19% said they had increased visits to such spaces further away from home. 38% stated that visiting local green and natural spaces had been even more important to their wellbeing.

“My friend I have recently been trying newer walks around the Haslington and Sandbach area. We are both in our 60s and this has been a great boost to our physical and mental health during the Coronavirus lockdown”

¹⁰ [The People and Nature Surveys for England: Adults' Data Y5Q2 \(July 2024 - September 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

Demand assessment

What do we know about who is using the network?

The Natural England People and Nature Survey¹¹ identified that 70% of visits to green or blue spaces including the activity of walking, including taking a dog for a walk. 10% involved running, 6% cycling and 3% horse riding. The demand for walking routes is evident: 83 million day visits to rural locations in 2015 involved a hike¹².

However, given that we have relatively little data about the use of the PROW and countryside access network, it is not surprising that we know even less about *who* those users are.

A survey undertaken to assess use of Alsager Footpath No. 12, recorded that two thirds of walkers are using the route to walk their dog. Notably, 20% of those dog walkers had the dog off the lead, with potential impacts for livestock and other users.

Of the total number of users, 38% were children, one third of whom were accompanied by adults whilst the other two thirds were unaccompanied. 16 users were classed as 'elderly' users, with 4 as 'mobility impaired' users.

Mobile phone data for the Salt Line country park suggest that over 75% of visits were from an origin within 3-10 miles of the site, with 17% within 0-3 miles. Comparable figures for Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve suggest that 72% of visits were from an origin within 3-10 miles of the site, with 18% within 0-3 miles. It is clear that use of the sites is predominantly by local residents, and with 61% of the population of Cheshire East living in urban areas¹³, the value of countryside access to those residents is clear.

In contrast, nearly 50% of visitors to Tegg's Nose Country Park were from an origin within 0-3 miles of the site, with 20% from within 3-10 miles and 22% from within 10-25 miles, indicating a different and wider-geographical draw to this particular site. Some visitors to the sites come from over 50 miles, presumably those visiting friends and families in the area.

¹¹ [The People and Nature Surveys for England: Adults' Data Y5Q2 \(July 2024 - September 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

¹² [Visit Britain \(2015\) GB Day Visitor Report](#)

¹³ [Cheshire East Council Active Travel Strategy draft 2025](#)

Demand assessment

Barriers to use

Those not using the PROW and wider countryside access network will have many and varied reasons. Some will simply not wish to. Others may not know about the potential, The provision of information, or lack of, influences

Others still may not be able to use the networks. This may be again for a variety of reasons, including disposable income, transport, time, perception of risk, health, disability and physical barriers.

Disabled people

Estimates from the Department for Work and Pensions' Family Resources Survey¹⁴ indicate that 16.1 million people in the UK had a disability in 2022/23, representing 24% of the total population.

People with a long-term health condition or disability are twice as likely to be inactive as those without, according to NHS England¹⁵.

The prevalence of disability rises with age, and Cheshire East has a higher-than-average population aged 65 and over compared to both the North West and England¹⁶.

"I am 82 and walk a few miles every day. Before lockdown stiles were becoming a problem. I want you to know that all the new gates that are appearing are so much appreciated. Thank you so much. KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK."

The Disabled Ramblers¹⁷ identified that around 7 million people in the UK, or about 10% of the population, are unable to do a 1km walk but could do a 1km 'wheel' using a wheelchair, mobility scooter or adaptive bike, for example. They purport, therefore, that with an appropriate wheeled mobility aid these people could be '1km active'. However, they continue to note that only around 750,000 people have access to an appropriate mobility aid, thus recognising a 'chasm in provision' of 90% of those who need it not having easy access to an appropriate form of mobility aid for a 1km wheel.

Natural England's People and Nature Survey data published 26 March 2025¹⁸, covering data collected between July 2024 and September 2024, recorded that a lack of facilities and access points for those with disabilities was noted by 5% of respondents as the main reason for not spending free time outdoors in the last 14

¹⁴ [Family Resources Survey: financial year 2022 to 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁵ [NHS England » Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

¹⁶ 2023 Mid-year estimates produced by Office for National Statistics

¹⁷ Not Enough Wheels to Go Round, Disabled Ramblers, 2022

¹⁸ [The People and Nature Surveys for England: Adults' Data Y5Q2 \(July 2024 - September 2024\) - GOV.UK](#)

Demand assessment

days. This figure has stayed relatively constant since 2020. The survey also indicated that 29% of adults in England are worried about anti-social behaviour when visiting a green or natural space.

Data about the numbers of blind and partially sighted people, as specifically identified in the legislation surrounding the ROWIP, are not available separately, but are included within the figures above.

Demand assessment

The potential of the network

The PROW and countryside access network of the borough form part of the wider green infrastructure of Cheshire East. The Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit has been used to arrive at a valuation of the benefits of green infrastructure in Cheshire East¹⁹. The health and wellbeing Gross Value Added contribution of the Green Infrastructure of Cheshire East has been estimated at £8.3m, and the other economic value at £171m. In terms of recreation and leisure, the figures have been estimated other economic value at £73.6m. The ORVal for Cheshire East, which uses the national Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment dataset to derive welfare values for green spaces, estimated the welfare value from accessible green spaces to be £78.9m per annum.²⁰

Visitor economy

Research has demonstrated that “*spending by walkers provides significant benefits to local economies in terms of income and job generation*”²¹. Walking tourism was estimated to generate up to £2.76 billion for the England Economy in 2023 and supported up to 245,500 full time jobs. It is recognised that small scale tourist businesses such as B&Bs tend to generate higher economic multipliers than national businesses, with remote rural locations also tending to have a higher multiplier effect, thereby maximising the benefits of visitor spend.

The countryside is recognised as a strength in the Cheshire and Warrington Destination Management Plan 2024-2029 as it recognises that the area is well placed to take advantage of trends in tourism, including the desire for outdoor recreation²².

The National Trust, as a major landowner of countryside in Cheshire East, aims to work with partners to deliver landscape-scale improvements in nature recovery. The Trust’s *People and Nature Thriving* strategy covering 2025-2035²³, seeks to restore nature both within and outside of its land holdings, to end unequal access to nature, beauty and history, and to inspire more people to care and take action. Recognising that “*many people don’t have enough nature in their lives to be healthy*”, the Trust aims to increase access so everyone can benefit, by removing practical barriers like distance and emotional barriers like belonging. A key aspect of distance to Trust properties is the ‘last mile’ – that from a public transport connection to the property itself – with the potential of the PROW network to provide that connectivity having been highlighted.

¹⁹ [Green infrastructure assessment of Cheshire East](#)

²⁰ [Green infrastructure assessment of Cheshire East](#) derived from <http://leep.exeter.ac.uk/orval/>

²¹ Christies and Matthews (2003) *The economic and social value of walking in England and Sport and Recreation Alliance (2014) The Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation: The Evidence*

²² [Cheshire and Warrington Destination Management Plan](#)

²³ [Our strategy to 2035 | National Trust](#)

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This aspiration, to widen the range of people using the countryside access networks, is mirrored in the Ramblers' 2024 strategy *Opening the Way*²⁴. The walking charity wants a future where anyone can enjoy walking outdoors and aims to prioritise the needs of communities with the least access and which face the most barriers to the outdoors. Focusing on working with the most deprived communities, the Ramblers note the need to improve confidence and knowledge to walk outdoors. This need is a recurring issue raised by stakeholders

Health and wellbeing

The health and wellbeing benefits of physical activity are well recognised. NHS England²⁵ has stated that:

- *“physical inactivity is estimated to contribute to almost 1 in 10 premature deaths from coronary heart disease ... and 1 in 6 deaths in the UK from any cause*
- *physical inactivity is increasingly recognised as a global health priority that should be the concern of all healthcare systems*
- *the greatest health and economic gains can be made by supporting those who are physically inactive to participate in some physical activity*
- *physical activity helps to delay the onset and progression of diseases for as long as possible, it also helps people to recover from surgery more quickly and it is beneficial for mental health”.*

NHS England²⁶ highlight the economic value of activity for the health of the nation, with people who are inactive being less able to participate in society, both socially and economically. Cited is a report into the social and economic value of community sport and physical activity in England²⁷ which found that over £9.5 billion in value to the economy can be attributed to the role of physical activity in preventing a number of serious physical and mental health conditions. The report found that of this amount:

- *“£5.2 billion was in healthcare savings*
- *£1.7 billion was in social care savings*
- *more than £3.6 billion worth of savings were generated by the prevention of 900,000 cases of diabetes*

²⁴ [Opening the Way: The Ramblers' Strategic Ambition - Ramblers](#)

²⁵ [NHS England » Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

²⁶ [NHS England » Harnessing the benefits of physical activity](#)

²⁷ Sport England and Sheffield Hallam University (2019) [Social and Economic Value of Community Sport and Physical Activity in England](#)

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- *a further £3.5 billion of value was generated in avoided dementia cases and the related care*
- *£450 million was saved by preventing 30 million additional GP visits”.*

The Cheshire East Public Health Annual Report 2022²⁸ states that Cheshire East has a low proportion of physically inactive adults (29.4%). However, it notes a higher prevalence of inactivity among children and young people as compared to the North West and England. Additionally, the percentage of adults walking or cycling for travel is lower than the regional and national levels.

In addition, *where* that activity is undertaken can also play a role in our health and wellbeing. It is recognised that *“exposure to green and blue space is associated with improved wellbeing, physical activity and health outcomes”* and that *“there is now a large body of literature that evidences the positive association between good health and wellbeing and time spent in nature”*²⁹. Further, improvements in air quality arising from increased active travel can only improve the health of our communities.

Relating these benefits to those derived from countryside access, in 2020, the value of health benefits associated with outdoor recreation within the UK was estimated to be between £6.2 billion and £8.4 billion³⁰. An estimated annual saving of £2.1 billion would be achieved through averted health costs if everyone in England had good access to nature”³¹.

*“I walked with a friend yesterday starting from Rainow.
We took a 7 mile circular route following part of the Gritstone Trail and field paths. We were very impressed by the excellent signposting and especially the many gates replacing stiles.
They make walking so much easier for we oldies. Thank you.”*

Activity can also play a part in a person’s wellbeing. Sport England’s Active Lives Survey³² has identified that those undertaking activity levels of at least 150 minutes a week are more likely to report higher levels of happiness, worthwhileness and life satisfaction, whilst reporting lower levels of anxiety. Natural England³³ note the Department for Education’s recognition of the importance of learning in the natural

²⁸ [Cheshire East Public Health annual 2022 report](#)

²⁹ [Mughal R., Seers H., Polley M., Sabey A. & Chatterjee H.J. \(2022\) How the natural environment can support health and wellbeing through social prescribing. NASP.](#)

³⁰ [Office for National Statistics \(2022\) Health benefits from recreation, natural capital, UK: 2022](#)

³¹ [Defra blog 3/01/2025](#)

³² [Active Lives | Sport England](#)

³³ [Natural England \(2024\) Joining up nature recovery and health priorities](#)

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environment for physical and mental health³⁴, and the Government's Levelling Up aspirations including the importance of access to natural spaces"³⁵.

In order to design-in activity in daily lives, Sport England's Active Design Guide³⁶ urges good planning to create active environments through place-making and routes to provide connectivity. The Guide features 10 over-arching principals built on the foundation principal of 'Activity for All'. In recognition that walking, cycling, running and fitness make up 80% of all minutes of activity taken per week, the Guide highlights the opportunity that the creation of active environments can play in delivering health and wellbeing outcomes. It also notes the wider benefits brought about by such planning, in environmentally friendly and sustainable places, social inclusion and economic productivity.

³⁴ Department for Education (2022) [*Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy*](#)

³⁵ [Joining up nature recovery and health priorities – Natural England](#)

³⁶ [Active Design | Sport England](#)

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Conclusion

Data on use of the PROW and countryside access network is not extensive nor comprehensive. However, that which is available suggests that some routes and sites are heavily used and highly valued. The importance of the network was clearly demonstrated through the Covid pandemic lockdowns for health and wellbeing, for active travel and for both our communities and our visitors.

The health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor physical activity, much of which will be enabled by the PROW and wider countryside access networks, is clear. Evidence now “*points towards the benefits of nature-based social prescriptions on long term health and wellbeing*”³⁷ with shorter distances to nature from people’s homes being of benefit. For this reason, green social prescribing is embedded within the NHS long term plan³⁸, with accessible greenspace being highlighted as a determinant of health by the Department for Health and Social Care³⁹.

³⁷ [Mughal R., Seers H., Polley M., Sabey A. & Chatterjee H.J. \(2022\) *How the natural environment can support health and wellbeing through social prescribing*. NASP.](#)

³⁸ [NHS England » Green social prescribing](#)

³⁹ Department for Health and Social Care (2023) [Major Conditions Strategy](#)

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Cheshire East Council Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2026-36

For consultation

Foreword

Foreword

In an increasingly sedentary and digital world, it has never been more important for people to access our wonderful greenspaces to walk, wheel, cycle and horse ride. The Public Rights of Way and wider countryside access paths are the vital network that enables so many of our active travel and outdoor leisure pursuits to take place.

Therefore, this network plays a fundamental role in the wellbeing of our residents, the connectivity of our communities and in the appeal to our visitors. The value in maintaining, improving and promoting them is therefore abundantly clear and highly important, both to achieve our vision for Cheshire East and to improve all our daily lives.



Councillor Mark Goldsmith

Chair of Highways and Transport Committee

Access to the countryside and open spaces is widely acknowledged as a significant contributor to physical and mental wellbeing. Public Rights of Way play a large part in facilitating this, and maintaining, improving, and developing the network is of major importance so that as many people as possible are encouraged to, and are able to, access the countryside.

Cheshire East is fortunate in having an extensive and well maintained network. However increased demand, the affects of climate change, and financial constraints, mean that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is more important than ever. The plan will allow resources to be focussed on where they can be used most advantageously to make improvements.



Cheshire East Local Access Forum is committed to using its influence in a constructive manner to help in developing and expanding access so that everyone is able to enjoy the countryside.

Maurice Palin

Chair of Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum



The Forum is a statutory body set up under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to provide advice on access to the countryside. See www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/cecaf.

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Introduction

Introduction

What is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 requires local authorities to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) and review it every 10 years.

The aim of a ROWIP is that it prompts the local authority to go further than simply meeting the basic legal duties for maintaining Public Rights of Way (PROW), recognising the multiple benefits that the use of a connected and accessible network of paths can bring.

To produce a ROWIP a full assessment must be made of the needs of the public using the Public Rights of Way and wider countryside access networks, both now and in the future, including the following:

- the extent to which local rights of way and other countryside access resources meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- opportunities for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area; and,
- the accessibility of local rights of way and other routes to blind or partially-sighted people and others with mobility problems.

Following this assessment, which can be read in the Appendix, local authorities are required to prepare a statement of action setting out how improvements to PROW and wider countryside access could be achieved. We have included an aspirational statement of action which sets out what we would like to achieve, if resources allow.

Cheshire East Council published its first ROWIP in 2011. Many of the findings and objectives of that strategy will remain valid now. These include the extent and connectivity of the path network, the benefits of outdoor activities and countryside access, and the barriers to that access. In contrast, some things will have changed in the years since, including the relative age and health profiles of our communities, the pressures on local authority and household budgets and the increasingly evident impacts of climate change. As a society we also have a greater appreciation, learnt through the Covid pandemic lockdowns, of the vital importance of greenspace and countryside access for both mental and physical wellbeing.

The first Cheshire East ROWIP proved useful in increasing the profile of PROW and wider countryside access within the Council and outside it. It enabled integration with strategies of other departments and external organisations. It also provided leverage for funding applications and justification for requests for new or improved paths from developers through the planning system. Learning from the previous ROWIP, the statement of action of this strategy will not be focussed at a path-specific level, more the focus will be on wider actions through which improvements can be delivered.

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The Cheshire East context

By population, the Council is the third largest unitary authority in the North West and the sixteenth largest in the country¹, providing services for 412,500 residents², plus visitors. Forming part of the historical county of Cheshire, the borough covers a mix of rural and urban environments spanning from the Peak District in the east to the Sandstone Ridge in the west. At nearly 2000km, the length of the PROW network in Cheshire East would stretch from Crewe to Rome.

The strategic policy context

PROW and countryside access networks are recognised as contributing to active travel, leisure, health and wellbeing and the visitor economy. As such, national and local policy and guidance refers to the importance of protecting and enhancing PROW and countryside access networks.

National level

The National Planning Policy Framework, which guides development, states that *“planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access, including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks”*³. Likewise, Active Travel England identifies PROW as forming *“important networks of traffic-free, active travel routes”* which *“people use ... for recreational purposes, as many provide attractive routes through nature. They may also be used for travel with a specific purpose, such as commuting or travelling to facilities.”*⁴

The government's 25 Year Environment Plan⁵ published in 2018 - which featured a public bridleway on the front cover - identified a need to invest in active travel and access for all so as to improve inclusive access to green and blue spaces for wellbeing. The subsequent Environmental Improvement Plan 2023⁶ – which featured the same photo on the front cover of its executive summary – continued the aim of investing in active travel and highlighted the need for people to be responsible in their engagement with the natural environment.

Local level

At a borough-level, the aims of the ROWIP contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan vision of *Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East*, through the

¹ Cheshire East Council website 2025: [Current Facts and Figures](#)

² [Cheshire East Plan 2025-29](#)

³ [National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK](#), paragraph 105

⁴ [Public rights of way | Active Travel England](#)

⁵ [25 Year Environment Plan](#)

⁶ [Environmental Improvement Plan](#)

Introduction

contribution to each of the plan's commitments: 1 - *Unlocking prosperity for all*; 2 - *Improving health and wellbeing*; and, 3 – *An effective and enabling council*².

PROW and country parks are identified within the Council's Local Plan as forming part of the strategic green infrastructure of Cheshire East, as are cycle routes, greenways, canals, estate parklands, river corridors and key areas including those connected by the Gritstone Trail⁷. Supplementary Local Plan documents referring to the value of PROW include the Green Infrastructure Plan⁸, the Green Spaces Strategy⁹ and the Design Guide¹⁰. The Local Plan Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document states that "*Public Rights of Way (PROW) are an essential network of connections that enable healthy and active lifestyles*"¹¹. In addition, many Neighbourhood Plans contain reference to and aspirations for PROW.

The PROW and countryside access network can be found in rural countryside locations where they will be used mainly for leisure activities, as they are most often thought of, and are therefore contribute to the Cheshire East Rural Action Plan¹².

The network also extends to within urban areas where it forms vital routes for getting around. The network is therefore well positioned to provide viable and safe alternative routes for local communities by encouraging people out of their cars and to travel by active means of transport, whether on foot, by wheeling - those who use prams, pushchairs, rollators, manual and powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters - by bike or by horse. In recognition of the contribution PROW play in connecting people with places, the ROWIP is integrated into the council's Local Transport Plan and emerging Active Travel Strategy. By reducing private car usage, the ROWIP also links to the council's Air Quality Strategy¹³ and Air Quality Action Plan¹⁴ and Carbon Neutrality Action Plan¹⁵.

The PROW network is freely open to everyone throughout the year. The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028 includes the key deliverable of "*Prioritising new walking and cycling infrastructure in areas with higher levels of deprivation and promoting active travel*"¹⁶ whilst the Cheshire East Public Health Annual Report 2022¹⁷ highlights the co-benefits of reducing the impact of climate change.

⁷ [Cheshire East Local Plan Policy SE 6 Green infrastructure](#)

⁸ [Cheshire East Council Green Infrastructure Plan 2019](#)

⁹ [Cheshire East Council Green Space Strategy 2020](#)

¹⁰ [Cheshire East Council Design Guide Volume 2](#)

¹¹ [Cheshire East Council Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document](#)

¹² [Cheshire East Rural Action Plan 2022](#)

¹³ [Cheshire East Council Air Quality Strategy](#)

¹⁴ [Cheshire East Council Air Quality Action Plan](#)

¹⁵ [Cheshire East Carbon Neutrality Action Plan](#)

¹⁶ [The Cheshire East Partnership Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028](#)

¹⁷ [Cheshire East Public Health annual 2022 report](#)

Introduction

Maintaining a high quality, accessible, natural environment is essential in supporting the visitor economy, with both local users and visitors from further afield contributing through stopping off at a café following a walk, buying a new set of boots, or staying in the area, for example. The Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-2028¹⁸ recognises the importance and potential of the countryside and walking and cycling routes in the borough, especially post-pandemic, with an increase in dog ownership, increased appeal of outdoor experiences and the increased consumer focus on health and wellbeing.

With the Peak District National Park covering a significant proportion of the upland area of the borough, the Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-2028¹⁹ is clear as it sets out the aim of “*Ensuring the existing rights of way network is more accessible and connected to recreation hubs*”.

¹⁸ [Cheshire East Visitor Economy Strategy 2023-2028](#)

¹⁹ [Peak District National Park Management Plan 2023-28](#)

Opportunities and challenges

Opportunities and challenges

The evidence base contained in the appendix includes an assessment of the current PROW and countryside access network and the demand for that network. Together with comments from stakeholders both within and external to the Council, this has drawn out the challenges faced in seeking to manage that network and to deliver improvements. It has also identified the opportunities that exist in doing so. These are summarised in the tables below.

Opportunities
Benefits of the PROW and countryside access network for health and wellbeing
Benefits of the PROW and countryside access network for active travel – walking, wheeling and cycling for local journeys
Benefits of the PROW and countryside access network for enhancing respect for the environment
Benefits of the PROW and countryside access network for enhancing a sense of community and a connection to and pride of place
Integration with the Council's strategic documents, especially the emerging Local Transport Plan and Active Travel Strategy
Partnership working with local communities and organisations
Volunteering on the PROW and countryside access network
Agri-environmental land management schemes which may include incentives for land managers to provide public access
Targeted improvements to the PROW and countryside access network, within the scale of landscape scale planning and changes
Landscape restoration projects through the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, such as those for tree-planting, natural capital and biodiversity net gain, offering potential sites for inclusive public access (with appropriate consideration of associated maintenance and liabilities)
Connecting people and places
Improving connectivity in the PROW and countryside access network as new developments go through the planning system
Changing patterns of visitors leading to a potential increase in visitor numbers

Opportunities and challenges

Challenges
Climate change
Resources (time and budget)
Increased and geographic concentrations of visitor demand causing pressure at some key destinations at some locations
Dated, complex and lengthy statutory processes, with uncertain outcomes, involved for any change, such as a diversion, on the Definitive Map and Statement, the legal record of PROW, leading to a reluctance on behalf of land managers to engage
Maintaining the path network on the ground within a working agricultural landscape
Reliance on the public reporting issues on the PROW network to the Council – there is no proactive inspection
Pressures from development across Cheshire East as sites are allocated for development within the Local Plan
Ensuring that developments adequately contribute to both initial capital investment and maintenance costs of public access schemes, ensuring that all factors are addressed (e.g. liabilities, maintenance, inspection, sign off, landownership, not sterilising land parcels)
Legislative changes, for example the Deregulation Act 2015 resulting in increased pressure on PROW legal order process resources
Road safety where the PROW and countryside access networks are fragmented
The confidence of members of the public in using the PROW and countryside access network due to concerns about, for example, encountering livestock, getting lost, walking across private land
Uncertainty for land managers about national policy, for example in agri-environment schemes
Impacts on land managers arising from the public's use of PROW and countryside access networks

What we will aim to do

Draft vision

The vision for the ROWIP sets out the aspiration for PROW and wider countryside access networks in the borough:-

*To contribute to the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our residents
through inclusive and accessible path networks
that encourage outdoor activities, active travel
and more visitors to Cheshire East*


Draft objectives

The network assessment and demand assessment considered in the evidence base identified a gap of what could be done to help provide a network which matches the current and potential demand for that network. Actions to bridge that gap can be organised into 3 themes or objectives.


Mirroring the aims of the Council's emerging Active Travel Strategy, we will aim to:

- *maintain* the PROW and countryside access network to connect green spaces, open countryside and urban areas, so it is available for the public to use and enjoy;
- *improve* the PROW and countryside access network for more people to access whether by foot, wheeling, horse or bike and by adding to it where we can so it is more connected; and,
- *promote* the PROW and countryside access network so that it is used responsibly by as many people as possible and the benefits that can bring are seen by those users, local communities, businesses and landowners.


The draft objectives of the ROWIP are therefore:



We will aspire to **maintain** the PROW and countryside access network so it is available for use by more people



We will aspire to **improve** the PROW and countryside access network so it is more accessible and, by creating missing links, more connected for use by more people



We will aspire to **promote** the PROW and countryside access network so more people enjoy and benefit from its considerate use

What we will aim to do

Draft statement of action

To achieve those objectives, we have set out a number of actions in the tables below. This list is aspirational – it outlines what we would like to achieve if resources, both time and money, allow. Due to the finite nature of such resources, it will not be possible to make all the desired improvements to PROW and countryside access network paths and processes related to them. Action must therefore be targeted to where it is most beneficial within the constraints of the available resources.

What can be delivered will depend on a host of influences including those internal to the Council, those within partner organisations and communities, and those on a national and even international scale – as demonstrated during the Covid pandemic.

Successful delivery and sustainability of both statutory duties funded from the Council's own budgets and non-statutory actions funded from external sources will depend on working in partnership. This will include collaboration with land managers – with landowner agreement being key to the delivery of some actions listed – with users, suppliers, community groups and others. In some actions, the Council will be the lead delivery partner, in others it will act as the enabler.

In the following tables, the priority of the action is indicated by stars, ranging between 1 star indicating a lower priority and 6 stars indicating a higher priority.

What we will aim to do

Draft statement of action - *maintain*

Ref.	Action	Partners	Priority score
M1	Undertake statutory duties to maintain the network, including vegetation management, surfacing, signposting, path furniture (e.g. bridges and gates)	Land managers Volunteers User groups	*****
M2	Increase data on usage of sites and networks to inform policies	Land managers	*****
M3	Seek opportunities for other ways to maintain the PROW network, for example in partnership with local communities	Town & Parish Councils Community Partnerships	*****
M4	Expand the use of volunteering in maintaining the network through recruitment to new Volunteer Co-ordinator position to coordinate work across Green Infrastructure and partners	Volunteers Partners	*****
M5	Develop a prioritisation system for PROW network to focus resources on most valuable paths	User groups	*****
M6	Identify potential climate change adaption changes needed to PROW furniture (bridges, gates) and surfaces/drainage and manage expectations of users in condition of routes	Land managers User groups	****

What we will aim to do

Draft statement of action - *improve*

Ref.	Action	Partners	Priority score
I1	Review the specification design code for PROW and countryside access networks within the emerging Local Plan, referring to guidance such as Sport England's Active Design Guide, British Horse Society guidance, Outdoor Accessibility Guidance, Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design	Planning team	*****
I2	Collaborate with land managers to promote best practice and to reduce the number of stiles on the network, by replacement with gaps or gates, in line with the emerging accessibility policy	Land managers	*****
I3	Set out a policy on acceptable specifications for PROW being diverted through legal order processes, to cover width, surface, furniture, gradient, etc. in line with the emerging accessibility policy	User groups	*****
I4	Through partnership with local communities encourage engagement with, improvement of and promotion of local PROW and countryside access network routes	Town & Parish Councils Community Partnerships	*****
I5	Develop a guide for developers to encourage early accommodation of PROW and countryside access networks in new developments, such as Handforth Garden Village, to include consideration of legal processes, landownership, capital investment, specifications and future maintenance	Developers Planning team	*****
I6	Set out a policy on how the accessibility and inclusivity of the PROW and countryside access network will be improved	User groups	****
I7	Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of the PROW and countryside access network in key geographical areas and destinations	User groups	****

What we will aim to do

I18	Identify gaps in PROW and countryside access networks that could be linked by new routes for active travel and leisure, locally and pan-borough, for example the Greater Bollin Trail aspiration	User groups Active travel teams Land managers	****
I19	Identify potential funding sources for PROW and countryside access network improvement projects	Stakeholders	****
I110	Process diversions for landowners and in the public interest, supporting the removal of paths from gardens and farmyards and away from properties	Landowners User groups	***
I111	Reduce the list of anomalies on the Definitive Map and Statement, the legal record of Public Rights of Way	Land managers User groups	***
I112	Process Definitive Map Modification Order applications ('claims' for PROW) to determination (decision), reducing the waiting list to under 12 months	Applicants Land managers User groups	*
I113	Consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement – publish a Cheshire East legal record of Public Rights of Way, to replace that from the 1950s	Land managers	*

What we will aim to do

Draft statement of action - *promote*

Ref.	Action	Partners	Priority score
P1	Integrate the objectives of the ROWIP in key relevant Council strategies and those of other key organisations	Council teams Partners	*****
P2	Work with colleagues on active travel and available walking, wheeling and cycling routes to school to encourage a reduction in the number of vehicle journeys	Active Travel team	*****
P3	Engage with public health teams and social prescribers to encourage the use of PROW and countryside access networks for outdoor physical activities	Health teams	*****
P4	Work with land managers to encourage responsible use of PROW and countryside access networks	Land managers	*****
P5	Promote alternative routes to help protect sensitive sites and spread visitor pressure away from country park and town park sites and to build confidence in wider exploration and discovery	Land managers	****
P6	Develop Green Infrastructure team communications plan tailored to local, regional and national audiences	Communications team	***
P7	Proactively encourage PROW social media with partners	Partners	***
P8	Refresh accessible PROW and countryside access route leaflets in a digital and accessible format, and expand to include new and improved routes, classing as 'for all', 'for many' and 'for some'	User groups	***

What we will aim to do

P9	Gather data about the features on the PROW network, such as surfaces and path furniture, so it can be shared online to help people make better informed decisions on their visit to encourage outdoor activities	User groups	***
P10	Promote routes to encourage usage to support rural visitor economy businesses	Land managers Visitor Economy team Businesses	*

What we will aim to do**Monitoring**

Monitoring the delivery of the ROWIP helps us to understand what is working well and helps to demonstrate the difference the investment in the PROW and countryside access network is making in terms of achieving our vision and objectives. Likewise, monitoring also helps to show the impact of any lack of investment of resources and where we can do things better.

We aim to monitor the progress of this ROWIP and the subsequent implementation plans through the following means, where resources permit:

- Annual PROW team reports to the Highways and Transport Committee;
- Quarterly reports to the Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum;
- Surveys such as the National Highways and Transport Network Satisfaction Surveys;
- 'Ease of use' surveys undertaken by volunteers;
- Research projects, for example Motability University of Westminster project; and,
- The Council's Digital Influence Panel.

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Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Consultation and Engagement Plan

Name of engagement / consultation activity:	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):	Carole Hyde, Head of Service, Rural and Cultural Economy
Project Manager (PM) (if part of a project):	Genni Butler, Countryside Access Development Manager
Other Project Team members and roles (if part of a project):	Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager
Service / team:	Green Infrastructure, Rural and Cultural Economy

The outcome of this Consultation and Engagement will report to:	
Name	Role
Vacant	Green Infrastructure Manager
Carole Hyde	Head of Service, Rural and Cultural Economy

Version control:			
Version	Author	Date	Description
v1	Genni Butler	13/03/2025	Initial draft
V2	Genni Butler	17/07/2025	Amended following comments from Senior Intelligence Officer – Consultation

Consultation and Engagement purpose and background: An explanation of the issues and the purpose of the project, key information to set the scene.

The Council has a statutory duty to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The [current one](#) expires in 2026. The ROWIP has to assess:

- the extent to which the local Public Rights of Way network meets the present and future needs of the public
- the opportunities provided by local Public Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the local authority's area
- the accessibility of local Public Rights of Way for blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

The purpose of the consultation is to:

- Share the assessment of the network and demand
- Identify the main issues
- Invite representations and suggestions

Strategic Objectives: What the key strategic objectives of the project are, and how these relates to the corporate plan.

The ROWIP will include a vision, objectives and statement of action for the management of PROW and other countryside access routes. This is aligned with the Corporate Plan Commitments

1: Unlocking prosperity for all:

2: Improving health and wellbeing

3: An effective and enabling council

Stakeholders and methods: A summary of the people and groups you want to engage / consult with from your stakeholder analysis including impacted groups from your equality impact assessment. The methods you will use to gather information, based on the best ways to target your key audiences, or impacted groups.

Stakeholder	Method	What stage
Internal colleagues	Online survey 1-2-1 conversations	Preparatory stage
Key external partners	1-2-1 conversations	Preparatory stage
User groups	Countryside Access Forum and Rights of Way Consultative Group meetings	Preparatory stage
Members	Committee report Members' briefing	Preparatory stage
Public: local residents, local communities, organisations	External consultation	Public consultation

Activity plan: The time to take for each stage including preparation, live engagement / consultation, analysis phase and feedback phase.

Activity	Who / team responsible	Estimated date / timescales
Internal colleagues	PROW Team	April 2025
Key external partners	PROW Team	May 2025
User groups	PROW Team	June 2025
Members	PROW Team/Democratic Services/Comms	September 2025
Public: local residents, local communities, organisations	PROW Team/RandC	October – December 2025

Analysis, Reporting and feedback: How will analysis be carried out / how will the draft feedback be reported and shared with participants.

Analysis tools and expertise required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback gained during the preparatory stage recorded through online survey results spreadsheet, meeting notes and comments marked up by stakeholders in draft documents • Online survey response to include interactive mapping tool – assistance from RandC team required – proposal to use Planning team software package
Reporting required:	
Public feedback methods:	

Risk Assessment: What are the anticipated risks and mitigations?

Risk	Mitigation
Time delays	Early planning and liaison with RandC team
Interactive mapping technical issues	Early liaison with software provider

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Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and our equality duty

The Equality Duty helps public bodies to deliver their overall objectives for public services, and as such should be approached as a positive opportunity to support good decision-making.

It encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities so that policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs. By understanding the effect of their activities on different people, and how inclusive public services can support and open up people's opportunities, public bodies are better placed to deliver policies and services that are efficient and effective.

Complying with the Equality Duty may involve treating some people better than others, as far as this is allowed by discrimination law. For example, it may involve providing a service in a way which is appropriate for people who share a protected characteristic, such as providing computer training to all people to help them access information and services.

Whilst [the Gunning Principles](#) set out the rules for consulting with 'everyone', additional requirements are in place to avoid discrimination and inequality.

Cheshire East Council is required to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Equality Act 2010 simplified previous anti-discrimination laws with a single piece of legislation. Within the Act, the Public Sector Equality Duty (Section 149) has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, by consciously thinking about equality when making decisions (such as in developing policy, delivering services and commissioning from others)
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, by removing disadvantages, meeting their specific needs, and encouraging their participation in public life
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not

The Equality Act identifies nine 'protected characteristics' and makes it a legal requirement to make sure that people with these characteristics are protected from discrimination:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Age | • Race |
| • Disability | • Religion or belief |
| • Gender reassignment | • Sex |
| • Marriage and civil partnerships | • Sexual orientation |
| • Pregnancy and maternity | |

Applying the equality duty to engagement

If you are developing a new policy, strategy or programme you may need to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. You may be able to ascertain the impact of your proposal on different characteristics through desk-based research and learning from similar programmes, but you also need to carry out some primary research and engagement.

People with protected characteristics are often described as ‘hard to reach’ but you will find everyone can be reached – you just need to tailor your approach, so it is accessible for them.

Please feel free to contact the [Equality and Diversity mailbox](#) who will try to help you to assess the impacts of your proposals and will ensure that you help the Council to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of a service, strategy, function or procedure

Proposal Title	Rights of Way Improvement Plan – development of strategy
Date of Assessment	30 th April 2025
Assessment Lead Officer Name and other officers involved	Genni Butler, Countryside Access Development Manager Nicola Lewis-Smith, Public Rights of Way Manager
Directorate/ Service	Rural and Cultural Economy
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure.	<p>The Council has a statutory duty, under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). The ROWIP has to assess:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the local Public Rights of Way network meets the present and future needs of the public the opportunities provided by local Public Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the local authority's area the accessibility of local Public Rights of Way for blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems. <p>The ROWIP has to set out a Statement of Action as to how the issues identified are to be addressed.</p> <p>The assessment has to cover Public Rights of Way (PROW), countryside parks and other wider countryside access routes, such as canal towpaths and permissive paths.</p>

	As such, the strategy may change the current policy on structures on the PROW network (for example, bridges, stiles and gates) and may change the priorities and/or geographic focus of access improvement works.
Who is impacted?	<p>As a key part of the assessment and Statement of Action will relate to the improvement of those networks in terms of accessibility, users of the PROW network, countryside sites and wider countryside access routes may be potentially affected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For some, particularly those who share the protected characteristics of age, disability and pregnancy and maternity, improved access will be easier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the evidence for this is provided in national guidance documentation including Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 and Outdoor Accessibility Guidance. • For some, particularly vulnerable groups, proposals to remove access control barriers to increase the accessibility of routes may raise concerns due to the risk of increased use of routes by motorbikes, quadbikes etc. and the removal of speed-limiting controls for pedal cycles, electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs), etc. Such concerns may arise due to the perceived risk of using a route, and the potential change in the ambience of that route from a quiet and safe greenspace environment for outdoor recreation and active travel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the evidence for this is provided through on-site conversations with users and evidence provided to public inquiry in relation to a Cycle Track Act Order which proposed to change a public footpath into a cycle track for use by pedestrians and cyclists. • There may also be concerns should barriers be removed where routes meet the highway that users may collide with vehicles if barriers are removed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the evidence for this is provided in the form of consultation response to a proposal to change a public footpath into a public bridleway for use by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, in which barriers were requested to be installed. ○ Landowners and managers may also have concerns with increased accessibility of access control barriers (for example the replacement of stiles with kissing gates, or the replacement of

	<p>kissing gates with self-closing 2-way gates), due to livestock control matters, or increased access for dogs which may cause livestock worrying and faeces contamination.</p> <p>Staff affected include Countryside Rangers and PROW Officers who manage the sites and networks and are frequently in face to face contact with users and landowners, responding to complaints, enquiries and requests. Staff have to deal with conflict between user groups and manage the potential and perceived risks arising from shared-use routes.</p>
Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions or procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of leisure and active travel routes is linked to other areas of the Council's work including Highways, Parks and Property. • A corporate access control policy is proposed to be developed and adopted. • The Public Rights of Way network contributes to the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors by offering routes for outdoor activities, contributing to active travel, public health and air quality. • The management of leisure and active travel routes supports the Corporate Plan 2025-2029 aim of 'A thriving and sustainable place', the emerging Active Travel, Rural Action Plan, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023-2028 and other strategies of the Council and partners.
How does the service, service change, strategy, function or procedure help the Council meet the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty?	<p><i>The Public Sector Equality Duty is a legal requirement contained within the Equality Act 2010 which requires public authorities and others carrying out public functions to have due regard to the need to:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</i> • <i>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</i> • <i>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not</i> <p>Proposals to improve access to routes and sites would increase the physical accessibility of the route to all users, and particularly those who share the protected characteristics of age, disability and pregnancy and maternity.</p>

Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

What do you know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The public sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010 means that public bodies have to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy and in delivering services - and includes the duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. • A Court of Appeal judgement in 2021 (Garland v Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) concluded that “<i>it cannot possibly be justified to prevent bicycles from taking advantage of what would otherwise be a lawful use of the track in order to inhibit the unlawful use by motorcycles</i>”. • Current national design guidance e.g. Cycle Infrastructure Design LTN 1/20 and Outdoor Accessibility Guidance says: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the overriding design requirement for an access point is that it is accessible to all legitimate users of a traffic-free route ○ that restrictive access control barriers should not be provided on traffic-free routes ○ that there should therefore be a general presumption against the use of access controls unless there is a persistent and significant problem of antisocial moped or motorcycle access that cannot be controlled through periodic policing. • There are frequent requests from local members of the public, including groups like the Disabled Ramblers, for access control barriers to be removed or improved where feasible. • The Cheshire East Council Cabinet meeting of 9th March 2021 minutes note, in response to a Councillor question about whether the Council would review its policy regarding paths on housing estates with a view to removing barriers to accessibility to allow both cycling and walking, and providing appropriate signage to support all travel modes: <p><i>The Deputy Leader responded that the Council’s preference would be against the use of access controls unless there was a persistent and significant problem of antisocial moped or motorcycle usage or regular incursions leading to fly-tipping. Where a level of access control was required, the provision of bollards would be considered that still allowed all types of</i></p>
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	<p><i>cycle and mobility scooter to gain access. He would advise against unnecessary advisory signing as it led to additional maintenance costs and had a very limited legal basis and it problematic to enforce effectively.</i></p> <p>However, on many Public Rights of Way, particularly in rural areas, the routes cross working agricultural landscapes on private land. Landowners and occupiers may require stock-proof boundaries and, as the path furniture of stiles and gates is in the ownership of the landowner, the decision as to the accessibility of any particular piece of furniture where a route crosses a boundary, sits outside of the Council.</p>
Information you used to arrive at the decision	<p>Consultation has been undertaken on a specific access control barrier removal proposal on a linear country park which forms part of the National Cycle Network. Engagement involved the public and key local stakeholders in order to help understand and quantify the extent of concerns and to identify any measures which may help to mitigate those concerns.</p> <p>The extent to which the risk of increased use of the route by motorbikes, quadbikes etc. and the potential removal of speed limiting controls for pedal cycles, electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs), etc. may change the perceived risk of using the route, and may change the ambience of that route from a quiet and safe greenspace environment for outdoor recreation and active travel, was uncertain.</p> <p>Likewise, the extent of concern where routes meet the highway that users may collide with vehicles if access control barriers are removed, was uncertain.</p>
Gaps in your Information	<p>Previous consultation with key local stakeholders has helped to understand and quantify the extent of these concerns and to identify any measures which may help to mitigate those risks and concerns. The impact of those changes on the one particular route continue to be monitored.</p> <p>The extent to which changes in the wider policy on structures on PROW and any geographic prioritisation on improvements may affect users who share the protected characteristics of age, disability and pregnancy and maternity, is not fully established.</p>

Section 3 - Information - What did people tell you?

<p>What did people tell you about your proposals?</p>	<p>The large majority of respondents to the site-specific consultation were in support of the removal of the access control barriers for the benefit of all users. Some respondents did, however, raise concerns about the removal of the barriers, due to anticipated use of the route by motorcycles. Potential mitigation measures included the use of signage on site to encourage users to 'share with care', to explain that motorbikes are not permitted, to ask cyclists to give advanced notice of approach and to slow down, use of signage where site meets the highway to warn drivers of pedestrians and cyclists and the cutting back of vegetation to improve sightlines. Respondents to the consultation put forward a number of suggestions for mitigating concerns included signage and policing.</p>
<p>Details and dates of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities</p>	<p>Consultation on a specific access control barrier removal proposal has been undertaken with the public, including key local stakeholders, in order to help understand and quantify the extent of concerns and to identify any measures which may help to mitigate those concerns. The consultation lasted for 6 weeks and included direct email distribution, webpage banner and on-site notices. Responses were received from a range of different users of the Biddulph Valley Way, along with local community groups, residents and land managers. Engagement on the wider topic of countryside access is ongoing through the statutory Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum and the Rights of Way Consultative Group.</p>
<p>Are there any gaps in consultation and engagement feedback?</p>	<p>Gaps in consultation on the ROWIP strategy will be addressed via statutory consultation on the draft vision, objectives and statement of action to engage with stakeholders and the wider public. A 12-week public consultation period, as stipulated in government guidance, is proposed in autumn 2025.</p>

Section 4 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Protected characteristics groups from the Equality Act 2010	What do you know? <i>Summary of information used to inform the proposal</i> <u>Refer to Section 2</u>	What did people tell you? <i>Summary of customer and/or staff feedback</i> <u>Refer to section 3</u>	What does this mean? <i>Impacts identified from the information and feedback (actual and potential).</i> <i>These can be either positive, negative or have no impact.</i>
Age	Accessibility may be difficult for users with mobility issues, visual impairment or with a companion due to natural and man-made path features	Awaiting feedback from the consultation	Awaiting feedback from the consultation
Disability	Accessibility may be difficult for users with mobility issues, visual impairment or with a companion due to natural and man-made	Awaiting feedback from the consultation	Awaiting feedback from the consultation

	path features		
Gender reassignment	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated
Pregnancy and maternity	Accessibility may be difficult for users with mobility issues, or with a companion due to natural and man-made path features	Awaiting feedback from the consultation	Awaiting feedback from the consultation
Race/ethnicity	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated
Religion or belief	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated
Sex	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated
Sexual orientation	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated	No impact anticipated

Section 5 - Review of information, consultation feedback and equality analysis

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
<i>Please summarise the impacts listed in section 4 and what will be done to mitigate these impacts</i>	<p>Potential mitigation measures, depending on the location and type of route, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of signage on site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ to encourage users to 'share with care', ○ to explain which types of users are / are not permitted on a route ○ to ask cyclists to give advanced notice of approach and to slow down • Use of signage where site meets the highway to warn drivers of pedestrians and cyclists • Cutting back of vegetation to improve sightlines <p>The PROW team seek to improve the accessibility of the PROW network as opportunities arise for discussions with landowners and occupiers about stiles and gates.</p> <p>Sharing of information about the accessibility of routes would enhance the positive impacts of increased accessibility.</p>

Section 6 – Monitoring and review


Details of monitoring activities	Monitoring will be undertaken through:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued engagement with the statutory Cheshire East Countryside Access Forum and the Rights of Way Consultative Group. • Analysis of complaints and compliments. • Analysis of Countryside Ranger Service monthly site inspection reports which include fields for incidents. • Analysis of incidents and near miss reports. • Continued liaison with Police Rural Crime team. • Statistical and interview research with users undertaken within Motability-funded research

	<p>project 'Monitoring access control removal on traffic-free walking, wheeling, and cycling routes (2024-2027)'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of National Land Access Centre access control barrier demonstration and testing centre and related research into accessible livestock-proof gate designs.
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EIA	<p>May 2026</p> <p>Green Infrastructure Manager</p>

Section 7 – Sign off

When you have completed your draft EIA, it should be sent to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Mailbox](#) for review.

If your EIA is approved, it must then be signed off by a senior manager within your Department (Head of Service or above).

Name	Carole Hyde, Head of Rural and Cultural Economy Service
Date	31/7/2025
Signature	

Once the EIA has been signed off, please forward a copy to the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#) for it to be published on the website.

For Transparency, we are committed to publishing all Equality Impact Assessments relating to public engagement.

Help and support - For support and advice please contact the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion mailbox](#)

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Highways & Transport Committee

Work Programme 2025 - 26

Report Reference	Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Consultation	Equality Impact Assessment	Part of Budget and Policy Framework	Exempt Item	Is the report for decision or scrutiny?
20 November 2025								
HTC/05/25-26	Second Financial Review 25/26	To scrutinise and comment on the Second Financial Review and Performance position of 2025/26, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny/Decision
HTC/06/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27-2029/30	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer					Scrutiny
22 January 2026								
HTC/07/25-26	Third Financial Review 2025/26	To scrutinise and comment on the Third Financial Review and Performance position of 2024/25, and (if necessary) approve Supplementary Estimates and Virements.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny
HTC/08/25-26	Medium Term Financial Strategy Consultation 2026/27 to 2029/30 Provisional Settlement	To provide feedback in relation to their financial responsibilities as identified within the Constitution and linked to the budget alignment approved by the Finance Sub-Committee in March 2025.	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny and Decision
HTC/12/25-26	Delay to Department for Transport decision on Middlewich Eastern Bypass	To consider the options for funding and the letting of a construction contract for the Middlewich Eastern Bypass	Executive Director of Place	No	No	Yes	No	Decision
2 April 2026								
HTC/09/25-26	Service Budgets 2026/27	To set out the allocation of approved budgets for 2025/26 for services under the Committee's remit, as determined by Finance Sub Committee	Executive Director Resources, and S151 Officer	No	No	Yes	No	Scrutiny

Highways & Transport Committee Work Programme 2025 - 26

Task and Finish Groups

Group	Membership	Established	Purpose
Home to School Transport – Cross Directorate with Children & Families Committee	H & T Members M Goldsmith H Faddes C Hilliard C & F Members M Beanland L Crane E Gilman B Puddicombe	May 2025	This project will enable members of both Highways & Transport Committee and Children & Families Committee to jointly scrutinise the Councils' arrangements for provision of Home-to-School Transport, including SEND. The Council provides transport for approximately 4000 students to educational establishments in the borough and beyond. The MTFS provides an increase in budget (FY2025-26) of £1.5 million with further growth expected in future years. Transport services make up 17% of the overall children's revenue budget. There have been recent planned changes to the council's policies, procedures and procurement arrangements for home-to-school transport and members are interested to understand the effectiveness of these and what else can be done to ensure services provide value-for-money.

Briefing Reports/Reports for noting

Title	Purpose of Report	Lead Officer	Expected Circulation Date via the Members Hub
Public Rights of Way Annual report 2024 - 25	To inform members about the work of the Public Rights of Way (PROW) team, including achievements and challenges.	Nicola Lewis-Smith -Public Rights of Way Manager	TBC

Note: These reports will be circulated outside of committee meetings.

[Library folder - Reports for Noting - Reports for Noting | Cheshire East Council](#)

Highways and Transport Committee

18th September 2025

**DMMO Application MA-5-259 - For the
addition of two footpaths between
Bexton Lane and Knutsford Footpath 6
and Bexton Footpath 1**

Report of: Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place

Report Reference No: HTC/16/25-26 – DLT BH 049497

Wards Affected: Knutsford and Chelford

For Decision

Purpose of Report

1. Under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (“the 1981 Act”), Cheshire East Council has a statutory duty as the Surveying Authority to keep the Definitive Map (“the DM”) and Statement of Public Rights of Way for Cheshire East Borough Council (“the Council”) under continuous review. Section 53 (3) (c) (i) permits the authority to act on the “discovery of evidence” that suggests the map needs to be amended. The authority must investigate and determine that evidence and decide whether or not to make a Definitive Map Modification Order (“DMMO”).
2. The evidence in support of the application may consist of documentary/historical records, user evidence or a mixture of both. All evidence must be evaluated and weighed against the legal tests, and a conclusion reached on the ‘balance of probabilities’ as to whether public rights subsist. Other issues, such as safety, security, suitability, desirability or the impact on property or the environment, are not relevant to the legal test. The appendices set out the context for understanding the documents that have been consulted.

Executive Summary

3. An application was made in September 2020 for an order to add two footpaths to the DM shown between points A-B-C and B-D on Plan WCA/MO048A (“the Plan”) (Appendix 1). This report assesses the submitted evidence and makes a recommendation in accordance with the duty set out under Section 53 (2) (b) of the 1981 Act, following the occurrence of an event under Section 53(3)(c)(i), namely the discovery of evidence that a public footpath subsists. This is set out in detail at Appendix 2.
4. The evidence in support of the application consisted primarily of user evidence forms from 15 people, 14 of which provided relevant information. Route A-B-C on the Plan is alleged to have been used by the public within periods from 1982-2002 and also a period from 1987-2007. This could meet the test for a reasonable allegation of public rights under Section 53 (3)(c)(i). However, the evidence for route B-D over the period 1987-2007 is insufficient to meet that threshold.
5. The investigation also considered maps and plans from the nineteenth century, the records of the DM and a paths leaflet submitted by the applicant. While these documents were not conclusive in establishing additional rights of way, they do suggest that there had been a longstanding reputation of a public path crossing prior to the construction of the rail line.
6. The evidence was assessed against the statutory tests set out under the 1981 Act and the Highways Act 1980 (“the 1980 Act”). Submissions from landowners relate to a later period than the claimed use. Nevertheless, based on the user evidence covering a twenty-year period prior to 2002 and 2007, it is considered on the balance of probabilities, that a public footpath subsists between points A-B-C on the Plan. The evidence relating to route B-D is insufficient to support a similar finding. There is no clear basis to suggest that public rights have arisen over that section of the route.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Highways & Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve a Definitive Map Modification Order under Section 53(2)(b) on the basis of evidence under Section 53(3)(c)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, for the route **A to B to C** on Plan WCA/MO048A.
2. Refuse to make a Definitive Map Modification Order for the route **B to D** on Plan WCA/MO048A
3. Approve that public notice of the making of the Order be given and in the event of there being no objections within the period specified, that the Order be

confirmed in the exercise of the powers conferred on the Council by the said Act.

4. Note that in the event of objections being received, Cheshire East Borough Council will be responsible for the conduct of any Hearing or Public Inquiry relating to the Order.

Background

7. The application route commences from Bexton Lane, at the junction between the adopted highway and the commencement of Public Footpath 2 Bexton (Point A on the Plan at OSGR SJ7469 7720). From there, the claimed route runs in a northwest direction to a railway bridge. After crossing the bridge, the application plan shows that the route splits into two from this point (Point B on the Plan at OSGR SJ 7445 7751). One route proceeds in a north westerly direction at the east side of a field boundary and terminates on Knutsford Public Footpath 6 (Point C on the Plan at OSGR SJ7436 7763). The second route runs in a south westerly direction alongside a field edge on the west side of the rail line towards the M6 and terminates on Bexton Public Footpath 1 (Point D on the Plan at OSGR SJ7390 7684).
8. From Bexton Lane the route runs over an unmetalled surface with cobbles for approximately 356 metres along the side of an agricultural field to a railway bridge. The railway bridge is approximately 30m in length and has been recently surfaced, graffiti has been drawn on the parapets. Running towards Knutsford Footpath 6 for 194m the path is a trodden earth path, as is the second path running for 830m towards the junction with Bexton Footpath 1. After recent works on the railway bridge carried out by Network Rail, a field gate was fitted across the southern end of the bridge. The gate was initially locked but has since been unlocked.
9. The evidence from documents and photographs has been considered and found inconclusive of a public footpath(s) (Appendix 3).
10. The user evidence supports a case to satisfy the test under S31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 for the route from A-B-C across the railway bridge (Appendix 4). The evidence to support the case for the claim B - D along the railway line was insufficient to satisfy the test. Use of the second path appeared to be occasional and did not demonstrate sustained use over the twenty-year period.

Consultation and Engagement

11. Consultations were sent out in February 2025 to the Toft and Bexton with Plumley Parish Council and the Knutsford Town Council as well as the Ward Councillors for Chelford Ward and Knutsford Ward, as the application route crosses the administrative boundaries of these parish and town councils and the Ward boundaries. The two affected landowners and local user groups were also consulted. There were no comments submitted by the user groups.
12. The Toft and Bexton with Plumley Parish Council wrote to say that they had received a presentation in 2021 on behalf of the tenant farmer against the application, and they had agreed to support the representation. They were asked about the parish paths map from 2000/2002 but have said they could not find any records. Knutsford Town Council wrote to say that they had no evidence in relation to this application. The Ward Councillors Dean and Gardiner commented that they did not have information on the paths claimed and had no objections.
13. The land affected by the claim forms part of the Tabley Estate in the ownership of Landowner 1. The Estate changed ownership in 2007. Evidence was shared with the agents acting for the current estate owners. A representation has been received which is a statement of their belief that the evidence does not meet the tests. The evidence submitted in rebuttal of the claim is a statement from the tenant farmer who manages the land on an unfettered lease. The response also claims that the S31(6) deposit made in 2007 under the 1980 Act was the complete deposit. There is no indication that an accompanying statutory declaration (Part 2) was submitted before the land was sold; making it ineffective.
14. Landowner 1 states that there was very little use of the routes made before the “covid period”. They report that the tenant farmer verbally challenged walkers although this is not corroborated by the witness evidence.
15. Landowner 2 has not responded.

Reasons for Recommendations

16. Where uninterrupted use “as of right” over a twenty-year period can be shown, Section 31(1) of the 1980 Act provides that a public right of way has been dedicated, unless there is sufficient evidence to show the landowner did not intend to dedicate the route as a public right of way. The date when the path(s) seem to have been brought into question is 2002 when the publication of the application route A to C on a parish map leaflet was questioned and the error was acknowledged and

brought to the attention of the Parish Council; bringing into question the path in order to satisfy the provision in S31 of the 1980 Act of a period between 1982-2002.

17. The evidence from users supports a case to satisfy the test under S31 of the 1980 Act for the route from A-B-C across the railway bridge that there is a reasonable allegation of public rights. The evidence to support the case for the claim B-D along the railway line is considered insufficient to satisfy the test. The evidence for use of this path was very occasional and does not appear to have been sustained for the twenty-year period.

Other Options Considered

18. If the authority was to do nothing it would not comply with Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which requires the Council to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as required.

Implications and Comments

Monitoring Officer/Legal

19. The legal implications in relation to highways law are set out in the Legal matters section of this report (Appendix 2).

Section 151 Officer/Finance

20. If objections to an Order lead to a subsequent hearing/inquiry, the Council would be responsible for any costs involved in the preparation and conducting of such. The associated costs would be borne within existing Public Rights of Way revenue budgets. The maintenance of the Public Right of Way, if added to the Definitive Map and Statement, would, by reference to post-1959 legislation, not be maintainable at the public expense.

Human Resources

21. There are no direct implications for Human Resources.

Risk Management

22. There are no direct implications for risk management

Impact on other Committees

23. There are no direct implications on other Committees

Policy

24. The work of the Public Rights of Way team contributes to the Corporate Plan vision of Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East, with the commitments of Unlocking prosperity for all and Improving health and wellbeing, and the policies and objectives of the Council's statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Corporate Plan 2025-2029

Vision: Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East

Commitments –

- Unlocking prosperity for all
- Improving health & wellbeing

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

25. The legal tests under section 53 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 do not include an assessment of the effects under the Equality Act 2010.

Other Implications

26. *Rural Communities* - There are no direct implications for Rural Communities

Children and Young People including Cared for Children, care leavers and Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)-
There are no direct implications for Children and Young People.

Public Health

The recommendations are anticipated to offer a positive overall impact on the health and wellbeing of Cheshire East residents.

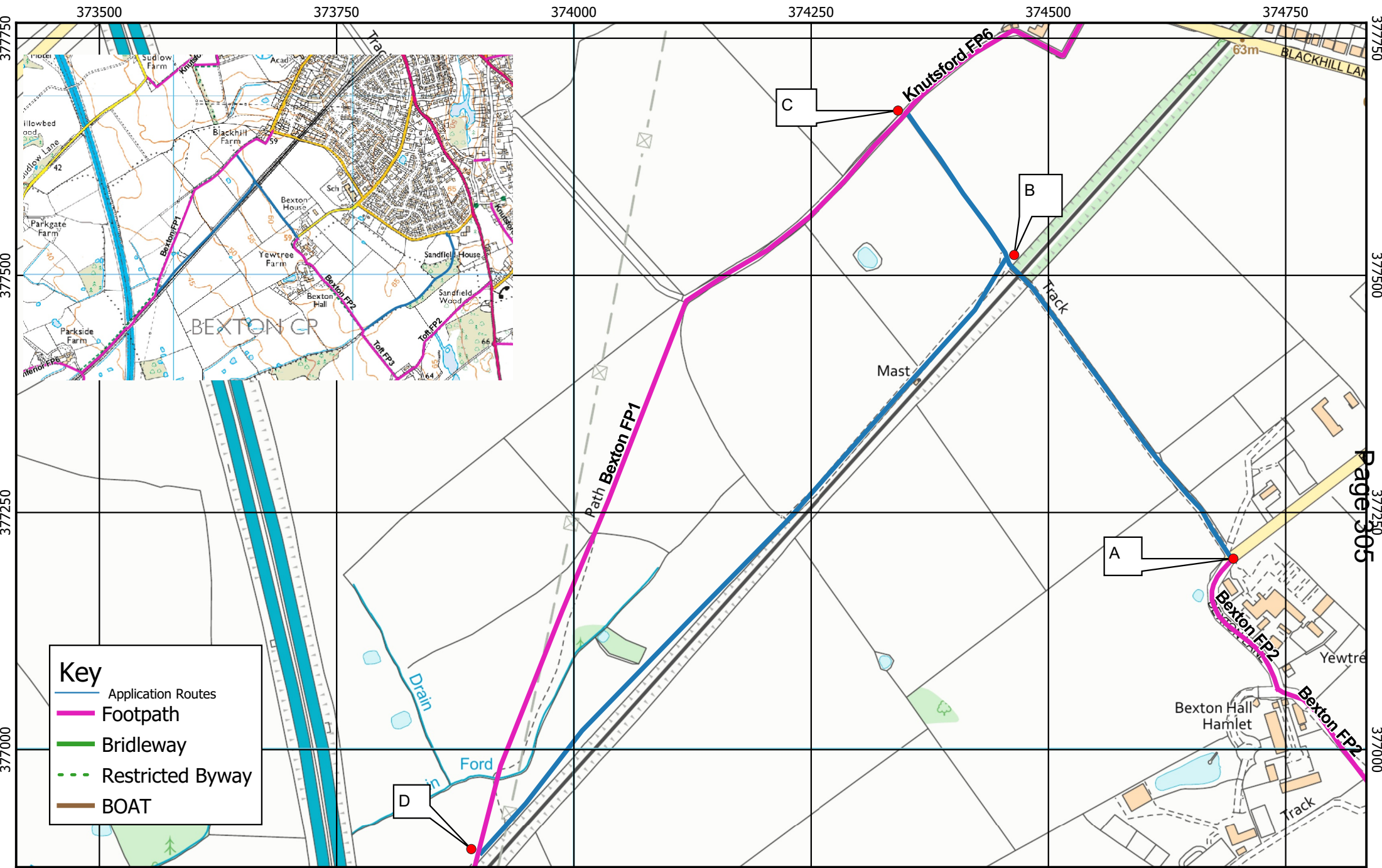
Climate Change

The work of Public Rights of Way team encourages a reduction in carbon emissions and increased environmental sustainability by reducing energy consumption and promoting healthy lifestyles through active travel and leisure.

Name of Consultee	Post held	Date sent	Date returned
<i>Statutory Officer (or deputy) :</i>			
Ashley Hughes	S151 Officer	09/09/25	10/09/25
Kevin O'Keefe	Interim Director of Law & Governance (Monitoring Officer)	09/09/25	09/09/25
<i>Legal and Finance</i>			
Bethany Hill	Solicitor	28/07/25	31/07/25
Wendy Broadhurst	Principal Accountant (Lead Business Partner)	28/7/25	28/7/25
<i>Other Consultees:</i>			
<i>Executive Directors/Directors</i>	At DLT		14/08/2025

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Adele Mayer adele.mayer@cheshireeast.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Plan Appendix 2 Legal Background Appendix 3 Documentary list and background Appendix 4 User evidence
Background Papers:	The background papers and files relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer.

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Key

Application Routes

Footpath

Bridleway

Restricted Byway

BOAT



1:5000

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
Application MA-5-259. Addition of Footpaths from Bexton Lane to Footpath 1 Bexton
and Footpath 6 Knutsford

Plan No.
WCA/MO048A

This is a working copy of the definitive
map and should not be used for legal
purposes



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APPENDIX 2

Application No. MA/5/259

Application to add two footpaths between Bexton Lane and Bexton Footpath 1 and Knutsford Footpath 6

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND CASE LAW

1. Section 53(2)(b) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires that the Council shall keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and make such modifications to the Map and Statement as appear requisite in consequence of the occurrence of certain events:-
 - a. "53 (c) The discovery by the authority of evidence which (when considered with all other relevant evidence available to them) shows;
 - b. (i) that a right of way which is not shown in the map and statement subsists or is reasonably alleged to subsist over land in the area to which the map relates, being a right of way such that the land over which the right subsists is a public path, a restricted byway or subject to section 54A a byway open to all traffic"
2. The evidence can consist of documentary/historical evidence or user evidence or a mixture of both. All the evidence must be evaluated and weighed, and a conclusion reached whether, on the 'balance of probabilities' the rights subsist. Any other issues, such as safety, security, suitability, desirability or the effects on property or the environment, are not relevant to the decision.
3. Where the evidence in support of the application is user evidence, section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980 applies. This states; "Where a way.....has been actually enjoyed by the public as of right and without interruption for a full period of twenty years, the way is deemed to have been dedicated as a highway unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it."
4. S31 also requires that the public use of the route during the 20 year period was uninterrupted, and the use was made "as of right", that is without force secrecy and without permission of the landowner.
5. For public rights to have come into being through long use as stated above, a twenty year period must be identified during which time use can be established. Where no challenge to the use has occurred, this period can be taken as the twenty years immediately prior to the date of the application. In this case, the application was made in 2020. Which would make a claim period of 2000-2020 to satisfy the 20 year rule. However, this period is supplanted by previous dates where the public rights appear and were brought into question.

6. There appears to have been a challenge to the public status of the route in 2002 as a consequence of a publication dating, it is thought, to be 2000. A leaflet showing the parish paths was created by the former Cheshire County Council (the “CCC”). The CCC had published and distributed the map in 2000 showing the route A-B-C as a public footpath. The publication and the status of the route was questioned in correspondence sent by the Peak and Northern Footpath Society in 2002 and the CCC accepted they had made an error by including a path that was then not a recorded public right of way. The error was communicated to the Parish Council at the same date. This is arguably a point of challenge bringing the rights of the public into question. This suggests a statutory period of user may have arisen between the period 1982 to 2002.
7. Public rights can also be established under Common Law based on evidence of public use and there is no requirement for a period of twenty years. Establishing rights under common law relies on there being an owner with capacity to dedicate or evidence that there was no capacity to dedicate. In the absence of knowing who the owner was, satisfactory evidence of user by the public would establish rights.
8. In the case of, *R (on the application of Godmanchester Town Council) v Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2007)*, the House of Lords considered the proviso in section 31(1) of the Highways Act 1980:

“...unless there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention during that period to dedicate it”.

The proviso means that presumed dedication of a way can be rebutted if there is sufficient evidence that there was no intention to dedicate the way, during the relevant twenty year period. What is regarded as ‘sufficient evidence’ will vary from case to case. The Lords addressed the issue of whether the “intention” in section 31(1) had to be communicated to those using the way, at the time of use, or whether an intention held by the landowner but not revealed to anybody could constitute “sufficient evidence”. The Lords also considered whether use of the phrase “during that period” in the proviso, meant during the whole of that period. The House of Lords held that a landowner had to communicate his intention to the public in some way to satisfy the requirement of the proviso. It was also held that the lack of intention to dedicate means “at some point during that period”, it does not have to be continuously demonstrated throughout the whole twenty year period

9. In this matter the status of ownership is relevant to the successful application of S31 of the HA80. Some land held by Network Rail may be exempt from the presumption of the statutory test. With land held by Network Rail this claim requires the railway bridge is excepted from the provision of S31 of the HA80 by the British Transport Commission Act 1949 section 55 relating to operational land held by the railway. In this case, the question is whether the bridge relates to the use of the main railway or as it appears, provides for an easement to cross the rail line. The question is also whether the bridge

provides for a pre construction right of way. *British Transport Commission v Westmorland County Council* (HL)(1957) 2 All ER 353 [1958] AC 126 sets out that if such use by the public is not incompatible with the objects prescribed by the Act then the commissioners would have the power of dedication. The documentary evidence suggests that the railway bridge was provided as an easement.

10. In addition to all of the above, there is a provision under Section 31(6) of the 1980 Act that permits a landowner to make a deposit to protect the land from the acquisition of public rights. The deposit requires a statement and plan to be deposited with the relevant local authority. To be effective the statement is then backed up by the submission of a statutory declaration which sets out the lack of intention by the landowner to dedicate any public rights. The lack of the second part and the intended symmetry of the 2 parts has been discussed in the context of the case of *Godmanchester* (above), such that the lack of a declaration does not rebut the lack of intention to dedicate. There has also been a discussion on the effect of a deposit bringing into question the rights of the public which suggests that the deposit would challenge the rights of the public but the lack of a second part would not provide the evidence of the lack of intention to dedicate.
11. In this case, the previous landowner had submitted a statement under S31(6) of the 1980 Act in 2007 but failed to submit a second part, declaration, within 10 years of the statement. For the purposes of this claim, it is proposed that the first deposit brings into question the path(s) therefore the relevant period for the purposes of a statutory period of user would be 1987 to 2007.
12. Section 80 of the Highways Act 1959 abolished the ancient duty to maintenance of highways by the inhabitants at large and so highways prior to the Act which were maintained by highway authorities, or the inhabitants were then maintained at public expense. The same Act repealed section 23 of the Highways Act 1835 and introduced a procedure for adoption at public expense any new highways. (the 59 Act was repealed by the 80 Act) Currently the situation is that an expressly created path are maintainable except when the path maintenance rests with another body or person, it was created by a parish council under section 30 of the 80 Act or it was dedicated after 1949 and observed one of the legal processes set out under the 59/80 Act. Paths that came into existence after the 1959 Act through long usage are not publicly maintained unless a procedure was or will be undertaken. No other law provides for the duty to publicly maintain. A way added by a DMMO is therefore only public maintainable if it can be shown to have come into existence prior to the 1959 Act. This includes a path that is upgraded to a different status, the liability to maintain to the higher status is not imposed on the authority, although maintenance may be carried out.
13. The Human Rights Act is also of relevance. Whilst article 1 to the first protocol (peaceful enjoyment of property) and article 8 (right to respect for family, private life and home) are engaged, it is important to note that these rights are qualified, not absolute, which means that they can be interfered with in so far as such interference is in accordance with domestic law and is necessary in a

democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. It is considered that any interference occasioned by the making of a Modification Order is both in accordance with domestic law (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) and is in the public interest as it is necessary in a democratic society for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, namely the public who wish to use the way. Should Members resolve that a Modification Order be made in accordance with highways legislation, this is merely the start of the legal process. Once a Modification Order is made, it must be publicised, and any person will have an opportunity to formally object to it. Should objections be received, the Modification Order would have to be referred to the Secretary of State who may hold a Public Inquiry before deciding upon whether or not to confirm the Modification Order

14. Please note that the Council will not disclose the user evidence forms that form part of the background documentation at this stage in the process. The Council considers that the information provided within the user evidence documentation is exempt information under s1&2 Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, as amended.
15. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, there is no such statutory right prior to an Order having been made - persons affected are entitled to the information in the event that an Order is made following the Committee decision.
16. Once an Order is made it may be the subject of objections. If objections are not withdrawn, this removes the power of the Local Authority to confirm the Order itself and may lead to a hearing or Public Inquiry. It follows that the Committee decision may be confirmed or not confirmed. This process may involve additional legal support and resources.

APPENDIX 3**Application No. MA/5/259****Application to add two footpaths between Bexton Lane and Knutsford FP2 in the parish of Bexton and Knutsford Town****List of Documents Consulted**

PROW = Public Rights of Way, Cheshire East Council

CRO = Cheshire Record Office

SML = maps online at National Library of Scotland

Primary Sources	Date	Site Shown/Mentioned	Reference Number/Source
County Maps			
Swire and Hutchings	1829/30	Route part shown	CRO PM 13/8
Bryant map	1831	Route part shown	CRO searchroom
Tithe Records			
Bexton township Tithe Map and Apportionment	1847	Route partially shown, other paths shown owners and occupiers listed	CRO EDT 45/1
Ordnance Survey Maps			
O.S. 1" to 1 mile 1 st Edition	1887	Not shown	SML-Sheet 98 -PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.S. 1 st Edition 1:25 inch	1890	Part shown	PROW/Cheshire East Council
O.S. 2 nd Edition 1:25 inch	1898	Part shown	SML/PROW/CEC
O.S. 3 rd Edition 1:25inch	1909	Part shown	SML/PROW/Cheshire East Council
DEPOSITED MAPS			
Railway plan	1859	Route A-B shown labelled "occupation road"	CRO QDP 369 Cheshire and Midland Railway
Local Authority Records			
Parish Survey Schedules and Maps	1953	Routes not recorded	PROW
Draft Map	1953	Routes not recorded	PROW
Provisional Map	1968	Routes not recorded	PROW
Definitive Map & Statement	1971 (published)	Routes not recorded	PROW
Draft Map objections	1954	Route requested not included	PROW

Additional records			
Parish Paths Leaflet	2000 (no date on leaflet)	Route A-B shown	The Cheshire County Council publications PROW-
Aerial Photographs	1970-2005		PROW
Photographs	15.4.2025	Site photos taken in April 2025 of the two routes	PROW – see photo sheet
Consistency Guidelines	27.01.2022	Planning Inspectorate	Gov.Uk

BACKGROUND EXPLANATION OF THE DOCUMENTS

County Maps of 18th and 19th century

1. These are small scale maps made by commercial map-makers, some of which are known to have been produced from original surveys and others are believed to be copies of earlier maps. All were essentially topographic maps portraying what the surveyors saw on the ground. They included features of interest, including roads and tracks. It is doubtful whether mapmakers checked the status of routes or had the same sense of status of routes that exist today. There are known errors on many map-makers' work and private estate roads and cul-de-sac paths are sometimes depicted as 'cross-roads'. The maps do not provide conclusive evidence of public status, although they may provide supporting evidence of the existence of a route
2. Burdetts map of 1794 is at a scale which does not show lesser roads and tracks. The vicinity is labelled Lord Tabley and Bexton Hall is shown by a solid icon. Swire and Hutchings 1830 map shows Bexton Lane and no indication of a track leading off the north corner. Bryant's map, 1831 shows the area before the railway line and also draws in a cul de sac track leading off the corner of Bexton Lane. None of the maps indicate a path connecting Bexton Lane to Blackhill Farm

Tithe Map and Apportionment Bexton 1847

3. Tithe Awards were prepared under the Tithe Commutation Act 1836, which commuted the payment of a tax (tithe) in kind, to a monetary payment. The purpose of the award was to record productive land on which a tax could be levied. The Tithe Map and Award were independently produced by parishes and the quality of the maps is variable. It was not the purpose of the awards to record public highways. Although depiction of both private occupation and public roads, which often formed boundaries, is incidental, they may provide good supporting evidence of the existence of a route. Non-depiction of a route is not evidence that it did not exist; merely that it did not affect the tithe

charge. Colouring of a track may or may not be significant in determining status. In the absence of a key, explanation or other corroborative evidence the colouring cannot be deemed to be conclusive of anything. In Cheshire there appears to be no tithe map which has produced a map key. Map symbols were already in use on nineteenth century maps and some common symbols appear on the maps which were mostly understood by the people using the maps. Non tithed roads and tracks are quite often separated because they do not deliver a titheable commodity (such as a crop). For this reason, it is thought that a non tithed road is indicative of treatment for tithes and not for public highway

4. The Tithe map was drawn up before the railway line was constructed. On the map, a broken black line is shown running in a north easterly direction from the junction of Bexton Lane (point A on the Plan) and a cul de sac track running alongside 2 fields. At the termination of the track (point B on the Plan) a second broken black line runs in a westerly direction towards the track where Bexton FP6 runs. The broken black line suggests a footpath and at the junction with Bexton Lane a stile icon is drawn. A solid line is drawn across the entrance to the cul de sac track suggesting it was gated. Elsewhere on this map a broken black line aligns with Bexton FP2, suggesting the broken line is depicting a footpath
5. The Apportionment describes Bexton Lane as a public road not including the track to the railway line (point A-B on the Plan). The land on the north side of Bexton Lane is listed in the ownership of Lord de Tabley. The broken line A to Blackhill Lane crosses fields 86, 74, 73, 72 and 71, in the occupation of 2 different names. The broken line from point B to Bexton FP6 runs across fields 43 and 46 in one occupancy. The public roads were listed separately and summed at the end of the Apportionment account and there is no indication that the track was included in the public road layout. It is not possible to say if the depicted paths may have been public, but maybe indicative of a reputation of a path connecting Bexton Lane in a north and westerly direction prior to the construction of the railway plan

Deposited Plans : Proposed Cheshire and Midland Railway Plans 1859

6. Railway plans had to be produced and deposited prior to a railway company obtaining an Act of Parliament authorising the construction of their intended railway. The maps covered a corridor of land defining the limits of deviation either side of the line of the intended railway, with plot numbers for the land and public and private routes, which are referred to in a book of reference. They showed the status of routes bisected by the proposed line, the accuracy of which would have been in the interest of those affected. The plans were drawn to comply with parliamentary requirements. The Bill and plans were open to consultation and debate and as such, they carry strong evidential weight. There are, however, railway proposals that were never constructed. While this in itself may not necessarily reduce the value of the evidence providing the parliamentary process was completed, many proposals failed or were rejected due to poor or inaccurate plans.

7. The plan issued for the QDP 39 proposal to construct a line through Bexton labels the public highways and the track leading off Bexton Lane as an “occupation road”. The term occupation road is usually taken to mean a non adopted highway after the enactment of the Highways Act of 1835 that required the adoption of roads that would be maintainable by the public. In effect the non adopted roads and tracks would be privately maintainable which is usually described as being private roads. The track, numbered as 18 in the book of reference for the railway line proposal, listed as owned by Lord de Tabley (and Ralph Leyster , Lords of the Manor) occupied by Thomas Hough. On the same railway plan in Plumbley public highway is listed and two footpaths.

Ordnance Survey Maps (“OS”)

8. OS mapping was originally for military purposes to record all roads and tracks that could be used in times of war; this included both public and private routes. These maps are good evidence of the physical existence of routes, but not necessarily of status. Since 1889 the Ordnance Survey has included a disclaimer on all of its maps to the effect that the depiction of a road is not evidence of the existence of a right of way. It is argued that this disclaimer was solely to avoid potential litigation. Dr Yolande Hodson has written widely on the interpretation of the OS map. Dr Hodson was formerly employed by the Military Survey and then by the Map Room of the British Museum. In publication, she has described the tension in the twentieth century within the OS to agree on what would be shown on the maps, at which scale and for which audience and what symbols should be used to depict the condition and status of roads and ways. She has indicated that the OS are good evidence of the existence of a way or path and can support any other evidence claiming public rights of way but they are limited in proof of public status

OS 25” series

9. Bexton Lane shown connecting with a track on the route, indicated by a double row of broken lines on the north side of the field boundaries. The track runs through fields numbered 54 and 37 and there are no lines across to suggest this was gated. Across the railway line the track leads into field numbered 40.

OS post war 25” revised

10. On this map, a parcel of land has been carved out of the fields next to Bexton Lane leaving the enclosed track running between solid lines (enclosed). The parish boundary runs along the west boundary line. ON the north side of the railway line there is an enclosed track running the length of 2 fields (not the full length of the claim).

Definitive Map and Statement (“DM”) process carried out under the National Parks and Countryside Act 1949

11. The Public Rights of Way team hold records that pre-existed the Definitive Map process and date from approximately 1930. This is represented by a

District map which recorded “footpaths” with a record of the maintenance issues. There is no record of a path at the location.

12. The DM is based on surveys and plans produced in the early 1950s by each parish in Cheshire, or the Town or District Council where there was no parish, of all the ways they considered to be public at that time. The surveys were used as the basis for the Draft DM. Any representations against the Draft Map were dealt with before the Provisional Map was published. Representations by landowners to the Provisional Map were made to Quarter Sessions. One all representations had been dealt with the DM was finally published. The date of publication will be different from the relevant date of the map. For Bexton in the Rural District of Bucklow, the relevant date is 1 June 1953
13. The parish boundary between Bexton and Knutsford also runs on the route of part of the path running from the railway bridge to Bexton FP6. The parish survey was carried out by the District Surveyor for Bexton parish as there was no parish council sitting. The survey records no path, for either Bexton parish or Knutsford Urban District (as it was at that time). As a consequence, no path appeared on the Draft Map
14. There was a representation made to the omission of the footpath from the Draft Map. A plan is attached to the contemporary correspondence requesting information from the Bucklow RDC Surveyor. The plan indicates a path running from Bexton FP2 crossing the railway line by a “cart bridge” and running to Bexton FP1. A “stile” is noted at the cart bridge and a “field gate” on the northern side of the bridge. The response from the Bucklow RDC set out a rebuttal: that the clerk had no evidence for a path in the location and recalls that there had been a sign saying the path was permissive “soon after the Rights of Way Act 1932 became operative”, and he also said that he had not seen any access on the north side at the junction with Bexton FP1.

Parish Paths Leaflet

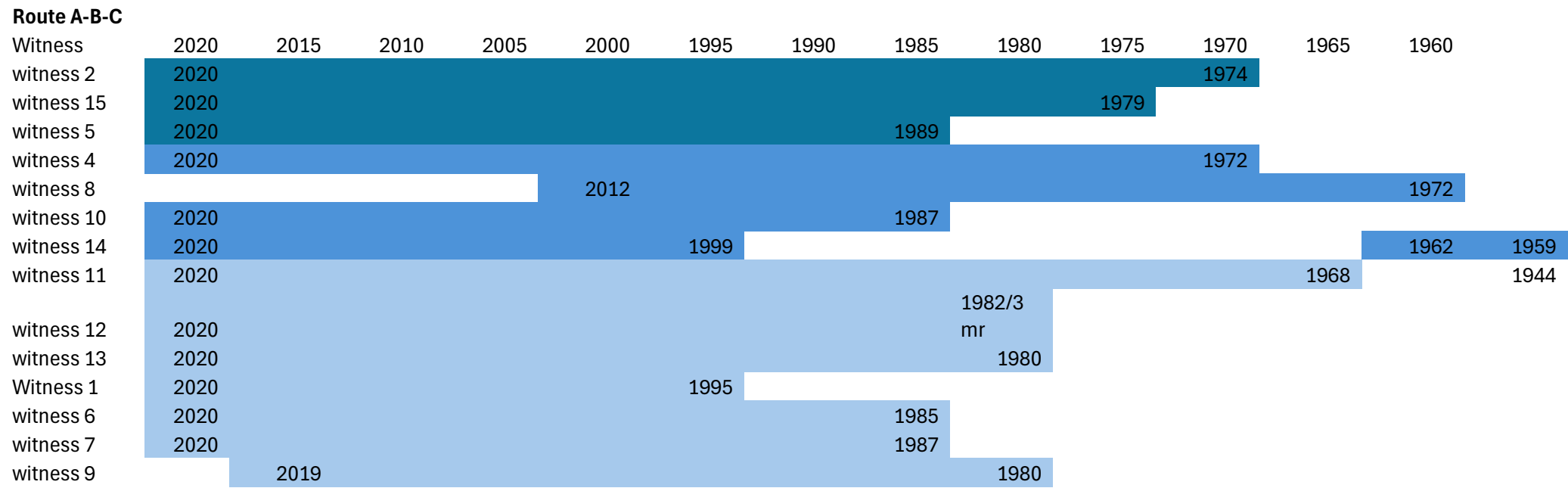
15. The Cheshire County Council for some years ran a programme Paths 4 Parishes, and it is thought that this leaflet was published under this programme. The leaflet submitted with the application is undated and entitled “Explore Bexton and Toft”. The leaflet is undated but there are indications it was published in 2000. At the end of 2002, the CCC received a letter from the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society pointing out that a footpath was shown on the plan which was not a recorded footpath : “The OS maps do not appear to show this [path] as a public right of way. I do recall many years ago there being a fingerpost by the grassy lane opposite Yewtree Farm but this pointed up what is not the minor road extension of Bexton Lane from Knutsford to Bexton Hall.” The CCC acknowledged the error and wrote to say that remaining stocks of the leaflet would be withdrawn and the parish council informed. In November 2002 the clerk to the Parish Council was informed of the error and advised to take the action of withdrawing the leaflet. The leaflet itself is not evidence of a dedication but could be evidence that brought the path into question.

Photographs

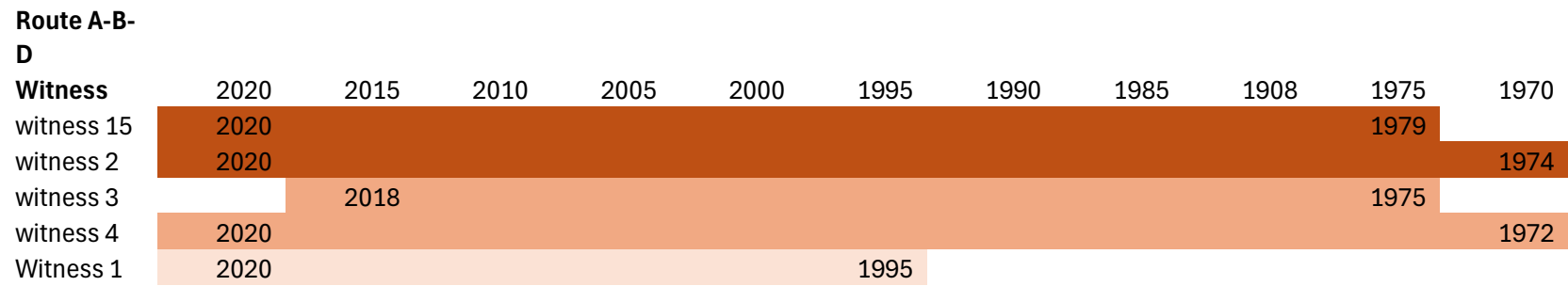
16. Aerial photographs are held by the Council comprising a black and white series from 1970s and subsequent colour version series. On the 1970s there is no sign of trodden paths for the recorded paths, the path shows wear which may be construed as use by farm vehicles. On the 1983/5 photograph there are no signs as before; The 1992 series shows most clearly the hedge enclosing Knutsford FP6, it would require a gap in this hedge to connect the footpath with the claimed path. No trodden paths are particularly visible, and the photographs are not fine enough to show hedge breaks. The 2000 series shows farm vehicle tracks on the same alignment as the claimed paths except C-B. The hedge along Knutsford FP6 is still visible. The 2000/2003 series shows cloud cover which obscures part of the claim at point A. At the railway bridge there is no evidence of a gate across the tracks. Vehicle tracks are very clear, breaks in hedges are visibly possible. The 2005/6 series shows the vehicle tracks very clear again, between C-B the photograph is not clear enough to identify breaks in hedges or trodden paths.

Appendix 4

User Evidence



Shading represents frequency of use darker is more frequent.



From the 15 user evidence forms that were submitted with the application, 9 people have been interviewed. A hand drawn plan of the route that they walked was included with the evidence forms, and at interview the witnesses agreed the consultation plan reflected the paths they had used.

None of the witnesses said they were challenged during their use of the route or knew of anyone else who had been challenged. No obstructions were remembered or described until a gate was erected in 2020 on the south side of the railway bridge and this being locked, it prevented users from walking. This constitutes one date of challenge for users for the purposes of S31 of the HA80 ie, 2000 to 2020

Between Bexton Lane and the railway bridge all users had walked the same route. North of the railway bridge from point B, 5 people used the route B-D and 11 people used the route B-C, that is, a few people used both routes. Frequency of use has been daily, with others including both routes in a configuration of use which was less regularly used for the railway line and most usually that route was used for a period of a few years and incorporated into a long distance route. It was more popular for users to more regularly walk along the shorter route to link paths either side of the railway line. Use was for recreational exercise, dog walking and more particularly linked to family outings with children or the local scouts and cubs groups.

The period of use claimed by the witnesses who support the application is from a period in the 1950's-1960s when as children they went to the area before the motorway was constructed. Use continued for most witnesses with breaks in use caused by periods of residence abroad or another change in circumstances. During interviewing no one had been aware of the parish paths leaflet described above, although a few were aware of a leaflet about paths. One witness thought the route A-B-C was shown as a footpath on an Ordnance Survey map as a dotted line. A few were aware of the landowner and the change in ownership although seemed not to know at which date that occurred. Most knew and may have spoken with about the (late) farmer who lived at Blackhill Farm. One witness had asked permission from the famer at Yew Tree Farm, however it isn't known when this happened and it isn't confirmed if the farmer was the tenant of the relevant land at that time.