

Local Transport Plan

Our Vision

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1 Introduction

The Importance of Transport

Cheshire East has one of the most successful economies in the country and is consistently recognised as offering opportunity and a good quality of life, including being recently recognised as the happiest place in England¹.

Major successes have been achieved through transport investment guided by the Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011 – 2016 including: Crewe Green Link Road; A556; M6 Junction 17; A500 Junction 16; Basford West Spine Road; investment in services and station facilities through the Northern Rail franchise; Crewe Station Rail Exchange; and Connect 2 cycle route.

Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency. Over the coming years Cheshire East will face new challenges which we must plan for now. The transport network will play an increasingly important role and ensuring excellent connectivity will be vital to the Borough's continued success.

An effective transport network supports sustainable communities which have access to services, opportunity, friends, and family. Transport connectivity enables new development and urban regeneration which contributes to the delivery of much needed jobs and homes in the Borough. Transport also plays a role in promoting improved public health and safeguarding the environment by reducing the negative impacts of transport, for example by working to improve air quality.

The Need for a New Local Transport Plan

The Council has been successful in delivering against the priorities in the current LTP with major investment in the network. However the local, regional and national policy context has evolved with a new Local Plan emerging and the government placing particular emphasis on Local Economic Partnerships to drive economic growth. Equally, major projects such as High Speed 2 (HS2) have the potential to deliver significant benefit to the Borough if supported locally.

There is now a need to refresh the LTP to provide an updated plan and vision which captures the Borough's priorities. This will support:

- The emerging Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan to deliver successful jobs-led economic growth and improvements to quality of life in the Borough.
- Adoption of Neighbourhood Plans within Cheshire East which help to define local expectations and concerns regarding transport.
- A number of new and emerging Cheshire East local transport strategies including: Cycling Strategy; Rail Strategy; Air Quality Management Strategy; Speed Management Strategy; Bus Service Review; Home to School Transport Policy; Rights of Way Improvement Plan; and Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy.

¹ Office for National Statistics (2016) *Personal wellbeing in the UK: local authority update*

Highways

- Emerging evidence and strategy at the pan-Northern level through Transport for the North.
- Development of new infrastructure programmes by Highways England and Network Rail.
- Long term growth aspirations such as HS2 and the Constellation Partnership.

New government initiatives, including the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine for Growth, place emphasis on the role of transport as a means of driving increased output and productivity. This is because transport and the economy are closely linked, with employment acting as a fundamental driver of transport demand and better connectivity driving increased productivity and development. It is for this reason that ensuring an efficient transport system which supports success for all will be increasingly vital to maximising Cheshire East's potential.

However, improved transport connectivity will not deliver on the ambitious plans for Cheshire East on its own. Transport must be delivered in partnership with spatial planning, urban development, health, economic, environmental, and social programmes to ensure maximum benefit for Cheshire East's residents and businesses. Ensuring this integrated approach will be vital to maximising the contribution of transport investment.

The LTP will not just focus on nationally significant projects but will identify links between all scales and types of interventions including: new small and large scale infrastructure, new ways of delivering services, partnership working, better communication, and technological innovation.

Developing the Vision

This document has been developed through analysing key evidence concerning transport issues in the Borough. Alongside identifying key strategic transport issues we have considered how transport can contribute to achieving Cheshire East Council's corporate objectives.

Following this vision document a strategy will be developed which will detail proposals to address challenges, deliver on priorities, and capitalise on opportunities over the next five years. This strategy will consider measures needed for specific areas of the Borough.

A five year period has been chosen as it enables the LTP to provide clear direction whilst retaining sufficient flexibility to react to emerging opportunities towards the end of this period. This LTP will also consider short term actions and planning which will directly support delivery of the longer term vision looking towards 2030 as identified in the Local Plan.

The LTP will provide detail on how the Council will work together with partners to achieve success in each of the following areas:

- **Delivery of new infrastructure:** new transport infrastructure will be delivered where it will bring most benefit to residents and businesses.
- **Network performance and asset management:** the transport network will be well maintained and operate efficiently.
- **Service redesign and delivery:** transport and Council services will offer excellent value with efficient and responsive services.

- **Partnership working:** joint working across sectors to address key strategic challenges and delivering engagement/promotion activities to encourage sustainable transport choices.

Aligning Our Strategies

Cheshire East will not thrive in isolation. Likewise concentrating on transport in isolation will not ensure Cheshire East's success.

Developing a transport system which supports improved connectivity across rural and urban areas, growth, a good quality of life, and a healthy environment will require a range of partners to work together to integrate investment at the local, regional, pan-Northern, and national levels.

Improved connectivity will be delivered in part by nationally significant investment such as HS2 which will deliver game changing rail improvements and act as a catalyst for growth in Crewe and the wider Constellation Partnership. Whilst across the Borough more efficient motorways and improved classic rail services will add additional value to industry and accessibility. However, HS2 is still some way in the future and the impact of major projects is most profound when supported by planned packages of local interventions. It is therefore necessary that the LTP ensures that Cheshire East's transport system provides good connectivity for people and freight locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

There are numerous opportunities for transport to contribute to related policy objectives. For instance the transport network can play a role in improving public health by promoting physical activity. By linking across different policy areas the LTP can ensure that transport investment has an impact greater than the sum of its parts. This can be achieved by ensuring the LTP is informed and feeds in to local mode specific strategies and wider policy/planning documents such as Neighbourhood Plans. This will ensure that investment is prioritised where it can bring the greatest holistic benefit.



Figure 1 Spatial Scales and Policy Adjacencies

2 Putting-Providing for Residents-First

The Corporate Plan

The LTP will be guided by the Council's Corporate Plan² which identifies six outcomes.

This chapter identifies what transport success against each of the six outcomes will look like. It then discusses 'quality of place' as a case study demonstrating how transport can deliver the Council's objectives as a central part of an integrated wider programme.



Figure 2 Cheshire East's Corporate Outcomes

² Cheshire East Council, *Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020*

**Outcome
1**

**Our local communities
are strong and
supportive**

What will success look like?

- All residents have access to services and leisure opportunities, including older people and those living in more rural areas.
- Communities are not severed or otherwise negatively impacted by road traffic.
- Road users act in a safe and courteous manner no matter which mode of transport they are using.
- Residents feel confident to travel by any mode of transport at any time.

**Outcome
2**

**Cheshire East has a
strong & resilient
economy**

What will success look like?

- The transport system drives sustainable growth.
- The transport network supports sustainable development as identified in the Local Plan.
- Improved transport connectivity positions Cheshire East in the heart of globally competitive Northern and Midlands economies.
- High quality public realm and green infrastructure encourage inward investment.

**Outcome
3**

**People have the life
skills and education
they need in order to
thrive**

What will success look like?

- Young people and adults have safe, affordable travel options to access skills, education, and opportunity.
- More children are able to walk and cycle to school.
- Young people and adults have access to travel information and training as required.

Outcome

4

**Cheshire East is a green
& sustainable place**

What will success look like?

- Cheshire East maximises the value of its natural landscape.
- All residents have access to places of recreation, leisure, and the countryside.
- The negative impact of the transport network on the natural and built environment is minimised.
- Air quality is improved.
- Residents have the option to travel by walking, cycling, and public transport.
- The transport network is resilient to the impacts of weather events and a changing climate.

Outcome

5

**People live well
and for longer**

What will success look like?

- Residents have access to physical activity opportunities to make both leisure and everyday journeys.
- Our streets are safe for all, especially the most vulnerable users.
- Residents have access to services and leisure opportunities, including older people and those that live in more rural areas.
- The transport network does not negatively impact health.

Outcome

6

**A Responsible, Effective
& Efficient
Organisation**

What will success look like?

- Investment in the transport network provides excellent value for money.
- Transport management and investment decision making is equitable and transparent.
- The transport network responds to resident need.
- The Council works effectively with partners at all scales to bring about the best outcomes for Cheshire East.

Joined-Up Delivery

Transport has been identified as a fundamental driver of future success. However, improved connectivity alone will not deliver on Cheshire East's ambitions. An integrated approach is needed which embraces the multiple linkages between transport and related policy areas, including public health, spatial planning, economic development, the public realm, children's and adult's services, the environment, open spaces, and innovation.

The following case study focusing on the Council's objective to improve 'quality of place' demonstrates the importance of transport as a fundamental contributor to the wider success of Cheshire East:

What is 'quality of place'?

It is about the quality of our built and natural environment and its interaction with our residents and businesses, the ability of individuals to make a life here, as well as valuing our vibrancy and culture as a means of attracting visitors to our unique Borough.

A focus on quality of place supports delivery of outcomes that promote future prosperity and retain the qualities valued by our residents and businesses. Studies show that innovators and entrepreneurs are attracted to creative, cultural and beautiful places. We can therefore support the economic well-being of our area by developing and communicating the characteristics that hold us apart from our neighbours and competitors.

What are our priorities for 'quality of place'?

- Regeneration and growth
- Strategic infrastructure
- Planning and design
- Homes and neighbourhoods
- Connectivity
- Protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment
- Embracing and capitalising on the evolving nature and role of urban centres
- Promoting and safeguarding countryside access
- Economic development and business support
- Leisure, culture and heritage
- Supporting people into work, skills, apprenticeships etc.

The role of transport

The overarching nature of transport means that it contributes, either directly or indirectly to each and every one of the priorities identified above. The role of the LTP will be to identify opportunities for transport to contribute to the Council's wider objectives in an integrated way, including those relating to 'quality of place'.

3 Connected at all Scales

Local, Regional, International, and Smart Connections

Cheshire East is a diverse borough. Our towns and villages vary greatly in character with each facing different issues and having bespoke needs for the future. The Borough also has an extensive rural area with a successful rural and agricultural based economy. Across this diverse geography Cheshire East has a strong sense of place which the LTP will support. We need to create a climate which supports success not just in our larger towns but also our smaller towns and rural communities.

There is therefore a need to invest in transport infrastructure, services, and maintenance which enable connectivity across all spatial scales and facilitates integrated, door-to-door journeys. To succeed the transport network must get people and goods to where they need to be by facilitating reliable and sustainable local accessibility, including the first and last mile of journeys.

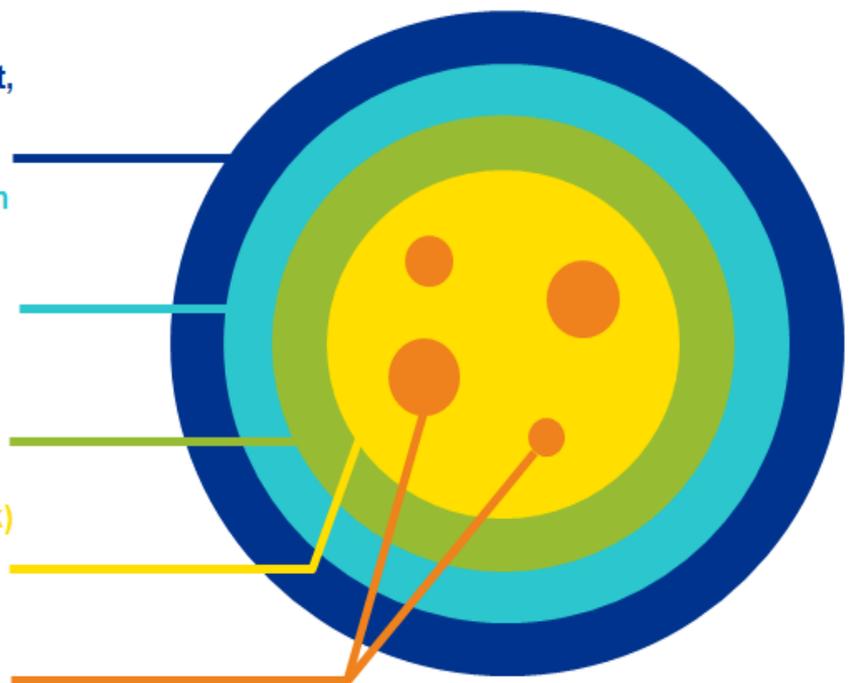
Global Gateways (Manchester Airport, Port Salford, Port Liverpool)

UK Connectivity (North Wales Growth Track 360, HS2 and Classic Rail, Strategic Road Network)

Cities and the Sub Region (Strategic Road and Rail)

Linking Towns (Inter Urban Bus Services, Rail and Highways Network)

Connecting Neighbourhoods (Local Bus Services, Active Travel, Urban Realm)



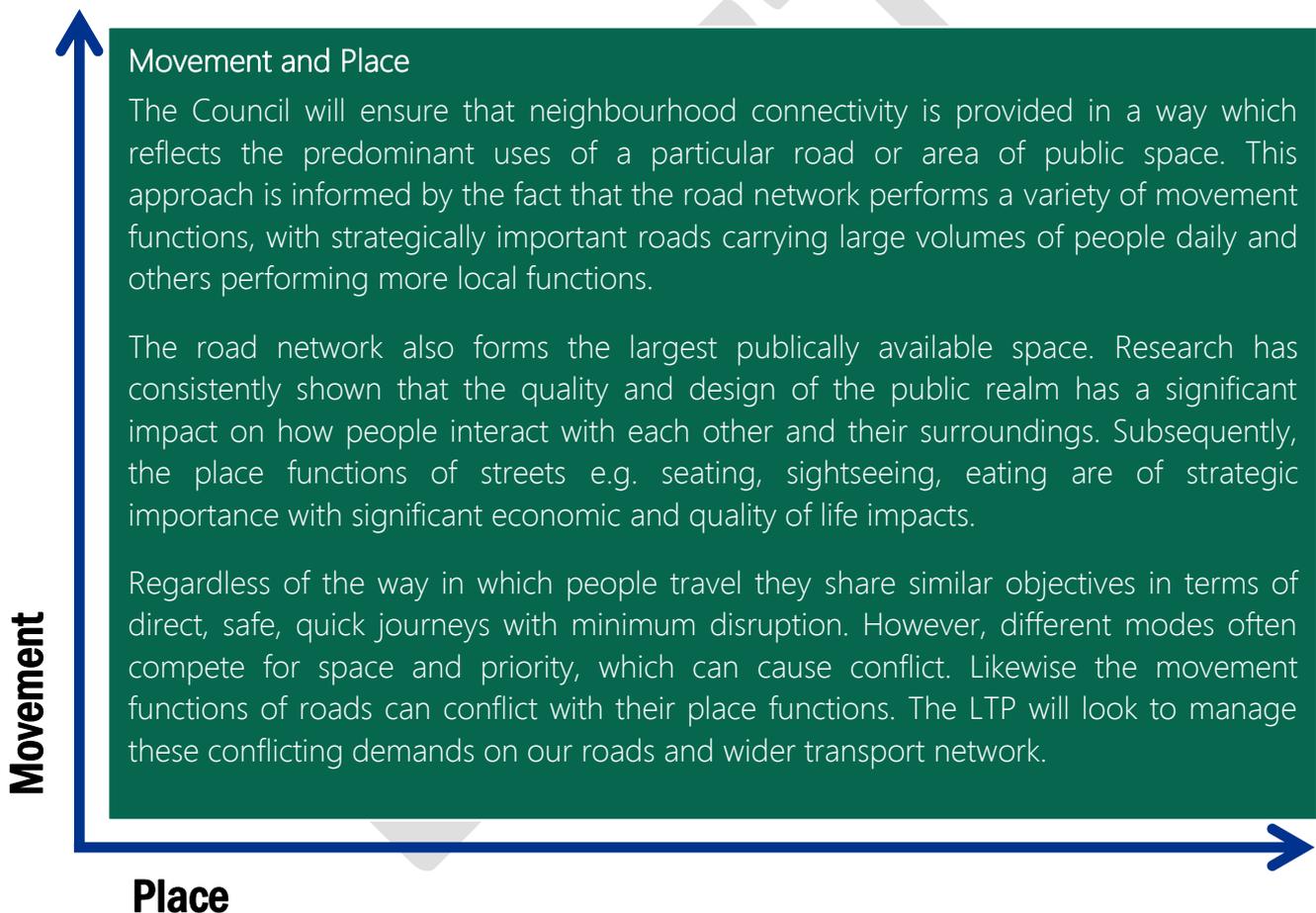
Connecting Neighbourhoods

All journeys start locally. The LTP will aim to connect our communities with a focus on: quality of place and improved public realm; walking and cycling facilities linking homes and destinations; and local passenger services (bus, flexible transport and community transport).

Investment in walking, cycling, and the public realm is relatively low cost and there is research indicating the quality of life and economic benefits that good quality urban design and active transport infrastructure brings. Whether it is an improved local retail offer, better health

outcomes, more vibrant communities, attracting high value employers and the highly skilled workers they need, or reduced congestion. In doing this the LTP must also consider the needs of our rural communities and support their sustainability by ensuring access to jobs and services.

Local bus services, flexible transport and community transport are an important part of neighbourhood connectivity supporting important economic and social activity. During the life of the LTP the Council will face financial challenges regarding funding supported bus services due to wider budget constraints. Alongside an ongoing review of supported bus services, the LTP will identify how the Council will respond to these challenges and utilise available resources in the most efficient manner. It will also identify how the Council will respond to changing travel behaviour; including the increasing trend towards urbanisation amongst younger people, the emergence of disruptive technology such as ride sharing and Connected and Autonomous Vehicles, and more generally the ideas around 'Mobility as a Service'.



Linking Towns

Ensuring good connectivity between Cheshire East's principal towns and key service centres is central to delivering on our plans for growth. The LTP will identify opportunities for improved inter-urban connectivity focusing on rail, the local highway network, and bus services.

Recent research has highlighted the importance of small and medium-sized cities and large towns in the North, the role of which is too often overlooked nationally³. These findings are especially relevant in demonstrating the benefits that will accrue from improved connectivity within and between Cheshire East's urban centres. The economic and social importance of which is demonstrated by the '*corridor of opportunity*' which will be created through the provision of improved transport connectivity between Crewe and Macclesfield by way of Congleton.

Small and Medium Sized Cities and Large Towns

The Council will prioritise investment which brings the most benefit to Cheshire East. New research suggests that in the case of small and medium sized cities and large towns in the North investment in local connections can be equally as effective as larger projects aimed at boosting inter-city connectivity. This is because local connections support the strong employment markets contained within small and medium sized towns and important sub-regional commuting flows. This demonstrates the importance of local investment in transport connectivity as a means of supporting bigger projects such as HS2.

Transport infrastructure investment in small and medium sized towns will enable greater contribution to local growth, including supporting the success of neighbouring city regions and other urban centres. Improved connectivity helps to build local resilience and maximises the benefits of local assets; whilst also allowing our urban centres to respond to emerging opportunities related to the evolving nature of town centres e.g. capitalising on agglomeration benefits to develop specialised knowledge centres.

Improving rail connectivity between our principal towns and key service centres is a key priority to improve access between towns. Rail connectivity across the Borough varies, for example Middlewich with a population of 13,700 has no railway station. In comparison, Knutsford, with a population of 13,300 has the fourth busiest railway station in Cheshire East. The railway line through Middlewich is currently used solely for freight with no station or passenger services. The Council has an ambition to link Middlewich to the passenger rail system.

Enhanced rail connectivity requires new rail infrastructure, new rolling stock, and improved station facilities and accessibility. Delivery of this will require the Council to work alongside key partners including train operating companies and Network Rail. Future franchise negotiations also offer an opportunity to inform service specifications and station investment to achieve a better outcome for residents. An example of this is the Council's input into rolling stock requirements and station enhancements as part of the new Northern franchise which was recently let.

Cities and the Sub-Region

Supporting movement between Cheshire and Warrington's urban centres and the wider sub-region will be increasingly important. Modelling shows that planned growth in jobs and houses associated with the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan requires delivery of a road network which can support a 40% increase in demand on the M6, and M62 strategic road

³ IPPR (2016) *The role of small and medium sized towns and cities in growing the Northern Powerhouse*

corridors, and a 30-35% increase in demand through corridors such as Congleton, Middlewich, M53/M56, and Alderley Edge⁴. Achieving this will require strong partnerships with the Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport for the North (including through the proposed Key Route Network), Highways England, and Network Rail.

The Council supports the delivery of proposed investment in the sub-region's rail and road networks. Examples such as electrification, Crewe Station improvements, A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, and the Congleton Link Road will all bring substantial economic and connectivity benefits. However, ongoing investment will be needed to accommodate ambitious levels of growth within the emerging Local Plan and supporting key priority programmes included within the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan including the Constellation Partnership and the Cheshire Science Corridor.

UK Connectivity

Cheshire East enjoys a favourable location close to the key hubs of Liverpool and Manchester City Regions and with direct connections to Birmingham and London. This advantageous position has contributed to the Borough's past success and, with the right investment and management, will contribute to its future prosperity. By bridging the key economic growth areas of the Northern Powerhouse and the Midlands Engine the Borough is well placed to make a significant contribution to rebalancing the UK's economy.

Indeed Cheshire East with its variety of successful industries including advanced manufacturing and pharmaceuticals has plans to be an engine for Northern growth. However, this will require the Borough to be fully integrated in to the UK through a transport network which offers effective national connectivity for people and freight.

Cheshire East is located on a major growth axis. As a result, the northern part of the Borough is generally well connected by road and rail north-south and east-west. But elsewhere, east-west connectivity is poor, by all modes. Even where good road connectivity exists on the M6, and M56, this spine of connectivity is congested and fragile. When it fails, not only is connectivity



Figure 3 Cheshire East's National Connectivity

⁴ Cheshire and Warrington 871 LEP (2016) *Sub-regional Transport Strategy*

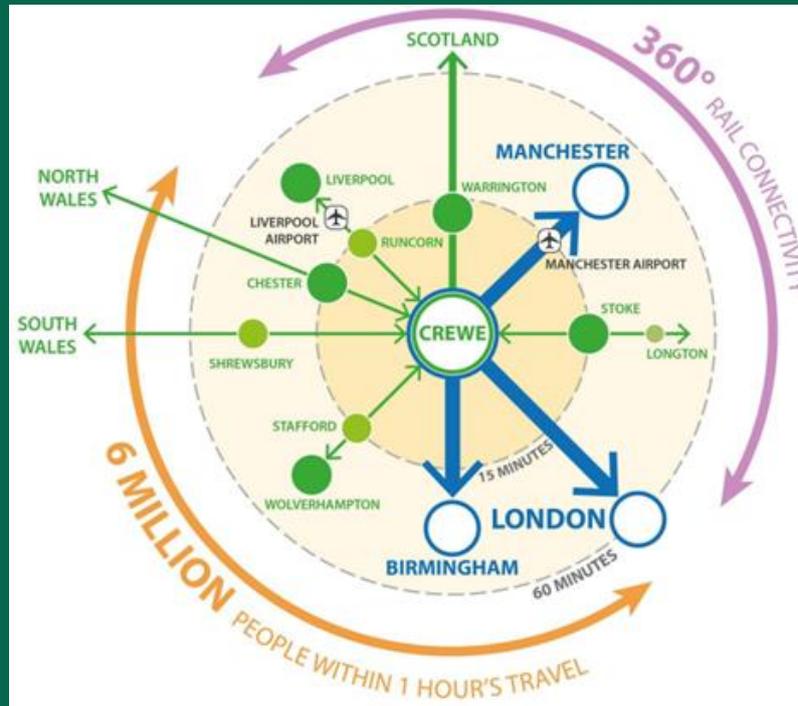
impaired, but our sub-regional centres become congested due to diverting traffic. Increasing the resilience of the transport network is vital for the 173,000+ jobs currently supported in Cheshire East and plans for growth.

Providing continued high quality national connectivity will require:

- Dedicated transport corridors between major centres for both passengers and freight.
- High frequency connectivity to and from key sub-regional centres.
- National hubs, markets, gateways and ports to be brought under the economically critical door-to-door travel time of one hour from Cheshire East, wherever possible.

Achieving this will necessitate investment in the strategic road and rail networks to ensure high quality links between the Borough and the wider region including the Greater Manchester City Region, Liverpool City Region, North Wales, West Midlands and Yorkshire. Nationally, key links will need to be improved to London, southern England, Wales, and northwards towards Scotland. The Growth Track 360 programme in particular will link Cheshire East and North Wales with the proposed HS2 Hub in Crewe to provide excellent connections to London and numerous city regions. The LTP will aim to achieve this by integrating transport investment across all scales.

The arrival of HS2 will place Crewe and the wider Borough at the centre of one of the worlds most advanced rail networks and provide national and international connectivity. The proposed Superhub at Crewe has the potential to create more than 120,000 jobs by 2040 and inject £10bn a year into the sub-regional economy.



The Council is committed to delivering maximum benefits from the proposed HS2 scheme and a future Hub at Crewe, whilst achieving maximum mitigation measures for residents who may be affected by the scheme. Maximising the potential benefits from HS2 requires strategic planning over the lifespan of this LTP. Effective integration and prioritisation of large and small interventions will ensure that HS2 achieves more than the sum of its parts. The LTP will create the transport policy framework which connects the Council's transport priorities with those of our partners to achieve this.

Whilst the Council is keen to build on the momentum of HS2 and the related prospects for Crewe the LTP will look to exploit new opportunities, build on current success and create a climate that is attractive for business investment and growth through improved connectivity not just in our larger towns but across the Borough.

Global Gateways

Cheshire East is well placed to capitalise on the government's drive to further develop competitive economic centres in the North and Midlands. To do this we must exploit our proximity to global gateways for both people and freight by improving multi-modal access to

Manchester Airport, Port Salford, and the Port of Liverpool. We also must improve connections with other significant global gateways such as Heathrow Airport.

Providing effective international connectivity is vital to encouraging inward investment and ensuring that businesses can capitalise on global markets, particular in emerging economies. Cheshire East is home to global brands such as Bentley Motors and AstraZeneca and the continued competitiveness of these major employers, as well as the growth and success of local talent, will be dependent on integrated transport investment connecting the local to the global.

Manchester Airport is the UK's northern global gateway handling over 22 million passengers a year and contributing almost £1billion pounds to the UK's economy annually⁵. Due to its proximity Manchester Airport is an important international gateway for businesses in Cheshire East. The airport is also a key local employer with 8% of the airport's staff residing in Cheshire East¹⁸. There is an ambitious programme of investment centred on the airport, including improved surface access via the A6 to the Manchester Airport Relief Road and proposals to link Manchester Airport with HS2. The LTP will support improved connectivity between the Borough and the Airport as a means of ensuring success for both Cheshire East and the airport.

Freight connectivity is also vital for the Borough. Forecasting by Highways England and Network Rail predicts an increase of 70% in freight via Liverpool Superport and a 25% increase in freight demands elsewhere in Cheshire and Warrington⁶. Improving road and multi-modal links between Cheshire East and global freight gateways will be vital to ensuring we can meet and capitalise on this increased demand.

Digital Connections

High quality digital connections can be just as important for social and business activity as good transport connections.

Improving vital digital connections which link Cheshire East internally and externally is a priority for the Council and the wider Connecting Cheshire Partnership as we strive to meet the government's target of 95% access to superfast broadband.

Improvements in technology and digital connections will also bring opportunities to reduce demand for travel, better manage our transport network and improve communication with the travelling public. In particular it is envisaged that the trend for 'Mobility as a Service' will continue to evolve through the utilisation of communication and technological advancements to offer tailor-made transport on demand be it public transport, taxi or car rental, or ride-, car- or bike-sharing.

⁵ Manchester Airport (2016) *Sustainable Development Plan 2016: Economy and Surface Access*

⁶ Cheshire and Warrington 871 LEP (2016) *Sub-regional Transport Strategy*

4 Meeting the Challenge

We face a number of challenges to achieving our vision of a connected borough and in turn delivering against the Council's corporate objectives. The main challenges have been identified through a review of key evidence and are summarised below. The Council outcome/s which will be contributed to by addressing each challenge are also identified.

Challenge 1: Providing connectivity that enables transformational economic change and supports a strong economy



Cheshire East already makes an impressive contribution to the sub-regional and regional economies: its GVA is around £9.2bn⁷ (2012 estimate), which equates to 7.0% of the North West region's economic output. An internationally facing economy with strong foundations in advanced manufacturing and research allows Cheshire and Warrington together as an integrated economic region to outperform Manchester, Liverpool, or any other area in the North in terms of GVA per head⁸.

Despite this excellent past performance Cheshire East will not continue to thrive with a 'business as usual' approach to transport. The sustainable growth aspirations set out in the Local Plan are a key element in meeting Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's plan for a transformed economy. Strategic transport investment will be central to achieving these wider ambitions for Cheshire East as outlined below:

- **Unlocking development sites** – By improving transport connectivity we can enable economic growth by opening up key sites for housing and employment development. The Local Plan makes provision for 36,000 new homes and 31,000 new jobs in the Borough by 2030. Providing transport connectivity which makes these sites viable propositions is a key consideration as part of the planning process. This is set within the context of a transport network which is already congested in parts. Therefore appropriate mitigation measures are required to ensure growth does not negatively impact connectivity.
- **Transport as an enabler for growth** – Longer term transformative economic programmes such as the Constellation Partnership centred on the proposed HS2 Hub in Crewe will be underpinned by strategic transport improvements. The provision of a HS2 Hub combined with complementary infrastructure improvements could lead to an additional 120,000 sub-regional by 2040 and inject £10billion per year in to the local economy.

⁷ Cheshire East Council (2016) *Local Plan Strategy proposed Changes (2012 estimate)*

⁸ Cheshire and Warrington 871 LEP (2016) *Sub-regional Transport Strategy*

Highways

In order to unlock the ambitious growth planned for Cheshire East the transport network must be able to cater for up to a 35% increase on current demand for movement between key economic centres³. Investment is needed to facilitate this growth planned for the sub-region; including capitalising on the transformational opportunities presented by the Constellation Partnership, the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone, and the Atlantic Gateway.

Although these are long term programmes, a key challenge within the lifetime of this LTP will be setting the foundations of transport infrastructure to enable future growth, whilst simultaneously ensuring that maximum mitigation measures are secured where infrastructure has the potential to negatively impact residents.

- **Keeping our economy moving** – Cheshire East will be an engine for Northern growth and will promote a dynamic and prosperous economy. We have a wide variety of successful industries in the area including the advanced engineering industry which includes Bentley Motors and the pharmaceutical industry e.g. AstraZeneca. However, we must build on our current successes and create an environment that is attractive for business investment and growth, not just in our larger towns but also in our smaller towns and rural communities.

A key challenge to achieving this will be ensuring that connectivity across our transport networks supports the efficient movement of people and goods. This will ensure that businesses can count on reliable and efficient networks which in turn will support their operations and future prosperity. There are already significant pinch points on our network, particularly in respect of road and rail links, which will need to be addressed to keep our economy moving.

- **Quality of place** – Providing attractive and vibrant built and natural environments will encourage inward investment through businesses and people choosing to locate in Cheshire East. The LTP has a key role to play in supporting the provision of high quality, attractive environments which encourage walking, cycling, and public transport whilst also effectively mitigating potential negative impacts of transport infrastructure. It also has a role to play in encouraging sustainable connectivity between our urban centres and their surrounding rural settings.

Challenge 2: Providing accessibility for residents and businesses



Cheshire East is a diverse borough characterised by its large number of towns, each with its own distinctive history and character and all located in a largely rural setting. These towns lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for our prosperity as a whole. The transport network plays a role in creating sustainable communities. Having access to vital facilities

and services as well as friends and family is important and the transport network must support these everyday journeys. The LTP must deliver not just in our larger towns but also for our smaller towns, villages, and rural communities.

Generally residents of Cheshire East lead longer, healthier lives than regional or national averages. Indeed Cheshire East is one of only two local authorities in the North with a significantly higher healthy life expectancy than the state pension age of 65⁹. However, our population is also older than regional and national averages with people aged over 60 outnumbering children and young adults.

This ageing population will present challenges which the transport network must respond to. With this trend forecast to continue we must cater for changing demographics and support mobility for all, including those who do not have access to a car. To achieve this we must ensure that transport supports:

- **Public transport accessibility** – Providing public transport accessibility for residents, especially those in rural locations, will be a key challenge in the coming years in the context of wider financial constraints and as a result reduced budgets for supported bus services.

The impact of this is especially relevant in light of Cheshire East's ageing population, with 22% of our population aged over 65¹⁰, and the damaging impact of social isolation which can be as harmful to health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day¹¹. The Council will maximise the impact of our budgets and seek innovative ways to provide services in a cost effective way. The LTP will provide the policy framework for a transport system which supports mobility without relying exclusively on the car.

- **Accessibility to education, skills, and employment** - Cheshire East boasts nationally recognised higher education and innovation assets. The transport network must support improved connectivity at these locations and provide access to the skills, education, and opportunity needed to succeed.

Whilst on the whole Cheshire East is economically successful there are a number of urban areas predominately in Crewe and Macclesfield which suffer from deprivation, and this has worsened since 2010. Delivering improved transport connectivity is central to allowing areas which underperform economically to reach their potential. For example a survey at Crewe Jobcentre showed that 65% of jobseekers found a lack of transport options was a barrier to working. More must be done to ensure that everyone in Cheshire East has access to education, skills and employment.

Children and young people must be able to access local schools safely and sustainably. Around 65% of Cheshire East's children currently travel to school by foot, cycle, or public

⁹ Office for National Statistics (2015) *Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth for Upper Ties Local Authorities, England: 2011 to 2013*

¹⁰ Office of National Statistics (2016) *Mid-2015 Population Estimates. Release: MYE9AT1*

¹¹ Holt-Lundstad et al (2015) *Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review*

transport and there is an ambition for this number to increase. Parents must feel confident to let their children walk or cycle to school. The LTP will promote policies and interventions which encourage journeys to be made on foot or by cycle wherever possible as a means of reducing congestion, increasing physical activity, and improving air quality.

As well as providing good quality local links the transport network needs to facilitate longer distance journeys allowing young people and adults to access higher and specialist skills and education providers. The Council will explore innovative uses of technology and integration of services to increase the affordability, sustainability, and efficiency of vital transport services such as home to school transport, local buses, and non-emergency patient transport. This work is initially focusing on rural areas but there is an ambition to widen the scope following implementation and evaluation.

Challenge 3: Improving our environment



The Council has produced a baseline evidence report which examines the impact of transport on the environment including to contribution of vehicular traffic emissions to air pollution and climate change. The biggest contributor to air pollution within Cheshire East is road transport¹². This impact on air quality is indicative of high car ownership in Cheshire East with 40% of households having two or more cars against a UK average of 29%.

One way of alleviating traffic impacts is by encouraging residents to utilise more efficient forms of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport. This will be increasingly important in light of expected population growth of over 58,000 by 2030. The Council will work with partners to explore ways to positively influence the ways in which we travel and to support:

- **Improved air quality** – The Council is committed to creating high quality walking and cycling environments, and increasing use of public transport as a means of improving the quality of our natural and built environments. Technological development will also present opportunities to increase the efficiency and sustainability of the transport network.

Modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes will improve air quality. The health impact of poor air quality can be significant and across Cheshire East there are thirteen Air Quality Management Areas where emissions are considered likely to breach guidelines. We will continue to monitor air quality and take action where necessary with further detail to be set out in an updated Air Quality Management Strategy later in 2017.

- **High quality green infrastructure** - As well as high quality built environments we value green infrastructure across the Borough. Cheshire East sits in the heart of the beautiful Cheshire

¹² Cheshire East Council, *What is air pollution?*

landscape, with 6% of the Peak District National Park with its 10 million visitors per year sitting within our administrative boundary. However green infrastructure links within and between our urban and rural environments offers scope for improvement. Improving these connections through investment in green infrastructure will bring numerous quality of life and economic benefits. The LTP will support innovative ways of connecting our urban and rural environments and utilising the transport network to green our towns as a means of supporting tourism, regeneration, and improved quality of life. High quality natural environments bring quality of life benefits, can encourage investment in our urban centres, and can also provide direct traffic free transport corridors for walking and cycling.

Challenge 4: Addressing poor health and physical inactivity



The transport network can play a key role in promoting health and physical activity. It is estimated that air pollution in Cheshire East results in 175 deaths per year¹³. In the UK, physical inactivity causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths amongst people aged 40 – 79 per year¹⁴ and by 2030 around half of the UK's population could be obese¹⁵. If current trends in Cheshire East, where a higher proportion of adults are overweight than nationally, are to be reversed then the LTP must target physical inactivity. We will work with partners across health, transport, and education to tackle this important issue. It is therefore important that the LTP supports:

- Walking and cycling for local journeys – The Cheshire East Cycling Strategy sets out an ambitious plan to double levels of cycling by 2026. The provision of high quality infrastructure, travel information and training can encourage people to travel in more efficient, sustainable and cost effective ways such as walking and cycling. The Council and key partners will build on successful previous sustainable travel initiatives such as those funded through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to improve and support sustainable travel options.

¹³ Public Health England (2010) *Estimating Local Mortality Burdens associated with Particulate Air Pollution*

¹⁴ Cycling UK (2016) *Cycling and Health*

¹⁵ Swinburn, Boyd et al (2011) *The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments*

Challenge 5: Network management and asset maintenance



Ensuring the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained is vital to both connectivity and safety. Reduced Council budgets combined with a greater number of users and an increased incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make maintaining the transport network and ensuring its resilience more difficult in the future. Subsequently it is therefore important that the LTP supports:

- **Effective asset management** - Transport infrastructure is expensive with the total value of all the Council's highway assets estimated at almost £5billion¹⁶. This consists of over 2,600kms of carriageway, 40,000 street lights, and over 1,400 bridges and other structures for which the Council are responsible. Therefore the Council needs to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets. Cheshire East's Highways Investment Programme is an excellent example of this evidence led approach to transport asset maintenance.
- **Safety for all** - Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe. Everyone, especially vulnerable users should feel confident to travel on our roads and use public transport. We must ensure that safety is designed and engineered in to our transport system and work towards a safe systems approach to road safety.

Furthermore anti-social behaviour and fear of crime can dissuade people from travelling in certain ways and at certain times of the day. We will work to address these issues so residents feel safe and confident to travel by public transport, on foot, or by cycle. This includes ensuring that school children are provided with safe routes to school.

- **Transport resilience** - There is a broad scientific consensus that in the future we will see an increasing incidence of extreme weather events¹⁷. Ensuring the transport network is well maintained and resilient to these events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important.
- **Technological innovation** – Improvements in technology will provide opportunities to better manage our transport network and communication with the travelling public. Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to the continued success of Cheshire East.
- **Effective partnership working** - The maintenance and improvement of parts of the transport network is outside direct Council control e.g. the rail and motorway networks. In these instances we will work with partners to ensure an integrated approach is taken to network

¹⁶ Cheshire East Council (2015) *Highway Asset Management Strategy*

¹⁷ Department for Transport (2014) *Transport Resilience Review*

performance and asset management across the Borough and to identify opportunities for value added delivery.

Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector. Working alongside the private sector will be increasingly important in the future as companies progressively focus on low carbon travel behaviours as part of the wider corporate social responsibility agenda.

We will work effectively with partners to achieve the best outcomes for Cheshire East. The Council will also maintain and enhance links between internal services to squeeze maximum positive impact out of every pound invested. This will mean working with colleagues in health, education, and planning to ensure an integrated approach.

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5 Delivering for Cheshire East

The development of a transport network which leads the way nationally will require a focus on three core priority areas. Success against each of these will contribute to our vision for transport:



In the coming years there will continue to be challenges relating to how we manage and fund our transport network. The Council will work with central government and other partners to identify how priority transport infrastructure is constructed, maintained, and paid for; as well as how excellent transport and local government services are provided in what is likely to be a challenging funding environment.

It is vital that the Councils' decision making is transparent and equitable as difficult decisions around where and where not to invest will need to be made. Subsequently, the Council's transport priorities must be clearly communicated. The LTP will be the vehicle for this and will inform our residents and partners of our priorities and vision for transport in Cheshire East.

Delivery of New Infrastructure

Government plans for transformational national investment in rail services will bring real benefit to Cheshire East. HS2 and the planned Hub at Crewe supported by Growth Track 360 proposals would place Cheshire East in the centre of a high quality UK wide rail network.

Investment in new and improved road infrastructure in the Borough will be needed to cater for up to a 40% increase in demand forecast for vehicles on the strategic and local road networks. Current investment including the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road will bring benefit but more investment is needed to relieve congestion which threatens economic growth. The Council is developing plans for major highway investment, including the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, Poynton Relief Road and Congleton Link Road, and will continue to support targeted major highway investment where required.

Maintenance and Asset Management

There is little point investing in new transport infrastructure without effectively maintaining the current network. Furthermore both planned and reactive maintenance and asset management is vital to ensure safe and efficient movement on the network.

The Council has invested an additional £30million improving the condition of Cheshire East's roads over the last three years through the Highway Investment Programme. Furthermore another £5million is being invested in 2016-2017 in road improvements. This programme utilises laser scanning of the highway to assess its condition and inform the identification and prioritisation of appropriate maintenance works.

Service Redesign and Delivery

The Highway Investment Programme described above is an excellent example of high quality service design providing residents and businesses with investment in the transport network which provides value for money and excellent results. Building on this will require further integration between transport, health, land use planning, and economic development during the life of the LTP.

Whereas in some instances the Council can work alone to deliver excellent services, generally service improvements will require better integration between the Council and partners. For example the Council will work with central government and train operating companies to influence the franchise specifications of rail services operating in Cheshire East. Indeed, the recent example of the Northern rail refranchise shows that significant improvements can be brought about by effective advocacy. Likewise we need to work closely with bus operators to prioritise bus services and ensure they connect as many people and are as efficient and equitable as possible in light of reduced Council budgets for supported bus services.

6 Next Steps

This document is the first step in the production of Cheshire East’s new LTP. It sets out the vision for transport which will guide the development of the LTP and its focus over the next five years. However, in developing this vision a longer term view is also needed to prepare the Borough for major transport investment such as HS2 which with its anticipated arrival in Crewe in 2027 will bring benefits further in to the future.

We will now reflect on the vision for transport identified in this document as well as the evidence base that has been developed to develop a place based LTP strategy development. This will involve working with stakeholders to develop place specific strategies which will identify the overarching transport priorities across the Borough and the type and scale of interventions.

Following development of these place specific strategies stakeholders and the public will be invited to provide feedback on the draft LTP before it is finalised in line with the broad timescales given below.

