Local Transport Plan

(2018 – 2023)

Draft for Public Consultation

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	Originated by	Checked by	Reviewed by	
ORIGINAL	NAME	NAME	NAME	
	Martin Baierl / Laura Oliver	Dan Sheppard	Dan Sheppard	
Approved by	NAME	As Project Manager I confirm that the above document(s) have been subjected to Jacobs' Check and Review procedure and that I **approve them for issue**		INITIALS
	John Davies			JMD
DATE	15/09/17	**Document status:** working draft for comment		

	Originated by	Checked by	Reviewed by	
REVISION	NAME	NAME	NAME	
	Martin Baierl / Laura Oliver	Dan Sheppard	Dan Sheppard	
Approved by	NAME	As Project Manager I confirm that the above document(s) have been subjected to Jacobs' Check and Review procedure and that I **approve them for issue**		INITIALS
	John Davies			JMD
DATE	22/11/17	Document status: Draft for comment		

	Originated by	Checked by	Reviewed by	
REVISION	NAME	NAME	NAME	
	Dan Sheppard	Dan Sheppard	John Davies	
Approved by	NAME	As Project Manager I confirm that the above document(s) have been subjected to Jacobs' Check and Review procedure and that I **approve them for issue**		INITIALS
	John Davies			JMD
DATE	27/02/18	Document status: Final for Public Consultation		

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Contents

1 Setting the Scene

1.1   Introduction

This document is the second Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be developed by Cheshire East Council following the re-organisation of local government in Cheshire in April 2009.

The LTP seeks to build on past achievements; including those guided by the previous plan period whilst also responding to local, regional and national changes since the previous plan was published in 2011. This LTP aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan for 2016-2020 and the six outcomes it identifies are embedded at the heart of our vision for transport. To ensure the robustness of the LTP and its alignment with national policy it has been developed in accordance with the Department for Transport (DfT) document 'Guidance on Local Transport Plans', whilst also clearly reflecting local priorities. This includes ensuring that the five key goals for transport in the UK identified by the DfT have alignment with and will be contributed to by success against the Council's corporate outcomes.

The importance of transport is clear and well understood by the Council. An effective transport network supports sustainable communities which have access to services, opportunity, friends, and family. Whilst transport connectivity enables new development and urban regeneration which contributes to the delivery of much needed jobs and homes in the Borough supporting the Council's priority of jobs-led growth. The LTP also plays a role in promoting improved public health and safeguarding the environment by reducing the negative impacts of transport.

1.2   What is a Local Transport Plan?

This LTP is a strategic plan for the development of transport within Cheshire East over the period 2018-2023, outlining how transport will contribute to and support the longer-term aspirations of the Borough. The LTP will also detail planning a feasibility which is necessary during this period to effectively plan for long term programmes investment programmes to 2030 and beyond. The LTP will be supported by a series of topic-specific 'daughter documents' which will address detailed or technical issues relating to transport in Cheshire East.

The LTP will remain a live document and will therefore be subject to ongoing review and development. As new national and local policies, strategies and priorities emerge and new challenges are identified, the LTP suite of documents will be reviewed and updated as required. This reflects the fact that the LTP is a vital tool to help the Council work with stakeholders to strengthen its place shaping role and its delivery of services to the community. Allowing this document to remain live will enable the flexibility required to adapt to and capitalise upon new opportunities as they arise.

1.3   The need for a new LTP

The Transport Act 2000 introduced a statutory requirement for local transport authorities to produce a LTP every five years and to keep it under review. Following this the Transport Act 2008 updated statutory requirements to give local transport authorities more flexibility about how and when they updated their LTP. Local transport authorities are now free to replace their LTP as they see fit.

Cheshire East's LTP requires updating in part due to the substantial progress which has been made since the previous plan was published in 2011, including major investment in the Borough's transport network. In addition, the local, regional and national policy context has evolved with a new Local Plan for Cheshire East emerging and the government placing renewed emphasis on Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) to drive economic growth. This creates opportunity to work alongside the Cheshire and Warrington LEP and in partnership with organisations such as Transport for the North, Rail North and the Midlands Engine to deliver for the Borough. Equally, major projects such as High Speed 2 (HS2) have the potential to deliver significant benefit to the Borough if supported locally and influenced nationally. There is also a need to respond to the growth in the Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy and, in parallel, consider the outcome of work on a 'refresh' of the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy.

Subsequently, there is now a need to update the LTP to provide an updated plan and vision which captures the Borough's priorities in the best interests of local residents and businesses. This will support:

- Cheshire East Council's refreshed corporate objectives and adoption of the principles of 'Quality of Place' as a key driver of strategy;
- Delivery of the new Local Plan which defines a forward looking spatial strategy for the Borough;
- Development of a number of specific local transport strategies, including the new Cheshire East Cycling Strategy and Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy;
- Development of new infrastructure programmes by Highways England and Network Rail;
- Emerging evidence and strategy at the sub national level under the auspices of both Transport for the North and Midlands Connect;
- On-going work at the regional level to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan and the Industrial Strategy, and support this through LEP-wide strategies such as the Cheshire and Warrington Transport Strategy;
- Progress on neighbouring authorities spatial and economic strategies, notably the new Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, with implications for the north of the Borough and the need for an update to the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study;
- New legislation in the Buses Act 2017, which conveys new powers to Local Transport Authorities around bus regulation such as Enhanced Quality Partnerships;

- Adoption of Neighbourhood Plans within Cheshire East, which help to define local expectations and concerns regarding transport provision, including local parking issues;
- The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which requires the Council to increase revenue and increase value for money;
- Long term plan led programmes such as HS2 and the Constellation Partnership growth strategy;
- Government's new Clean Air Zones Framework and the Clean Growth strategy;
- Impacts on travel behaviour and opportunities regarding the wider adoption of smart technologies and infrastructure;
- The requirements for active lifestyles, accessibility and wellbeing of an aging population; and
- A need to support businesses in Cheshire East to promote sustainable transport and manage travel demands by car, thus reducing the pressures on the road network and parking.

1.4   Progress and achievements

The Council and its partners have been successful in delivering against the priorities in the previous LTP. This includes major transport investment guided by the previous LTP, including but not limited to:
- Crewe Green Link Road improvements;
- A556 Knutsford to Bowdon improvements;
- Shared Space Scheme, Fountain Place, Poynton
- M6 Junction 17 Sandbach improvements;
- A500 improvements adjacent to M6 Junction 16;
- Basford West Spine Road delivery;
- Rail services and station investment such as the Crewe Rail Exchange scheme; and
- Successfully securing substantial government funding for walking and cycling programmes and infrastructure through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the Sustainable Travel Transition Year.

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.

2   Our Vision

2.1   Developing the vision

The LTP has been developed in partnership with stakeholders informed by analysis of key evidence concerning transport issues and opportunities across the Borough. This process has fed into the development of the following Vision for transport:

Cheshire East's transport network will enable growth through improved connectivity, a better quality of life and enhanced quality of place

2.2   The Corporate Plan

The LTP will be guided by the Council's Corporate Plan[1] which identifies six outcomes all of which transport can make a significant contribution towards. This section identifies what transport success against each of the six outcomes identified below will look like.

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[1] **Cheshire East Council,** *Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020*

2.2.1 Transport as a contributor to overall success

Below we identify what transport success against each of the Corporate Outcomes will look like:

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 the transport mode of their choice.

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.

2.3 Quality of place

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;
- Thriving rural areas;
- 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; and
- 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 every one of these priorities. The Council will identify opportunities for transport to contribute to wider objectives in an integrated way, including those relating to 'quality of place'.

3 Developing the Local Transport Plan

3.1 Approach

In order to ensure that the LTP reflects the diversity of Cheshire East whilst ensuring Borough wide consistency a two tier approach to the development of the LTP has been adopted. This approach ensures due consideration is given to local area issues and priorities, including through the participation of local stakeholders.

To achieve this a Borough wide strategy has been developed identifying the aims and challenges on a Borough wide scale. This has been supplemented by Local Area Profiles for key locations (two Principal Towns, nine Key Service Centres and our rural area) which have been developed as a means of both identifying and shaping local transport characteristics and priorities.

The Local Area Profiles give due consideration to the surrounding rural areas and smaller settlements which is vital given the importance of the Borough's rural population and economy. The selection of the eleven centres accords with other Council strategies (including the settlement hierarchy identified in the Local Plan) and is based on criteria around population, transport issues, opportunities for growth and future development. These eleven locations are identified below alongside their corresponding and overlapping areas of rural influence and travel to work flows.

- **Borough wide LTP** – The Borough wide LTP identifies the transport goals, challenges and actions for the Council and partners across Cheshire East.

- **Place based strategies** - The place based strategies identify how the issues and opportunities identified in the Borough wide strategy relate to specific geographic areas. They also set out the framework through which the process of identifying priority intervention options for delivery will be developed.

  Place based strategies have been developed for Cheshire East's two Principal Towns, nine Key Service Centres and for our rural areas with each also providing specific focus on wider areas than the town itself including the surrounding hinterland and neighbouring settlements:

  - Rural area
  - Principal Towns
    - Crewe, and
    - Macclesfield.
  - Key Service Centres
    - Alsager,

- Congleton,
- Handforth,
- Knutsford,
- Middlewich,
- Nantwich,
- Poynton,
- Sandbach, and
- Wilmslow.

Travel to Work Data (Census, 2011)
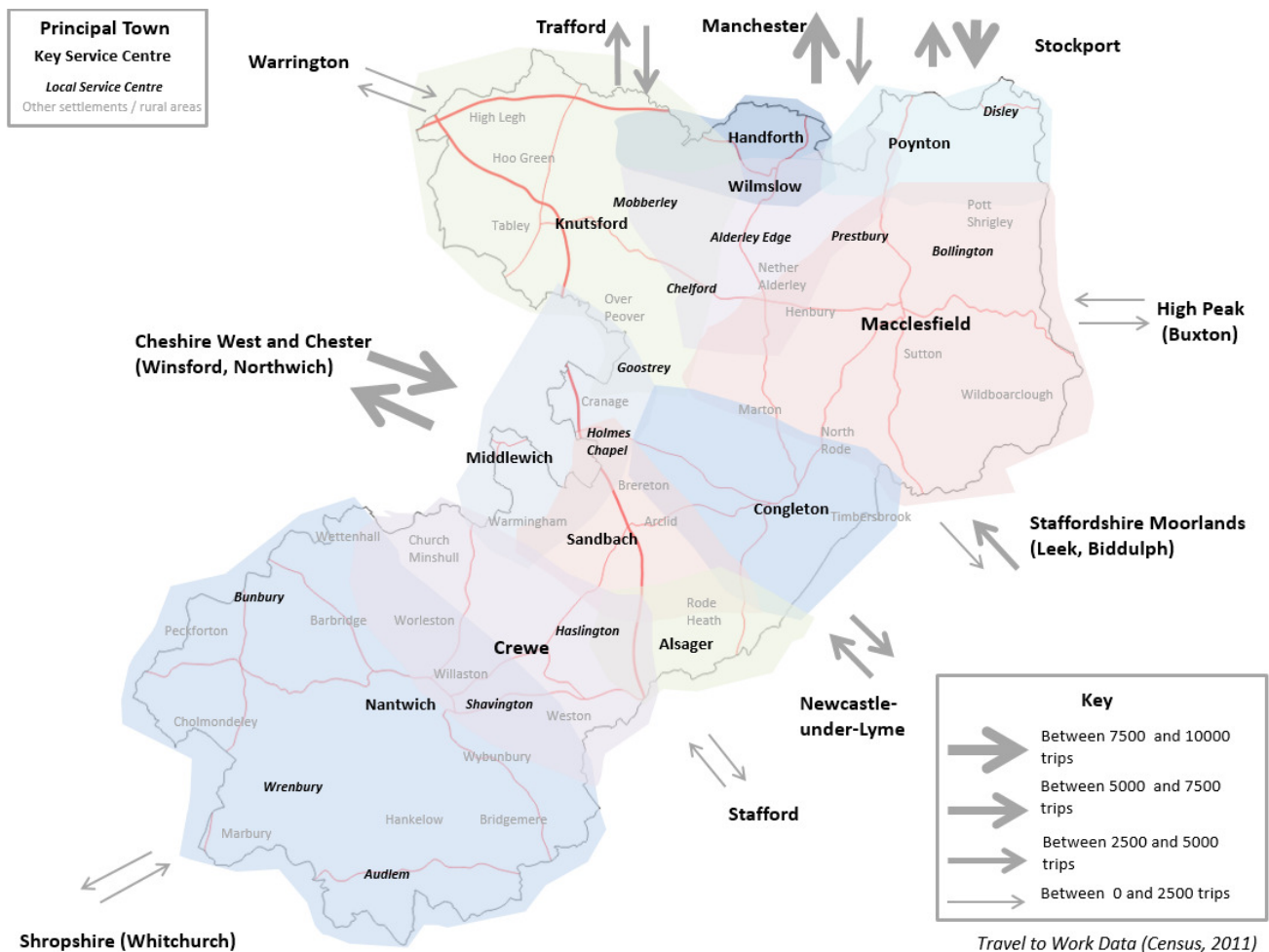
3.2 "Daughter documents"

The transport priorities of the final LTP will be reflected in a series of technical, topic specific, "daughter documents". The scope of these documents will be separately determined for each,

but will consider the Council's approach to both statutory and non-statutory duties in the context of wider priorities.

The list of documents below is not exhaustive, but helps communicate the interconnection of these documents with the LTP and their importance:
- Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy;
- South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy Refresh (2018);
- Network Asset Management Plan;
- Rail Strategy;
- Parking Strategy;
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Cycling Strategy;
- Road Safety Strategy; and
- Place based strategies.

3.3   Process

In line with DfT guidance a six stage process will be undertaken to develop this LTP and supporting Place based strategies. Some of these stages have been completed as part of this document for the Borough wide LTP and some will be undertaken on a place specific basis as part of the development of the Place based strategies as identified below:

Borough wide LTP
1   **Identify challenges and develop vision**: production of a Baseline evidence report drawing together the evidence base for the development of the LTP and subsequent identification of transport challenges and vision.
2   **Develop the strategic response**: production of a Borough wide strategy highlighting the overarching goals and objectives for transport in Cheshire East.

Place based strategies
3   **Generate options to resolve these challenges**: through examination of the evidence base and detailed stakeholder engagement, including meetings with Town and Parish Councils options were identified.
4   **Appraisal of options**: the feasible policy options have been appraised and their likely effects predicted through stakeholder workshops, policy refinement and filtering.
5   **Select preferred options**: the strongest set of preferred policy options and priorities were identified as influenced by stakeholder input workshops, the evidence base and emerging draft strategy consultation feedback.
6   **Strategy delivery**: the preparation of an Implementation Plan which identifies priorities and delivery phasing.

The initial high level Vision document which informs the LTP was developed in line with the Council's Corporate Plan and following engagement with stakeholders. The process sought to identify genuine priorities for transport across a range of stakeholder and partnership opportunities - not only those projects that the Council has the potential to support financially. In many cases external funding from both the public and private sector will be required.

To inform the development of the LTP, data was gathered from a variety of sources to identify trends and issues in wider social, economic and environmental circumstances. Existing transport infrastructure and service performance has been assessed, and travel patterns analysed to build up a picture of current and future transport challenges, and how they relate to the wider outcomes which transport can either support or constrain.

3.4   Consultation process

Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken to inform production of the LTP through initial workshops (with stakeholders and Council Members) in mid to late 2017. In order to reflect the place based nature of this LTP meetings with representatives from the two Principal Towns (Crewe and Macclesfield) and nine Key Service Centres (Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach and Wilmslow) were also facilitated. These meetings (supplemented by analysis of existing town and parish plans) identified local issues and challenges, and enabled attendees to propose policy priorities.

Public and stakeholder views on the draft LTP will then be collated during the consultation period in early 2018 through a survey form (available in libraries and information centres, and on-line) and at consultation events (including presentations to town councils and public consultation events in various locations).

The Place based strategies will be developed following the Borough wide LTP consultation period and will be subject to public and Member consultation once available in draft.

3.4.1 Sustainability Appraisal Process

Government guidance and legislation relating to transport planning, requires that all new LTPs should be subject to:

- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Health Impact Assessment (HIA)
- Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)

A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been prepared in parallel with the draft LTP in order to inform its development. The SA documents each of the elements above and sets out how the LTP contributes to meeting environmental, health, equality, social and economic objectives.

3.5 Policy context

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 Council ensures that Cheshire East's transport system provides good connectivity for people and freight locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Cheshire East will not thrive in isolation. Likewise concentrating on transport in isolation will not ensure Cheshire East's success. 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 we can ensure that transport investment has an impact greater than the sum of its parts. This can be achieved by ensuring the LTP feeds in to local mode specific strategies and wider policy documents such as Neighbourhood Plans. This will ensure that investment is prioritised where it can bring the greatest holistic benefit.

The diagram adjacent shows the relationship between

national, regional and local decision making bodies and policies. The Council will ensure that our policies clearly reflect local priorities whilst aligning with regional and national policies. Where appropriate we will also push for regional and national policies and organisations to reflect local priorities in the best interests of the Borough's residents, businesses and visitors.

4 Connected at all scales

Whilst the LTP is a local document focusing on Cheshire East it gives due consideration to the vital connectivity required at all spatial scales and interconnections with plans made at the local, regional, national and international levels.

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 extensive rural areas with successful rural, agricultural and non-land 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)
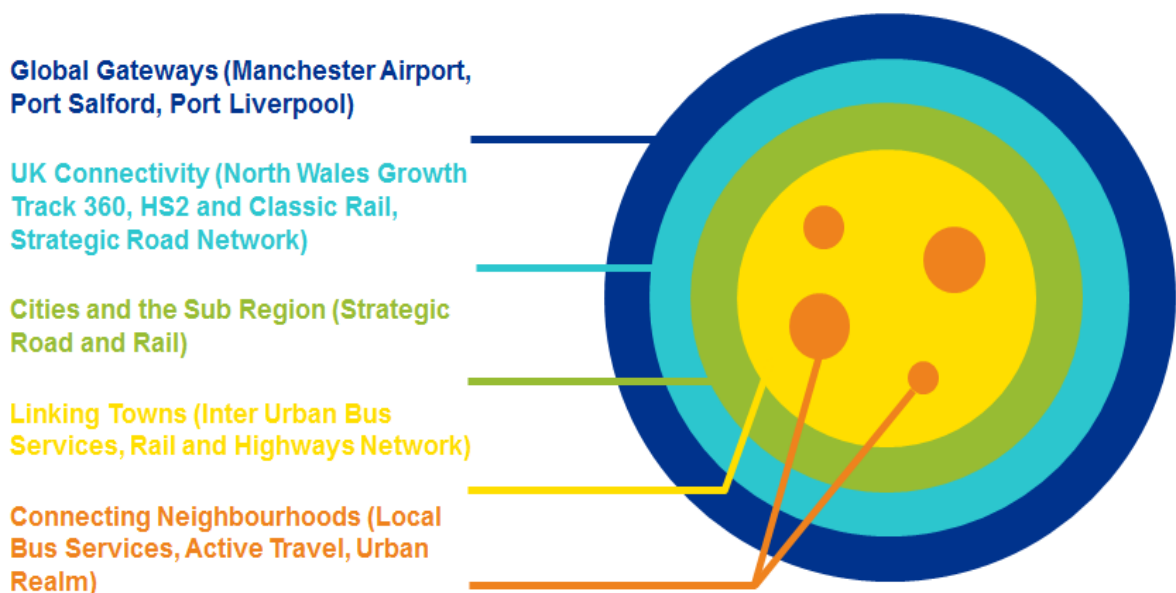
4.1   Connecting Neighbourhoods

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, community transport and rail).

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 delivering these benefits the LTP considers the needs of our rural communities which support over half of the Borough's population and supports 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. The Council faces financial challenges regarding funding supported bus services that must be addressed in order to function efficiently and effectively for our residents. As such, the LTP considers how the Council will respond to these challenges and utilise available resources in the most efficient manner. It also discusses 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'.

Movement

Place

Movement and Place

The Council will promote neighbourhood connectivity which reflects the predominant uses of a particular road or area of public space. This approach is informed by the fact that the road network performs a variety of movement functions, with strategically important roads carrying large volumes of people daily and others performing more local functions.

The road network also forms the largest publically available space. Research has consistently shown that the quality and design of the public realm has a significant impact on how people interact with each other and their surroundings. Subsequently, the place functions of streets e.g. seating, sightseeing, places to eat are of strategic importance with significant economic and quality of life impacts.

Regardless of the way in which people travel they share similar objectives in terms of direct, safe, quick journeys with minimum disruption. However, different modes often compete for space and priority, which can cause conflict. Likewise, the movement functions of roads can conflict with their place functions. The LTP seeks to manage these conflicting demands on our roads and wider transport network.

4.2 Linking Towns

Ensuring good connectivity to and between Cheshire East's Principal Towns and Key Service Centres is central to delivering on our plans for growth. The LTP identifies priorities 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 nationally[2]. 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.

Improving rail connectivity between our principal towns and key service centres is a key priority. 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 and 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 requires 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.

Small and Medium Sized Cities and Large Towns

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 which boost inter-city connectivity. Local connections support strong employment markets within small and medium sized towns and sub-regional commuting flows. This demonstrates the importance of local investment in transport 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.

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

4.3   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 corridors, and a 30-35% increase in demand through corridors such as Congleton, Middlewich, M53/M56, and Alderley Edge. Achieving this will require strong partnerships with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport for the North (including concerning the proposed Major Road 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 rail 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.

4.4   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 the potential to act as an engine for Northern growth. However, this will require the Borough to be fully integrated 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 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 the Borough's 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; and
- National hubs, markets, gateways and ports to be brought under the economically critical door-to-door travel time of one hour 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 connection in Crewe to provide excellent connections to London and numerous city regions. The LTP will aim to achieve this by integrating transport investment and provision across all scales.

4.5 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 annually[3]. 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 East. 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 Council supports 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 demand elsewhere in Cheshire[4]. 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.

4.6 Smart and Digital Connections

High quality digital connections are just as important as good transport connections. This is why the wider Connecting Cheshire Partnership is striving to meet our target of 99% fibre broadband coverage by the end of 2017 with an additional 96,000 premises reached by summer 2018. Improved communications and technology will continue to change how, why and when we travel through changing technologies such as driverless vehicles and also by making it easier to work from home or shop on the internet for example. Our medium and longer term planning must account for the potential impacts of technology such as increased numbers of electric vehicles and the potential for widespread adoption of driverless vehicles.

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[3] **Manchester Airport (2016)** *Sustainable Development Plan 2016: Economy and Surface Access*
[4] **Cheshire and Warrington 871 LEP (2016)** *Sub-regional Transport Strategy*

Improvements in technology will also bring opportunity 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.

The transport network, including our roads and pavements forms a significant amount of the publically available space in the borough. As such we need to identify ways in which technology and innovation can help us to manage it better. Recent examples have shown the benefits that can be gained from 'greening' transport infrastructure e.g. through the development of living roofs on public transport interchanges which support flood water management, improved air quality and reduced urban heat island effects. There is also the opportunity for us to join up transport investment and technology installation to reduce costs and disruption; for example, we will continue to explore opportunities for ducting to be installed for telecommunications and other services at the same time as road schemes are being delivered. Maximising these opportunities could also extend to seeking to capitalise on opportunities to install innovative technology such as heat network infrastructure alongside new scheme delivery where viable. We will improve on the advance warning we give partners around our forward investment programme to support planning and coordination.

5   Defining the challenge

We face a number of challenges to achieving our vision for transport within the Borough and in turn against delivering against the Council's corporate objectives. The main transport challenges faced by the Borough have been identified through a review of key evidence and are summarised below, namely:

- Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity
- Ensuring accessibility to services
- Protecting and improving our environment
- Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity
- Maintaining and managing our network assets
- Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

The Corporate Outcome(s) which will be contributed to by addressing each challenge are also identified below against each challenge.

5.1   Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Cheshire East makes an impressive economic contribution: its GVA is around £9.2bn[5] (2012 estimate), which equates to 7.0% of the North West region's economic output, and is the 6th fastest growing economy in the UK. Whilst an internationally facing economy with strong foundations in advanced manufacturing, life sciences, digital and energy technologies, 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 head[6].

> Outcome
> **2**
> **Cheshire East has a strong & resilient economy**

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 and the government's UK Industrial Strategy are key elements in meeting Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's ambition for a transformed economy. Strategic transport investment will be central to achieving these wider ambitions for Cheshire East as outlined below:

- Unlocking development sites – Improved transport connectivity enables 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

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[5] Cheshire East Council (2016) *Local Plan Strategy proposed Changes (2012 estimate)*
[6] Cheshire and Warrington 871 LEP (2016) *Sub-regional Transport Strategy*

already congested in parts. Therefore, appropriate mitigation measures are required to ensure growth does not negatively impact connectivity.

The South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study refresh is important to help identify where investment will be needed to support growth in the borough and wider south Manchester. The Council is supportive of on-going work to develop traffic models of the north of the borough and south Manchester to inform where transport issues are likely to arise due to population growth and development, as planned by the Local Plan and the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. It is important that the Council continues to work with neighbouring authorities, including Greater Manchester to ensure that plans are joined-up and cross boundary issues resolved.

- **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 jobs in the sub-region by 2040 and inject £10billion per year in to the local economy. There is also real potential for job creation in our rural areas as demonstrated by Alderley Park and Waters Corp and transport will play a role in ensuring that rural areas continue to offer opportunity for both land and non-land based businesses.

  In order to unlock the ambitious growth planned for the sub region the transport network must be able to cater for up to a 35% increase on current demand for movement between key economic centres by 2040[3]. 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 this future growth, whilst simultaneously ensuring that 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 advanced engineering e.g. 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 across our smaller towns and rural communities.

An example of a location showing transport challenges but possessing real economic opportunity is the Science Corridor which has been identified as an Enterprise Zone by the Local Enterprise Partnership. There is a high degree of cross boundary travel between South Manchester, Stockport and Cheshire East in terms of commuting to employment sites in the Science Corridor. Subsequently, the relatively rural locations of key employment sites and limited integration of public transport modes has resulted in high levels of single occupancy car travel to these sites and operational issues for businesses including excessive demand for car parking. The Council will continue to work with partners to improve accessibility to the science Corridor.

The reason for this focus on improved connectivity is because 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.

A key challenge to achieving this will be ensuring that connectivity across the 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.

Attention is also required to support employment sites and business throughout our rural areas, in the Cheshire Science Corridor and on the edge of towns, which face many of the same accessibility issues. These businesses are critical to our future prosperity and diversification of the rural economy is important in order to encourage new jobs and innovation. Many of these have very specific transport needs and it is important to support them through improved connectivity and communications.

- **Supporting the UK Industrial Strategy** – Our approach to transport will support the development of local and national industrial strategy challenges to build a modern innovative economy through capitalising on digital technologies, clean growth, and in particular, opportunities for smart mobility. We need to ensure that the Borough is future-ready, attractive for investment, and is enabling the emergence of new and innovative approaches to mobility locally. Underpinned by strong digital infrastructure, the adoption of smart technologies has the potential to play a significant role in modernising our transport system so it is effective and efficient in meeting growing demands. Alongside

this we will need to reduce the carbon intensity of transport, supporting the development of electric and autonomous technologies, and mobility services, alongside offering traditional active and sustainable modes of travel.

- **Quality of place** – Providing attractive and vibrant built and natural environments will encourage inward investment through businesses and people choosing to live and work in Cheshire East. There is an opportunity to increase the visitor economy to a value of £1bn per year by 2020. 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.

5.2   Ensuring accessibility to services

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

and rural communities lie at the heart of the Borough, and their vitality and growth is essential for our prosperity. Indeed, the transport network plays a role in creating sustainable communities with access to vital facilities and services as well as friends and family. The transport network must support these everyday journeys and deliver not just in our larger towns but also for our smaller towns, villages, and rural communities.

Growth in accessible employment is good for Cheshire East because employment is good for peoples' health and wellbeing. 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 65[7]. 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 our ambition, we must ensure that transport supports:

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

- <u>**Public transport accessibility**</u> – Providing public transport accessibility for residents, especially those in rural locations, is a key challenge in the context of wider financial constraints and as a result of reduced budget availability 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 65[8] and with the knowledge that the damaging impact of social isolation which can be as harmful to health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day[9]. The Council will maximise the impact and efficiency of our public transport budgets and seek innovative ways to provide services in a cost effective way.

- <u>**Accessibility to education and skills**</u> - 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.

  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 transport and there is an ambition for this number to increase. To achieve this increase parents must feel confident to let their children walk or cycle to school. The Council will promote policies and interventions which encourage journeys to be made on foot or by cycle where possible as a means of reducing congestion, increasing physical activity, and improving air quality. More information on how the Council will support children and young people to access schools and educational sites safely and sustainably will be provided in the forthcoming Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy, which will be consulted on in due course.

  The Council has a responsibility to provide home to school travel for children and young people under certain circumstances as directed by national legislation. The Council is committed to supporting access to school and education, however the way in which these services are provided and funded requires review as identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/20. A consultation on the Compulsory School Age Education Travel Policy has been undertaken and is being reviewed. The Council will work to explore a number of options to ensure most efficient travel assistance is provided and explore ways to provide greater cost effectiveness. This financial necessity will be linked to the stated ambition to get more children and young people to access schools by active means due to the large number of benefits which accrue.

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[8] **Office of National Statistics (2016)** *Mid-2015 Population Estimates. Release: MYE9AT1*
[9] **Holt-Lundstad et al (2015)** *Loneliness and social isolation as risk factors for mortality: A meta-analytic review*

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 further integration of services to increase the sustainability, and efficiency of vital transport services such as home to school transport and local buses.

- <u>Accessibility for vulnerable people</u> – Those who are vulnerable for whatever reason need to be able to live fulfilling lives which are as independent as possible. Access to transport is a fundamental part of this. The Council will work with partners across the Borough as well with neighbouring authorities to offer improved transport choices to vulnerable people and their carers. This can be particularly challenging in some of our rural areas and we will work with communities to find the right solutions to support accessibility for all.

- <u>Rural accessibility</u> – Good accessibility is vital to ensuring that our rural areas continue to thrive economically and socially. Rural land-based and non-land based businesses require connections to labour, markets and suppliers whilst rural residents need access to jobs, services, friends and families. However, providing rural accessibility raises different issues than in towns and cities due to low population densities for example. Rural schools tend to have larger catchment areas making the provision of efficient transport more complicated whilst low population densities tend to make bus services more expensive and more likely to require financial support from the Council. The Council will explore innovative ways of ensuring rural connectivity, including supporting community organisations to provide transport services.

5.3   Protecting and improving our environment

The biggest contributor to air pollution within Cheshire East is road transport[10]. 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%.

The decarbonisation of the Borough is also critical to tackling the affordability and availability of energy to support growth and well-being. Although significant activity to decarbonise will be lead nationally, we have a role to play in aiming to minimise the carbon intensity of our growth ambitions through the adoption of new fuels, vehicles, smart technologies and encouraging active travel.

One way of alleviating transport impacts is by encouraging residents, businesses and visitors to utilise more sustainable and less polluting forms of transport such as walking, cycling, electric

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[10] **Cheshire East Council,** *What is air pollution?*

vehicles 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, increasing use of public transport and encouraging the use of low and zero emission technology e.g. electric vehicles as a means of supporting improvements to 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 and there are currently eighteen Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where emissions, particularly of nitrogen dioxide, are considered to be in breach of guidelines. We will continue to monitor air quality and take action in accordance with the Council's Local Air Quality Strategy.

- **Carbon intensity** – Cheshire East has a higher than average per capita carbon emissions, at around 7.5 tonnes per person, which reflects the rural nature of the Borough. Due to Cheshire East being a predominantly rural area, a high proportion of trips are made by private transport methods, hence why public transport usage is relatively low compared to densely populated areas such as Greater Manchester, where there is a greater demand for public transport. The UK has already seen a 40% decrease in carbon emissions since 1990, and in line with the Climate Change Act we will see continued reductions though to 2050 when the economy will need to be almost totally decarbonised. Transport accounts for a significant amount of the reduction required and we will need to work with national and regional partners to ensure that we facilitate the introduction of low carbon technologies, make better use of the infrastructure that we already have where this is applicable, and encourage more sustainable modes of transport.

- **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 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 offer scope for improvement. Improving these connections through investment in green infrastructure will bring numerous quality of life and economic benefits. The Council will support innovative ways of connecting our urban and rural environments and utilising the transport network as a means of supporting tourism, regeneration, and improved quality of life. This is because high quality environments bring quality of life benefits, can encourage investment and can also provide direct traffic free transport corridors for walking and cycling.

5.4 Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

The transport network can play a key role in promoting health and physical activity. In the UK, physical inactivity causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths amongst people aged 40 – 79 per year[11] and it is forecast that by 2030 around half of the UK's population could be obese[12]. If current trends in Cheshire East, where a higher proportion of adults are overweight than nationally, are to be reversed then the Council must promote physical activity. Additionally, it is estimated that air pollution in Cheshire East results in 175 deaths per year[13].

Increased participation in active transport can significantly improve wellbeing and community cohesion. Walking and cycling routes using well designed transport routes incorporating green spaces have been shown to increase the emotional wellbeing and resilience of those using them. There are additional benefits of more attractive communities and transport networks with associated reductions in crime and antisocial behaviour. Subsequently, we will work with partners across health, transport, and education to tackle these important issues and support:

- **Walking and cycling for local journeys** – The Cheshire East Cycling Strategy sets out an ambitious plan to double levels of cycling by 2026. This will be supported by the provision of high quality infrastructure, travel information and training which can encourage people to travel in more 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.

5.5 Maintaining and managing our network assets

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 transport network 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 Council works to deliver:

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[11] Cycling UK (2016) *Cycling and Health*
[12] Swinburn, Boyd et al (2011) *The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments*
[13] Public Health England (2010) *Estimating Local Mortality Burdens associated with Particulate Air Pollution*

- **Effective asset management** - Transport infrastructure is expensive with the gross replacement value of all the Council's highway assets estimated at £5.68 billion[14]. This consists of over 2,670kms 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 our evidence led approach to transport asset maintenance.

- **Safety for all** - Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users 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 safer routes to school.

- **Transport resilience** - There is a broad scientific consensus that in the future we will see an increasing incidence of extreme weather events[15]. Ensuring the transport network is well maintained and resilient to these events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important. The Council will seek to ensure that our infrastructure continues to be secure.

- **Technological innovation** – Improvements in technology will provide opportunities to better manage our transport network and communication with the travelling public, including through the use of machine learning and big data. Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to the continued success of Cheshire East and we are exploring the very real opportunities available through our work around the Crewe Smart Region for example.

- **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 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

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[14] **Cheshire East Council (2016)** *Highway Asset Management Strategy*
[15] **Department for Transport (2014)** *Transport Resilience Review*

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 the private sector, health, education, and planning to ensure an integrated approach.

5.6   Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Cheshire East Council is responsible for over 500 services, with a population of over 370,000. Our annual turnover exceeds £700m and our resources are well-managed through our budgetary framework. Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/20 and our budget setting process ensures that the Council invests in priority areas and maintains its financial health.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support the growth targeted for Cheshire East.

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 is the vehicle for this and informs our residents, businesses and partners of our priorities and vision for transport in Cheshire East.

To maintain value for money the Council needs to demonstrate how local services will continue to be affordable and to make changes to its approach where required. The Council has taken bold steps to significantly limit the burden on local taxpayers since becoming an all-purpose Council in 2009 and are aiming to become increasingly self-reliant from central government funding. Achieving self-reliance will be supported by creating economic growth in a way that efficiently spreads the cost of services. Transport will be central to supporting this growth.

One key way in which we can support delivery against the challenges identified above is through effective partnership working with neighbouring highway and planning authorities e.g. Greater Manchester, Cheshire West and Chester, The Potteries, Warrington to ensure a joined up approach. This partnership, in addition to our involvement in Transport for the North and the LEP will help manage the potential impact of their plans on our transport network.

6   How we will meet the challenge

In order to meet our objectives, we must have a clearly developed approach, as specified in this chapter. This will help guide the activities of the Council and partners and deliver the vision for transport.

6.1   Hierarchy of Provision

In order to improve efficiency and effectiveness the Council has identified a hierarchy of provision where our first priority will be the maintenance and improvement of our current assets; we will then seek to improve the ways in which transport services and infrastructure are delivered; before we seek to deliver new infrastructure. Success against each of these three core priorities will contribute to our vision for transport:

6.1.1 Priority one - Maintenance and asset management

There is little point investing in the delivery of new transport infrastructure without effectively maintaining the current transport network; including roads, footways, cycleways, shared use paths, bus stops, structures and necessary street furniture e.g. street lighting and signage. Furthermore, both planned and reactive maintenance as well as asset management is vital to ensure safe and efficient movement on the transport network. The Council's first priority will be to maintain and improve our existing transport assets where cost effective. However, it is likely that this will entail difficult decisions around prioritising maintenance budgets where they can bring most benefit to the Borough.

The Council invested an additional £30million improving the condition of Cheshire East's transport assets over the last three years through the Highway Investment Programme reaffirming our strategic commitment to maintenance and asset management. Furthermore, another £5million was invested in 2016-2017 in transport infrastructure improvements. This investment has led to an overall improvement in our transport assets, including over 500kms of road being treated since 2013 which has delivered a significant improvement in network condition together with an 83% reduction in potholes, a 72% reduction in third party claims and a 98% reduction in compensation pay-outs.

Utilising the Councils approved Asset Management led approach, maintenance investment will be allocated in line with member and resident priorities across all highway assets. Capital investment will be targeted to deliver maximum value by adopting the right treatment at the right time with an emphasis on preventative maintenance. Building on previous success the Council has committed to investing £10million per year for the next three years in the maintenance of the Borough's transport assets, including supporting our successful Highway Investment Programme which utilises innovative laser scanning technology to assess the condition of the highway and inform the identification and prioritisation of appropriate maintenance works. The Council will always seek innovation to reduce costs and deliver the best value to residents and businesses and will continue to do so; for example, by exploring ways in which more improvements can be made at the same time e.g. by installing ducting for high-speed broadband whilst delivering highway works. Another example of harnessing innovation is our focus on the opportunities presented by smart technology across the Borough.

6.1.2 Priority two - 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. Continuing this intelligence led delivery will require further integration between transport, health, land use planning, and economic development. Subsequently, the Council's second priority is to improve services and our delivery processes as a means of delivering increased efficiency and effectiveness across the Borough.

Another recent example of the Council making changes to service delivery to ensure organisational efficiency is the recent Supported Bus Service Review. The Council has identfied significant savings in its supported bus budget to meet challenging budget targets required due to the fact that overall the Council is expecting to see cash reductions of almost £100 million for the three-year period 2017 to 2020 compared with the baseline budget for 2016/17. The focus of the bus review was on providing the greatest value for money for residents with some poorly used services costing over £5 of subsidy per passenger journey. This example shows how the Council is prepared to make difficult decisions when required to ensure cost effectiveness.

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 increasingly work with central government and train operating companies to influence the franchise specifications of rail services operating in Cheshire East to improve services. Indeed, the recent example of the Northern rail refranchise shows that significant improvements can be brought about by effective joined-up 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.

6.1.3 Priority three - Delivery of New Infrastructure

Once it has been established that an issue cannot be adequately resolved, nor an opportunity capitalised upon through improved asset management and maintenance, or service redesign and delivery then the Council will look to promote the delivery of new infrastructure to meet the identified need. This is because the provision of new infrastructure can provide enormous benefit to our visitors and residents but to ensure finance should only be invested in once alternative, often cheaper, option have been explored.

An example of where investment in new infrastructure has the potential to bring significant benefit to Cheshire East includes government plans for transformational national investment in rail services. 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; whilst improvement to the strategic road network will bring benefit to Cheshire East if supported locally. Whilst investment in new and improved road infrastructure in the Borough may be required 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. Subsequently, 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.

The examples above show the real benefits which infrastructure delivery can support. However, to ensure efficiency we will only look to deliver new infrastructure where similar benefit cannot be achieved through improved maintenance and asset management or service redesign and delivery.

6.2   Delivering the vision

The interventions and priorities identified in the LTP, delivered via the prioritised framework identified above will support the Borough to meet the transport challenges introduced and discussed in Chapter Three. Below we give a summarised overview of activity which will take place over the life of this strategy to meet these challenges.

6.2.1   Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

The importance of efficient connectivity to economic growth and success is well established. The Council will work with partners to ensure that the growth benefits of improved connectivity are maximised. The Council already works with a range of partners across both the public and private sectors to support the Borough's economic success and this will continue and increase over the life of this strategy. We will seek to contribute towards the implementation of the UK Industrial Strategy locally, in line with the Local Plan and wider corporate plan.

The council has identified that the success of certain locations of real economic importance to the Borough and the wider sub-region is being impacted by sub-optimum connectivity; our focus will be on working with partners, including businesses at these strategic locations e.g. the Science Corridor, town centres and Crewe Business Park to deliver improved transport efficiency. Specific actions will include focusing on improving multi-modal connectivity by delivering improved access on foot, by cycle and to the rail network. We will also explore ways in which vehicular access and parking can be improved to key strategic sites whilst seeking to minimise any adverse impact on the local highway network. An example of the work already underway is that undertaken by the Skills and Growth Company on behalf of the Council to examine transport challenges and opportunities along the Science Corridor. We will also explore how smart digital technologies can be trialled and implemented to make our networks more accessible, efficient and ready for future transport technologies and trends.

Supporting our businesses to succeed is also of vital importance for the long-term health and sustainability of the Borough. Businesses need seamless access to workers and materials if they are to compete nationally and internationally. The Council will work with partners, including the business community to improve accessibility in support of continued success. This will take the form of supporting employers to develop travel plans, tackling pinch-points and delay on the network and encouraging employees to travel in more efficient ways. In support of this agenda we have completed a strategic transport review with major employers in the north of the Borough which has resulted in consideration being given to bus timetables and services.

The Council will continue to work closely with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (the LEP) to identify opportunities for and constraints to growth and to subsequently agree sub-regional priorities. Cheshire East has recently formally joined Transport for the North (TfN) and is currently working closely with TfN and constituent partners to shape the agenda and priorities for transport across the North. Working alongside TfN there is a real opportunity to shape strategic transport across the North whilst also working closely with national partners such as Network Rail and Highways England to ensure Cheshire East gets the investment needed to build upon previous economic success.

There is also a large role for improved local transport and public real to support economic growth as identified in the Council's priority to deliver "quality of place". The Council will work to ensure that future development brings benefits to neighbouring localities and that a joined-up approach is taken to the management of the transport network in support of economic success.

Action 6.1 – We will work with the LEP and other bodies e.g. TfN to agree sub-regional transport priorities

Action 6.2 - We will lobby central government and its agencies e.g. Highways England and Network Rail for investment that brings most benefit to Cheshire East

Action 6.3 – We will support the implementation of the UK Industrial Strategy locally including contributing towards meeting the grand challenges for clean growth, mobility, and a data driven economy.

6.2.2 Ensuring accessibility to services

The transport network supports all aspects of our daily lives, it therefore needs to support accessibility for our residents and visitors to economic opportunity, skills and training, shopping and utility destinations, leisure destinations, family and friends.

Our approach to supporting the home to school journey will promote sustainable travel, including walking and cycling where possible. This is because the journey to school represents an important opportunity to develop a sense of independence and to 'learn' mobility. Travel habits

are often formed at a young age; thus the choice of travel mode has broad implications for the future. Just as with any other groups, developing more sustainable alternatives to the use of the single occupancy car for home to school transport provides environmental and well-being benefits; including improved fitness, road safety skills and an increased sense of independence. Removing these trips from the road network where feasible also brings real benefits to other members of the travelling public as demonstrated by the difference in highway delay observed in school holidays. Our approach to supporting these journeys will be identified in the forthcoming Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Policy expected in 2018.

The Council has a duty to provide home to school / college travel for eligible children and young people in certain circumstances. The Council is currently updating our Home to School Travel Policy to ensure that we are meeting or statutory duties; with implementation of the new policy expected in 2018.

All residents need to be supported to achieve levels of connectivity which facilitate their daily lives. The Council understands that for vulnerable people in our communities assisted and accessible, door-to-door transport can be a lifeline. This is why the Council is seeking to achieve as much as it can on its own budgets and through working in partnership with others and this will continue. We also appreciate that access to transport and services can be more challenging for those in our rural areas and need to ensure we have the right transport options in both rural and urban areas for all.

One key way of supporting our aims above will be through ensuring that new residential development, as directed by our recently adopted Local Plan is delivered in such a manner to support efficient accessibility.

Action 6.4 – We will update our Sustainable Modes of Travel to School policy

Action 6.5 – We will seek to ensure that development delivered in line with the Local Plan is accessible by different transport modes

Action 6.6 – We will support activities which reduce the carbon intensity and resilience of our transport system.

6.2.3 Protecting and improving our environment

Transport has the potential to negatively impact the environment. In particular, reliance on the private car is linked to numerous environmental and health issues as a result of emissions. The Council undertakes annual reporting of air quality within the Borough following a process defined by government. In Cheshire East the main pollutant of concern is nitrogen dioxide as a result of emissions from road traffic. The Council's focus on promoting sustainable transport aims to reduce

reliance on the car which will deliver related environmental benefits. Likewise targeted investment in the transport network has the potential to deliver improved air quality and the Council will pursue these improvements wherever feasible.

One way in which transport can support environmental improvements is by supporting investment in, and the creation of green and blue infrastructure. By this we mean the green and blue spaces such as rivers, canals, parks which bring a wide range of benefits e.g. water storage, increased bio-diversity, improved well-being and can also support active travel corridors. Improved blue and green infrastructure is just one way in which we are committed to Quality of Place.

Action 6.7 – We will review and update our Local Air Quality Strategy

Action 6.8 – We will support the delivery of green and blue infrastructure improvements

6.2.4 Carbon reduction

Encouraging more active modes of transport such as walking and cycling, reducing the need to travel and greater use of public transport can play a key role in reducing carbon emissions. Technological change and new technologies also offer opportunities to reduce the carbon intensity of the transport network. Further detail on these themes are provided in following sections of this strategy.

Transport networks, and their associated green infrastructure, can provide valuable ecosystems that can assist in the management of, and adaptation to climate change. This green infrastructure can provide carbon storage by trees; sustainable drainage and water conservation; cooling urban heat islands; and ecological connectivity. For example, linear transport features (such as canal towpaths, public rights of way, road verges, cycle routes and railway embankments) are well suited to enhancing wildlife connectivity across the countryside, as well as providing areas for carbon storage, enabling better water conservation, and in towns and cities, providing valuable cooling systems.

6.2.5 Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

The transport network has the capacity to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors by reducing emissions and their impacts on air quality and supporting increased levels of physical activity through the support and promotion of active transport for a greater number of journeys. Embracing the potential of the transport network as a tool for supporting improved public health is vital due to the large impacts air quality and physical inactivity can have on public health.

Increasing participation in both walking and cycling can improve both physical health and emotional health and wellbeing. Being active can help to reduce the number of people who are

overweight and obese and also reduce the risk of heart disease, lung disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer. There are also significant benefits to mental and emotional health and wellbeing, particularly when travel routes incorporate green spaces.

Through the Council's focus on active transport, as identified in the recent Cycling Strategy, the Council will support journeys to be made actively wherever possible through a combination of maintenance of active travel infrastructure, delivery of walking and cycling promotion and training as well as the delivery of targeted infrastructure. We will work with a range of partners, including those in Public Health to implement the Cycling Strategy and other active travel measures such as the high quality infrastructure promoted by the government through Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plans. The implementation of this kind of high-quality provision will support our commitment to Quality of Place.

Action 6.9 – We will support increased levels of active transport, including through delivery of the Cycle Strategy

6.2.6 Maintaining and managing our network assets

Our first priority in terms of supporting connectivity is the effective maintenance and management of our transport assets, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The Council has developed an Asset Management Policy that defines how the implementation of asset management will support CEC in delivering its corporate vision. The Highway Asset Management Strategy (HAMS) sets out how the Council will best manage the transport network taking into consideration customer needs, local priorities, asset condition and the best use of available resources through invest to save initiatives to realise the benefits of early intervention. This strategy will be used to inform priorities in the Business Planning Process and will be used to support the continuous improvement of our transport asset management by capturing the outcomes of using the optimum treatments or interventions over the whole life cycle of the different asset groups.

A good example of this intelligence led approach to asset maintenance is the Highway Investment Programme which is an investment programme informed by significant data on asset condition ensuring that greatest financial efficiency and effectiveness are achieved. This intelligence led approach to asset management and maintenance will continue with regards to all of the Borough's transport infrastructure. We will also have regard to embedding the need for increased resilience and adaptation into the management of our transport network. Where infrastructure is the responsibility of other organisations e.g. Network Rail (rail infrastructure), train operating companies (rail rolling stock) or Highways England (strategic road network) we will work with our partners to ensure a joined-up approach to maintenance in the best interests of our residents and visitors.

Action 6.10 – We will deliver our Highway Asset Management Strategy

Action 6.11 – We will work closely with partners to support maintenance of transport infrastructure which falls outside our remit

6.2.7 Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Our resources are well-managed through our budgetary framework. However, despite our well managed finances there is a constant requirement to improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness, partially related to the fact that overall the Council is expecting to see cash reductions of almost £100 million for the three-year period 2017 to 2020 compared with the baseline budget for 2016/17.

The approach to prioritising investment and ensuring organisational and financial effectiveness is identified in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. This identifies the priorities and budgetary allocations to different activities, some of the key activities identified in the strategy as they relate to our three priorities for transport delivery are identified below but these are not in any way exhaustive:

Maintenance and asset management
- Highway Maintenance - utilising the Councils approved Asset Management led approach, maintenance investment will be allocated in line with member and resident priorities across all highway assets including roads, footways, structures, and street furniture. Capital investment will be targeted to deliver maximum value by adopting the right treatment at the right time with an emphasis on preventative maintenance.

Service Redesign and Delivery
- Supported Bus Service Review – in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness it is vital that limited resources are invested in those areas with the most critical need. The Council needs to make savings of £1.6million on its supported bus budget in order to meet challenging financial targets. The focus of the bus review is on providing the greatest value for money with some services presently costing over £5 of subsidy per passenger journey which is not an effective use of limited budgets. The review will ensure that greatest benefit is obtained from the budgets available for supported bus services.

Action 6.12 – We will deliver a redesign of the supported bus network in line with the 2017 Supported Bus Service Review

Delivery of New Infrastructure
- High Quality Infrastructure – the Council and partners will deliver an investment programme in major infrastructure projects such as the Connecting Cheshire Broadband scheme, the M6 Smart Motorway project, the Congleton Link Road, Macclesfield Movement Strategy, the Poynton Relief Road and the Middlewich Eastern Bypass.

Action 6.13 – We will deliver a major rolling infrastructure investment programme

- High Quality Town Centres – we will focus on securing investment in our key towns to create high quality places for residents, visitors and businesses which will include:

- A long term regeneration strategy for Crewe Town Centre which will stimulate investment and development in retail, culture, leisure, residential and employment facilities;

- Developing a strategy for the revitalisation of Macclesfield Town Centre; including, a capital investment programme to significantly enhance the quality of the public realm of the town centre with an ambition to enhance: the pedestrian experience, legibility, cycling experience; town centre character; quality of place and general visitor experience."

- Working with partners to create a hub station which will connect Crewe through High Speed rail and the classic rail network to key centres in the UK including London, Birmingham and Manchester;

- Through the Northern Gateway Partnership, which is an emerging economic partnership between seven local authorities and two Local Enterprise Partnerships we will deliver sustainable plan led growth in the Borough on the back of HS2 investment at Crewe;

- Delivering improvements and supporting the marketing of Middlewich town centre as well as pushing for the reopening of the rail station; and

- Investing in Congleton town centre's public realm and securing the future use of a key listed building.

Action 6.14 – We will support investment in quality of place and the creation of high quality town centres

6.3   How we will decide what to do

We will engage with our communities, businesses, stakeholders and central government and its agencies to identify issues which need addressing and subsequent relates interventions. Once we have identified potential areas of investment in line with our three-stage hierarchy described above we will complete a sifting process using an objective driven appraisal tool. The aim of this process is to ensure confidence in delivery phasing and that investment brings most benefit to Cheshire East through delivery of LTP priorities.

6.3.1 Stage One

Stage One in this sifting and appraisal process will entail the following Red/Amber/Green scoring; with any scheme or investment priority not scoring at least green or amber in all three categories sifted out and not included in Stage Two of the appraisal process:

Deliverability e.g. planning, timescale or third party issues	Feasibility e.g. physical constraint, land availability or design issues	Value for money: perceived value for money
Deliverable in Theory	Feasible in theory	Likely to deliver value for money
Deliverable but with Challenges	Feasible but with challenges	May deliver value for money
Very difficult to deliver	Significant challenges	Not likely to deliver value for money

6.3.2 Stage Two

Stage Two of the sifting and appraisal process involves scoring each intervention on a five-point scale against their expected benefit to each of the six transport challenges previously discussed, taking in to account contributing factors as shown below:

1. **Support growth and economic strength through connectivity**
   a. Capitalise on opportunities, including through maximising value of funding from central government, the private sector and other sources
2. **Improve access to services**
   a. In both rural and urban rural areas
   b. Increase independence for younger/older/vulnerable people
3. **Protect and improve the built and natural environment**
   a. Contribute to improved quality of place
   b. Contribute to improved air quality and reduced carbon intensity
   c. Reduces carbon intensity of the transport network
4. **Promote health, wellbeing and physical activity**
   a. Prioritise sections of the population / locations most at risk of health inequality
5. **Improve the maintenance and management of the transport network**
   a. Ensure alignment with Highway Asset Management Strategy
6. **Improve organisational efficiency and effectiveness**
   a. Ensure investment demonstrates value for money

b. Ensure programmes and interventions are evidence based, including through actively engaging local communities to understand their needs and priorities

6.3.3 Outputs

The outputs of Stage One and Two will be a list of potential interventions which are all considered feasible, deliverable and potentially offer value for money scored against their expected benefit to Cheshire East's six transport challenges. This list will inform the phasing of investment and delivery to ensure delivery on the LTP priorities. Records of any interventions sifted out in Stage One, along with the reasons why, will be kept to ensure that these can be appraised again in the future if the situation or evidence available changes.

6.4 Joined-up delivery

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, public 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. Subsequently, 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.

7   Active and Smarter Travel

Active travel such as walking and cycling, complementing an effective bus and rail network, should be at the heart of any transport strategy aiming to achieve a transport system which offers travel choice. The public health, environmental, economic and transport benefits of active travel have been consistently confirmed and many places are already benefiting from a larger share of walking and cycling. In line with the national governments cycling and walking investment strategy, the Council aims to "make cycling and walking the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a larger journey."[16]

Smarter travel means offering travel choices which are healthier, less expensive and with reduced environmental impact. Smarter choices, which cover a range of policy measures, can be a valuable toolkit in achieving this transition.

The following section will outline smarter choices measures initiated by the Council, such as travel planning, school travel planning, and promotion and engagement. Thereafter the current state, challenges and initiatives are assessed separately for walking and cycling. Finally, the integration of active travel with the other existing modes and its interplay with land use is addressed.

7.1   Smarter Choices

Smarter Choices are transport policy measures including promotion, marketing, information and training aimed at helping people to choose to reduce car use while enhancing the attractiveness of alternatives. Smarter choices include a variety of measures such as workplace and school travel plans, personalised travel planning, travel awareness campaigns and public transport information and marketing, as well as car clubs and car sharing schemes, working from home and teleconferencing. It has been shown that applying these policies and initiatives in a concerted way has the potential to reduce local traffic levels and there is therefore a role for them to play in the Borough's transport strategy.

Promoting active travel and engaging with employers and employees, pupils and students as well as the public is a proven method of effectively influencing travel behaviours. Travel plans are also a key element in the promotion of more sustainable travel. A travel plan is a set of measures that are designed to help promote sustainable transport within a school, a business or a residential development, with the main aim of reducing travel by single occupancy vehicles. A successful travel plan will give anyone travelling to or from their place of work, education or home a choice of travel options and provide encouragement to use more sustainable methods. Effective travel plans often also include measures to manage parking on site.

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[16] Department for Transport (2017) Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

In many cases, a travel plan will be required as a condition to planning permission. However, many schools and businesses choose to prepare their own plans, often in response to, but sometimes to pre-empt problems associated with congestion and parking.

In 2012, the Council received a £3.5m grant through the Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) for a three-year programme to promote and support sustainable travel. Through the LSTF, £120,000 was awarded to businesses to address accessibility barriers, including the provision of 329 cycle parking spaces.

Building on this success, Cheshire East secured £350,000 of funding from the Department for Transport's Sustainable Travel Transition Year (STTY) Grant to provide travel planning support for businesses in Crewe.

The program focuses on access to skills and employment, enabling active travel and targeted active travel promotion. This included 'Smarter Ways to Travel' business travel planning sessions, business grants to improve sustainable travel options for their employees, travel planning for businesses and education providers, targeted marketing of active travel through interventions in companies and education providers, as well as signage and wayfinding to South Cheshire College and University Technical College.

Travel Cheshire[17], an online platform developed by the Council, offers a range of travel advice for all modes and personalised travel planning services. In order to support travel planning efforts by businesses and organisations in the Borough, the Council is developing a comprehensive toolkit for travel planning, funded through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Grant, which will be made accessible online via the Travel Cheshire website in the future.

Cheshire East hosted stage 3 of the 2016 edition of the Tour of Britain, UK's largest cycling competition. The Tour of Britain attracted thousands of spectators from its start point in Congleton to the finish line in Knutsford. Such events help to promote cycling and active travel as recreational and everyday activity, with 59% of spectators stating that they were inspired to cycle more often following the event.

Action 7.1 - We will continue to support the promotion of smarter choices as a means of enabling leisure, commuter and business journeys to be made in more sustainable ways

Action 7.2 – We will continue to support employers, schools and other trip generators to develop, implement and monitor effective travel plans through our online resources and advice from officers where required

[17] http://www.travelcheshire.co.uk/

7.1.1 School travel

Travel to and from school is of particular importance. Children are more vulnerable and exposed to the dangers of road traffic, accounting for 10.5% of all people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Cheshire East's roads, with collisions with vehicles the most likely type of accident. Slightly below half of school attendees walk to school, whereas a third travel by car and about 15% travel by public transport, with levels of cycling remaining relatively low.

When comparing this against the national figures, Cheshire East has a higher percentage of children travelling to school by car. Indeed, research would indicate that levels of childhood inactivity is linked to increasing levels of obesity, leading to associated health problems. This highlights the need to foster sustainable modes of travel to school and improve walking and cycling infrastructure and journeys to and from schools.

We recognise that to achieve our targets 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. We will work alongside our delivery partners to provide a range of advice, resources and funding to support schools in updating and implementing School Travel Plans.

A Travel Plan is a document which sets out the measures and initiatives a school or college will use to reduce car journeys and promote other ways of getting to school in safer, healthier and more environmentally sustainable ways. School Travel Plans have an important role to play in promoting these alternatives. We will support Cheshire East schools to develop their own travel plans to help facilitate sustainable access to schools and these should be monitored on an ongoing basis, usually yearly or more frequently. As part of the effort to promote safer and more sustainable school travel, the Council has assessed home to school travel and transport needs and is now in the process of preparing a new Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

Action 7.3 – We will support children and young people to access schools and educations sites via sustainable modes wherever possible. Our approach to this will be identified in our forthcoming Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

7.2   Walking

Between 2012 and 2015, walking has increased by 13% in Cheshire East, the highest increase in any local authority outside of London.[18] This is very good news, as for short distances below 400 metres, walking is the ideal mode to access services, education and employment. It does not produce any emissions or any type of pollution, uses very little space, its speed allows for social interaction with other pedestrians and it is affordable for everyone, making it, together with

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[18] http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/media/12-july-2016-walking-and-cycling-statistics-published

cycling, the most sustainable way to travel in Cheshire East. Besides, walking has been shown to improve overall health and mental well-being by reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer while strengthening bones, joints, mood and mental health as well as boosting the immune system; thus we can say that walking supports people in the Borough to be happier, healthier and independent for longer.

In addition, walking is not only limited to utilitarian purposes such as trips to shops, doctor, work or school, but it is enjoyed by many for its own sake. Walking and hiking are important leisure and recreational activities in Cheshire East and therefore the existence of designated, maintained, safe and scenic walking trails and routes contributes to quality of place in the Borough and the local visitor economy.

7.2.1 Current Context

In 2015, people in the UK walked 22% of their trips, which accounted for 3% of the total distance travelled. Regarding travel to work, about one in ten residents in Cheshire indicated that they walked to work in 2011, a small increase of one percentage point compared to 9% in 2001 and equal to the national average.[19]

The existing network for pedestrians in Cheshire East comprises more than 1900 km of public footpath or bridleway as well as 22 long distance walking routes which either pass through or are entirely within Cheshire East with the most important asset for pedestrians being the highways network and associated footways.

People's satisfaction with the existing pavements and footpaths was rated at 51% in 2016, therefore below the national average of 55%. Satisfaction with rights of way was somewhat higher at 59%, in line with the 58% nationally.[20]

7.2.2 Past Measures and Initiatives

During the previous LTP period, measures have been taken to improve footways and footpaths such as verge improvements, removal of litter, provision of lighting and seating, but also resurfacing and decluttering i.e. removal of barriers and obstacles. New routes have been provided and existing bits of infrastructure have been connected to allow for better pedestrian movements. Safe crossing points, dropped kerbs and wide pavements have been provided to improve perceived safety and increase accessibility for disabled people. Signs relaying destination, distance and time information for dedicated pedestrian routes have also been provided.

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[19] NTS 2015 and Census 2011
[20] NHT Survey 2016

Yet despite these efforts, issues with pedestrian infrastructure persist which need to be addressed. These include the provision and safety of crossing points, signage and wayfinding, pavement condition in urban areas, the width of footpaths and their proximity to motorised traffic, the lack of provision in rural areas as well as the perceived safety of pedestrians and accommodation of users with mobility impairments.

7.2.3 Priorities for Improvement

On the local level, walking policies are jointly delivered across the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)[21] and the Local Transport Plan and their respective implementation plans.

Cheshire East benefits from an extensive public rights of way network with generally good provision for walkers. However, gaps continue to exist and for cyclists, horse riders and users with mobility impairments in particular, the network remains fragmented. Therefore, the priorities for improving the public rights of way network are to improve, upgrade and connect up the existing network by:

- Filling gaps in the existing network;

- Improving access opportunities for horse riders, cyclists and people with reduced mobility;

- Providing information and signs to inform use;

- Partnering with local businesses and the visitor economy to promote routes and trails; and

- Maintaining the network and improving surfacing.

The current ROWIP implementation plan for 2015 to 2019 puts forward ten interventions, including three upgrades and five improvements of existing footpaths and towpaths, and the development of two new off-road links. Likewise, the Council's latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan outlines seven walking infrastructure priorities; as well as the creation of new walking and cycling links in Middlewich and between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport.

Walking, just as cycling and horse riding, is a popular leisure activity not only for residents but also for many visitors coming to Cheshire East. Therefore, popular routes such as the Sandstone Trail and the Gritstone Trail, are to be supported and facilities for walkers and cyclists could benefit from further improvement. This would also support the local visitor economy. A particular beneficial investment are routes that serve a dual purpose as both everyday walking and cycling links for commuters and local residents while at the same time serving as recreational routes or trails.

Overall, the pedestrian network would benefit from

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[21] Cheshire East Council (2011) *Rights of Way Improvement Plan, available at:*
http://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s10142/14%20-%20ROWIP%20Appendix%201.pdf

- Continuing highway footpath and public rights of way path improvement and surface maintenance;

- Removing access barriers for users with reduced mobility;

- Linking existing pieces of infrastructure and closing gaps in the network;

- Improving rural provision, in particular to and from trip attractors and areas of interest; and

- Providing safe pedestrian crossing points.

Action 7.4 – We will work to improve the quality of our footpaths and pavements, including through targeted investment as part of our asset led approach to highway maintenance

Action 7.5 – We will connect existing parts of the pedestrian network, close gaps and address safety concerns at identified hotspots

7.3   Cycling

Cheshire East's relatively compact settlements and mostly flat terrain lends itself to cycling as a low-cost, healthy, energy efficient and enjoyable way of travelling. Using the bike not only helps to easily achieve recommended levels of physical activity which many people throughout the Borough struggle to maintain, but also improves physical and mental health and reduces the probability of cardiovascular diseases and cancer.[22]

Modal shift from car travel to cycling reduces local air pollution and lowers the carbon footprint of travel in Cheshire East, while also reducing levels of congestion [23] which currently affects both the local and strategic road network in the Borough. Each cycle journey that replaces a car trip benefits all residents, businesses and visitors to Cheshire East.

Considering the wide range of important benefits and the government target to double levels of cycling, the Council is committed to enable more people to cycle in safety, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys.

7.3.1   Current Context

On a national level, cycling accounts for only 2% of overall trips and for a mere 1% of the total distance travelled. In Cheshire East, 3% of all commuters cycle to work, about the same as in England and Wales as a whole. However, this hides important local variation throughout the borough, as displayed in the figure. below. In fact, levels of cycling to work range from below 2% in Wilmslow and Congleton to more than 6% in Crewe.[24] On average, cycling to work is more

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[22] Oja et al (2011) Health benefits of cycling: a systematic review
[23] Crawford and Lovelace (2015) The benefits of getting England cycling
[24] Census 2011 QS701EW Method of travel to work

prevalent in built-up areas than in rural areas, reflecting shorter distances and existing infrastructure in the key service centres.
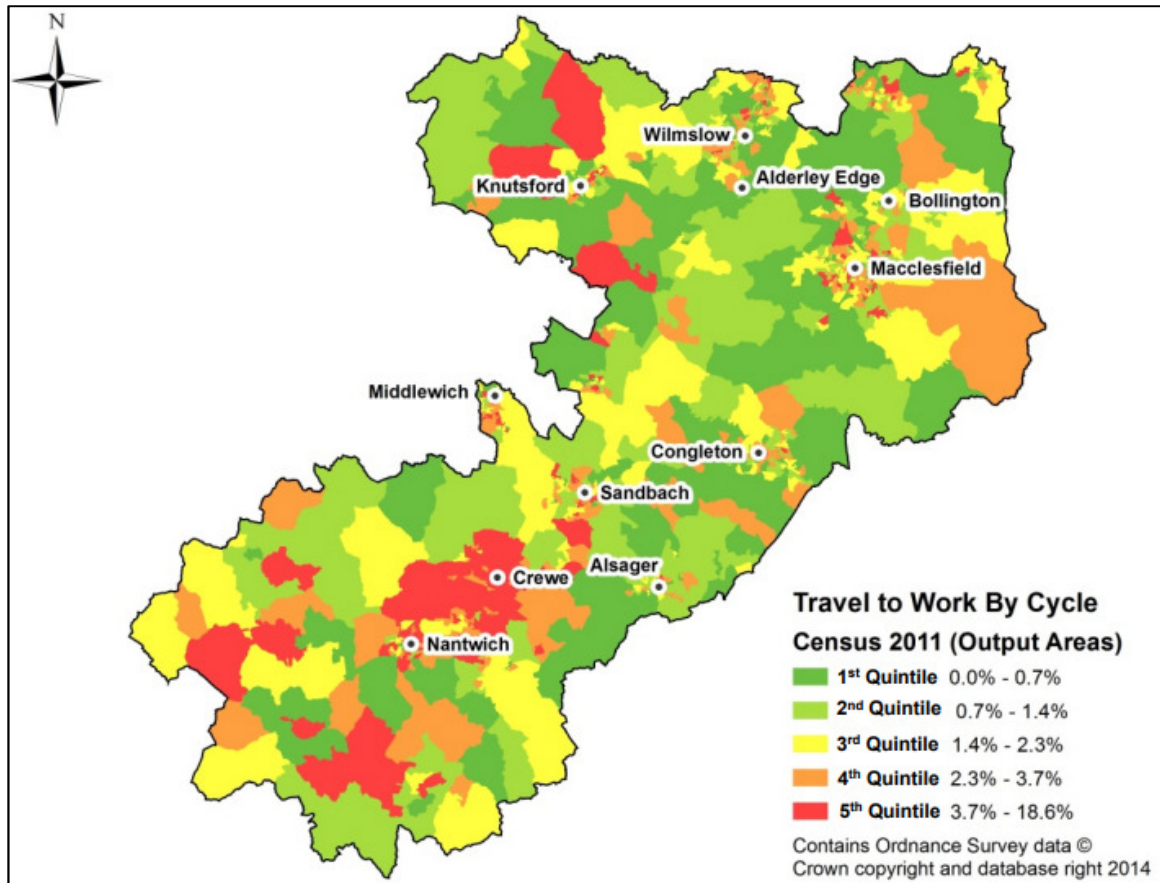
Travel to work by cycle (Lower Super Output Areas, Census 2011)

While utility cycling is in line with the national average, the latest available data indicates that the number of people cycling five times per week for leisure purposes is significantly higher than in England as a whole.[25]

People's satisfaction with the cycle routes and facilities was rated at 48% in 2016, therefore below the national average of 52% and a 3% decline from 2015.[26] The provision of cycle routes where needed and location of cycle routes/lanes received the lowest scores, which were also rated worse than in England as a whole. In contrast cycle training, cycle facilities at work, condition of cycle routes and direction signing received better scores and were rated on the same level as the national average.

Based on user satisfaction, the provision of cycle routes stands out as an area with potential for improvement. According to stakeholder feedback, the lack of a coherent and consistent network

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[25] Active People Survey 2014
[26] NHT Public Satisfaction Survey 2016

and perceived safety constitute major barriers to increased cycling levels. While on-road cycling is common, there is only a limited amount of segregated cycle lanes or off-road cycle routes in the Borough. Most of the local cycle infrastructure is concentrated in the key service centres of Crewe, Nantwich and Wilmslow.

7.3.2 Past Measures and Initiatives

The previous LTP aimed to provide appropriate highway improvements and off-road routes for cyclists, as well as junction improvements. Moreover, it sought to provide greater access to cycling facilities, to improve signage and to undertake surface and lighting improvements on existing links.

Several cycling projects have been successfully delivered in recent years, including conversions and extension of cycle paths in Crewe; the installation of cycle parking in Crewe, Alsager and Nantwich; accessibility improvements to Congleton town centre and railway station; improved links between existing routes (in Ettiley Heath) and the railway station (in Macclesfield) and the installation of cyclist counters. Young person and adult cycle training, ranging from learn to ride and bikeability level 1-3 training to bike maintenance, commuter confidence and cycle ride leader qualification has also been delivered throughout the Borough.

In March 2013 a major cycleway project linking Crewe and Nantwich was officially opened, providing a car-free route cycle route between the two towns. The scheme cost £1.6m and was funded by Sustrans' Connect2 programme, delivered by Cheshire East Highways and supported by a Big Lottery Fund grant. The project directly benefits Reaseheath College, Leighton Hospital and a number of major employers within the local area. Initial monitoring shows a 43% increase in cyclists, using the route, 60% increase in pedestrians delivering a very high benefit to cost ratio of 4.0.

7.3.3 Priorities for Improvement

The UK government published its Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and technical guidance for local authorities on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans in April 2017. The strategy presents the government's ambitions and actions planned to achieve them and provides guidance on the cycling infrastructure investment process. The strategy, together with the technical guidance for local authorities on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, inform and guide the Council's investment in cycling infrastructure.

Cheshire East Council adopted a Cycling Strategy in 2017 as part of the transport strategy framework. Driven by the vision to enable more people to cycle safely, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys, it sets out guidelines for future cycling investment for the 2017 – 2027 period. The main targets are to double the number of people cycling, to improve public perception of cycling and to increase leisure cycling within the Borough. The strategy's objectives to improve cycling are outlined below:

Objective 1	Create and maintain safe, attractive, cohesive, direct and adaptable networks and infrastructure
Objective 2	Ensure cycling is integrated with other transport modes, transport networks, the public realm and new developments
Objective 3	Ensure high quality facilities are in place to support people who cycle and that will attract people to live work in the area
Objective 4	Use targeted cycle promotion, education and training
Objective 5	Integrate and align policies, procedures and practices to encourage cycling
Objective 6	Provide residents, officers and organisations of Cheshire East the tools to deliver cycle-friendly infrastructure & initiatives

Objectives of the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy

A perceived lack of safety, together with the fragmented cycling network, are consistently identified as the main barriers to higher levels of cycling in the Borough. Building a cohesive and high quality network of cycle lanes and paths is therefore key to making cycling more attractive in Cheshire East. Delivering this cycle-friendly environment will rely on cycling infrastructure which is safe, attractive, cohesive, direct and adaptable.

The strategy will therefore support delivery of a network of key routes for cycling that link with existing local routes in order to connect residents and visitors to jobs, skills, schools, services and leisure opportunities. The envisaged network of strategic cycle routes is displayed in the figure below.

Strategic Cycle Routes in Cheshire East

The existing network of leisure routes is an essential asset to encourage leisure cycling and support the local visitor economy. These routes can also fulfil a double function as they do not only provide scenic leisure routes but also connect residential areas with workplaces and are therefore suitable for utilitarian cycling, too.

In order to make cycling the natural choice, cycling needs to be integrated with other modes, in particular public transport by bus and rail, but also with the wider transport network, which can – in the form of the major road network – represent a barrier to local cycling trips. Similarly, cycling and cyclists' needs ought to be considered when designing the public realm and new developments. Doing so will reduce barriers for cycling, create more seamless journeys and facilitate cycling as part of a longer, multi-modal journey.

The continued, targeted promotion of cycling in businesses, schools and communities and the provision of cycle education and training ought to complement the creation of high quality infrastructure. Together with the integration and alignment of policies, procedures and practices

to encourage cycling, this will ensure the most efficient use of existing infrastructure and resources for cycling in Cheshire East.

As laid out in the Cycling Strategy, Town Cycling Plans will be developed under the lead of local cycling groups, who possess in-depth knowledge of existing conditions and needs. Plans will illustrate existing routes and propose new local routes with the purpose of becoming adopted as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and provide guidance on future planning and infrastructure proposals. Moreover, cycle proofing training is being rolled out to ensure that cyclists' needs are fully considered as early as possible in the planning of new transport schemes and developments.

The delivery of major highway schemes can also provide opportunities for improved walking and cycling provision. This may take the form of improved provision delivered alongside as part of the scheme itself or creating opportunities for the Council and partners to take advantage of road space released by the delivery of major schemes to implement walking and cycling measures e.g. if a bypass reduces town centre traffic levels to allow sufficient capacity to support the delivery of segregated cycle ways.

In 2017, Cheshire East became the first local authority to formally support the Space for Cycling campaign promoted by Cycling UK by allocating 8.5% of its own local transport budget to active travel for the year 2017/18. For 2017/2018, funding for cycling infrastructure has been secured from diverse sources, including from the Local Growth Fund allocated to the Cheshire and Warrington LEP (share of £5m.), Local Growth Fund match funding by the council (£0.5m) and £0.6m secured from the DfT to fund Bikeability cycle training for children.

The 2015 to 2019 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Implementation Plan puts forward five measures relating to cycling infrastructure, including upgrades of footpaths and improvement of existing trails and bridleways. Likewise, the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan features ten interventions aimed at cycling, including new links, the creation of shared spaces, improvements of existing leisure and utilitarian cycle paths and promotion of routes.

Doubling the number of people cycling, improving public perception of cycling and increasing leisure cycling are ambitious targets that will require dedicated and continuous efforts to improve the cycling network and cyclists' safety. But work is already underway to support achieving these ambitions, including the completion of the final stage of the cycle facilities along the A538 to create a route between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport, and the extension of the Leighton/North West Greenway linking to new developments in Leighton and Leighton Hospital.

Future capital investment will be guided by the vision for the strategic cycle routes defined in the cycle strategy and the priority routes identified by the Town Cycling Plans. Specific cycling infrastructure schemes will be put forward in each of the Place based strategies, based on the principles outlined in the cycle strategy and identified local needs and requirements.

Action 7.6 - We will continue to maintain and improve the existing cycling infrastructure and develop a network of strategic high quality cycle routes connecting the Borough

Action 7.7 – We will support the development of Town Cycling Plans and their integration in the Neighbourhood Plans for all towns and key service centres in the Borough

Action 7.8 – We will support the delivery of improved walking and cycling infrastructure as part of the delivery of other major transport schemes

Action 7.9 – We will seek to ensure that developments are planned in a sustainable way through the inclusion of active travel facilities and linkages

7.4   Other vulnerable road users

Equestrianism is a popular leisure activity throughout Cheshire East, as the rural character of the Borough lends itself to horse riding; with a number of promoted horse riding routes available.

Recent work to improve the number of available paths for horse riders was delivered as part of the Connect2 Crewe to Nantwich Greenway, which includes a section suitable for horse riding along Middlewich Road, and the creation of a new bridleway in the Carrs park in Wilmslow.

Our highway network and wider transport system must be suitable for all, including those with disabilities who may or may not be using mobility aids or vehicles as well as children and those with buggies etc.

Action 7.10 - We will maintain, improve and promote the paths available for leisure use, including horse riding

Action 7.11 – We will seek to ensure that the publically accessible highway and transport network supports accessibility for all and does not exclude anyone

7.5   Integration with other modes / land use

Walking and cycling trips often form part of a longer journey which includes different modes. The possibility to seamlessly change from one mode to another, such as to cycle from home to the rail station to then take the train and then walk from the station to work, increases the attractiveness of active travel, including improving the appeal of available routes ad facilities effectively enables people to shift from the car to more sustainable ways of travel. Poor integration of modes thus constitutes a barrier for increased levels of active travel.

The integration of walking stands or falls with the accessibility for pedestrians of stations and stops, and with the quality, comfort and safety of footpaths.

To better integrate active travel with bus and rail transport, stations and stops need to be accessible and should cater for the particular needs and requirements of mobility-impaired pedestrians, including elderly, disabled and pushchair users.

The provision of secure and accessible cycle parking that provides a safe and weatherproof place to store bikes at trip end points such as bus stops, stations, interchanges, businesses, education providers, shopping and service centres, is key for the integration of cycling with walking, public transport and rail travel. Increasingly, the provision of charging infrastructure for e-bikes should also be considered as e-bikes can benefit many users through reducing the impediment of distance, gradient and physical limitations.

Often, leisure cycling, hiking, walking and horse riding goes in hand with a private vehicle ride from and back to home. Measures to promote the use of alternative modes to reach recreational areas should therefore be considered. An often neglected aspect of promoting sustainable leisure travel is encouraging accommodation providers to provide facilities and services for walkers and cyclists. The absence of station transfer services or secure cycle parking can discourage potential cyclists or walkers. Providing for these customers is also in the interest of the local visitor economy, as there is the potential to discourage these visitors through a lack of facilities.

For a range of popular attractions that are in some distance of the next interchange or rail station, such as Jodrell Bank or Tatton Park, cycle routes and footpaths linking these attractions with the nearest public transport hub would provide an incentive for choosing sustainable transport options and render routes more attractive and safer for those that already use them.

Rental bikes available at rail stations provide users with the choice of using a bike for their onward journey without the need to own a bike or to carry it on the train, significantly reducing barriers to cycling as part of multimodal trips. Bike & Go is currently operating such a scheme at both Knutsford and Wilmslow rail stations.

Major road schemes should not only provide high quality cycling and walking infrastructure as part of the scheme but traffic reduction on some roads resulting from such schemes also provide an opportunity to cater for walking and cycling on quieter and safer roads. With lower traffic flows enabling traffic calming measures, the creation of cycle lanes or improvement to foot and cycle paths, providing a safer and more attractive environment for active travel. Additionally, routes for walking and cycling should, where feasible, be more direct and seamless than the alternative car route, for instance by selectively closing roads for cars but enabling pedestrians and cyclists to use them as shortcuts.

As stated in the Local Plan, developments should take place where infrastructure for active travel is already existing or can be supplied. If not, developers will be encouraged to provide or support the creation of walking and cycling infrastructure connecting to and within sites. The provision of daily services, employment and education within walking or cycling distance encourages active travel and reduces the need for longer distance travel. With public transport stops and interchanges reachable by foot or bike, walking and cycling are also likely to be considered as part of longer, multimodal journeys. Together, this diminishes the demand for travel in the first place and reduces the need for car use.

Action 7.12 - We will continue to reduce barriers for multimodal active travel and improve the accessibility to and facilities at rail and bus stations for pedestrians and cyclists

Action 7.13 - We will facilitate the use of walking and cycling to access leisure destinations and for leisure trips

Action 7.14 – We will seek external funding from all sources to support active and sustainable travel interventions

8   Bus

Bus is the most significant means of local public transport serving Cheshire East, enabling a wide range of local trips to be completed safely, sustainably and cost-effectively. Bus networks in the Borough are provided by a mix of commercial, supported and specialist provision with the local authority responsible for coordination, information provision and integration. These tasks are delivered through our arms-length specialist transport company – Transport Service Solutions (TSS). Working closely with the range of private bus operators working in the Borough, the Council aims to ensure that local buses fulfil their maximum potential in meeting the transport needs of residents.

The Council has recently completed a thorough review of the local bus network serving Cheshire East, to inform proposals for changes to those local bus services that are supported (subsidised) by Cheshire East Council. Following on from this significant set of changes, there is a need to review and refresh to overall strategy for buses across the Borough.

Key objectives for an updated strategy for local buses include:

- Improving the whole journey experience for bus users through uplifting the provision and quality of stops, shelters, vehicles, passenger information and the range of fares a & season tickets. This can only be achieved through effective cooperation with the wider bus industry.

- Providing safe waiting facilities at bus stations and stops through maintenance and improvement programmes

- Providing reliable information to passengers to enable journey-planning, with information available both at stops and digitally before people start their journey.

- Working to improve the commercial viability of bus routes throughout the Borough, so as to minimise the requirement for public financial support.

- Improving the environmental credentials of bus travel by working with operators to see early adoption of more efficient, sustainable and alternatively-fuelled vehicles.

- Enhancing the cost-effectiveness of bus travel for passengers by encouraging the development of flexible, multi-operator season tickets – potentially through the roll-out of Smart Ticketing systems.

- Ensuring that punctuality and reliability are improved across the network, especially where there are persistent impacts of traffic congestion.

- Integrating the needs of local bus services into the development planning process and, where appropriate, securing financial contributions to the infrastructure and operation of buses to serve new developments.

- Working across boundaries with operators and neighbouring local authorities to ensure that bus routes reflect the journeys people wish to make to work, health care, education and leisure.

The Council will pursue these objectives through the development of a specific Local Bus Strategy under the framework defined in our updated Local Transport Plan. We will work in partnership with the commercial sector to seek shared outcomes, with all parties taking their role and responsibilities to strengthen the long-term future for buses in Cheshire East.

8.1   Flexible Transport

The Council recognises that traditional, schedule bus services may not meet the needs of all residents and communities in Cheshire East. Where bus services are not the best solution, it may be advantageous to consider flexible transport solutions.

The Council has provided a flexible transport service – branded Little Bus - for a number of years. This service provides a safety net for isolated communities or passengers with particular mobility needs. The service is regularly used by a relatively small but important group of users, who consider it is critical to meeting their local travel needs.

Following on from our review of supported local bus services, the Council intends to complete a thorough review of the current Little Bus services. The objectives of this review are, as follows;

- To maximise the impact of flexible transport for those communities in Cheshire East where "traditional" bus services are not available

- To make the services as flexible and responsive to users as possible,

- To consider options for flexible transport to provide greater certainty to users, especially occasional users, through some form of "shadow timetable"

- To minimise the operating costs of Little Bus to ensure its long-term financial sustainability.

9 Rail

9.1 Introduction

The Cheshire East area plays an important role in rail connectivity, with Crewe providing a nationally significant hub for connections on the West Coast Mainline with London, Birmingham, North Wales, Manchester, Liverpool and Scotland. The district also possesses access to inter-city services from Macclesfield and Wilmslow, and a number of inter-urban connections that are essential to the ongoing vitality of the economy.

9.2 Current Context

The rail market has seen huge growth in recent years with 1.69 billion passenger journeys being made in Great Britain in 2015-16, an increase of 129.8% since the railways were privatised in 1994[27]. However, on a number of routes across northern England it is clear that demand remains suppressed by a lack of capacity (of track and available rolling stock) resulting in heavily loaded services during peak periods, allied to a poor perception of rolling stock quality on local routes. Within Cheshire East, the majority of rail connections between service centres operate at a frequency no greater than hourly, apart from key inter-city and local connections from Crewe, Wilmslow and Macclesfield on the West Coast Mainline.

It is recognised that investment is needed to support growth aspirations within Cheshire East, both to improve the quality and frequency of services. In the short to medium term, this relates to infrastructure improvements delivered by Network Rail, and service enhancements specified by the Department for Transport (DfT) and delivered by Train Operating Companies (TOCs) through the franchising process. In the longer term, opportunities exist to maximise the reach of the High Speed Rail Network, both through improved coherency with local services at Crewe, and released capacity for passengers and freight on the existing network elsewhere within the Borough.

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[27] Office of Rail and Road (2016) *Passenger Rail Usage 2015-16 Q4 Statistical Release*

The existing rail connections are summarised below by franchise and route:

Franchise	Incumbent	Renewal Date	Route	Stations served	Intermediate Links	Frequency
Intercity West Coast	Virgin Trains	April 2018	London – Scotland / North Wales / Liverpool / Manchester	Crewe, Wilmslow	From Crewe: Warrington, Chester, Runcorn, Wigan Stockport (from Wilmslow and Crewe)	4 tph to London & 1 tph each to Scotland / Chester (N. Wales) / Manchester / Liverpool
			London – Manchester	Macclesfield	Stoke, Stockport	Hourly
West Midlands	Govia London Midland (until December 2017) Abellio West Midlands Trains Ltd.	March 2026	London – Crewe	Alsager	Stafford, Stoke	Hourly
			Birmingham – Liverpool	Crewe	Wolverhampton, Stafford, Runcorn, Liverpool South Parkway (for John Lennon Airport)	Half Hourly
East Midlands	Stagecoach East Midlands Trains	March 2019	Derby – Crewe	Alsager	Stoke, Kidsgrove	Hourly
Crosscountry	Arriva Crosscountry	December 2019	Bournemouth - Manchester	Macclesfield	Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Stoke, Stockport	Hourly
Wales & Borders	Arriva Trains Wales	October 2018	Crewe – Chester	Crewe		Hourly
			Cardiff - Manchester	Nantwich, Crewe, Wilmslow	Stockport, Shrewsbury	Hourly (2 hourly from Nantwich)
			Crewe – Shrewsbury	Nantwich, Wrenbury	Whitchurch	
Northern	Arriva Rail North	October 2025	"Mid-Cheshire Line" Chester – Manchester	Plumley, Knutsford, Mobberley, Ashley	Northwich, Altrincham, Stockport	Hourly
			Crewe – Manchester (via Airport)	Sandbach, Holmes Chapel, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow	Manchester Airport,	Hourly
			Crewe - Manchester	Sandbach, Holmes Chapel, Goostrey, Chelford, Alderley Edge, Wilmslow, Handforth	Stockport	Hourly
			Stoke – Manchester	Congleton, Macclesfield, Prestbury, Adlington, Poynton	Stockport	Hourly
			Buxton – Manchester	Disley, Middlewood	New Mills, Stockport	Hourly (2 hourly from Middlewood)

9.3 Existing Constraints

The existing rail network is predominantly of two-track configuration, which inherently limits the ability to successfully segregate fast and slow passenger services on the same corridor, and constrains the ability to accommodate growth areas for freight. The diagram below summarises the current track configuration within Cheshire East.

9.3.1 Number of Tracks

Crewe Station acts a regional hub for rail connectivity, providing interchange between local and long distance rail services. The convergence of a number of routes to the immediate north and south of the station serve to limit the resilience of the network through the necessity for movements across the layout, which in turn increases the hourly track occupancy. Delays occurring at Crewe can serve to import performance issues onto services across the WCML.

On mainline sections, the lack of segregation between intercity and local services limits the ability to provide additional paths for local stopping services and freight. Strategic east-west freight flows (such as Port of Liverpool to Drax) use more circuitous alternative routes through Cheshire East, where permitted by gauge clearance.

Elsewhere within the Borough, there are physical constraints that limit opportunities to introduce or intensify service provision without physical improvement to track capacity (on single track sections), junctions and line speed, notably at the following locations:

- The Mid-Cheshire Line between Chester & Manchester;
- The Crewe – Stoke – Derby line; and
- The Crewe – Sandbach – Middlewich – Northwich line (currently freight only).

Action 9.1 – We will lobby for investment in rail infrastructure where it will unlock opportunities for improved rail services within the Borough

9.4   Existing Connections

The direct connections between the two Principal Towns and nine Key Service Centres of Cheshire East are summarised for Monday – Saturday (including peak) and Sundays within the figures below. The geography of the existing rail network limits the ability to make direct journeys between the Principal towns of Crewe and Macclesfield, as they are on parallel branches of the West Coast Mainline; both routes provide connections to Manchester and Stockport. The most consistent service pattern within Cheshire East is between Crewe and Wilmslow (4tph); however, outside the peaks, links between Key Service Centres (apart from Crewe – Sandbach) services do not exceed an hourly frequency, and many links are only possible with an interchange at Crewe, or outside the Borough (such as Cheadle Hulme). Middlewich is the only key service centre without an existing rail service.

Direct Weekday Rail Services

Legend:
- 1 = Direct Rail Link / Per hour (peak)
- No direct Rail Links
- Not currently served by rail

Station matrix (stations along diagonal): CREWE, MACCLESFIELD, Alsager, Congleton, Handforth, Knutsford, Middlewich, Nantwich, Poynton, Sandbach, Wilmslow.

	CREWE	MACCLESFIELD	Alsager	Congleton	Handforth	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow
MACCLESFIELD	2										
Alsager	1(2)										
Congleton	1										
Handforth											
Nantwich	1										
Poynton	1(2)		1								
Sandbach	2(3)			1							
Wilmslow	4		1(2)			0.5(1)			2		

Daily Sunday Rail Services

Legend:
- 1 = Sunday Services per day
- No direct Rail Links
- Not currently served by rail

	CREWE	MACCLESFIELD	Alsager	Congleton	Handforth	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow
MACCLESFIELD	22										
Alsager	5										
Congleton	5										
Nantwich	6										
Poynton	4		5								
Sandbach	6			5							
Wilmslow	17		6						4		6
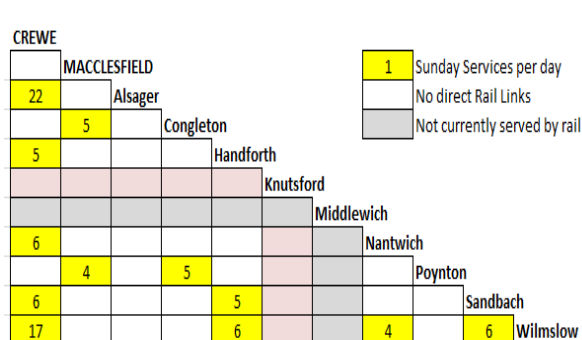
9.5　Existing Franchise Position

The Council recognises the importance of influencing the franchising process in order to achieve the best possible service provision for users and maximum investment into the local rail network. The Council (as part of Cheshire & Potteries) are members of the Rail North Partnership, who jointly specified the new "Northern" and "Transpennine" franchises with DfT. This relationship will also be important in making representation on franchises that are notionally controlled in other regions, but have a direct bearing on service provision within the district, notably East Midlands and Wales & Borders. The importance of working with sub-regional partners and stakeholders is recognised, as well as the role of Community Rail Partnerships and local user groups in understanding local needs and developing grassroots initiatives.

In Cheshire East, the Northern Franchise will deliver the following direct benefits to rolling stock and service provision from late 2018 onwards:

- The delivery of 281 new carriages (as 2,3 and 4 carriage formations) from late 2018;
- The removal of all existing "Pacer" trains by the end of 2019;
- The provision of an additional hourly (Mon-Sat) service between Greenbank and Manchester Piccadilly, resulting in 2 trains per hour (tph) from Knutsford alongside the existing Chester – Northwich – Manchester service. Introduction of an hourly Sunday service across the full route;
- The provision of an additional hourly (Mon-Sat) service between Macclesfield and Manchester, supplementing the existing hourly Crosscountry, Virgin, and Northern services, and resulting in 2 tph from Poynton. Provision of an hourly Sunday service between Stoke and Manchester, calling at all stations; and
- The provision of an additional service (resulting in 2 tph) and faster journey times between New Mills Newtown and Manchester, serving Disley.

From 1 April 2019, the InterCity West Coast franchise will be replaced with a new franchise in combination with HS2: The West Coast Partnership rail franchise (WCP). This franchise will begin in April 2019 and will design and run the initial HS2 services across the country from 2026. The winning bidder will also deliver the transition of the timetable on the West Coast Main Line as it is revised to take advantage of the extra capacity provided by HS2.

Action 9.2 – We will continue to work with partners at the sub-regional and national level to influence the specification of rail franchises in the best interests of the Borough

9.6　Growth Trends

9.6.1　Passenger Growth

Patronage figures obtained from the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) indicate a trend of rising demand for rail travel in the North West. In 2015/16 a total of 36 million rail journeys were made

to/from the North West, an increase of 2 million against the previous year (2014/15), and 92 million rail journeys were made within the North West, an increase of 1 million[28]. With regard to strategic connections, there was significant growth in movement with the key markets of London (6.1%); the West Midlands (6.3%); and Yorkshire and the Humber (6.5%), as demonstrated by the figure below. This rising trend has placed further limitations upon the ability of existing rolling stock to accommodate demand, notably on peak time commuter services into major cities from districts such as Cheshire East.

North West rail passenger growth from 2014/15 - 2015/16
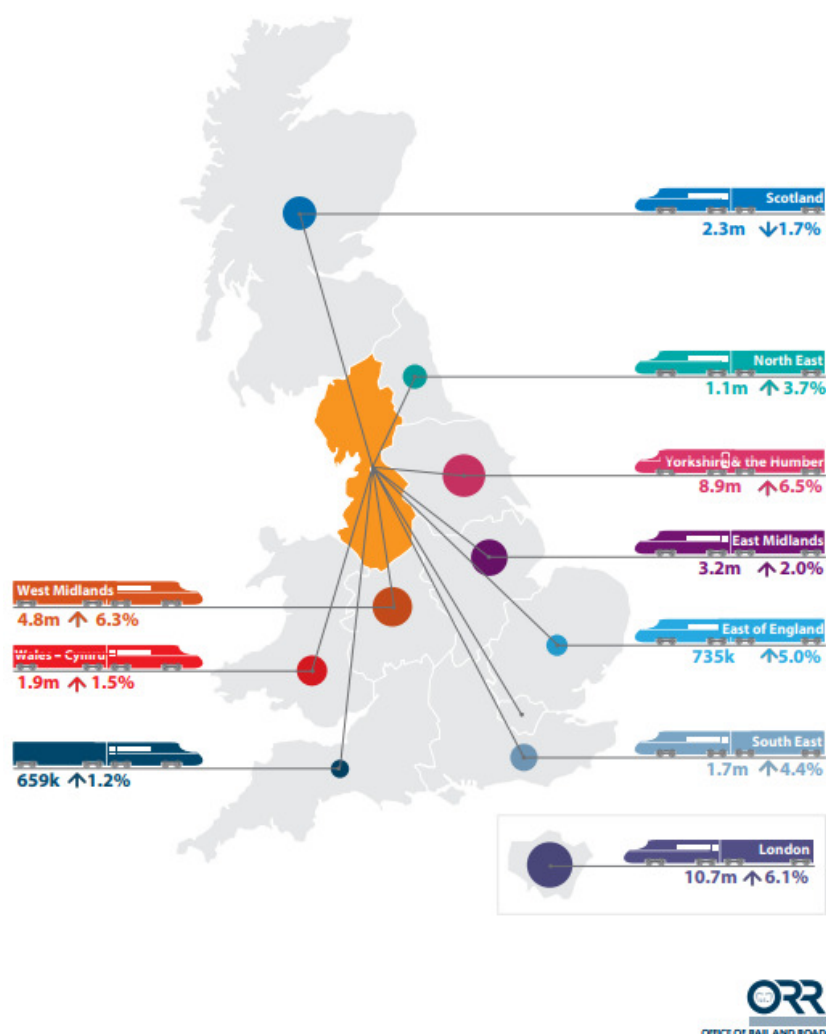
9.6.2 Station Usage

The National Rail network is accessible from 22 railway stations across Cheshire East. The number of passengers carried by rail services serving Cheshire East continues to show strong growth, though it is noted that growth in certain instances has been limited by the availability and

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[28] Office of Road and Rail (2017) *Regional Rail Usage*

capacity of services, especially at stations where there is currently an hourly frequency. A comparison of Passenger Footfall data (ORR) between 2012/13 and 2015/16 at stations relating to the two Principal towns and nine Key Service Centres shows an increase in passenger numbers by at least 11%: Crewe and Alsager have increased by 16%; Macclesfield and Wilmslow by over 20%; Nantwich by 30%; and, Sandbach by 40%[29]. The top five busiest stations in Cheshire East are Crewe, Macclesfield, Wilmslow, Knutsford and Congleton.

Two stations that have demonstrated progressive growth within the top five will benefit from additional service provision as a result of the new Northern franchise, with an additional service every hour at Macclesfield (to Manchester); Knutsford (between Greenbank and Manchester). Additional growth opportunities will also be presented by new services in each hour at Poynton (Macclesfield to Manchester) and Disley (New Mills to Manchester).

Action 9.3 – We will work to support additional rail services in the Borough where they will bring most benefit

9.7 Priorities for Improvement

The Council will focus on specific improvements that are necessary to deliver better rail services within the district, and meet aspirations for growth over the next 30 years. Research has highlighted the importance of small and medium sized cities and large towns, the role of which is too often overlooked nationally[30]. As such, improving rail connectivity between the Principal Towns and Key Service Centres must be a priority.

Collaboration will be required with the DfT to maximise the benefit to be accrued from the delivery of nationally significant infrastructure such as HS2, and with TfN (incorporating Rail North) for the delivery of complementary interventions on the surrounding "classic" network, both from the perspective of reutilising released capacity, and improving overall coherency and interchange opportunities. The interface with Welsh Government and Midlands Connect will also be critical in understanding how mutual aspirations can be achieved through better cross-border travel opportunities.

Action 9.4 – We will work with partners to renew and improve rail stations and facilities, including at Macclesfield

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[29] Office of Rail and Road (2016) *Passenger Rail Usage 2015-16 Q4 Statistical Release*
[30] IPPR (2016) *The role of small and medium sized towns and cities in growing the Northern Powerhouse*
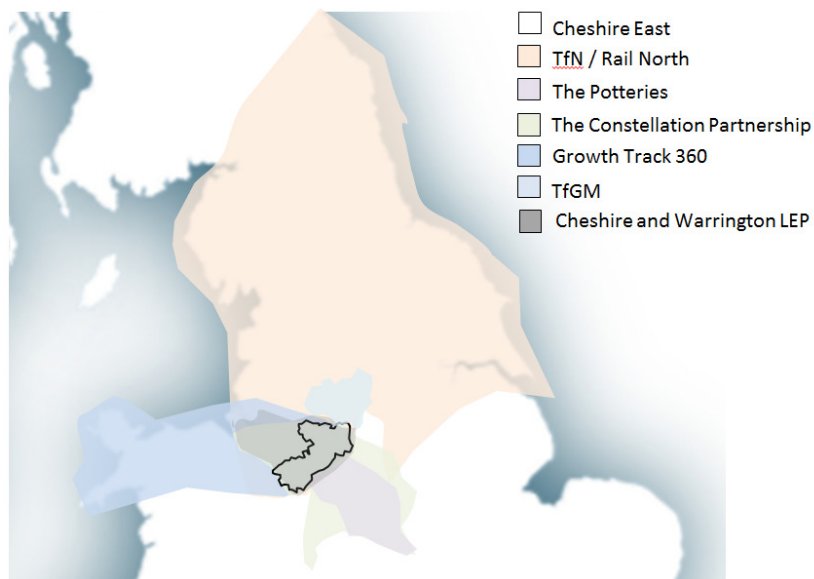
9.7.1 National Passenger Growth

The delivery of High Speed 2 to Crewe will have a major influence on the economic progress of the district over the next 30 years, particularly the realisation of the Constellation Partnership growth strategy for north Crewe and beyond, and the forecasts for additional development that are incumbent within it. Phase 1 of the scheme (London to Birmingham) received royal ascent in February 2017, and the Hybrid Bill for Phase 2A as far as Crewe is currently going through Parliament.

The HS2 Hub has the ability to transform Crewe through attracting investment and growth in the region. Current plans are for two trains per hour to stop at Crewe, however, there is potential for this to increase which would release additional benefits of HS2 coming through Crewe and growth for the regional and local economy. As part of the Phase 2a Hybrid Bill, the government have committed to a new island platform at Crewe Station (platform 12), which will free capacity on the other tracks and platforms, facilitating HS2 services stopping at Crewe whilst maintaining existing services.

The Council are undertaking work on the Crewe Masterplan, which sets out growth and development ambitions for the future. It plans for the future of the town, setting out where investment and opportunities are for growth. This will be consulted on post HS2 consultations, towards the end of 2018.

Action 9.5 – We will work to achieve maximum Borough wide benefit from HS2 whilst achieving mitigation measures to minimise negative impacts on residents

Action 9.6 – We will use HS2 as an opportunity to drive substantial investment and improvement in Crewe, including through the development of the Crewe Masterplan

9.7.2 Regional Passenger Growth

In order to enhance the success of HS2 hub and maximise benefits of the project in Cheshire East, rail improvements are fundamental across the sub-regional rail network, increasing connectivity to adjacent destinations within the North West such as Liverpool, Chester and Warrington. Services on the classic network need to be robust, with the relevant service frequency and journey times in order to improve the ease by which passengers can access HS2 services at Crewe. Investment will be required in order to bring forward any works that may be required in order to improve this connectivity, and should avoid any deprecation of existing connecting services that may result from the delivery of works to accommodate HS2. As detailed above, HS2 will be a component of discussions not only for the West Coast franchise, but also for franchises that have an interface at Crewe, notably East Midlands (to Stoke and Derby); and Wales and Borders (to Cardiff, Chester, and Manchester).

Noting the symbiotic labour markets that exist across the Welsh Border, and the significant volumes of commuters that travel into Cheshire East from North Wales, the Growth track 360 Strategy was launched in 2016 by the Mersey Dee Alliance. It has the complementary aim of securing £1bn of rail improvements to transform the Cheshire and North Wales economy, linked to the delivery of an additional 70,000 jobs over 20 years. It aims specifically to maximise the benefits of interface with HS2, including electrification of the line from Crewe to North Wales, and identifies the need for investment in rolling stock to improve the quality of trains and train services.

Action 9.7 – We will work to ensure that HS2 does not detrimentally impact conventional services linking to the Borough

Action 9.8 – We will support delivery of Growth Track 360

9.7.3 Local Passenger Growth

As plans for the Crewe Hub station are developed, sufficient capacity and flexibility should be included to enable full realisation of the wider aspirations and benefits to Cheshire East. Revision of West Coast Mainline services post HS2 offer opportunities to develop new local service patterns.

The railway line through Middlewich is currently used solely for freight. Re-opening the Northwich to Sandbach line for passenger services would increase travel choice, improve accessibility and enable sustainable growth in Middlewich. An area of land has been safeguarded to explore the potential delivery of a new station. Network Rail have a long term plan which has identified the

need for an additional service to be delivered post-delivery of HS2, which may serve the mid-Cheshire towns amongst other places along this route.

The section of the railway between Crewe and Alsager requires investment; double tracking this section of railway would enable service increases on the Crewe to Derby line. The current hourly service does not meet existing need. Upon completion of HS2 in 2033, the Crewe to Derby railway line will be in a unique position to link the two sections of the HS2 'Y' network. The route will join up key economic centres across the midlands; the HS2 hubs at both Toton and Crewe amplify the importance of this railway. The route provides significant inter-regional east-west movement potential linking the main towns and cities in the midlands and North West.

Action 9.9 – We will work with partners with the aim of reopening the Northwich to Sandbach rail line to passenger traffic

Action 9.10 – We will work with partners with the aim of double tracking the section of line between Crewe and Alsager

9.7.4 Rail Freight Growth

Rail freight is a successful aspect of the UK rail network, with over £2bn invested in the rail network by rail freight operators; supporting growth of over 70% is the last 20 years. The Council is supportive of rail freight in its role to reduce the number of HGVs on the roads.

The freight sector has an opportunity to capitalise on capacity freed by HS2, as a means to accommodate projected growth on the West Coast Mainline, notably between Crewe and Warrington. The port of Warrington is aiming for growth in addition to the delivery of Liverpool 2, which would increase demand for rail freight paths along this route. General improvements on the Crewe to Warrington route would benefit freight trains as well as passenger services.

Action 9.11 – We will promote rail freight as a more sustainable method of haulage except in instances where there are conflicts with passenger services

10 Public Transport Information and Ticketing

10.1 Ticketing

Technology and innovation are becoming more prominent in terms of the role they play in the transport network, and this is likely to increase. Technology enables the facilities that are required in order to develop, expand and link different modes of transport, for example dealing effectively with the complex arrangements for information and pricing structures for seamless organisation of the bus network. It is important that methods adopted are consistent with changing lifestyles and predictions around the future uses of technology that will be used to purchase tickets.

Transport for the North (TfN) have been working in partnership with operators and transport authorities to deliver an integrated ticketing scheme that will make it easier for passengers to travel seamlessly using a payment method of their choice. The ticketing system will allow passengers to be confident that they have paid the cheapest possible fare; with the aim encouraging new passengers to travel by public transport thus bringing benefits to the operation of the road network and the environment, TfN are implementing this through a phased approach. The system also has potential for increasing competition for passengers and resources, potentially linked to the recent Bus Services Act which supports a more joined up approach to ticketing and bus service organisation.

Working with TfN, the Council would welcome a smart ticketing system within Cheshire East to deliver the benefits associated with such a roll-out across the north. Multi-modal, multi-regional and multi-operator ticketing and visitor tickets would simplify the system, providing clear and transparent ticket prices for passengers. This would increase accessibility and likelihood of people using public transport for all or part of their journeys.

Action 10.1 – We will work with partners to improve information around bus services and ticketing, including supporting a move to smart ticketing where appropriate

10.2 Information

A lack of integration between transport services has been identified as a significant barrier to greater use of bus and rail services, causing significant increases in journey time and discouraging multi-modal travel. Initiatives to overcome this have been shown to have the potential to increase the appeal of travel by public transport and provide an attractive alternative to the private car.

The provision of additional information at bus stops/stations and railway stations increases the likelihood of the use of public transport and interchange, as do improved interchange facilities e.g. clear signage, walking routes, information etc. Improved communications such as real-time information (RTI) has also been shown to help ensure that users who have just missed a connection do not wait unnecessarily, but are aware of the next service available to them.

Improved accessibility to public transport can be achieved through expanding and improving the number of channels that are available to communicate with passengers. This may include a variety of sources such as traditional time tables as well as mobile phone apps and other media which may emerge in the future and help to ensure that the information on offer is as up to date as possible. Good quality information ensures that users at unstaffed stations and users outside of ticket office hours are kept informed, and the modes of travel on offer are accessible as up to date information is available. Ensuring that all rail stations have ticket machines prevents travelling without a ticket, when ticket offices are closed or at unmanned stations.

Action 10.2 – We will work with partners to improve information at interchange facilities

10.3 Facilities

Facilities at transport hubs and interchanges, such as improved parking, cycle stands, bus links, the provision of raised kerbs and dropped crossings and disabled access improve accessibility for a wide range of users and encourage a shift to multi-modal travel. The provision of raised and dropped kerbs can improve accessibility for wheelchair users, parents with buggies and people with mobility constraints.

In addition to the provision of accessible infrastructure, bus and rail stations should be well maintained, through the maintenance of seating areas and ensuring that litter bins are emptied regularly. This provides a more pleasant environment for users whilst interchanging and increases the likelihood of use of public transport. The installation and maintenance of lighting and CCTV at bus and rail stations improved people's perceptions of safety when travelling late at night and also during the winter months. These changes, in addition to a well maintained interchange and changing facilities enhance users' safety (both actual and perceived) whilst travelling by bus and rail.

Action 10.3 – We will promote well maintained and accessible interchange facilities which feel safe to use day or night

10.4 Integration

The economic and social benefits of short and direct rail services between key cities and other strategic locations are well established. Public transport delivers business connectivity as well as supporting commuting and leisure journeys. Ensuring that public transport and active modes are well connected with bus and rail stations bring real benefits on top of expanding the reach of these services.

The integration of bus services with other modes of transport, such as rail and cycling facilities, is important in order to encourage the use of public transport for people travelling for both leisure and commuting purposes. For example, a bus service which has a stop at the nearest train station may encourage people to use the bus rather than drive to the train station.

Public transport also should be integrated with walking and cycling. Safe routes that are well-designed, with signage to key destinations are factors which can improve connectivity and expand the public transport catchment area. Key interchanges such as train stations and bus stations should have changing facilities and bicycle parking for those choosing to cycle. The health and cost benefits of active travel should also be promoted.

Action 10.4 - We will work with passenger transport providers (bus, rail and community transport) and other partners to improve public transport integration and facilities in Cheshire East

11 Roads

11.1 The importance of the highways network in Cheshire East

Our residents, employees and visitors rely on the extensive roads network to travel to, from and within Cheshire East. The highway network performs a vital function by connecting places and people in the Borough and ensuring access to services, education, employment and leisure. In rural areas the highways network is especially important with over 57% of Cheshire East's highway network being classed as rural and serving over half of our population. Moreover, the highway network also plays a pivotal role in connecting Cheshire to the wider region and national centres via the strategic road network and to the global economy via international hubs. The quality and availability of the highway network is therefore vital to the sub-regional economy.

11.1.1 The local, major and strategic road networks

Different parts of the highway network perform different roles and hence have distinct characteristics. While the strategic road network (SRN) comprises the country's motorways and trunk roads and is under the authority of Highway England, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, the local road network consists of local A, B and C roads and are managed by Cheshire East Highways. The SRN ensures connections between Cheshire East and England's key cities and economic centres and is a key element of the primary route network that links the whole of England, whereas the local road network provides primarily connections between places and service centres in the Borough as well as local access to places, services, housing and employment.

However, there are a significant number of locally managed highway routes in Cheshire East that perform critically important economic functions in linking the key centres, and providing interface points with the SRN, which have been defined as constituting part of a Major Route Network. Transport for the North (TfN) has defined such a MRN which is composed of the SRN and key local roads. In the future, the ambition is that a portion of the new National Roads Fund might be allocated to the MRN. The MRN acts as interface between the SRN and the local roads, providing access between towns, settlements and economic centres on the one hand and the SRN on the other.

In Cheshire East, the SRN is formed by the M6, M56 and A556. The MRN connects the Principal Towns, key service centres and economic centres with the SRN and consists of eleven key A-roads. With the exception of the SRN, all these roads are under the responsibility of Cheshire East Council as the local highways authority. The extent of the SRN, MRN and local highways network in Cheshire East are represented in the maps below.

Strategic road network in Cheshire East:

Major road network in Cheshire East:

Local road network in Cheshire East:

The economic performance of the Borough is closely linked to the ease of access to and from the SRN (M6, M56, A556) and the access opportunities this provides with the rest of the UK on the one hand and the local roads network that connects places in the Borough on the other hand. However, this proximity can also have a negative impact during periods of closure and delay, when strategic traffic reassigns through key centres adjacent to the motorway network, exacerbating local congestion in towns such as Crewe, Sandbach, Congleton and Macclesfield.

The key interfaces between the strategic and local highway interfaces, that are part of the MRN, are summarised below with regard to their links within Cheshire East:

Strategic Road Network	SRN junction	MRN interface	Key Service Centres in CEC	External Connections
M6	Junction 16	A500	Nantwich, Crewe	Stoke on Trent, Newcastle under Lyme, Wrexham (A534)
	Junction 17	A534	Sandbach, Congleton, Macclesfield (A536), Poynton (A523), Wilmslow (A34)	Buxton (A54)
	Junction 18	A54	Middlewich, Holmes Chapel	Mid-Cheshire towns (Winsford & Northwich), Chester, North Wales

	Junction 19	A556	Knutsford, Wilmslow (B5085), Macclesfield (A537)	Northwich, Chester, Altrincham, Manchester Airport
	Junction 20/20A	Interchange with M56	n/a	Chester, North Wales
M56	Junction 6	A538	Wilmslow,	Manchester Airport
	Junction 7/8	A556/A56	Knutsford	Altrincham
	Junction 9	Interchange with M6	n/a	Southern England, West Midlands, Lancashire

Action 11.1 – We support the establishment of a Major Roads Network and commit to additional investment in this key infrastructure if supported as necessary by national government

Action 11.2 – We will work to improve the connectivity between the local and strategic road networks

11.1.2 Pinch points and congestion

Traffic congestion on the road network results in people spending 'unproductive' time queueing. This has a real impact on business efficiency and productivity, and causes unreliability and poor performance of public transport. Furthermore, congestion has been shown to increase the levels of pollutants emitted by vehicles, and can have life-threatening effects near hospitals on ambulance routes.

The SRN within Cheshire East is under great stress with Junctions 17 to 19 of the M6 running 30-50% over capacity and Junctions 16 to 17 and 19 to 20 running 10-30% over capacity. The M56 is also running over capacity between Junctions 6 and 7, along with the A56. There are also existing issues around road safety and congestion at the interface of the SRN and the local road network.

When it comes to the local road network in Cheshire East, evidence shows that the most congested parts of the network are in the town centres. However, notable key 'hotspots' on the inter-urban network also include:
- Crewe Green Roundabout, Crewe;
- A500 Barthomley Link, Crewe;
- Parts of the A530, including Alvaston Roundabout;
- Parts of the A523 from the end of the Silk Road through to Poynton;
- The A34 (Clayton Bypass) around Congleton; and

- M6 Junction 17 Sandbach.

Ongoing and committed developments outlined in the Local Plan will lead to traffic increases and additional pressure on key junctions and links, thereby exacerbating existing pinch points and creating new bottlenecks in the network.

Before new highway capacity is created there is a need to demonstrate that the existing highway network is operating as efficiently as possible through cost-effective improvements in line with our three stage prioritised process discussed previously. It is important to demonstrate that the level of demand for additional road capacity has been minimised, for example by encouraging the use of public transport, car sharing, walking or cycling, and that environmental considerations have been assessed (e.g. impact on agricultural land, green belt, biodiversity, etc.).

Action 11.3 – We will seek effective solutions to existing pinch points on the local road network and lobby for Highways England to resolve those on the Strategic Road Network

Action 11.4 – We will work to minimise the negative impacts of development on the highway network and seek suitable mitigation measures of all types where required

11.1.3 Large and heavy vehicles – weight and width

Freight traffic is vital for the effective operation of our economy and for the goods on which we all rely. However, freight traffic has the potential to negatively impact on communities through air quality, noise, community severance and visual intrusion.

Crewe acts as a major 'hub' for road freight traffic from all over the country, this mirrors the recent economic development of Crewe as a major regional distribution centre (due, in part, to Crewe's excellent road links to the national transport network). The roads with the highest HGV flows in the Borough tend to be those within the Strategic and major Road Networks.

In recent years there has been strong growth in the use of the rail network to transport freight. Transport of freight by rail is more sustainable than by road and can lead to a reduction in the total number of miles travelled by HGV. The potential exists to capitalise on the growth in rail freight and the rail connectivity of Crewe, with similar opportunities also existing in Middlewich.

A number of problems have been identified in relation to freight movements in Cheshire East. Many of these issues relate to congestion within the Borough, resulting in lorries diverting onto unsuitable or rural routes which can lead to problems associated with road safety, poor air quality, noise, severance and visual intrusion.

It is therefore paramount to address concerns around routing, driver behaviour and delivery times, as well as to ensure routes and access arrangements are appropriately maintained and

signed. In addition, Cheshire East supports initiatives by developers, businesses, Network Rail and operators, to promote integration of road and rail freight.

Action 11.5 – We will work to improve HGV routing through measures on street, working with developers and large trip attractors e.g. supermarkets and hauliers and through the provision of information such as the innovative Freight Journey Planner

11.1.4 Delivery of major road schemes

In cases where neither maintenance nor management and redesign have been able to sufficiently improve traffic conditions and network performance at identified pinch points and known accident and congestion hotspots on the road network, new road infrastructure has and will continue to be considered following a thorough analysis in terms of economic, social and environmental costs and benefits. Where it is concluded that new infrastructure will deliver real long term benefits and address transport challenges in an efficient and sustainable manner, road schemes have and will continue to be promoted, supported and delivered.

Work is now underway to develop the second RIS (known as RIS 2) covering the second road period post 2020. The main evidence for the research phase for RIS2 are the programme of refreshed route strategies covering the entire network and the six strategic studies. One of the strategic studies investigates the Manchester North-West Quadrant, which covers the M60 form Junctions 8 to 18. Potential schemes in the study area are likely to have an impact on traffic flows on the SRN in Cheshire East.

For the SRN, the following schemes in and adjacent to the Borough have been put forward by Highways England as part of the first Road Investment Strategy from 2015 to 2020:

Strategic road network schemes		Status
M56 Junctions 6-8	Upgrading the M56 to Smart Motorway between Junction 6 & 8	Committed
M6 Junction 19 Improvements	Improved junction with the A556	Planned
M6 Junctions 16-19	Upgrading to Smart Motorway including hard shoulder running	In Construction
A556 Knutsford to Bowdon	Widening of the A556 between the M56 and M6	Completed
M6 J17 Improvement	Improved Junction 17 in Sandbach	Completed
M6 J16 Improvements	Improved Junction 16 in Stoke-on-Trent	Completed

The Council is working with partners on refreshing the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study (SEMMS) which was originally published in 2001. This refresh is linked to delivery of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road. Construction of the new link commenced in March 2015 with the road expected to open in Spring 2018. The SEMMS refresh is needed to take account of what has been achieved since the strategy was first published and to take account of significant planned growth both in the borough and across south Manchester. The 20-year strategy will be developed to deal with existing and predicted transport problems in the area and aims to:

- Improve public transport;
- Improve the use of road space;
- Encourage transport change;
- Encourage urban regeneration; and
- Improve highways.

In addition to construction of the A6MARR several schemes delivering improvements to the local and major road networks are either currently under construction or planned:

Local and major road network schemes		Status
Crewe Green Roundabout	Redesign of the Crewe Green Roundabout	Planned
Sydney Road Bridge Improvement, Crewe	Replacement of the rail bridge by a bidirectional bridge	Planned
Middlewich Eastern Bypass	Bypass for Middlewich to relieve congestion	Planned
Congleton Link Road	Bypass for Congleton to relieve congestion	Planned
A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR)	Relief road connecting the A6 to Manchester Airport. Linked to the overall South East Manchester Multi-Modal Study.	In Construction
A500 Dualling, Crewe	Dualling of the A500 between M6 J16 and the A531 and B5472 at Mere Moss Roundabout	Planned
Poynton Relief Road	Bypass for Poynton to reduce congestion and support growth	Planned
South Macclesfield Link Road	New link road supporting growth	Planned

Action 11.6 – We will support the delivery of Highway England schemes which will bring benefit to Cheshire East and actively contribute in the identification and planning of future schemes, including through the RIS2 process

Action 11.7 – We will seek effective delivery of identified major schemes on the local and major route networks

11.1.5 Potential for Electric Vehicle Usage

With the recent government announcement to ban the sale of conventional internal combustion engine vehicles from 2040 there is a significant opportunity to move to low carbon transport initiatives. Electric Vehicles are becoming ever more popular with over 100,000 on the road and future predictions only show this increasing, therefore it is important that there is the necessary infrastructure to cope with this increase. Electric vehicles provide an excellent opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and other vehicle emissions.

Cheshire East Council has secured a government grant to enable the Council to provide six 50kV rapid charging units – two each in car parks in Congleton (Princess Street), Wilmslow (South Drive) and Nantwich (Love Lane). The sites have been chosen as they are close to destination points such as supermarkets and coffee shops, where drivers can pass 20 minutes or so while waiting for their vehicle to charge.

Action 11.8 - We will continue to apply for funding from the government, in order to implement and construct infrastructure projects, such as electric vehicle charging points to make it more attractive to buy an electric vehicle.

Action 11.9 – Encourage the private sector to invest in Electric Vehicle charger stations at petrol stations, supermarkets and new developments.

11.2 Road safety

Making the roads in Cheshire East safer for all users by identifying road users most at risk and collision hotspots is at the heart of Cheshire East's approach to road safety. Appropriate measures can subsequently be developed to prevent crashes and to reduce the numbers of users killed or injured. In Cheshire East the number of serious road injuries and deaths are higher than the National average with 0.5 people killed or seriously injured (KSI) per every 1,000 people compared to the National average of 0.33 in 2015[31].

There has been success in reducing the number of KSIs in Cheshire East from 327 in 2005 to 189 in 2015 against a backdrop of increased traffic. Car occupants constitute the majority of KSIs, but vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists are overrepresented.

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[31] Department for Transport statistics. Reported casualties by severity, by local authority area, Great Britain, 2015

Road Casualties Killed or Seriously Injured
Cheshire East Reported Casualties

Legend: Pedestrians, Cyclists, Motorcyclists, Car occupants, Others

www.travellindependent.org.uk
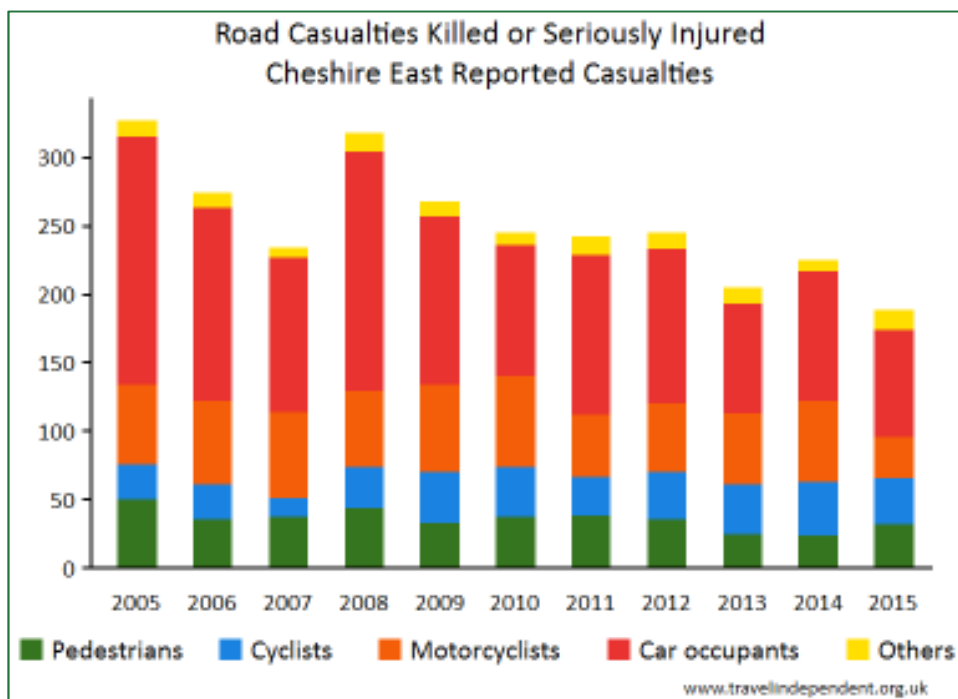
This is an issue the Council takes extremely seriously and it has invested in numerous road safety projects, including working with local and sub-regional partners including the Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue and other external organisations to provide education and training services to high risk groups (e.g. young adults and motorcyclists). The Council also undertook an evaluation of existing education and training campaigns to measure the impact they are having on the number of KSI incidents in the borough and ensuring effective delivery. These initiatives worked to inform all drivers and riders of the consequences of excessive speed, alcohol impairment and not wearing seatbelts, as well as improving observation skills through the use of national behavioural campaigns. Additionally, the Council engaged with schools, employers and in local communities to provide road safety training to cyclists identified as having a high level of risk in the Borough and promote the use of active travel.

Engineering interventions on highways and junctions can have a significant impact on the number of road traffic incidents experienced. Examples of positive action include rectifying sites with poor visibility, lighting or drainage, inappropriate crossing design, or below standard corner radius or road camber. Whilst taking care in sensitive locations, such as the Peak District National Park, to avoid clutter, light pollution or schemes with a detrimental visual impact.

Excessive and inappropriate speed is a recurring contributory factor in a high number of KSIs especially those involving young adults. Higher speeds increase the severity of crashes and resulting injuries but speed related crashes are preventable through both education of users at risk and enforcement of speed limits. The Council uses speed cameras at high risk sites to encourage drivers and riders to abide by speed limits and will continue to do so. Following an evaluation of collision hotspots circumstances were identified where pedestrians and cyclists

should be given priority on the highway network and where reduced speed limits would be appropriate.

Some road user groups are more vulnerable and more often involved in road collisions. Children are particularly vulnerable road users, as they are often still learning the correct road user behaviour and their judgment is not yet fully developed, making their behaviour sometimes unpredictable, which combined with their size means that they tend to get overlooked more often. This reaffirms the importance of road safety education from a young age and engagement with schools and other learning establishments.

Young adults aged 17 to 24 are the most accident-prone category. Due to their lack of experience and sometimes risk-seeking behaviour, including excessive and inappropriate speed and alcohol impairment, young adults constitute another vulnerable road user category. Education of young drivers and enforcement of speed and alcohol limits are thus of central importance.

Cyclists and pedestrians are two road user groups disproportionally victims of road collisions. Both are especially at risk from collisions from motorised vehicles that have higher speed and mass, exacerbating the impacts of collisions. Collision hotspots for pedestrians and cyclists are junctions, crossings and rural roads. The provision of segregated infrastructure for active travel and the treatment of high accident junctions and crossings, together with provision of information and training to cyclists and pedestrians but also to car users are effective means to increase the safety of walking and cycling.

While the overall number of motorcyclists is low (an estimated 0.71% of the working population uses them as principal means of transport to travel to work), they constitute vulnerable road users requiring a safe road environment. Amongst casualties involving young adults (between 16 and 25 years old), 17% are riding motorcycles over 215cc, and a further 7% motorcycles over 125cc.

Action 11.8 – We will continue to support the use of existing speed cameras and the introduction of speed management measures at accident hotspots as determined by the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership

Action 11.9 - We will work with partners and other organisations to provide education and training to high risk groups, including young adults, children, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists

Action 11.10 - We will continue to support programmes which inform all drivers and riders of the consequences of high-risk behaviours such as excessive speed, alcohol and drug impairment and not wearing seatbelts

Action 11.11 – We will continue to work with schools, employers and local communities to provide road safety training to cyclists and promote the use of active travel

11.3 Network management

The highways network in Cheshire East is an asset with a replacement cost of over £5.5billion encompassing 2,700 kilometres of highway. The Council is in charge of managing the local road network and has a duty to ensure a resilient and efficient highways network that effectively connects places in the Borough and further afield.

This strategy identifies maintenance and management of current assets as the number one priority for the provision of an effective transport network which will meet wider ambitions. This aligns with the integrated asset led approach taken by the Council to the management of transport assets.

11.3.1 Maintenance and asset management

The Council has a statutory duty to maintain the highway network in a safe and usable condition. The Highway Asset Management Strategy[32] (HAMS) identifies how the Council will manage and maintain the highway network and associated infrastructure. The HAMS informs priorities in the planning and delivery process and supports continual improvement in the management of the highway asset.

The Council has invested an additional £30million improving the condition of Cheshire East's transport assets over the last three years through the Highway Investment Programme reaffirming our strategic commitment to maintenance and asset management. Furthermore, another £5million was invested in 2016-2017. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017/20 also states an ambition of investing £10million per year for the next three years in the Borough's transport assets.

The Corporate Plan for Cheshire East outlines the four core objectives for highways maintenance:

- To reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Cheshire East's roads;
- To improve the condition of Cheshire East's roads, footways and bridges;
- To manage the impact of traffic and resulting congestion on Cheshire East's communities; and
- Improve the quality of and access to transport networks and services in Cheshire East.

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[32] Cheshire East Council (2015) Highway Asset Management Strategy

Asset management framework

Context

- Stakeholder Expectations
- Corporate and National Requirements
- CEC Vision and 3 Year Plan
- Government Policy / Guidance
- Local Transport Plan and Policies
- Local Policies / Guidance

Planning

Highway Asset Management Policy

Outcome 1 – Our local communities are strong and supportive

Outcome 2 – Cheshire East has a strong and resilient economy

Outcome 4 – Cheshire East is a green and sustainable place

Local Transport Strategies

Ensure a sustainable future

Create conditions for business growth

Nurture strong communities

Unlock the potential of our towns

Highway Asset Management Strategy

Lifecycle & Investment Planning
Data Management
Information Systems
Service Provision
Good Practice

Enablers

Budget

Service Requirements
Business Planning
Budget
Investment
Risk
Resources
Data

Performance

Target Setting and Monitoring
Service Delivery Standards
Budget
Risk Management
Resources
Data

Delivery

Delivery

Highway Asset Management Plan & Maintenance Plan
LTP Implementation Plan
Code of Practice for Highway Safety Inspections
Delivery of Projects
Delivery of Routine Maintenance Activities
Communication Strategy

Action 11.12 – We will continue to take an asset led approach to maintenance of our transport assets in an effort to achieve maximum value for money

11.3.2 Weather-related disruptions

Projections show that by 2050, the Northwest region will have wetter and warmer winters and drier and warmer summers. This will require an element of preparedness to ensure the transport network maintain effectiveness.

Sections of the transport network already suffer from weather related issues. As routes become unavailable for the passage of vehicles, journeys are disrupted and the level of congestion on the wider network is increased, making increased resilience to weather-related disruptions a priority for the future.

Action 11.13 – We will seek to ensure that the transport network is increasingly secure against extreme weather events and disruption

11.3.3 Permitting

Activity such as utility maintenance when occurring on the public highway has the potential to cause inconvenience to vehicular traffic, pedestrians, cyclists and others; whilst also having the potential to cause inconvenience for residents and business. Where the activity affects traffic flows directly there is the likelihood of congestion and disruption.

Effective coordination and management of the highway requires reliable and timely information being communicated and enables differences between those competing for space or time in the street to be resolved in a positive and constructive way. In addition, efficient design of an activity on the highway will significantly mitigate the potential disruption of that activity.

Permits provide the basis for this with the requirement to manage the applications for utility and highway works in a proactive manner as these are the two activities that often have the greatest effect on traffic and disruption.

Following the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 3, the Council is preparing to join the West and Shires Permit Scheme (WaSP Scheme). The WaSP scheme allows participating authorities to better manage activities on the highway and minimise disruption and inconvenience. The WaSP scheme requires an activity promoter to apply for a permit in order to 'book' time on the highway. The Permit Authority issues permits with conditions attached to better focus the activity in terms of reducing the impact of road users and other stakeholder; this might be in relation to the timing of the works, the traffic management and methodology or any other factor that is deemed important.

Action 11.14 – We will introduce a permitting scheme with the aim of reducing the negative impact of utility and other works on highway function

Action 11.15 – We will seek provision of further functionality and continued development of the range of information on roadwork's and delays that is provided electronically

11.3.4 Environmental performance and air quality

In Cheshire East, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transport account for 44% of total emissions, compared to about a quarter in the UK. Transport, in particular road transport, is also a main source of local air pollution through the emission of pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, particulate matters, volatile organic compounds and sulphur dioxide.

However, transport networks, and their associated green infrastructure, can provide valuable ecosystem services that can assist in the management of, and adaptation to climate change. Green infrastructure can provide carbon storage by trees, sustainable drainage and water conservation, cooling urban heat islands and ecological connectivity. Canal towpaths, public rights of way, road verges, cycle routes or railway embankments therefore have the potential to make a positive contribution to the environment.

In order to detect changes in air quality and limit air pollution to safe levels as set out by national legislation and European directives, Cheshire East is required to undertake annual reporting which assesses local air quality within its jurisdiction. Where the air quality objectives are not likely to be met and emissions are expected to breach legal limits, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared, for which the local authority must develop a plan to improve the air quality - a Local Air Quality Action Plan.

Within Cheshire East, a total of eighteen AQMAs have been declared. All of these relate to nitrogen dioxide emissions and breaches of the annual mean objective and there is the potential for two to breach the hourly standard. There are four AQMAs in Macclesfield, three each in Congleton and Crewe, two in Sandbach, and one in Cranage, Knutsford, Mere, Middlewich, Nantwich and Disley:

AQMA	Key service centre	Pollutant
West Road, Congleton	Congleton	NO_2 (Annual and potential hourly Limit
A34/A54, Congleton	Congleton	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Lower Heath, Congleton	Congleton	NO_2 (Annual and potential hourly Limit)
Nantwich Road, Crewe	Crewe	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Earle Street, Crewe	Crewe	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Wistaston Road, Crewe	Crewe	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
M6 Motorway, Cranage	Knutsford	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A556 Chester Road, Mere	Knutsford	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A50, Manchester Road, Knutsford	Knutsford	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A523 London Road, Macclesfield	Macclesfield	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Broken Cross, Macclesfield	Macclesfield	NO_2 (Annual Limit)

Hibel Road, Macclesfield	Macclesfield	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Park Lane, Macclesfield	Macclesfield	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Chester Road, Middlewich	Middlewich	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
Hospital Street, Nantwich	Nantwich	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A6 Market Street, Disley	Poynton	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A534 Middlewich Road, Sandbach	Sandbach	NO_2 (Annual Limit)
A5022/A534 Sandbach	Sandbach	NO_2 (Annual Limit)

Action 11.16 - 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

Action 11.17 – We will support technological advances which reduce the environmental harm caused by vehicle use

11.4 Parking

11.4.1 Introduction

Parking provision in the Borough supports accessibility for residents, businesses, shoppers, workers and commuters. Parking provision has the potential to impact on surrounding areas both negatively and positively. When parking is well managed it can support thriving businesses, access to services and active social lives; but when not well managed well parking can encourage car travel to areas which suffer unduly from congestion as well as causing other environmental and social issues.

11.4.2 High Level Parking Strategy

The existing car parking strategy was published in 2010, bringing together the parking strategies of the three former borough Councils of Macclesfield, Congleton, and Crewe and Nantwich. The High Level Parking Strategy is intended to further develop and harmonise the parking offer focusing on the Cheshire East principal towns and key service centres.

There are two broad categories of car parking in Cheshire East:

- On-street – this is parking within the adopted highway boundary that is regulated by the Council acting as highway authority. Enforcement of on-street parking regulations is undertaken by the Council.
- Public off-street – these are parking areas provided by the Council which are open for use by the general public. Some car parks are charged for according to length of stay.

In developing parking strategy, issues of demand and supply will be considered, together with establishing when the Council may consider changes in supply.

Further work on future requirements for parking will come through the Local Plan Documents, the High Level Parking Policy, the On-Street Parking Policy, and the individual Town Parking Studies.

Effective management of both on and off street parking can have a significant effect on the capacity and flow of traffic on the road network. Well managed parking can have a positive environmental effect, making our towns attractive with the resultant impact on local economic viability.

The Council must continue to manage on and off street parking whilst encouraging more sustainable travel patterns including walking, cycling and public transport where these effective alternatives are viable.

A Parking Strategy can assist in encouraging balanced transport choices, working with other policies, strategies and plans to develop the required approach.

It is important to ensure that the economic viability and vitality of our town centres is preserved, the provision of well planned and managed parking, both on and off street plays a key role in achieving this. Whilst it is not always possible to increase parking space within urban areas without high costs, controls can be put in place to manage demand.

It is recognised that there is a need to cater for a number of users including residents, shoppers, tourists, workers and commuters. The balance of need depends on individual locations, however in general:

- Shoppers require short stay convenient parking. In some locations tourists are likely to spend the whole day where Park & Ride could be a convenient option.
- Commuters/workers require long stay and can be encouraged to walk further to their destination and are more likely to use Park & Ride/rail facilities or local bus services.
- Residents (where off-street private parking is not available) require on-street parking as close to home as possible. In some locations they may be given preference over shoppers/or given shared use provision.
- Visitors and tourists may require either short or long stay parking depending upon the tourist offering and this will need to be considered in each location.

- For some of Cheshire East's towns, the night time economy is important, and people are likely to make different choices therefore the pricing strategy needs to take account of this, as fewer public transport choices are available at night and there are personal security concerns for some.

The provision of off-street parking can be very costly, both in terms of land requirements and maintenance costs. The Council charges for parking in order to recover these costs from service users, although it is recognised that there is currently a disparity between those areas of the borough where parking charges apply and those where they do not.

Cheshire East Council is also responsible for the making of Traffic Regulation Orders concerning on street parking control and is responsible for the enforcement of those Traffic Regulation Orders including the management of off street car parks within their ownership.

An appropriate Parking Strategy can support regeneration of town centres while also encouraging people to think more about when and how to travel, perhaps choosing public transport, and contributing to road safety.

In order to establish a consistent approach across the Borough, it is proposed that each town be looked at individually with regards to parking quality, choice and value, thus facilitating necessary unique pricing tariffs based on patterns of parking demand, size of town and its draw in terms of the type of shops, catchment area and whether it is predominantly a local service centre or includes tourists.

The proposed town parking studies will include:

- Alsager
- Congleton
- Crewe
- Handforth
- Knutsford
- Macclesfield

- Middlewich
- Nantwich
- Poynton
- Sandbach
- Wilmslow

Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this High Level Parking Strategy is that it will seek to balance long-term economic, social and environmental well-being underpinned by the following objectives:

- Manage traffic to improve transport network efficiency

- Encourage the use of more sustainable and healthy forms of travel, including walking, cycling and public transport
- Sustain and enhance the vitality of our town centres
- Provide for the parking needs of people with disabilities & parents/carers with young children
- Balance the parking demands of local residents, shops and businesses and visitors, shoppers, workers and commuters

The strategy looks at all forms of parking requirements, not just for cars i.e. Ultra Low Emission Vehicles, motorcycles, and Heavy Goods Vehicles.

The strategy will not set parking charges (Tariffs) but rather establish the general principles which should be taken into consideration for charging. Charges/tariffs are set at annual budget rounds and are to be considered on a town by town basis.

Overall, it is the intended aim that the High Level Parking Strategy should work in conjunction with proposals in the emerging town centre regeneration programmes which Cheshire East Council is developing and delivering. These are to be reflected in the proposed programmes of work.

Quality

Safe, secure and accessible parking is vital to the attractiveness of our towns and assists in the promotion of our principal towns and key service centres, boosting the economic regeneration of the borough.

Parking is often the first contact that a visitor has with a town and can thus provide the first and lasting impression. Security, cleanliness and availability of facilities contribute to this impression and play an important role in the successful of our towns.

The Community Safety Strategy identifies reduction of vehicle crime and the fear of crime as key priorities.

Examples of facilities considered important include:

- Clear directional signage to car parks
- Clear signage within the car parks including bay lining
- Designating appropriate spaces for disabled motorists, motorcycles and electric vehicles

- CCTV
- Clean and well maintained car parks
- Active uniformed patrols

Improvements and measures have been implemented to work towards enhanced safety and security on car parks. CCTV has been re-introduced on Spring Street Multi Storey Car Park (Wilmslow) and Jordangate Multi Storey Car Park (Macclesfield).

The Council's car parks are regularly inspected and any actionable maintenance issues such as defective lighting, faded lines, and surface maintenance will be addressed. It is important that Cheshire East Council continues to:

- Continues to pursue high standards of safety, security and cleanliness on its off street car parks
- Support increased provision for electric vehicle charging infrastructure

Choice

Parking provision and management within Cheshire East will take into account national and regional planning and transport policies, complement local land use and regeneration policies, and relate to the size and function of the principal towns and key service centres. Parking provision will reflect wider community objectives with facilities being safe and secure.

The Council will consider maximising the availability of short stay spaces in prime, central locations for use by shoppers and other short stay users. Short stay parking generates a high turnover of spaces allowing more visitors to be accommodated per space. *The Council will therefore review the designations of each car park to ensure the right spaces are in the right places – looking at whether the provision should be short or long stay or a mixture of both.*

Disabled parking and the Blue Badge scheme will comply with the national guidelines, although a review does need to be undertaken with regards to the location of disabled spaces in car parks. Whilst our aim is to meet the needs of our towns, historical underuse of disabled parking in some highly utilised car parks can exacerbate the availability issues of general spaces.

The Council's work on climate change and sustainable travel promotes better use of the car and healthier more environmentally friendly alternatives, such as walking, cycling, motorcycles and public transport. Travel Plans are also seen as a key element in reducing car usage by tackling different aspects of businesses transport.

Parking impacts on traffic flow and on street parking can reduce the capacity of the road network. Provision of adequate, safely accessible off street parking can reduce this impact. In addition, parking guidance and information can reduce unnecessary traffic movements and thereby congestion in and around main centres.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a network management duty on local authorities to keep traffic flowing, and to co-operate with other authorities to the same end. Local authorities have to exercise all of their functions which may affect traffic in a more coordinated way.

Parking Provision, management and enforcement must contribute to the delivery of the overall statutory network management duty. Providing for either too few or too many vehicles in a town can affect its environment and its viability. Whilst it is not possible to increase parking space within urban areas without high costs and abstracting prime urban land from the limited supply, controls can be put in place to manage demand.

Value

Charging is an effective tool in managing the demand for parking spaces, however because each of our towns are unique, it is not appropriate, fair or realistic to introduce a uniform borough-wide tariff model. The approach would be to set appropriate tariffs on a town by town basis following each town parking study.

It requires the recovery of full cost from service users. Any pricing mechanism adopted should be appropriate for the following purposes:

- Managing demand, required to promote the use of town centre short stay spaces for shoppers and visitors
- Ensuring that direct users pay for the service, e.g. charging appropriately in car parks close to train stations that are predominantly used by Commuters.
- Providing finance to support other strategic transport aims

Cheshire East Council would in principle impose charges for parking based on supply and demand, reflecting local pressure and needs including any consequences for on-street parking. The key measure for assessing the demand, pressure and need will be the utilisation of the car parks, measured through either ticket sales or by observing the numbers of cars parked at particular points in time.

Those towns where average car park utilisation during peak hours is high would be considered for increased charges to manage demand. The provision of additional parking could also be considered providing the charges were sufficient to recover the investment cost required to deliver the additional parking requirement. A business case would be required to demonstrate a

return on investment to ensure residents and businesses would not be required to fund any shortfall.

Those towns where average car park utilisation during peak hours is low could be considered for reduced charges to support the towns economic viability. A reduction in parking provision could also be considered, potentially releasing land for redevelopment and regeneration. Any reduction in charges would still be expected to cover to cost of operating and managing the town's car parking.

It is expected that an appropriate town by town charging level, combined with appropriate enforcement action, will help the Council to make the best use of the car park assets which in turn is likely to make parking easier and more attractive.

Formal consultation will be required to introduce new charges as part of the agreed Council procedures.

Following completion of each town parking study, the Council will review the parking charges annually, in accordance with the Council's Fees and Charges policy, at least recovering the cost of the car park service.

Enforcement Action

Fundamental to any Parking Strategy is the need for efficient parking enforcement, to ensure that on-street parking supply is managed effectively, to prevent inappropriate parking that could cause congestion and increase dangers for other road users, and to ensure proper management of off-street car parks and time limited on-street parking.

The enforcement approach will be geared to effectively manage the supply of off street and unauthorised parking; effective parking enforcement is also required on street short stay parking.

Cheshire East Council is responsible for enforcing parking, loading and waiting restrictions on the streets and in the car parks throughout Cheshire East, with the exception of most major trunk roads. This is carried out under the terms of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and is a civil matter rather than criminal. Civil Enforcement Officers will issue Penalty Charge Notices to any vehicle parking in contravention and will enforce on-street contraventions as well as in car parks. The Civil Enforcement Officers are paid an annual salary only and there is no bonus, commission or incentive scheme or target for issuing Penalty Charge Notices.

Enforcement practice will follow the Guidelines detailed in the Traffic Management Act 2004; it will focus on key areas where compliance needs to improve and will follows the principle that the purpose of enforcement is to induce motorists to comply with the regulations.

The Councils Civil Enforcement Officers will operate under the following principles:

- Enforcing parking and waiting restrictions to ensure maximum space availability for customers and business visitors.
- Taking action where unlawful or inconsiderate parking stops traffic (or the free flowing movement of traffic)
- Taking action where cars parked on pavements block the walk way for pedestrians who then have to go into the road to pass the cars (particularly in school keep clear areas)
- Taking action where the unlawful or inconsiderate parking is dangerous
- Taking action where emergency vehicles are prevented from travelling along a road
- Taking action where spaces are taken up which should be used for disabled people
- Allowing for exceptional events and circumstances and engaging with the community at key events

A key partner in control is Cheshire Police who continue to be responsible for enforcement of certain traffic offences; Cheshire East residents and businesses rightly expect that we act as true partners in tackling bad and dangerous parking, utilising our respective powers promptly, efficiently and in concert.

Local Parking Standards

The adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 details the parking standards applied to new developments. It is considered that the town parking studies will support the evidence base for use in determining the parking requirements of new development, allowing the Council to depart from the standards where appropriate to improve the management of the road network.

Ultra Low Emission Vehicles

The Council will promote and support the use of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs), including electric vehicles, due to their reduced impact on air quality. Electric vehicles have the potential to help reduce kerbside emissions if they become more widely used in Cheshire East, although current technology means that they are likely to be a more attractive choice in urban areas due to the limited availability of charging points in the rural areas. To date, take-up of electric vehicles has remained low, however all predicted forecasts are for significant growth moving forward.

The potential exists to install public on-street charging points. Since any bays would have to be reserved for electric vehicles only, the Council will take into account future demand and the loss of general public parking before considering whether to install any on-street bays.

Heavy Goods Vehicle and Coach Parking

The provision of HGV and coach parking is a necessary amenity across the authority; the provision of lorry parking is required to ensure that drivers have suitable places for rest breaks and encourages appropriately parking. At present HGV parking is underutilised, and has capacity to fulfil future growth detailed in the 2011 Department for Transport Lorry Parking Study. Cheshire East will assess the provision of HGV parking in line with future growth and associated demand; this should include assessing the location of existing facilities and assessing if the locations are suitable for future demand.

The Freight Transport Association indicated that demand for overnight lorry parking facilities would rise as a result of the 1998 EU Working Directive leading to increased need for driver stops. The Council will continue to review the needs in specific areas to determine whether existing facilities are adequate and appropriately located.

Additionally, successful tourist attractions require adequate off street coach parks to prevent road safety problems and to protect the environment. To deter access via residential streets and other environmentally areas, it is intended that off street coach and overnight lorry parks will be located, where required, with good links to the road network and regard to the impact on the local environment.

Motorcycle Parking

Motorcycles and mopeds offer the same potential for personal mobility as private cars whilst contributing less congestion, pollution and damage to roads. They are lighter, generally more fuel efficient and take up less space, whether parking or moving.

The safety of users of motorcycles and mopeds and the need for secure parking must be taken into account both in new and existing developments and at public transport interchange sites.

Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Taxis and private hire vehicles are important in meeting the travel needs of many sections of the population, especially people with disabilities and for those whose journeys cannot be made on foot, cycle, bus or train.

Taxi parking should be visibly provided at key locations, such as shopping areas and public transport interchanges. Ranks should be marked out to avoid random parking. Accessibility to the parking location is a priority and a road safety audit should be carried out to ensure taxi movement will not conflict with other users. The level of taxi parking will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Residential Parking

The Council aims to improve the quality of life for residents through parking management, provision and relief of traffic congestion generated by parking demand. Residential areas around town centres can suffer from commuter on street parking and in some cases controlled parking zones are implemented to meet the needs of residents and local businesses.

The Council will review on street parking provision for residents as travel demands grow, and assess if the need exists for the introduction of further controlled parking zones. The Council should review the on street demand at each of the principal towns and key service centres and assess the impact to residents, reviewing existing Traffic Regulation Orders.

Parking at Rail Stations

The provision of adequate car parking at railway stations can help to reduce the length of car journeys by attracting people onto rail for the major part of their journey. In addition, it can help avoid or alleviate 'overspill' parking around stations.

In reviewing parking issues at railway stations, the Council will need to consider a number of factors to seek to gain a better understanding of the local context:

- the quantity and usage of parking presently available at a station and in the surrounding area
- the level of charges for those parking spaces, if any are in place, and charges at other nearby stations serving the same destinations
- the number of stopping train services
- the origin (catchment area) and journey mode of station users;
- the impacts of station traffic and parking on the local road network and community
- the length and type of rail journeys
- the availability of sustainable transport modes to and from the station.

If appropriate, the Council will then work with Network Rail, station and public transport operators, passenger and cyclist groups and others to evaluate the situation further and investigate possible solutions that take account of the needs of both rail users and the local

community. In line with LTP objectives, the Council will ensure that any solutions also promote modal shift by encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public transport. These issues and the factors above should be considered as part of a station travel plan.

Increased parking provision at railway stations will only be considered if it is included as part of a station travel plan or linked to improved infrastructure such as the new Hub Station in Crewe.

Sunday Parking Requirements

On a Sunday many towns now see a normal shopping or visitor day, therefore there is a need to manage Sunday parking to serve shoppers and visitors. Overall there is also a benefit in simplifying and providing a consistent approach.

The Council should consider proposals to maintain / introduce standard tariff seven day charges for off-street car parks where charges are applied.

Charging in off street car parks whilst maintaining free on-street parking on a Sunday does create the effect of people seeking to park on-street. However, it is considered that the benefits to be gained from introducing Sunday charging do outweigh the cost of Sunday on-street parking enforcement.

Night Time Economy Parking Requirements

The Council should consider that in towns/areas where the night time economy is prevalent, that consistent time bands for charges are applied as follows:

- For off-street car parks 8am to 10pm Monday to Sunday.

Shopper/Retailer Subsidy

Although there are issues about drivers thinking about alternative methods of travel where possible, this does allow for local loyalty incentives to shoppers when supporting local shops and is recommended these be made available where requested.

Contract Permits – Off Street Car Parks

It is proposed that contract permits will be car park specific (currently some may be for more than one car park) and will be registration specific, with up to two vehicles registrations per permit. It is recommended that no contract or season permits should be issued for short stay car parks as this parking is designed to be available for short stay trips for shoppers and visitors.

Waivers

A list of special permits and conditions appropriate for issuing them should be established.

This provides for carers, meals on wheels, essential trades, such as plumbers, etc. These usually allow for parking, where essential, in Residents Parking Zones or Pay & Display, or in certain cases on double yellow lines. Clear principles will be set out, which need to be backed up by clear issuing procedures for staff.

Charging Mechanisms

In general where charges in a car park or on-street are applied, Pay & Display machines are used. Whilst pay on foot machines/pay on exit Pay Stations that give change, may be popular elsewhere with users, these are expensive to install and maintain. The Pay Station costs in the region of £16,000 added to the cost of a barrier and ticket reader required at the exit at £10,000, plus on-going maintenance requirement. Pay & Display ticket machines cost in the region of £4,000. In many cases the level of income is not sufficient to warrant the higher investment or operating costs of Pay Stations relative to Pay and Display and this will need to be a consideration.

Barriers require maintenance, and if a car park is not staffed any mechanical failures can cause problems. It is recommended therefore that Pay & Display be retained in car parks, and only MSCP's be considered for Pay Stations permitting pay on exit.

Disabled Parking

The use of disabled spaces is governed by the blue badge parking scheme. This is a European scheme for people with limited mobility and allows disabled people accessible parking in locations that enable access to shops and services.

The badge is allocated to individuals and not to vehicles. It can only be used when the named holder is either the motorist or travelling with a carer.

People displaying a blue badge may park on double yellow lines for a limited period where their vehicle does not obstruct traffic or other road users. However, such parking is prohibited where there are additional yellow road markings that restrict parking or where local parking restrictions apply such as outside schools. The blue badge scheme also governs use of disabled spaces on car parks.

The Council adheres to the national policy on concessions for Blue Badge Holders. There are on-street designated disabled bays. These are free and have no time restrictions for blue badge

holders. For disabled bays in off-street car parks, blue badge holders can currently park without charge for as long as they want to, even if this is only a short stay car park.

In 2015/16 8125 Blue Badges were issued contributing to the circa 20,000 blue badges held by the Boroughs individual residents and organisations.

- This strategy recommends that national disabled parking standards for car parks and all new developments are applied across the borough.
- The strategy recommends that the quantity and locations of disabled bays are reviewed and where necessary, changed to meet the needs of users in each urban centre. Ideally, disabled bays should be close to amenities and spread out around town centres rather than all together.
- It is recommended that charges for disabled parking are considered for implementation alongside charging for standard spaces. This will generate revenue which can be used for raising the quality of parking.

Parent and Child Parking

There is no specific national or local policy on the provision of parent and child spaces. Supply of these in Cheshire East is almost entirely within privately owned, retail-related car parks. Occupancy of these spaces is generally high. Whilst it is legally unenforceable and does not yield additional revenue, it is felt that consideration should be given to the provision of parent and child spaces. This could be done in conjunction with the review of disabled spaces, Snow Hill car park in Nantwich is currently the only one facilitating these spaces.

11.4.3 On Street Parking Guidance

Introduction

Cheshire East Council as Traffic Authority is responsible for making Traffic Orders that regulate on street parking.

The Cheshire East road network needs to support a local transport system that promotes economic growth, is safe for all road users and is not detrimental to the quality of life in our communities. The Council recognises the importance of its highway infrastructure and how an effectively maintained and managed road network contributes to the accessibility and safety of its users.

The On Street Parking Guidance has been developed to support the Council's High Level Parking Strategy with the aim to manage the level of on street parking based on guiding principles and ensure consistency of approach to overall parking management across the borough.

In line with the High Level Parking Strategy, the guiding principles for parking will be applied in town parking studies to ensure the management and balance of parking is addressed both on and off street.

On Street Parking Regulations

There are a number of pieces of national legislation that impose statutory obligations and duties on the Council in relation to on street parking including:

- The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) places a duty on all local traffic authorities to secure the expeditious movement of traffic on their road networks.

- The Road Traffic Act 2006 (RTA) requires local authorities to prepare and carry out a programme of measures designed to promote road safety.

- Waiting restrictions are indicated on the road network by road markings and signs which can only be implemented or changed via Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) which involves a legal process governed by strict legislation. The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) defines under what circumstances a TRO can be introduced. These are:

  o   Avoiding danger to persons or traffic;
  o   Preventing damage to the road or to buildings nearby;
  o   Facilitating the passage of traffic;
  o   Preventing use by unsuitable traffic;
  o   Preserving the character of a road especially suitable for walking or horse riding;
  o   Preserving or improving amenities of the area through which the road runs; and
  o   For any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of the Environment Act 1995 in relation to air quality.

The RTRA also requires the Traffic Authority to exercise these powers to secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway.

Any decision to restrict vehicles from parking on the road network must have due regard to these objectives.

Types of Restrictions

There are two main types of waiting restrictions:

- Prohibitive Waiting Restrictions and
- Permissive Waiting Restrictions.

Prohibitive Waiting Restrictions

Generally, prohibitive waiting restrictions are indicated by yellow road markings and the times of the control are indicated by accompanying signs (except for double yellow lines, where restrictions apply 24 hours per day and cannot have supporting signs).

Zonal restrictions can be applied to parking on the road, footways and verges. These are indicated by zonal entrance signs and repeater signs.

It should be noted that the setting down of passengers and loading/unloading is lawfully allowed, except where the following loading restrictions apply:

- Bus Stop Clearways;
- Bus Lanes;
- Clearways;
- School Keep Clears;
- Box junctions; and
- Doctors Bays.

Also, blue badge holders (disabled drivers or passengers) can lawfully park for up to three hours on Single or Double yellow lines during the hours of operation provided they do so safely, are not obstructing traffic and the badge and clock are clearly displayed with the correct time of arrival.

Permissive Waiting Restrictions

Permissive bays manage the demand for parking by assisting in addressing conflicts for parking in areas of high demand.

These are usually indicated by zonal entry signs or white parking bays with accompanying signs. The signs indicate who can park and any limits on length of stay or times of use. Sometimes designated use of a parking bay can be indicated on the carriageway in white lettering, such as 'disabled', 'doctors', 'loading' or 'permit holders only'.

Other Restrictions

School Keep Clear Markings and zig zag markings associated with pedestrian crossings - Stopping under any circumstances during the hours of operation is prohibited on School Keep Clear markings and this includes coaches, deliveries and blue badge holders. The purpose of providing School Keep Clear markings is to keep the space outside of schools free from parked vehicles so that children can be seen more easily when crossing the road.

Loading and Unloading Restrictions - These are indicated by yellow "tabs" on the kerb and can be at all times or for a prescribed period as indicated on accompanying signs. No vehicles are permitted to park in these locations during the hours of operation, including blue badge holders.

Controlled Footway Parking - Legislation is available to allow footway parking to be created using line markings and signs to delineate when parking is allowed. However, it is necessary to ensure there is a minimum of 1.2 metres of remaining footway for wheelchair users etc. These parking bays can be enforced by the Council's Civil Enforcement Officers.

A street can be designated a footway parking zone. In this circumstance there will be a requirement to sign the street either by local signs or zonal signs but there are no formal markings on the footway and residents are left to park appropriately. This does not necessarily prevent parking causing an obstruction of the footway and where this occurs it can only be enforced by the Police.

Parking Guidelines

The Council receives numerous complaints and requests each year from residents who are experiencing local parking issues.

The types of issues that are reported include:

- Road Safety and traffic flow concerns caused by parked vehicles;
- Access to residential properties being restricted and hampered visibility on exiting;
- Parking around junctions;
- Parking on bends;
- Indiscriminate parking around schools and employment and development sites; and
- Residents have no off street parking and there is limited on street parking available.

In the majority of cases the criteria defined under the RTRA is not met and other methods need to be considered in line with the Highway Code. But in making that decision the following needs to be considered:

- What is the evidence?
- Who or where is the source of the evidence?
- What actual safety risks are there?
- What is the role of the Police and Council around enforcement?
- What is the potential impact of the TRO?
- Does it meet with local and National Regulations?

It is important to consider each issue to identify if it is a real problem and not a perceived one and the consequences of any change to Regulations do not simply displace the problem. Contentious TROs are often challenged and can be the subject of an Ombudsman investigation, it is therefore important that the powers available under the RTRA are used appropriately and that there is clear evidence to support the decision to implement the TRO.

Issues raised can be categorised as follows:

Road Safety
The highest proportion of issues raised by members of the public, parish and town councils and Ward Councillors relate to the perceived potential for risk to safety, particularly at junctions or where parking is considered hazardous. These issues are frequently close to amenity areas such as rail stations.

However, this can only be considered as a reason for a TRO if collisions are occurring or where a formal risk assessment carried out by qualified road safety professionals indicates a high risk that should be mitigated.

Cheshire East will consider parking restrictions in locations supported by evidence provided by the Police in order to reduce collisions.

Accessibility
These are issues where parking contributes to problems that affect through traffic.

However, consideration has to be given to the frequency and the effects on the volume of traffic, including the time periods.

Cheshire East will consider parking restrictions on roads where parked vehicles are proven to have a detrimental effect on the capacity and efficiency of the road network.

On Street Parking Capacity

This is where there is a conflict in demand or capacity for parking in an area. Most relate to where off-street parking is limited and conflict between residents and other road users for on street parking exists. It also includes requests for residents only parking zones.

Cheshire East will consider requests for residents parking zones in locations that meet the criteria detailed within the current Residents Parking Permit Guidance.

Cheshire East will consider other forms of parking restrictions where equivalent additional parking capacity can be provided.

Cheshire East will consider the installation of individual disabled person's parking bays where eligibility is identified through a Community Care Assessment.

Amenity
Issues arise that affect the visual or environmental amenity of a particular area. This includes parking on grass verges or where parking is considered to be a visual intrusion rather than a safety or accessibility issue, such as in conservation areas.

Cheshire East will consider restrictions in conservation areas where the equivalent additional parking capacity can be provided.

Cheshire East will consider the formal restriction of parking on footways and verges on an area wide basis

When introducing or renewing yellow lines in Conservation Areas Cheshire East will use Primrose Yellow and 50mm wide lines

When introducing new restrictions in rural and Conservation Areas Cheshire East will consider the use of Zones involving signs only at entrances

Demand for access to retail facilities and transport hubs and the associated parking capacity available can have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and community.

Cheshire East will consider parking restrictions in villages and town centres on an area wide basis that will take in to consideration on street and off street availability and time restrictions.

School Parking
The Council actively supports and encourages a responsible approach to parking and driving outside and around schools through its road safety education programme and regular enforcement in partnership with the Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Council has a Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy and a Safer Routes to School programme. Working with schools that have an up to date school travel plan, this programme aims to manage and reduce the impacts of parking around schools.

The introduction or extension to parking restrictions near schools needs to consider any impacts of displacing parking problems to other local roads.

Cheshire East will assist local communities to tackle parking issues related to the school start and finish times as appropriate.

Cheshire East will seek to avoid the displacement of on street parking near schools when considering any new restrictions.

Parking associated with Employment and Development Sites
There are numerous parking issues within and surrounding many of the boroughs major employment sites. The Council will apply the guidelines alongside working with employers to reduce the impacts on the road network by encouraging both considerate parking where this affects residential areas and sustainable travel to work.

The adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 details the parking standards applied to new developments. It is considered that the town parking studies will support an evidence base for use in determining the parking requirements of new developments through the planning process. In certain circumstances the Planning Authority may consider departing from the standards where unacceptable pressure would be placed on the road network.

Footway and Verge Parking
The Council does not advocate parking on footways or verges due to the impact it has other road users and the damage it causes.

Any proposals for footway and verge parking must balance the needs of all road users against the physical constraints of the highway.

Cheshire East will consider the benefit of hardened verges to cater for localised parking provision but only where this is deemed appropriate against the needs of all road users.

TRO Process

The Council will consider Traffic Regulation Orders to improve Network Management, Road Safety and Accessibility for all road users through the following process:

Priority 1 - Urgent

Those locations where there are urgent access issues, such as emergency services, refuse collection vehicles unable to travel along a road, or where a specific safety issue has been evidenced.

Priority 2 – Non Urgent
These are locations where residents are frequently competing with commuters/local workers for limited on street parking. Those requests that meet the criteria specified in the guidance will be considered with a focus on an area wide approach.

Priority 3 – Non Urgent
These are locations where alternate on street or off street parking is readily available elsewhere in the locality.

Action 11.18 – We will produce town parking studies for the two principal towns and nine key service centres across the Borough

11.4.4 School Parking

The 2010/11 School Census reveals that 21% of high school pupils are driven to school, with the figure for primary schools, which are principally in residential areas, being significantly higher at 45%. Since this Census the impacts of parking around primary schools has been highlighted as an issue by some residents and communities owing to the pressure it places on the local highway infrastructure.

The Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Policy will identify interventions aimed at minimising the adverse impact of parking at the school gates, including the development of School Travel Plans. However, given the larger catchment areas associated with rural schools, there are additional challenges faced in terms of encouraging modal shift towards walking and cycling. In addition to Travel Plans other interventions will also be implemented such as educational campaigns, exploring opportunities for off highway drop off zones and better enforcement.

Action 11.19 – We will continue to seek to minimise the adverse impacts of parking at the school gates

11.5 Integration with other modes / land use

The integration of different transport modes has the ability to increase efficiency and sustainability. A lack of integration between transport services and modes is a significant barrier to greater use of bus and rail services, causing significant increases in journey time and discouraging multi-modal travel.

Improvements in integration between road and other transport modes e.g. bus, rail, walking and cycling has the potential to decrease private car travel bringing a multitude of benefits. Likewise promoting development which is not car dependant is vital for long-term sustainability, health and the operation of the highway network.

Action 11.20 – We will implement improved car parking and cycle parking at bus and railway stations across the Borough where the opportunity exists

Action 11.21 – We will promote development which facilitates travel by a variety of transport modes

12   Delivering for Cheshire East

12.1 Monitoring and evaluation

Data collection and analysis play a key role in informing transport planning, investment and management. Subsequently, there is a need for the Council to monitor progress against the LTP in a proportionate way which does not impose unreasonable costs but gives focus to the collection and analysis of data which will be beneficial to Cheshire East.

The Council will monitor progress against the LTP on an on-going basis and produce yearly Monitoring and Evaluation Reports. Monitoring will focus on metrics related to each of the six LTP transport challenges as detailed below:

- Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity:
  - **Efficiency:** Minutes of delay per hour travelled on the Major Road Network in Cheshire East: car; HGV and LGV; and
  - **Community perception of highway reliability:** National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey – Tackling Congestion Theme.

- Ensuring accessibility to services:
  - **Supported bus service reliability:** Percentage of supported bus services operating within the 'six-minute window' punctuality standards (one minute early to five minutes late);
  - **Community perception of bus service reliability:** National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey – Public Transport Theme; and
  - **Sustainable access to schools:** Number of schools supported to implement and maintain a School Travel Plan.

- Protecting and improving our environment:
  - **Air Quality:** Number of Air Quality Management Areas declared in Cheshire East.

- Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity:
  - **Community perception of walking/cycling facilities:** National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey – Walking/Cycling Theme; and
  - **Levels of walking and cycling:** Walking and cycling counts from both manual and automatic counts that are either already in place or would otherwise take place.

- Maintaining and managing our network assets:
  - **Road safety:** Number of people killed or seriously injured on roads managed by Cheshire East Council;

- o **Community perception of road safety:** National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey – Road Safety Theme;
- o **Community perception of highways maintenance/enforcement:** National Highways and Transportation Public Satisfaction Survey – Highways Maintenance/Enforcement Theme; and
- o **Highway maintenance:** Number of third party claims relating to highway condition made and number of subsequent compensation pay-outs.

- • **Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness:**
  - o **Transport funding:** Amount of third party inward investment in Cheshire East's transport network e.g. from central government or its agencies, private developers etc.;

12.2 Borough wide actions

This strategy identifies the Borough wide challenges, objectives and actions in relation to transport. As discussed previously it will be supplemented by eleven Local Area Strategies which will spell out more granular detail in terms of delivery in different locations. Below are listed the Borough wide actions to be completed against each transport mode:

How we will meet the challenge	
No.	Action
6.1	We will work with the LEP and other bodies e.g. TfN to agree sub-regional transport priorities
6.2	We will lobby central government and its agencies e.g. High ways England and Network Rail for investment that brings most benefit to Cheshire East
6.3	We will support the implementation of the Industrial Strategy locally including contributing towards meeting the grand challenges for clean growth, mobility, and a data driven economy.
6.4	We will update our Sustainable Modes of Travel to School policy
6.5	We will seek to ensure that development delivered in line with the Local Plan is accessible by different transport modes
6.6	We will support activities which reduce the carbon intensity and resilience of our transport system.
6.7	We will review and update our Local Air Quality Strategy
6.8	We will support the delivery of green and blue infrastructure improvements
6.9	We will support increased levels of active transport, including through delivery of the Cycle Strategy
6.10	We will deliver our Highway Asset Management Strategy
6.11	We will work closely with partners to support maintenance of transport

	infrastructure which falls outside our remit
6.12	We will deliver in line with the Bus Service Review
6.13	We will deliver a major infrastructure investment programme
6.14	We will support investment in quality of place supporting the creation of high quality town centres

Active and smarter travel	
No.	Action
7.1	We will continue to promote smarter choices as a means of supporting leisure, commuter and business journeys to be made in more sustainable ways
7.2	We will continue to support employers, schools and other trip generators to develop, implement and monitor effective travel plans through our online resources and advice from officers where required
7.3	We will support children and young people to access schools and educations sites via sustainable modes wherever possible. Our approach to this will be identified in our forthcoming Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.
7.4	We will work to improve the quality of our footpaths and pavements, including through targeted investment as part of our asset led approach to highway maintenance
7.5	We will connect existing parts of the pedestrian network, close gaps and address safety concerns at identified hotspots
7.6	We will continue to maintain and improve the existing cycling infrastructure and develop a network of strategic high quality cycle routes connecting the Borough
7.7	We will support the delivery of improved walking and cycling infrastructure as part of the delivery of other major transport schemes
7.8	We will support the development of Town Cycling Plans and their integration in the Neighbourhood Plans for all towns and key service centres in the Borough
7.9	We will seek to ensure that developments are planned in a sustainable way through the inclusion of active travel facilities and linkages
7.10	We will maintain, improve and promote the paths available for leisure use, including horse riding
7.11	We will seek to ensure that the publically accessible highway and transport network supports accessibility for all and does not exclude anyone
7.12	We will continue to reduce barriers for multimodal active travel and improve the accessibility to and facilities at rail and bus stations for pedestrians and cyclists
7.13	We will facilitate the use of walking and cycling to access leisure destinations

No.	Action
	and for leisure trips
7.14	We will seek external funding from all sources to support active and sustainable travel interventions

Rail	
No.	Action
9.1	We will lobby for investment in rail infrastructure where it will unlock opportunities for improved rail services within the Borough
9.2	We will continue to work with partners at the sub-regional and national level to influence the specification of rail franchises in the best interests of the Borough
9.3	We will work to support additional rail services in the Borough where they will bring most benefit
9.4	We will work with partners to renew and improve rail stations and facilities, including at Macclesfield
9.4	We will work to achieve maximum Borough wide benefit from HS2 whilst achieving mitigation measures to minimise negative impacts on residents
9.5	We will use HS2 as an opportunity to drive substantial investment and improvement in Crewe, including through the development of the Crewe Masterplan
9.6	We will work to ensure that HS2 does not detrimentally impact conventional services linking to the Borough
9.7	We will support delivery of Growth Track 360
9.8	We will work with partners with the aim of reopening the Northwich to Sandbach rail line to passenger traffic
9.9	We will work with partners with the aim of double tracking the section of line between Crewe and Alsager
9.10	We will promote rail freight as a more sustainable method of haulage except in instances where here are conflicts with passenger services

Public transport information and ticketing	
No.	Action
10.1	We will work with partners to improve information around bus services and ticketing, including supporting a move to smart ticketing where appropriate
10.2	We will work with partners to improve information at interchange facilities
10.3	We will promote well maintained and accessible interchange facilities which feel safe to use day or night
10.4	We will work with passenger transport providers (bus, rail and community transport) and other partners to improve public transport integration and facilities in Cheshire East

Roads	
No.	Action
11.1	We support the establishment of a Major Roads Network and commit to additional investment in this key infrastructure if supported as necessary by national government
11.2	We will work to improve the connectivity between the local and strategic road networks
11.3	We will seek effective solutions to existing pinch points on the local road network and lobby for Highways England to resolve those on the Strategic Road Network
11.4	We will work to minimise the negative impacts of development on the highway network and seek suitable mitigation measures of all types where required
11.5	We will work to improve HGV routing through measures on street, working with developers and large trip attractors e.g. supermarkets and hauliers and through the provision of information such as the innovative Freight Journey Planner
11.6	We will support the delivery of Highway England schemes which will bring benefit to Cheshire East and actively contribute in the identification and planning of future schemes, including through the RIS2 process
11.7	We will seek effective delivery of identified major schemes on the local and major route networks as identified in Table XX
11.8	We will continue to support the use of existing speed cameras and the introduction of speed management measures at accident hotspots as determined by the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership
11.9	We will work with partners and other organisations to provide education and training to high risk groups, including young adults, children, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists
11.10	We will continue to support programmes which inform all drivers and riders of the consequences of high-risk behaviours such as excessive speed, alcohol and drug impairment and not wearing seatbelts
11.11	We will continue to work with schools, employers and local communities to provide road safety training to cyclists and promote the use of active travel
11.12	We will continue to take an asset led approach to maintenance of our transport assets in an effort to achieve maximum value for money
11.13	We will seek to ensure that the transport network is increasingly secure

	against extreme weather events and disruption
11.14	We will introduce a permitting scheme with the aim of reducing the negative impact of utility and other works on highway function
11.15	We will seek provision of further functionality and continued development of the range of information on roadwork's and delays that is provided electronically
11.16	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
11.17	We will support technological advances which reduce the environmental harm caused by vehicle use
11.18	We will produce town parking studies for the two principal towns and nine key service centres across the Borough
11.19	We will continue to seek to minimise the adverse impacts of parking at the school gates
11.18	We will implement improved car parking and cycle parking at bus and railway stations across the Borough where the opportunity exists
11.19	We will promote development which facilitates travel by a variety of transport modes

Appendix 1 – Local Area Profiles

Alsager

Area Summary

Alsager is a town and civil parish located in the south east of the borough 8km from Crewe and 13km from Stoke-on-Trent, with a population of approximately 12,500. The civil parish is bordered by the parishes of Betchton to the north and Audley Rural to the south.

Five nearby settlements rely on Alsager's services, including the areas of Lawton Heath End, Rode Heath, Church Lawton, Kidgrove and Scholar Green. Due to its location in the south of the borough and its proximity to the Potteries, Alsager has close ties to both Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent.

There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth. This includes six sites consisting of both residential and employment development in Alsager as outlined in the Local Plan. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Alsager.

### Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Following the conversion of Radway Green to a business park and the closure of the Manchester

Metropolitan University Campus and Twyford Bathrooms, employment opportunities within Alsager remain limited. Currently, 66% of the population of Alsager is economically active which is lower than both the national and Cheshire East averages. In addition, Alsager has a significantly higher percentage of retired residents than nationally or borough averages. The limited employment opportunities and the low percentage of economically active residents creates a particular challenge for Alsager that is reflected in the eastern part of Alsager being amongst the top 20% most deprived areas nationally. The issues with deprivation and the lack of local employment opportunities underlines the importance of delivering improved transport connectivity to Alsager as a means of supporting jobs led growth.

Less than a quarter of residents in Alsager live within walking or cycling distance of their workplace, limiting the opportunities for people to use active travel to commute. 21% of residents commute 5 to 10 km with the largest share (42%) living 10 km or more from their place of employment. This highlights the importance of bus and rail services as well as the road network to enable efficient access to work. With both bus and rail services limited to one or two services to Crewe, Stoke and other nearby service centres, 80% of commuters rely on the car to get to work with only 4% using public transport.

Alsager is located 5km from Junction 16 of the M6 and possesses good links to the strategic road network. However, there are issues relating to parts of the local road network which in some places operates at or near full capacity during peak times which increases the incidence of congestion and reduces journey time reliability, such as on the B5077. Congestion often inhibits access between Junction 16 and Alsager town centre particularly in peak periods. The junction of the B5077 Crewe Road and B5078 Sandbach Road North causes concern locally and this has the potential to inhibit local business growth and economic development.

There are several local development areas that have been designated in the Local Plan as illustrated below:
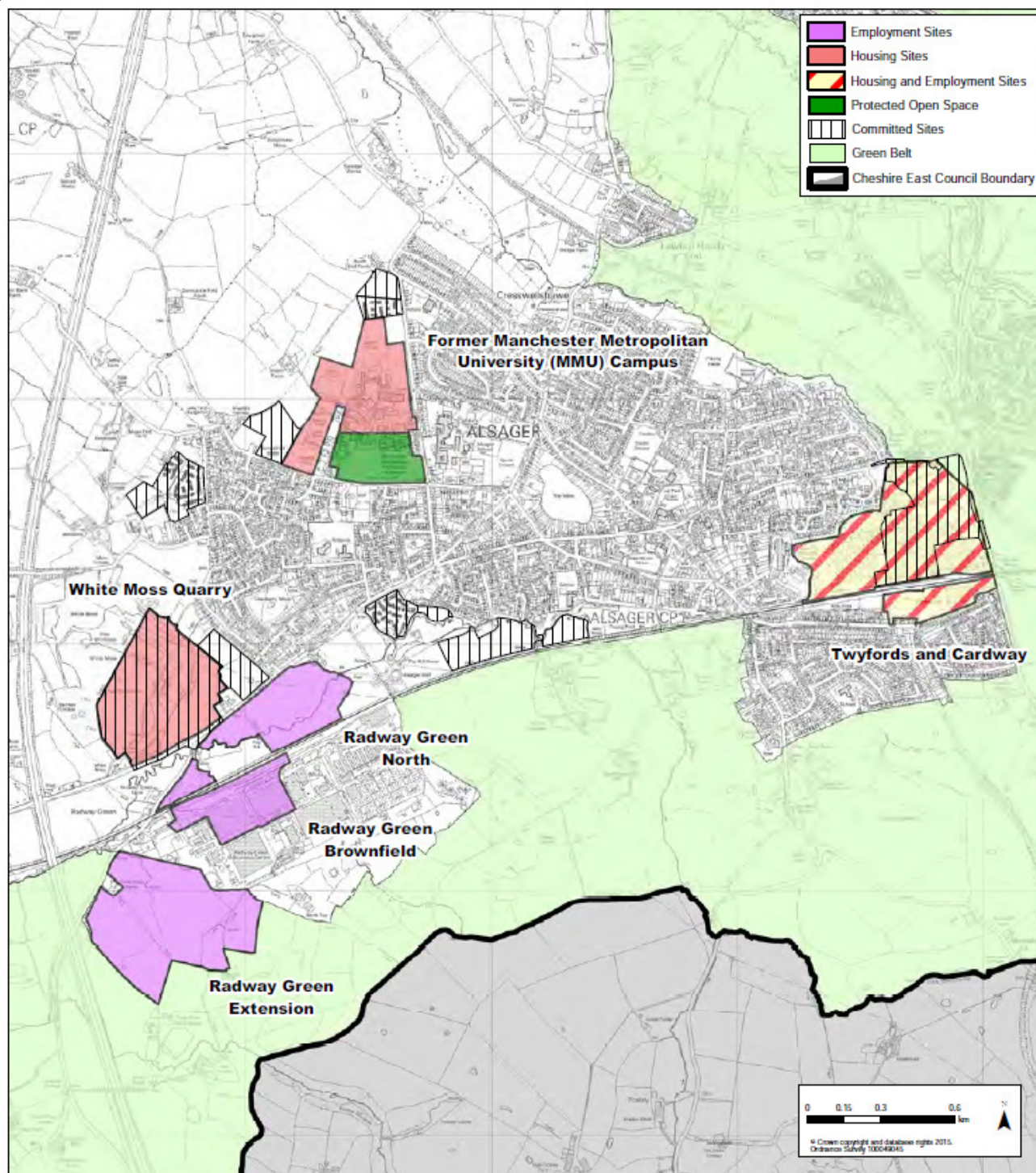
The provision of 47ha of employment land in Radway Green in addition to the housing development sites is likely to generate an inflow of workers. This has the potential to put additional stress on parts of the road network which are already under pressure, such as links with the M6 and surrounding key centres such as Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent. As such, there will be a need for new development to be delivered in tandem with road, public transport and active travel improvements in order to support jobs-led growth within Cheshire East.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

Alsager has an increasingly ageing population with more than a quarter of households in Alsager being of retirement age. Subsequently, services and facilities for older people need to be provided, and this has been a focus area for a number of local development sites which include land allocation for older person's accommodation. Whilst these new developments will bring much needed care services, they are located away from the centre of Alsager and related services and therefore appropriate consideration should be given to accessibility into the town centre.

Commercial bus services are currently in operation from Alsager tom Congleton, Crewe, Kidsgrove, and Leighton Hospital. However, the frequency of some bus services has recently been reduced, limiting mobility options for those that do not have access to a car. Good quality public transport is needed if residents are to have good access to employment, services and education without relying on the private car.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

Alsager benefits from proximity to open countryside and is set within an attractive landscape setting with areas of good quality open space; including Alsager Mere, Milton Park and Cranberry Moss which all add to the quality of place and life enjoyed by Alsager's residents.

Much of the proposed development plans to incorporate green infrastructure, with some offering new sport and leisure community facilities and improved opportunities for exercise. The challenge will be to ensure that these are delivered to a high standard and to reduce barriers to these facilities to ensure they are accessible for all sections of the local population irrespective of age or other factors

There are currently no Air Quality Management Areas in the town. Nevertheless, parts of Alsager along the main roads and the M6 are subject to noise pollution from high traffic flows and queueing.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

With relatively low levels of active travel, a high share of elderly residents and with a small area of the town being one of the 20% most deprived areas in England, addressing physical inactivity and poor health is important in Alsager.

The town has connections to the National Cycle Network (NCN 5 and NCN70) which provides cycle access to many nearby areas for both leisure and utility trips. However, the perception of safety on routes linking nearby towns and settlements is an issue hindering the use of cycles as an alternative to short distance car trips thereby limiting the health and wellbeing benefits accrued locally.

Wherever possible, new developments should offer improved or new pedestrian and cycle infrastructure liking nearby residential areas and services.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone,

especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel

- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

The car is the dominant mode of commuter travel with 80% of residents travelling to work via car. This is related to the fact that almost half of residents travel between 5 and 20 km to access employment; including to commuter destinations such as Stoke-on-Trent, Congleton and Crewe. Therefore, the delivery of improved public transport to these key locations may reduce stress on the road network, in addition to required investment in the road network to increase capacity and allow for growth.

Active and Smarter Travel

Improved linkages with green and blue spaces linked to improvements in quality of place will bring health and wellbeing benefits to the residents of Alsager. Whilst improving the perceived safety of walking and cycling as an alternative for short distance car trips will help improve activity levels and help improve health and local wellbeing, this will require improved provision and maintenance of footways and cycleways. Linked to this are issues with accessibility in the town for those using mobility scooters and aids. Footpath widening and further dropped kerb installation are required in order to support independence for all. This is part of a wider ambition to focus on improving the pedestrian experience in the centre of Alsager.

The Salt Line, a former railway line linking Wheelock and Alsager and the Trent-Mersey Canal running north east of the town are both popular leisure walking and cycling routes. Alsager is also well situated within the National Cycle Network, with access to many nearby areas via bike. NCN 5 runs to the north of the town and NCN 70 runs to the west of the town. Access to these routes via connecting infrastructure could be improved to increase usage.

The significant proposed employment and housing development in Alsager needs to be well integrated into the transport infrastructure network. This should include walking and cycling

infrastructure linking to residential areas, employment and key services. Within the plans for new employment areas, particularly Radway Green, are new pedestrian and cycle links to residential areas and nearby shops which are likely to increase the uptake of active transport bringing health and wellbeing benefits.

Bus

Bus services link various areas of the town, and also connect Alsager with nearby towns, with services offering connections to Crewe, Sandbach, Congleton, Nantwich and the Potteries. Evening and Saturday services are limited on bus services between Nantwich and Scholar Green, which also call at Sandbach, Alsager and Leighton Hospital. The community have also reported relatively long bus journey times to access Leighton Hospital to the north west of Crewe.

Two bus interchanges exist within Alsager, at Alsager Bank Corner bus stop and Alsager Railway Station. The interchange between the two bus stations would also benefit from improvement to support wider growth in bus usage. These services will need to be further developed through improvements to ticketing, information of services and infrastructure.

In future, there are aspirations to provide improved connections between attractions and destinations, such as the town centre and employment areas, and ensure that new developments are fully integrated into the public transport network.

Rail

Alsager Railway Station is unstaffed, managed by East Midlands Trains and provides hourly links via Stafford, Lichfield and the Trent Valley Line to Northampton, Milton Keynes and London Euston as well as two hourly trains to Crewe. Due to its unstaffed nature the installation of ticket machines at the station would support ease of use. There is also a desire for greater connectivity to Crewe via rail in the evening and weekends as off-peak services can make rail a viable alternative to the car for many. Improving services at the station would encourage use of rail in Alsager.

To build upon the increase in usage (9%) from 2015/16 to 2016/17, the connections between Alsager station and residential as well as employment areas and nearby transport hubs require improvement. This would make it easier to combine public transport and walking or cycling, whilst also potentially encouraging car users to shift to public and active transport to get from home to work and vice-versa. An integrated and joined up network of transport would improve access and support growth.

Roads

In order to address safety and improve capacity, improvements are planned for a number of local junctions. Improvements to the B5077/B5078 junction and other local junctions (A5011 Linley Lane/Crewe Road, Hassall Road/Church Road/Dunnocksfold Road) are being progressed and are currently at the preliminary design or concept stage.

The signalised junction of the A5011 Linley Lane/Crewe Rd also has the potential to be impacted by proposed development sites, with capacity issues likely to occur if not mitigated against. Similar issues may arise on the Hassall Road/Church Road/Dunnocksfold Road mini roundabout following future development of the former MMU campus. From examining the various congestion issues, it is evident that junction improvements need to be implemented in order to support growth of housing and employment in Alsager. This will support the Council's jobs-led growth agenda, allowing housing and employment development to progress.

A total of four car parks (403 spaces combined) exist in Alsager and are all free of charge with it being observed that public car parks within the town can be particularly busy during peak times. Alsager would benefit from additional parking at Alsager rail station to encourage greater use of rail.

Congleton

Area Summary

Congleton is a market town in the eastern part of the borough, and lies on the River Dane which runs to the north of the town centre. Congleton lies half way between the principal towns of Crewe (15km) and Macclesfield (10km). Nearby settlements which rely on Congleton as a local service centre include Astbury, Hulme Walfield, Havannah and Eaton.

There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth. This includes a total of seven sites in Congleton as outlined in the Local Plan, which consists of employment, housing and mixed use land; with the majority of this development situated to the north west of Congleton associated with delivery of the Congleton Link Road. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Congleton.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Congleton is relatively well connected to surrounding economic centres and the national transport network. It is linked to Manchester and Stoke-and-Trent via the A34, the M6 is 11km from the town and linked by the A54 and the A534. Congleton rail station is located on the Manchester to Stoke-on-Trent line.
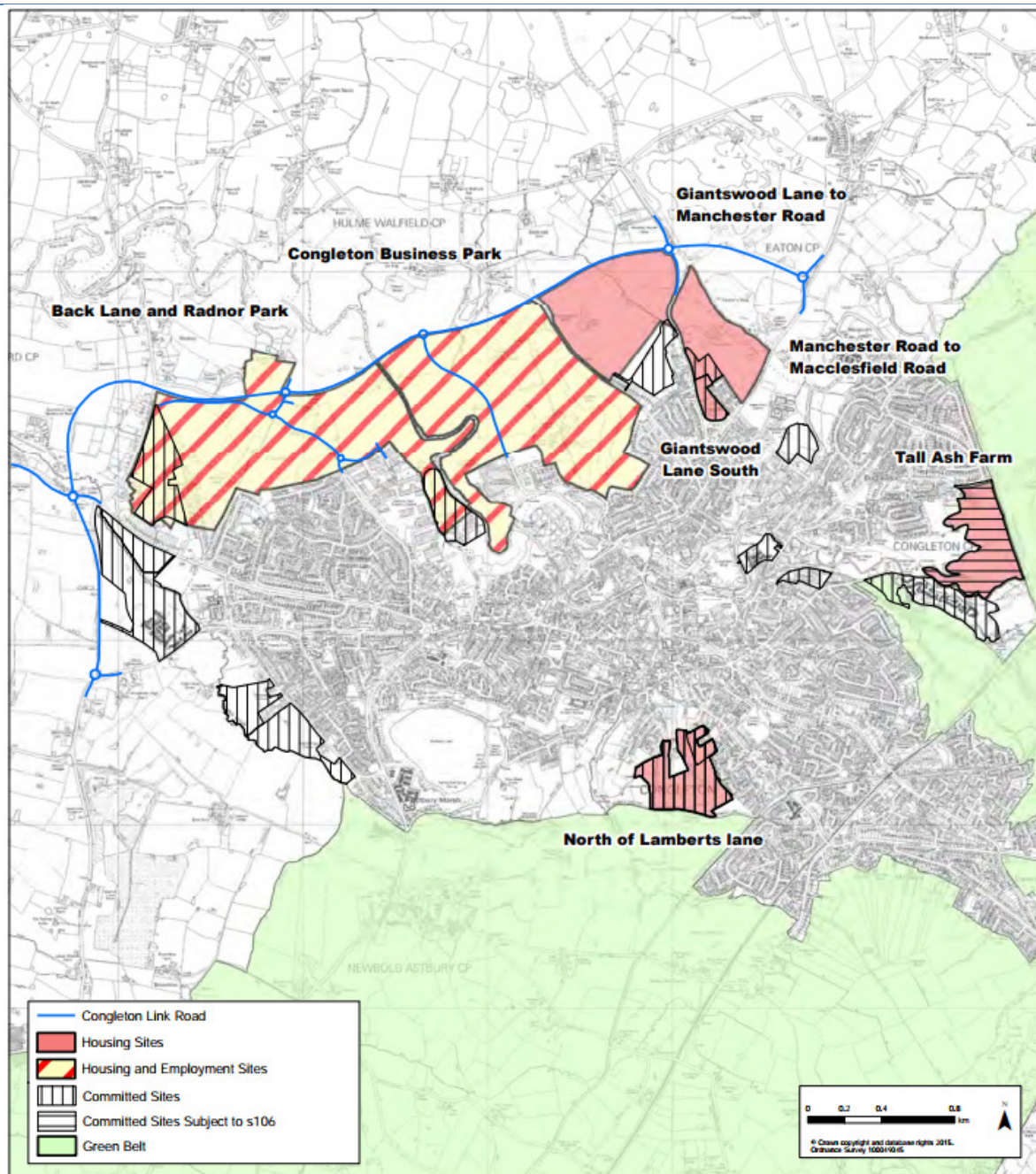
69% of Congleton's residents are economically active. Within the town, one area figures amongst the top 20% nationally most deprived.

Locally many residents are employed within the manufacturing sector due to the number of major manufacturers within the area, including Siemens, Airbags International and Berisford. A majority of employers are located on five major employment sites:

- Eaton Bank to the north of the town centre alongside the River Dane;
- Congleton Business Park to the north of the town centre;
- Daneside Business Park to the north of the town centre;
- Greenfield Industrial Estate on the western side of the town; and
- Radnor Park Industrial Estate located to the west of the town centre.

Several developments are planned in Congleton as identified in the Local Plan, as outlined below:

The map legend:
- Congleton Link Road
- Housing Sites
- Housing and Employment Sites
- Committed Sites
- Committed Sites Subject to s106
- Green Belt

These developments are expected to generate employment-led growth to allow business expansion and attract new investment. This is expected to increase the number of residents within the area, which are accommodated for in the increased housing availability identified in the Local Plan. All of these factors combined will generate economic growth, and it is important that the right transport investments are made to facilitate this jobs-led growth in Congleton.

The concentration of residential housing growth to the north of Congleton will require consideration of improved links to key services from these areas, not least to Congleton Town Centre.

Given the prevalence of long distance commuting, expected development and the deprivation issues associated with some parts of the local area, enabling transport access to employment areas as well as local services and transport hubs is essential to supporting economic growth. Considering the high

levels of car travel and the low share of rail use amongst commuters, it should be investigated how to facilitate a shift to rail where possible to ensure sustainable long-term connectivity to key economic centres and employment areas.

In addition, traffic flows are reaching capacity on the A34 corridor particularly in the peak periods, with congestion and delays occurring as a result. In order to support growth in Congleton and sustain the road network for the future, it is important to maintain good connectivity for all road users. Investment into the transport infrastructure will need to address road capacity issues in Congleton with the planned Link Road playing a significant role in this regard.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

With over 20% of the local population aged over 65, a figure above the national average, it is important that local amenities are accessible to all, including those without access to a car. The closest hospital is the Macclesfield District General Hospital, which is approximately 12km and 30 minutes away by public transport. There is no direct connection to the hospital from Congleton, as all public transport options require changing at least once or a walking leg of the journey.

Congleton has nine primary schools and two secondary schools; with colleges and higher education available further away in Crewe and Stoke-on-Trent. Ensuring sustainable and safe access to local schools and public transport options to further education is therefore vital to ensuring access to education and keeping Congleton an attractive place to live.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

A number of community parks, greenspaces and outdoor areas exist throughout the town, including Astbury Mere, Congleton Park and the Dane-in-Shaw Pastures with the quality of greenspace in Congleton being recognised by Natural England. Transport improvements need to preserve these areas and provide sustainable means to access green spaces as a means of supporting improved health and wellbeing, an aim which is incorporated into the design of several new developments.

Three Air Quality Management Areas have been declared in Congleton with all three due to limits for annual mean nitrogen dioxide emissions being exceeded as a result of high traffic flows and congestion. All are situated on or near the A34, one in West Road between the A34 and Forge Ln, one on the A54/A34 intersection and at Lower Heath near the junction with Dane Bank Avenue. Additionally, noise levels exceeding 75 dB exist throughout Congleton on West Road, Clayton Bypass, Rood hill and Lower Heath, constituting a nuisance for adjacent residents. Reducing congestion levels and the negative impacts of traffic is therefore necessary through transport improvements and traffic management to ensure that sustainable growth can be achieved in the future.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Local green spaces in Congleton offer significant potential for increasing the level of physical activity through active travel and leisure activities. Congleton is also located along the national cycle network routes NCN 573 and NCN 55 offering routes to nearby service areas. The town is connected to the canal network via the Macclesfield Canal which contributes to the recreational activities available locally. There are a number of walking and cycling facilities in the town requiring improvement or promotion, including the Biddulph Valley Way which is a recreational walking and cycling path from Congleton to Biddulph.

Congleton has an ageing population and it is important to provide accessible transport options for older people.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- **Effective asset management**: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- **Safety for all**: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- **Transport resilience**: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- **Technological innovation**: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- **Effective partnership working**: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

Residents from Congleton commute to Macclesfield, Alderley Edge and more generally towards the north and to a lesser extent the Potteries. Significant numbers of commuters travel to Congleton from Rode Heath, Biddulph, Alsager and Kidsgrove i.e. from the south of Congleton.

The majority of commuters (77%) use the car to travel to work, while the remaining residents mostly walk to work (11%) and cycle (2%) with only 4% using public transport in the form of bus and rail. Almost a quarter of commuters travel less than 2km to work and an additional 9% travel less than 5km. Almost half of commuters travel more than 10km to work, due to the significant number of residents commuting to Manchester, Macclesfield, Alderley Edge and Stoke-on-Trent.

Active and Smarter Travel

Cycling and walking infrastructure is fragmented, and segregated cycling routes are limited which reduces accessibility of walking and cycling. Major roads cutting through Congleton such as the A34, A54 and A534 with their high traffic flows further constitute barriers to walking and cycling. A

number of proposed developments outlined in the Local Plan intend to improve connections, with a number incorporating new pedestrian and cycle links into their design. The integration of the developments into existing and future transport networks needs to be ensured, in order to ensure that transport is well integrated into residential and employment areas.

The Biddulph Valley Way, just outside of the town centre to the border with North Staffordshire, offers a multi-user route for walkers, cyclists and horse riders, and this route has the potential to be expanded to further increase walking and cycling options. This could be through maintenance of the route, and improved surfacing and access points.

The cycle routes NCN 573 (Congleton to Davenham via Goostrey) and the NCN 55 (Ironbridge to Preston) pass through Congleton and offer substantial stretches of off-road cycling. Alongside this, Macclesfield Canal towpath improvements and the promotion of a cycle route from the Railway Station to Congleton town centre have been suggested. If these improvements were to be implemented, this could support economic growth and stand as a viable option for commuters.

Bus
These services provide hourly or better access to the major service hubs of Macclesfield and Crewe, Alsager and Sandbach, although few of these services operate on a Sunday and during evenings. The Beartown service offers a local circular service every half hour apart from Sundays, linking local destinations within Congleton.

Improved transport integration through links between the bus and train stations are also likely to be well utilised and improved services, frequencies and coordination of schedules. The bus network in Congleton is supported by two bus interchanges. The principal one is at the Congleton Fairground Bus Station, and another smaller facility at Congleton Railway Station.

With the extent of developments planned for Congleton, there is an aspiration to provide improved connections between the town centre, employment areas, and new housing developments to ensure that they are integrated into the public transport network.

Rail
Congleton Railway Station, managed by Northern Rail, is located on the Manchester to Stoke-on-Trent branch of the West Coast Main Line providing indirect access to London Euston (via Stoke-on-Trent). Other destinations served by the train station include Kidsgrove, Macclesfield, Manchester Piccadilly (41 minutes), Poynton, Stockport and Stoke-on-Trent (16 minutes). Subsequently, the rail station provides access to several major destinations, many of which are commuter destinations, and therefore there is the potential for greater uptake of rail transport.

To support this, rail services which are currently limited to an hourly stopping service to/from Stoke and to/from Manchester via Stockport, should increase in frequency; which would require support from central government and discussions with the Train Operating Company. Rail usage levels have recently increased by 10.8% from 2015/16 (313,290) to 2016/17 (347,208) showing an increase of importance of rail as a mode of travel. Improved integration of the rail station with other modes of travel, such as bus or active modes would further increase the attractiveness of rail travel.

Roads
Congleton is well connected to the strategic road network, located approximately 11km east of the M6 motorway. The A34 road links the town to Stoke-on-Trent and Manchester with the A536

offering connections to Macclesfield. Manchester airport can currently be reached via car in approximately 40 minutes, whilst Crewe is accessible within a 30-minute drive.

Other key junctions that suffer from the impacts of congestion include:
- A34 Rood Hill / A54 Rood Hill / A34 Clayton By-pass (signalised junction)
- A34 Clayton By-pass / Barn Road / A34 Clayton Bypass (roundabout junction)
- A34 West Road / West Street / A34 Clayton By-pass (roundabout junction)
- A34 West Road / A54 Holmes Chapel Road / A34 Newcastle Road / A534 Sandbach Road (roundabout junction / gyratory)

It is important that issues at these junctions are addressed in order to create improved road capacity and enable future growth and investment into Congleton. This would support the jobs-led growth agenda of the Council, and create a sustainable road network with capacity for future growth.

Congleton Link Road is a major scheme that gained planning approval in June 2016. This road will create a connection between the A534 Sandbach Road and the A536 Macclesfield Road. This will unlock some of the opportunities for employment and housing identified above, and is expected to generate further inward investment at established locations such as Congleton Business Park, and improve access to Radnor Park Industrial Estate. Congleton will also gain a connection to the M6 Growth Corridor, which will increase investment in manufacturing/engineering; an industry key to the towns heritage and future. The link will reduce traffic congestion in the town centre, and improve local air quality.

Congleton has a total of 13 car park sites, of which 7 are free of charge. Altogether, 844 parking spaces are available in and around the town.

Crewe

Area Summary

Crewe is a principal town within Cheshire East, with a historic industrial centre which is also a significant railway hub. The town lies approximately 30 miles south of Manchester and Liverpool, and 50 miles north of Birmingham.

Crewe plays a strategically vital role within the economy of the Cheshire & Warrington sub-region, as well as providing a service centre for the nearby settlements of Haslington, Shavington, Weston and Willaston.

There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth. This includes a number of committed sites in Crewe as outlined in the Local Plan. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Crewe.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Crewe is exceptionally well connected and possesses significant growth potential, with the 'Constellation Partnership' growth programme aiming to capitalise on Crewe's relatively

unconstrained availability of land, a strong business and human capital base and future improved connectivity to major economic hubs and markets through the proposed HS2 Hub.

Crewe is well located for connectivity to the UK's motorway network, creating an attractive location for logistics and manufacturing activity. Crewe's main roads are the A530 and the A534 running north-south and the A500/Nantwich bypass/A51 running west-east to the south of the town. The presence of numerous rail lines converging in Crewe results in congestion as a result of limited road and rail crossing points. In peak periods, congestion exists on the A534 Nantwich Road with resulting impacts on air quality and the A530 Flowers Lane junction, which may be exacerbated by the proposed Leighton West development. It is important to address congestion within Crewe itself in order to unlock some of the sites for development in the Local Plan and enable growth. Addressing these issues will allow for a road network which has the capacity to cater for future planned growth and investment, creating a sustainable road network in Crewe.

Proposed developments are forecast to impact various junctions across the town unless successfully mitigated:
- A530 Middlewich Road / Smithy Lane;
- Flowers Lane / Bradfield Road / Smithy Lane;
- A51 / Middlewich Road;
- Crewe Road / A500;
- Crewe Green Link Road, South Roundabout;
- Weston Road / University Way;
- A500 / A531 / A5020;
- Macon Way (roundabout with A534/A532);
- A534 Nantwich Road / A5019 Mill Street / B5071 South Street;
- Sydney Road / Herbert Street; and
- A534 Crewe Green Road / A5020 University Way / Hungerford Road.

It is important to provide solutions to these junctions in Crewe in order to provide the capacity and resilience for future growth through housing, employment and other investment in Crewe. Increased investment is already becoming evident with Bentley Motors recently announcing £1billion investment further securing Crewe's status as a premier location for excellence in manufacturing and engineering. This planned transformational change in Crewe means that the town has the potential to become a key northern economic centre in future. With the arrival of HS2 in 2027, this is likely to further increase the attractiveness of the area for future investors. It is important that these developments are planned with the required supporting transport infrastructure needed in order to ensure sustainable growth of Crewe and its economy.

Several developments are outlined in the Local Plan to cater for growth in housing and employment, with the majority located in the town centre, adjacent to the existing rail station to the south and the industrial parks to the north west; as shown below:
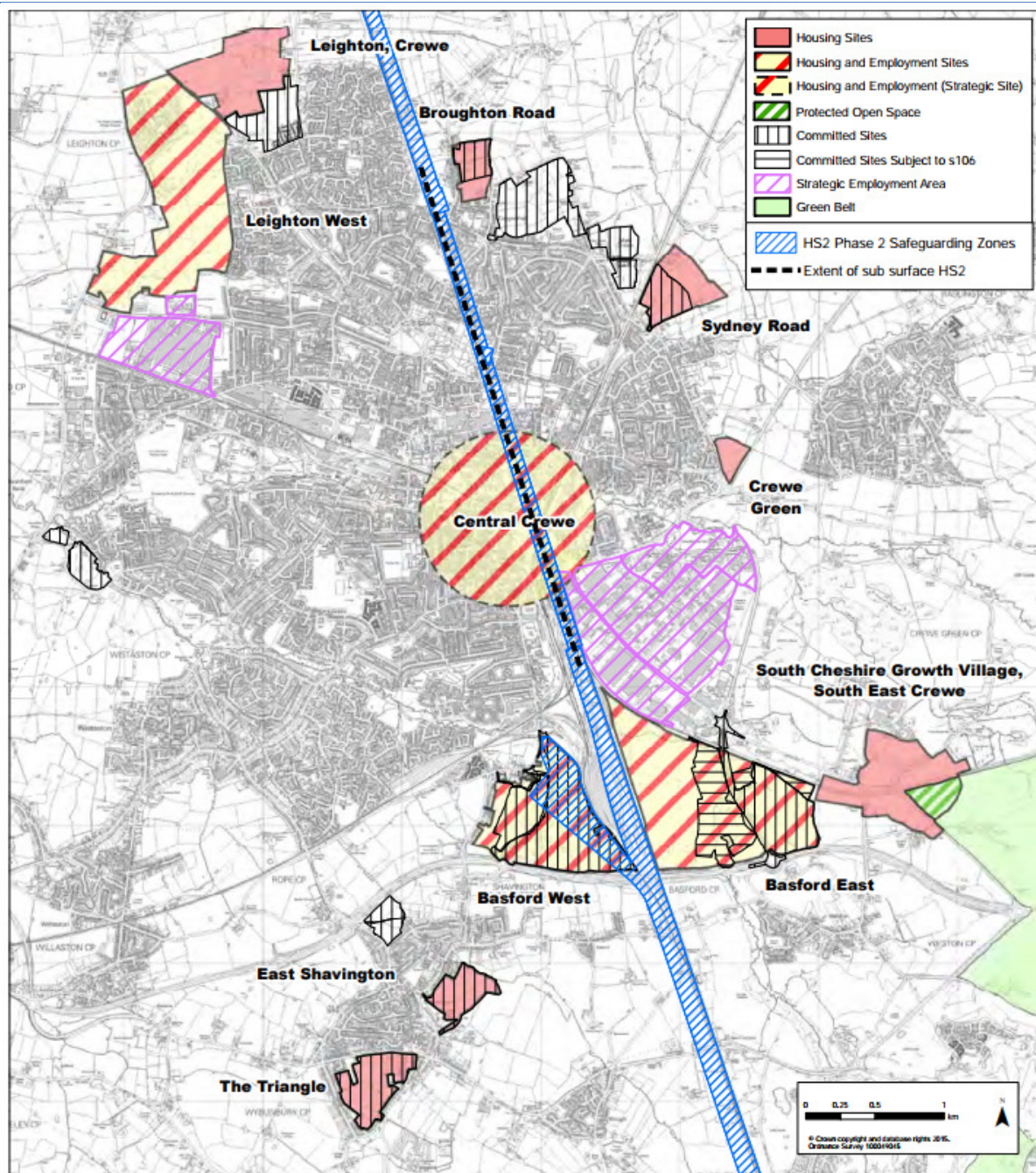
Economic growth and inward investment is likely to increase commuter flows to the area, which are already relatively high as Crewe supports around 40,000 work-based employees in 5,000 businesses. Also, 4.9 million people currently live within a one-hour journey of Crewe and the arrival of HS2 will significantly increase this figure. The Crewe Masterplan details the following growth scenario to 2043 relating to the provision of the HS2 Hub:

- GVA £1.1bn to £2.9bn;
- Commercial floor space of 107,000m^2 to 590,000m^2;
- 23,000 to 60,000 jobs; and
- 3,500 to 10,600 homes.

The journey speed and efficiency improvements HS2 will bring with London and other major cities, coupled with existing good connections via the strategic road network and attractive land values will

create strong pull factors for office markets, regional hub employers and major retailing. It is a challenge for Cheshire East to ensure that the benefits which arise from HS2 are visible borough wide.

As a result of 69% of commuters travelling by car in additional to development as described above, the road network in Crewe experiences congestion at peak hours. Two major road schemes are currently being progressed, which will help ease congestion. However, with future predicted growth in Crewe it is a challenge to further relieve congestion in additional places on the network.

Although Crewe town centre is relatively close to the Grand Junction Retail Park the area feels disconnected and hence footfall is anecdotally lower than could be expected given the retail offer. There is a challenge to better integrate the retail park and the town centre in future years to complement the redevelopment of the Grand Arcade site, thereby revitalising the town centre.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

Crewe is the most demographically varied area of Cheshire East, with the most densely populated areas found in north east Crewe. It has the youngest population of the borough, lower average income than other places in the borough and also the most deprived areas within Cheshire East. Ensuring access to opportunity, health care and education is therefore of particular importance in Crewe.

Crewe benefits from an array of education assets and providers; including primary schools, secondary schools, sixth forms, and colleges and other tertiary education providers. A number of these schools are located on or nearby busy roads and parking from school drop has the potential to create safety issues. In addition, given that school-related traffic forms a significant proportion of peak traffic, ensuring sustainable access to education has a significant role in ensuring accessibility for local residents.

A number of the main roads in Crewe can act as real or perceived safety barriers to walking and cycling due to the high vehicle flows. Limited pavement quality has been raised as an accessibility issue, especially for older people and those with reduced mobility.

A number of key employers are located within the urban area of Crewe, including Grand Junction Retail Park and Crewe Business Park, and businesses located within the town centre. Some, such as Crewe Business Park, are accessible on foot from the station. Others are further away which discourages public transport and walking use and subsequently they are accessed primarily by car. The challenge is to increase accessibility to these areas via alternative modes of travel and to integrate them into the public transport network. The challenge within Crewe itself, is to improve accessibility focused on improved pedestrian connectivity to the town centre and employment, particularly between residential areas and employment sites, aiming to reduce car use for short journeys. Improved local accessibility and connections to the public transport network is especially important as 25% of Crewe's residents do not have access to a car.

Currently, there are no direct links from Crewe to Macclesfield or Knutsford and this could allow for new employment opportunities generated by HS2 to be accessible across Cheshire East. In addition, station capacity is also a potential problem particularly for terminating trains. Although the current track layout at Crewe has capacity for terminating services from the south, the north side is more constrained. In particular, there is a lack of capacity for additional terminating services from the lines to Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

As a result of ongoing development in Crewe, a Green Gap policy is in place to ensure Crewe and nearby settlements do not coalesce whilst still leaving appropriate scope for further development in the Local Plan period and beyond. The long term objective is preventing Crewe, Willaston, Wistaston, Nantwich, Haslington and Shavington from merging into each other. As such, areas of green space need to be protected forming a gap between the settlements and supporting improved access to recreational space.

Within Crewe, three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) have been declared due to exceedance of annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels as a result of high road traffic levels and congestion. All three AQMAs are located on busy roads within central Crewe. One is along Nantwich Road between the rail bridge and Ruskin Road, the second is on Wistaston Road between Bridle Road and Duke Street with the third on the A532 Earle Street from Thomas Street to Manchester Bridge at Vincent Street. Noise issues have also been identified along the A534 Haslington Bypass, Crewe Green Road, Nantwich Road, the A530 Middlewich Road and the A500. There is an aim to improve air quality in Crewe, and address the AQMAs. This will create a more pleasant and attractive place to live and work.

It is the Council's vision to continue to maintain and improve the image of Cheshire East and its high quality of place. The aim for Crewe is to continue to be attractive for investors, as a place to live and also as a place to visit. As such, new developments in Crewe are now expected to contribute to 'The Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Crewe', through the provision of green spaces and walking/cycle routes and by working towards environmental objectives.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Crewe experiences more deprivation than the rest of the borough and its rural hinterland in terms of health, income and educational performance. Particularly in urban Crewe, five areas are judged as being in the 10% of most deprived areas nationally. In addition, physical activity rates in Crewe are some of the lowest in the borough. Subsequently, a key challenge is to increase physical activity and health within Crewe such as through active travel.

Cheshire East has an ageing population with a significant proportion of the population aged over 65. There is an opportunity to continue to enhance active travel opportunities for some older people whilst also recognising this may not be an option for some and there is a requirement for suitable accessible means of transport that supports independence and wellbeing.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important

- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

Crewe attracts a net inflow of commuters, with flows of people commuting into Crewe higher than the people going out for work. The biggest attractors of commuters are Crewe Business Park, Gates Industrial Park, Bentley Motors, Leighton Hospital and the Grand Junction Retail Park. These flows of workers make it important to have a road network that can meet demand.

A significant number of commuters come from nearby places such as Nantwich, Sandbach and Alsager for which public transport can provide a feasible alternative. There is also a large inflow of workers commuting in from the Potteries. The remaining inflow comes from the Mid-Cheshire towns and other key service centres in the borough. Outflows are largely limited to nearby places such as Nantwich and to a lesser extent Manchester, the Mid-Cheshire towns and the Potteries.

Around 69% of commuters travel to work by car, while 16% walk to their workplace, 6% cycle and 6% use public transport. These levels of walking, cycling and bus commuting are amongst the highest values in the borough. However, only 2% of residents use the train to travel to work, despite the good rail connections offered by Crewe station.

More than 60% of journeys to work are made within the Crewe and Nantwich area, indicating a high proportion of residents working in close proximity to where they live. With a large proportion of employees living within 10km of their workplace and only 24% travelling more than 10km there is the potential to shift a proportion of work related trips to more sustainable modes of travel such as walking, cycling or public transport.

Active and Smarter Travel

Attempts to increase physical activity levels in the area are already underway, with the delivery of the Lifestyle Centre in central Crewe that incorporates leisure, library and care facilities. As part of the Sustainable Travel Transition Year, travel planning advice was provided to local businesses and institutions. A substantial share of commuters and students live within walking and cycling distance

of their workplace or educational facility. However, capital investment in physical pedestrian and cycling infrastructure is necessary as the main barriers to increased active travel are fragmented networks and poor perceptions of safety. A Crewe Cycling Infrastructure Plan has been developed to plan a network of high quality routes.

Some local cycle routes are well utilised with National Cycle Network route 451 from Wrenbury to Nantwich, Crewe, and Sandbach experiencing a recent increase of 43% in the number of cyclists using the route, and a 60% increase in pedestrian usage. The route forms a link between Route 45 and Route 5 with the scheme directly linking Reaseheath College, Leighton Hospital and a number of major employers within the local area. Similarly, the Connect2 Crewe to Nantwich Greenway provides a high quality walking and cycling route. Additional benefit would be gained from extending the off-road provision up to Leighton Hospital, as well as creating improved links to the town centre. The success of this cycle route can be built upon by increasing the number of cycle and pedestrian routes passing through the town centre.

In addition, there is an opportunity to link new developments, such as Leighton West, to existing walking and cycling infrastructure to ensure that active travel is a feasible and attractive option for residents and employees living and/or working in new developments.

Bus

Crewe bus station is the major bus hub in the town and for the borough. The Local Plan outlines redevelopment of Crewe bus station as part of the Crewe Royal Arcade which will contribute to regeneration of the town centre; plans for which are currently being developed.

Most buses to and from Crewe are commercially operated with connections to: Winsford, Alsager, Kidsgrove, Leighton Hospital, Shavington and Macclesfield. The commercial service is supported by a number of financially supported services by the Council which include connections to Middlewich, Holmes Chapel, Congleton and Nantwich. Some services cross the Cheshire East border to destinations such as Chester. All services operate weekdays, with less services on evenings and weekends in some instances.

Rail

Crewe has long been established as a major railway hub, currently facilitating 200,000 commuter journeys per year and often referred to as the 'Gateway to the North West'. Crewe's rail network will experience extensive growth due to the arrival of HS2 and this will significantly increase the number of commuters entering Crewe via rail. The rail station is situated less than a mile from Crewe town centre, however, connectivity and integration of modes between the town centre and the station needs improvement.

Crewe station currently offers services to London, Warrington (and northwards), Wales (both North and Mid Wales), Stoke-on-Trent, Derby and the East Midlands, and the Manchester Line. Travel times from Crewe to London are 96 minutes which will decrease with the arrival of HS2, and services to Manchester take 35 minutes. It is a long term aspiration of the Council to reopen the Sandbach to Northwich Line from Crewe. The Council is lobbying relevant bodies for improved services and improved connectivity for Crewe as part of existing arrangements (including better links to Manchester Airport) and also with a view for the delivery of HS2. The Council has also supported development of a vision for the Crewe Hub which will address capacity constraints at Crewe station whilst acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration of the area.

Roads

There is currently ongoing investment from Highways England to enhance capacity on the M6 (e.g. smart motorway scheme between M6 J16 and J19), reinforcing Crewe's good national connectivity.

In order to address congestion and support delivery of the Local Plan, the Council are currently progressing three major road schemes in Crewe itself. These aim to ease urban congestion, unlock economic growth and support job creation opportunities:

- Crewe Green Roundabout – the redesign of the roundabout in the east of the town will reduce queueing and congestion allowing more efficient access to Sandbach and the M6;
- Sydney Road Bridge – this is one of three rail bridges in the town, which will be replaced by a two-lane bridge to remove this existing bottleneck; and
- A500 dualling scheme giving better access to the M6 and the Potteries.

In addition, the Council has secured a proportion of funding for the Leighton West Spine Road and related transport improvements in North West Crewe to enable the delivery of housing developments in the area.

Further work will need to be conducted over the lifetime of this LTP to consider road access improvements to enable benefit realisation from the HS2 Hub connectivity improvements. This work will be conducted in accordance with the Crewe Masterplan and alongside planning for HS2 infrastructure.

There is substantial car parking in Crewe which can act to dislocate the town centre from the surrounding areas. The introduction of town centre multi-storey car parks have been subsequently proposed as a means of rationalising surface car parks. There have also been concerns raised around parking charges, with observation of higher charges in Crewe compared to other areas of Cheshire East.

Key employment areas also suffer from limited parking capacity, especially around Crewe Business Park (CBP) and Gates Industrial Estate. New developments are likely to increase parking demand and therefore mitigating measures, such as the provision of active travel infrastructure, shuttle bus services or additional levels of on-site parking where appropriate could be considered.

Handforth

Area Summary

Handforth is a suburban town, situated in north of the borough. Near to the border with Greater Manchester, the town is situated between Wilmslow in the south and Cheadle in the north. Despite its proximity to Greater Manchester and Wilmslow, Handforth maintains a suburban character. The surrounding areas of Heald Green and Woodford rely on Handforth's services, including local amenities in the town centre and Handforth Dean Retail Park.

There are significant economic ties and cross-border movements between Handforth and Greater Manchester, with the town benefitting from job opportunities in Greater Manchester and also inflows of workers coming in to Handforth from Greater Manchester. Linked to this is significant planned growth both in Handforth and wider Cheshire East as identified in the Local Plan. Growth is also planned within the Greater Manchester boundary as identified in the Spatial Framework. Subsequently, there is a real requirement to ensure the local transport network operates efficiently and effectively to support jobs-led growth and continued success.
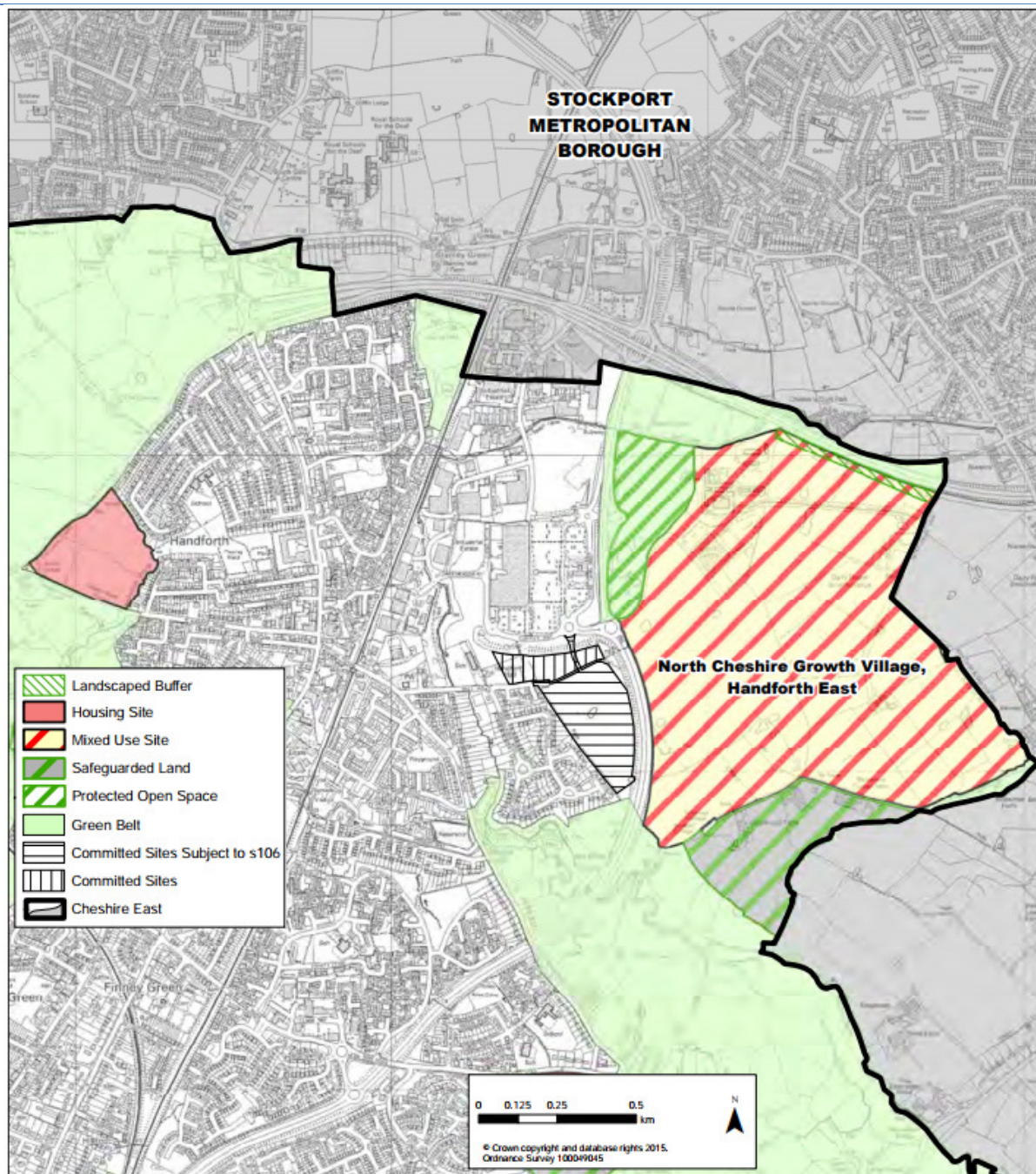
Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they specifically impact Handforth.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

There are a number of sites identified in the Local Plan for significant levels of development in Handforth. These include LPS 34 with approximately 250 homes identified for delivery between Clay Lane and Sagars Road, and LPS 33 the North Cheshire Growth Village which will include 1,500 homes and 12 hectares of employment land. These developments are shown in the map below. There are also some other Local Plan sites in close proximity to Handforth, in the neighbouring key service centre of Wilmslow.

Handforth development sites will total 12ha of employment land and 1,750 new homes, which is a significant expansion of housing in the area. These sites are considered well located for employment opportunities both in Cheshire and Greater Manchester. It is important to maintain an appropriate level of accessibility to new development sites without negatively impacting connectivity to existing residents and businesses; as a means of ensuring that the transport network can support future jobs-led growth in Handforth.

Legend:
- Landscaped Buffer
- Housing Site
- Mixed Use Site
- Safeguarded Land
- Protected Open Space
- Green Belt
- Committed Sites Subject to s106
- Committed Sites
- Cheshire East

STOCKPORT METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

North Cheshire Growth Village, Handforth East

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Ordnance Survey 100049045

Economic activity in Handforth is closely linked to Greater Manchester with commuters travelling to Manchester to work and vice-versa. This relationship is supported by relatively efficient rail links, with two direct trains per hour to Manchester and one to Crewe. However, bus, walking and cycling links between Handforth rail station and main employment sites such as Handforth Dean and Stanley Green can be inefficient impeding multi-modal connectivity.

This lack of multi-modal connectivity is demonstrated by the fact that almost three quarters of Handforth residents commute via car. With commuter traffic exacerbating congestion, in particular on the A34 bypass during peak times and on Wilmslow Road through the town centre. Road connectivity will soon be improved with the completion of the A555 Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road, resulting in an improved direct route from the M60/M56 which will offer reduced impact on

some local roads and significant economic growth potential for Handforth. In addition, better access to and from Manchester Airport is likely to bring benefits and inward investment to Handforth. The challenge will be to ensure that supporting work takes place to maximise the benefits of this investment to Handforth.

Employment opportunities within the town centre include the Paddock shopping area, which provides retail job opportunities and Deanway Business Park which is within walking distance of the majority of Handforth's residential areas. A significant number of the town's key employment opportunities are located at Stanley Green Industrial Estate and Handforth Dean Retail Park. Although in close geographical proximity to the town centre these are located to the east of the railway line resulting in access challenges due to limited crossing points over the railway. The challenge is to increase accessibility to these areas via all modes of travel.

Significant growth in housing and employment is planned in Handforth. In addition to the planned extension of Handforth Dean Retail Park, the North Cheshire Growth Village site identified in the Local Plan includes 2200 new homes alongside 22ha of employment. The village aims to offer a 'best practice' example for future developments which incorporates sustainable design, including improved public transport provision. Due to the proximity of Handforth to Greater Manchester the growth planned for in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework will have cross border impacts on Handforth and its transport network. A key enduring challenge will be the management of existing and future congestion on the road network and delivering improved connectivity to new employment and residential developments via public transport and sustainable modes. In this regard an update to the South East Multi Modal Movement Strategy is currently being conducted in tandem with the LTP.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

Almost 30% of Handforth's working population travel over 10km to work with the majority of these trips being made to Greater Manchester. Handforth has good rail connections with Greater Manchester allowing public transport access into the city centre and other areas including Stockport. It is important that public transport access is available to all residents to support employment, independence and access to services. There are lower car ownership levels in Handforth than the Cheshire East borough average. Subsequently, it is important to provide alternative modes of travel to the car for both short and long journeys improving connectivity for residents to services and employment in Handforth, Stockport and Greater Manchester.

Through consultation, it is evident that issues exist around the accessibility of local services, particularly for the high proportion of older residents (21%) and those under 18 (19%), who are likely to rely on passenger transport and active travel for access to services and education. The nearest hospital is located in Wythenshawe 7km away from Handforth and accessibility improvements linking the town with the hospital would bring real benefit.

There are a number of primary schools in Handforth with the nearest secondary school being in Wilmslow and further college and university education available in Cheadle and Manchester respectively. Ensuring safe walking and cycling routes to local schools and good public transport links to higher education is important for maintaining accessibility to education and supporting wellbeing and independence. Additionally, safe and well managed highway environments in the vicinity of schools is important for the safety of pupils and quality of life for wider communities in these areas.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

There is an ambition that the natural and built environment of Cheshire East is maintained and improved as part of the wider commitment to quality of place. In the case of Handforth the parish is keen to maintain its distinct character separate from Greater Manchester in the north and Wilmslow in the south. Public green and open spaces within the town such as Meriton Road Park, Stanley Hall Park and the green space around Oakmere also need protecting as they bring substantial local benefit including providing opportunities for exercise and recreation.

Levels of road traffic can also have a negative impact on Handforth; in particular noise issues related to the A34 and A555 were raised locally and will need to be considered alongside the current and future proposals around the A555.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East are physically active for less than 30mins a week and we know that lack of physical activity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the Borough. Deprivation is commonly associated with poor health outcomes and Handforth has pockets of deprivation towards the north of the parish. As such, ensuring access to healthcare, open space, recreation and physical activity opportunities is especially important to reduce the impact of health inequalities. Improved links are needed with public green and open spaces such as Meriton Road Park, Stanley Hall Park and the green space around Oakmere to support improved health and wellbeing. Ensuring multi-modal accessibility for all to Wythenshawe Hospital and local doctors surgeries is also vital.

Over 20% of Handforth's population are aged over 65 and subsequently the borough is faced with the challenge of providing for an ageing population. We need to provide access to healthcare and other services for older and vulnerable people via transport options which support independence and wellbeing.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

According to the 2011 Census, Handforth has 16% higher commuter outflow than inflow meaning more people travel to work outside of Handforth than commute in to work; with a large proportion of these commuter flows connecting to and from Greater Manchester. In addition, a large proportion of work trips are made to and from Handforth and nearby Wilmslow, Alderley Edge, Macclesfield and, to a lesser extent, Poynton.

16% of Handforth's residents travel less than 2km to work with a further 20% travelling between 2 and 5km. With almost three quarters of journeys to work in Handforth currently undertaken by car there exists the potential to encourage shorter trips by more sustainable modes of travel which would deliver congestion and journey time reliability benefits.

Active and Smarter Travel

The uptake of cycling across Handforth is in line with the majority of the borough. Cycle routes exist along Manchester Road and Wilmslow Road connecting north / south however there is not currently a connected network across the parish. There are issues relating to the limited width of some footways in the town, maintenance of edge of carriageways and with parking encroaching on cycle and footways.

There is a stated ambition to improve access to the open countryside surrounding Handforth and one way of doing this is through improved walking and cycling provision. Currently, the Manchester Airport Orbital Cycleway (Regional Cycle Route 85) starts and terminates just west of Handforth in Styal providing access to a popular cycle route. Expansion of this cycle route to reach other residential areas and trip attractors would be a useful addition to local cycling infrastructure.

The Local Plan identifies improvements to be made to the land between Clay Lane and Sagars Road including new cycle and pedestrian links . The new developments forming the North Cheshire Growth Village could also benefit from the inclusion of pedestrian and cycle link improvements to nearby residential areas and services.

In order to encourage further sustainable travel, Handforth would benefit from a safe cycle route connecting the town centre and rail station with Handforth Dean and Stanley Green Business Park. This would further encourage sustainable travel and provide an alternative to driving to these locations for work and/or leisure. This would also support the continued success of these locations.

Bus

The bus network in Handforth currently consists of one service from Macclesfield to Manchester

Piccadilly via Wilmslow, and another service from Handforth Dean to Stockport. Both services run Monday to Saturday. Other than the connection to Macclesfield, bus services into Cheshire East are limited.

It is important to integrate the developments outlined in the Local Plan, such as the North Cheshire Growth Village, into the public transport network in order to provide connectivity.

Rail

6% of commuters in Handforth use rail which is higher than the Cheshire East average. Two trains per hour link Handforth to Manchester Piccadilly also calling at Stockport, making this a viable option for many commuters. There is also an hourly service to Crewe, with two trains per hour at peak times. However, East / west rail movements require a change at Stockport reflecting borough wide rail issues with east / west connectivity. National destinations can be reached following a change of service in Crewe or Manchester. As consequence of being located outside the Greater Manchester boundary Handforth suffers from a rail fare differential with rail fares being higher for trips from Handforth than from Cheadle Hulme, the next stop on the line.

The train station itself would benefit from improvement; currently, the platforms at Handforth are only accessible by steps and therefore improving disabled and older people's access to the station is necessary. Multi-modal accessibility to the station also requires improvement through the introduction of parking and drop off facilities at the station as well as improved walking and cycling links connecting the town centre and other key destinations, including wayfinding and cycle parking.

Roads

Handforth is well linked to the wider road network, via the A34 northbound towards Greater Manchester and southbound to southern Cheshire. The Wilmslow-Handforth Bypass (A34) passes to the east of Handforth, connecting the town with Manchester and the M60 in the north and Congleton and Newcastle-under-Lyme. Once completed the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (A555) will improve connectivity by linking the A6 near Hazel Grove and the M56 at Manchester Airport to Handforth; providing faster access to both the airport, M56 and further east to the Peak District.

Traffic on the A34, in particular on approach to the roundabouts with the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road (A555) and the B5094 may increase further, as a result of the extension of the A555 to the airport, although current improvements to the roundabouts will increase capacity at these junctions. The A555 scheme is also likely to increase traffic on Wilmslow Road through the centre of Handforth and it is necessary to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic on this route.

Traffic congestion during peak periods has resulted in noise issues on the A538 north of the town, on the A538 Manchester Road to the south and on the A5102 Adlington Road near Wilmslow Park Road. Concerns have also been raised around congestion on Wilmslow Road and in particular at its junctions with Stanneylands Rd/Dean Row Rd and Bulkeley Rd/Dean Rd. Issues have also been raised surrounding the A34 and the potential impact of development related traffic; this is of particular concern at the A34 / Handforth Dean Retail Park dumb-bell (West) and A34/Coppice Way gyratories within Cheshire East. Various junctions outside of the Cheshire East boundary have also been noted including:
- A34 / A560 Gatley signals;
- A34 / B5094 gyratory; and
- A34 / A555 gyratory.

Handforth has three public car parks owned by the Council: School Road, Wilmslow Road and the health centre, which are all free of charge; with privately owned car parks at the Paddock and Spar. All car parks in Handforth tend to be at capacity during weekdays and there is some anecdotal evidence that this is partly the result of commuters from elsewhere e.g. residents of Wilmslow driving to Handforth and parking near the rail station to get the train to Greater Manchester.

Knutsford

Area Summary

Knutsford is a market town, located in the north-west of the borough with a population of approximately 13,191. Knutsford is in fairly close proximity to Wilmslow and Northwich, as well as Altrincham in Greater Manchester. Various nearby settlements, including Tabley, Mobberley, and High Legh rely on Knutsford for local services thus increasing the population served by the town to around 25,000.

Both Macclesfield and Manchester city centre are less than 20 kilometres away and the town and has strong economic ties to both with significant numbers of Knutsford residents commuting out to these locations. Whereas, commuter inflows are primarily more local; particularly from the south-west including Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich.

There is significant planned development both within Cheshire East as identified within the Local Plan and Greater Manchester as identified in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework; with housing growth in and around Knutsford and the growth of Greater Manchester likely to impact the transport network connecting Knutsford and surrounding areas. This highlights the importance of effective management and investment in the transport network as without effective connectivity this jobs-led growth is unlikely to be deliverable.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Knutsford.

There are a number of housing and employment sites included as part of the adopted Local Plan. The sites are:

- LPS 36 – North West Knutsford – 500 homes and 7.5 hectares of employment land;
- LPS 37 – Parkgate Extension – 200 homes and 6 hectares of employment land;
- LPS 38 – Land South of Longridge – 225 homes;
- LPS 39 - Safeguarded land south of Tabley Road;
- LPS 40 – Safeguarded land north of Tabley Road; and
- LPS 41 – Land adjacent to Booths Hall.

It is important to ensure a good level of accessibility to these new developments in Knutsford, as well as to employment locations and services in order to ensure that the transport network supports the continued growth and success of Knutsford.
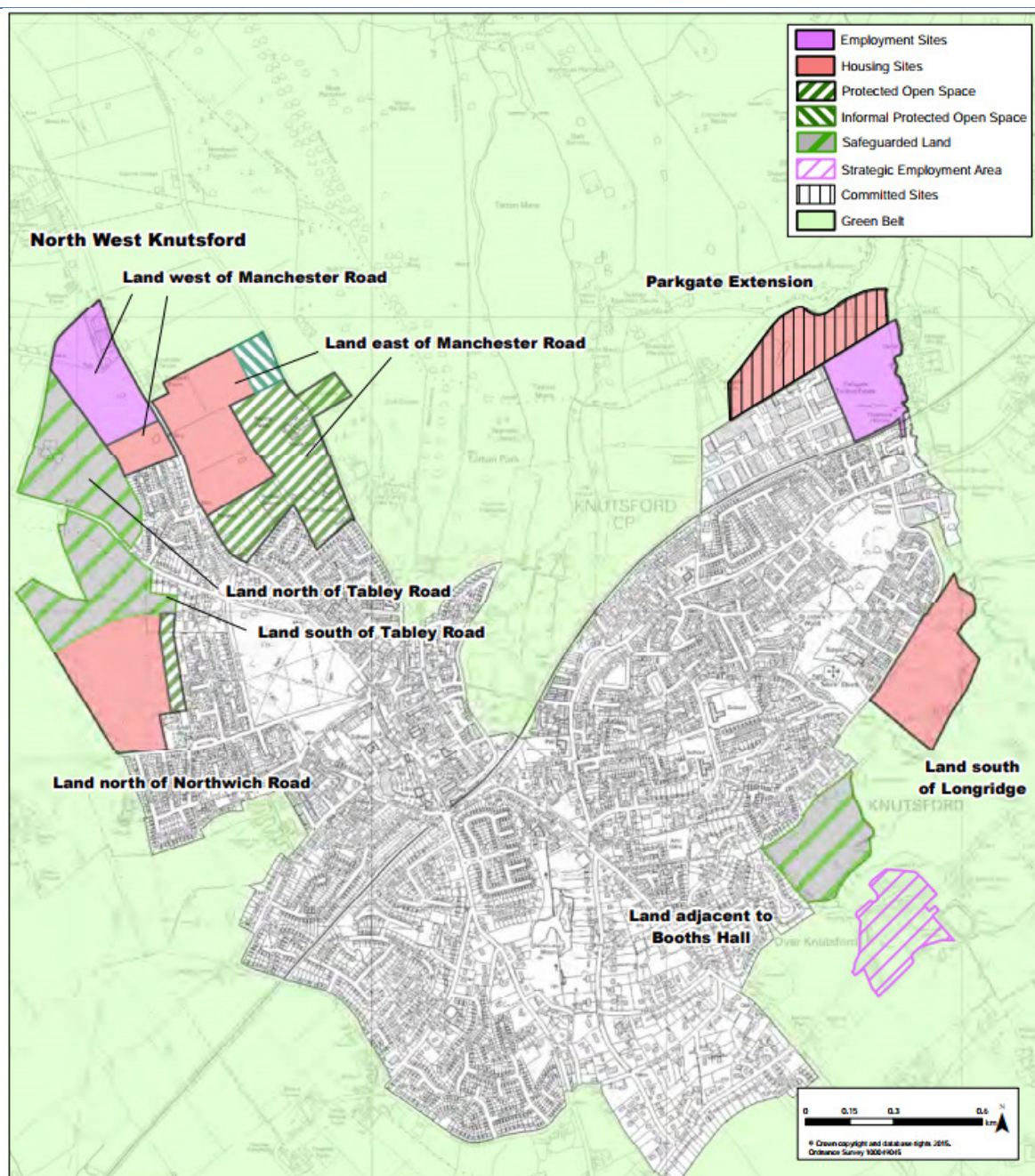
Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

In Knutsford, 71% of commuters travel by car. Although this is lower than the Cheshire East average, this level of car use contributes to congestion experienced in the town centre alongside through traffic. Peak hour congestion is also an issue near to rural employment sites on the outskirts of the town, such as Parkgate Trading Estate, Longridge Trading Estate, Booths Park and Radbroke Hall.

The presence of congestion in and around main employment areas has the potential to hinder growth and investment. A key challenge in Knutsford relates to congestion and town centre parking with regards to balancing the needs of visitors on whom much of the town's economy relies and local residents. The Council is seeking to improve travel options and journey time reliability in and around Knutsford, including through the recent addition of access from the A556 to the B5569

Bucklow Hill which has increased accessibility and relieved congestion into the north of Knutsford.

Employment locations in more rural areas are more susceptible due to the challenge of integrating these locations successfully with public and sustainable travel options. This can cause local issues regarding congestion and parking availability but can also act to exclude those without a car from accessing employment at these locations. This issue is not so pronounced at employment locations in central Knutsford, including retail as most are within walking distance of the train station.

Jobs-led economic growth in and around Knutsford is supported. However, the impact of local development in Cheshire East and also neighbouring Greater Manchester has the potential to impact negatively on the transport network in and around Knutsford if not successfully mitigated.

It is recognised that Knutsford would benefit from improved connectivity between the town centre and its main attractions, such as Tatton Park, which is one of the key heritage areas in Cheshire East attracting around 800,000 visitors annually. The park hosts various events throughout the year with the majority of visitors arriving via car. Improved transport links between the park and the town would benefit both.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

There are a number of primary schools in the town with Knutsford Academy offering both secondary and further education courses. For alternative options and higher level study residents need to travel further afield, including to colleges in Northwich and Wilmslow. The nearest universities are located in Manchester. In order for Knutsford to continue to be successful, it is important that younger residents have good access to education including via public and sustainable transport options. Safe and well managed highway environments in the vicinity of schools are important for the safety of pupils and quality of life for wider communities in these areas.

Knutsford has the ambition to retain young people and the working population and subsequently must continue to offer improved connectivity to major employment destinations, most notably Greater Manchester. The town must seek to provide both connectivity which encourages young residents to stay or locate to Knutsford whilst also ensuring that transport provision supports older people to live healthy, independent lives.

Approximately 23% of Knutsford's commuters travel between 10 and 20km to destinations including Greater Manchester and Macclesfield. Longer distance commuter travel is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of congestion, in particular if there are limited viable alternatives to travelling by car as is often the case with more rural employment locations.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

It is the Council's vision to continue to maintain and improve Cheshire East's environment as part of the commitment to high quality of place. Knutsford benefits from numerous green spaces within and around the town which help make the town a great place to live and visit; including The Heath and Little Heath, The Moor, Sanctuary Moor, St John's Wood and Tatton Park.

There are three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) declared in Knutsford with motorised traffic levels a contributory factor. These areas include five properties along the A50 Manchester Road at the junction with Windsor Way, on the A556 Chester Road near Mere and the A50 Manchester Road. Improved vehicle technology will help reduce emissions over the medium to long term and encouraging more sustainable journey can play a part in addressing this challenge.

This is especially important when planning local development and working to ensure that as many trips as possible from new development sites are made sustainably.

The evidence shows that 20% of Knutsford's working population travel less than 2km to work. There is therefore an opportunity to cater for a large proportion of these trips via sustainable and public transport. Knutsford has relatively high levels of walking in comparison to the wider Borough suggesting that people feel confident to travel on foot in the town. This should be further encouraged through the development of high quality of place as walking and cycling bring numerous benefits to health, the environment and the wider transport network.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East are physically active for less than 30mins a week and we know that lack of physical activity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the Borough. Knutsford has a higher than average percentage of commuters who walk to work (12%) however there appears scope to increase cycling from current levels by improving accessibility for active travel options to local attractions and destinations.

Knutsford has an ageing population and it is important to provide accessible transport options for older people. We know that lifestyle and travel habits are formed at a young age and therefore children should be supported to lead healthy lives which include physical activity. As such, it is increasingly important that the transport network supports all of Knutsford's residents to access friends, family, services and employment via appropriate modes of transport.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the Borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:
- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the Borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport

and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

The car is the most common mode of travel to work at 71% which is lower than the Cheshire East average, whilst 13% of commuters choose to walk to work which is a higher percentage than many other areas of the Borough. The town's job market is relatively self-contained compared with other settlements in Cheshire East, which could contribute to the higher number of people choosing to commute via foot. However, there are also significant employment sites on the edge of the town for which travel options are limited and where subsequently the majority of people travel by car.

Active and Smarter Travel

There are a number of opportunities in Knutsford to increase levels of active travel. Although the percentage of people who currently walk to work is relatively high, it has been identified that pedestrian improvements are required. In particular, a number of footways require widening, for example on the A537 the footpaths could be widened and extended to both sides of the road. Other pedestrian improvements such as better crossing points may also bring benefits to the town. In particular, crossing facilities for both pedestrian and cyclists at the A50 / A537 / Stanley Road Junction and the A50 / King Edward Road / Northwich Road Roundabout may support greater levels of active travel.

The town would also benefit from improved cycle connections between key destinations e.g. the rail station to Tatton Park and links to key employment sites. The Parkgate expansion intends to extend cycle infrastructure into the town and corresponding links between the town centre and other employment sites on the edge of Knutsford would be beneficial and encourage active travel.

The pedestrian environment on both King Street and Princess Street in the central shopping area is limited. For vehicles, there is currently a one-way system in place and footpaths are narrow. There is an ambition to make improvements to this area in order to better cater for high-levels of footfall in retail locations, contributing to improving 'quality of place' in the town.

Bus

The town is served by several bus services; destinations served include Macclesfield, Northwich, Wilmslow and Altrincham throughout the week on an hourly basis. There is also a circular service within the town itself; however, this service does not offer evening or Sunday services.

It is important for future developments, such as those outlined in the Local Plan, to be fully integrated into the public transport network in Knutsford. This allows accessibility to local services, such as the GP, and other local shops and services.

In order to increase accessibility to Knutsford and Tatton Park, it would be beneficial during events and peak times for shuttle buses to take visitors between the centre of Knutsford to Tatton Park. This could either be a regular service, or during popular events such as the Tatton Park Flower Show

in order to reduce the demand for car parks, and relieve congestion. A shuttle service might also increase footfall in the centre of Knutsford and could link to other attractions in the borough, such as Jodrell Bank.

Rail

The town is served by a centrally located rail station on the mid-Cheshire line offering one train per hour to Chester and Manchester, with both journeys taking approximately 45 minutes. There is a long standing ambition and plans to increase the frequency of these services. This train also connects directly to Altrincham, Northwich and Stockport. There is also the possibility of investigating tram-train running on the mid-Cheshire line to provide direct journey options to locations on the Metrolink network such as Trafford. Knutsford has limited connectivity towards the north west (no direct rail services to Warrington and Liverpool) and the south east (no direct services to Crewe, Stafford and Congleton).

The train station would benefit from improvements to open up a wider choice of modes of travel to and from the station. There are Bike and Go facilities at the station and promotion may encourage greater use. The station access is situated on a busy junction with pedestrian crossings on some arms however improved crossings here could create more direct routes for pedestrians.

Roads

The town is well served via the road network. The main roads through the town include the A50, providing local connections north/south, and the A537, which runs east towards Macclesfield. The town is 2km east of J19 of the M6 and the M56 is accessible via the A556. The roads through the centre of Knutsford however, experience significant congestion in particular during peak times and during disruption on the M6. Relatively high levels of heavy goods vehicles have also been reported by the community in Knutsford as the town is located on key routes to the M6 and M56.

There are a number of development sites in Knutsford identified in the Local Plan. As a result of these developments, in particular at Parkgate, additional traffic has the potential to exacerbate existing congestion issues, particularly at peak periods. As a result, improvements would be required at the following junctions:
- A537 Adams Hill junction;
- A50 between A5033 junction and Adams Hill junction widening;
- A5033/A50 roundabout junction improvements;
- Mobberley Road/Parkgate Lane junction improvements; and
- Brook Street/Hollow Lane junction improvements.

An improvement scheme at Junction 19 of the M6 is also under consideration in part to accommodate future traffic growth and address existing congestion.

There are a number of car parks located centrally in Knutsford; including King Street, Silk Mill and Princess Street car parks. Knutsford rail station also has its own parking provision but this is relatively limited.

Macclesfield

Area Summary

Macclesfield is a principal town within Cheshire East known for its industrial heritage. It is situated on the River Bollin in the north east of the Borough, 21 miles north-east from Crewe, close to the borders of Greater Manchester to the north and with the Peak District immediately to the east.

There is significant planned development across Cheshire East as identified within the Local Plan. In particular jobs-led growth, development and regeneration in and around Macclesfield is targeted as a priority for the borough. In addition, there is significant growth planned in Greater Manchester as identified in the Spatial Framework which has the potential to impact Macclesfield. These growth ambitions highlight the importance of effective management and investment in the transport network in Macclesfield and the surrounding areas, as without effective connectivity this growth is unlikely to be deliverable.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Macclesfield.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity
Macclesfield is the second largest town in Cheshire East after Crewe, with 52,500 inhabitants. 72% of Macclesfield's population are economically active which aligns with the Borough-wide average.

The town has a relatively young population, with a higher share of young people under 16 and a higher proportion of working age (16-64) residents than the borough average. However, it also has comparatively lower than average household incomes and pockets of deprivation with two areas within the most 20% deprived nationally.

Despite this, Macclesfield has diversified from its historic emphasis on silk manufacturing and developed employment in commerce, business and IT. The town is home to several business parks (Lyme Green, Tytherington, Fence Avenue) and also hosts one of the world's largest pharmaceutical manufacturing sites, AstraZeneca, located at the Hurdsfield Industrial Estate. The expertise and growth opportunities of the AstraZeneca site place Macclesfield at the forefront of the European pharmaceutical industry.

Outside of these business parks the historic town centre hosts a retail centre with around 500 shops providing local employment opportunities. A key challenge over the coming years is to bolster this retail and leisure offer to encourage residents and visitors alike to shop and spend time in the town centre. A key supporting factor in this effort will be ensuring transport accessibility for all modes of transport into the town centre and continuing work to create a high quality urban realm.

The Local Plan proposes the delivery of 20ha of employment land and 4,250 new homes. As a result of the likely resultant population growth there is forecast to be increased traffic adding to existing congestion issues, especially in the peak hours. Significant infrastructure improvements are therefore required to avoid negative impacts on the highway network, especially on the A536 Congleton Road corridor, the A523 London Road / Silk Road corridor, and the A537 Chester Road / Chelford Road corridor where the biggest vehicle growth is likely to occur.

The South Macclesfield Development Area is 53ha currently consisting of community playing fields and undeveloped grassed areas. Up to 950 homes, employment land, retail and other amenities, plus a new school, improved sports training and recreational facilities are planned as part of the development. A new road linking London Road and Congleton Road will also be developed as part of the scheme. For developments of this size it will be important that local services are available which minimise the need for travel and that high quality links to employment are provided which minimise the negative impact elsewhere.

In addition, Macclesfield is integrated with 'Constellation Partnership' with links between Macclesfield and Crewe through a 'corridor of opportunity' supporting regeneration in both Crewe and Macclesfield. This will be supported by the Macclesfield Town Centre Movement Strategy which must successfully integrate housing and employment locations in peripheral areas in to existing transport networks.

The location of the housing and employment areas is shown below:
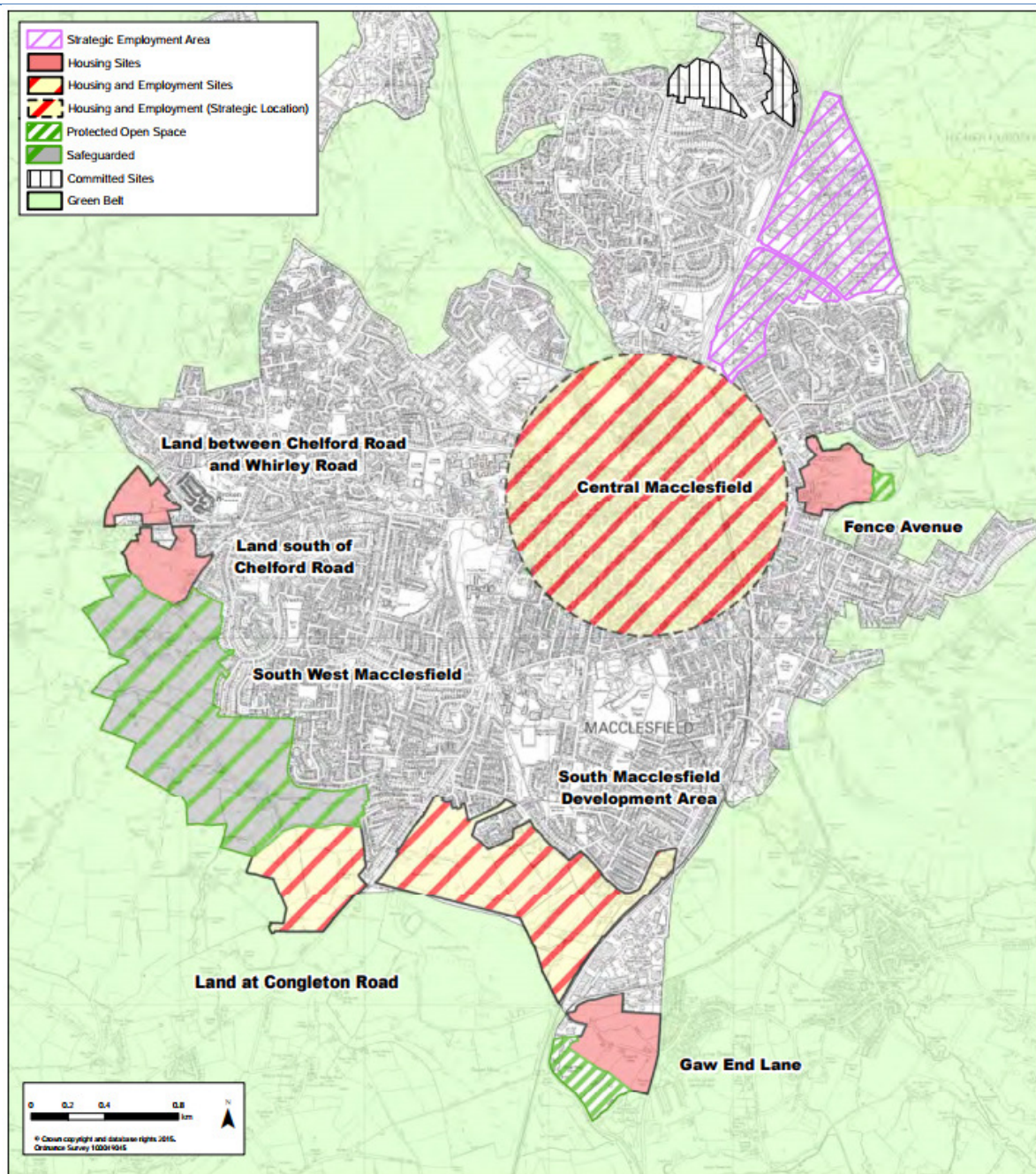
The list and the location of the development sites in Macclesfield are:

- CS 8 South Macclesfield Development Area   (Housing and Employment)
- CS 9 Land East of Fence Avenue   (Housing)
- CS 10 Land at Congleton Road   (Housing and Employment)
- CS 40 Land south of Chelford Road   (Housing)
- CS 11 Gaw End Lane   (Housing)
- CS 41 Land between Chelford Road and Whirley Road   (Housing)
- CS 32 (Safeguarded) South West Macclesfield   (Safeguarded Land)

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

Macclesfield has modest net outflows of commuters. Many residents work within the town at the various employment areas, whilst a significant proportion of people work in neighbouring areas

such as Manchester, Stockport, Alderley Edge (Alderley Park) and Wilmslow. Amongst the economically active a quarter travel less than 2km to work, 17% commute less than 5km, 11% work mainly from home and 28% travel further than 10km to their workplace.

Macclesfield's topography and the cobblestoned meandering narrow streets provide a key asset in terms of character and distinctiveness, however this can be a challenge for older people, those with impaired mobility and also cyclists.

Macclesfield and the surrounding hinterland contain 21 primary schools and 4 secondary schools with the town also being home to Macclesfield College. Further and higher education is also available in Crewe, Stockport and Manchester. Ensuring safe walking and cycling routes to local schools and good public transport links to higher education is important for maintaining accessibility to education and supporting wellbeing and independence. Similarly, safe and well managed highway environments in the vicinity of schools is important for the safety of pupils and quality of life for wider communities in these areas.

The local hospital is Macclesfield District General located west of the town centre. The service from Altrincham to Macclesfield and the service from Macclesfield to Prestbury link the town to the hospital and accessibility improvements would benefit those without access to a car.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

Macclesfield generates some of the highest road emissions in the North West which exacerbates local environmental issues. Congestion and traffic levels have led to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) being declared as a result of nitrogen dioxide annual limits being exceeded at A523 London Road, A537 Broken Cross, A537 Hibel Road and A536 Park Lane.

In addition, noise levels of 75dB are being exceeded along parts of the A523 and the A537, likely as a result of high traffic flows and local congestion. Residents living near to main roads in Macclesfield subsequently have the potential to be exposed to a combination of poor air quality, noise and vibration from local road traffic.

There appears to be significant scope for encouraging low carbon travel in Macclesfield. Despite more than half of residents commuting distances deemed suitable to be made by active travel or public transport 72% of commuters travel to work by car, either as drivers or passengers. 12% walk to their workplace, just below 2% cycle, 3% travel by train and 2% by bus.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

The town has a number of popular parks, including South Park, Victoria Park and West Park; with improvements also having recently been made to Sparrow Park in the centre of Macclesfield to offer additional recreational opportunity. As such, Macclesfield benefits from a number of parks, green spaces, waterbodies and other green infrastructure within the town. Together with the bordering Peak District these resources help mitigate the negative impacts of road transport and provide opportunities for recreation and active travel benefitting health and wellbeing. Promoting increased levels of physical activity is especially important in deprived areas such as those seen in parts of Macclesfield to reduce health inequalities. As such an important challenge is to improve links between Macclesfield and surrounding open spaces such as the Peak District.

Macclesfield is linked to the Macclesfield Canal, a linear conservation area to the east of the town recently granted the Green Flag Award. The Macclesfield Canal Society arranges walks along the

canal which residents are welcome to attend, and works towards increasing physical activity levels. The walks often incorporate the Middlewood Way walking and cycling path which extends from Macclesfield to Marple, a length of 11 miles with the route mostly following the canal and the Marple railway offering a recreational space for walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

Much of the proposed development in Macclesfield gives importance to improved accessibility and the integration of green infrastructure and pedestrian/cycle links into plans. For example, the Gaw End Lane development (LPS 17) aims to increase connectivity to the wider footpath network and Macclesfield Canal and a challenge will be to ensure that new development benefits existing routes through the creation of a coherent walking and cycling network.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the Borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

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Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

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Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

In Macclesfield there is a small net outflow of commuters, with the number of people entering the town lower than the number of people leaving the town for work; with many Macclesfield residents employed in Greater Manchester, Chelford, Stockport and Alderley Edge. Almost three quarters of

Macclesfield's commuters use the car to travel to work, despite more than 40% living less than 5km from their workplace. The dominance of car travel leads to congestion issues throughout the town likely to be exacerbated by new development which is predicted to cause a 15% increase in traffic during the morning peak hour and an 18% increase in traffic in the evening peak hour. The greatest traffic flow increases are predicted for on the A536 Congleton Road corridor, the A523 London Road / Silk Road corridor, and the A537 Chester Road / Chelford Road corridor.

Active and Smarter Travel

Several cycle routes exist in Macclesfield, with the National Cycle Network route 55 connecting Marple in the north and Congleton in the south. Work is underway to improve the route with the eventual aims of linking to Telford and Preston. An existing local cycle route connects the town centre and the 55 route with southern areas of the town, with a further cycle route running north-south along the western side of the town extending between Moss Lane and Chester Road via the Flowerpot junction and off-street sections. Several off-road cycle routes are therefore available for residents to use but these need to be expanded in to a coherent network linking trip attractors, employment locations as well as new and existing residential areas if usage is to increase substantially.

Just over 2% of the Macclesfield's working age population cycle to work but this is not currently an option for everyone due to perceptions of safety and current network fragmentation. It has been suggested that bike storage could be improved at Macclesfield rail station to reduce the number of commuters travelling to the rail station via car, but this provision would need to be supported by greater cycle connectivity linking the rail station. If higher cycling levels were to be achieved this may help to ease parking capacity issues which currently occur at Macclesfield rail station.

The Macclesfield Movement Strategy has noted issues with the narrowness of streets relating to the provision of walking and cycling provision and has identified an aim of improving accessibility through the introduction of pedestrian and cycle links to meet local need. Additionally, the 'Waters Green' underpass has recently undergone renovation to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists travelling to/from the town centre. These efforts improve access to key service areas within the town centre for residents. However, there is still scope to improve connectivity further and make Macclesfield more accessible for all residents and visitors by all modes of transport.

Bus

Macclesfield has a good commercial bus network, which is well utilised by the public, serving routes to Congleton, Bollington, Leek, and Manchester via Wilmslow and Handforth. In addition, the Council support a number of additional services to Stockport via Poynton, Hayfield (High Peak), Buxton, Prestbury, and Altrincham via Wilmslow and Knutsford. Most services do not operate in the evenings and some routes only operate Monday to Saturday.

Macclesfield bus station and the railway station bus stop, which are in walking distance of the town centre, are the main hubs for bus services in Macclesfield. It is important to integrate different modes of travel such as bus, rail, cycling and walking opportunities at transport hubs in order to encourage people to use these modes of travel. It is also important to integrate future developments such as housing and employment areas into the bus network.

Rail

Since there is a considerable relationship between Macclesfield and Greater Manchester in terms of employment, rail travel is the most suitable travel option for many commuters. Macclesfield rail station is situated in the centre of Macclesfield and is located on the West Coast Main Line, with

direct regular services to Stoke–on–Trent, Birmingham, Manchester (30 mins) and London Euston (1hr 40mins). Four services per hour run from Macclesfield to Manchester in peak periods and the rail connections themselves are of a quality and timetable to support sub-regional and national connectivity. However, the station itself is in need of improvement and does not currently offer an attractive gateway to Macclesfield.

Macclesfield is also likely to benefit from the new HS2 hub in Crewe, particularly through the new links planned to Crewe via the 'corridor of opportunity'. This will reduce journey times to major services areas and increase inward investment in Macclesfield if well supported.

Roads

Macclesfield experiences high levels of commuting via road which causes issues on local roads. Peak period congestion currently occurs in and around the town centre and on key commuter routes, due to the volume of traffic entering and exiting the town centre and also traversing around the core area of Silk Road and Park Lane. In the morning peak period, Congleton Road experiences delays as commuters enter from the south, and in the evening Silk Road experiences delays. Congestion measures have been implemented, including implementation of an Urban Traffic Control system in the town centre but further congestion measures need to be implemented at junctions, particularly in light of expected traffic increases linked to new development.

Macclesfield is well served in terms of road connections linking with other areas of Cheshire East. The A523 gives access to Stockport and Manchester via the A6, while the A537 leads west to Knutsford. To the East, the A537 links to the Peak District and the A536 leads south to Congleton. Improved links to the Strategic Road Network via the M6 and M56 are required to support the delivery of further development and growth in and around the town.

As a former mill town, Macclesfield's character and constrained highway land creates challenges in terms of delivering transport improvements. Congestion, narrow roads and limited connectivity between the rail station, town centre and a number of strategic employment sites mean that improvements to transport in the town centre are challenging.

Macclesfield is well served by several car parks, including Duke Street and Park Green. There are plans in place for the development of Churchill Way car park which will reduce local provision. However, it is deemed that there is sufficient parking provision overall. Although in certain locations issues exist particularly at Macclesfield station where the car park is often not able to cope with commuter demand causing spill over to residential streets and creating nuisance for local residents. Providing better bus connections from residential areas to Macclesfield station and improving cycle and walking routes and facilities at the station would encourage commuters to use alternative mode to get to the station, reducing pressure on town centre and station parking and peak time car use.

Middlewich

Area Summary

Middlewich is one of the Weaver Towns, along with nearby Winsford and Northwich which are all situated in the Weaver Valley. Middlewich is in close proximity to the border with neighbouring Cheshire West and Chester and has strong cross boundary economic ties being located only 30km from Chester, 4km from Winsford town centre and 8km from Northwich.

There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth. This includes strategic housing and employment development sites identified for Middlewich in the Local Plan. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Middlewich.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

A relatively high proportion of Middlewich's residents are economically active (74%) in comparison to the wider borough. Currently over 70% of Middlewich's working population use the car to access

employment and these high levels of car use contribute to a highly congested centre alongside significant levels of through traffic, particularly in peak periods.

Significant development and investment is planned in Middlewich over the coming years as identified in the Local Plan. These include: LPS 42 Glebe Farm (525 homes), LPS 43 Brooks Lane (200 homes and facilities to meet local needs) and LPS 44 Midpoint 18 which includes 70 hectares of employment. It is important that the transport network continues to support the economy in Middlewich through effective connectivity as a means of supporting improved quality of life and the Council's priority of jobs-led growth.
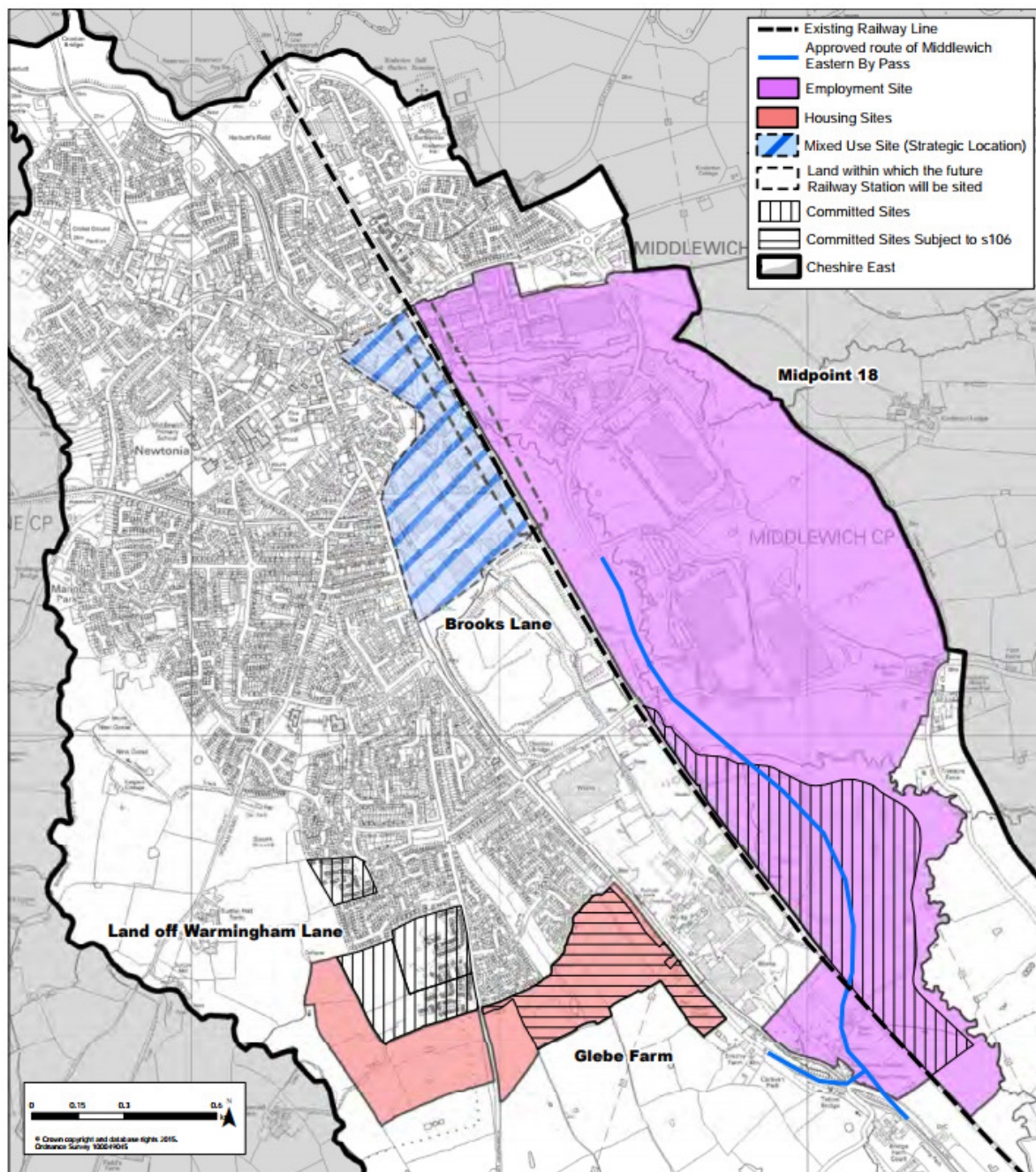
The Midpoint 18 Business Park (known as Ma6nitude) is a mixed use site offering distribution,

manufacturing and office facilities about to embark upon phase three of its development aiming to generate 2,000 new jobs. Its strategic location on the North West motorway network, just 2 miles from junction 18 of the M6, provides good access but experiences heavy congestion. The site provides 1.3 million square foot of business accommodation, which covers the extent of almost 2.5km from north to south. Midpoint 18 is not only the main employment site in Middlewich, but is it also one of the most important employment parks sub-regionally. With congestion hampering access to important sites such as this it is important that road, public transport and active travel access are all maintained and improved to strategic sites to support continued success.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

There are a number of primary schools and one high school in Middlewich but no college, further or tertiary education offer within the town. For further study residents need to travel further afield to colleges in Winsford, Northwich or Crewe. For university study, the closest options are in Manchester. Ensuring safe walking and cycling routes to local schools and good public transport links to higher education is important for maintaining accessibility to education and supporting wellbeing and independence. Additionally, safe and well managed highway environments in the vicinity of schools is important for the safety of pupils and quality of life for wider communities in these areas. Safety concerns have been raised regarding a perceived lack of pedestrian crossings and car parking options near local schools and proposals made for the introduction of a crossing on the A533 aimed at improving safety.

There are also concerns around limited accessibility to vital local services such as shops and doctors' surgeries from new development in Middlewich, such as Cledford. It is important that all new developments provide access to nearby vital services either through direct provision or improved transport infrastructure.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

Due to high vehicle flows and congestion one Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) has been declared on the A54 Chester Road as a result of measurement showing that nitrogen dioxide emissions exceed the annual limit. The provision of the Middlewich Eastern Bypass will remove a proportion of vehicular traffic from the town centre and the Council are currently developing an air quality strategy which will tie in with the LTP. Approximately 15% of commuters in Middlewich travel less than 2km to work, suggesting scope for more journeys to be made by non-car modes.

Middlewich is home to The Trent and Mersey Canal, which offers views over the Cheshire Plain and contributes to the recreational offer in the area. There are existing walking and cycling routes along the River Croco, Trent and Mersey Canal, and the Shropshire Union Canal. Improved connections with the surrounding open countryside would bring benefits to Middlewich.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East are physically active for less than 30mins a week and we know that lack of physical activity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the Borough.

Middlewich has relatively low levels of deprivation in comparison to national averages however there are pockets of poor health in the centre of the town. As such, it is important to improve levels of physical activity and active travel in particular in these areas as a means of reducing health inequalities.

Middlewich has a high proportion of residents between the age of 18 and 64 in comparison to the average for Cheshire East. It has therefore important to support people to be physically active where possible through providing the infrastructure to encourage active travel. Equally, it is important to ensure access to health care, services and leisure opportunities for older people who do not own a car and people with disabilities.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
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- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

There is a significant proportion of the local working population travelling short distances to work between 5 and 10km; particularly to the areas of Winsford, Crewe, Knutsford and Northwich. Approximately 15% of commuters in Middlewich travel less than 2km to work.

Active and Smarter Travel

There are opportunities to improve the pedestrian and cyclist network in Middlewich to support greater use bringing health and wellbeing benefits. For example, the towpath on the Shropshire Union Canal through Middlewich and Trent, and the Mersey Canal towards Sandbach could be improved to provide better cycling and walking facilities connecting both routes, and supporting

commuter trips towards Sandbach. Furthermore, an additional footpath and cycle link between Brooks Lane and Midpoint 18 would improve local links for both pedestrians and cyclists supporting sustainable access to employment and mitigating against the impact of congestion.

New developments should all provide new or improved walking and cycling infrastructure linking residential areas and key service locations; as this likely to increase the uptake of active transport bringing health, wellbeing and accessibility benefits.

Bus

The town is served by two bus services connecting Crewe to Northwich via Sandbach, and Crewe-Congleton; these services run Monday to Saturday. The potential loss of evening services in Middlewich is a concern for local residents as they do not have a railway station, so have limited options for public transport travel in the evenings. The Council are currently exploring options for the provision of evening services as part of Bus Service Review. The 42 bus service will also follow a more direct route within Crewe.

It is also important that new developments outlined in the Local Plan are fully integrated into the public transport network.

Rail

The Middlewich branch rail line is currently used for freight services only, and no passenger rail services are available. Reopening the line and provision of a new station for passenger services is an aspiration of the town, and would improve transport accessibility by providing local connections with Northwich, Sandbach and further to Crewe and Manchester. It would also increase the opportunities for the development of an integrated transport network through the creation of links with bus, walking and cycling networks. Reopening the line would require detailed technical work to establish feasibility and develop a business case in conjunction with Network Rail and central government. As part of the Local Plan, land has been reserved for the provision of a rail station in Middlewich. There has also been discussion of the provision of tram-train services on the Mid-Cheshire line connecting into central Manchester. Following the reopening of the branch line there would be opportunities for this to connect to Middlewich.

Roads

Middlewich is situated to the west of the M6 junction 18, which is accessed via the A54. The A54 connects Middlewich to Winsford and Holmes Chapel. The A54 through Middlewich experiences significant congestion due to through traffic and local journeys accessing the M6 and further afield.

In order to ease congestion and improve access to Midpoint 18 (known as Ma6nitude) the Council is in the process of delivering the Middlewich Eastern Bypass scheme, with £46.8 million recently secured from central government. The bypass is expected to relieve pressure on junctions in central Middlewich, enable the creation of 6,500 jobs and the development of 2,000 houses. Further to this, work is being conducted to examine options to improve wider east-west movements along the A54 to improve connectivity west of Middlewich. One option would entail extending the Middlewich Eastern Bypass to provide improved links to the A530 and onwards to Winsford.

The A54/Lewin Street and A54/A530 Croxton Lane junctions experience congestion, particularly at peak times. Transport improvements to these areas are required to reduce congestion levels and improve access to the M6. Lewin Street itself is congested and this leads to severance between the two sides of road, acting as a barrier between the canal and town centre. The congested highway

also results in an unattractive environment with noise issues affecting local residents.

Middlewich has three free of charge public car parks, all located within the town centre, with a total capacity of 133 spaces.

Nantwich

Area Summary

Nantwich is a market town situated in the south of the Borough, approximately 5km south-west of Crewe. The town serves as a central hub for several nearby settlements in the surrounding parishes that form Nantwich's rural hinterland, including Audlem, Wybunbury, Bunbury, Wrenbury and Stapeley. Nantwich has close economic links to Crewe due to its proximity.

There is significant planned development both within wider Cheshire East and Nantwich itself as identified within the Local Plan. This proposed growth highlights the importance of effective management and investment in the transport network as without effective connectivity this jobs-led growth is unlikely to be deliverable.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Nantwich.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Despite the average income in Nantwich being higher than Cheshire East, the economic activity rate is lower compared to other parts of the borough, which may be due in part to the relatively high share of retired residents in the town.

Many of Nantwich's residents who are economically active work in neighbouring towns such as Crewe, Winsford and Stoke-on-Trent. Notwithstanding this, the town has relatively modest net

commuter outflows as a considerable number of people commute to the town for work. This highlights the importance of connectivity to and from other towns and employment areas to improving employment prospects for residents and support jobs-led growth.

Currently, peak hour delay occurs at key junctions such as the Peacock and Cheerbrook roundabout. The mitigation of such growth would go some way to addressing congestion as a potential constraining factor for local growth and development. Poor journey time reliability may constitute a barrier to economic growth in Nantwich.

Nantwich has extensive heritage assets with more than 100 listed buildings which is the highest concentration in the borough, as well as a rich industrial heritage which attracts visitors and tourists; as such, visitors to Nantwich are important contributors to the local economy. However, existing congestion and large traffic flows have a negative effect on the local quality of place.

Nantwich has a variety of employment, education and retail opportunities and community services. The larger employment areas within the town comprise:
- Alvaston Business Park – office space;
- Barony Court Employment Park – offices, industry, storage and distribution; and
- Pepper House offices.

Ongoing developments in the south of Nantwich will provide a mix of housing and additional employment land. Local Plan development sites include Kingsley Fields which will deliver up to 1,100 new homes, local amenities and up to 2 ha of employment and CS 23 Snow Hill which is expected to deliver 3 hectares of employment land and 2,050 new homes. These developments will attract new residents and drive local economic growth. Investment will be required in supporting infrastructure to mitigate the impacts of new development on the transport network.

The location of these development sites is identified below:

Legend:
- Housing and Employment Site
- Mixed Use Site
- Highway Improvements
- Committed Sites
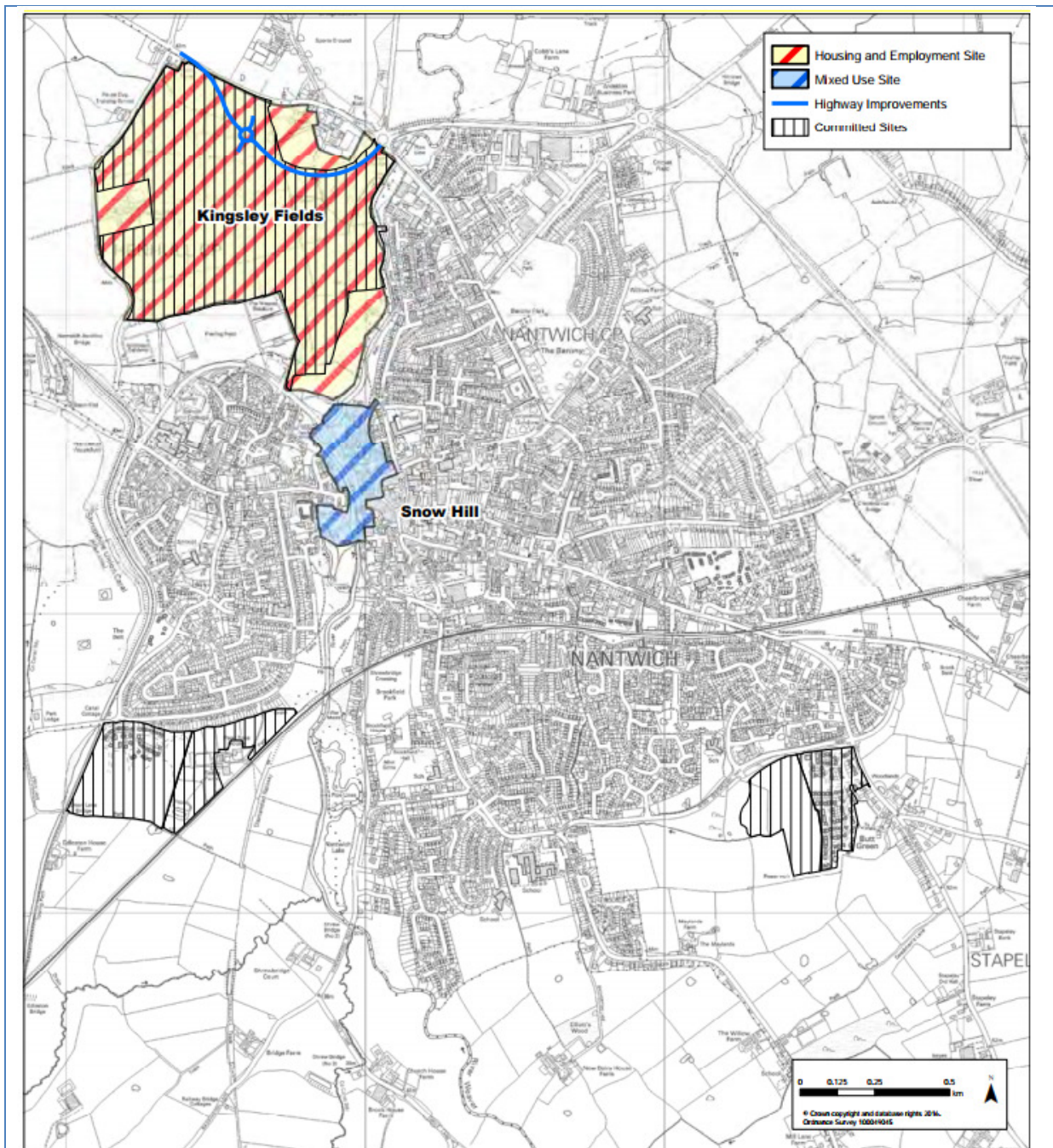
Challenge 2: Providing accessibility to services

Nantwich has varied population groups which have different accessibility needs. Although the town has relatively low levels of deprivation as a whole, it includes one of the 25% most deprived areas in the UK. Therefore, improving accessibility to employment from central Nantwich could contribute towards lowering the levels of deprivation.

Additionally, Nantwich has a higher proportion of both younger and older segments of the population in comparison to other areas of the borough. Over 24% of the population of Nantwich are 65 or older. Older people's mobility needs can require the availability of accessible passenger transport options and this should be considered in the coming years.

Nantwich has six primary schools and two secondary schools with colleges and higher education

available in nearby Crewe. For many schoolchildren, walking and cycling to school could constitute an alternative to being driven, with the benefits of improving overall road safety, increasing physical activity and reducing traffic flows (particularly around schools) in peak hours.

Nantwich's wide and dispersed rural hinterland constitutes a challenge in how to ensure efficient and sustainable accessibility. For residents who do not own a car, passenger transport will be important for accessing key services alongside walking and cycling for more local journeys.

Challenge 3: Improving our environment

As a consequence of high traffic flows and congestion in inner Nantwich, nitrogen dioxide emissions exceeded annual limits and an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared on Hospital Street between London Road and Prachitts Row. Reducing concentrations of congestion in the Nantwich area and increasing the usage of sustainable modes of travel will contribute to reducing vehicles emissions, as will future technological improvements which may come forward.

It is the Council's vision to continue to maintain and improve the image of Cheshire East and its high quality of place. The aim for the borough is to continue to be an attractive place to live and visit. As Nantwich is a location sought for its quality of place, maintaining and improving the quality of the local environment is an important local factor.

Challenge 4: Addressing poor health and physical inactivity

Alongside Crewe, Nantwich has one of the lowest levels of adult physical activity in the borough. Sports facilities available within the town include the Barony Park Sports Complex, Brookfield Park and Nantwich swimming pool which are within close proximity to local amenities and can be accessed by foot or bicycle. Encouraging more leisure and commute trips to use active modes of travel has the potential to improve health and physical activity of Nantwich's residents. Many destinations from shops to GP practices and schools are in walking and cycling distance for most residents.

A 'riverside loop' 3-mile walk is located within the town and explores the river and canal from the town centre, which can increase physical activity for recreational purposes. Other cycle routes increase accessibility within the town, including the Connect2 Crewe to Nantwich Greenway which offers a predominately traffic-free cycle route and cycle connectivity to Crewe within 30 minutes. This offers a viable commuting alternative to the car, reflected in 4% of Nantwich residents commuting via bike, one of the highest figures across Cheshire East. With further investment, this figure has the potential to be increased further which will assist in increasing physical activity levels overall in Nantwich.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the Borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to

extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important

- <u>Technological innovation</u>: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the Borough
- <u>Effective partnership working</u>: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

Of the 6500 Nantwich residents that commute to work, 29% travel less than 5km, a 25% travel 5 to 10km which is the range in which Crewe is located and only 27% commute more than 10 km. Compared to other places in the borough, more people commute a shorter distance and significantly less commute more than 10km, which is primarily a result of a significant proportion of Nantwich residents working in Crewe.

Commuting by car as this is the preferred choice for over 70% of commuters with 5% commuting by bus or train. 18% of residents walk or cycle to work which is one of the highest proportions for active travel in the Borough.

Active and Smarter Travel

The Connect2 Crewe to Nantwich Greenway offers a safe and direct off-road cycle route from Crewe to Nantwich, passing local amenities, including Leighton Hospital, Reaseheath College, Wistaston and Nantwich town centre, making it a popular route. Plans are in place to extend the route further northwards to Leighton Hospital and upgrade the section to an off-road path. A cycle path linking the Greenway to Reaseheath College along Nantwich Bypass could also be considered. From Alvaston Roundabout towards Nantwich town centre options could be considered to create a more coherent route.

National Cycle Network Routes 451, 45 and 5, 551 and 552 cycle routes connect Nantwich to nearby towns and the wider network of cycling routes. The short distances between other localities, along with the available routes, are reflected in an above average number of residents choosing to cycle. These cycle routes need to be maintained, improved and extended to ensure cycling remains an attractive alternative to car use for medium distance journeys.

The River Weaver runs northwards through the town and the Shropshire Union Canal passes to the west, making Nantwich a popular leisure walking destination. A number of promoted walking paths exist around Nantwich, such as the Nantwich Riverside Loop. Provision for pedestrians is generally good within Nantwich however some sections in rural areas can be challenging due to limited footways.

Bus

Bus services in Nantwich are available to Whitchurch, Crewe, Chester, Congleton, Sandbach. There are also bus connections to most rural areas surrounding Nantwich, including: Bunbury, Tiverton, Bulkeley, Audlem, and Wrenbury. These services operate at various frequencies and different days between Monday and Saturday. It is important that new developments, such as those listed in the Local Plan, are integrated into the public transport network.

Rail

Nantwich Railway Station is located on the Crewe to Cardiff line, which is operated by Arriva Trains Wales. Connections to Crewe, Shrewsbury and Wales are available on two-hourly services during the week, with further connections to national rail services in Crewe. A direct service is available between Nantwich and Manchester with a 56-minute journey time. It is recognised that these services have limited frequency with only one hourly service in peak periods. Increased frequency of this service would be an opportunity to provide a more attractive regular commuter option to a range of destinations including Manchester.

There are local calls to improve level crossings in the town as issues exist around the crossing stopping the flow of traffic for a longer period than necessary, creating localised delay on roads which could be prevented. Discussions with Network Rail have identified that this would require significant infrastructure investment and could be investigated in the future.

Given the proximity of Crewe Railway Station and the connectivity of that station both locally and nationally, it is noted that a significant proportion of rail trips in the town are made via Crewe. As such, improving sustainable travel links to Crewe would provide an opportunity to significantly enhance connectivity from Nantwich, particularly given the future opportunities provided by HS2.

Roads

Nantwich is well connected by road in all directions by the A534, A530, A500 and A51; however, key junctions within the town and along the bypass experience peak hour congestion. The following junctions within Nantwich have been identified as being in need of improvement:
- Burford junction;
- Alvaston roundabout;
- Peacock roundabout;
- Cheerbrook roundabout;
- Peter Destapleigh Way/Audlem Road; and
- London Road crossroads.

Due to future development key junctions along A5301 Elwood Way/Peter Destapleigh Way are forecast to be subject to capacity constraints in the future, and a new link road connecting the new Kingsley Fields development to the A51 and A534 will be required. Junction improvements to the A51 corridor north of Nantwich have been identified as a major highway improvement in the Local Plan aiming to reduce further potential congestion issues in this area.

Funding has been secured from planning permissions in Nantwich to implement improvements to the transport network in the west of the town. These include a long-standing aspiration to provide a new north/south route from Welsh Row, and potential one-way operation on Marsh Lane and parts of Welsh Row.

Nantwich experiences high demand for parking all year round. Nine car parks in Nantwich provide a total of 731 parking spaces, located within the town centre. On-street parking on Welsh Row can cause operational problems during peak times, particularly with regard to bus manoeuvring, and as such measures to better manage parking demand on Welsh Row. In the longer-term, consideration will also be given to measures to de-traffic this route and encourage traffic to utilise the B5341 Waterlode, in line with the historical nature of Welsh Row.

Poynton & Disley

Area Summary

Poynton is a town located on the north eastern fringe of Cheshire East, 17 km south of Manchester city centre, 10 km north of Macclesfield and 7 km south of Stockport. This profile also covers Disley, which is a distinct area of the Borough in its own right located to the north east of Poynton and east of Stockport.

Poynton and Disley have strong economic links to neighbouring Macclesfield and Greater Manchester, with significant cross border movements as the areas are popular for those who commute to Manchester. There is significant planned development both within Cheshire East as identified within the Local Plan and Greater Manchester as identified in the emerging Greater Manchester Spatial Framework. This proposed growth highlights the importance of effective management and investment in the transport network as without effective connectivity this jobs-led growth is unlikely to be deliverable.

In addition, the South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMs) is currently being refreshed by Cheshire East Council, Stockport Council and Transport for Greater Manchester, which is due for consultation in 2018. This will inform a future iteration of this profile in terms of emerging issues, options and schemes.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Poynton, Disley and surrounding areas.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Poynton and Disley have economic activity rates of 69% and 72% respectively. These figures are both higher than the borough-wide average. Of Poynton's working population, 76% drive to work, which is 2% higher than the borough average. For Disley, this is slightly lower at 71%.

The main junction in the centre of Poynton, the A523/Park Lane/Chester Road, experiences congestion as a result high traffic volumes. Congestion in Poynton has the potential to limit growth in future as a result of long journey times for commuters. There is a lack of road capacity in the town centre to support additional growth and investment, something the Poynton Relief Road will play a key role in addressing.

Employment within Poynton and the surrounding areas is primarily centred on the Poynton and Adlington Industrial Estates, in addition to the town centre shops and leisure facilities. Due to the industrial estates being rurally located, in addition to limited integration with the public transport network and sustainable travel options often commuters both local and from Greater Manchester drive to these employment sites. This presents a challenge for accessibility to these employment sites which could limit their appeal to commuters from further afield, whilst also presenting a potential limitation to investment.

Due to limited employment opportunities near Poynton, a high proportion of people commute out of town for work to areas including Manchester, Stockport and Macclesfield; 25% of commuters travel between 5 and 10km and a further 21% travel between 10 and 20km. These figures indicate that there is a high degree of cross-boundary travel. Currently, a lack of direct routes results in traffic from the Poynton area passing through other local settlements in Greater Manchester including Woodford, Hazel Grove and Cheadle Hulme.

The Local Plan outlines the development areas planned for Poynton:
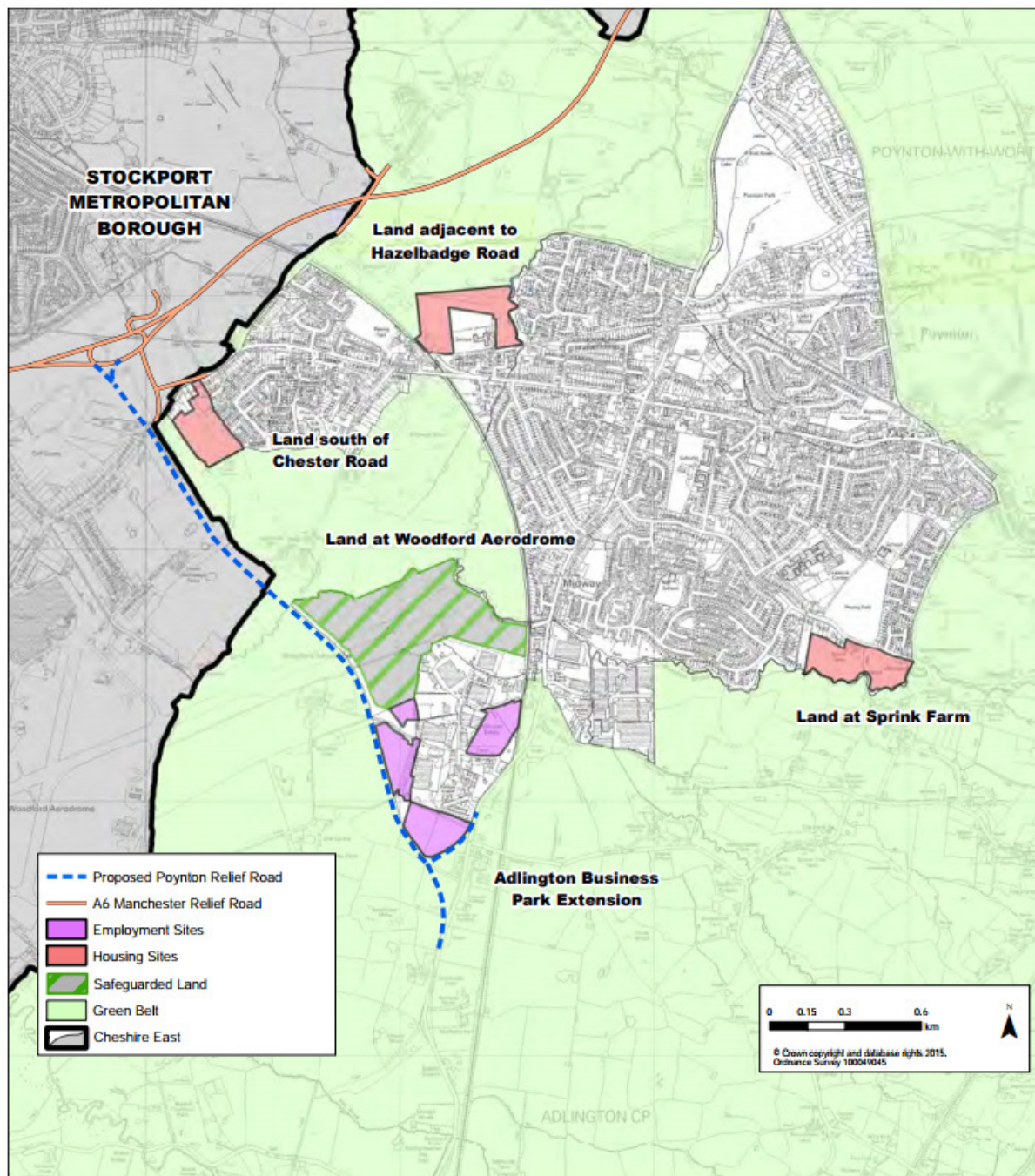
- CS 57 Land adjacent to Hazelbadge Road   Housing
- CS 58 Land at Sprink Farm   Housing
- CS 59 Land south of Chester Road   Housing
- CS 60 Adlington Business Park Extension   Employment
- CS 65 (Safeguarded) Woodford Aerodrome   Safeguarded Land

The Local Plan allocates three different housing development sites and one area of employment

involving an extension of Adlington Business Park by 10ha. Land on the former Woodford Aerodrome has also been safeguarded for future development. Further development land for employment would be required to increase the number of residents employed within Poynton, with approximately only 3000 people currently working within the town. It is important for the transport network in Poynton to support jobs-led growth.

In light of the above, the proposed Poynton Relief Road would connect to the A6 Manchester Airport Relief Road, which is currently under construction. This would provide additional economic benefits to the town through reduced congestion, with associated environmental and social benefits. The link will also open up accessibility to the Local Plan development sites. This link has the potential to make the area more attractive for investors and consequently to increase employment opportunities. In addition, links from Poynton to destinations east/west will be improved as well as accessibility to the M56 which will open up opportunities for businesses and residents.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

There are primary, secondary and further education facilities in Poynton; in Disley, there is one primary school. For secondary education, Disley residents need to travel to Poynton, Hazel Grove or New Mills. For additional college options, other nearby facilities are located in Bramhall, Cheadle and Marple. For tertiary level study, Manchester offers the closest institutions. To support the future success of Poynton there is a need to provide viable public transport access and sustainable travel options to provide a choice of further education options. The proposed development of the land adjacent to Hazelbadge Road provides an opportunity to incorporate green infrastructure such as pedestrian and cycle links to new and existing residential areas, employment areas, shops, schools and health facilities, including improved pedestrian links to the town centre, and the railway station.

Employment locations within the town centre are accessible on foot from residential areas and also the train station. However, with the train station situated to the west of Poynton reaching the east of the town on foot takes approximately 30 minutes. Whilst Adlington Industrial Estate is situated over 1mile from the railway station, this distance is considered unattractive for those travelling by train and walking,   therefore the primary mode of travel is by car at present.

Non-car links between Disley and Poynton/Macclesfield are relatively limited with the majority of travel to Greater Manchester. There are however specific services which Disley residents need to access within Cheshire East and consideration should be given to alternative travel options to Poynton and Macclesfield.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

It is the Council's vision to continue to maintain and improve the image of Cheshire East and the high quality of place. Improved connectivity between local attractions, such as local shops and Lyme Park would improve the attraction of Poynton and Disley as a place to live and as a place to visit. There is a need to address the AQMA on the A6 Market Street in Disley. One way to improve the air quality would be to improve connectivity by public transport and sustainable options, in order to help address congestion and therefore improve air quality in Poynton and Disley. Specific highway improvements can also play a key role in mitigating the impacts of congestion and vehicle emissions, in addition to wider efforts to transition to lower emissions technology.

There are some existing cycle and walking routes through green and rural areas which can be pleasant to use and improve connectivity to open space. Poynton is located to the west of Middlewood Way, which is an 11-mile traffic free greenway from Macclesfield to Marple providing a

scenic off-road route for both leisure and commuting purposes. Notwithstanding this, walking and cycling for commuting is lower than the Cheshire East average. Further improvements to green infrastructure would provide additional attractive routes which would contribute to the uptake of sustainable modes of travel.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East engage in physically activity for less than 30mins per week. This is an issue as we know that lack of physical inactivity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the Borough.

In addition, Poynton and Disley have an ageing population, with 23% in Disley and 24% in Poynton over the age of 65. It is therefore necessary that accessible transport options link residents with the services they need to maintain good health and wellbeing.

Improved walking and cycling infrastructure increasing connectivity and providing alternative travel options to local destinations has been shown to support increased levels of active transport. This is one way of supporting physical activity and reduced health inequality.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

A significant proportion of residents travel to neighbouring towns and cities for work including Manchester, Stockport and Macclesfield. Due to Poynton and Disley being situated to the west of the Peak District, flows to the west are much higher than flows to the east. These journeys account for the 31% of the working population which travel over 10km to work, a figure much greater than other areas of Cheshire East. As a result, 76% of commuters in Poynton, and 71% of commuters in Disley choose to travel by car.

Active and Smarter Travel

The Middlewood Way is a long-distance recreational footpath/cycleway to the east of Poynton, which extends between Marple and Macclesfield and is part of the National Cycle Network Route 55. There are however limited links from the Middlewood Way to Poynton and Disley itself, particularly in the case of cycling. Providing these links would improve accessibility to and from the Middlewood Way with benefits for residents and visitors. This would also enable cycling journeys between Disley and Poynton. Cycle facilities along the A6 through Disley and A6MARR mitigation measures through the village will also create a more cycle friendly atmosphere in Disley.

The Poynton shared space scheme aims to create a more attractive and less car dominated local centre and this scheme could be complemented by cycle infrastructure improvements nearby. The Poynton Relief Road will also complement the shared space scheme through reallocation of some traffic travelling through Poynton and improve the benefits of the shared space scheme.

In addition, routes could be implemented from Poynton and Disley to Lyme Park and the Gritstone Trail in particular, which would encourage active travel leisure use into green areas and the countryside. On the existing network, Disley is well connected to the Peak District via the Peak Forest Canal towpath, which provides a scenic route that encourages active travel.

There are opportunities for both footway and cycle infrastructure to be improved on routes in the town centre connecting to employment areas such as Poynton and Adlington Industrial Estates. There are existing advisory cycle lanes along Chester Road, which is the main road into Poynton from the west and from the station. However, these routes are intermittent and cyclists would benefit from dedicated facilities at junctions to improve perceptions of safety and increase use. It is also acknowledged Poynton would benefit from the provision of a signed route from the station to the towns industrial estates.

Bus

Poynton is served by a service which connects to Macclesfield, Hazel Grove and Stockport. This service runs on an hourly frequency on weekdays and Saturdays, however it terminates in the evening and doesn't run on Sundays. This has been re-routed to cover western Poynton as well as the east of the town.

Disley's bus service consists of the 199 High Peak bus service, which runs twice per hour. This connects Disley with Buxton, Stockport and Manchester Airport. There is not currently a bus service in operation that connects to Macclesfield and Poynton.

Considering potential future travel demand growth as a result of investment in both Poynton and Disley, integrating the bus network into developments outlined in the Local Plan would provide additional benefits. A proportion of the population in Poynton also rely on bus travel for access to local services and amenities within Poynton and also in Hazel Grove and Stockport. One potential option could be linking Poynton into a future bus service which runs between Hazel Grove and Manchester Airport to be considered further through the SEMMMS refresh work.

Rail

Poynton Railway Station is located to the west of Poynton outside of the town. Rail travel represents 5% of commuter's mode of travel to work. The station is located on the West Coast Main Line and operates an hourly service to Stoke-on-Trent southbound and Manchester Piccadilly northbound, with half hourly trains to Macclesfield during peak times. Due to the limited frequency of trains to commuter areas (1 per hour), and the location of the station outside of the town (approx. 15min walk to town centre), Hazel Grove Railway Station also accommodates a significant volume of commuter trips from Poynton. This is due to that Hazel Grove offers a more frequent service, free parking and benefits from reduced fares to/from Greater Manchester. Service improvements from Poynton station may reduce car-based commuter travel and potential "park and ride" travel to Hazel Grove, thereby reducing congestion on local roads. As a result, an investigation into the improvement of public transport links from Poynton to Manchester, Stockport and Hazel Grove is ongoing.

The train station in Disley is situated on the Manchester to Buxton line. Approximately 8% of commuters in Disley use the train to travel to work, and the station has experienced an increase of 10% in passenger entries and exits between 14/15 and 15/16, according to ORR statistics. Hourly services run to Manchester Piccadilly and Buxton, with services operating twice per hour during peak hours. Disley would benefit from increased frequency of trains to and from Manchester Piccadilly.

Additionally, the accessibility of rail travel would benefit from improved opportunities for interchange. For example, cycle and walking routes and key attractors could be signposted in order to encourage further use of the station, and integration with local bus services.

Roads

The Poynton Relief Road scheme planning application was submitted in 2016. The road would link London Road South (A523) to the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR), thereby relieving congestion in Poynton and acting as a catalyst to deliver Local Plan sites. This scheme will help to attract necessary investment into the area. This will improve the connectivity of the road network in Poynton to larger service and employment areas.

The A6 through Disley is a key arterial route between the Peak District and eastwards to Greater Manchester, North Cheshire and the strategic road network. As such significant levels of general traffic and HGVs use this route through Disley village. A package of mitigation measures is being brought forward in Disley in respect of increasing traffic flows as a result of the A6MARR scheme. The ongoing SEMMMS work will consider further multimodal options to improve travel on both the A6 and A523 corridors. There is a longstanding desire for an improved A6 route to bypass Disley. Development of this scheme will require inter-authority working involving Cheshire East, Derbyshire and Stockport councils to define an appropriate solution.

The main link between the town and the strategic road network is the A523 connecting Poynton to

Hazel Grove, the A6 and Macclesfield. Congestion on the A523 and A5149 junctions are acknowledged to contribute to a perception of severance within the town centre. In an attempt to address this Fountain Place in the town centre has been improved in to a shared space arrangement. While this has led to a reduction in queuing and reduced flows have improved air quality and traffic noise there is still a significant number of vehicles passing through Poynton Town Centre every day.

40 parking spaces can be found at the railway station. There is also a car park at Nelson Pit Visitor Centre and Poynton Civic Hall, which offers 204 free car parking spaces. The Town Council have reported that since the introduction of parking charges at both the railway station and Nelson Pit, this had led to a rise in parking in residential areas.

There are two Council owned car parks within Disley; 40 spaces are at the community centre and 20 at the station approach which are both free of charge. In addition the train station offers 25 free spaces. There are also a number of private car parks, such as one at the Rams Head.

Rural Areas

Area Summary

Cheshire East's rural areas, communities and open spaces plays a key role in the borough. Our rural economy also plays a significant sub-regional role both through traditional land-based businesses but also non-land based businesses which appreciate the rural setting; including professional services, digital and creative industries, and the visitor economy. Our rural areas with their strong quality of place attributes present a number of opportunities and challenges with regards to transport and responding effectively to these will allow them to thrive to the whole borough's advantage.

There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth with an element of this growth planned in some of our more rural areas. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Traditional land-based businesses such as farming and agriculture, as well as Cheshire's countryside and tourist attractions form a significant part of the borough's economy attracting investment and visitors to the borough. The challenge is to maintain the attractiveness of our rural areas and further improve their quality of place in order to attract visitors and investment. It is important to maintain and improve accessibility to these rural areas in order to provide connections to businesses in these areas and allow the local economy to grow.

Rural areas need to be well connected to key towns and service centres to ensure their continued viability and success. Improved connectivity through all modes of transport will increase options for travel into these rural areas, open up accessibility and increase investment in rural areas supporting jobs-led growth.

We have employment sites and business throughout our rural areas, in the Cheshire Science Corridor and on the edge of towns, which face many of the same accessibility issues. Some of these are major employers, such as Barclays near Knutsford, Sanofi near Holmes Chapel, Alderley Park, Astra Zeneca on the edge of Macclesfield, and Jodrell Bank Observatory near Chelford. We also need to ensure our rural areas have the infrastructure to be attractive for inward investment. These businesses are critical to our future prosperity and diversification of the rural economy is important in order to encourage new jobs and innovation. Many of these have very specific transport needs and it is important to support them through improved connectivity and communications.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

As mentioned above, a number of key employers have chosen to locate in rural areas, such as Alderley Park. These locations can have challenges associated with public transport accessibility, contributing to relatively high levels of single occupancy car travel. The challenge in Cheshire East is to ensure that residents can access these key employment areas in order to open up career opportunities. Improved integration of these workplaces with public transport and the road network in addition to infrastructure encouraging active modes of travel would benefit residents and employers alike.

In rural areas schools tend to have larger catchment areas due to lower population densities which can make the home to school journey more difficult than in urban areas. In the majority of rural areas in the borough there is only one catchment area for both primary and secondary schools. Whilst in some parts of the borough the nearest secondary school can be up to 8km away. The challenge in rural areas is to ensure that there is good quality and safe access to education for students via sustainable modes, public transport and highways. Independent access to further and higher educational opportunities is critical to enhancing prospects for residents.

In addition, access to retail opportunities and wider services can be more challenging. The larger shops and some services are usually located in key service centres and towns, rather than rural areas. The challenge is to ensure that there is road and passenger transport connectivity between rural areas and retail services in order to provide access for residents for both utility and employment purposes.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

One of the Council's main priorities is to maintain and improve the image of Cheshire East and its high 'quality of place'. In particular, the 'quality of place' of our rural areas helps Cheshire East to stand out from competitors and attract investment, visitors and tourists. The Council also place importance on making Cheshire East 'a green and sustainable place'.

One major challenge is that a reliance on the car can negatively impact air quality, create severance for pedestrians and result in nuisance noise. Addressing high flows of vehicles and congestion, for example through improved public transport and sustainable connections between rural attractions such as Tatton Park and Jodrell Bank could subsequently bring about benefits for rural areas. The Council are also investing in upgraded highway routes where appropriate which remove traffic from pressure points.

There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in rural Cheshire East, located in Cranage on the M6 and on the A556 at Mere which will be addressed in line with this LTP and the forthcoming Air Quality Strategy.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Cheshire East has relatively low levels of deprivation when compared to national averages. However, it has been reported that statistics can fail to capture the reality for residents in rural locations as a result of being sub-divisions of a larger area[33]. For example, there can be issues of low paid work, social isolation, high costs of commuting, and poor accessibility to hospitals in some rural areas. It is the role of transport to provide connectivity for those living rurally to be able to access the services they require and for the road network to be able to cater for residents and support jobs-led growth.

Cheshire East's population has a significant proportion of residents over the age of 65 and this ageing population brings a number of additional challenges. Older people are more likely to use healthcare, and in rural locations in particular, this can be challenging due to less public transport connectivity and often longer distances to cover than in our more urban areas. Over the coming years, there is a challenge to provide for our rural communities to ensure that there is suitable accessibility to the services they require.

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[33] Public Health Association, *Health and Wellbeing in Rural Areas* (2017)

There is a challenge to increase physical activity to help people live better and for longer and an opportunity to encourage the uptake of physical activity; in particular, through the maintenance and provision of walking and cycling routes for both leisure and utility travel.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- Technological innovation: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the borough, particularly in rural areas
- Effective partnership working: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities relating to how we manage and fund our transport network. The Council will work with central government and other partners to identify how transport infrastructure is maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. We will need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport issues and challenges

Travel demand

There are various rural areas within Cheshire East and these tend to be closely associated with different towns in Cheshire East or across our border in to neighbouring areas. The key areas they are associated with form routes for many commuting and leisure trips as well as to access services. The mix between our rural, urban and those areas which lie between the two are shown in the map of the borough below.

Active and Smarter Travel

Footpaths are not always present alongside the side of roads in rural areas, which can discourage people to choose to walk. It is important for improvements to footpaths to be made (where feasible) in order to encourage their use for short trips, such as commuting and leisure purposes.

For leisure and tourism, the attractive landscape results in a high proportion of visitors to the region to enjoy Cheshire East's walking routes. There are a number of popular long distance routes in Cheshire East including the Gritstone Trail, the Sandstone Trail, Middlewood Way and the Bollin Valley Way, as well as many shorter walking routes on offer. Improvements to some rural walking routes such as off road routes and public rights of way would bring benefit, especially to people who are disabled and older people. It is important for routes to be maintained in order to further promote walking for leisure and support the visitor economy.

In addition to footpaths and bridleways, there are existing rural cycle routes through Cheshire East, and also National Cycle Network routes which pass through the borough. The National Cycle Network provides long distance connections between locations, mostly through the signage of quiet routes such as country. Existing cycle infrastructure could be improved by linking existing routes and also by increasing the provision of dedicated cycle infrastructure and maintenance of routes. The Cheshire East Cycling Strategy contains an aspirational strategic route map with many of these routes linking through rural areas of the borough.

Bus

Public transport is a challenge in rural areas due to the low density of residential areas and workplaces. Some areas, such as High Legh, does not have a bus service, and is no longer connected to Altrincham and Warrington. The Goostrey service to Sandbach operates twice per day, which

provides a useful service for local residents, maintaining bus connectivity for Goostrey. Rural areas such as Audlem and Wrenbury are integrated into the bus network and are connected to Whitchurch and Nantwich.

A majority of rural areas retain access to key service centres so they are not cut off from services. As a result of the ongoing bus service review some towns may have reduced access to more than one key service centre and/or principle town in Cheshire East and the surrounding areas by bus.

In combination with the Council providing passenger transport services, one additional option is to further encourage community transport, which can help connect people in rural areas to the services and facilities that they need.

Rail

Some rural areas in Cheshire East are well served by rail services and rail stations. Between 2014/15 and 2015/16 all rural stations increased their usage, apart from Plumley, Styal and Wrenbury. Holmes Chapel and Disley both exceeded 150,000 passenger entries and exits in 2015/2016. This growth of rail use suggests that more people are relying on public transport in rural areas. As such, it is important to support rural stations and services and provide for current and future users through maintenance and improvement; whilst also lobbying for increased services where necessary and providing onwards travel options from stations.

Roads

Local roads in rural areas are very important to residents and businesses, as travelling by car is often the primary option for travel. Travelling by car requires the roads to be well managed and maintained. Subsequently, it is important to continue to invest in the local road network in order to have a well maintained road network in rural areas.

Traffic in some rural areas can impose negative external impacts on villages and communities. This can include severance, deteriorating of air quality and noise issues; as such, it is important to address detrimental traffic impacts in rural areas. A number of main rural A roads are busy during peak periods. Through traffic can result in negative impacts on rural villages and small towns. The A54 and A50 in Holmes Chapel both experience high levels of through traffic which also has a wider impact on east-west connectivity across the borough, as the A54 is a key route between Winsford and Congleton. The A50 also has an impact on rural connectivity as this route can be affected by incidents on the M6, which can cause rerouting along the A50. This negatively impacts various settlements along the route. Further investigation of the A50 and A54 is needed once the M6 J16-19 Smart Motorway schemes has been completed in order to better understand movements and address ongoing issues.

Car parking in rural areas is also important as residents / visitors in rural areas tend to rely more on the car. Car parking facilities should support the vitality and economy of villages in rural areas and car parking prices should be appropriate for each area in order to attract visitors and provide sufficient capacity to meet demand.

In rural areas where there are rail stations it is also important to provide enough parking to encourage people to 'park and ride', rather than use the car to travel the whole distance of their journey.
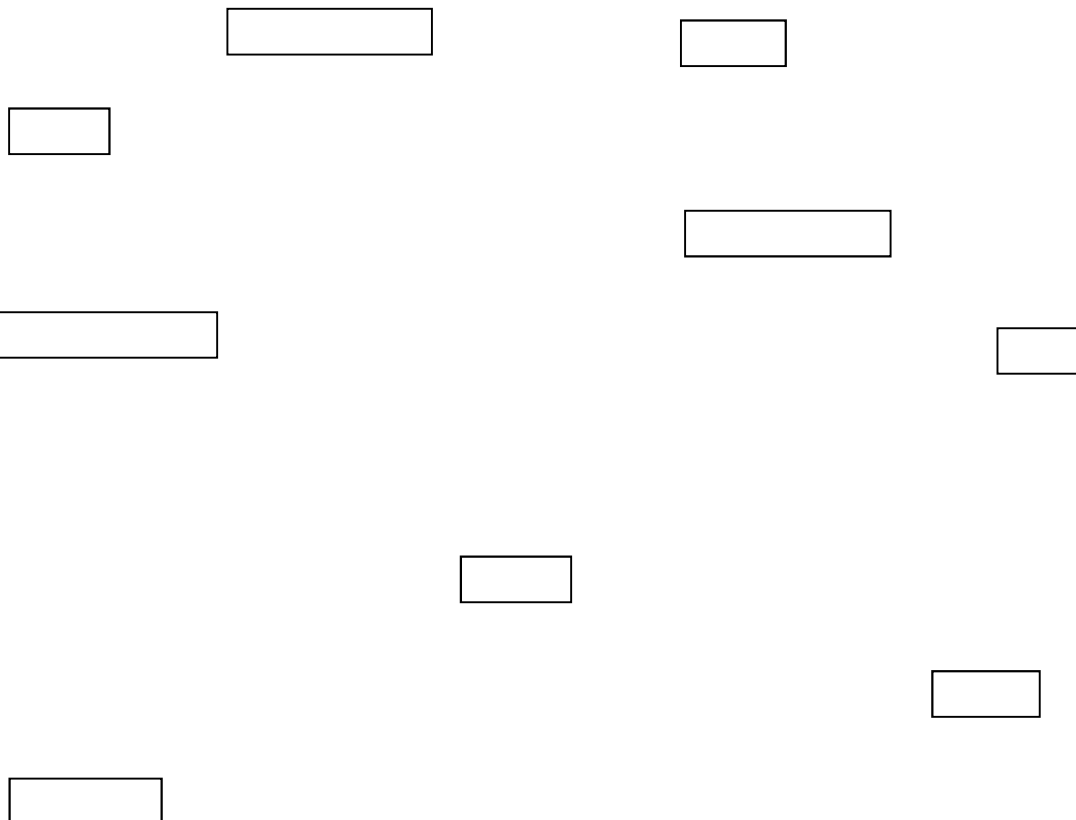
Sandbach

Area Summary

Sandbach is a historic market town centrally located within the borough, around 7 km north-east of Crewe and 20 km south-west of Macclesfield. Due to its proximity, Sandbach has close links to neighbouring Crewe, particularly for travel to work. Sandbach has been a focus for significant housing growth in advance of the adoption of the Local Plan. This growth has increased challenges in relation to local transport provision.

Sandbach is comprised of several distinct settlements including the town of Sandbach plus Elworth village, Ettiley Heath, Wheelock village and Sandbach Heath. These areas are referred to collectively as Sandbach throughout the Local Transport Plan. There is significant planned development within Cheshire East supporting the Council's objective of jobs-led growth. This includes one committed site in Sandbach as outlined in the Local Plan, which consists of employment land and up to 450 homes. This pro-growth policy position underlines the importance of effective management of the transport network to ensure journey time efficiency and reliability.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges which have been identified across Cheshire East and how they impact Sandbach and surrounding areas.

Sandbach - Key Transport Infrastructure

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Following the 2002 closure of local truck manufacturing industries, a marked shift in employment has occurred in Sandbach resulting in less manufacturing activity and larger numbers of local people now working within managerial, professional and associate professional occupations (45.9%). Sandbach is performing comparatively well economically with 70% of residents being economically active, which is above the borough average. The average household income in Sandbach is also slightly higher than both the Cheshire East and national averages. It is important that the transport network continues to support Sandbach's economy through effective connectivity as a means of supporting improved quality of life and the Council's priority of jobs-led growth.

In Sandbach itself there is a relative shortage of jobs, leading to a net outflow of commuting trips; the structural shift in employment in the past decade means there is opportunity to deliver local jobs through development. One strategic land allocation for future development is identified within the Local Plan (LPS 53 adjacent to junction 17 of the M6) the location of which is shown below:
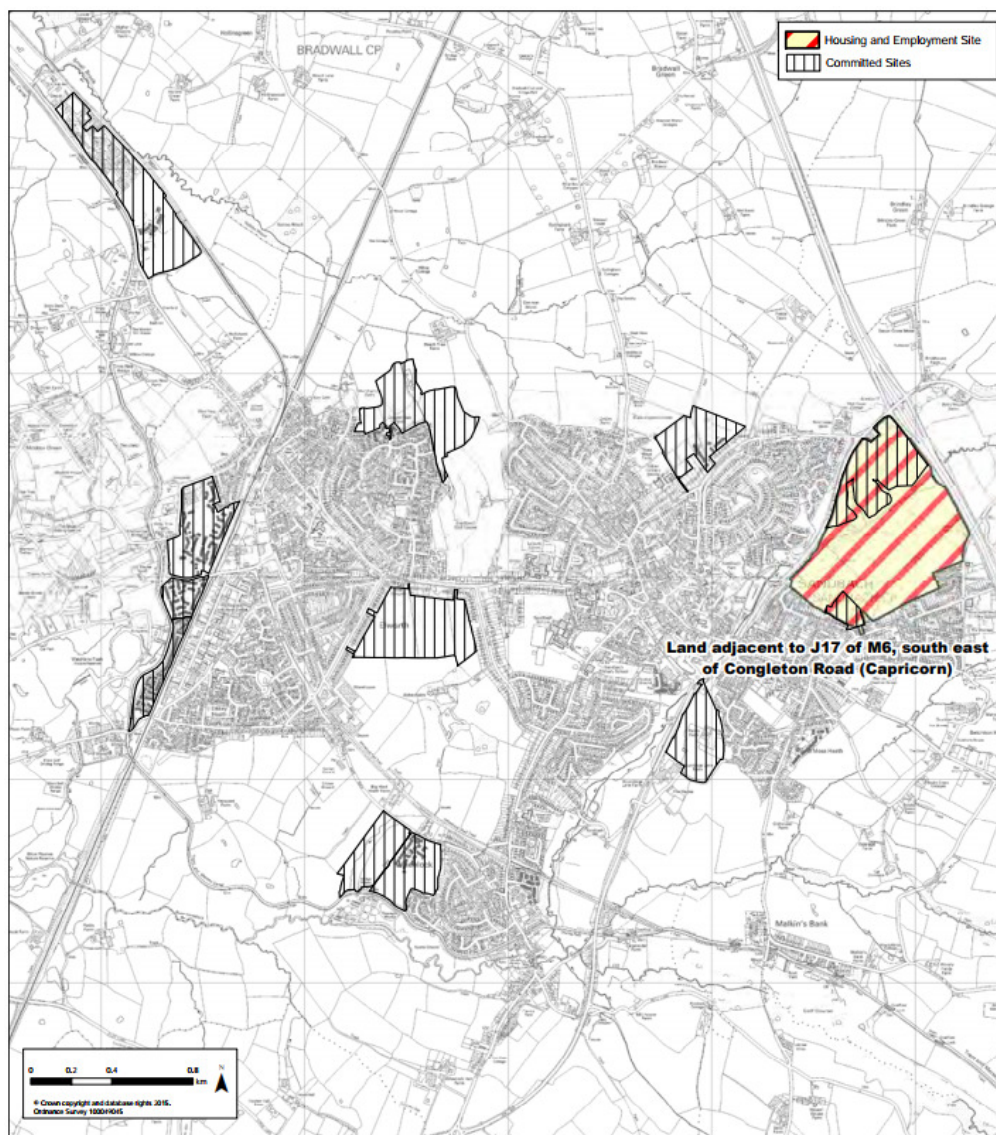
Strategic Development Sites around Sandbach

The development site includes 20ha of employment land and 450 new homes. A demand for more employment land exists as Sandbach has experienced a reduction in undeveloped employment land and an increase in housing developments in recent years. It is important to maintain a good level of road accessibility to this new development site and ensure that the road network has sufficient capacity to support future growth.

Additional provision of local employment may also reduce the proportion of longer-distance commuting trips, if an increased number of residents have opportunities to work closer to home. Currently, the main employers in Sandbach are located at the Cheshire East Council offices on Middlewich Road, Spring Vale Industrial Estate in Ettiley village and business units in Elworth. It is important to have good accessibility to these employment sites in order to support economic growth and investment.

From Census travel-to-work data, 16% of employees live less than 2km from their place of work and an additional 6% live less than 5km from work. Due to limited employment opportunities within Sandbach, 24% travel 5 to 10 km and 37% travel more than 10 km to work. In part, as a result of this tendency for relatively long commutes 78% of Sandbach's residents travel to work by car. The impact of this high proportion of car use is reflected in peak time congestion on the A533 and A534, as well as at junction 17 of the M6. Congestion has the potential to limit local economic growth and as such it is important to address local impacts and provide a road network that enables future growth.

Sandbach is connected to the Strategic Road Network via the A543 towards the M6 via junction 17, north to Congleton and southwards to Crewe. The A533 provides a connection to Middlewich and Northwich and links with the A534. Commuter traffic is an issue on all of these roads, particularly the A534 corridor, which is causing concerns for local residents and businesses due to queuing and congestion. Links which are currently congested due to commuter traffic require intervention in order to provide capacity for future investment and growth in Sandbach.

Sandbach's proximity to M6 junction 17 offers connection to the rest of the country. Notwithstanding provision of a roundabout and junction improvements on the southbound slip roads of the M6, the junction experiences congestion and safety issues which are likely to be exacerbated by future development unless mitigated. It is considered to be vital to address the form and function of M6 junction 17 in order to provide capacity for growth, improve resilience of the road network and enhance the environment.

Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

Local amenities should be accessible for all local residents and businesses. Significant growth is planned in Sandbach with Cheshire East's Local Plan identifying the potential to deliver 2,750 new homes by 2030 and the transport network will need to support this growth. Cheshire East has the fastest-growing ageing population in the North West and Sandbach will be impacted by this. Demographic trends will need to be recognised in future transport improvements, including the particular transport and access requirements of an ageing population.

Sandbach and its surrounding areas has 6 primary schools and 2 secondary schools with an integrated sixth form. For additional options for further study residents need to travel further afield to Crewe or Nantwich. For university level study, Keele University is the nearest university however Sandbach also has rail connectivity to sites in Manchester. It is important to maintain public and

active transport connectivity to education in order to support independence and enhance prospects for younger residents.

As a historic Market Town Sandbach hosts a range of local amenities. To maintain accessibility of local amenities for local residents and the surrounding parishes, services and the public transport network, accessibility improvements are also required for residents in the surrounding rural settlements, such as older residents and those that do not have access to a car to access the services in Sandbach.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

Due to annual nitrogen dioxide limits being exceeded, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared in 2009 for a number of properties along the A533 Middlewich Road, and another at the A534 Holmes Chapel Road/A5022 junction. It is important to protect and improve the environment, support improved air quality and address the AQMAs in Sandbach in line with the Council's forthcoming Air Quality Strategy.

Cheshire East has a vision to continue to maintain and improve quality of place in the borough, building on our environmental assets. The vitality of Sandbach town centre should be maintained and further developed to enhance its attractiveness destination for businesses, employers, visitors and residents. Improving connections between attractions, such as local shops, and leisure routes for example would improve the quality of place and attractiveness further.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East engage in physically activity for less than 30mins a week. This is concerning as it is well established that physical inactivity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the borough in support of good health.

Deprivation is commonly associated with poor health outcomes. The index of multiple deprivation (2015) shows that Sandbach has relatively low levels of deprivation in comparison to the wider borough and country. However, there are pockets of deprivation around the centre of Sandbach and the high street.

There is a high proportion of over 65s in Sandbach (20%). As such we need to ensure older people who do not drive have good connections to health care, services and leisure opportunities.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the Borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- Effective asset management: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- Safety for all: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- Transport resilience: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important

- **Technological innovation**: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the Borough
- **Effective partnership working**: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Opportunities

Travel demand

Currently, there is a net travel to work outflow of over 2,000 people per day from Sandbach, which is due in part to relatively limited employment opportunities in Sandbach. The primary destinations for commuters from Sandbach include Crewe, Middlewich, Knutsford, Holmes Chapel, and Congleton. (Census travel-to-work data).

Active and Smarter Travel

Increased levels of sustainable and active travel are crucial to improved accessibility, health and physical activity. As such, there is a need to invest and promote public and active travel infrastructure and services to increase their use. There are clear opportunities to improve the existing cycle provision such as the Wheelock Rail Trail, which is relatively flat, and green infrastructure such as Sandbach and Elworth Parks. Additional connections between existing cycle routes and key attractions/destinations could increase the uptake of cycling for both leisure and commuting, thereby creating a connected network. A Town Cycling Plan is currently being prepared for Sandbach and once finalised this will propose key improvements within the town. Suggested schemes from this will be considered for LTP funding in line with the appraisal framework.

Several walking routes exist within Sandbach, including the Wheelock Rail Trail, Sandbach Bridges Trail and the Trent and Mersey Canal towpaths. Improvements on these routes in terms of accessibility and maintenance in particular on the Trent and Mersey Canal towpath and the A534 crossing on the Wheelock Rail Trail would encourage additional users to benefit from these routes. The Sandbach Footpaths Group has identified a number of opportunities to provide better connectivity of footpaths and public rights of way, creating better linkages across the town. An illustration of the type of networks that could be created is provided below.

Sandbach Footpaths network, including indicative new links

Active and smarter travel should be encouraged for the home to school journey. The delivery of improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists linking schools provides increased accessibility for school children, improved safety and mitigation of some of the detrimental impacts of school-related traffic on highway network performance.

Bus
The town is currently served by regular bus services to destinations including Crewe, Congleton, Macclesfield and Middlewich. Following its review of Supported Bus Services, the Council will be retaining direct routes to Leighton Hospital, Alsager, Holmes Chapel and Goostrey, as well as a town service within Sandbach. These will be supplemented by retained evening services on Route 37 (Winsford – Sandbach – Crewe) and Route 38 (Macclesfield – Sandbach – Crewe).

Rail
Sandbach train station is located in Elworth and offers two trains per hour to central Manchester, one of which stops at Manchester Airport. Approximately 3% of residents commute via train, which is in line with the Borough average. With planned expansion of Manchester Airport there is the potential for increased job opportunities for Sandbach residents and improved access to the airport will become increasingly important.

In addition to Sandbach Station, Crewe Railway Station is accessible within a 10-minute car or train journey from Sandbach and provides additional connections. Crewe Station is extremely well connected with quick access to London (1hr 35mins), Edinburgh (3 hr 15mins) and the rest of the UK. There is potential for the journey times to improve with the proposed HS2 line, with Phase 2a involving improvements to the Sandbach line, although there may be some disruption to Sandbach station and services resulting from construction of the scheme. There is a need to pursue the best local train service outcomes for Sandbach and the wider borough from delivery of HS2.

Sandbach station would also benefit from improvements to access and customer facilities. These

are likely to be more viable as passenger demand increases due to local developments including the Capricorn site. The Council are supportive of reopening the rail line between Sandbach, Middlewich and Northwich in future, which would have benefits for users of Sandbach Station.

Due to Sandbach Station being located approximately 1 mile from the town centre (and approximately 25 minutes walk) rail travel can be challenging when accessing residential, retail and employment areas within the town centre and towards eastern Sandbach.

Sandbach is also expected to benefit from any future re-opening of the Sandbach to Northwich railway, via Middlewich. Introduction of new services on the Middlewich line are expected to open up new destinations from Sandbach by rail.

Roads

To address significant commuter traffic and linked congestion issues on local roads improvements to the A534 and surrounding junctions has been classified as a highway scheme improvement in the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan. This will allow for the roads and junctions improved by this scheme to cater for existing traffic and have enough residual capacity to support future growth and investment. Peak time congestion is also present on the A533 through Sandbach. There is also a perception of speed limit adherence issues within Sandbach which require further investigation.

As described previously, there is a need to address access onto and over the M6 due to existing congestion and safety issues. Plans are currently in place for the roundabout to the northbound slip roads to be redesigned to enable access to the new employment site and planned development. Further junction improvements may potentially be required in this area in the future. In addition to M6 junction 17, a wider programme of works on the M6 junctions 16 to 19 are being delivered through Highways England's Smart Motorways programme. These improvements will provide additional capacity and improve resilience allowing for further growth in the future.

Car parks across eight sites in Sandbach provide over 500 free spaces, but there is a lack of car parking facilities to serve both the medical centre and shopping areas which provide essential services for residents. Introduction of charged parking at Sandbach rail station is known to have displaced some long-stay parking into nearby residential streets. The need to define a balance between the needs of residents and those of commuters is expected to be a key focus in the development of a parking plan for the town.

Wilmslow

Area Summary

Wilmslow is a market town with a thriving retail and leisure economy. The town is situated in the north of the borough, adjacent to Handforth to the north and Alderley Edge to the south. Wilmslow serves as a central service hub for other nearby settlements including Morley Green, Alderley Edge, Nether Alderley and Mottram St Andrew.

Wilmslow is approximately 18km south of Manchester city centre, and 4km south of the Greater Manchester border. Subsequently, the town has significant economic ties with Greater Manchester and benefits from substantial commuter inflows and outflows to and from Manchester, contributing to Wilmslow's economy to the benefit of both businesses and residents.

There is significant planned development both within Cheshire East as identified within the Local Plan and Greater Manchester as identified in the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework; with growth in and around Wilmslow and neighbouring Greater Manchester likely to impact Wilmslow. This highlights the importance of effective management and investment in the transport network in Wilmslow and the surrounding areas, as without effective connectivity desired levels of jobs-led growth are unlikely to be deliverable.

Outlined below is a discussion on the six key transport challenges identified in Cheshire East's Local Transport Plan as having an impact on the Borough and how they impact Wilmslow.

Challenge 1: Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Census 2011 statistics reported approximately 71% of commuters living in Wilmslow travel by car. Although this is lower than the Cheshire East average, this level of car use contributes to congestion experienced in the town centre at peak times, particularly on the A538 which passes through the town centre. As such there is a need for intervention as congestion has the potential to limit economic growth in and around Wilmslow due to increased journey times to employment sites for commuters and delivery for goods vehicles.

There are a number of known issues with public car parking in Wilmslow, with long stay and short stay car parks often at capacity throughout the week. This impacts perceptions of accessibility for both local residents and visitors, who may be less likely to visit if the ability to find a parking space is in doubt. Improved management of the car parking facilities would provide additional benefits to the local economy and improve accessibility.

Around 36% of Wilmslow's commuters travel more than 10km to destinations such as Stockport and Manchester. As a result, there is a high degree of cross boundary travel between South Manchester, Stockport and Cheshire East. Some of these employment areas are in relatively rural locations, with limited integration with public transport contributing to relatively high levels of single occupancy car travel to such locations.

The key employment sites in Wilmslow and its surrounds include Royal London, Alderley Park, Waters, Handforth Dean Retail Park, Manchester Airport and Stanley Green Business Park. Journey times to these areas have increased as a result of congestion and improving access to these locations presents an opportunity for jobs-led growth. Links from Wilmslow to the M56 and M60 will be improved following completion of the Manchester Airport Eastern Link Road which will improve access to key employment areas.

There are a number of development sites listed in the Local Plan for development, as shown in the figure below. This is a mixture of employment, housing and some areas which are safeguarded for the future. Wilmslow and its surrounding areas Local Plan sites include:
- LPS 54 Royal London – 175 homes and 5ha of employment land;
- LPS 55 Wilmslow Business Park – 6.3ha of employment land;
- LPS 56 Land at Little Stanneylands – 200 homes;
- LPS 57 Heathfield Farm – 150 homes;
- LPS 58 – Safeguarded land at Heathfield Farm; and
- LPS 59 – Safeguarded land at Upcast Lane/ Cumber Lane.
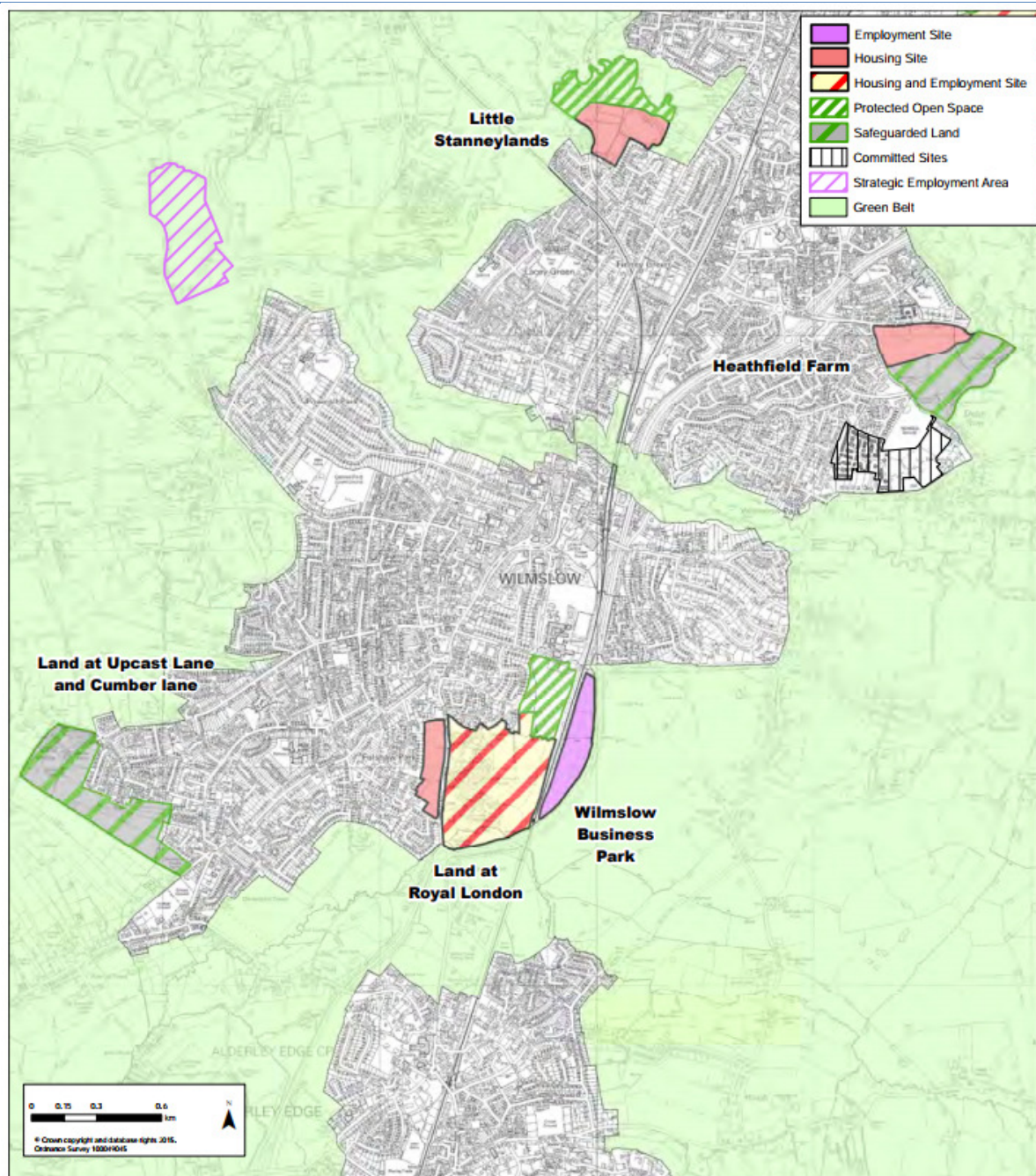
Challenge 2: Ensuring accessibility to services

There are a number of primary schools and one high school in Wilmslow, which includes an on-site sixth form. However, to access other further education opportunities and higher education opportunities residents may need to travel further afield to colleges. Other nearby colleges are in locations such as Cheadle, Altrincham and Macclesfield while the nearest higher education opportunities are located within Manchester. Given that school-related traffic forms a significant portion of peak-time traffic ensuring a good level sustainable access to primary and secondary education has a significant part to play in ensuring reliable journeys for local residents. It is recognised that access to further and higher educational opportunities are critical to ensuring positive prospects for younger residents.

A number of key employers in Wilmslow are located within the town centre, including the

Information Commissioners Office and businesses located on the high street. These locations are accessible on foot from most residential areas within Wilmslow and also from the railway station. Other employment areas such as Waters and Royal London and Stanley Green Business Park in Handforth are currently accessed primarily by car. The challenge is to increase accessibility to these areas via alternative modes of travel and to integrate them into the public transport network. This would open up the opportunity for those without a car from neighbouring areas and Greater Manchester to access jobs in Wilmslow.

Approximately 15% of commuters in Wilmslow travel less than 2km to work and there is an opportunity to provide viable options for alternative modes of travel for these shorter journeys, such as bus, train, walking and cycling.

One of the Wilmslow's main shopping streets, Grove Street, is pedestrianised resulting in a traffic free area for pedestrians and visitors. Notwithstanding this, the layout of the highway network within the town centre may contribute to a perception of 'severance' for pedestrians. In particular, the pedestrian crossings at the junction of Alderley Road / A538 experiences long waiting times with high traffic volumes at the junction. It is important to continue to improve accessibility for pedestrians and to provide safe walking routes into the town centre.

Challenge 3: Protecting and improving our environment

It is the Council's vision to continue to maintain and improve the image of Cheshire East and its high quality of place. The aim for Wilmslow is to continue to be an attractive destination as a place to live, work and visit.

A significant proportion of commuters travel short distances by car and this presents an opportunity to encourage an increase in sustainable travel. Improved connectivity between local attractions such as The Carrs and the high street, and a reduction in congestion would improve the environment, local air quality and the sense of quality of place further.

Some existing routes for walking and cycling exist through green areas, for example, a route through the Carrs to Hawthorn Lane and a route along the River Bollin. Attractive and quiet off-road routes provide a more pleasant alternative to footways adjacent to highways, and can be a way of encouraging trips on foot or by cycle for both leisure and commuting purposes. Green infrastructure could be expanded upon and improved further through a ramped alternative improving access for cyclists and the disabled and also improved signposting to improve knowledge of route availability.

Challenge 4: Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity

Approximately 22% of adults in Cheshire East are physically active for less than 30mins a week and we know that lack of physical activity is a major contributory factor to poor health. There is therefore a need to encourage more active lifestyles in the Borough. Wilmslow has relatively low levels of deprivation when compared to national averages. However, there are pockets of deprivation in the Colshaw Farm and Lacey Green areas.

Higher levels of walking and cycling could be delivered through improved cycling and walking infrastructure, which could increase connectivity and accessibility and provide alternative travel options to local attractions and destinations.

Wilmslow has a slightly lower proportion of older people compared to the overall borough although it still has a significant proportion of the population aged over 65. As such it is important to provide

accessible transport options for older people which provide connectivity to services, retail and recreational opportunities that supports independence and wellbeing.

Challenge 5: Maintaining and managing our network assets

Ensuring that the transport network performs efficiently and is well maintained across the Borough is vital to both connectivity and safety. Increased pressure on Council budgets combined with higher levels of travel and a greater incidence of extreme weather events is likely to make the maintenance and management of our transport network more difficult in the future. As such it is important that the Council works to deliver:

- <u>Effective asset management</u>: We need to maintain and invest in transport infrastructure as efficiently and effectively as possible to maximise the lifespan of assets
- <u>Safety for all</u>: Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone, especially vulnerable users feel confident to travel
- <u>Transport resilience</u>: Ensuring that the transport network is well maintained and resilient to extreme weather events and that their impact is minimised will be increasingly important
- <u>Technological innovation</u>: Making best use of digital connections and technological innovations will be important to continued success across the Borough
- <u>Effective partnership working</u>: Efficient joined-up delivery will require strategic partnerships with government agencies, neighbouring local authorities and the private sector

Challenge 6: Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Ensuring the Council operates in an efficient and effective manner is vital for the delivery of all Council functions, including the delivery of transport services and infrastructure.

In the coming years there will continue to be challenges and opportunities 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 maintained, how excellent transport and local government services are provided and how new infrastructure is delivered and paid for; in what is likely to be a competitive funding environment. The Council has a history of successfully securing significant external funding to invest in transport infrastructure and services. There will be a need to continue this excellent track record if the Council is to deliver the transport network that will support our ambitions.

Transport Issues and Challenges

Travel demand

In Wilmslow, inward and outward commuter flows are approximately equal. A large proportion of commuters travel between the town and Macclesfield, Knutsford, Poynton and Greater Manchester. The town also experiences a significant amount of through traffic travelling in an east/west direction which contributes to local congestion issues.

There is a high demand for road travel and single occupancy car journeys, often as a result of commuting to rural based employment sites, although a significant proportion of car-based trips are for shorter local-based journeys.

Active and Smarter Travel

There are opportunities to improve the pedestrian network in and around Wilmslow. Existing footpaths and pedestrian crossings do not always follow desire lines, while high traffic flows at the

junction of Grove Street / Water Lane / Alderley Road also contribute towards perceptions of severance. Some controlled pedestrian crossings involve long waiting times for pedestrians, causing delay for users. This could be further improved with clear signage from the train station to the town centre and key areas of employment.

There are existing advisory cycle lanes along Manchester Road, along the A34 Melrose Way, parallel to MacLean Way, and along the A538 towards Manchester Airport. These routes provide connections into the centre of Wilmslow from all directions. However, outside of the built up area of Wilmslow cycle provision is more limited and cyclists are required to use busy roads. Existing cycle infrastructure could be improved by linking existing routes, providing a fully connected network for cyclists. The network could be further enhanced through signposting and quiet routes connecting to schools, employment areas and the train station.

Bus

The bus network is served by routes connecting Wilmslow to Knutsford and Altrincham on an hourly basis. Other bus services serve connect to central Manchester and Macclesfield; however, they do not run on Sundays. These bus services are important for school children getting to school and access to services in the Wilmslow and nearby areas for older people in particular.

The rail station bus stops acts as the main public transport interchange within Wilmslow; it is important for the bus stop interchange to provide connections to other modes of travel such as car parking facilities, and public and sustainable travel options.

When future developments such as housing and employment areas as outlined in the Local Plan are built, it is important that they are integrated into public transport networks in the town.

Rail

Wilmslow has good rail connectivity north/south; with direct services to Manchester, Stockport, Crewe and London Euston. As a result, the area has relatively high levels of rail commuting in comparison to the rest of the Borough, with 5% of all commuting trips made by rail. However, Wilmslow experiences poor east/west connectivity to Poynton and Knutsford with no direct services available. The direct links north and south provide fast and frequent services, which attract users locally from Wilmslow and also users from other nearby towns, who commute to the station by car, before travelling to their destination by train. A side effect of the excellent connectivity provided by Wilmslow railway station is high demand for car parking facilities at the station and other long stay car parks in the town centre, such as Broadway Meadow and Spring Street which are often at capacity during the week.

The railway station would also benefit from improved interchange links in order to open up a wider choice of modes of travel to and from the station. There are currently *Bike and Go* facilities and bus facilities; these could be promoted to encourage further use, along with improved signposting and cycling and walking infrastructure.

Roads

Wilmslow experiences congestion throughout the town centre both in peak and off peak periods, and in particular, evening peak periods. This causes delay to road users as well as noise and air pollution. The junction of the B5086 / A538 / Grove Street is in the centre of the town. The A538 is the primary option for east/west movements between Woodford, Poynton and Prestbury in the east and towards Hale and Altrincham in the west, which generates significant through traffic. The

junction experiences congestion throughout the day as a result of this through traffic travelling east / west. The Manchester Road / Mill Street / A538 roundabout also experiences congestion, which is the main route onto the A34 bypass north and south. Mitigating the impact of congestion will be increasingly important in the future.

Congestion is also experienced in particular on the B5359 and Alderley Road, which provides direct access to the Royal London site. This site generates a significant amount of traffic on local roads through the town at peak times and a challenge will be to mitigate potential additional impacts associated with the site's expansion.

Car parking is an acknowledged concern affecting the town centre, particularly around the railway station. Car parking capacity constraints at the train station result in significant demand at long stay car parks in the town centre, such as Broadway Meadow and Spring Street. Parking demand also affects streets within nearby residential areas. Significant levels of on street parking is associated with a reduction in accessibility for blue badge holders, cyclists, motorcyclists, perceptions of severance for pedestrians, potential air quality and road safety concerns. There is a need to review the existing parking situation and delivery improved management and facilities.