

# **Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy**

**January 2018**

## Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy

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## Foreword

Travel to schools within Cheshire East is a fundamental part of daily life and alternatives are available for many journeys, including walking, scooting, cycling, public transport and car sharing. We know that walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health and Cheshire East is working to promote more physical activity, helping to create stronger, healthier and more vibrant communities.

Simple measures to build activity into daily routines can help combat increasing levels of obesity in children. Cheshire East Council is encouraging more sustainable travel to schools. This supports healthier and more active lifestyles for staff, students and parents, whilst also reducing congestion on local roads around schools with associated improvements in air quality and road safety.

We are therefore delighted to introduce Cheshire East's 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy'.

This document sets out the measures Cheshire East Council and partners could bring forward to achieve an increase in sustainable travel. We, together with the schools and other delivery partners, will work together to implement measures that will provide opportunities for sustainable travel to school. We have a plan in place to deliver these actions and are pleased to confirm funding and support to help implement this strategy.

Overall, we believe that for those schools that are able to work with us to implement this strategy, we can achieve benefits for all members of both school and neighbouring residential communities.

Councillor Jos Saunders, Children and Families Portfolio Holder  
Councillor Don Stockton, Environment Portfolio Holder

Cheshire East Council (CEC) is committed to encouraging more sustainable travel to and from schools. This strategy establishes a framework which supports schools, pupils and parents/carers to travel more sustainably for the journey to school. It will enable healthier and more active lifestyles for staff, students and parents/carers, whilst reducing congestion on local roads around schools with associated improvements in air quality and road safety.

This strategy can make a contribution to the achievement of key outcomes the Council are working towards as set out in the Corporate Plan, namely:

- Our local communities are strong and supportive
- People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive
- Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place

Cheshire East Council also recognises that the quality of our built and natural environment and its interaction with our residents plays a key role in providing good quality of life in the Borough. Providing options to travel sustainably to schools can contribute to improving 'Quality of Place', both through offering high quality infrastructure and also addressing environmental issues associated with motorised traffic.

We recognise that walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health. Walking and cycling to school helps children achieve recommended government targets of physical activity. Physically active children can be more alert and ready to learn than children who are driven to school.

This strategy sets out how the Council in collaboration with key partners will support delivery of the key outcomes outlined above. Cheshire East Council, in conjunction with a range of partners, already provides a range of initiatives to enable and encourage sustainable travel to and from schools. We aim to continue to offer this support and a range of new measures, resources and funding to schools, and ultimately enable more sustainable journeys to schools.

## 2

## Legislation and Policy Framework

### 2.1 Key Policies and Strategies

There are a range of national and local policies and strategies which inform this Sustainable Modes of Travel to School strategy. These are referenced below, with further detail available in Appendix B.

#### 2.1.1 Sustainable Travel

The government is committed to promoting sustainable travel, as outlined in the '*Sustainable Schools Alliance*' (2006) and the *Department for Transport 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy'* (2017) which aims to provide support and set targets for schools regarding sustainability. Both policies provide a framework to improve the number of people using sustainable modes and identify the importance of providing support to schools in order to achieve this.

The importance of sustainable travel is identified in a range of local policies and guidance produced by CEC. The key policies related to sustainable travel include the emerging '*Local Transport Plan*', the '*Cycling Strategy 2017-2027*' (2017) and the '*Corporate Plan*' (2017).

These policies set out the overall vision and approach to delivering improvements to sustainable travel in Cheshire East, alongside a framework to prioritise and deliver improvements.

#### 2.1.2 Public Health and Wellbeing

The Government has produced a range of policies and guidance identifying the importance of public health and wellbeing. The key policies and strategies include the Public Health England '*Everybody Active, Every Day*' strategy (2014) and '*Active Travel – A briefing for local authorities*' (2016).

The benefits of increasing physical activity through active travel are outlined and how people can be encouraged to increase their use of active travel modes (i.e. walking and/or cycling).

At a local level, CEC has produced a '*Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Population of Cheshire East 2014 – 2017*' (2014). This provides an overarching framework that will influence the commissioning plans of the local NHS, the Council and other organisations in Cheshire East.

#### 2.1.3 Local Authority Education Travel Duty

Local authorities have a duty to promote sustainable travel and make transport arrangements for all 'eligible children'. This is further identified in the '*Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance 2014*'.

CEC identify their responsibility to adhere to this guidance in the emerging '*Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy*' which sets out how CEC can assist children of statutory school age with travel between home and school.



There are a number of key requirements on Local Authorities which apply to education travel and sustainable travel. Further information regarding current legalisation and policies can be found in Appendix B.

## 2.2 Legislative Framework

Section 508A of the *'Education and Inspections Act 1996'* *"places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority's area. The duty relates to journeys to and from institutions where education or training is delivered."*<sup>1</sup>

Under the Education and Inspections Act 1996, Cheshire East Council also has a legal duty to:

- Assess the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area;
- Audit the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority's area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;
- Develop a strategy to improve the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;
- Promote sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions; and
- Publish a 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to School' (SMOTS) Strategy.

Local Authorities also have a duty to provide travel assistance to 'eligible children' travelling to and from school. To qualify as an 'eligible child', the child must satisfy the criteria outlined in the *'Education and Inspections Act 2006'* which is further outlined in Appendix B.

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<sup>1</sup> Department for Education, 2014. Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

## 3 Baseline Data and Analysis

### 3.1 Current Status of School Travel Plans in Cheshire East

A Travel Plan is a document which sets out the measures and initiatives a school or college (for the remainder of the document referred to as schools) will use to reduce car journeys and promote other ways of getting to school in safer, healthier and more environmentally sustainable ways. Successful Travel Plans will be supported by the educational community (pupils/students, teachers, parents/carers, governors and support staff), the local community and the local authority. To be effective, a Travel Plan should be monitored regularly and at least on a yearly basis.

As of March 2010, all primary, secondary and special educational needs schools in Cheshire East had completed a Travel Plan. CEC recently conducted online Travel Plan surveys with schools in Cheshire East. The results were then collected and analysed by CEC.

The number of returned responses to the survey (38%) gives an indication of the current state of travel plans within an education context; however, a significant number of schools did not respond to the survey. Although the returned data was limited, the surveys demonstrated that not all schools are regularly updating their Travel Plans. CEC will continue to encourage all schools to continually review and refresh their Travel Plans and policies.

A review of a sample of Travel Plans was undertaken. The review identified that each school has typically defined a list of specific improvements required to encourage more frequent sustainable travel and improve access to the school.

#### 3.1.1 Primary Schools

##### (a) Current Travel Plan Compliance

Of the 49 primary schools who responded to the survey, 16 have a Travel Plan in place (33%). Three of these reported they had undertaken a review of their Travel Plan within the last 12 months, while 13 had not done so for over one year. Of those primary schools with a Travel Plan in place, six reported they have a School Travel Plan Co-ordinator.

##### (b) Travel Plan Concerns

The review identified that similar concerns for not travelling to school through sustainable modes were recorded at the majority schools. These include:

- Cars parking on both sides of the road outside the school, limiting visibility for pedestrians;
- Inappropriate vehicle speeds outside school and in the surrounding area; and
- Limited footpaths on non-designated available walking routes to school.

### **3.1.2 Secondary Schools**

#### **(a) Current Travel Plan Compliance**

Of the six secondary schools who responded to the survey, three have a Travel Plan in place (50%). One of the schools reported they had undertaken a review of their Travel Plan within the last 3-6 months, while the remaining two had not done so for over a year. One school reported that they have a School Travel Plan Co-ordinator.

#### **(b) Travel Plan Concerns**

The review identified that the reasons for not using sustainable modes of travel to school were consistent with those identified by primary schools. These include:

- Cars parking on both sides of the road outside the school, limiting visibility for pedestrians;
- Inappropriate vehicle speeds and traffic volumes outside school and in the surrounding area; and
- Limited footpaths on non-designated available walking routes to school.

### **3.1.3 Further Education Colleges**

#### **(a) Current Travel Plan Compliance**

One further education college responded to the survey. It reported that it has a Travel Plan in place, as well as a Travel Plan Co-ordinator. A review of their Travel Plan was last undertaken within the last 3-6 months.

#### **(b) Travel Plan Concerns**

Following a review of the further education college Travel Plan, the following concerns were identified as reasons for not travelling by sustainable modes:

- Lack of suitable, secure cycle parking spaces; and
- Timetable of college bus services not compliant with course timetables.

## **3.2 Current Travel Patterns**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

To increase the uptake of sustainable modes of travel for the journey to school, it is important to undertake an assessment of current school travel patterns. This will be used to inform future schemes and initiatives to ensure that they are correctly and efficiently targeted. CEC recently conducted Mode of Travel surveys for a sample of schools in Cheshire East. A review of the data has been undertaken below, including a comparison to the 2011 Census data for primary and secondary schools. A comparison could not be completed for further education colleges as this data was not recorded in the 2011 census.

Safer Routes to Schools surveys have also been undertaken and completed by pupils and parents/carers at primary schools, secondary schools and further education colleges. The surveys were designed to identify any barriers to the uptake of sustainable travel.

The number of responses received from the surveys undertaken in 2017 are listed below.

- CEC Primary Schools – 681 responses from 124 primary schools;
- CEC Secondary Schools – 726 responses from 24 secondary schools; and
- CEC Further Education Colleges – 39 responses from 17 further education colleges.

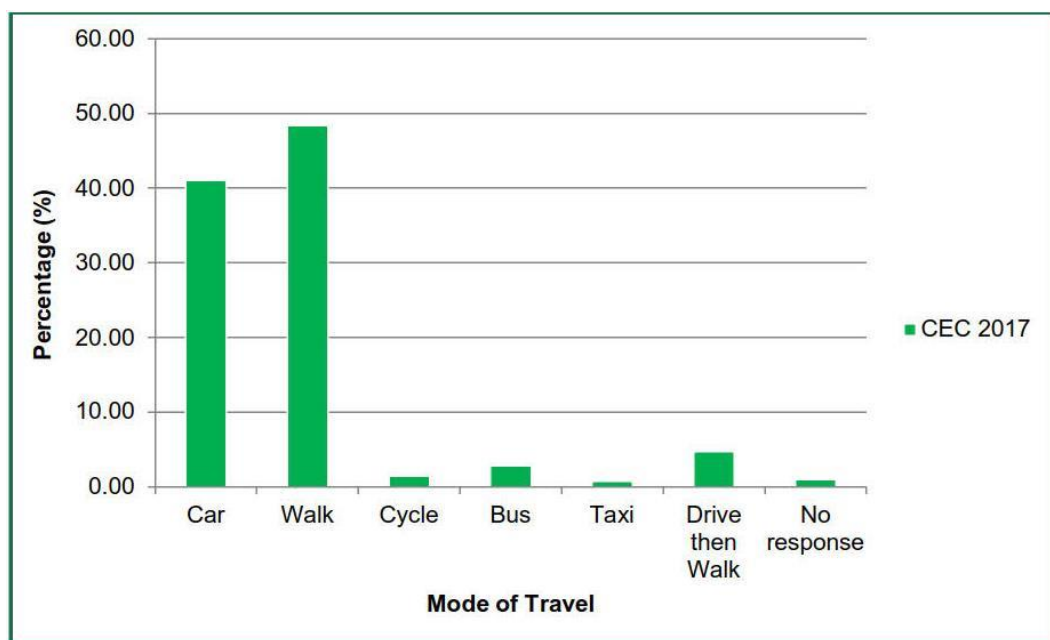
The number of returned responses gives an indication of the current travel patterns; however, a significant number of parents/carers and pupils/students did not respond to the survey.

Data from Cheshire East has been assessed to determine any patterns in travel behaviour over time. It is however recognised that different methodologies have been used over time (2011 and 2017) and between datasets (CEC and National Travel Survey 2016) and so no direct comparison is fully appropriate. In addition, the surveys in Cheshire East are more likely to have been completed by parents/carers that have a greater awareness of travel issues for their children and so this may impact on the results. Therefore, patterns in travel behaviour can be identified however caution should be exercised when comparing the data sets.

### 3.2.2 Primary Schools

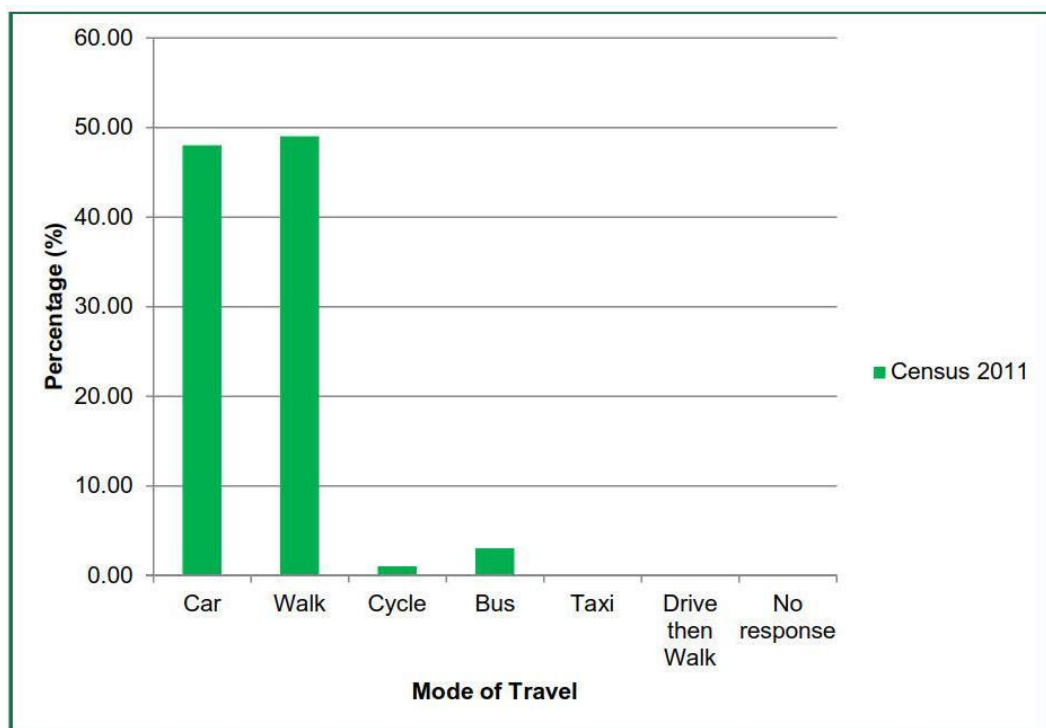
Cheshire East's school travel modal split (Figure 3-A) identifies that almost 50% of primary age children walk to school and just over 40% travel by car. This is the reverse of the 2016 National Travel Survey (NTS) data, which has higher car use (56%) than walking (38%). This in part can be explained by the different methodologies (NTS includes children up to 16 years). Travel by bus is lower than the NTS data, however other options such as 'drive and stride' are popular in Cheshire East at 5%.

**Figure 3-A Primary School Mode of Travel Patterns – 2017**



Cheshire East's school travel modal split has also been compared with the percentage of pupils recorded in the 2011 national school census (Figure 3-B) (noting the differing methodologies). It was identified that the percentage of pupils driven to school has decreased significantly from 2011 to 2017. However, the percentage of pupils that are driven part of the route and then walk the remaining distance to school has increased. The other modes of travel that were included in the national census do not indicate a significant change over the period. As noted previously, due to survey methodological differences, undue prominence should not be placed on direct comparisons between 2011 and 2017 surveys.

**Figure 3-B Primary School Mode of Travel Patterns – 2011**



The trends above can be further understood by considering the reasons why pupils travel to and from school by car, in favour of more sustainable methods of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

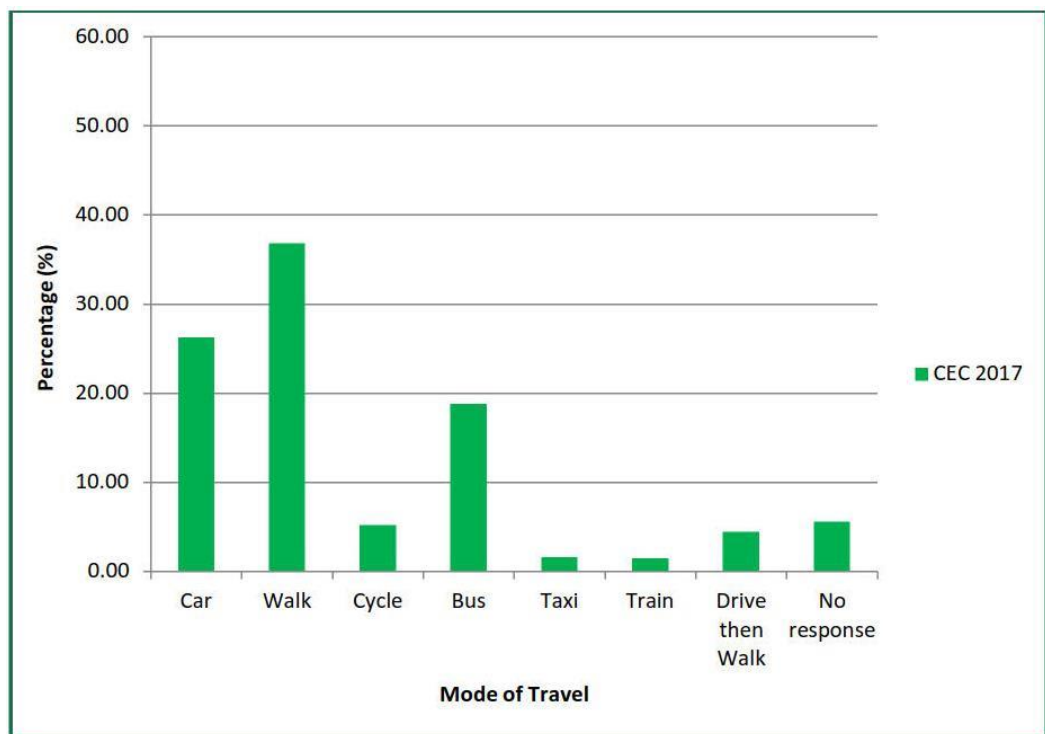
Analysis shows that 44% of respondents who drove their children to school did so due to the distance required to travel to school. To address distance as being one of the main considerations for driving, a number of options are available to encourage more sustainable journeys. Firstly, 'park and stride' schemes could be encouraged to increase walking to school, and reduce the number using the car to travel the whole distance to school. Encouraging car share schemes and bus travel would also reduce the number of cars travelling to schools.

57% of pupils travel less than one mile to school, which is considered to be a suitable distance to walk or cycle. A common issue reported as preventing sustainable travel includes safety concerns associated with walking and cycling. In order to address this, the Council aims to improve the safety of routes where appropriate, so as to further encourage pupils walking and cycling alongside their parents/carers, or as a group.

### 3.2.3 Secondary Schools

A review of Cheshire East's secondary school travel modal split (Figure 3-C), has a low car modal split (26%), particularly if compared to the national statistics (56%). Whilst the percentage of those walking is broadly similar to national figures, cycle and bus usage are higher than may be expected, noting the different methodologies.

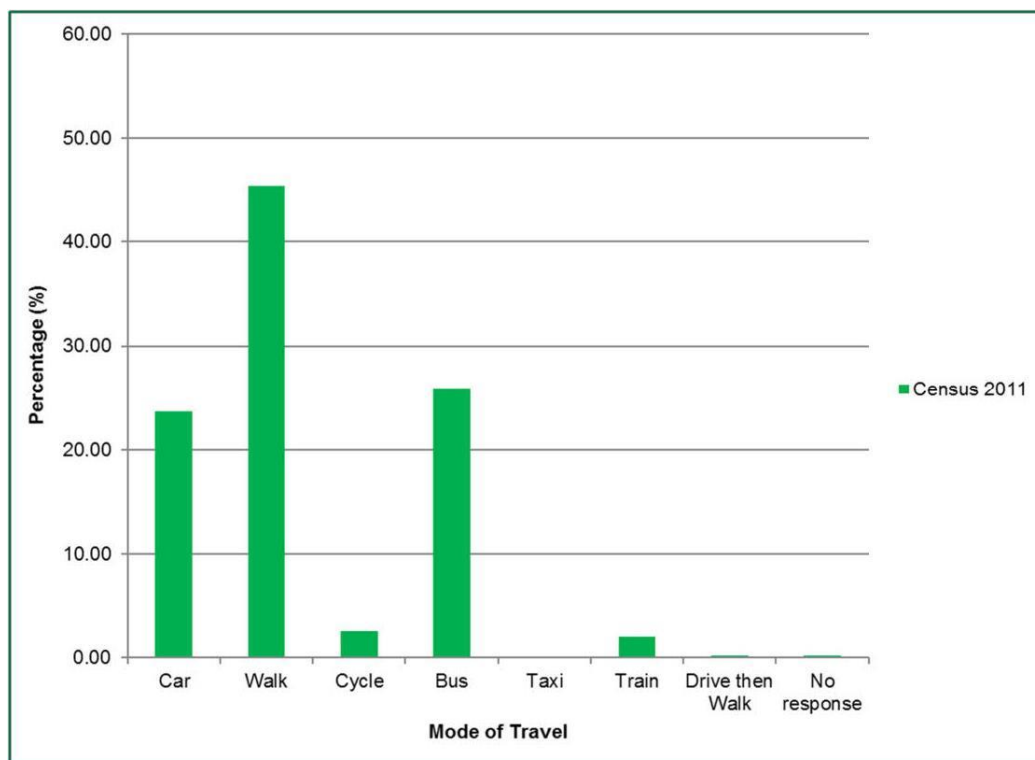
**Figure 3-C Secondary School Mode of Travel Patterns – 2017**



Cheshire East's school travel modal split has been compared with the percentage of students recorded in the 2011 national census (

Figure 3-D), again noting the different methodologies. It was identified that the percentage of children using the bus and walking to school has decreased between 2011 and 2017. The percentage of pupils that are driven to school is approximately similar to 2011 data but more pupils are reported to be driven part of the route and then walk the remaining distance to school. The number of students that cycle to school has also increased between 2011 and 2017, suggesting some modal shift to cycling.

**Figure 3-D Secondary School Mode of Travel Patterns – 2011**



The trends shown above can be further understood by considering the reasons why pupils travel to and from school by car, rather than sustainable methods of travel, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

The survey indicates that 55% of parents/carers who dropped their children off at secondary school did so due to the distance travelled. In order to address this reliance on the car for secondary school travel, the Council will consider a number of opportunities to improve sustainable and public transport modes of travel to school that are suitable for long distances, such as bus or train. The Council will also encourage schools to develop car share schemes for parents/carers.

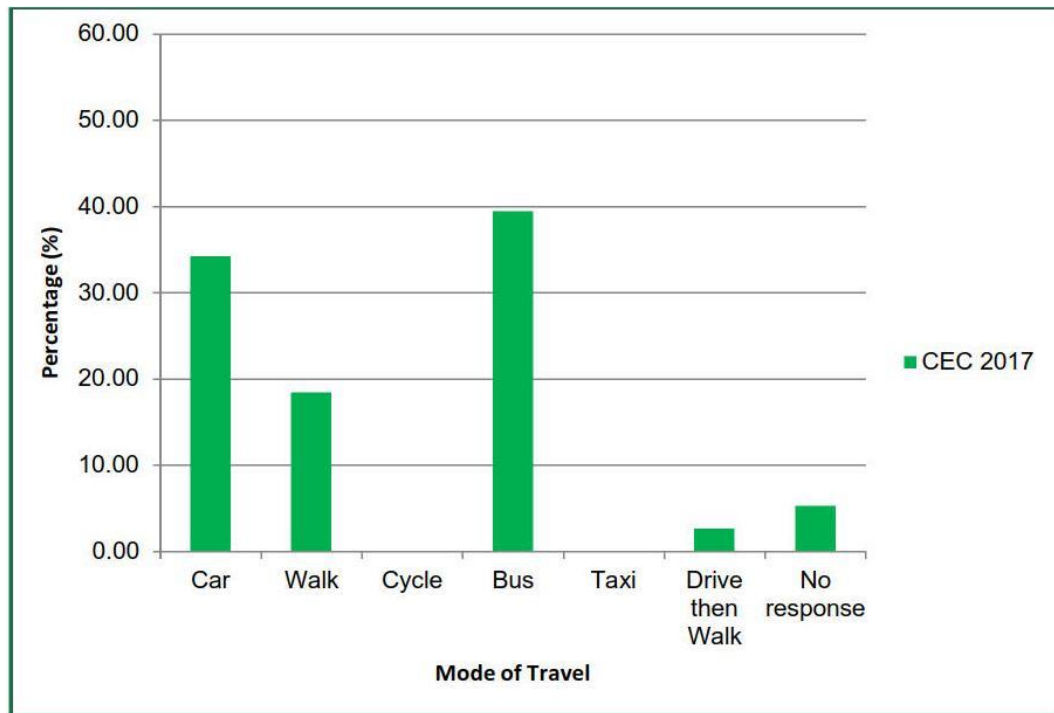
A common issue identified was safety concerns associated with walking or cycling to school. In order to address this, the Council plans to maintain and implement safer routes where appropriate that can be walked and/or cycled by pupils either on their own, or as part of a group. Between 2011 and 2017, cycling has almost doubled in popularity, noting methodology differences in the surveys. The Council aims to further increase cycling in the borough, in line with its Cycling Strategy.

### 3.2.4 Further Education

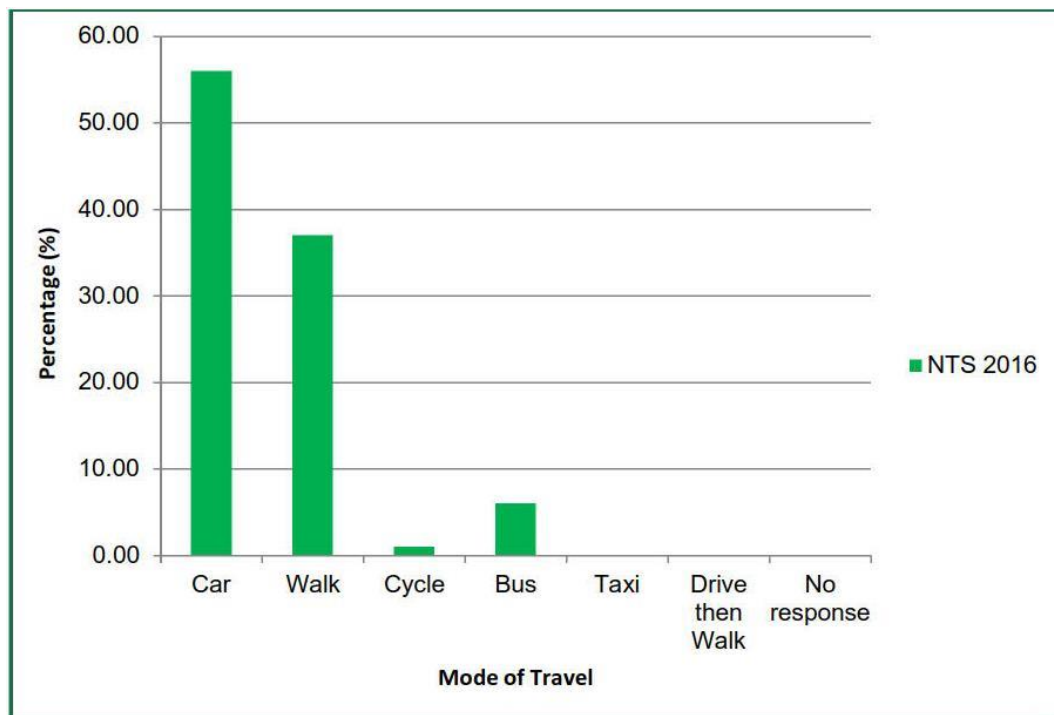
Cheshire East's further education modal split (Figure 3-E) suggests very different trends to those identified in national statistics. However, it is important to note that only one further education college responded to the survey, which is likely to have influenced the results, as well as the different methodologies used. Data for Cheshire East suggests a lower car modal share (34%) and much higher bus usage (39%) than the national averages, which are 56% and 6% respectively. However, there is a lower percentage of people walking to school (18%) compared to the national average (37%), which shows scope for improvement.



**Figure 3-E Further Education Mode of Travel Patterns – 2017**



**Figure 3-F Further Education Mode of Travel Patterns – 2016**



Survey results show that 61% of respondents thought that it was too far to walk to college, and therefore chose modes such as driving or bus. Public transport usage could be further encouraged, including travel by train, where this is a viable option.

It was identified that 33% of respondents who travel to college by car did so as they have perceived safety concerns associated with walking or cycling. Where appropriate, the Council aims to maintain and improve routes in order to improve safety and encourage walking and cycling.

## 4 Measures

### 4.1 Introduction

The review of the survey data clearly identifies opportunities to address a range of barriers to further increase the number of children using sustainable modes to travel to school.

Cheshire East Council plans to work collaboratively with schools and delivery partners to address these barriers with key measures outlined below.

### 4.2 Walking

Walking is environmentally friendly, cost-effective and sustainable. CEC is keen to encourage and increase the number of young people walking to and from school and college.

#### 4.2.1 Walking Routes

CEC intends to continue to identify potential improvements to walking infrastructure which will increase the safety, and the perception of safety, of routes to school.

Recent examples of improvements to the walking infrastructure in Cheshire East include:

- Rope Lane Pedestrian Crossing Installation – The scheme was implemented in October 2016 and included the installation of a new pedestrian crossing and improvements to the surrounding footways. The crossing gives pupils from the nearby Shavington Academy a safe place to cross when walking to and from school.
- Brooklands Avenue/Crewe Road Signal Junction Refurbishment – The scheme was implemented in March 2017 and included improved pedestrian crossing facilities. These measures assist pupils on their journey to and from the nearby Wistaston Church Lane Primary School and the Berkley Primary School.
- A523 Silk Road Toucan Crossing – The scheme was implemented during the summer of 2017 and involved the installation of a Toucan crossing on a dual carriageway route. This location falls on an alternative walking route for pupils between Bollington and Tytherington School and also forms part of both the National Cycle Route 70 and the Cheshire Cycleway.

#### 4.2.2 Walking Buses

A walking bus is defined as a group of children walking to/from school with at least two adult volunteers. Parents/carers take it in turns, on a rota basis, to walk with the children. There is always a 'driver' who leads the bus, and a 'conductor' who walks at the back. The more children there are on the bus, the more adults that walk with them. Walking buses are an important initiative enabling pupils to safely walk to/from school, as well as supporting young children in becoming independent pedestrians.

A number of schools already operate walking buses and are supported by CEC who have provided risk assessments of the route on request. CEC plans to continue to provide this support to schools where requested.

#### **4.2.3 Road Safety Training**

CEC is currently working in partnership with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) to implement road safety education programmes for children and young people, such as 'Let's Walk' and the 'Road Safety Roadshow'.

'Let's Walk' is a child pedestrian training programme for Year 3 and Year 4 pupils. The programme aims to increase children's knowledge and understanding through practical experience and training and to prepare them to become independent road users.

The 'Road Safety Roadshow' is a presentation, aimed at Year 11 pupils, exploring the circumstances leading to and consequences of a road traffic collision involving a group of young people. The presentation focuses on the role and responsibility of being a passenger in a vehicle and the consequences their choices and behaviour can have. It is presented in partnership with CFRS, Cheshire Police and the Health Authority.

As well as these programmes, the CFRS currently offers a day of road safety training for all CEC schools annually.

#### **4.2.4 School Crossing Patrol**

Transport Service Solutions (TSS) are responsible for the appointment, training, supervision and administration of Cheshire East's School Crossing Patrol Service. The Service ensures the safety of school children crossing roads at 20 points across the borough. Although this service is provided by CEC, parents/carers remain responsible for ensuring their children's safety whilst using this service.

#### **4.2.5 Parking Enforcement**

Civil enforcement officers (traffic wardens) and the Police undertake patrols at schools where there is an identified issue. Both also work together to address parents' or schools' concerns regarding inappropriate or inconsiderate parking.

CEC and CFRS are jointly funding a range of signage/bollards to be used outside schools during drop off/pick up times to encourage parents/carers to park more considerately.

### **4.3 Cycling**

#### **4.3.1 'Bikeability'**

'Bikeability' is a National Standard for Cycle Training currently being delivered to Year 5 and Year 6 children in schools across the UK. It covers basic cycle control skills, the use of safety equipment, road safety knowledge and cycling manoeuvres with a view to trainees having the skills and confidence to make their everyday journeys by bike. Part of the training takes place on quiet roads to enable trainees to apply their learning in a real environment.

CEC is working in partnership with Everybody Sport and Recreation, to offer Levels 1, 2 and 3 core Bikeability modules, as well as Bikeability Plus modules, from

Reception through to Year 7+ children across Cheshire East. The scheme is provided subject to continuing funding from the Department for Transport.

#### 4.3.2 Cycleway Improvements

As part of the Local Transport Plan and the '*Cycle Strategy 2017-2027*' (2017), CEC is seeking to provide appropriate improvements to make cycling a safe and attractive alternative to car use. Examples of recent cycling infrastructure schemes include:

- A538 Altringham Road Cycle Links;
- Vernon Way Cycleway Improvements; and
- Installation of cycle parking in Crewe, Alsager and Nantwich town centres.

CEC allocates investment into cycling infrastructure each year from the annual Local Transport Plan funding. CEC intends to continue to identify improvements to cycling infrastructure in line with the Local Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy.

#### 4.4 Bus Travel

As part of the LTP, CEC has been supporting improvements to the quality and safety of bus stops, including the provision of raised kerbs and dropped crossings, lighting, CCTV, shelter, seating and litter bins.

CEC is also encouraging the use of low energy, hybrid and electric vehicles by creating incentives and disincentives into the procurement process, particularly in Air Quality Management Areas.

CEC, through Transport Service Solutions Ltd (TSS), manages Home to School transport arrangements for students travelling to 222 establishments. It monitors all transport contracts being used to provide school transport, including public bus services. It also plans travel for all students and establishments, in conjunction with Children's Services. It also has responsibility for the production and distribution of student travel permits, the purchase and distribution of travel tickets for students on local bus services and manages the parental travel grants process.

CEC currently offers to sell surplus capacity seats on school transport routes to offer a service to families who may wish to make use of this scheme.

#### 4.5 Car Travel

A reduction in the number of young people travelling to school by car is supported by CEC; however, it is recognised that in some circumstances travel by car is necessary and the most appropriate option. CEC's initiatives below assist enabling journeys to be undertaken in a safe and sustainable manner.

##### 4.5.1 Car sharing

CEC will provide support and advice to schools so that they are able to establish their own car share schemes for parents/carers and will continue to encourage car sharing for the journey to school on its Travel Cheshire website (<http://www.travelcheshire.co.uk/>).

## 4.6 Road and Footway Maintenance

CEC is responsible for highway maintenance on local roads (i.e. excluding motorways and trunk roads) and Public Rights of Way. The condition of the road and footway will affect safety and the number of potential collisions. CEC has an annual highway maintenance programme and monitors road conditions on an annual basis. Members of the public are also able to provide feedback on road safety concerns i.e. overgrown hedges etc. via CEC's website using the following link:

[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways\\_and\\_roads/highway-services/highway-services.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/highway-services/highway-services.aspx).

In an emergency, road and footway issues can also be reported by calling 0300 123 5020.

## 4.7 Traffic Calming

CEC is committed to reducing the number of casualties on our roads and work closely with the Police to investigate locations where there are a high proportion of incidents. Where analysis indicates that it is appropriate, engineering measures will be implemented.

CEC is currently in the final year of a three-year programme to implement advisory 20mph zones near all schools in Cheshire East. This scheme aims to change the culture and behaviour of motorists around schools. Following implementation, the results will be monitored to identify any further areas for improvement.

The traffic calming measures in the vicinity of schools should be considered as part of highways investment programmes and area highways area groups.

## 4.8 Parking Measures

Since the 2011 School Census, the impacts of parking around primary schools has been highlighted as an issue by some residents and communities, due to the pressure it places on the local highway infrastructure<sup>2</sup>. To reduce the impact of congestion, improve road safety and reduce impacts on local communities in areas surrounding schools, CEC is currently considering its approach across the borough. It will consider the findings of a pilot off-highway drop-off point and will monitor effectiveness.

## 4.9 Personal Safety

Although CEC currently does and will continue to actively encourage measures to educate children regarding their personal safety (i.e. road safety training and independent travel training for SEND pupils) it is noted that children's safety is ultimately the responsibility of parents/carers, who should take an active role in decisions surrounding children's routes to school. For older pupils/students (16+), pupils typically tend to take more responsibility, although this is at the discretion of parents/carers.

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<sup>2</sup> D. Brown, 2017. Cabinet Report: Safer Routes to Primary Schools.  
<http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s57710/Safer%20Routes%20to%20Primary%20Schools%20-%20report%20final.pdf>

## 4.10 Travel Information and Awareness

Information regarding school and college travel is provided through a range of online links from the CEC website which can be accessed by parents/carers, young people, local residents and educational establishments. This information highlights travel choices that are available, as well as the benefits of using more sustainable options.

### 4.10.1 Travel Cheshire

CEC provides travel advice and information through its Travel Cheshire website (<http://www.travelcheshire.co.uk/>). This includes information on the following:

- Walking/Cycle Maps;
- Walking/Cycling Groups;
- Bus Route Maps;
- Bus Timetables;
- Journey Planner; and
- Independent Car Share Schemes.

CEC plans to review and update this resource as appropriate.

## 4.11 Modeshift STARS

To improve the number of schools/colleges reviewing and updating their Travel Plans, CEC will fund a licence for the Modeshift STARS (Sustainable Travel Accreditation and Recognition for Schools) Online System.

Modeshift STARS provides a national framework for the implementation of sustainable and active school travel activities, and is the only national accreditation scheme for rewarding sustainable School Travel Plans. It is an easy to use online system that significantly reduces the amount of time and work schools/colleges are required to undertake on travel planning, therefore freeing them up to focus on delivering actions that really make a difference to travel patterns on the journey to and from school.

Modeshift STARS offers three levels of accreditation:

- **Modeshift STARS Bronze** – “For schools that demonstrate a commitment to promoting sustainable travel by conducting an annual survey, identifying travel issues and solutions and delivering a range of travel initiatives” (Modeshift, 2017)<sup>3</sup>.
- **Modeshift STARS Silver** – “For schools that achieve a reduction in car use on the journey to school, deliver a whole-school approach and deliver above and beyond what is normally expected of a school” (Modeshift 2017)<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Modeshift, 2017. Resources for Local Authorities. <https://www.modeshiftstars.org/laResources.php>

<sup>4</sup> Modeshift, 2017. Resources for Local Authorities. <https://www.modeshiftstars.org/laResources.php>

- **Modeshift STARS Gold** – *“For schools that have excelled with promoting sustainable travel and achieved a noticeable reduction in car use on the journey to school by fully embracing sustainable travel as the norm throughout the entire school community” (Modeshift, 2017)<sup>5</sup>.*

CEC plans to establish officer resource to promote the system and help schools with additional technical advice when this is not provided by Modeshift STARS.

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<sup>5</sup> Modeshift, 2017. Resources for Local Authorities. <https://www.modeshiftstars.org/laResources.php>

## 5 Targets & Outcomes

### 5.1 Targets

To ensure we are achieving our objectives and vision, we have identified targets set out below:

Target Description	2017	Five Year Target
Increase the number of schools participating in promotional campaigns e.g. Walk Once a Week (WOW)	Not available	30
No. of schools/colleges with bronze level accreditation (Modeshift STARS)	0	20

Each individual school will be expected to define targets, including modal shift, in their own School Travel Plans.

### 5.2 Outcomes

If the above targets are achieved, this will result in a range of improvements related to public health and the environment. If Cheshire East schools improve the quality of their Travel Plans through the usage of the Modeshift STARS system, the implementation of measures will increase the number of children using sustainable modes of travel to school.

By increasing the number of children using sustainable modes of travel, this should result in a reduction in vehicle emissions, and an overall improvement to air quality, as well as improved road safety.

Furthermore, the increase in children undertaking active travel (on a daily basis or through promotional campaigns) will increase their health and wellbeing, which could also result in increased educational attainment.



## 6 Action Plan

### 6.1 Strategic Approach

The Council recognise that to achieve the targets set out previously there needs to be coordinated action by a wide range of stakeholders. School communities are best placed to identify the particular measures which will enable more sustainable journeys to their location. Schools will therefore be encouraged to update their School Travel Plans and implement appropriate measures. The Council and our delivery partners will in turn provide a range of advice, resources and funding to support schools that update and implement School Travel Plans, as detailed below. It is recognised that funding for measures may need to be prioritised if the funding is oversubscribed depending upon demand.

### 6.2 Action Plan

CEC will continue to improve and develop the initiatives surrounding sustainable travel to school. The table below sets out the actions which CEC, schools and delivery partners should take and summarises how progress will be measured.

Action	Responsibility	Measure of Progress	Timescale
<b>CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL ACTIONS</b>			
Funding of Modeshift STARS to encourage more schools to review and update their own Travel Plans.	Cheshire East Council (CEC)	Number of schools/colleges with up-to-date Travel Plans using the system.	Ongoing
Establishment of CEC officer resource to promote the system and help schools with additional technical advice when this is not provided by Modeshift STARS.	CEC	Number of schools/colleges with up-to-date Travel Plans on the system.	Spring 2018

Action	Responsibility	Measure of Progress	Timescale
Establishment of a Safer Routes to School Programme, with appropriate funding, whereby schools whom produce up to date School Travel Plans can submit requests to fund infrastructure measures (capital funding only), which may be subject to prioritisation if the fund is oversubscribed.	CEC	Establishment of the system.	Summer 2018
Ongoing day to day CEC Highways officer support i.e. road safety officers/highways engineers where issues have been identified in School Travel Plans.	CEC	Number of schools supported by CEC Highway officers.	Ongoing
<b>ENGAGEMENT WITH SCHOOLS/CEC SUPPORT TO SCHOOLS</b>			
Increase support for main sustainable travel awareness events.	Schools to organise student participation in promotional campaigns.  CEC/Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) to encourage schools to participate by providing information regarding upcoming promotional campaigns to schools in advance of event dates.	Number of schools participating in promotional campaigns.	Ongoing
Keep sustainable school travel information on CEC website up to date.	CEC to review and update information as appropriate.	Information provided on sustainable travel choices up to date.	Ongoing

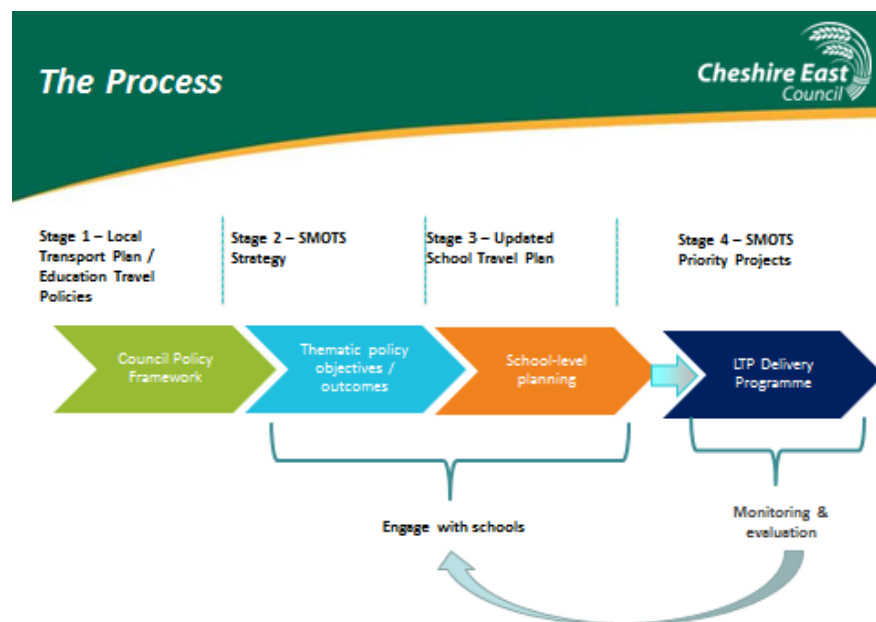
Action	Responsibility	Measure of Progress	Timescale
Increase the number of schools/colleges with up-to-date Travel Plans.	Schools to participate in Modeshift STARS and conduct annual reviews of their Travel Plans.	Number of schools/colleges with up-to-date Travel Plans	Ongoing (to be reviewed annually)
Road safety training.	Schools to provide opportunity for CFRS to deliver presentations within schools.  CFRS to continue to deliver presentations within schools.	Number of schools taking up the offer of Road Safety Training.	Ongoing
<b>ENGINEERING</b>			
Traffic calming – ‘advisory’ 20mph zones.	CEC Highways to monitor ‘advisory’ 20mph zones implemented through recent programme.	Number of schools with an ‘advisory’ 20mph zone implemented.  Results of the ‘advisory’ 20mph zones to be monitored.	2018  Ongoing
Improve cycle routes to school.	Schools, CEC and partners to identify potential improvements to cycle routes to school as part of Town Cycle Plans, School Travel Plans or ongoing infrastructure planning.  CEC Highways/Public Rights of Way departments to support the improvement of cycle routes to school, as funding allows.	Continued development of CEC’s cycle route network, as funds allow.	Ongoing
Improve walking routes to school and upgrade to pedestrian/cycle crossings	Schools, CEC and partners to identify potential improvements to walking routes to school and pedestrian/cycle crossings.  CEC Highways/Public Rights of Way	Continued development of CEC’s walking network, as funds allow.	Ongoing

Action	Responsibility	Measure of Progress	Timescale
	departments to support the improvement of walking routes to school and pedestrian/cycle crossings as funds allow.		
Routine maintenance/street lighting	<p>Schools, CEC and partners to identify potential maintenance improvements and communicate these to CEC.</p> <p>CEC Highways department to support the routine maintenance of routes to school as part of Highways Asset Management Plan.</p>	Continued Highways routine maintenance.	Ongoing

## 7 Proposed Approach to Implementation

### 7.1 Proposed Process

The following diagram sets out how the SMOTS strategy will be implemented in order to achieve Council priorities.



Schools will be expected to update their own travel plans, with support for delivery measures as set out in Section 4.

### 7.2 Appraisal Process

Schools with up-to-date School Travel Plans which can evidence the need for local infrastructure measures will be invited to submit requests for capital funding through the LTP programme. An annual Safer Routes to School Programme will comprise schemes which are requested by schools and are prioritised through the following two-stage appraisal process.

#### Appraisal Stage One

Stage one of the assessment will screen scheme requests against the following criteria, which is consistent with the approach developed for the updated Local Transport Plan:

- Deliverability – are schemes deliverable in terms of timescales, taking account of planning, consents, 3rd party issues etc?
- Feasibility – are schemes feasible in terms of physical constraints and design?
- Value-for-money – will schemes deliver high levels of benefits relative to scheme costs?

## **Appraisal Stage Two**

Stage Two will assess how proposed schemes meet the following criteria:

Criteria	Description
Mode shift	The scheme must encourage and enable pupils to travel sustainably to and from school, leading to a reduced reliance on travel by car.
Safer routes	The scheme must improve safety on routes in the vicinity of schools.
Wider commitment to sustainable travel	Schemes should be an integral part of delivering the school's wider commitment to encouraging sustainable travel. Each school submitting an application should have a current School Travel Plan (reviewed and updated within the previous 12 month period). The quality of the School Travel Plan and the capacity of the school to implement proposed measures will be considered.
Strategic fit	The proposed scheme must fit with the wider transport policies adopted by the Council, including the 'Education Travel Policy' and the 'Sustainable Modes of Travel to Schools' Strategy.

Following the appraisal process, a prioritised list of schemes will be included in the Local Transport Plan capital funding delivery programme.

## Appendix A Glossary

Term	Definition
Car Sharing	Car sharing is the practice of two people or more sharing a car, to limit the number of car trips undertaken.
Everybody Sport and Recreation	Everybody Sport and Recreation is an independent non-profit distributing organisation responsible for delivering leisure services in partnership with Cheshire East Council.
Modeshift STARS	Modeshift STARS is an online system that provides a national framework for the implementation of sustainable and active school travel activities, and is the only national accreditation scheme for rewarding sustainable School Travel Plans.
Scootering	Scootering involves using a scooter, which is a vehicle that typically has two wheels with a low footboard between them. It is steered by a handlebar, and is propelled by pushing one foot against the ground while resting the other on the footboard.
Special Schools	A school catering for children with special educational needs.
Sustainable Modes of Travel	Sustainable modes of travel are defined as walking, cycling, public transport or car sharing. However, a sustainable mode of transport can be any mode of transport which improves the physical well-being of the user and/or are beneficial to the environment due to a reduced level of congestion.
Sustainable	A method of travelling which meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

## Appendix B Policy and Legislation

### B.1.1 Legislation

#### The Education and Inspections Act 1996

*Section 508A of the Education Act 1996 “places a general duty on local authorities to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport. The duty applies to children and young people of compulsory school age who travel to receive education or training in a local authority’s area. The duty relates to journeys to and from institutions where education or training is delivered.”*

*“There are five main elements to the duty which local authorities must undertake:*

- An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority’s area;*
- An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority’s area that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions;*
- A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are best catered for;*
- The promotion of sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from, and between schools and other institutions; and*
- The publication of Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy” (Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance, 2014<sup>6</sup>).*

#### Education and Inspections Act 2006

Local authorities have a duty to provide travel assistance to ‘eligible children’ travelling to and from school. To qualify as an ‘eligible child’, the child must be of compulsory school age (5-16) and must be attending a qualifying school and fulfil one of the criteria listed below:

1. The child is living outside of the statutory walking distance of the nearest suitable school, which is,
  - Beyond 2 miles for children below the age of 8; and
  - Beyond 3 miles for children aged 8–16.
2. The child cannot reasonably be expected to walk to school because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety concerns related to their Special Educational Needs or disability (SEND).

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<sup>6</sup> Department for Education, 2014. Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>



3. The child cannot reasonably be expected to walk the route to school because the nature of the route is unsafe to walk.
4. Children from low-income groups or families are defined in legislation as those entitled to free school meals, or whose families receive the maximum level of Working Tax Credit. A child in these circumstances has extended rights to free travel if:
  - The child is aged 8-11 and the nearest suitable school is beyond two miles; or
  - The child is aged 11-16 and the nearest suitable school is between 2-6 miles and there are not three or more suitable nearer schools/colleges; or
  - The child is aged 11-16 and the school is between 2-15 miles and is the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief. Religion or belief includes a lack of religion or belief and so also applies to an atheist parent's wish for their child to attend a non-faith school.

To qualify under the extended rights eligibility, the child will need to be entitled to free school meals or their parents are in receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit.

## B.1.2 National Policy Guidance

### Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance

The Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance is statutory guidance published in 2014 under duties placed on the Secretary of State by sections 508A and 508D of the Education Act 1996. The guidance places local authorities under the duty to promote sustainable travel and transport and make transport arrangements for all 'eligible children'<sup>7</sup>.

### Department for Transport 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy'

The Department for Transport have published a draft 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy'. This sets the strategy for long-term transformational change and aims for a nation in which cycling and walking are the natural choice for all people, whatever their background, for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey. The strategy has set targets for an overall increase in cycling activity and an increase in the number of children aged five to 10 that usually walk to school.

### Sustainable Schools Alliance

The Sustainable Schools Alliance aims to provide support to schools regarding sustainability as outlined in the Sustainable Schools National Framework which states, *"By 2020 the Government would like all schools to be models of sustainable travel, where vehicles are used only when absolutely necessary and where there are exemplary facilities for healthier, less polluting*

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<sup>7</sup> Department for Education, 2014. Home to school travel and transport statutory guidance.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/home-to-school-travel-and-transport-guidance>

*or less dangerous modes of transport. The National Framework introduces eight doorways through which schools may choose to initiate or extend their sustainable school activity. It focuses on ways in which sustainable development can be embedded into whole-school management practices and provides practical guidance to help schools operate in a more sustainable way.” (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006<sup>8</sup>).*

## **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 outlines disability provisions that replicate those in the former Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Local Authorities and schools are required to remove the barriers disabled children face because of their disability so that they have equal opportunities to access and participate in education in the same way, as far as possible, as someone who is not disabled. The Equality Act calls this the duty to make ‘reasonable adjustments’.

## **Public Health England ‘Everybody Active, Every Day’ strategy**

The Public Health England ‘Everybody Active, Every Day’ strategy recognises that walking and cycling are good for our physical and mental health and the many ways the built and natural environment impacts on the choices people are able to make. It emphasises that by developing ‘active environments’ that promote walking and cycling, we can help to create active, healthier and more liveable communities.

Walking to and from school helps children achieve the recommended government targets of physical activity. Physically active children are more alert, ready to learn, do better in tests and achieve better grades than children who are driven to school.

## **Active Travel – A briefing for local authorities**

Public Health England has written an Active Travel briefing for local authorities. The document looks at the impact of current transport systems and sets out the many benefits of increasing physical activity through active travel. It sets out key steps for transport and public health practitioners, and lists a number of key messages to include when developing a healthy local transport strategy.

## **Physical Activity: Walking and Cycling 2012**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published a public health guideline on Physical Activity: Walking and Cycling in 2012. It sets out how people can be encouraged to increase the amount they walk or cycle for travel or recreation purposes. This will help meet public health and other goals (for instance, to reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions). The recommendations cover:

- Policy and planning;
- Local programmes; and

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<sup>8</sup> Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2006. Sustainable Schools – A brief introduction. <http://sustainable-schools-alliance.org.uk/sustainable-schools-framework/>

- Schools, workplaces and the NHS.

### **Physical Activity and Children: Children and Active Travel 2008**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence published a public health guideline on Physical Activity and Children: Children and Active Travel. It examines the evidence for the effectiveness of active travel interventions in increasing use of active travel modes (i.e. walking and/or cycling).

The UK Government 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation' strategy considers which key measures are needed to encourage greater participation in sport. The strategy will be delivered alongside the broadening of Sport England's remit, providing the necessary resources to support activities around cycling and walking which had previously been an area that was restricted.

## **B.1.3 Cheshire East Council Policy Guidance**

### **Cheshire East Corporate Plan 2017-2020**

The Corporate Plan sets out six outcomes:

- Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive;
- Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy;
- Outcome 3 – People have the life skills and education they need in order to thrive;
- Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place;
- Outcome 5 – People live well and for longer; and
- Outcome 6 – A responsible, effective and efficient organisation.

As part of our Corporate Plan, the Council has adopted the principles that relate to Quality of Place which is a measure that focuses on the connection of environment and place. It deals with the quality of the built and natural environment, its interaction with people living in the area, the ability of individuals to make a life there and the vibrancy of the area and its cultural.

### **Cheshire East Local Transport Plan**

The Council is currently in the process of refreshing its Local Transport Plan (LTP). The LTP will address travel to school and ensure that the policy incorporates an integrated approach to walking and cycling that also reflects the needs of journeys to schools. Results and feedback from the Mode of Travel, Safer Routes to Schools School Travel Plans surveys undertaken as part of this SMOTS report will also inform the LTP. The refresh will also provide the platform to engage with schools, it is proposed that a consultation takes place to invite primary schools to submit proposals to CEC that would improve sustainable travel and reduce the school impact on its local community.

## Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010 - 2030

The Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy is a key component in the Cheshire East Local Plan and was adopted in July 2017. It sets out the overall vision and planning strategy for development in the borough and contains planning policies to ensure that new development addresses the economic, environmental and social needs of the area.

The Strategy includes the following Policies and Strategic Priorities which directly relate to SMOTS:

- Policy Y1 Travel to Education: *“The Council will work with schools and colleges to enable sustainable travel to education, including appropriate provision for those eligible for free or assisted transport.”*
- Policy CO 1 Sustainable Travel and Transport: *“ii. Ensuring development gives priority to walking, cycling and public transport....”*
- Policy SD1: Sustainable Development in Cheshire East: *“Point 4. Provide appropriate infrastructure to meet the needs of the local community including: education; health and social care; transport....”*
- Strategic Priority 4: *“Reducing the need to travel, managing car use and promoting more sustainable modes of transport and improving the road network.”*

## Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy

CEC's Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy was updated in 2018 and sets out how CEC can assist children of statutory school age with travel between home and school.

## Cheshire East Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2017-18

*“Local authorities have a statutory duty to prepare and publish an annual Travel Policy Statement. This needs to specify the arrangements for the provision of transport or otherwise that the Local Authority considers necessary to facilitate attendance of persons of sixth form age (16-18) as well as the 19-25 range to include learners with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities receiving education or training.”* (Cheshire East Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2017-18, 2017<sup>9</sup>).

CEC currently provides support with transport and for post 16 learners who have been formally assessed regarding special education needs and are carrying on into post 16 education. For all other post 16 students (16-18 & 19-25 SEN or disability), each sixth form and further education college may determine what support they can provide, taking into account both the needs of the students and the establishments themselves.

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<sup>9</sup>Cheshire East Council, 2017. Cheshire East Post 16 Travel Policy Statement 2017-18.  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public\\_transport/school\\_transport/school\\_transport.aspx#TransportforPost16Students](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/public_transport/school_transport/school_transport.aspx#TransportforPost16Students)

### **Cheshire East Council Cycling Strategy 2017**

Cheshire East Council continues to invest in cycling and have produced a strategy to provide a framework to guide future investment in cycling, working collaboratively with partner organisations and local cycling groups. This strategy which covers the period 2017 – 2027 sets out a plan for guiding investment with an ambitious target of doubling the number of people cycling once per week for any journey purpose in Cheshire East by 2027 from a 2014 baseline.

Town Cycling Plans are also being developed; schools will be engaged to see how we can improve cycle routes to school.

### **Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Population of Cheshire East 2014 – 2017**

The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy was produced by the Cheshire East Health and Wellbeing Board and adopted in 2014. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy provides an overarching framework that will influence the commissioning plans of the local NHS, the Council and other organisations in Cheshire East. It will be a driver for change, focussing upon those key areas that will make a real impact upon improving the health and wellbeing of all our communities.

### **Cheshire East Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011 – 2026**

The CEC Rights of Way Improvement Plan was adopted in 2011 and outlines the strategy for improving the Cheshire East rights of way network from 2011 – 2026. It provides an assessment of the network of public rights of way and wider countryside access that is currently offered within Cheshire East as well as an assessment of the level of demand. Following this the strategy outlines the objectives, policies and initiatives by which gaps between the demand and the existing network can be bridged.