

Questions & Responses – Highways & Transport Committee – 19 June 2025

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?

Written Response

The following schemes will be funded in Macclesfield;

- Links to Astra Zeneca campus at Hurdsfield - £60k for stage 1 feasibility and design
- Macclesfield Cycle Package – Gas Road/Hurdsfield Road construction phase - £32k
- Middlewood Way – construction of new access ramp £40k

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.

Following the meeting Mrs Scaresbrook followed up with an email to say she hadn't received the responses she required and asked further questions as follows:

What proportion of the Consolidated Active Travel Fund of around £800K would be spent in Congleton and what on?

Officer response:

This is still to be determined.

How many schools currently had School Travel plans and were there proposals to increase uptake by making it easier to create them?

Officer response:

The Council does not retain current records of how many schools produce and maintain a Travel Plan. Experience indicates that many schools do not consider this to be a priority. It is anticipated that there will be a need to review the role of school travel plans in the LTP procedures in the near future and this will seek to identify means to make them more meaningful and deliverable for schools.

There was also mention in the meeting of two projects (Manchester Rd, Wilmslow and Manchester Rd, Macclesfield) that were to be completed, and this would help raise Cheshire East's level with ATE. Are these projects being completed from existing funds or will the £800K go towards these?

Officer response

It is anticipated that a contribution from the ATE funding may be necessary to complete the Manchester Road schemes.

There was a question about default 20mph which quoted about £10 million and the reply was that CE didn't have that money. But surely CE can find a government pot to bid for?

Officer response: Following the Comprehensive Spending Review we believe the Council has more clarity on the Highways capital and revenue funding available to it for the next 3 years. Officers are not aware of any additional government funding at this time.

Please note that the estimate of £10million was stated by a public speaker. It has not been verified by Cheshire East Council therefore officers cannot confirm whether or not it is a reliable estimate of the investment required.

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 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 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 generally poor state of the roads.

In response officers 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.

Written Response

Records indicate that assessments of this site were completed in early 2023. The site did not meet sufficient criteria under the Council's Road Crossings Policy to be a priority for investment at that time. The site will be retained on our list of proposals and will be reviewed periodically.

We will ensure that this approach is acknowledged in the updated Active Travel Strategy.

Please be aware that the Council is currently responding to a planning application in the local area that may provide a crossing in the vicinity of The Hill, Hassall Rd, Heath Rd junction. This will be determined through the planning process with reports to the

relevant Planning Committee. In due course, there would be statutory consultation before any works started at this location.

Public notices will be posted and ward councillors informed at the start of such a consultation.

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 outside of the meeting.

Written Response

Officers would welcome a response to the Active Travel consultation from Ms Roberts and the wider community of equestrian interests within Cheshire East.

In preparing their contributions, it would be advisable to take account of the national priorities for Active Travel defined by Active Travel England, which is the relevant executive agency of the DfT. The link to their Corporate Plan is below for information.

[Active Travel England: Corporate plan 2023 to 2025](#)

A key consideration for the Council, as Local Transport Authority will be to what degree horse-riding is a means of transport rather than a recreational pursuit.

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 foot path 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.