

# Consultation and Engagement Plan

<b>Name of engagement / consultation activity:</b>	Active Travel Strategy and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) – Public Consultation
<b>Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):</b>	Richard Hibbert
<b>Project Manager (PM) (if part of a project):</b>	Jenny Marston
<b>Other Project Team members and roles (if part of a project):</b>	Laura Prendeville Hannah Webster
<b>Service / team:</b>	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	Hannah Webster / Laura Prendeville	03.04.25	Consultation, Engagement and Communications Plan for the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs.
V2	Hannah Webster / Laura Prendeville	08.04.25	Address comments

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

The existing Cycling Strategy 2017-2027 was prepared pre-pandemic, and prior to many policy changes and new guidance which has emerged, including: Gear Change (2020), the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (2021) and Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2 (2022), as well as new cycle infrastructure design guidance.

The Cycling Strategy focused on a single mode only, without consideration of the interfaces with walking and wheeling, which have subsequently been emphasised in national policy. The government considers 'active modes' (walking, wheeling and cycling) holistically. This direction can be seen in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and the expectation for local authorities to develop Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).

Central Government has an objective for 50% of all local journeys in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled by 2030. Importantly, Active Travel England (ATE) expect local authorities to complete an active travel capability self-assessment each year, which is then assessed by ATE to assign a level to which a local authority is performing, ranging from levels 0 (lowest) to level 4 (highest). Cheshire East is currently classified as level 1 and there is ambition and commitment to progress through the levels. Those authorities performing at a higher level have greater access to funding.

An Active Travel Strategy for Cheshire East has been drafted to share our vision and actions. Alongside this, a suite of seven new Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) have been

developed, setting out an evidence-based prioritised network of walking and cycling routes, following guidance set out by the Department for Transport.

The primary purpose of the consultation, subject to approval by Committee, is to seek the views of stakeholders and residents on the extent to which the public agree with the Active Travel Strategy and actions provided, as well as the extent to which the public agree with the proposed networks, interventions and prioritisation presented in the LCWIPs. Following the consultation, the feedback will be considered and the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP plans will be updated and presented to Committee for approval.

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

The desired outcomes of the consultation on the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIPs are to inform the public and stakeholders of the plans for a new strategy and suite of LCWIPs and to obtain a representative picture of local views on the actions outlined in the strategy, and interventions and prioritised network outlined in the LCWIPs.

The objectives of the consultation are to:

- Understand whether the public and stakeholders agree with the challenges and opportunities set out within the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the vision and themes (create, culture and collaborate) set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the way the key priorities will be achieved as set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with targets set out in the Active Travel Strategy;
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the proposed network of walking and cycling routes in the LCWIPs; and
- Understand the extent to which the public and stakeholders agree with the prioritisation of the proposed network of walking and cycling routes proposed in the LCWIPs.

**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
Chair of H&T Committee Vice Chair of H&T Committee	Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage
Walking and Cycling Champion	Email/briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage Consultation Stage Post-Consultation
All CEC Members	Members Briefing	Pre-Consultation Stage

Stakeholder	Method	What 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	Online survey and paper copies at Libraries	Consultation stage
Statutory transport bodies (Active Travel England)	Email	Consultation Stage
Specialists e.g. Sustrans, Canal and River Trust	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 full stakeholder mapping exercise 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 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 develop materials for consultation	Strategic Transport	May/June 2025
Progress work to prepare for consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liase with comms to promote consultation</li> <li>• Full stakeholder list and contact details</li> <li>• Prepare detailed consultation plan</li> <li>• Draft and finalise consultation materials               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Questionnaire</li> <li>○ Brochure summarising the Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP networks and prioritisation in a public friendly format</li> <li>○ Web page text</li> <li>○ Emails</li> <li>○ Poster</li> <li>○ Press releases prior to and during consultation</li> <li>○ Social media posts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Prepare for and undertake relevant briefings</li> <li>• Organise meetings with cycle groups and reps for each of the town LCWIPs.</li> </ul>	Strategic Transport	June 2025
Conduct consultation (6 weeks)	Consultation Team	July-August 2025
Analysis and feedback	Consultation Team	Autumn 2025

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

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

**Risk Assessment:** What are the anticipated risks and mitigations?

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
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 Autumn 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. The questionnaire will be available online and a paper version on request.
Unpresented sample/results	Reach out to broadest possible range of age groups, demographics and partners.
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.