

Congleton Link Road

Public Consultation Report OD020

April 2014

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

This report describes the Public Consultation for the Congleton Link Road scheme, which was held over a 7-week period from the 13th January to the 28th February 2014, and assesses the feedback received from the public.

The Public Consultation consisted of the following:

- A Public Exhibition held over three days at Congleton Town Hall;
- Displays for consultation material located in Congleton, Crewe, Sandbach and Macclesfield;
- Newsletter distribution to local residents through the winter edition of Congleton's 'Bear Necessities' newsletter;
- A consultation leaflet sent out to identified stakeholders;
- A leaflet and questionnaire drop initiated for residents within a 500m boundary of the scheme;
- Consultation material uploaded to Cheshire East Council's (CEC) website providing details of consultation venues and times, PDF's of the exhibition boards and ability to complete an online questionnaire; and
- Meetings with Local Parishes and individual landowners.

1.2 Purpose of Consultation

The purpose of the Public Consultation was to gauge the general interest in the Congleton Link Road scheme. Residents were invited to attend a consultation exhibition and complete an associated questionnaire allowing them to indicate their level of support for each of the four proposed options. The objectives of the Public Consultation can be summarised as follows:

- To inform the public and other stakeholders of the Congleton Link Road scheme and the route options available for consideration;
- To provide an opportunity for the public and other stakeholders to discuss and ask questions of the scheme with members of the project team;
- To gauge the level of support for the four link road options and the support for the scheme in general;
- To determine the main areas of concern for residents; and
- To identify areas for further consideration or development.

1.3 Scope of this Report

The Public Consultation Report provides an overview of how the consultation process was executed. The general interest of the public towards the link road is assessed, and the results from the questionnaires are compiled and analysed with a summary of the findings presented. The report lists any actions that have been taken in response to feedback from the Public Consultation and discusses key issues.

1.4 Structure of the Report

The report is broken down into the following sections:

Chapter 1 – Introduction: an introduction to the background of the Public Consultation and the scope of the report.

Chapter 2 - Consultation Proposals: a brief explanation of the background to the scheme, scheme benefits and objectives, and the proposed link road options.

Chapter 3 – Consultation Arrangements: explains the consultation arrangements including utilised venues/locations, exhibition boards, methods employed to distribute material and efforts made to generate publicity and awareness for the consultation period.

Chapter 4 – Consultation Response: breakdown of the level of response received during the consultation period including the number of written responses and questionnaires. Exhibition attendance levels can also be found in this section.

Chapter 5 – Questionnaire Responses: this section contains an analysis of the questionnaires; a brief explanation of each question is given, and results are summarised and presented in tabular and graphical format. ‘Other’ factors that have been identified are listed and grouped accordingly.

Chapter 6 – Written Responses: presents any actions that were required following the consultation. A summary of how the information was received and the response taken is provided.

Chapter 7 – Other information: any other information relevant to the report is listed in this section.

Chapter 8 – Special Consideration: summary of meetings held with local Parish Councils and landowners.

Chapter 9 – Other Routes Suggested: details any route alterations that have been considered in response to feedback.

Chapter 10 – Summary: presents a summary of the major findings of the report.

Chapter 11 – Conclusions: conclusions based upon the findings of the report will be listed in this section.

2 Consultation Proposals

2.1 Scheme Background

As part of their development plan for Congleton, Cheshire East Council has identified a Development Strategy which is founded on employment-led growth. Expansion of existing businesses which operate within the area and inward investment are seen as pivotal to the Development Strategy and the future success of Congleton. The Congleton Link Road is considered an essential element in the successful delivery of the Development Strategy.

The principle of the link road was consulted on as part of Congleton Town Strategy which was held between the 2nd March 2012 and 2nd April 2012. Feedback from the Congleton Town Strategy consultation indicated that there was support for a northern link road and that this should be investigated further. An indicative route for the northern link road was approved by Congleton Town Council on the 4th September 2012.

Further information related to the Congleton Town Strategy and the Development Strategy can be found at:

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies_2012/congleton_town_strategy_2012.aspx

www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/development_strategy.aspx

2.2 Scheme Benefits

Congleton is a market town located in Cheshire, situated south of Manchester, and north of Stoke-on-Trent. Several major A-roads converge on Congleton which link the town to the various outlying villages, towns and cities. The A34 runs through Congleton Town Centre and connects Stoke-On-Trent with Manchester. The A534 runs east-west through the town connecting Crewe with the M6. The A536 runs north-eastwards to link Congleton to Macclesfield.

The road network experiences significant levels of congestion, particularly during peak hours, which causes severe delays along the town centre corridor. The Congleton Link Road aims to reduce congestion by providing a bypass for traffic using the town as a through-route. In addition to improving travel times for commuters wishing to bypass the town, the link road is expected to improve journey times within Congleton by removing excess traffic from major roads.

As part of Cheshire East Council's Local Plan for the area, the link road is expected to bring several other benefits to the town; these include improved air quality within the town centre and promoting urban regeneration. The link road will secure much needed investment for the town by improving access to the local trading parks and opening up developable land.

2.3 Scheme Objectives

The Scheme Objectives for the Congleton Link Road can be listed as follows:

- To support economic, physical and social regeneration of Congleton by creating and securing jobs;
- To relieve existing town centre traffic congestion/HGV's, remove traffic from less desirable roads and facilitate town centre regeneration;
- To open up new development sites and improve access to Radnor Park Trading Estate (RPTe) and Congleton Business Park (CBP);
- To improve strategic transport linkages across the Borough facilitating wider economic and transport benefits;
- To reduce community severance along key town centre corridors;
- To reduce traffic related pollutants within the town's declared Air Quality Management Areas.

2.4 Link Road Options

Four link road options were identified with the potential to address the Scheme Objectives. These have been referred to as the Red Option, the Blue Option, the Green Option and the Purple Option. These route options are shown in Figure 2.0; a larger copy of this plan can be found in Appendix A.

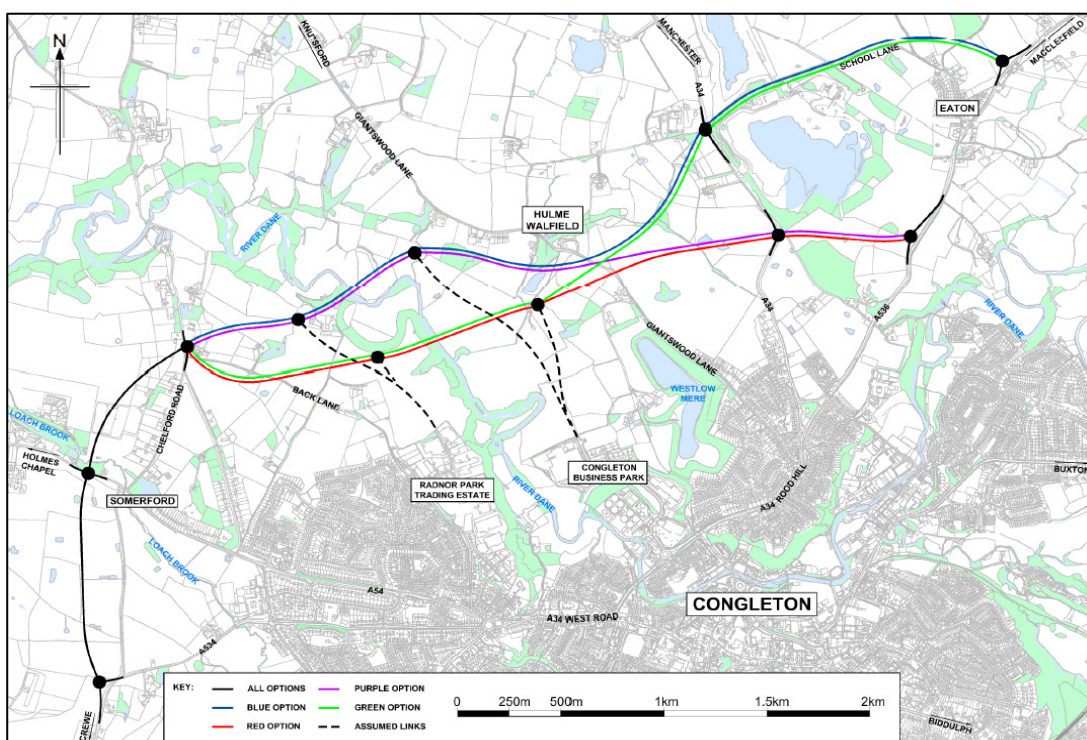


Figure 2.0 – Congleton Link Road options

The proposed link road has been divided into a number of sections (Zones A to F, Radnor Park Trading Estate Link, and Congleton Business Park Link). All routes share a common starting point beginning west of Congleton at a junction with the A534.

Zone A consists of the section between the A534 Sandbach Road and the A54 Holmes Chapel Road.

Zone B consists of the section between the A54 Holmes Chapel Road and Chelford Road.

Zone C consists of the section between Chelford Road and a new junction to the west of the River Dane valley.

Zones D crosses the River Dane valley.

Zone E consists of the section between a new junction to the east of the River Dane valley and A34 Manchester Road.

Zone F consists of a section between the A34 Manchester Road and A536 Macclesfield Road.

Radnor Park Trading Estate Link and Congleton Business Park Link provide connections from the proposed link road into Radnor Park Trading Estate and Congleton Business Park respectively.

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3 Consultation Arrangements

3.1 General Approach

The Public Consultation took place over a 7-week period from the 13th January to the 28th February 2014. The Public Consultation was held as an opportunity for the public to express their views and opinions with respect to the scheme.

The target audience for the consultation included any organisation, stakeholder or individual who may have an interest in the scheme. Due to the proximity of the link road, the majority of people who took part in the consultation were either residents of Congleton or from surrounding villages and Parishes.

The main event during the consultation period was a three-day Public Exhibition which was held at Congleton Town Hall from the 23rd - 25th January 2014. The exhibitions invited the public to come and view the consultation material related to the scheme and complete the associated questionnaire; the opportunity to converse directly with members of Jacobs UK Ltd and Cheshire East Council was also available.

In order to capture views from surrounding towns, displays containing the exhibition material and questionnaires were setup in the following locations:

- Westfields, Sandbach;
- Town Hall, Macclesfield; and
- Delamere House, Crewe.

An additional display was also setup at Congleton Library for the duration of the consultation period.

3.2 Consultation Strategy

The consultation process had three core elements – information dissemination, obtaining feedback, and analysis and reporting. In order for the public to make an informed decision regarding the scheme, it was important that information was communicated clearly and effectively with a robust means of providing feedback.

The consultation material was designed to provide a concise overview of the scheme, guiding the reader through the identification of the need for improvement through to the development of the link road options.

The means of acquiring feedback was primarily through the completed questionnaires, although comments made about the scheme in emails, letters or in conversation with members of Cheshire East Council or Jacobs UK Ltd were also taken into account.

The information gathered during the consultation stage forms the basis of this report.

The methods employed to promote awareness of the scheme and generate interest for the Public Consultation are provided in the following sections within this chapter.

3.3 Public Exhibition

The venue utilised for the Public Exhibition was the Bridestones Suite within Congleton Town Hall. The exhibition ran for a three day period, the time and dates of which were as follows:

- Thursday 23rd January 2014 (12pm – 5pm)
- Friday 24th January 2014 (9am – 8pm)
- Saturday 25th January 2013 (10am – 5pm)

Boards displaying the consultation material were displayed around the room with a separate table provided for the public to complete a questionnaire.

The main aims of the Public Exhibition were as follows:

- To present information of the scheme to the public;
- To provide an opportunity for the public to converse directly with members of the Jacobs UK Ltd project team and the Cheshire East Council; and
- To invite feedback on the scheme based on the information presented.

3.4 Exhibition Boards

The consultation material was displayed across fourteen A0 size boards which were distributed around the room. The boards presented key information related to the scheme such as how the need for improvement was identified, the link road options, traffic flows, costs, and a comparison of the proposed options. A scheme timeline was also provided to illustrate the current stage of the project. The information and themes contained within each board are summarised below and included in Appendix E:

- Board 1 – Welcome to the Public Consultation
- Board 2 – Why is it needed?
- Board 3 – Local Plan
- Board 4 – Environmental Considerations
- Board 5 – Route Appraisal
- Board 6 – Link Road Options
- Board 7 – Link Road Options (Red & Blue Options)
- Board 8 – Link Road Options (Green & Purple Options)
- Board 9 – Traffic Flows
- Board 10 – Economic Assessment and Funding
- Board 11 – Quality of Local Plan

- Board 12 – Option Comparison
- Board 13 – Option Summary
- Board 14 – What Happens Next?

Members of the project team were available to discuss any specific queries related to the boards or the scheme.

Attendees were invited to complete a questionnaire based upon the information displayed on the boards.

An Actions and Comments Register was created to record outstanding actions or requests made by the public which needed to be addressed after the exhibition ended.

3.5 Website

Details of the Congleton Link Road Scheme were made available at the CEC website at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/congleton_link_road. Information provided included a project overview, key programme dates, progress to date and frequently asked questions.

Several reports were made available providing additional information about the scheme; reports included the Stage 1 Scheme Assessment Report, Route Appraisal Report, and Environmental Appraisal Report.

The fourteen exhibition boards were available in PDF format alongside the various contact details for Cheshire East Council.

Additionally, an electronic version of the consultation questionnaire was made available to ensure the best possible response to the survey.

The scheme website went live on the 13th January 2014.

3.6 Leaflet Distribution

Two leaflets drops were initiated prior to the Public Exhibition, one to the general public and another to identified stakeholders. Information provided in the leaflet included scheme objectives, link road options, link road comparison, and details of how to provide feedback. Time and dates of the Public Exhibition were also included.

A copy of the Consultation Leaflet can be found in Appendix C.

3.6.1 Stakeholder letter drop

A list of stakeholders was compiled; this included any organisation or body that was identified who may be affected by the scheme or who was thought to have an active interest. Examples of stakeholders include local businesses, Parish Councils, Government agencies, non-statutory bodies, and local authorities. A total of 231 stakeholders were identified.

The Stakeholder List can be found in Appendix F. The accompanying Letter to Stakeholders can be found in appendix G.

3.6.2 Letter drop

Leaflets with attached questionnaires were distributed to residents living within a 500m boundary of the link road corridor. A 500m boundary was chosen to ensure that the views of those living within close proximity of the link road could be captured. Approximately 1,500 properties were identified in the mailing list. Delivery was handled by DBS Distribution, a company that specialises in leaflet distribution.

3.7 Questionnaire

The questionnaire acted as the main source of feedback during the consultation stage and was designed to ascertain the views of the public with respect to the scheme. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the proposed options and to specify which factors they considered most important when considering the scheme. Other important information such as the respondents preferred mode of transport was also acquired.

Prior to the commencement of the Public Exhibition, questionnaires were distributed to the following locations:

- 1,500 questionnaires distributed to residents living with a 500m boundary of the scheme (as described in section 3.6.2).
- 150 questionnaires issued to Congleton Library.
- 100 questionnaires issued to Macclesfield Town Hall.
- 100 questionnaires issued to Delamere House, Crewe.
- 100 questionnaires issued to Westfields, Sandbach.

In addition to the above, the following questionnaires were issued during the Public Consultation period:

- 500 approx. questionnaires made available during the Public Exhibition.
- 50 additional questionnaires issued to Congleton Library.
- 50 additional questionnaires issued to CEC.
- 140 questionnaires issued to Eaton Parish.
- 500 approx. questionnaires issued to the business community.

In total, 3190 paper copies of the questionnaires were issued throughout the Consultation Period.

A copy of the Consultation Questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

3.8 Newsletter

A newsletter presenting a summary of the scheme was issued in the winter 2014 edition of Congleton Town Council's 'Bear Necessities' newsletter prior to the Public Consultation's commencement. This represented an ideal opportunity to generate interest and awareness of the scheme due to Bear Necessities having a circulation

of approximately 12,000 recipients. The newsletter essentially provided the same information as the leaflet, albeit a slightly shortened version; information included the scheme overview, link road options, times and dates of the upcoming consultation, and contact details for further information.

A copy of the Consultation Newsletter can be found in Appendix D.

3.9 Period for Comments

A 5-week period was provided after the Public Exhibition to allow adequate time for the public to consider their views on the scheme. The closing date for feedback was the 28th February 2014 which was made clear on both the consultation material and the Cheshire East Council website.

3.10 Information made available to the public

The following information was made available to the public throughout the Consultation Period:

- Stage 1 Scheme Assessment Report
- Route Appraisal Report
- Environmental Appraisal Report
- Local Model Validation Report
- Traffic Survey Report 2012
- Traffic Survey Report 2013
- Congleton Town Strategy
- Report of Consultation
 - Summary of Consultation Findings
 - Full report of Consultation Findings
 - Report of Consultation Process
- Draft Congleton Town Strategy Sustainability Appraisal
- Cabinet Paper 17th September 2012
- Congleton Link Road Consultation documents
 - Exhibition Boards 1 – 14
 - Traffic Flow Information to the South of Congleton
 - Typical cross-section of the link road

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4 Consultation Response

4.1 Questionnaire Response

During the Public Consultation period, a total of 1279 questionnaires (paper and electronic) were received in response to the link road scheme.

Questionnaires were received via one of the following methods:

- By post;
- Submitted electronically; or
- Completed at the Public Exhibition.

A breakdown of how the responses were received is provided below in Table 4.0. A detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses is provided in Chapter 5.

Questionnaire responses	
Questionnaire received via	Number
Post	630
Electronically	317
Completed at Public Exhibition	332
Total	1279

Table 4.0 – Breakdown of the returned questionnaires

In total, 962 paper questionnaires were received out of the 3190 that were distributed; this equates to an average response rate of 30%.

4.2 Exhibition Attendance

Over the course of the three-day Public Exhibition a total of 396 attendees were recorded as having attended an exhibition held at Congleton Town Hall. A breakdown of the number of attendees per day is provided in Table 4.1 below.

Public Exhibition Attendance	
Date of Event	Number
Thursday 23 rd January 2014 (12pm – 5pm)	112
Friday 24 th January 2014 (9am – 8pm)	173
Saturday 25 th January 2014 (10am – 5pm)	111
Total	396

Table 4.1 - Breakdown of the Public Exhibition attendance

A selection of photos taken during Congleton Town Hall Public Exhibition is shown overleaf in Figures 4.0 to 4.3.



Figure 4.0 - Layout of the Exhibition Boards in the Bridestones Suite



Figure 4.1 - Members of the public viewing the Exhibition Boards (1)



Figure 4.2 - Members of the public viewing the Exhibition Boards (2)



Figure 4.3 - Questionnaire Ballot box

4.3 Written Contributions

Written contributions were received either by email, letter, recorded during the Public Exhibition, or in meetings with landowners, stakeholders, and Parish Councils.

Emails were received via the dedicated email address at: congletonlinkroad@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Letters were received via the Cheshire East Council address:

Cheshire East Council
Strategic Highways and Transportation
Floor 6
Delamere House
Delamere Street
Crewe
CW1 2LL

Responses were recorded in a register and logged according to whether an outstanding action was required, or whether the comment was a general remark in relation to the scheme.

A breakdown of the written contributions and the actions taken in response is discussed in Chapter 6 of this report. The most frequently raised and important issues are summarised and accompanied by a written response.

The Actions and Comments Register can be found in Appendix H.

5 Questionnaire Responses

5.1 Questionnaire Response

A total of 1279 questionnaires (paper and electronic copies) were received during the Public Consultation period. The questionnaire asked a total of nine questions with questions 1-6 considered mandatory, and questions 7-9 considered optional.

The feedback obtained from the online and paper questionnaires was merged into a single spreadsheet so that the information could be processed. Data was grouped according to the criteria set out by the question.

5.2 Questionnaire Analysis

Each question has been analysed in sections 5.3 to 5.11 with the following information provided for each:

- A brief description of the question;
- The level of response;
- Ranking of the results (where appropriate);
- A graphical/tabular representation of the results; and
- A discussion of the results.

The nine questions from the questionnaire are stated for convenience. It should be noted that the questionnaire contained both open (i.e. multiple choice) and closed (i.e. 'yes' or 'no') type questions. The nature of the question, whether open or closed, is stated for each question.

A copy of the Consultation Questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

5.3 Question 1

Please provide us with your name and postcode, or, if you would prefer your comments to remain anonymous, your postcode only. Please note that we will require your full postcode to validate your response.

This question requested the name and home postcode of respondents so that the location of responses could be analysed using Geographical Information System (GIS) software. Respondents could choose to remain anonymous if they desired, however, postcode data was required in order to include each questionnaire in the spatial analysis. Due to the closed nature of the question, the percentage breakdown is out of 100%. Table 5.0 shows the percentage breakdown of respondents who provided their name for question 1.

Option	Respondent Count	Respondent %
Provided	1043	81.5%
Not Provided	236	18.5%
Total Response	1279	100%

Table 5.0 – Name of respondent

The number of respondents who chose to provide their name was high, with 81.5% providing the requested information. Conversely, 18.5% of respondents chose to remain anonymous. Out of the 1279 questionnaires received, 5 respondents failed to provide a postcode and as such could not be processed during the GIS spatial analysis.

5.4 Question 2

Please indicate your level of support for each of the four options (shown in the Public Consultation Leaflet and at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad) by ticking one box on each line.

This open question was designed to gauge the general support for the scheme and each of the four proposed options by asking respondents to indicate their support based on a 5-point scale; options ranged from 'Strongly Support', 'Support', 'No Preference', 'Oppose', and 'Strongly Oppose'. A sixth option, 'Don't Know', was also available. It was noted that of the 1279 returned questionnaires, 231 were submitted by the business community (e.g. RPTE, CBP, businesses within the town centre). In response, two separate data sets have been created to illustrate how the support for the scheme differs when the views of the business community are discounted.

5.4.1 General results (business community included)

In order to gauge the general support for the scheme, it was necessary to determine the number of respondents in favour of the scheme in relation to the number of respondents who opposed the scheme. Respondents who expressed support for at least one option were considered to be in favour of the scheme whereas respondents who expressed opposition to all the proposed options were considered to be against the scheme. Respondents who neither supported, nor opposed the proposed options (i.e. selected 'No Preference', 'Don't Know' or failed to provide a response for all four options) were placed in the 'Other' category.

Table 5.1 provides a breakdown of the general support for the scheme based on the total number of returned questionnaires.

Total number of questionnaires: 1279		
Option	Respondents	Respondent %
Support the scheme	986/1279	77.1%
➤ <i>In favour of only one option</i>	<i>564/1279</i>	<i>44.1%</i>
➤ <i>In favour of two options</i>	<i>300/1279</i>	<i>23.5%</i>
➤ <i>In favour of three options</i>	<i>13/1279</i>	<i>1.0%</i>
➤ <i>In favour of all options</i>	<i>109/1279</i>	<i>8.5%</i>
Against the scheme	235/1279	18.4%
Other	58/1279	4.5%
Total	1279/1279	100.0%

Table 5.1 – Support for the scheme based on total returned questionnaires (including business community)

The results illustrate that there is widespread support for the link road with 77.1% of respondents indicating that they support the scheme and therefore at least one of the proposed options. In contrast, opposition to the link road was relatively low with 18.4% of respondents against the scheme. Further analysis of the support for the scheme reveals that the majority of respondents were in favour of only one option at 44.1%. Approximately a quarter of the respondents were in favour of two options at 23.5%

5.4.2 Option analysis (business community included)

In order to establish the public's preferred route, it was necessary to determine the individual support for the four proposed options, this involved a breakdown analysis of the 77.1% of respondents who had expressed general support for the scheme.

To simplify the analysis the results were generalised by identifying respondents who selected 'Strongly Support' or 'Support' and grouping them together in a new category titled 'Support'. Similarly, respondents who selected 'Strongly Oppose' or 'Oppose' were grouped together in a new category titled 'Oppose'.

It was noted that 18.4% of the respondents were against the scheme and these results were isolated from the breakdown analysis as it had already been established that these respondents were opposed to all the four proposed options. Including these results would dilute the analysis and not represent a true breakdown of how respondents who support the scheme feel about the individual options. For similar reasons, respondents in the 'Other' category were also omitted from the analysis. In other words, the breakdown of the support is focused purely on the 77.1% of respondents who has been grouped in 'support' for the scheme.

It should be noted that although the respondents in the 'oppose' or 'other' categories have been removed; opposition to each option will be present in the breakdown analysis. This is due to the open nature of the question which allows a respondent to be in favour of the scheme whilst opposing at least one of the options (e.g. a respondent may support the Red, Blue and Green Options but oppose the Purple Option).

Figure 5.0 illustrates the support for the individual options based on the 77.1% of respondents who were in favour of the scheme. The levels of support and opposition are summarised in Table 5.2. Respondents were able to provide one response for each individual option (4 responses for Question 2 per questionnaire). As such, the total number of responses in the 'Support', 'Opposition' and 'Other' categories can exceed the number of questionnaires under consideration. The total number of positive responses received in support was 1639.

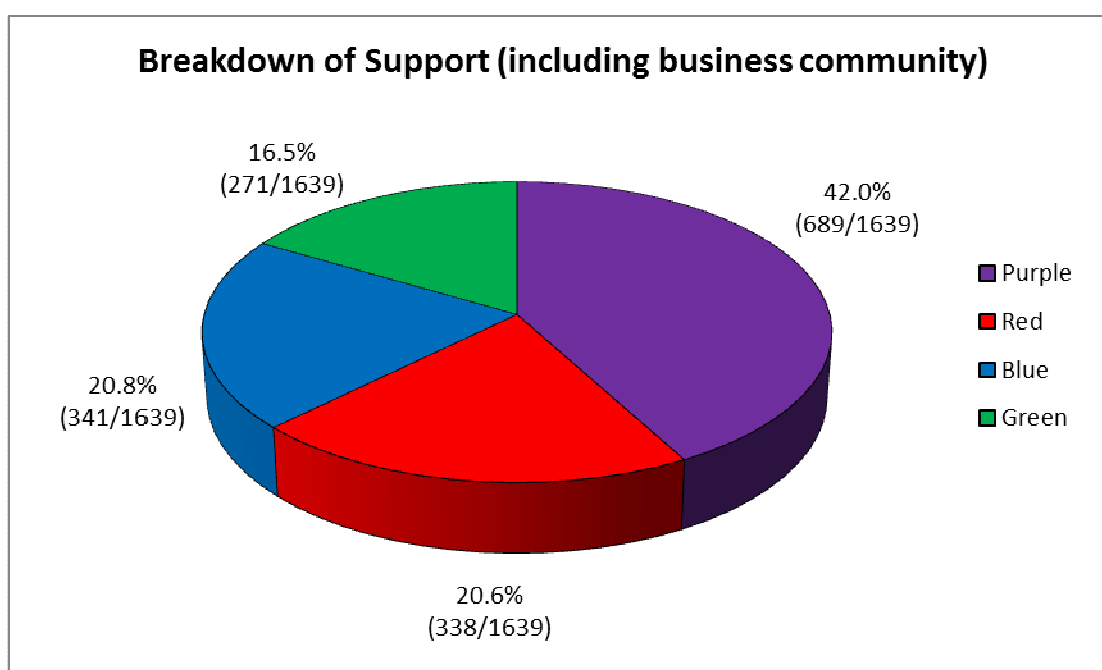


Figure 5.0 – Support for the scheme (including business questionnaires)

Route Option	Support	Oppose	Other
Purple Option	42.0% 689/1639	19.8% 180/907	8.4% 117/1398
Red Option	20.6% 338/1639	25.5% 231/907	29.8% 417/1398
Blue Option	20.8% 341/1639	25.9% 235/907	29.3% 410/1398
Green Option	16.5% 271/1639	28.7% 261/907	32.5% 454/1398
Total	100.0% 1639/1639	100.0% 907/907	100.0% 1398/1398

Table 5.2 – Data summary for support of the individual options based on respondents in favour of the scheme (including business community)

The levels of support, opposition and 'other' can be analysed independently as each category received a different number of total responses across the four option range. Therefore, the summation of the responses within each of the support, opposition, and other categories equals 100.0%.

The analysis was executed by determining the total number of responses that were received in a particular category and then determining the number of responses allocated to each of the individual options within this category.

In terms of support, 1639 responses were received and these were then broken down out of 100.0%. It can be seen that the Purple Option received the majority of the support with 42.0%. The levels of support for the Blue Option and Red Option were similar at 20.8% and 20.6% respectively. The Green Option received the least endorsement with only 16.5% of respondents being in favour of this option.

A total of 907 responses were received in opposition to the four options. The Purple Option received the least opposition at 19.8%. Opposition to the Blue Option and Red Option was similar at 25.5% and 25.9% respectively. The Green Option received the largest amount of opposition at 28.7%.

Further analysis was undertaken by omitting the data from the 'other' category as these respondents influenced neither the support, nor opposition of the options. For this analysis the breakdown was based on the combined number of responses an option received in support and opposition (e.g. the Purple Option received 689 responses in support and 180 responses in opposition, therefore the breakdown is out of 869). This allowed for a direct comparison of the internal support and opposition of a particular option.

Table 5.3 presents the results for the proposed options when the 'other' category is omitted.

Option	Support	Oppose	Total
Purple Option	79.3% 689/869	20.7% 180/869	100.0% 869/869
Red Option	59.4% 338/569	40.6% 231/569	100.0% 569/569
Blue Option	59.2% 341/576	40.8% 235/576	100.0% 576/576
Green Option	50.9% 271/532	49.1% 261/532	100.0% 532/532

Table 5.3 – Option summary omitting 'other' category (including business community)

The total number of respondents for each option varies; however, each option received a large enough response for the results to be considered representative of the total population and could therefore be used to draw several conclusions.

The Purple Option received the highest support and lowest opposition with values of 79.3% and 20.7% respectively. This represents an excellent result for the Purple Option with roughly an 80/20 split in favour of the option.

The Red Option and Blue Option received very similar levels of support (59.4% and 59.2% respectively) and opposition (40.6% and 40.8% respectively). The results were good with roughly a 60/40 split in favour of either option.

The Green Option received the lowest support and highest opposition of the four options at 50.9% and 49.1% respectively; this roughly equates to a 50/50 split. Despite receiving the lowest support of the four options, the Green Option still received slightly more support than opposition.

Comparing the above results with those of Table 5.2 indicates that omitting the 'Other' category does not affect the public's views with respect to the options. In both cases the Purple Option receives the most endorsement and least opposition, the Red Option and Blue Option receive similar levels of support and opposition, and the Green Option receives the least endorsement and most opposition.

It can therefore be concluded that the numbers provided are robust and accurately reflect the respondent's views of the proposed options.

5.4.3 General results (excluding the business community)

The business community submitted a significant number of responses (231 questionnaires, 18.1% of the total response) and it was necessary to assess how the support for the scheme fluctuated when these views were discounted. Removing these views reduces the total number of questionnaires under consideration to 1048. Table 5.4 presents the breakdown of the general support of the scheme.

Total number of questionnaires: 1048		
Option/s	Respondents	Respondent %
Support the scheme	755/1048	72.0%
➤ In favour of only one option	333/1048	31.8%
➤ In favour of two options	300/1048	28.6%
➤ In favour of three options	13/1048	1.2%
➤ In favour of all options	109/1048	10.4%
Against the scheme	235/1048	22.4%
Other	58/1048	5.5%
Total	1048/1048	100.0%

Table 5.4 – Support for the scheme based on total returned questionnaires (excluding business community)

By discounting the questionnaires submitted by the business community, it can be seen that support for the link road drops slightly from 77.1% to 72.0%. It can be observed that the number of respondents who were 'In favour of only one option' has reduced from 564 to 333. This suggests that the business community was entirely in favour of one option due to this reduction being equal to the number of questionnaires submitted by the business community (which have been discounted in this analysis). The number of respondents who are in favour of two, three or four options remains the same although their respective percentages have increased

due to the smaller population of questionnaires under consideration. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who are against the scheme or in the 'other' category has also increased for identical reasons.

The results indicate that there is widespread support for the scheme regardless of whether the business community's views are included or excluded with percentages of 77.1% and 72.0% respectively. Additionally, opposition to the scheme remains low with values of 18.4% and 22.4% respectively.

5.4.4 Option analysis (excluding the business community)

By discounting the views of the business community a second set of data detailing the respondent's individual support and opposition of the proposed options was produced.

Similar to the analysis carried out in section 5.4.2, the respondents who were against the scheme, 22.4% in this case, were omitted as including them would dilute the analysis and not present a true breakdown of how respondents who were in favour of the scheme felt about the individual options. Likewise, respondents in the 'other' category were similarly omitted. The breakdown of the support is focused purely on the 72.0% of respondents who were in favour of the scheme.

It should be noted that, as in section 5.4.2, despite omitting respondents in the 'against' and 'other' categories, opposition to each option will remain due to the open nature of the question which allows a respondent to be in favour of the scheme whilst opposing at least one of the options.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the support for the individual options based on the 72.0% of respondents who were in favour of the scheme. The levels of support and opposition are summarised In Table 5.5. Much like the analysis carried out in section 5.4.2, the total number of responses in the 'Support', 'Opposition' and 'Other' categories can exceed the number of respondent who were in favour of the scheme. The number of respondents in favour of the scheme was 755 and the total number of positive responses in the support category was 1408.

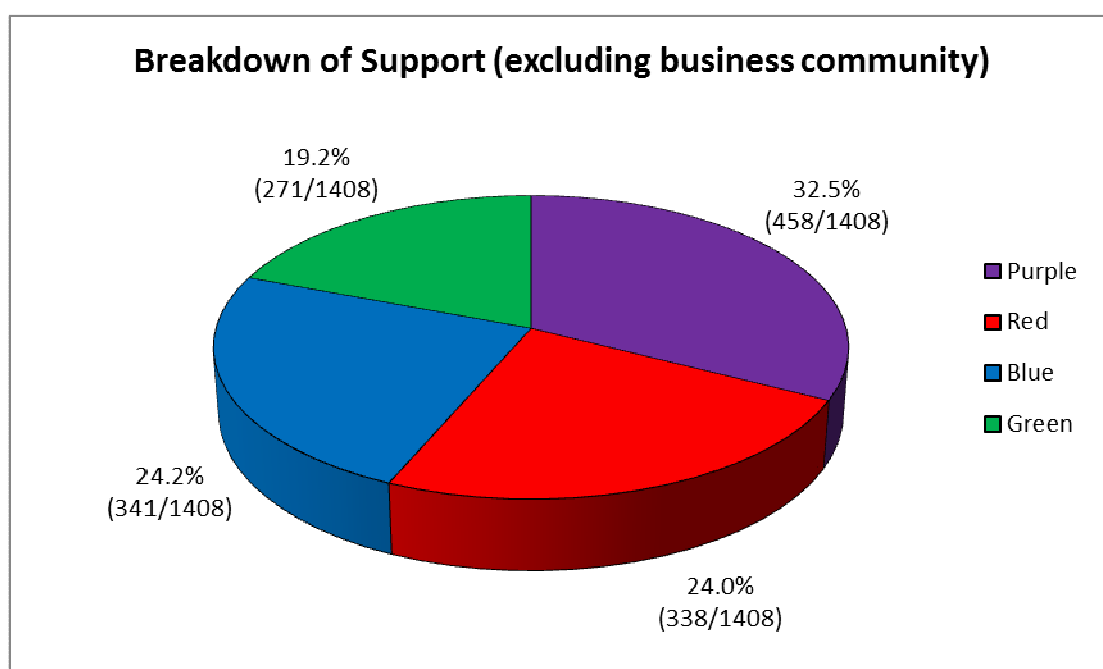


Figure 5.1 – Support for the scheme (excluding business questionnaires)

Route Option	Support	Oppose	Other
Purple Option	32.5% 458/1408	19.8% 180/907	16.6% 117/705
Red Option	24.0% 338/1408	25.5% 231/907	26.4% 186/705
Blue Option	24.2% 341/1408	25.9% 235/907	25.4% 179/705
Green Option	19.2% 271/1408	28.7% 261/907	31.6% 223/705
Total	100.0% 1408/1408	100.0% 907/907	100.0% 705/705

Table 5.5 – Data summary for support of the individual options based on respondents in favour of the scheme (excluding business community)

The levels of support, opposition and other, can be analysed independently as each category received a different number of total responses across the four option range. Therefore, the summation of the responses within each of the support, opposition and other categories equals 100.0%.

The analysis was executed by determining the total number of responses that were received in a particular category and then determining the number of responses allocated to each of the individual options within this category.

In terms of support, 1408 responses were received and these were then broken down out of 100.0%. It can be seen that the Purple Option received the majority of the support with 32.5%. The number of positive responses for the Purple Option has decreased from 689, in section 5.4.2, to 458. As the number of responses for the remaining options remains the same, it seems to suggest that the business community was wholly in favour of the Purple Option.

Support for Blue Option and Red Option were similar at 24.2% and 24.0% respectively. The Green Option received the least endorsement with just under a fifth of the response being in favour of this option at 19.2%. The percentage support for the Red Option, Blue Option, and Green Option has increased when compared to the values stated in Table 5.2; which is due to the smaller number of questionnaires under consideration.

Further analysis was undertaken by omitting the data from the 'other' category as these respondents influenced neither the support, nor opposition of the options. This allowed for a direct comparison of the support and opposition of a particular option.

Table 5.6 presents the results for the proposed options when the 'other category is omitted.

Option	Support	Oppose	Total
Purple Option	71.8% 458/638	28.2% 180/638	100.0% 638/638
Red Option	59.4% 338/569	40.6% 231/569	100.0% 569/569
Blue Option	59.2% 341/576	40.8% 235/576	100.0% 576/576
Green Option	50.9% 271/532	49.1% 261/532	100.0% 532/532

Table 5.6 – Option summary omitting 'other' category (excluding business community)

As with the results presented in Table 5.3, the number of respondents for each option differs; however, each option received a large enough response for the results to be considered representative of the total population and therefore suitable for drawing several conclusions.

The Purple Option received the highest support and lowest opposition with values of 71.8% and 28.2% respectively. This represents a minor drop in support when compared with when the business community is included. Nevertheless, the support remains very good with roughly a 70/30 split in favour of the option.

The levels of support and opposition for the Red Option, Blue Option and Green Option remain identical to when the business community is included as the number of responses in each category remains the same.

Discounting the views of the business community only affects the levels of support and opposition for the Purple Option.

5.4.5 Options Summary

Table 5.7 presents a comparison of the results for each of the proposed options when omitting data in the 'other' category.

Route Option	Support	Oppose	Total
Purple Option (in. business community)	79.3% 689/869	20.7% 180/869	100.0% 869/869
Purple Option (ex. business community)	71.8% 458/638	28.2% 180/638	100.0% 638/638
Red Option (in. business community)	59.4% 338/569	40.6% 231/569	100.0% 569/569
Red Option (ex. business community)	59.4% 338/569	40.6% 231/569	100.0% 569/569
Blue Option (in. business community)	59.2% 341/576	40.8% 235/576	100.0% 576/576
Blue Option (ex. business community)	59.2% 341/576	40.8% 235/576	100.0% 576/576
Green Option (in. business community)	50.9% 271/532	49.1% 261/532	100.0% 532/532
Green Option (ex. business community)	50.9% 271/532	49.1% 261/532	100.0% 532/532

Table 5.7 – Data summary for the proposed options

Based on the above data, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The Purple Option received excellent support with the highest public endorsement and least opposition regardless of whether the business community's views are discounted or not. Support for the option when including the views of the business community roughly represents an 80/20 split in favour of the option. Conversely, discounting the business community causes this to reduce to roughly a 70/30 split in favour of the option.

- The Red Option and Blue Option received very similar levels of support and opposition. Support for these options was generally good, with roughly a 60/40 split in favour of both options regardless of whether the business community's views are included or excluded.
- The Green Option received the weakest support and strongest opposition of the four options, although support received was slightly more than opposition. The data illustrates that support and opposition for the option (regardless of whether the business community's views were included or not) roughly equals a 50/50 split.

5.4.6 Spatial Analysis

Spatial analysis was performed so that the views of specific regions could be assessed in relation to the proposed scheme. The analysis separated the questionnaires into two categories, responses received from within the CW12 postcode district and responses which were received from outside of the CW12 postcode district. CW12 was selected as this area encompasses Congleton and the parishes within the immediate vicinity of the link road. Of the 1279 questionnaires received, 5 respondents failed to provide a postcode and as such could not be analysed using the GIS software; a further 4 questionnaires produced erroneous results and were subsequently discounted. Therefore, the total number of questionnaires which were included in the analysis was 1270 (99.3% of the total response). The methods employed to determine the breakdown of the results were identical to those used in sections 5.4.1 – 5.4.4 (i.e. omitting respondents in the 'oppose' and 'other' categories and focusing on the respondents in favour of the scheme).

Detailed data and figures illustrating the response for each parish are provided in Appendix N.

5.4.7 Response within the CW12 boundary

A total of 1083 questionnaires (84.7% of the total response) were submitted from within the CW12 postcode boundary. The questionnaires were categorised based on the parish the response was issued from. A total of 9 parishes were identified within the CW12 boundary which included the following:

- Brereton;
- Congleton;
- Eaton;
- Hulme Walfield;
- Moreton cum Alcumlow;
- Newbold Astbury;
- North Rode;
- Somerford Booths; and
- Somerford.

Table 5.8 provides a breakdown of the general support for the scheme based on the response from the individual parishes.

Parish	Respondent no.	Support the scheme		Against all options		Other		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
-	-								
Brereton	16	11	68.8%	3	18.8%	2	12.5%	16	100.0%
Congleton	786	672	85.5%	85	10.8%	29	3.7%	786	100.0%
Eaton	118	59	50.0%	47	39.8%	2	10.2%	118	100.0%
Hulme Walfield	57	37	64.9%	18	31.6%	2	3.5%	57	100.0%
Moreton cum Alcumlow	4	2	50.0%	2	50.0%	0	0.0%	4	100.0%
Newbold Astbury	15	3	20.0%	9	60.0%	3	20.0%	15	100.0%
North Rode	7	7	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Somerford Booths	6	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%
Somerford	74	23	31.1%	47	63.5%	4	5.4%	74	100.0%

Table 5.8 – General support for the scheme based on responses from within CW12

It can be seen that there is generally good support for the scheme, with at least 50% of respondents in 7 out of the 9 parishes being in favour of the scheme.

The largest response was submitted by Congleton with a total of 786 questionnaires received; support was positive with 85.5% of respondents in favour of at least one option. Conversely, only 10.8% of respondents were against the scheme.

Newbold Astbury and Somerford were the only parishes that were largely against the scheme with opposition values of 60.0% and 63.5% respectively. A fair percentage of respondents from Eaton were opposed to the scheme at 39.8%.

Table 5.9 illustrates the percentage support and opposition for each individual option based on results from the CW12 parishes.

Parish	Purple		Red		Blue		Green	
	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
-								
Brereton	55.6%	44.4%	80.0%	20.0%	50.0%	50.0%	57.1%	42.9%
Congleton	82.2%	17.8%	55.1%	44.9%	69.4%	30.6%	57.1%	42.9%
Eaton	58.7%	41.3%	81.4%	18.6%	24.0%	76.0%	24.5%	75.5%
Hulme Walfield	38.2%	61.8%	72.7%	27.3%	47.2%	52.8%	56.7%	43.3%
Moreton cum Alcumlow	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Newbold Astbury	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%	0.0%
North Rode	50.0%	50.0%	42.9%	57.1%	28.6%	71.4%	42.9%	57.1%
Somerford Booths	40.0%	60.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Somerford	40.9%	59.1%	65.0%	35.0%	36.8%	63.2%	25.0%	75.0%

Table 5.9 – Support/opposition for the individual options based on respondents in favour of the scheme (CW12 parishes)

As with the analysis that was undertaken in sections 5.4.2 and 5.4.4, the figures presented are based on the respondents who supported the scheme; respondents who were against the scheme and/or in the 'other' categories have been omitted.

The responses for support and opposition have been combined to form the total response that an option received; the percentage breakdown represents the distribution of these responses in terms of support and opposition. This allowed for a direct comparison of the internal support and opposition for a particular option with respect to the individual parishes.

It should be noted that due to the varying number of respondents within each parish, the results can appear skewed. For example, the Purple Option received a total of 1 response from Moreton cum Alcumlow, this response was in support of the option which therefore equates to 100.0% support due to this being the only response received. A more detailed breakdown of the results is provided in Appendix N.

A summary of the findings are presented in table 5.10.

Parish	Comments
Brereton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 total respondents – 11 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (68.8%). Red Option received the highest support (80.0%).
Congleton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 785 total respondents - 672 in favour of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (85.5%). Purple Option received the highest support (82.2%).
Eaton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 118 total respondents – 59 in favour of the scheme. Average support for the scheme (50.0%). Red Option received the highest support (81.4%).
Hulme Walfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57 total respondents – 37 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (64.9%). Red Option received the highest support (72.7%).
Moreton cum Alcumlow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 total respondents – 2 in favour of the scheme. Average support for the scheme (50.0%). Purple Option and Red Option received joint highest support (100.0%).
Newbold Astbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 total respondents – 3 in support of the scheme. Poor support for the scheme (20.0%). Green Option received the highest support (100.0%).
North Rode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 total respondents – 7 in support of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (100.0%). Purple Option received the highest support (50.0%).
Somerford Booths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 total respondents – 5 in support of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (83.3%). Red Option received the highest support (100.0%).
Somerford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 74 total respondents – 23 in support of the scheme. Poor support for the scheme (31.1%). Red Option received the highest support (65.0%).

Table 5.10 – Summary of response from the CW12 parishes

5.4.8 Response outside the CW12 boundary

A total of 187 questionnaires (14.6% of the total response) were submitted from areas outside the CW12 boundary. The GIS software identified the following major areas where responses had originated (sporadic responses were grouped into the 'Other' category within the Location column):

- Crewe;
- Macclesfield;
- Manchester;
- Middlewich;
- Nantwich;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme;
- Sandbach;
- Stoke-on-Trent;
- Wilmslow; and
- Other.

Table 5.11 provides a breakdown of the general support for the scheme based on responses from outside CW12.

Location	Respondent no.	Support the scheme		Against all options		Other		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
-	-	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Crewe	16	12	75.0%	3	18.8%	1	6.2%	16	100.0%
Macclesfield	26	23	88.5%	3	11.5%	0	0.0%	26	100.0%
Manchester	7	5	71.4%	2	18.6%	0	0.0%	7	100.0%
Middlewich	5	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Nantwich	5	3	60.0%	2	40.0%	0	0.0%	5	100.0%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	8	8	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	100.0%
Sandbach	25	20	80.0%	3	12.0%	2	8.0%	25	100.0%
Stoke-on-Trent	65	61	93.8%	3	4.6%	1	1.5%	65	100.0%
Wilmslow	6	4	66.7%	2	33.3%	0	0.0%	6	100.0%
Other	24	22	91.7%	1	4.2%	1	4.2%	24	100.0%

Table 5.11 – General support for the scheme based on responses from outside CW12

It can be seen that there is very good support for the scheme outside of the CW12 boundary, with each identified location indicating at least 60% support for the scheme. Opposition against the scheme was generally low.

The largest response came from Stoke-on-Trent with a total of 65 questionnaires received; support was very positive with 93.8% of respondents in favour of the scheme. Conversely, only 4.6% of respondents were against the scheme.

Other areas which submitted a noteworthy response include Crewe, Macclesfield and Sandbach; each of these areas was significantly in favour of the scheme.

Table 5.12 illustrates the percentage support and opposition for each individual option based on results from the identified locations.

Parish	Purple		Red		Blue		Green	
-	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose	Support	Oppose
Crewe	72.7%	27.3%	40.0%	60.0%	66.7%	33.3%	80.0%	20.0%
Macclesfield	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	75.0%	25.0%	75.0%	25.0%
Manchester	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Middlewich	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nantwich	100.0%	0.0%	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%
Newcastle-under-Lyme	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sandbach	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	40.0%	60.0%	33.3%	66.7%
Stoke-on-Trent	96.7%	3.3%	48.0%	52.0%	28.6%	71.4%	25.0%	75.0%
Wilmslow	33.3%	66.7%	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%
Other	95.5%	4.5%	66.7%	33.3%	80.0%	20.0%	80.0%	20.0%

Table 5.12 – Support/opposition for the individual options based on respondents in favour of the scheme (outside CW12)

As with the analysis that was undertaken for the CW12 parishes, the figures presented are only based on the respondents who supported the scheme; respondents who were against the scheme and/or in the 'other' categories have been omitted. The responses for support and opposition have been combined to form the total response that an option received; the percentage breakdown represents the distribution of these responses in terms of support and opposition. This allowed for a direct comparison of the internal support and opposition of a particular option with respect to the individual locations. A more detailed breakdown of the results is provided in Appendix N.

A summary of the findings for the questionnaires submitted outside of the CW12 boundary is provided below in Table 5.13.

Location	Comments
Crewe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 total respondents – 12 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (75.0%). Green Option received the highest support (80.0%)
Macclesfield	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26 total respondents – 23 in favour of the scheme. Very good support for the scheme (88.5%). Purple Option and Red Option received joint highest support (100.0%)
Manchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 total respondents – 5 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (71.4%). Purple Option, Blue Option and Green Option received the joint highest support (100.0%).
Middlewich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 total respondents – 3 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (60.0%). Purple Option received the highest support (60.0%).
Nantwich	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 total respondents – 3 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (60.0%). Purple Option received the highest support (100.0%).

Newcastle-under-Lyme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8 total respondents – 8 in favour of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (100.0%). Purple Option received the highest support (100.0%).
Sandbach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 total respondents – 20 in favour of the scheme. Very good support for the scheme (80.0%). Purple Option received the highest support (100.0%).01
Stoke-on-Trent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 65 total respondents – 61 in favour of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (93.8%). Purple Option received the highest support (96.7%).
Wilmslow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 total respondents – 4 in favour of the scheme. Good support for the scheme (66.6%). Red Option received the highest support (66.7%).
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 total respondents – 22 in favour of the scheme. Excellent support for the scheme (91.7%). Purple Option received the highest support (95.5%).

Table 5.13 – Summary of response from outside CW12

5.5 Question 3

When considering the Congleton Link Road proposals, which three of the following factors do you consider to be the most important?

This question gave the respondent the opportunity to express which factors they felt were the most important when considering the link road. Nine options were provided with the respondent asked to indicate which three they felt were the most important. Respondents were free to select the 'Other' category to provide details of any alternative factors they felt should be considered. All responses were considered to have an equal weighting.

Table 5.14 and Figure 5.2 illustrate the results.

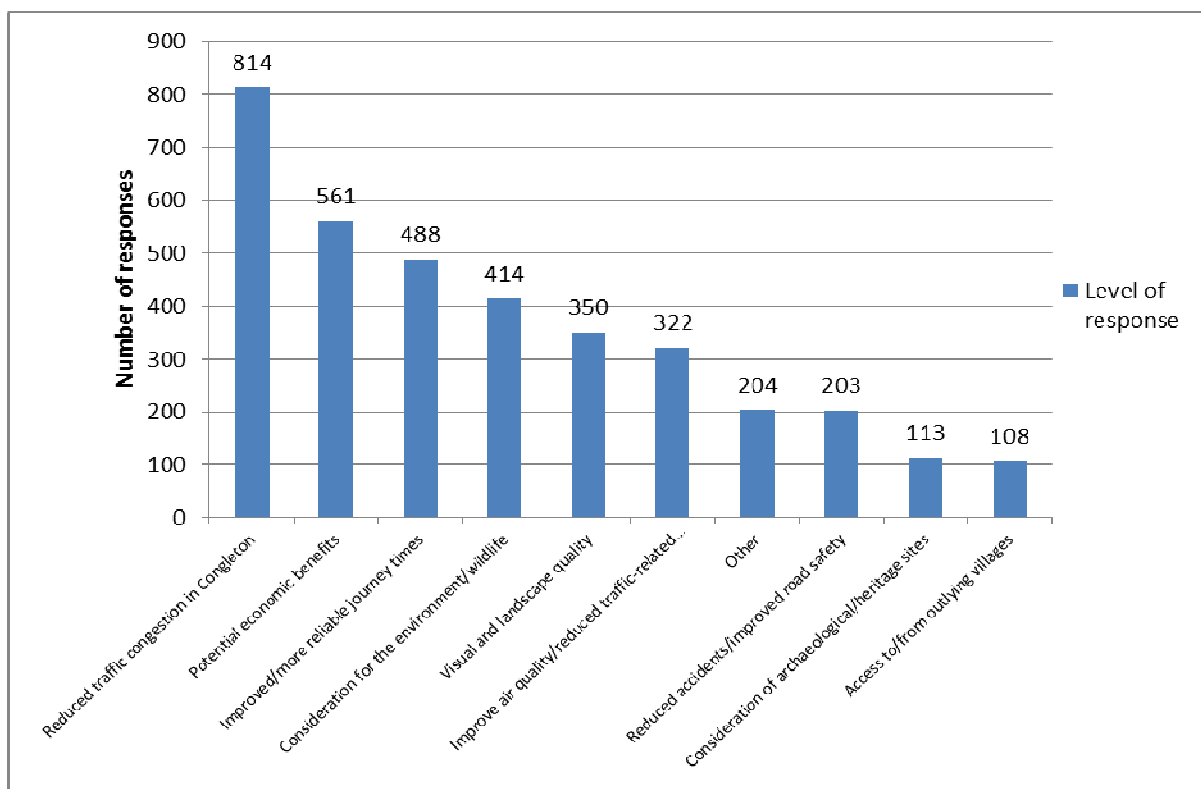


Figure 5.2 – Three most important factors

Factor	Responses	% of respondents
Reduced traffic congestion in Congleton	814/1279	63.6%
Potential economic benefits	561/1279	43.9%
Improved/more reliable journey times	488/1279	38.2%
Consideration for the environment/wildlife	414/1279	32.4%
Visual and landscape quality	350/1279	27.4%
Improve air quality/reduced traffic-related pollutants	322/1279	25.2%
Other	204/1279	16.0%
Reduced accidents/improved road safety	203/1279	15.9%
Consideration of archaeological/heritage sites	113/1279	8.8%
Access to/from outlying villages	108/1279	8.4%

Table 5.14 – Three most important factors

Due to the open nature of the question, the factors can be viewed as independent to each other. The ‘% of respondents’ column expresses the results as the number of times an interest was selected out of the total number of returned questionnaires.

A total of 3557 responses were received from a population of 1279 questionnaires; this equates to an average response rate of 2.8 factors per questionnaire. A total of 138 questionnaires (10.7% of total response) respondents failed to provide 3 factors.

Based on the responses it can be seen that the ‘Reduced traffic congestion in Congleton’ was considered to be the most important factor, with 63.6% of respondents selecting this as one of their three factors.

Notable factors that were provided in the ‘Other’ column are listed below:

- Development of business parks;
- Improving footpaths/cycle-ways/bridleways/public rights of way;
- Effects on existing residents;
- Potential noise/vibration produced by the link road;
- Economic cost of the link road; and
- Minimizing land-take.

5.6 Question 4

We would like to be able to take into account the views of the users of different modes of transport. Please identify your main modes of transport (tick more than one box if appropriate)

This question was designed to determine the main modes of transport of the people of Congleton and the surrounding area. Respondents were able to select as many modes of transport as they desired out of the possible 7 options. The ‘Other’ option was made available so respondents could indicate any alternative modes of transport which were not listed. Responses were considered to have an equal weighting.

Table 5.15 and Figure 5.3 illustrate the results.

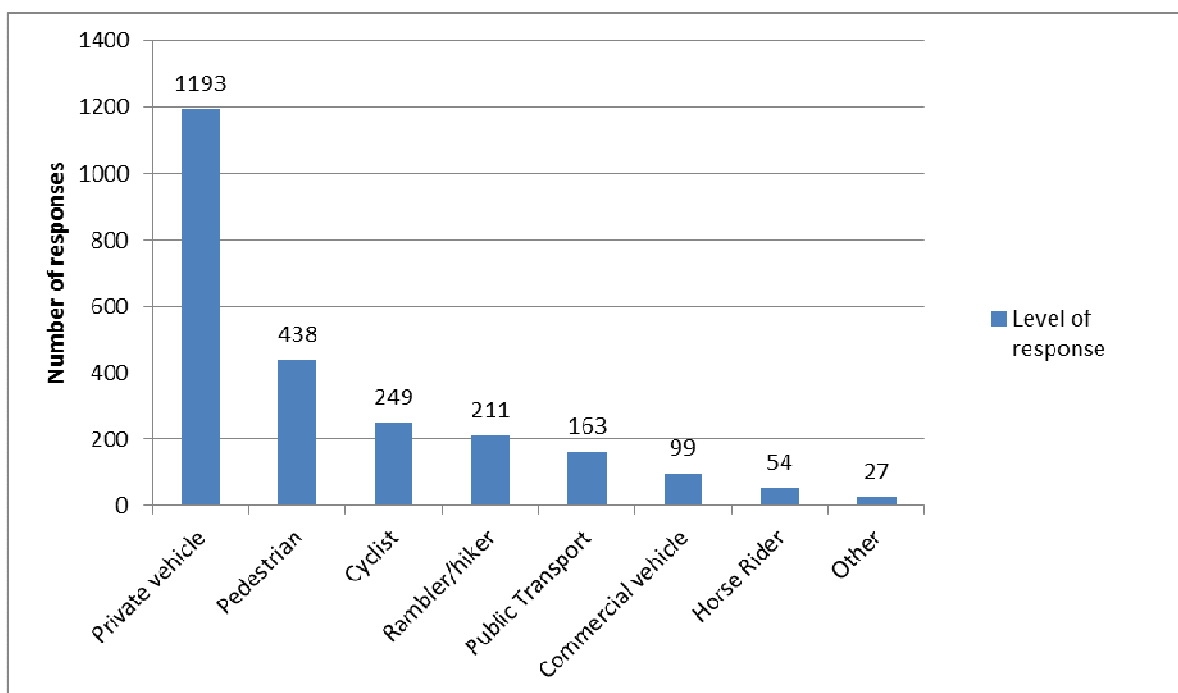


Figure 5.3 – Main modes of transport

Main mode/s of Transport	Responses	% of respondents
Private vehicle	1193/1279	93.3%
Pedestrian	438/1279	34.2%
Cyclist	249/1279	19.5%
Rambler/hiker	211/1279	16.5%
Public Transport	163/1279	12.7%
Commercial vehicle	99/1279	7.7%
Horse Rider	54/1279	4.2%
Other	27/1279	2.1%

Table 5.15 – Main modes of transport

Due to the open nature of the question, the modes of transport can be viewed as independent to each other. The '% of respondents' column expresses the results as the number of times a mode of transport was selected out of the total number of returned questionnaires.

A total of 2434 responses were received from a population of 1279 questionnaires; this equates to an average response rate of 1.9 modes of transport selected per questionnaire.

It can be seen that the number of respondents who selected 'Private vehicle' is significant, with 93.3% of respondents indicating this as one of their main modes of transport. More than half the respondents utilise more than one mode of transport with 52.6% selecting more than one option.

Notable modes of transport stated in the 'Other' category are listed below:

- Agricultural vehicles;
- Mobility Scooter;

- Motorbike/Motorcycle; and
- HGV.

5.7 Question 5

Are you a regular user of Congleton's highway network?

This closed question is designed to determine the number of respondents who are regular users of Congleton's highway network. Table 5.16 presents the findings of this question.

Regular User?	Responses	% Responses
Not stated	69/1279	5.4%
Yes	1180/1279	92.3%
No	30/1279	2.3%
Total	1279	100.0%

Table 5.16 – Regular user of Congleton's highway network?

The number of respondents who considered themselves to be regular users of Congleton's highway network was high at 92.3%. A total of 69 respondents failed to answer this question.

5.8 Question 6

By completing this questionnaire, you have identified that you have an interest in this project. Please identify the nature of your interest in the link road (tick more than one box if appropriate).

The purpose of this question is to determine the respondent's main areas of interest in the link road. Six interests were provided by the questionnaire; respondents were free to select the 'Other' category to provide details of any interests they felt were important. Responses were considered to have an equal weighting.

A total of 2025 responses were received from a population of 1279 questionnaires; this equates to an average response rate of 1.6 interests per questionnaire. Table 5.17 and Figure 5.4 illustrate the results.

Nature of interest	Responses	% Responses
Residential	916/1279	71.6%
Local business	349/1279	27.3%
Public rights of way user	242/1279	18.9%
Leisure	240/1279	18.8%
Business	157/1279	12.3%
Agricultural interest	94/1279	7.3%
Other	27/1279	2.1%

Table 5.17 – Nature of interest in the link road

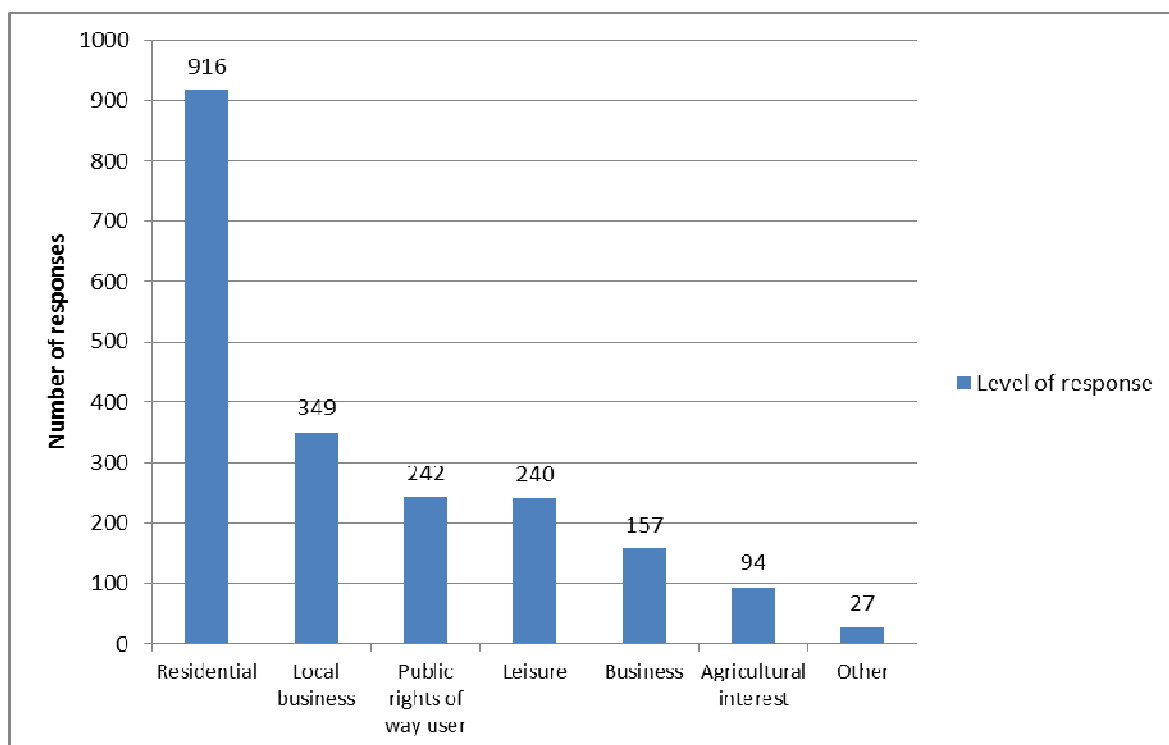


Figure 5.4 – Nature of interest in the link road

Due to the open nature of the question, the interests can be viewed as independent to each other. The ‘% of responses’ column expresses the results as the number of times an interest was selected out of the total number of returned questionnaires.

The majority of the respondents had a residential interest in the link road with 71.6% of respondents selecting this as an option.

Notable interests that were indicated in the ‘Other’ category were as follows:

- Environmental;
- Employment;
- Education;
- Infrastructure; and
- Future housing.

5.9 Question 7

Are you male or female?

This optional question is demographic based and requests the respondent to state their gender. Due to the closed nature of the question, the percentage breakdown is out of 100%. Table 5.18 illustrates the results.

Gender	Response	Response %
Not stated	61	4.8%
Male	752	58.8%
Female	466	36.4%
Total	1279	100.0%

Table 5.18 – Gender of respondent

In total, 95.8% of respondents answered this question with the majority of respondents being male at 58.8%. A total of 61 respondents opted to not answer this question.

5.10 Question 8

How old are you?

This optional question asked for the age of the respondent and was categorised into seven age bands. Due to the closed nature of the question, the percentage breakdown is out of 100%. Table 5.19 and Figure 5.5 illustrate the results.

Age	Response	Response %
Not stated	51	4.0%
Under 21	37	2.9%
21-30	102	8.0%
31-40	152	11.9%
41-50	238	18.6%
51-60	258	20.2%
61-70	267	20.9%
70+	174	13.6%
Total	1279	100.0%

Table 5.19 – Age of respondent

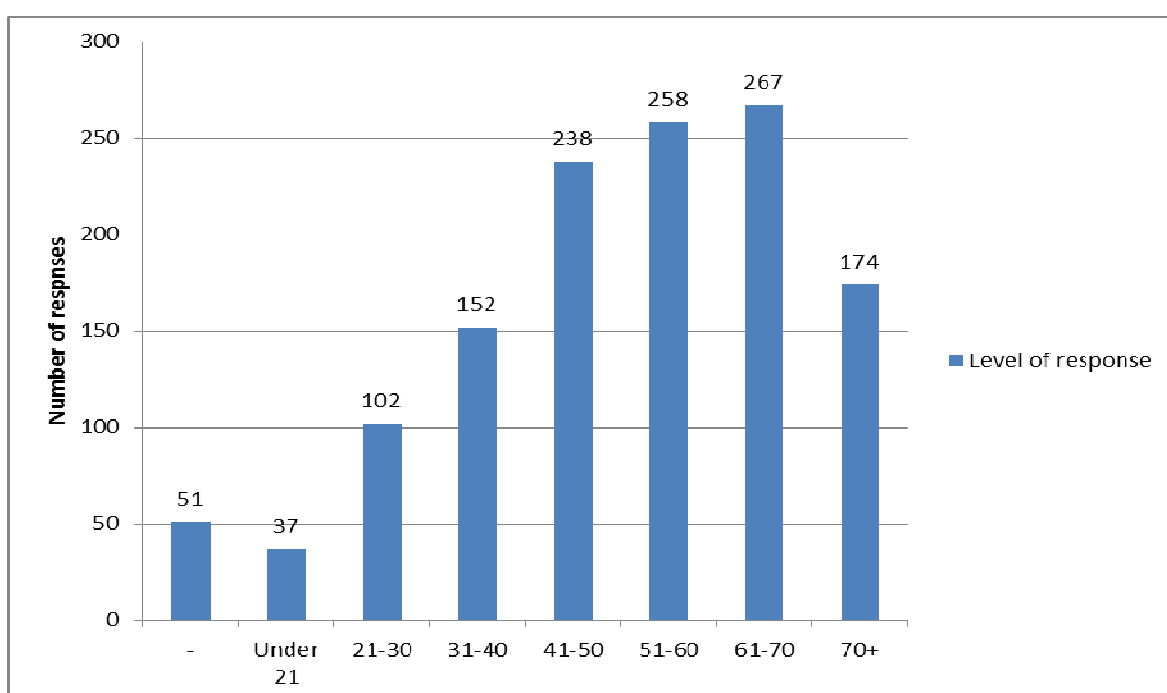


Figure 5.5 – Age of Respondent

In total, 96.0% of respondents answered this question. The highest number of respondents falls into the 61-70 age group with 20.9%. A total of 51 people opted to not state their age.

5.11 Question 9

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

This optional question asked whether the respondent considered themselves to be disabled. Due to the closed nature of the question, the percentage breakdown is out of 100%. Table 5.20 below illustrates the results.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	Response	Response %
-	78	6.1%
Yes	74	5.8%
No	1127	88.1%
Total	1279	100.0%

Table 5.20 – Disability information of respondents

In total, 5.8% of respondents considered themselves to be disabled. A total of 78 people opted to not answer this question.

6 Written Responses

6.1 Schedule of written responses

A schedule was created to log and collate the written responses which were received during the Public Consultation period; the schedule was separated into two categories, 'Actions' and 'Comments'. Comments were considered to be general remarks regarding the Scheme; conversely, actions were considered to be comments which required a specific task to be completed in response.

6.2 Actions and Comments Schedule

Written responses were received either via letter, email, during the Public Consultation, or in stakeholder meetings. Each comment was given a unique reference number and a date on which the comment had been received. A brief description of the comment was provided along with any outstanding action required, if any. The name of the person who was responsible for completing the task was also stated. In total, 47 comments and 45 actions were received during the Public Consultation period; all actions were issued with a response during this period.

The Actions and Comments Schedule can be found in Appendix H.

6.3 Key Issues

A number of key issues have been identified throughout the Public Consultation which were considered to be important by the public. These issues have been identified based upon the frequency of the comments made or where repeat requests for further information have been sought. A number of issues raised by the public have been addressed in the response to the Protect Congleton Civic Society Letter.

The key issues identified throughout the Public Consultation are as follows:

- A34 Newcastle Road extension;
- A54 Buxton Road extension;
- Online improvements, 'the 5th Option';
- Funding of the RPTE and CBP links;
- Property devaluation;
- Effect on local businesses/town centre;
- Pollution;
- Impact on farmland/agricultural land;
- Loss of woodland;
- Loss of countryside;

- Habitat destruction;
- White Elephant Leaflet; and
- Protect Congleton Civic Society Letter.

6.3.1 A34 Newcastle Road extension

The extra cost for providing the A34 (south) connection has been estimated at £10m. The council would have to seek Government funding to cover the majority of the scheme costs. This funding is a competitive process and as such we must submit our strongest case to access it. Economic assessment work has been undertaken, using projected traffic flows, to assess the economic case for the extension to the A34. Of all the possible road links, this section provides the lowest return on the investment.

The traffic modelling shows that traffic would continue through town for A34 Northbound traffic; much of the other traffic movements are removed and as such the journey times for this traffic are improved (without the need for the link to the A34). It is recognised that certain local roads, such as Wallhill Lane will require complimentary measures to ensure that rat running does not increase. Assumptions have been made in the traffic modelling that measures would be implemented on the roads that could be used to access the new link road from the A34 Newcastle Road (such as Padgbury Lane and Wallhill lane) to discourage inappropriate use of these roads. The model assumes speeds on these roads would be reduced to an average of 20mph.

The exact nature of the measures required to reduce speeds and discourage through traffic will be developed in parallel with the detailed design of the link road. All relevant parties including residents and landowners will be engaged in this design process.

The removal of through traffic between the A536/A34 (north) and the A54 (west) from the existing route onto the Congleton Link Road is forecast to reduce peak hour delays on the A34 through Congleton to lower levels than are currently experienced. As a consequence, through traffic between the A34 south and the A536 / A34 north of Congleton would find the existing route an attractive option. This does of course assume that effective traffic calming measures can be implemented with appropriate signing to reinforce restrictions on through traffic on the alternative routes.

6.3.2 A54 Buxton Road extension

The volume of through traffic to/from the A536 is much higher in absolute and percentage terms than other links around Congleton, with nearly 60% of traffic on this route in the AM peak (08:00 to 09:00) being through traffic. In the 2012 base model the forecast (two ways) Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) is 11300 vehicles on the A536. Through traffic is defined as traffic with both origin and destination outside Congleton.

Any link to the east of the A536 to link to the A54 Buxton Road would be costly as a further bridge crossing the River Dane would be required and the topography is more challenging. From a traffic perspective very little traffic would be expected to use this link to get from the A54 to the A536 as other more direct routes are already available via the A523 to access most destinations in the Macclesfield area. The

volume of through traffic to/from the A54 Buxton Road to the A54 Holmes Chapel Road and A534 Sandbach Road is low in absolute numbers and in percentage terms. The A534 Sandbach Road provides a link to the strategic highway network via junction 17 of the M6 Motorway. A link road from the A54 Buxton Road round to the A534 road would be considerably longer than the existing route via the town centre.

In the morning peak hour about a third of traffic approaching from the east on the A54 (just outside the urban area) is through traffic, two thirds is destined for the urban area. Traffic travelling east bound is predominantly from the urban area of Congleton (about 80%) with only 20% through traffic. Meanwhile in the PM peak 87% of eastbound traffic originates in the Congleton urban area, with only 13% through traffic. In the opposite direction 57% of westbound traffic is destined for the urban area (43% is through traffic). The two-way AADT on the A54 in 2012 is 4450 vehicles.

On the basis of the above “high level” assessment it was concluded that a full model run was not required to test the provision of a link from the A54 east of Congleton to the A536 near Eaton. Even if 50% of traffic on the A54 East of Congleton was to use a link between the A54 and the A536, the flow on this link would only be around 2,200 vehicles per day based on 2012 flows. With traffic growth this would be higher in 2017 and 2032, but this would still be much lower than any of the other sections in the proposed options between the A536 and A534.

The analysis of existing transport problems examined traffic conditions across Congleton. Traffic congestion is experienced across the town, but is worst at junctions along the A34 corridor between Lower Heath and the Waggon and Horses junction. Traffic flows are generally lower on the eastern side of Congleton than they are in the west. Analysis of the existing pattern of movements suggests that in absolute numbers there is little through traffic on routes to the east / south east of Congleton. Flows on the A54 Buxton Road are significantly lower than other approaches to Congleton.

The additional benefits of this section in terms of journey time savings would almost certainly offset by the increased costs, and the overall scheme Benefit to Cost Ratio would be lower.

6.3.3 Online improvements, the ‘5th’ Option

Cheshire East Council has not consulted on improvements to the existing A34 corridor within Congleton as an alternative to the four link road options taken to Public Consultation because it is not promoting this option. In accordance with Department for Transport guidance, an assessment of a scheme consisting of improvements to the existing A34 corridor did not score as highly as the proposed link road in its contribution to the Scheme Objectives. This assessment is also summarised in the Stage 1 Scheme Assessment Report. It is considered that online improvements to the A34 Corridor would bring significantly less benefits when compared with a new link road. In particular improvements along the existing corridor in Congleton would not address existing and forecast noise, air quality and severance issues.

In the interest of robustness, a scheme incorporating online improvements to the A34 was modelled to investigate any potential traffic improvements. The model indicated that with online improvements present, some junctions along the major route corridors experienced an improvement in traffic flow. However, these are local

improvements only which do not address the traffic problems facing Congleton as a whole.

Online improvements to the A34 do not present a feasible solution to the forecast traffic growth and the observed improvements are generally minor when compared to the improvements yielded by the link road; this was confirmed in a comparison between the two in which the A34 online improvements scheme performed significantly worse than the link road option.

6.3.4 Funding of RPTE and CBP links

Funding of the links to Radnor Park Trading Estate and Congleton Business Park is expected to be provided by developer contributions. It is possible that the business parks links would be provided at a later date once the construction of the link road is completed. Further information can be found in the response to the White Elephant Leaflet and the Protect Congleton Civic Society letter.

6.3.5 Property devaluation

The route appraisal process considered the disturbance to, and potential devaluation of properties and dwellings within the route corridor, with numerous route options being instantly discounted on the basis that they created unacceptable disturbance to properties. The route appraisal process is documented in the Route Appraisal Report (OD015,) which is available online and can be found on the scheme's website (www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad). The four options presented at the Public Consultation were considered to have a relatively low impact on properties and dwellings when compared to the discounted options. A conscious effort has been made to minimise the impact on properties throughout all stages of design development, while still allowing the link road to achieve the scheme objectives.

Following feedback and requests from members of the public throughout the consultation period, additional design work was carried out to develop alternate alignments and variations to existing alignments. The primary reason for doing this was to attempt to further mitigate the impact that the link road would have on properties located in the immediate vicinity of the proposed link road options.

Alternate alignments have been developed in Zone A, Zone B/C, Zone D/E and Zone F. Details of the alternate alignments can be found in Chapter 8 of this report and also in Appendix I. The alternate alignment designs will be appraised as part of the design development strategy prior to the Preferred Route Announcement. Alternate alignment designs which are considered to be superior to the existing alignment will be incorporated into the overall link road design.

Even though attempts have been made to minimize the impact on properties wherever possible, it is almost inevitable that some properties will be 'blighted' by the link road. While the scheme is under consideration, owners can be left uncertain as to whether their properties will be affected and it may prove more difficult to sell. However, the legal rules on blight require the route to have reached some degree of certainty before blight is triggered and compensation can be considered. The Congleton Link Road scheme would start to trigger blight when a Preferred Route has been chosen and been endorsed by the Council and the Local Plan Core Strategy adopted. The Preferred Route Announcement is anticipated to be made in May 2014.

In certain circumstances compensation can also be paid for loss of amenity through Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973. Claims through Part 1 of this act are valid after 12 months of the opening of the road.

6.3.6 Effect on local business/town centre

It is anticipated that the link road would have an overall positive effect on the town centre environment. By redirecting through traffic away from the town centre road network and onto the link road, congestion within Congleton Town Centre will be reduced. Lower traffic flows would reduce travel times to/from the town centre, suggesting that the centre of Congleton would become more accessible. Additional benefits of reduced traffic congestion within Congleton would be a reduction in town centre noise and pollution, and less town centre severance.

It seems rational to suggest that the centre of Congleton would become a more attractive shopping destination for local residents as town centre shops/businesses would become more accessible. Indeed, if as expected the removal of through traffic makes the town centre area more appealing, it may attract new retailers, help to retain existing customers and attract new customers. It is not apparent that the introduction of a link road would result in encouraging residents to shops elsewhere. At this point, it is not clear what effect the link road would have on 'passing trade'. However, it could be argued that when the existing town centre roads are congested, passing trade may be reduced as people will have little or no time spare to stop in Congleton. In order to support local businesses, there is the potential for signage to be used on the approach to the link road advising drivers of what local services are available in the town centre.

Additionally, it has been reported that some of the major employers located within Congleton are considering relocating due to the congestion on the existing highway network. The link road scheme would act to appease the existing major employers within the area and would also encourage new business development. This would create employment opportunities within the town as well as acting to secure jobs for the future. The town centre would be relieved of through traffic, meaning that investment in the town centre itself would become a much more attractive proposition.

6.3.7 Pollution

As stated in Cheshire East Council's local plan, one of the key objectives which the link road aims to address is improving the air quality within Congleton. The introduction of the link road will reduce the volume of traffic travelling along key route corridors and remove emission-heavy HGV's from the town centre.

The improved traffic flow will reduce the time that traffic is at a standstill, or travelling at slow speeds thus reducing the window of opportunity for vehicles to be at their most fuel inefficient. By shortening the journey times within Congleton and removing excess traffic it is believed that the link road will improve the overall air quality within the town. It has been suggested that the introduction of the link road will transfer the poor air quality within Congleton to the surrounding countryside. Whilst it is true that the air quality within the immediate vicinity of the link road may reduce, it is not thought that the introduction of the road will cause a particularly detrimental effect to the local air quality.

Efforts have been made to mitigate the impact of noise pollution by locating the link road as far away from residential properties as possible, although it is inevitable that

some properties will be adversely affected. The full extent of the impact of noise on properties will not be known until an assessment is completed during the detailed design stage. It is possible that noise-mitigation measures may be introduced although no decision has been made at this stage.

6.3.8 Impact on farmland/agricultural land

As identified in the Private and Community Assets chapter of the Environmental Assessment Report (EAR), the proposed scheme would cause a significant adverse effect on agricultural land and farm businesses. The permanent loss of agricultural land cannot be mitigated by the proposed scheme. The impact to farm businesses would be reduced by providing mitigation measures such as new access tracks and entrances, in order to deal with any potential severance of access to agricultural land.

As part of the assessment on agricultural land and farm businesses, a detailed agricultural land survey and assessment will be undertaken for the preferred route option, which would determine the required mitigation measures for farm businesses.

6.3.9 Loss of woodland

As identified in the ecology chapter of the EAR, the proposed scheme would cause a significant adverse effect on woodland through permanent loss and severance of the habitats present.

Some of the areas of woodland which could potentially be affected by the proposed scheme are designated as ancient woodland and as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) priority habitat woodland. One of the key ecological impacts that has been identified is the potential severance of both ancient woodland at Radnor Wood, and areas of BAP woodland at both Church Wood and Radnor Wood.

Further survey work would be carried out once a Preferred Route has been established, including a Phase 2 ecological survey/National Vegetation Classification which would consider the composition of the woodland and determine the importance of the section which is specified to be removed. Once this information is available, further assessment can be made and, if required, mitigation measures could be considered. Potential mitigation measures could include improving other sections of the existing adjacent woodland and creating new areas of woodland.

6.3.10 Loss of countryside

In the Landscape and Visual Impact chapter of the EAR, the proposed scheme has been assessed against two local policies in the Congleton Borough Local Plan (2005) that consider the loss of countryside. These include:

- PS8: Open countryside

This policy controls countryside development. The link road would travel through the countryside and therefore introduce development as outlined in the Local Plan; however, open countryside would remain on both sides of the road with views across it. In comparison to other forms of potential development, the link road has a less significant impact on the countryside. Nevertheless, there would be an adverse impact on the countryside.

- PS9: Area of Special County Value

This policy protects the designation of the Dane Valley from development which would damage its character or features. The proposed scheme is likely to adversely affect landscape character and features of the Area of Special County Value, although mitigation measures (including the use of landscape screening in the form of new hedgerows and trees, the use of cuttings and embankments, and the use of building materials sympathetic to the landscape) would be put in place to minimise these effects.

Therefore, although the proposed scheme would cause some loss of countryside, the adverse impact would be reduced through the use of mitigation measures and a minimisation of the footprint of the road.

6.3.11 Habitat destruction

As identified in the Ecology chapter of the EAR, the proposed scheme would cause a significant adverse effect as a result of the permanent loss of a number of habitats, including woodland, hedgerows (which have been judged to be both species rich and species poor), watercourses, ponds and marshy grassland.

Further surveys will be carried out in order to support the detailed assessment of the preferred route and to identify mitigation measures that would reduce the impact of the loss of habitat. These may include the following:

- Replacement of lost hedgerows with species rich native hedgerows and/or translocation of species rich/important hedgerows;
- Replacement of lost woodland habitat (to be replaced on >1:1 basis);
- Any bat roosts affected would require detailed bat survey, mitigation and compensation under a European Protected Species licence from Natural England;
- Bat boxes to compensate for loss of trees with bat roost potential;
- Landscape planting, underpasses or overbridges/hop-overs designed to compensate for the severance of important bat commuting routes by the road scheme;
- Any badger setts that are affected would need to be excluded and may be replaced with artificial setts under licence from Natural England, if they are assessed as being of high value (e.g. main setts or setts in areas of low availability of alternative sett-building habitat);
- Mammal underpasses will be installed at appropriate locations;
- Badger fencing may be necessary in appropriate locations;
- Ponds that are lost would need to be replaced on at least a two-for-one basis for common amphibians and those with diverse aquatic macrophyte assemblages in order to ensure that no net loss of habitat is incurred.
- Pond creation is also suggested to replace ponds that become isolated due to the proposed road; and

- Any impacts on Great Crested Newts (GCN) may require a European Protected Species licence and mitigation may include capture and translocation to newly created ponds.

6.3.12 White Elephant Leaflet

A leaflet was circulated during the Public Consultation period presenting a case against the proposed link road. The rear of the leaflet lists a series of points against the Congleton Link Road; a response to these points is provided below alongside the respective point.

A copy of the White Elephant Leaflet can be found in Appendix J.

- We, the local taxpayers, will largely fund this project; just as our Council tax is being wasted on studies to justify this “white elephant” whilst we have our bin collections stopped and our elderly lose their meals-on-wheels. It is merely a vanity project for certain Councillors.**

The scheme is expected to be largely to be funded by revenue streams from central government such as the strategic economic plan. The Local Economic Partnership (LEP) has produced a joint submission to Government outlining their vision for schemes that promote economic growth, which includes the Congleton Link Road. Although this is funding from the National tax payer, if CEC didn't bid for this money it would either go somewhere else within the LEP area (i.e. Cheshire West and Chester or Warrington) or to another LEP. The funding has to be focused on economic growth and as such any scheme promoted has to demonstrate that it will contribute to economic growth. Whilst the scheme requires local funding in the form of costs to develop the scheme and generate a business case, the economic benefits of the additional jobs and housing will outweigh this cost. The consequences of not bidding for this funding would be a lack of growth or even a decline as employers choose to locate away from Congleton, potentially outside the CEC area. To reiterate, most funding could not be used for any other purpose, and other Council services will not suffer as a result of this scheme.

- Large tracts of open countryside and prime agricultural land will be destroyed and built on to raise funds for this road, damaging wildlife habitats and recreational areas in the process.**

Development outlined in the Local Plan is expected to happen regardless of whether the link road scheme goes ahead or not. Funding for the link road is anticipated to consist primarily of Central Government funding (which is not related to any local development). The connections to Radnor Park Trading Estate and Congleton Business Park are expected to be funded through developer contributions. However, these connections will actually provide an alternative route for 'industrial and through traffic' out of Congleton (via the link road) rather than worsening congestion within the town centre.

The environment and key environmental receptors have been carefully considered and where possible, the link road options have been aligned so that they provide minimal disruption to the environment (scheduled monument, ancient woodlands etc). The alignment of the link road scheme and the position of the junctions will be altered throughout design development to further minimise the impact on the environment. Environmental surveys are currently being conducted to identify sensitive areas of flora and fauna. Species relocation and re-planting of trees/

hedgerows will form a large part of the detailed scheme proposal. Bunding and screening measures may be developed which further limit the adverse effects on the environment. Discussions with land owners and farmers will continue to reduce negative impacts and to maintain the viability of existing farms.

3. Consulting on the link road is holding up submission of the Local Plan, which desperately needs to be progressed to resist unwanted development.

The Congleton Link Road (CLR) scheme is NOT holding up the Local Plan, which is has taken longer to develop/adopt than the Council had originally planned. The “Local Plan Strategy – Submission Version” was published in March 2014. The Examination in public of the plan is proposed for later in 2014. A protected corridor has been identified which was included in the draft Local Plan. As the scheme is progressed, a more specific route may be identified in the Local Plan, but the plan will not be delayed if a preferred route has not been identified. It is expected that the preferred route will be approved in Spring/Summer 2014.

4. The road is supposed to encourage new businesses to set up in Congleton but a road in itself does not encourage business. In fact, one new business proposed for Congleton has been put on hold, with alternative sites being investigated, because of the link road proposal and other existing businesses and planning to relocate from Congleton if the road goes ahead. More likely the road will enable business in Macclesfield and Crewe to grow at Congleton’s expense.

Transport is a means to an end and not an end in itself, thus improved transport links are proposed to reduce travel times and encourage business to locate in Congleton by reducing uncertainty around travel times in / around Congleton. The road would provide better access to the M6 (north and south) from the Congleton Business Park and Radnor Park Trading Estate, particularly for HGVs. We would be interested in evidence of businesses / sites where development has been put on hold in response to the scheme. Our understanding of the views of the Chamber of Commerce and larger employers is that the road is wanted and welcomed, as it addresses issues around delays that they have experienced for some time. Improved access to / from the town centre will result from the removal of through traffic. This will make Congleton more attractive as a destination.

It has been reported that some of the major employers located within Congleton are considering relocating due to the congestion on the existing highway network. The link road scheme would act to appease the existing major employers within the area and would also encourage new business development. This would create employment opportunities within the town as well as acting to secure jobs for the future. The town centre would be relieved of through traffic, meaning that investment in the town centre itself would become a much more attractive proposition.

5. The majority of traffic congestion around Congleton is associated with the A34, yet the link road will not relieve it by virtue of failing to connect with the A34 at both its ends.

Our reporting clearly identifies that this is the case, with congestion at the Rood Hill junction, West Road / West street roundabout and the Wagon and Horses roundabout. This does not however mean that through traffic from the A34 to the A34 is the cause of these problems, nor does it mean that we need to remove this

traffic to meet the scheme objectives. We undertook Roadside Interview Surveys with drivers on the A536, A34 (north and south of Congleton), the A54 Holmes Chapel Road, A534 and A54 Mountbatten Way, which allowed us to understand the origin / destination and purpose of journeys. Traffic flows are high between the A34 (north) and A534 in both directions, to access the M6 south and areas west of the M6. Through movements are also high between the A536 (Macclesfield area traffic) and the A534 to/ from the M6 south. Whilst there are some through flows between the A34 south and north, the volume is not as large as between the A34 and the A54 (w) and A534 (w). The additional cost of this section would require additional funding to be secured. We have undertaken a modelling test of the potential traffic that would use this additional link. This has established that some traffic would use this section however some A34 to A34 through traffic would remain on the existing route as it becomes less congested and is shorter than the new route via the Link Road. The Benefit to Cost ratio of a road that connects the A34 (south) to the A536 is lower than that of the presented scheme that terminates at the A534.

6. This bypassing of Congleton Town Centre will destroy it by discouraging passing trade and enabling Congleton residents to shop more easily elsewhere.

As per the response to point 4, the scheme reduces congestion within Congleton which reduces travel times to/from Congleton town centre. It is not clear that this would encourage residents to shop elsewhere. Indeed if as expected the removal of through traffic makes the town centre area more attractive, it may attract new retailers, retain existing customers and attract new customers. Our transport modelling assumptions for growth assume that only the redevelopment that has planning permission would happen in the town centre. Also it is not clear what the impact of the road would be on “passing trade”. When the existing road is congested passing trade may to be reduced any way as people will have little or no time spare to stop in Congleton. Signage could be used on the approach to the link road to advise drivers of what local services are available in the town centre.

7. The prime beneficiaries of the road will be Macclesfield, via an improved connection to the M6, and provision of a new route to Manchester Airport to support its planned Airport City Development, whilst Congleton will be subjected to increase traffic flows and pollution for the advancement of others.

The scheme will provide benefits for the residents of Macclesfield and other parts of the CEC area which is good for the wider CEC economy. However there will be considerable benefits to the residents of Congleton as a result of the reductions in traffic experienced on the A34, A54, A534 and A536 within the urban area. Noise modelling based on traffic forecasts suggest that noise would be reduced for residents living near to these roads, within Congleton. Over the standard 60 year appraisal period the scheme reduces the number of people “annoyed” by noise by between 31 and 112 people dependant on the option being considered. Traffic levels would increase slightly compared to the situation without the link road on the approaches to Congleton. Mitigation measures are proposed and more will be developed as we work towards a preferred route, for properties close to the new road. We are engaged in discussions with Parish councils and residents in developing proposals to reduce the impact of any additional traffic that might impact on communities on the approaches to Congleton.

8. No economic case for the link road has been made and requests for data from the traffic surveys performed over a year ago have been repeatedly ignored. This can only be because the figures don't stack up!

The consultation material does state that all the schemes are considered high value for money under DfT criteria. The economic case has been advanced and has been documented in the Economic Appraisal Report. CEC would not be able to promote a scheme without a strong business case that requires a valid economic appraisal. Journey time savings and accidents savings have been quantified and all four options generate significant benefits.

The economic analysis of the monetised costs and benefits of a scheme forms a key element in the overall value for money assessment as prescribed within Government Transport Appraisal Guidance, and the Appraisal Summary Table framework.

It aims to quantify in monetary terms, over a 60 year appraisal period, as many of the costs and benefits of a proposal as is feasible.

The results of the assessments for the scheme using Core growth and using 44% Optimism bias are summarised in Table 6.2.

Table 6.3 shows the summarised scheme benefits with the additional wider economic benefits, calculated using GVA (Gross Value Added).

There may also be other benefits or disbenefits, to the environment, landscape, heritage or water that cannot be presented in monetised form.

These are summarised in the scheme Appraisal Summary Table (AST) out with the Economic Assessment Report.

	Blue	Red	Green	Purple
Transport User Benefits (incl. Carbon)	£291.6m	£275.0m	£290.9m	£273.1m
Safety Benefits	£23.3m	£24.6m	£29.6m	£20.9m
Carbon Benefits	-£6.5m	-£6.0m	-£5.7m	-£6.1m
Air Quality	£0.7m	£0.5m	£0.6m	£0.5m
Noise	£5.6m	£2.7m	£4.9m	£3.7m
TOTAL PVB (Present Value of Benefits)	£314.7m	£296.9m	£320.3m	£292.1m
TOTAL PVC (Present Value of Costs)	£124.1m	£96.3m	£107.8m	£115.8m
BCR	2.5	3.1	3.0	2.5

Table 6.2 – Summarised Scheme results (in £m) – 44% Optimism Bias

	Blue	Red	Green	Purple
TOTAL PVB	£314.7m	£296.9m	£320.3m	£292.1m
TOTAL PVC	£124.1m	£96.3m	£107.8m	£115.8m
BCR	2.5	3.1	3.0	2.5
Additional GVA Benefits	£1,530.0m	£1,530.0m	£1,530.0m	£1,530.0m

Table 6.3 – Summarised Scheme results with wider economic benefits included

An update to the Economic Appraisal will be provided based on the Preferred Route once the Preferred Route Announcement has been made (Spring/Summer 2014).

- 9. The link road could cost in excess of £102 million based on current estimates (which are likely to have been scoped whilst wearing “rose-coloured glasses”), yet just £1m spent by Cheshire East Council on a bus service in Crewe has increased its usage for work-related travel 4-fold!**

This cost is correct and includes the provision of link roads into the Congleton Business Park and the Radnor Park Industrial Estate, which we would expect to be funded by developer contributions. Excluding these links, current estimates range from £87.8m for the Blue Option to £70.9m for the Red Option, as quoted in the consultation material presented in January / February 2014. The costs include allowance for risk, inflation, land take and compensation costs and design/supervision fees. The scheme cost estimates should therefore be viewed as realistic and robust. There is no justification for stating that the costs are based on “rose coloured glasses”.

- 10. Investment could be made cost-effectively in public transport to reduce carbon emissions, which will be increased by road building; especially given the large number of roundabouts proposed.**

The alternative bus service improvement referred to is not a comparable or viable alternative to address the objectives of the scheme and was assessed in an earlier stage of scheme development (EAST Assessment and SWOT Analysis). Bus service frequencies are currently low within Congleton. Current and forecast demand for travel is not well suited to public transport as the origins of many trips are dispersed across the rural area around Congleton. Whilst some future demand associated with new developments may be suited to public transport, the road scheme would still be required. A bus service/facilities improvement would not significantly reduce through traffic or promote investment in the area (securing jobs, local economic growth etc).

Carbon emissions: As stated with regard to point 10, public transport is not a viable alternative to the road scheme. Based on the transport model, most existing movements would be difficult to serve with public transport. Bus lanes are unviable due to the lack of road space on the existing roads (need space where the traffic queues to give buses an advantage) and low bus frequencies. Even if the number of buses was increased by 4 or 5 times, bus flows would not justify a bus lane.

- 11. The road is partly intended as an M6 relief road but, given the bottleneck at the Monk's Heath crossroads, it will become a linear car park; thus generating excessive air pollution.**

Although the scheme might help relieve traffic issues that currently arise in Congleton when the M6 is blocked, this is NOT an objective of the scheme. The economic case is built on average traffic conditions from November 2012, when the M6 was operating normally. Long term traffic counts were used to ensure that the days of roadside interview surveys were representative of average conditions and did not pick up traffic movements that were abnormal. Other locations away from Congleton where there are capacity limitations will limit the amount of traffic that can get to / from the M6. The on-going improvements to the M6 (such as hard shoulder running) will reduce the number of occasions when traffic attempts to divert away from the M6. We have included the increased capacity on the M6 in the model networks for future years.

- 12. New roads are not needed because UK traffic volumes haven't increased in the past 10 years (according to the RAC foundation) and increased capacity will come about on the M6 anyway when it becomes a managed motorway (enabling the use of the hard-shoulder)**

There is evidence from long term monitoring that there is traffic growth in the area. On the A536 Macclesfield Road north of Eaton traffic has grown by just under 5% between 2003 and 2012. On the A534 Sandbach Road traffic has grown by 14% between 2003 and 2012. On the A34 Manchester Road traffic grew by 3% over the same period whilst south of Congleton there was a small reduction of 2% on the A34 Newcastle Road. Overall growth is around 4.5% across the surveyed sites between 2003 and 2012.

We have used standard DfT growth assumptions based on the National Traffic Model for future years, with allowance made for local growth associated with the new housing and employment proposed in the local plan that is being consulted on. As per point 11 the capacity increase on the M6 is accounted for in the modelling.

- 13. It will cut Somerford, Hulme Walfield and Eaton in half, causing community severance. This will further encourage Congleton Town Council in their attempts to annex parts of the Parishes that will entitled to funding from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL); due if the proposed developments go ahead.**

The road will be designed to minimise any new severance issues. Existing severance within Congleton will be reduced by the scheme due to reductions in traffic on the A34 in particular. Hulme Walfield is to the north of all the options and Giantswood Lane will remain open with a bridge over the new road which addresses any severance issue with Hulme Walfield. Existing public rights of way will be provided for, wherever they cross the new road, with details of crossings to be developed once the preferred route is chosen. Costs of measures are covered in the contingencies mentioned under point 9. Discussions with land owners and residents in Somerford are ongoing. The potential junction between the Link Road and Chelford Road may be amended or removed to reduce the impact on households and reduce severance along Chelford Road. The Blue and Green options for the link road run to the North of Eaton and therefore can't be considered to "cut the village in

half". Likewise the red and purple routes start south of the village and so the road does not cut the village in two. It is however recognised that the red and purple routes would lead to an increase in vehicles travelling through Eaton village, which would increase severance on the A536. There is a clear difference between the options in terms of the impact on Eaton village. The consultation process will establish if the residents of Eaton have a preference for any particular route option.

The CIL will provide some funding for the road and other facilities in Congleton such as a primary school and other facilities that potentially benefit all local residents.

6.3.13 Protect Congleton Civic Society letter

A letter was received, dated the 18th February 2014, from Protect Congleton Civic Society (PCCS). The letter provides comments on the Congleton Link Road scheme and puts forward many questions regarding the impact the link road may have. The queries listed in the letter have been mirrored by many of the respondents who took part in the Public Consultation. The questions asked by PCCS have been listed for convenience along with their respective response. The full PCCS letter can be found in Appendix K.

1.2 It will be seen from the following comments that one of the significant flaws of this consultation is the continual lack of detail to support the need for a Link Road. For example, there are statements in the consultation documentation that the Link Road will “*help the local economy and create and secure jobs*”, yet there is no information on how the Link Road will achieve these objectives – a road in itself will not do this.

The link road will open up much needed land for development – the scheme has been shown to be the most effective way of facilitating the development of the following strategic development sites:

- Back Lane and Radnor Park – a 33 hectare site located to the North West of Congleton with the potential for 10 hectares of employment land adjacent to Radnor Park Trading Estate and up to 10 hectares of land for a leisure hub adjacent to Back Lane Village Green;
- Congleton Business Park Extension – a 50 hectare site located on the North Western edge of Congleton with the potential for 10 hectares of land for commercial and employment uses adjacent to Congleton Business Park;

The Business Community tell us they desperately need new land to prevent leakage of employment from the town. For example, Congleton was the preferred location for a second Siemens factory but this opportunity was lost due to lack of a suitable site. In recent years on the Radnor Park Estate the opportunity for 140 jobs were lost when suitable premises were not available to house the HQ of Healthcare Enterprise Group PLC who acquired an existing company.

1.3 Has the Cheshire East Council carried out the required analysis and/or feasibility studies to show how such a road is “guaranteed” to achieve the job creation and boost the local economy? Claims such as this are just that, mere claims. Without the necessary material to back up the claims then the claims are meaningless. If Cheshire East Council does have such evidence then that is good news. However why has this information not been made available? It could be construed as, at the least, disrespectful to the community to withhold such information? The community is asked to support the building

of 3,500 houses and the sacrifice of vast areas of green space around Congleton to help fund the Link Road. The least that Cheshire East Council could do is provide material that supports the need for this Link Road.

A projection of the number of jobs that the new road could enable has been undertaken using a 'Green Book' Treasury approved methodology (full details at end): This projects that 3458 new jobs would be created. This information is available as part of the economic forecasting undertaken for the scheme.

1.4 Without the details of why a Link road is required and the benefits it will provide to Congleton and its community this consultation process is deeply flawed.

The benefits (and disbenefits) of the scheme were reported as part of the public consultation process; they were summarised to make this information as accessible as possible. Supporting information has been sent out where this has been requested.

2.1 It is understood that the consultation process is being led by Ringways Jacobs, a Highways Construction and Service company, which performs much of the highways service for Cheshire East Council. This is NOT to an impartial leader for this consultation. Why has an impartial organisation not been chosen to lead this consultation process?

The consultation and development of the scheme is being supported by Jacobs – this is a purely consultancy function and has no construction ability. Clearly, should any future construction contract be awarded this would be through an open and transparent procurement process. Ringway Jacobs, the joint venture company who provides highway construction services to the authority would be conflicted out of any procurement process.

2.2 The consultation process appears to be a flawed process. The online process merely asks people to “choose a route”; there is not an option to say “No to the Link Road” – how can this be a fair consultation?

You can select 'Strongly Oppose' for every route option.

2.3 The documentation provided is a set of PDF charts showing the routes and other information at a high level. It is even difficult to determine the precise routes to be taken with such high level documentation. There is no detailed information on such things as the financial breakdown of each route, how the road will be constructed in terms of things like crossing of existing roads, cycle ways and screening, a detailed analysis of the business benefits, there are no traffic flows on the A34 south to show why an A34 south connection is not desirable. It is not possible to understand the true value or otherwise of the Link Road proposals without such information and as such the consultation process is seriously flawed.

This consultation is only the beginning of the process. Should support for the scheme be forthcoming, the consultation will help support the selection of one of the preferred routes. The consultation report will play an important part in the route decision, but other factors such as affordability, environmental impact will be considered alongside. If development of the scheme continues it is proposed that a further round of consultation would be held prior to any possible planning application. This would have details of access arrangements, environmental mitigation, etc. Clearly, it is appropriate to do this at the stage when the support for

the principle of the scheme is known and whether any of the initial route proposals are preferred. Traffic flow information on the A34 to the South of Congleton is available on the scheme website. The FAQ section details why the council is initially not able to support the extension of the road to the A34 South.

3.1 We note that the southern end of the Link Road still ceases at Sandbach Road, Congleton. Whilst it is understood that the southern link is to be to the M6 via Sandbach this ignores one of the principle routes for traffic, and in particular for business traffic. We note that the route to South Staffordshire from Sandbach Road, Congleton, via the M6 and the A500 route is 7 miles and 5 minutes longer than the direct route along the A34. This hardly seems a sustainable option and it would appear more likely that traffic from, and to, Stoke and north Staffs would either continue through the town or would access the Link Road either through the Wall Hill route or through Padgbury Lane. Neither of these roads are designed for heavy traffic. Wall Hill is single track at one point with houses lining the road at this point. Padgbury Lane is residential and is a route to school. We consider the lack of a southern connection to the A34 is a serious flaw with this proposal. Apart from an increased cost, why is a southern A34 connection for the Link Road continually ignored? What is the extra cost for providing a southern A34 connection?

Please see response to key issue 6.3.1 - A34 Newcastle Extension.

3.2 An obvious comment that can be made on the Link Road routes is that all of them cut-through Cheshire East Council's Local Plan Strategic Sites proposed for Congleton. Surely it is impractical to consider routing the Link Road through any site? In effect, this would seem to discount at least one (red option) and probably two (green option as well) of the proposed routes. If the Link Road is routed through one or more Strategic Sites this would have unjustifiable consequences for things such as highway safety, noise pollution and air pollution for the residential developments that could have a Link Road a matter of a few metres away. If the Link Road is to be constructed it should be sited away from all the proposed Congleton Strategic Sites and also provide an "outer boundary" for the Cheshire East Council Local Plan's proposed housing development for Congleton. With this in mind the Blue option would seem preferable, although the northern edge of the Radnor Park Strategic site would need to be sited to be "inside" the Link Road route.

The Local plan 'Core Strategy' allocations are broadly defined such that the exact outermost boundaries can be defined at the Site Allocations stage. By this stage the preferred route of any proposed link road would be established. All of the route options are capable of delivering the level of growth required without recourse for 'over spilling' beyond any link road boundary. The more northern route options offer a greater amount of development land, and more flexibility in 'Master planning' developments.

3.3 There are historic problems within Congleton town created by narrow roads and traffic over-load, we have not seen a plan to improve this for local traffic or to ensure that additional development to the north and west of the town will be able to access the town, except along the routes and through the "pinch points" that are already subject to unacceptable levels of congestion, pollution, noise and vibration. The Cheshire East Council Local Plan claims to promote increased use of Congleton town centre it is not clear how residents in the proposed Strategic Sites will access the town centre and we have

concerns that the Link Road will encourage residents to look outwards, especially to Manchester and the wealthier areas to the north of the town for shopping, for work opportunities and for entertainment.

An assessment of improving the existing road network has been undertaken as an alternative to providing a link road. It does offer some traffic benefits, but much less than the new link. It also does little to address air quality, severance or allow the redistribution of existing road space of other uses (cycleway, enhanced bus provision, etc.).

3.4 Further detail is required on the Link Road in order that Congleton residents are able to understand whether this is a realistic and valuable proposition for the town, such things as:

3.4.1 The Link Road will generate lots of air pollution and noise pollution as well as cutting a swathe through open countryside. Traffic noise is expected to be a major problem especially as the Link Road may be close to the development sites and may even run through the development sites. What measures will be put into place to combat the air pollution and noise pollution? How will the Link Road be built such that it is sympathetic to the open countryside in which it lies (e.g. what mechanisms will be used to visually camouflage the road)?

The new road will generate some air pollution and noise; however existing routes (where there are declared Air Quality Management zones) would benefit. The council is committed to providing the very highest level of screening and mitigation for any potential new road. Full details would be made available at the next consultation stage. Clearly, for any scheme to achieve a planning permission it would have to be accompanied by a full Environmental Statement describing the impact and proposed mitigation on such things as noise, amenity, etc. Indeed, the route development process has already considered these factors in arriving at potential routes.

3.4.2 How will the Strategic Sites be connected to the Link Road, e.g. roundabout, traffic signals, a T Junction? Also it is not clear how the Link Road will cross other roads, e.g. Giantswood Lane. Will existing roads have bridges to go over the Link Road? There could be many connections to the Link Road, which could give rise to a very “stop-start” piece of road, especially at peak times. Has Cheshire East Council conducted a road survey/analysis for the traffic they anticipate will use the Link Road and is the Council confident that the stop-start nature of this road, especially at peak times, will satisfactorily cater for the required traffic flows?

The design principle of the road is for it to be free-flowing. As such, the new junctions proposed have been modelled as roundabouts rather than traffic signals. There is no connection proposed at Giantswood lane where the road would cross below. Initial feedback from the consultation also suggests that there is no support for a connection at Chelford Road, leaving the road to link the A534, A54, A34 and A536 principal roads only. A full traffic survey that will meet the necessary central government challenge has been undertaken in both 2012 and 2013.

3.4.3 There are residential as well as business sites and the close proximity of the residential dwellings to such a road is not desirable. What road safety measures will be put in place to ensure the safety of the near-by residents?

Much of this information will be provided at the next stage of detailed design. However, the council is committed to building in suitable cycling provision in all new major infrastructures.

3.4.5 Has a study been carried out for the proposed route of the Link Road to ensure that areas of special interest and/or value will not be destroyed?

Yes and further detailed work in this regard will continue.

4.2 The Link Road will cost a minimum of £71 million. Responses to the following questions and observations, as a minimum, should be provided in order that the Link Road can be properly assessed:

4.2.1 How confident is Cheshire East Council that the funds to build the Link Road can be obtained?

The scheme as promoted has a strong economic and transport business case. The Council is confident, that funding can be secured for the scheme. If necessary the scheme could be delivered on a phased basis.

4.2.2 Have all costs been taken into account? For example, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, cycle ways, road screening etc.

At this level of development the council is confident that the costs of the scheme are robust and includes a healthy contingency. Any preferred route would be developed to a greater level of detail.

4.2.3 It is understood that developers on the Strategic Sites will need to contribute to the funding of the Link Road. On the surface, the developers' contribution to the Link Road appears a good funding source. However, the reality is that developers will not let any additional development costs impact their profit so the Link Road funding costs will be passed onto the house purchaser. This means that, effectively, a house purchase tax will be introduced for some/all new house builds in Congleton.

A Borough wide Community Infrastructure Level (CIL) will be developed, in conjunction with the local plan to set a level of contribution required to mitigate the impacts of new developments. In this regard, Congleton will be on an equal footing with other locations of the Borough. The levy will have to be set at a level that has due regard to other competing areas. An initial assessment has been undertaken to examine what a viable level of contribution towards the link road would be (from Congleton sites alone) and this would feed into any future Government funding bids.

4.2.4 One of the main objectives for building the Link Road, we are informed, is to help stimulate new business. Will existing businesses, including landlords of empty business units, or the Business Parks be expected to contribute to the Link Road Funding? If so, what size of contribution will they be expected to make and how will the Council enforce this?

There are no current plans to charge existing businesses for new infrastructure; though a recent change in legislation allows a proportion of existing business rates to be retained locally.

4.2.5 Will all new businesses on the Strategic Sites contribute to the Link Road funding including all expansions of existing businesses (we assume

that the funds will come from the developer of the business premises, who will need to pass on costs to the business/landlord)? If so, what size of contribution will they be expected to make?

The exact levy to be charged is yet to be determined.

4.2.6 Following on from the two points above, why should the house builds fund the Link Road? Should this not be predominately business funded? If there has to be funding from the house building this should be kept to the absolute minimum – is this proposed?

The exact levy to be charged is yet to be determined.

4.2.7 Will it only be the dwellings (houses and business premises) on the Strategic Sites that will help fund the Link Road? There are 600 other dwellings mentioned as Site Allocations of the Cheshire East Council Local Plan that are not situated on the Strategic Sites.

See 4.2.3

4.2.8 Will Cheshire East Council have a say in how the Link Road funding required from developers will be passed onto the house purchase prices? One of the concerns is that the price of affordable homes will be increased even further by these requirements. In essence how will the funding will be allocated amongst the various types of property? For example: Will it be a flat rate per property (probably unfair on the least expensive dwellings)? Will it be a percentage of the property price? Will it be some form of tiered rate (perhaps linked to the Council Band of the property)? Or will it be something else? We do not believe it is sufficient for the Council to respond that this will be left to the developers, the Council needs to be concerned with how this funding will impact the housing market.

Affordable housing would have to be provided at the levels adopted in the Local Plan unless there were compelling reasons not to. This would be taken into account when considering the size of any Borough-wide CIL. CIL is usually charged per square foot per property.

4.2.9 When will the Link Road funding contributions start and for how long will they be in place? Many of the Strategic Sites have capacity to build further dwellings after 2030 so it is important to know when this funding contribution will cease.

CIL contributions would start as soon as the charging framework is in place (Expected Summer 2015). Prior to that, any small scale developments would have to make the appropriate contributions via the S106 process. CIL contributions would continue over the life of the local plan and beyond; contributing to funding requirements over the Borough.

4.2.10 Will all other types of development be required to contribute to the Link Road (e.g. schools, doctors, nurseries etc.)?

Normally these types of community assets are not covered by the charging schedule

4.2.11 There has been mention of a cost of £10,000 per house for the Link Road funding. This is not an insignificant amount and, as mentioned above,

the developer will need to pass this amount (or as much as possible) onto the purchaser. This would imply that the funding will increase the cost of the new housing proposed for Congleton. Taken to its extreme this could cause property prices in all/most areas of Congleton to increase. Although this impacts all residents it would seem to impact especially the lower income residents and will make it even more difficult for such people to purchase a house. What measures/schemes will the Council put into place to alleviate this?

The CIL will have to be set at a level which allows developers to make an acceptable return on their investment. This will be subject to an independent inspection. Arguably, the increased supply of new housing in Congleton may actually make housing more affordable in the longer term.

4.2.13 How will the funding work in terms of ensuring the Link Road is constructed? We do not have any details on the contribution value per dwelling or how it will be applied or when it will start and on what houses/businesses it will be levied and this makes it impossible to understand what funds will be raised and how/when the funds will be used. For example, let's say there is an "average" £10,000 per house and only houses on the Strategic Sites incur the cost then the maximum that can be raised by 2030 is 2,200 x £10,000, circa £22m. Then there will also be whatever the contribution there is from other dwellings. When the phasing of house builds is taken into account this implies zero raised by 2015, £3.8m by 2020, another £8.2m by 2025 and another £10m by 2030. This is only a small percentage of the Link Road cost and would also imply it will be a long phasing period for the Link Road, undermining the capacity to generate new business/jobs. Perhaps a loan will be taken out to covers costs, so it would be beneficial to understand how this will work in the phasing and construction of the Link Road.

It is anticipated that the Council would 'forward fund' any developer contribution and claw back the funding as development (across the Borough) adds to the CIL pot.

4.2.14 Will this funding impact in any way the Council Tax Bands of the Strategic Site dwellings?

Council tax bands are set at the value of the property – so no.

4.2.15 Will the Link Road cause an increase in the Council Tax for Congleton residents?

No.

4.2.16 Cheshire East Council is still unable to defend housing developments (planning application appeals) outside of the Strategic sites, yet the Link Road is dependent on the developer funds from these sites. Unless Cheshire East Council is able to deliver a 5-Year housing supply and associated Local Plan we will not see houses developed on these sites and this will increasingly see the objectives of the Link Road become diminished.

The Council now has a 5 year housing land supply and has a submission draft of its Local Plan (which has material consideration / weight in planning decisions / appeals).

5 Business Expansion

The Local Chamber has evidence that businesses are not locating to Congleton due to insufficient supply of quality / accessible development plots. The exact nature of businesses would of course be subject to the usual planning process – whereby planning conditions can be used for such activities as business deliveries, hours of work and noise generation. The Council will work with any affected landowners to ensure that access is maintained and business can continue.

6 Countryside

The council will be required to submit a full environmental impact of any scheme proposal and is committed to ensuring the very highest levels of mitigation are provided. The need, justification and proposed location for the housing proposals have been evidenced (and will be tested at inquiry) in the Local Plan. The proposed link road is seen as complimentary to the housing, fully mitigating any potential highway impact (indeed, Congleton will experience less congestion than at present – even assuming a full build out of housing – a condition rarely replicated elsewhere) and offering a new natural boundary to development. If the link road is not supported by the consultation, this does not lessen the case for the housing (or its location) – rather a ‘make do and mend’ approach to squeezing extra capacity out of existing Town Centre routes will be required to provide some extra highway capacity for the development. Congestion will be as bad or worse as experienced today; Town Centre Air Quality in densely populated areas will continue to be poor, etc.

6.4 Petitions

No petitions were made against the scheme.

6.5 Further Consultation

This will be dealt with in Chapter 7.

Page Not Used

7

Special Consideration

7.1 Further Consultation

Following the Public Exhibition, further consultations were held with the following:

- Somerford Parish Council;
- Eaton Parish Council;
- Newbold Astbury Parish Council;
- Congleton Business Consultation; and
- Individual Landowners.

In addition, the following responses have been included from other major stakeholders:

- Marton Parish Council; and
- Lafarge Tarmac.

A summary of the Parish Council meetings can be found in Appendix L.

7.1.1 Somerford Parish Council

A meeting was held with Somerford Parish Council on the 27th January 2014. The meeting was attended by approximately 120 people and lasted for 2 hours. The main topics which were discussed were as follows:

- Full opposition to the Congleton Link Road Scheme; members were also opposed to the proposed housing developments stated in Cheshire East Council's Local Plan.
- The lack of an extension of the link road to the A34 Newcastle Road and the effect this would have on rat running, particularly on Wallhill Lane.
- Queries related to whether the link road would be constructed in a single phase or in sections.
- Concerns due to the uncertainty of the funding for the RPTE and CBP links.
- Requests for more information to be made available.
- Several individual actions were recorded which were added to the Actions and Comments Register.

7.1.2 Eaton Parish Council

A meeting was held with Eaton Parish Council on the 14th January 2014. The meeting was attended by approximately 80 people and lasted for 1 hour. The main topics which were discussed were as follows:

- Mixed response to the link road.
- Traffic flows through Eaton with or without the proposed link road.
- Queries related to why the Green and Blue options had not been considered further north of Eaton to mitigate the impact of traffic on the village.
- Safety concerns regarding how the increase in traffic would negotiate the sharp bend in Eaton.
- The effect that the link road would have on noise and air pollution.
- Severance to the village.
- The lack of a link road extension to the A34 Newcastle Road; it was claimed that without this the link road failed to serve its purpose.
- Several individual actions were recorded which were added to the Actions and Comments Register.

7.1.3 Newbold Astbury Parish Council

A meeting was held with Newbold Astbury Parish Council on the 12th February 2014. The meeting was attended by approximately 40 people and lasted for 90 minutes. The main topics which were discussed were as follows:

- The level of traffic (current and expected should the scheme go ahead) on Wallhill Lane, Padgbury Lane, and the A34.
- The increase in rat running which could occur due to the link road; it was claimed that an extension of the link road to the A34 Newcastle Road was required to avoid rat running if the scheme goes ahead.
- A leaflet had been circulated prior to the meeting suggesting that Wallhill Lane would act as a section of the link road; it was suggested that if a link to the A34 was provided then it would increase the attraction of development to the south of Congleton.
- Councillor Brown stated that the link to the A34 south was not been considered due to the reasons provided in Chapter 6; it was stated that measures would be investigated to discourage any potential increase in traffic on the local roads around Newbold Astbury.
- Several individual actions were recorded which were added to the Actions and Comments Register.

Following on from this, additional internal meetings were held by Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council to further discuss the scheme. A response was received by CEC on the 24th March 2014 and the main issues presented were as follows:

- Newbold Astbury cum Moreton Parish Council unanimously opposed to the link road.

- It was claimed that the link road would bring no discernable benefits to the parish and would cause significant damage to agriculture and the open countryside surrounding Congleton.
- It was claimed that the link road would increase traffic volumes on rural roads within the parish and the surrounding area. It was suggested that these rural roads were not designed to carry heavy traffic and that new roads may be required to replace the existing roads; a solution which the parish fully opposes.
- Concerns were raised regarding the volume of development that would be required to fund the link road and the encroachment of these developments into the surrounding parishes. It was claimed that the link road would promote development outside of the areas identified in the Local Plan.
- It was claimed that the traffic data provided on the consultation material was from historic data rather than recent counts and was therefore inaccurate. Concerns were raised regarding whether the traffic data had accounted for the increase in traffic from the proposed developments. In addition, it was suggested that the traffic travelling from North Staffordshire through Astbury Village had not been taken into account and that the most recent traffic count through the village has been undertaken 10 years prior and was therefore outdated.
- The point was raised that Astbury Village is a conservation area; the Objectives of the Conservation Policy were listed in the document.
- It was claimed that the consultation material was flawed by not providing the opportunity for respondents to state that the road was not required.

7.1.4 Congleton Business Consultation

A meeting was held at Meadowside, Congleton on the 12th February 2014. The event was organised by CEC Regeneration in conjunction with The Link 2 Prosperity Group (L2P), which is a subgroup of the East Cheshire Chamber of Commerce. In total approximately 43 people attended the morning and afternoon sessions; the main topics discussed were as follows:

- Consistency with Local Plan was raised – it was explained that each option would be able to support the development outlined in the draft Local Plan and that a Preferred Route could be decided in advance of a decision on the Local Plan.
- It was questioned why there were no figures presented for traffic on the A34 south of Congleton. It was confirmed that these figures were available and probably should have been included on the plans.
- It was questioned why the road did not link to the A34. It was explained that tests for the link to the A34 had shown that there is not the demand for this link; A34 traffic is more likely to use the A34 through the town. Additionally, the increase in cost associated with extending the link road to the A34 has a significant effect on reducing the business case for the scheme.

- It was stated that the Council had no objection in principle to a link to the A34 but that it was not being promoted as part of this scheme. Such a link might be funded by a developer.
- There was concern that there would be increased traffic on Wallhill Lane and that there may be safety issues with this increased traffic turning right on to the A34.
- Some thought that the traffic flows did not make sense and cited the A34 south of the link road which in 2032 only showed a 4% reduction in traffic over the no link road scenario.
- Figures to support the assertions for traffic and economic benefit were requested. It was explained that these will be included in a Traffic Forecasting Report.
- It was felt that dealing with the issues in the town centre, in terms of complementary measures, were very important.
- Congestion in the town centre was considered by some to be unacceptable but others thought that the problems were overstated.
- A view was expressed that the route was good for those outside of Congleton e.g. Macclesfield getting better access to the M6 but not so good for Congleton. The counter view was expressed that the proposed development would have a positive effect on town centre businesses.
- There was a view by many that the road was needed.
- It was questioned why the route through the town centre (A34 Online Improvements) was not being offered. It was explained that as part of the DfT approval process it was necessary for the business case to look at 'next best' and 'low cost' option, with the low cost option being the A34 Online Improvement strategy. These were not options being promoted by the Council and the purpose of the consultation was to arrive at a preferred route based on a comparison of options offered.
- The means of communicating the outcome of Public Consultation was discussed. It was explained that following the consultation, a report would be produced pulling together all the information gathered to date. This report would then be presented to a Public Cabinet Meeting.

7.1.5 Individual Landowners

It was necessary to meet with several landowners who would be adversely affected by the link road. Meetings were prioritised based on the potential impact of the link road to the respective landowners land and/or property. The team also attended meetings as and when requested. In total, a series of 27 meetings were held with 25 individual landowners, with some landowners requiring a second visit. All landowners received copies of the consultation material. A summary of the landowner meetings is provided in Table 7.0.

Date	Landowner
13 th January 2014	Radnor Bank Farm
	Sandholes Farm,
14 th January 2014	New House Farm
	Resident of Hulme Walfield
	Ravens clough Farm
	Resident of Chelford Rd, Somerford
	Resident of Chelford Rd, Somerford
	Loachbrook Farm
7 th February 2014	Resident of Back Lane , Somerford
	Resident of Wallhill Lnae
	Resident of Wallhill Lane
	Resident of Wallhill Lane
	Cherry Blossom Cottage, Somerford Rd
	Resident of Chelford Road, Somerford
3 rd March 2014	Resident of Back Lane, Somerford
	Radnor Hall Farm
	New House Farm
10 th March 2014	Claphatch Farm
	Gaintswood House, Gaintswood Lane
25 th March 2014	Somerford Park Farm
	Resident of Chelford Road, Somerford
22 nd April 2014	Sandholes Farm
	Gaintswood Farm
	Sandy lane Farm
	Mount Pleasant Farm
	Upper Medhurst Green Farm
28 th April 14	Resident of Holmes Chapel Rd

Table 7.0 – List of affected landowners

The main issues raised by landowners can be summarised as follows:

- Loss of property/land due to link road construction;
- Concerns that the link road would adversely affect their business;
- Severance of access to property/land and existing road network;
- Compensation and Blight queries;
- Environmental concerns;
- Safety concerns;

- Rat running concerns;
- Funding of the link road; and
- Alignment alteration suggestions.

Some of the suggested alignment alterations were taken forward for further investigation into the possibility of incorporating them into the existing designs. These alignment alterations are discussed in more detail in section 8.

7.1.6 Marton Parish Council

A response was received from Marton Parish Council on the 27th February 2014 detailing their response to the Congleton Link Road Scheme. The main topics which were discussed are summarised as follows:

- Marton Parish Council does not oppose the CLR in principle.
- Concerns that the link road will have a negative traffic impact on the stretch of the A34 that passes through Marton; in particular, Cocks Moss Lane which provides a link between the A34 and the A536.
- Marton Parish Council wishes for the proposed housing developments to not encroach on the green fields north of the link road.
- Request for the Green Gap be designated to ensure that ribbon developments does not extend outwards from the link road.

7.1.7 Lafarge Tarmac

Lafarge Tarmac Ltd is responsible for the operations at Eaton Hall Quarry and represents a major stakeholder with respect to the scheme. The Blue Option and Green Option are both situated within close proximity of the quarry which could potentially have a significant impact on their Silica Sand operations.

A response was received on the 3rd March 2014 from Lafarge Tarmac Ltd stating their opposition to the northern routes, i.e. the Blue Option and Green Option. There were concerns that the suggested underpass for the HGV's would be an insufficient size due to the size of some of vehicles operated at the quarry and the required length of the access ramps.

It was suggested that engineering difficulties could be encountered due to the water table lying approximately 6 to 8m below ground level and with the underpass requiring a minimum of 12m clearance.

It should be noted that Lafarge Tarmac supports the scheme in principle but strongly objects to the northern routes for the aforementioned reasons.

A copy of the response from Lafarge Tarmac can be found in Appendix M.

8 Other Routes Suggested

8.1 Alternative alignments

Following feedback from members of the public throughout the consultation period, it was necessary to consider and develop alternative alignments in certain locations which had the potential to be integrated into the existing alignment designs.

The alternate alignments were developed in an attempt to mitigate the impact on properties, dwellings and woodland areas which are located adjacent to the proposed link road options presented at the Public Consultation.

8.2 Summary of Investigated Alternative Alignments

A total of 13 alternative alignments were considered between Zone A and Zone F. A summary of the alignment alterations is provided below. Drawings of the alignment alterations are provided in Appendix I.

8.2.1 Zone A Alignment Alterations

The alterations in Zone A were developed in an attempt to minimise the severance of agricultural land by moving the road alignment to the east (so that the link road alignment runs adjacent to Sandy Lane). In addition, the potential for tying in the link road further to the south-west along the A534 was explored. Doing this would reduce the traffic flows on a section of the A534 which contains two small radius bends. Table 8.0 lists the Alignment Alterations that were investigated for Zone A.

Drawing Reference	Zone	Description of Change	Option Description
B1832001/SK/31	Zone A	Modification to alignment in Zone A. Alignment changed so that link road will run adjacent to Sandy Lane, thereby reducing the land take to the west of Sandy Lane. 3 Options prepared which tie into the A534 at different points.	Option 1 - From the junction with the A54, the alignment moves south adjacent to Sandy Lane. Sufficient highway width of Sandy Lane remains to use it as an access track to adjacent fields. New proposed roundabout on the A534 to also tie into Pitcher Lane.
			Option 2 - From the junction with the A54, the alignment moves south adjacent to Sandy Lane. Sufficient highway width of Sandy Lane remains to use it as an access track to adjacent fields. Eastbound link road traffic would avoid the 2 'small radius bends' on the A534 if Option 2 is used.
			Option 3 - From the junction with the A54, the alignment moves south adjacent to Sandy Lane. Sufficient highway width of Sandy Lane remains to use it as an access track to adjacent fields. Proposed that Sandy Lane is stopped up at the junction with the A534. Removes one of the 'small radius bends' on the A534.

			<p>Option 4 – From the junction with the A54, the alignment moves south, running parallel to (and between) the alignment presented at Public Consultation and Sandy Lane. Option 4 runs approximately 60-70m to the east of the alignment presented at Public Consultation and approximately 100-120m to the west of Sandy Lane. Removes one of the 'small radius bends' on the A534.</p>
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Table 8.0 – Investigated Zone A alignment alterations

8.2.2 Zone B/C Alignment Alterations

The alterations in Zone B/C were required to reduce the impact of the link road on properties located on Chelford Road and Back Lane. Instead of providing a junction to tie the link road into Chelford Road, the alternate alignments provide a road bridge, which will take Chelford Road over the proposed link road. This will mean that the proposed link road will be in a cutting, thereby reducing visual and noise impacts. Removing the junction between the proposed link road and Chelford Road will also prevent traffic leaving the link road at this point and using Chelford Road to enter Congleton. Table 8.1 lists the Alignment Alterations that were investigated for Zones B/C.

Drawing Reference	Zone	Description of Change	Option Description
B1832001/SK/32	Zone B/C	Modification to the Blue/Purple Option in Zone B/C. Junction at Chelford Road has been removed and small radius horizontal curves have been used to create an alignment through the centre of two sets of dwellings. Retaining walls or engineering slopes will need to be used to limit impact of cut sections on adjacent properties.	<p>Option 1A - From the junction with the A54, alignment runs north and crosses Chelford Road between two sets of dwellings before joining the roundabout on the Blue/Purple alignment on the western escarpment of the River Dane.</p> <p>This option assumes free drainage from the overbridge at the intersection with Chelford Road to the River Dane (at a longfall gradient of -0.3%).</p>
			<p>Option 1B - From the junction with the A54, alignment runs north and crosses Chelford Road between two sets of dwellings before joining the roundabout on the Blue/Purple alignment on the western escarpment of the River Dane.</p> <p>This option assumes that a pumping station will be incorporated to pump highway runoff out of the trapped cutting at the intersection with Chelford Road.</p>
B1832001/SK/32	Zone B/C	Modification to the Red/Green Option in Zone B/C. Junction at Chelford Road has been removed and small radius horizontal curves have been used to create an alignment through the centre of two sets of dwellings. Retaining	<p>Option 2A - From the junction with the A54, alignment runs north and crosses Chelford Road between two sets of dwellings before joining the roundabout on the Red/Green alignment on the western escarpment of the River Dane.</p> <p>This option assumes free drainage from the overbridge at the intersection with Chelford Road to the River Dane (at a longfall gradient of -0.3%).</p>

		walls or engineering slopes will need to be used to limit impact of cut sections on adjacent properties.	<p>Option 2B - From the junction with the A54, alignment runs north and crosses Chelford Road between two sets of dwellings before joining the roundabout on the Red/Green alignment on the western escarpment of the River Dane.</p> <p>This option assumes that a pumping station will be incorporated to pump highway runoff out of the trapped cutting at the intersection with Chelford Road.</p>
B1832001/SK/34	Zone B/C	Further modification to the Red/Green Option in Zone B/C.	<p>Option 3A - Similar alignment to Option 2B but alignment sweeps further to the west before crossing Chelford Road in order to minimise severance of the land in that area.</p> <p>It should be acknowledged that this option features a trapped cutting. A 'free drainage' option could be provided if required.</p>

Table 8.1 – Investigated Zone B/C alignment alterations

8.2.3 Zone D/E Alignment Alterations

The alteration in Zone D/E was required to move the link road alignment to the south of Church Wood to minimise the impact on the Ancient Woodland. This alteration also had the benefit of moving the link road further away from the properties in Hulme Walfield. Table 8.2 lists the Alignment Alteration that was investigated for Zones D/E.

Drawing Reference	Zone	Description of Change	Option Description
B1832001/H/WD/047	Zone D/E	Modification to the Blue/Purple Option in Zone D/E. Alignment has been changed to avoid properties in Hulme Walfield and Church Wood, which lies to the south-west of St. Michael's Church.	After crossing the River Dame, the alignment extends to the south of Church Wood before extending north-east to tie into the proposed roundabout located on the A34.

Table 8.2 – Investigated Zone D/E alignment alterations

8.2.4 Zone F Alignment Alterations

The alterations in Zone F were required to investigate whether the link road could be moved further away from the village of Eaton and tie into the A536 further to the north. Table 8.3 lists the Alignment Alterations that were investigated for Zone F.

Drawing Reference	Zone	Description of Change	Option Description
B1832001/SK/29	Zone F	Modification to the Blue/Purple Option in Zone F. Alignment has been moved further away from Eaton and now ties into the A536 further to the north.	Option 1 – After following the existing alignment along School Lane, the alignment moves north, bisecting the wooded area before tying into the A536 via a roundabout junction adjacent to Old Brickbank Wood.
			Option 2 – This option is similar to Option 1 but would have a less severe impact on the wooded area.
			Option 3 - After following the existing alignment along School Lane, the alignment moves north, severing a relatively small portion of the wooded area before tying into the A536 via a roundabout junction to the north of Old Brickbank Wood. This option would sever access to the large wooded area to the west of the A536.

Table 8.3 – Investigated Zone F alignment alterations

8.2.5 Incorporation of Alignment Alterations into the Preferred Route Alignment

The 12 alignment alterations which have been developed following feedback from the Public Consultation will be appraised as the design develops. It is anticipated that the alignment alterations will form part of the Preferred Route due to the improvements offered over the original designs.

Details of the Preferred Route, including any alterations to the alignments presented at the Public Consultation will be presented in a report and will be made available in May 2014.

9

Summary

A total of 396 people attended the Public Exhibition held at Congleton Town Hall over the 23rd - 25th January 2014. The response to the Consultation Questionnaire was good with 1279 questionnaires returned.

The following observations were made based on analysis of the questionnaires:

- 77.1% of respondents are in favour of the scheme, i.e. support at least one option (72.0% when discounting the business community).
- 18.4% of respondents are against the scheme, i.e. oppose all proposed options (22.4% when discounting the business community).
- The Purple Option has the strongest support at 79.3% (71.8% when discounting the business community) and the weakest opposition at 20.7% (28.2% when discounting the business community) of the proposed options.
- The Blue Option and Red Option experience similar levels of support at 59.2% and 59.4% respectively and similar levels of opposition at 40.8% and 40.6% respectively. Discounting the business community has no effect on the Blue Option and Red Option.
- The Green Option received the smallest amount of support at 50.9% and the largest amount of opposition at 49.1% in comparison to the other routes, although the support received was slightly more than opposition. Discounting the business community has no effect on the Green Option.
- Respondents consider the three most important factors, in order of rank, to be:
 - 1) 'Reduced traffic congestion in Congleton', with 63.6% of respondents selecting this as an option.
 - 2) 'Potential economic benefits', with 43.9% of respondents selecting this as an option.
 - 3) 'Improved more/reliable journey times', with 38.2% of respondents selecting this as an option.
- 93.9% of respondents use a 'Private Vehicle' as their main mode of transport; 52.6% of respondents use more than one mode of transport.
- 71.6% of respondents have a 'Residential' interest in the link road.

A total of 13 alternative alignments have been proposed between Zone A and Zone F in response to feedback received during the Public Consultation. These will be appraised individually and may form part of the Preferred Route.

The written responses received by letter, email or captured during the exhibitions contained a number of comments and actions related to the scheme. All actions recorded during the Public Consultation were issued with a response.

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It is concluded that the Purple Option received the most endorsement and the least opposition of the proposed options. However, the Red Option and Blue Option also received favourable levels of support. The Green Option received the least support and most opposition of the proposed options, although support remained marginally higher than opposition.

There is very good support for the scheme with approximately three-quarters of respondents being in favour of the link road; however, a number of alignment issues were made apparent during the Public Consultation which need to be addressed before a preferred route can be determined.

It is recommended that further consideration is given to the alternative alignments that have been developed and that investigations are carried out to determine the possibility of incorporating these designs into the preferred route alignment.

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