Cheshire East Local Transport Plan 2019-2024

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Contents

1 Setting the Scene

1.1 Introduction

This document is the second Local Transport Plan (LTP) to be developed for Cheshire East following the re-organisation of local government in Cheshire in April 2009, which created the unitary authority of Cheshire East Council (CEC).

The LTP seeks to build on past achievements; including those guided by the previous LTP period whilst also responding to local, regional and national changes since the previous LTP 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.

The importance of transport is clear and well understood by the Council. An effective transport network presents significant opportunity for both economic and sustainable development, allowing Cheshire East to thrive and develop across the borough. Transport supports sustainable communities by providing access to services, opportunity, friends, and family. Alongside this, transport is an enabler of new development and urban regeneration which contributes to the delivery of much needed jobs and homes in the Borough, directly 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 2019-2024, outlining how transport will contribute to and support the longer-term aspirations of the Borough. The LTP will be supported by a series of topic-specific supporting 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. 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. This live document will enable the flexibility required to adapt to and capitalise upon new opportunities as they arise, to allow Cheshire East to remain an influential authority regionally and nationally.

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. Following several successful funding applications, a number of major highway schemes have either been completed or are under construction, enhancing the transport network across Cheshire East.

In addition, the local, regional and national policy context has evolved with a new Local Plan for Cheshire East and the government placing renewed emphasis on Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) to drive economic growth. The Cheshire East Local Plan contains a number of housing developments across the Borough which requires an integrated sustainable transport network. This creates an opportunity to work alongside the Cheshire and Warrington LEP and in partnership with major organisations such as Transport for the North and the Midlands Engine to deliver an efficient and effective transport network across the Borough. 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.

The refreshed LTP provides 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 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;
- 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   Supporting documents

The transport priorities of the final LTP will be reflected in a series of technical, topic specific, supporting 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 supporting documents below is not exhaustive, but helps communicate the interconnection of these documents with the LTP and their importance:
- Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy;
- South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy Refresh;
- Network Asset Management Plan;
- Rail Strategy;
- Parking Strategy;
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan;
- Cycling Strategy;
- Road Safety Strategy; and
- Town Delivery Plans.

1.5   Approach to developing the LTP Strategy

In order to ensure that the LTP reflects the diversity of Cheshire East whilst ensuring Borough wide consistency, a two phase approach to 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 will be supplemented by a second phase to develop Town Delivery Plans for key locations (two Principal Towns and nine Key Service Centres) which will be developed as a means of both identifying and shaping local transport characteristics and priorities and identifying potential packages of solutions to meet local objectives. The Council intends to produce Town Delivery Plans across the Borough over the lifespan of the LTP, which will have a greater focus on the opportunities, challenges and solutions in each individual area. Phase 2 of the LTP to develop the Town Delivery Plans is detailed in section 11.

1.6   Process

In line with DfT guidance, a six stage process will be undertaken to develop this LTP. 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 Town Delivery Plans 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.

Town Delivery Plans
3   **Generate options to resolve challenges**: through examination of the evidence base and detailed stakeholder engagement, including meetings with Town and Parish Councils options will be identified.
4   **Appraisal of options**: the feasible policy options will be 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 will be 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.

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 will look like against each of the six outcomes identified below.

2.2.1 Transport as a contributor to overall success

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

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

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.

3   Defining the challenge

3.1   The challenge of connectivity

Our Plan identifies six key areas of 'connectivity' that are critical to deliver our strategic objectives. Achieving these 6 levels of connectivity will contribute to Cheshire East reaching its full potential, by connecting people, businesses, customers and freight.

1. Connected Neighbourhoods

To ensure our neighbourhoods succeed we need to invest in 'quality of place'. Designs for local areas must create a quality of place that encourages people to be active and healthy. Our neighbourhoods must be high quality for residents and visitors alike. All journeys start locally and we must ensure our neighbourhoods are connected in ways which support their overall success, delivering:

- Good quality public spaces;
- Local roads which are safe and fit for purpose;
- Parking which supports local communities and the local economy;
- Walking and cycling facilities which encourage people to travel actively; and
- Reliable public transport.

2. Connected Cheshire

To deliver on our ambitious plans for growth we need to make sure that our rural areas, towns and neighbouring centres are efficiently connected via rail, road and bus. We will work with partners to provide:

- New rail infrastructure e.g. supporting services to Middlewich;
- New trains;
- Improved rail stations;
- A reliable bus network; and
- Efficient road connections.

3. Connecting to the North and the Midlands

Cheshire East needs to maximise the benefits from its location by building links with key economic centres such as Manchester, Liverpool, Merseyside, North Wales, the Potteries and the wider Midlands. Investment in these connections will be increasingly important as it is likely that by 2030 we could see 30-40% more traffic on the M6, M62, M56 and key corridors such as Crewe-Congleton-Macclesfield, Crewe-Middlewich, and Alderley Edge-Manchester. Without investment it is likely that links between Cheshire East and key neighbouring destinations on which our residents and economy rely will get worse.

The Council is working to future proof the road and rail networks by delivering major projects such as A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road, Congleton Link Road motorway, and rail improvements. We are also working with Highways England to improve motorway links through schemes such as the M6 Junction 16-19 Smart Motorway. However, further investment will be needed which will require close working with a variety of partners, including the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport for the North, Highways England and Network Rail.

4. Connecting to the UK

For Cheshire East to succeed its residents and businesses must be able to efficiently and affordably access locations across the UK. We need to improve existing links to Birmingham and London to ensure that connectivity of the borough nationally contributes to future successes, addressing issues which cause poor connectivity. We aim to bring key national locations within the critical one hour door to door travel time. The proposed HS2 Hub and transport improvements to improve access to Crewe station will improve connectivity. Our partnership working with Highways England will improve motorway links increasing access to the national network.

5. Connecting to Global Gateways

We must support our residents and businesses by providing efficient links to 'global gateways' such as Manchester Airport, the Port of Salford and the Port of Liverpool. We must improve access to other significant gateways such as London Heathrow and the Port of Dover. This will encourage investment in Cheshire East helping our businesses thrive.

6. SMART and Digital Connections

High quality digital connections are just as important as transport connections. We must continue to improve broadband provision in the Borough as this will help our businesses, particularly those in more rural areas, and support communities. We also need to investigate the opportunities that technology will bring for us to travel less, improve communication with the travelling public and even to change how we travel. We are already investigating opportunities to use technology to better manage traffic lights and have installed electric vehicle charging points as a way of encouraging the use of less polluting vehicles. But there is much more to do and we will trial new approaches to ensure maximum benefits from new technologies.

3.2 Challenges to achieving our vision for transport

We face a number of challenges to achieving our vision for transport within the Borough and, in turn, 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

- <u>Ensuring accessibility to services</u>
- <u>Protecting and improving our environment</u>
- <u>Promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity</u>
- <u>Maintaining and managing our network assets</u>
- <u>Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness</u>

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

3.3   Supporting growth and economic strength through connectivity

Cheshire East makes an impressive economic contribution: its GVA is around £9.2bn[2] (2012 estimate), which equates to 7.0% of the North West region's economic output, and was 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[3].

> 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:

- <u>Unlocking development sites</u> – 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 already congested in parts.

  The South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy 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.

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

- **Transport as an enabler for growth** – Longer term transformative economic programmes such as the Constellation Partnership which includes 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 £10 billion 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 Corporation 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.

- **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.

  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.

- **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 opportunities for smart mobility. We need to ensure that the Borough 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.

- <u>Quality of place</u> – 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.

3.4   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. 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 for our smaller towns, villages, and rural communities in addition to larger towns.

Growth in accessible employment is good for peoples' health and wellbeing. Generally, residents of Cheshire East lead longer, healthier lives than regional or national averages. 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[4]. 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. To achieve our ambition, we must ensure that transport supports:

- <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[5] and with the knowledge that the damaging impact of social isolation which can be as

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[4] **Office for National Statistics (2015)** *Healthy Life Expectancy at Birth for Upper Ties Local Authorities, England: 2011 to 2013*
[5] **Office of National Statistics (2016)** *Mid-2015 Population Estimates. Release: MYE9AT1*

harmful to health as smoking fifteen cigarettes a day[6]. 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> - 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. 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 is provided in the Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy.

  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. 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 encourage more children and young people to access schools by walking and cycling due to the large number of benefits which accrue.

- <u>Accessibility for vulnerable people</u> – Those who are vulnerable 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 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

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

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.

3.5   Protecting and improving our environment

The biggest contributor to air pollution within Cheshire East is road transport. 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 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 vehicles and public transport. 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. The Local Air Quality Strategy recognises that traffic accounts for the main source of pollutant emissions across Cheshire East, and also recognises that links with the LTP are fundamental to both the improvement of local air quality and maintenance of air quality across the Borough.

  The Council also published a Low Emissions Strategy (LES) in March 2018 which aims to minimise demand for travel via private motor vehicles and encourage transport by low or zero emission modes, and subsequently improve health and wellbeing. The LES outlines the support for the CEC LTP given the overlapping policies of reducing the need to travel and the encouragement of walking and cycling.

- <u>Tackling climate change</u> – 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.

- <u>High quality green infrastructure</u> - As well as high quality built environments we value green infrastructure. 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.

3.6   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[7] and it is forecast that by 2030 around half of the UK's population could be obese[8]. 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.

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.

Accordingly, we will work with partners across health, transport, and education to tackle these important issues which will support:

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[7] Cycling UK (2016) *Cycling and Health*
[8] Swinburn, Boyd et al (2011) *The global obesity pandemic: shaped by global drivers and local environments*

- **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 enable 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 Sustainable Travel Transition Year (STTY) to improve and support sustainable travel options.

3.7   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:

- **Effective asset management** - Transport infrastructure is expensive with the gross replacement value of all the Council's highway assets estimated at £5.68 billion[9]. 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. This evidence led approach means that the Council is well placed to qualify for central government funding which incentivises this approach.

- **Safety for all** - Our transport system must be safe, and be perceived to be safe so that everyone feels 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.

- **Transport resilience** - There is a broad scientific consensus that in the future we will see an increasing incidence of extreme weather events[10]. 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. For example, the new Congleton Link Road will be designed to withstand 1 in 100 year rainfall events with an additional 20% allowance for climate change.

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

- <u>Technological innovation</u> – Improvements in technology will provide opportunities to better manage our transport network and communication with the travelling public, including through the use of 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.

- <u>Effective partnership working</u> - 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 be increasingly important in the future as companies progressively focus on low carbon travel behaviours as part of the wider corporate social responsibility agenda.

3.8   Improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness

Cheshire East Council is responsible for over 500 services, with a population of 378,800. 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 and our budget setting process ensure 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 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.

One 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, Derbyshire County Council, 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.

4   How we will meet the challenge

In order to meet our six defined objectives, we must have a clearly developed approach to identifying, sifting and appraising potential interventions. This will help guide the activities of the Council and partners and deliver the vision for transport, while maintaining full and appropriate consideration of the opportunities and constraints in which interventions must be considered.

In this section we set out a hierarchy which means that we will plan for balanced investment which maintains our existing assets while also ensuring the delivery of new infrastructure where maintenance or service redesign is not sufficient. We subsequently set out how we will decide which specific interventions will be taken forward once considered under this hierarchy, and what the outputs of this decision-making process will be.

4.1   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 management of our current assets to maximise their utility. Where our existing assets are being maintained and managed to their maximum utility, we will then seek to optimise the ways in which transport services and infrastructure are delivered. Finally, where our service design and delivery are already optimised, we will seek to deliver new infrastructure. This approach is intended to ensure the efficient use of resources while allowing for investment in new services and infrastructure where this is the optimal option.

Quality of Place

1. Maintenance and Asset Management
2. Service Redesign and Delivery
3. Delivery of new Infrastructure

4.1.1 Priority one - Maintenance and asset management

There is little value in 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.

At the same time, the cost effectiveness and level of disruption to road users has been minimised by better coordination of works 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.

4.1.2 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. 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.

A recent example of the Council making changes to service delivery to ensure organisational efficiency is the recent review of local supported bus services. The Council identified a need for significant savings in its supported bus budget; to reflect the relatively high costs, low value-for-money and low usage of some services. The focus of the 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.

In some instances the Council can work alone to deliver excellent services however in many areas service improvements require closer integration between the Council and its delivery 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 service improvements can be brought about by effective joined-up advocacy through multi-agency bodies such as Transport for the North. Likewise, we need to work closely with bus operators to sustain local bus services, ensuring they connect people and remain efficient and equitable in the light of cost pressures affecting both commercial and supported bus services.

4.1.3 Priority three - Delivery of New Infrastructure

Once it has been established that an issue cannot be adequately resolved through neither improved asset management nor service redesign, the Council will look to promote the delivery of new infrastructure to meet the identified need. The provision of new infrastructure can provide enormous benefit to our residents, businesses and visitors but it must be demonstrated that the costs of infrastructure investment are warranted after alternative, lower cost options have been fully explored.

The requirement for new infrastructure will often be associated with new developments and, as set out in Local Plan Policy IN 2, developer contributions will be sought to make sure that the necessary physical, social, public realm, economic and green infrastructure is in place. Subject to satisfying the three-part test set out in Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2010, the Council will aim for the delivery of new infrastructure to be funded by developers to the greatest degree, as and where possible.

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 Station at Crewe, supported by the regional rail enhancement proposals from the Constellation Partnership and Growth Track 360, will place Cheshire East in the centre of a high speed, high capacity, high quality UK wide rail network. Complementary improvements to the strategic road network will bring additional benefit to Cheshire East and the wider travel-to-work area. Investment in new and improved road infrastructure in the Borough may be required to cater for up to a 40% increase in forecast demand for vehicles on strategic and local road networks. Recent investments including the A6 Manchester Airport Relief Road (A6MARR) and Congleton Link Road will bring benefits but more investment is needed to relieve congestion, reduce environmental impacts and support economic growth. The Council is delivering plans for major highway investments, such as Middlewich Eastern Bypass and Poynton Relief Road; and will continue to support targeted investments in major highway schemes where required.

4.2   Delivering the vision

The interventions and priorities identified in the LTP, delivered via the prioritised framework identified in section 4.3 will support the Borough to meet the transport challenges introduced and discussed in section three. Below we give a summarised overview of cross cutting actions which will take place over the life of this strategy to meet these challenges. Further detail for specific modes is provided in sections 5 to 9.

4.2.1 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 specific 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. 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.

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 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 realm 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 4.1 – We will work with the LEP and other bodies (e.g. TfN) to agree sub-regional transport priorities

Action 4.2 - 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 4.3 – 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.

4.2.2 Ensuring accessibility to services

The transport network supports all aspects of our daily lives. It should enable our residents, businesses and visitors to access economic opportunities, skills and training, shopping, healthcare services, leisure destinations, family and friends. Our approach to supporting home-to-school

journeys will promote sustainable travel, including walking and cycling wherever possible. Travel habits are often formed at a young age; thus the choice of travel mode has broad implications for the future. Just as for other groups, greater use of more sustainable alternatives provides environmental, health and well-being benefits; including improved fitness, road safety skills and an increased sense of independence. Our approach to supporting these journeys is identified in the Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS).

The Council has a duty to provide home to school / college travel for eligible children and young people in certain circumstances. The Council updated our Home to School Travel Policy to ensure that we are meeting or statutory duties and this was finalised in September 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 maximise the use of available budgets and continue to work in partnership with others. 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 both residents and visitors.

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

Action 4.4 – We will seek to ensure that development delivered in line with the Local Plan is accessible by different transport modes

Action 4.5 – We will support activities which reduce the carbon intensity and resilience of our transport system.

4.2.3 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 health and 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. 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. Improved blue and green infrastructure is just one way in which we are committed to Quality of Place.

Action 4.6 – We will review and update our Local Air Quality Strategy

Action 4.7 – We will support the delivery of green and blue infrastructure improvements

4.2.4 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. 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.

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

4.2.5 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 section. 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 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 4.9 – We will deliver our Highway Asset Management Strategy and adopt Well Managed Highways policies and procedures.

Action 4.10 – We will work closely with partners to support maintenance of transport infrastructure which falls outside our remit

4.2.6 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. We strive to ensure value for money, as this enables more to be done despite continuous pressure on resources. Overall the Council is expecting to see on-going financial pressures as resource costs increase whilst available funding is expected to be subject to budgetary constraints throughout the plan period.

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; outlining some of the key activities identified in the strategy as they relate to our priorities for transport delivery:

Maintenance and asset management

Highway Maintenance - utilising the Council's approved Asset Management approach, maintenance investment will be allocated using an evidence-led assessment process whilst considering 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.

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 4.11 – 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 existing rail network to key centres in the UK including London, Birmingham and Manchester;

- Through the Constellation Partnership, an 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.

Action 4.12 – We will support investment in quality of place and the creation of high quality town centres

4.3   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 related interventions.

Once we have identified potential areas of investment in line with our 3-stage approach, as described above, we will complete a sifting process using an objective-led appraisal tool. The aim of this is to ensure confidence in delivery, in phasing and in the benefits that investment brings to Cheshire East relative to our LTP priorities. The process of engagement and consultation that has been undertaken as part of the borough-wide LTP has identified issues and potential schemes already, and some of the locally-specific interventions will be outlined within the phase 2 of the LTP within the Town Delivery Plans. From a long-list of schemes, a short list will be developed for subsequent sifting and appraisal. The two stages of the sifting and appraisal process are set out below.

4.3.1 Stage One

Stage One 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 objectives previously discussed, taking in to account contributing factors as shown below:

1. **Support growth and economic strength through connectivity**
   a. Secure investment opportunities, including through funding from central government, the private sector and other sources in ways that ensure transport investment is affordable and financially sustainable.
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

In scoring schemes against the above objectives, cognisance will be made of the Actions set out under each objective throughout section 4. Once schemes have been scored in this way, they will be subject to a series of further considerations under Stage Two.

4.3.2 Stage Two

Stage Two in this sifting and appraisal process which will take place once an intervention has been scored against each of the criteria set out in Stage One and will consider the practical requirements to take an intervention from being a possibility through to a potential scheme.

The practical requirements comprise of: technical feasibility, value for money, affordability, and acceptability and are given equal importance as part of the Stage Two Appraisal. This is detailed within the table below.

Technical Feasibility e.g. physical constraint, land availability or design issues	Value for money e.g. perceived value for money	Affordability e.g. funding opportunities	Acceptability e.g. politically and stakeholder views
Yes, technically feasible	Likely VfM	Council/LTP funding (under £100k)	Yes, stakeholder support
No, technically infeasible	Unlikely VfM	External funding opportunities	No stakeholder support
		No financial support	

The feasibility of a potential intervention from a technical perspective will be considered. This will include considerations such as physical and engineering constraints, land availability, or design issues; with potential schemes ranging from 'yes, technically feasible' to 'no, technically infeasible'. Schemes that are considered at this stage to be unfeasible would be discounted from further consideration.

Schemes are considered to be technically feasible will be considered from a value for money perspective, i.e. whether they are likely to deliver value for money, or are unlikely to deliver value for money. This assessment may be supported by cost engineering or economic analysis.

It is recognised that not all schemes that represent value for money are necessarily financially deliverable, in light of internal and external funding constraints. Consequently, opportunities for funding would need to be considered for all schemes that have been considered to be likely or potential value for money. Funding sources to be considered would include, but not be limited to, internal Council funding, external funding opportunities or no financial support. Where no immediate funding sources are identified, we will work with partners to understand the opportunity for forthcoming funding opportunities, and a balanced approach to scheme funding, e.g. funding from developer contributions to accompany public funding.

The degree of internal and external stakeholder support will also be considered. Some of this consideration may occur as part of addressing the first three criteria, particularly if external funding has been considered; however, this stage would be formally undertaken at the end of the

process, in order that all available feasibility, value for money, and financial availability considerations are available to stakeholders.

4.3.3 Outputs

The outputs of Stage One and Two will be a list of potential interventions which have been scored against their expected benefit to Cheshire East's six transport objectives, and against the practical requirements. 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 and Stage Two, 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.

4.4 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.

4.5 Consultation process

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken to inform production of the LTP through initial workshops (with stakeholders and Council Members) in Autumn 2017. In order to reflect the place-based nature of this LTP, meetings with representatives from the two Principal Towns and nine Key Service Centres 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.

Following this, CEC held an eight week public consultation from 1st May 2018 to 25th June 2018. A Summary of Results report was produced which provides an overview of all feedback received throughout the consultation period. The report also includes the key themes raised throughout the consultation period.

Alongside the LTP consultation, the South East Manchester Multi Modal Strategy was also consulted upon in conjunction with Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council from 21st May 2018 to 16th July 2018. Feedback from both the results of the LTP and SEMMMS were analysed holistically.

As part of the consultation process, a draft version of the LTP was made publicly available alongside an information booklet, which informed responses to the LTP questionnaire. The consultation was advertised through the CEC website, direct emailing to local MPs; through a press release; and via Social Media. Paper copies of the questionnaire were made available at Cheshire East libraries and key contact centres in Principal Towns and Key Service Centres, and completed paper forms could also be returned.

There was also the option to complete the questionnaire online, and any additional feedback could be electronically sent. Town and Parish Councils were emailed at the beginning of the consultation and ahead of their local drop-in session, and letters were distributed to all CEC MPs. All neighbouring Council and Local Transport Authorities were notified of the consultation via email. In total, approximately 85 emails were distributed to specialist groups and transport operators, including bus operators, emergency services, and schools.

Drop in sessions were attended by a total of 195 people. At the sessions, paper copies of the questionnaire and brochure were made available. Staff were also in attendance to answer any questions from stakeholders. Additional posters were distributed at local shops, information points and bus stops on the day of the drop-in events. In total, approximately 2500 resources (i.e. leaflets, brochures and posters) were distributed to stakeholders at pick-up locations, drop-in events, or by request.

In accordance with Best Practice, equality champions within the Council provided advice on forums and groups to contact and engage with during the consultation.

By close of the consultation, 261 responses were received. A further 37 responses were received via email and an additional 16 responses were received via other means (including letters, a petition and enquiry forms).

From the above process, the Summary of Results report was produced which summarised the outputs of all feedback received, including quantitative data from the questionnaires and key themes were identified from verbal feedback and qualitative data. Feedback has been fully reflected in this final LTP.

4.5.1 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 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.

Active travel such as walking and cycling, complementing an effective bus and rail network, should be central to 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."[11]

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 and reducing the need to drive.

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.

5.1   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 also has the potential to reduce local traffic levels and there is an important role 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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[11] 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 grant through the Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) for a three-year programme to promote and support sustainable travel. Through the LSTF, £120,000 of the funding 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 programme 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[12], 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 has developed a toolkit for travel planning, funded through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Grant, which is available online via the Travel Cheshire website.

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 5.1 - 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 5.2 – We will continue to support employers, schools and other trip generators to develop, implement and monitor effective travel plans

5.1.1 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)

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

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 travel to school, the Council has assessed home to school travel and transport needs and the Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy (SMOTS) was approved for adoption by Cabinet in July 2018. SMOTS aims to increase the number of schools participating in promotional campaigns and increase engagement in Modeshift STARS; an online system which supports schools in producing a School Travel Plan and implementing active travel activities. Through encouraging sustainable shorter journeys, SMOTS aims to reduce vehicle emissions, improve road safety and increase educational attainment and offer health benefits.

Action 5.3 – We will support children and young people to access schools and educations sites via sustainable modes wherever possible. Our approach to this has been identified in our Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy.

5.2   Walking

Between 2012 and 2015, walking has increased by 13% in Cheshire East, the highest increase in any local authority outside of London.[13] 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

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

interaction with other pedestrians and it is affordable for everyone, making it, together with 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.

5.2.1 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.[14] Walking is also a popular recreational activity in Cheshire East with visitors attracted to areas of countryside within rural Cheshire which contributes to the rural and visitor economy.

The existing network for pedestrians in Cheshire East comprises more than 1900 km of public rights of way (public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic), with the most important asset for pedestrians accessing services 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.[15]

5.2.2 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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[14] NTS 2015 and Census 2011
[15] 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.

5.2.3 Priorities for Improvement

On the local level, walking policies are jointly delivered across the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)[16] 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 will benefit from further improvement. This would also support the local visitor economy and enhance biodiversity levels. 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.

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[16] Cheshire East Council (2011) *Rights of Way Improvement Plan, available at:*
https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/leisure,_culture_and_tourism/public_rights_of_way/improving_public_rights_of_way.aspx

Overall, the pedestrian network would benefit from:

- 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 5.4 – 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 5.5 – We will connect existing parts of the pedestrian network, close gaps and address safety concerns at identified hotspots

5.3 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.[17]

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 [18] 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.

5.3.1 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.[19] On average, cycling to work is more

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[17] Oja et al (2011) Health benefits of cycling: a systematic review
[18] Crawford and Lovelace (2015) The benefits of getting England cycling
[19] 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.
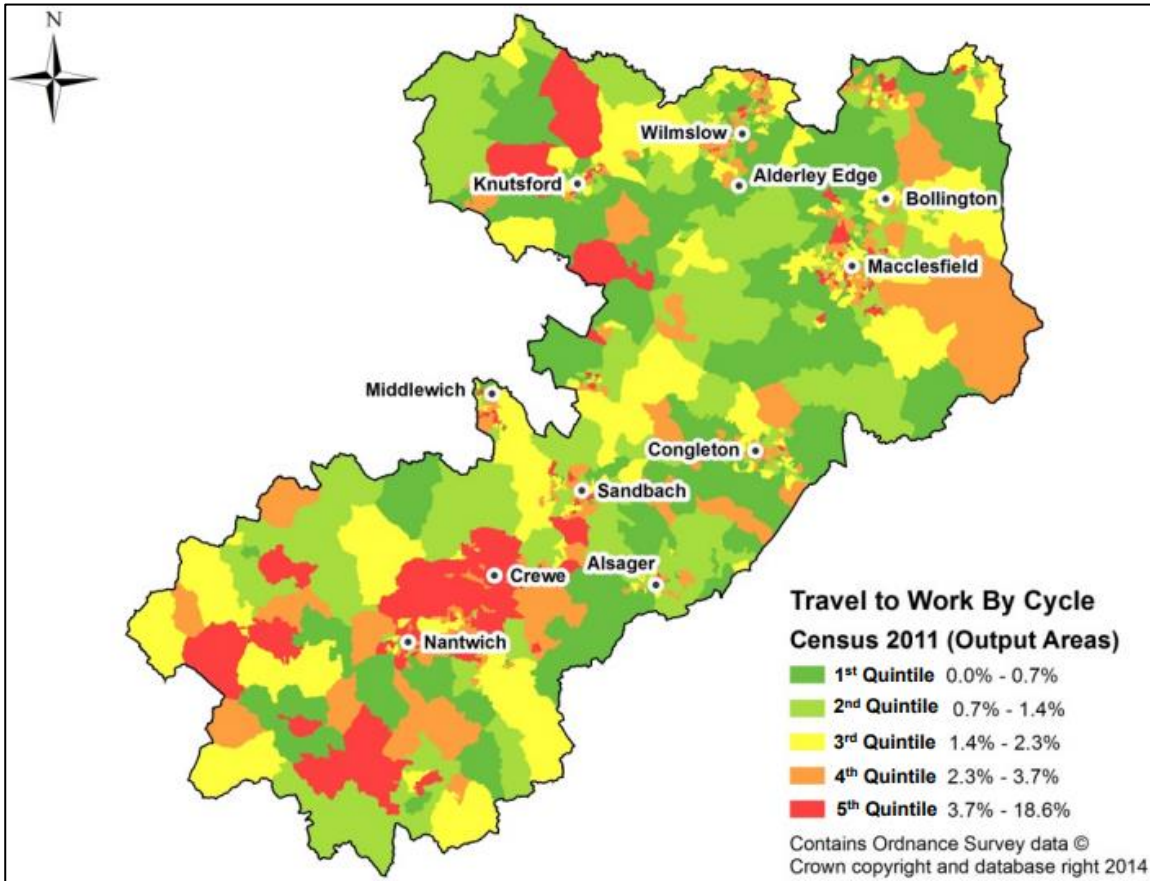
Travel to work by cycle (Lower Super Output Areas, Census 2011)

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.[20] It is recognised that cycling is a popular recreational activity in Cheshire East with visitors attracted to areas of countryside within rural Cheshire which contributes to the rural and visitor economy.

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.[21] 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.

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[20] Active People Survey 2014
[21] NHT Public Satisfaction Survey 2016

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 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.

5.3.2 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. There are plans to extend this route through LGF funding.

5.3.3 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 the actions 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, and ensuring these connect with major trip destinations, 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 integration of the envisaged network of strategic cycle routes is displayed in the figure below.
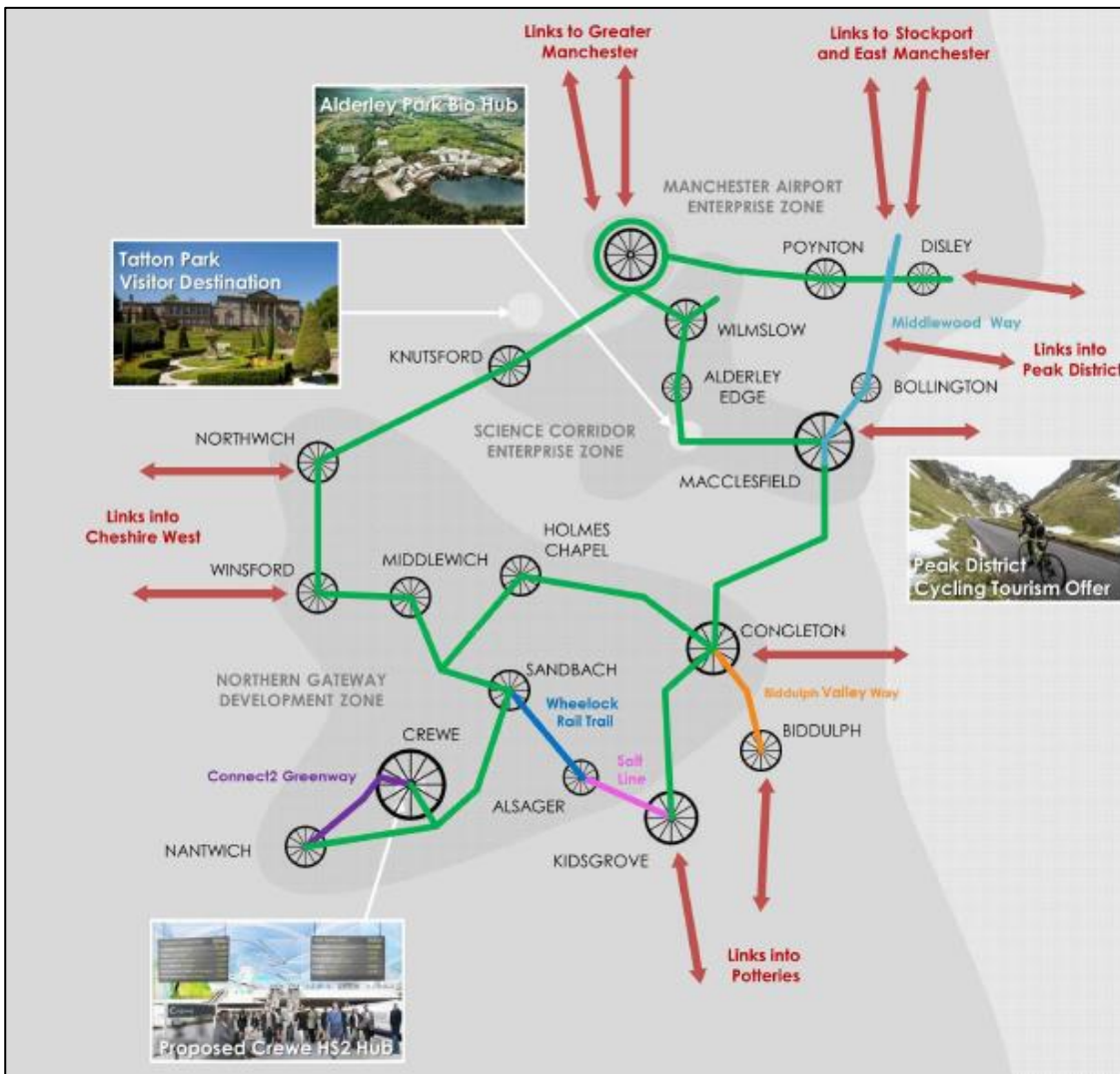
Strategic Cycle Routes in Cheshire East

The existing network of 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 was 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.

Cheshire East Council is currently in the process of developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which is intended to sit alongside the LTP and the existing Cycling Strategy. The LCWIP assigns equal importance to both walking and cycling and recognises that both pedestrians and cyclists have different infrastructural needs. The LCWIP focuses on the north of the borough, incorporating the towns of: Wilmslow, Macclesfield and Congleton. It provides an opportunity to identify key areas of improvement for walking and cycling, particularly since current cycling levels within the identified towns are amongst the lowest across the Borough.

Through the identification of Core Walking Zones and cycle desire lines within the Plan, future funding opportunities can be directed towards sustainable travel schemes, as and when such funding becomes available. This is intended to ensure that investment is directed to those areas which are most likely to generate the greatest level of uptake and enhance connectivity.

Alongside this, there are ongoing plans to develop an East-West Greenway link as part of the development of the Congleton Link Road. The Greenway aims to provide a key sustainable link between existing and planned developments located along the route which will assist in overcoming perceived barriers to waking and cycling.

The South East Manchester Multi-Modal Strategy (SEMMMS) outlines active travel schemes considered for short-term implementation, including the completion of a fully signed Wilmslow to Manchester Airport cycleway, and improvements to the Middlewood Way walking and cycling route within Macclesfield. Since both Wilmslow and Macclesfield are within the LCWIP area, these strategies directly complement one another.

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, alongside the walking/cycling zone and route improvements identified in the LCWIP. Specific cycling infrastructure schemes will be put forward in each of the Town Delivery Plans, based on the principles outlined in the cycle strategy and identified local needs and requirements.

Action 5.6 - We will continue to maintain and improve the existing cycling infrastructure and develop a network of strategic high quality cycle routes connecting the Borough with reference to appropriate Design Guidelines such as LTN02/08 or any subsequent versions.

Action 5.7 – 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 5.8 – We will support the delivery of improved walking and cycling infrastructure as part of the delivery of other major transport schemes

Action 5.9 – We will seek to ensure that developments are planned in a sustainable way through the inclusion of active travel facilities and linkages

5.4 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. The popular leisure aspect of equestrianism is recognised, and it is important that this continues to be an area of consideration in sustainable infrastructure developments.

Different transport users have different needs and thus it is essential that our highway network and wider transport system is 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. The transport system should not contain any barriers which may prevent people from travelling and overcoming any barriers to create a sense of safety and security is therefore of upmost importance Future sustainable travel improvements must cater for a range of users in both their design and implementation.

Action 5.10 - We will maintain, improve and promote the paths available for leisure use, including horse riding

Action 5.11 – We will seek to ensure that the publically accessible highway and transport network supports accessibility for all and does not exclude anyone

5.5   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 walking and cycling, including improving the appeal of available routes and facilities which effectively enables people to shift from the car to more sustainable modes of 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 walking and cycling 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, the option to transport bicycles via rail, 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.

Road improvement schemes should not only provide high quality cycling and walking infrastructure as part of the scheme but traffic reduction on parallel roads which can be repurposed to provide improved facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists. With lower traffic flows enabling traffic calming measures, the creation of cycle lanes or improvement to foot and cycle paths, provide 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 such as will seek opportunities to reallocate space from general highway purposes to walking and cycling, with the scope for this and designs considered on a case by case basis.

As stated in the Local Plan, developments should take place where infrastructure for active travel already exists 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. To achieve this, it is important that public transport services and active travel modes complement one another, for example through active travel facilities at public transport interchanges.

We are committed to improving and introducing walking and cycling links within Cheshire East. It is recognised that in order to achieve this, there may need to be reallocation of highway space for pedestrians and cyclists. On a borough-wide basis, we will seek opportunities to reallocate road space from general highway uses to facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Detail in respect of particular sites will be determined during the next phase of the LTP as part of the Town Delivery Plans and also as part of individual scheme design.

Action 5.12 - 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 5.13 - We will facilitate the use of walking and cycling to access leisure destinations and for leisure trips

Action 5.14 – We will seek external funding from all sources to support active and sustainable travel interventions

Action 5.15 – We will seek opportunities to reallocate road space to pedestrians and cycling

6	Bus

Bus services in Cheshire East provide access between and within the major settlements, and have an important role in connecting users to local services including employment, schools and recreation. The Cheshire East bus network comprises a mix of commercial and supported services with Cheshire East Council responsible for coordination and, information provision. These functions are delivered through our Council owned arms-length specialist transport company, Transport Service Solutions (TSS). Working closely with a range of private bus operators across the Borough, the Council aims to meet the needs of passengers through providing as a comprehensive a network as possible whilst operating within budgetary constraints.

6.1 Current Context

In 2016/17, there were approximately 4.5 bus passenger journeys per resident across the Borough which is reflective of a figure where patronage has declined in recent years. Bus patronage declined by 22% between 2009/10 and 2016, with Cheshire East within the bottom five Local Authorities for the lowest number of passenger journeys per head (12 passenger journeys per head)[22].

Cheshire East therefore has amongst the lowest number of trips per head of resident population in England[23]. Usage of the network is also characterised by a high proportion of trips undertaken by concessionary pass holders – equating to 49% of all trips in 2016/17, the second highest proportion in the country.

The decline in bus patronage causes commercial services provided by private operators to be less viable and thereby places further pressure on the Council's budget for supported/subsidised services.

6.2 The Bus Network

The local bus network in Cheshire East is comprised of a mixture of:

- Commercial bus services – where all details of the service including the route, frequency, hours of operation, etc. are determined by the private operator;
- Supported (subsidised) services which are socially necessary and are funded by the Council and provided by a private operator; and
- Partly supported services – commercial services for which the Council pays to extend the service, most usually to extend the hours of operation into the evening.

Commercial bus routes currently form the 'backbone' of the network, operating along corridors with the highest levels of demand. Within the Borough this typically includes some inter-urban

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[22] *DfT Annual Bus statistics January 2019*
[23] Table BUS0110: Passenger journeys on local bus services per head by local authority (2017/18)

routes with strong commuter flows (e.g. Macclesfield to Wilmslow and between Crewe and Nantwich) as well as the more intensively used town services within Crewe and Macclesfield.

The decline in bus patronage across the borough is placing pressure on the viability of commercially operated services. Accordingly, during this LTP period, the Council will seek to work with operators to maximise coverage and encourage uptake of these services.

The Council also provides financial support to provide a network of socially-necessary supported bus services throughout the Borough. These supported services enable residents to benefit from local bus services in areas where commercial services do not operate.

The Council has recently completed the Supported Bus Service Review which has carried out a comprehensive assessment of the local supported bus network to assess whether the services best met the needs of residents and represent value-for-money.

The outcomes of the Supported Bus Service Review were implemented in April 2018, which has reduced the number of services subsidised by the Council. In order to achieve best value, the Council does not support Sunday services in order to allow more resources to be available for evenings and particularly daytime services when usage is greater.

Whilst the implementation of the Supported Bus Service Review saw the supported bus budget reduced by £1.176m, large parts of the Borough continue to benefit from local bus services. Across Cheshire East, 93% of residential addresses have access to a Key Service Centre or Principal Town within a 60-minute public transport journey during a weekday off-peak period (09:30-16:00), and 90% of residential addresses have access within the weekday morning peak period (06:00-09:00) and evening peak period (16:00-19:00).

As a result of the bus service review, the percentage of residents which could access a Key Service Centre or Principal Town within a 60-minute public transport journey during the weekday morning/evening peak and the weekday off-peak period did not alter, since the greatest decrease occurred amongst weekday evening services and Sunday services. Following the bus service review, 67% of residents have access to weekday evening services (decrease of 12%), and 61% have access to a Sunday service (decline of 10%).

In the future and as the context surrounding the bus sector develops at all spatial scales, this focus may change and will need to be reviewed in the future with consideration of current context and how this impacts upon particular services.

In addition to public bus services, the Home to School Travel Policy sets out how the Council will assist children of statutory school age with travel between home and school. This includes the assistance which the Council will provide for those children with specific special educational needs, disability or other mobility difficulties. To meet such policy requirements, bus services will continue to meet the needs of those children which require home to school travel, which is directly supported through SMOTS and the encouragement of increasing the number of schools which hold an enforced Travel Plan.

Further, the Council will look to draw closer ties with Bus User Groups (BUGs), including agreeing a Memorandum of Agreement in order to manage the bus network through a cooperative partnership which reflects the needs of users. Such a partnership will greatly assist in ensuring the routing and frequency of services meets the needs of residents. Alongside this, the Council will continue to communicate with bus operators to develop the bus network as a cooperative partnership.

Action 6.1 –We will support socially-necessary bus services where possible within budgetary constraints.

Action 6.2 – We will consistently review the supported bus service provision to provide as wider coverage as possible to meet the needs of users whilst operating within budgetary constraints.

Action 6.3 – We will look to draw closer ties with Bus User Groups (BUGs), including agreeing a memorandum of agreement.

6.3 Flexible Transport

The Council recognises that traditional, scheduled bus services may not be feasible in all areas of the Borough or 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 'demand responsive' flexible transport solutions.

The Council has provided a flexible demand responsive transport service for a number of years. This service provides a 'safety net' for residents who are not able to use conventional public transport for reasons of disability or living too far from a fixed route. The service is presently regularly used by a relatively small group of users with particular needs. Those users typically comprise of vulnerable users across the borough, including the elderly and mobility impaired. Following the Bus Service Review, the Council continues to offer a flexible demand responsive transport service, branded 'FlexiLink', operating from 9:30am to 2:30pm, Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays. A limited service is available for group bookings between 8:30am and 9:30am and 2:30pm and 4.30pm.

Action 6.4 – We will look to maximise the availability and usage of the flexible transport service within the budget available.

6.4 Community Transport

Community transport can offer an alternative mode of transport, particularly in more rural areas. A number of such schemes are in place across the Borough including dedicated parish minibuses and community car schemes.

The Council has previously supported such schemes through the Transport and Accessibility Grant Scheme and the Vehicle Gifting Policy which sees the Council donate former fleet vehicles

for use by communities. In 2017/18, five mini buses were gifted to a range of Charity Organisations.

The scheme is intended to support local people to develop community-led initiatives which improve access to essential services such as healthcare, retail and leisure. Local communities are often best placed to identify their own transport needs and in some cases have the capacity to develop local solutions. Through the Grant Scheme, the Council is seeking to support innovative community transport solutions which are operated "by the community, for the community" and are tailored to local needs.

Further, in recognition of declining public sector funding, the Council recognises the value of community transport schemes and will aim to support local solutions such as community transport to integrate with the existing network to maintain access, where possible. The Council also recognises the importance of "partner agencies" in providing access for residents to local service centres.

Action 6.5 – We will maximise opportunities to work with and alongside our communities to encourage community led transport initiatives.

6.5   Bus Services Act

In April 2017, the Bus Services Act 2017 received Royal Assent presenting a number of opportunities for the bus sector. Bus operators have an obligation to disclose information on routes, timetables, fares and ticketing, to allow bus passengers to make travel decisions based on a complete and accurate data source. It is also proposed through the Act that Accessible Information Regulations will be introduced which will require the provision of audible and visible information on all local bus services, which will identify the route and direction of respective services, each upcoming stop and points at which diversions start or end. This is intended to remove any barriers to bus travel which currently exist for disabled users.

Within Cheshire East, there is a heavy reliance on small to medium sized operators and therefore the Council recognises that any changes generated by the Act must be proportionate to what smaller operators can reasonably be expected to deliver. Additionally, the Act provides mayoral authorities, such as Greater Manchester, powers to improve bus services through granting them the authority to reform the current bus market. The Council will work alongside neighbouring authorities to ensure cross boundary bus services with Cheshire East operate effectively.

Action 6.6 – We will continue to work alongside neighbouring authorities to ensure cross boundary services with Cheshire East operate effectively.

6.6   Infrastructure and Development

The Council will work alongside bus operators to integrate the proposed housing and employment development sites included within the Cheshire East Local Plan into existing bus services to meet the demands of new development areas. This is intended to encourage sustainable journeys from new development sites.

The development of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) also provides an opportunity to extend the provision of commercial services. BRT is under consideration for cross boundary travel to/from the Greater Manchester conurbation. Routes noted in the SEMMM Strategy for future consideration broadly include:

- Stockport – Hazel Grove – Woodford – Handforth – Stanley Green – Heald Green – Manchester Airport.

- Wilmslow – Handforth – Stanley Green – Heald Green – Manchester Airport.

- Wilmslow – Handforth – Stanley Green – East Didsbury Metrolink stop.

This is intended to improve cross-boundary connections between Greater Manchester and key hubs within Cheshire East, with the ambition to extend the services across the wider Borough in the future where feasible. The Council will seek to fund and deliver infrastructure to support the introduction of BRT as a potential mode of travel both within Cheshire East and to neighbouring authorities. Infrastructure to support this network would consist of dedicated bus lanes and/or guided tracks where possible, with frequent services and off-board fare collection. It is considered to be more reliable, convenient and faster than regular bus services due to the priority offered by infrastructure. The North Cheshire Garden Village provides an early opportunity to integrate bus priority measures into the development and adjacent infrastructure.

The Council are progressing with a town centre regeneration programme for Crewe. The regeneration for the Royal Arcade site is a mixed-use development. This will have a retail offering in the heart of the town centre, along with a cinema and restaurants with the provision of a new bus interchange. The scheme is pivotal to the town's centre's regeneration and future success and the new bus interchange will support bus provision through improved bus facilities in Crewe.

The arrival of HS2 in Cheshire East at stations in Crewe and Macclesfield, and the development opportunities this brings, presents an opportunity to strengthen the commercial bus network in these areas as part of an integrated transport network. The Council recognise the importance of ensuring that a high-quality bus interchange is provided at the station entrance, along with clear information and signage in order to integrate these modes.

Action 6.7–We will work with the development planning process to provide bus accessibility for new developments, seeking to establish commercially operated services through securing developer contributions to support initial operation of bus services.

Action 6.8–We will work alongside Stockport Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to examine the feasibility of developing of Bus Rapid Transit system in the north of Cheshire East.

Action 6.9 – We will work to ensure that Crewe bus station is delivered.

Action 6.10 – We plan to ensure that bus services are integrated with HS2 connections.

7.1   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 Borough 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.

7.2   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[24]. 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.

The SEMMM Strategy notes a recent significant increase in the popularity of rail travel, particularly by commuters. As a result, some cross-boundary rail services experience overcrowding on peak services and subsequently have a lack of capacity to accommodate new users. The SEMMM Strategy outlines an ambition to increase capacity on rail services and improve rail line speed with plans for platform lengthening at major commuter stations between Stockport and Macclesfield. Alongside planned improvements to station facilities, such measures are intended to improve the overall experience of using rail stations and therefore maintain the momentum of increased popularity in rail travel whilst providing the necessary increase in capacity to support the growing demand.

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[24] 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	N/A (this will be replaced by the West Coast Partnership franchise in December 2019)	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	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	Abellio	2027	Derby – Crewe	Alsager	Stoke, Kidsgrove	Hourly
Crosscountry	Arriva Crosscountry	October 2019	Bournemouth - Manchester	Macclesfield	Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Stafford, Stoke, Stockport	Hourly
Wales & Borders	Transport for Wales (KeolisAmey)	October 2033	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)

7.3 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.

7.3.1 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 7.1 – We will lobby for investment in rail infrastructure where it will unlock opportunities for improved rail services within the Borough

7.4   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

CREWE	MACCLESFIELD	Alsager	Congleton	Handforth	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow
	MACCLESFIELD									
2		**Alsager**								
	1		**Congleton**							
1				**Handforth**						
					Knutsford					
						Middlewich				
1							**Nantwich**			
	2		1					**Poynton**		
2				1					**Sandbach**	
4				2			0.5		2	**Wilmslow**

Legend:
- 1 (green) = Direct Rail Link per hour
- (pink) = No direct Rail Links
- (grey) = Not currently served by rail

Daily Sunday Rail Services

Crewe	Macclesfield	Alsager	Congleton	Handforth	Knutsford	Middlewich	Nantwich	Poynton	Sandbach	Wilmslow
CREWE										
21	MACCLESFIELD									
	6	Alsager								
5			Congleton							
				Handforth						
					Knutsford					
						Middlewich				
7							Nantwich			
	6		6					Poynton		
6				5					Sandbach	
17				17			4		6	Wilmslow

Legend:
- 1 (yellow): Sunday Services per day
- pink: No direct Rail Links
- grey: Not currently served by rail

7.5 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.

The Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership works closely with five local authorities: Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Trafford, Stockport and Transport for Greater Manchester, and also with Knutsford and Northwich Town councils and Parish Councils along the line. The line links Chester and Manchester and the service stops at sixteen stations in rural Mid Cheshire and the outskirts of Greater Manchester. Cheshire East, as one of the partners of the Community Rail Partnership, recognises the needs and potential of the rail line as part of the development of rail infrastructure.

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

- The delivery of 281 new carriages (as 2,3 and 4 carriage formations);
- 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 December 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 December 2019 and will design and run the initial HS2 services across the country from 2026. The franchisee 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.

Rail lines serving Cheshire East into Manchester are focussed into Stockport Station and its approaches. Stockport Station approaches are a pinch point for rail lines including those serving: Crewe-Manchester, Buxton – Manchester, Stoke – Congleton-Macclesfield- Manchester, and the Mid-Cheshire Line linking Chester - Knutsford – Manchester. All of these routes pass through Stockport Station. During the development of timetable enhancements for December 2019, Network Rail has commented that additional train paths are constrained by the track and signalling layouts at Stockport Station / Edgeley Junction. Without a clear plan of infrastructure improvements, there is concern that future rail service improvements to serve Cheshire and the Potteries authorities are undeliverable – including service enhancements bid as part of the current Northern rail franchise. The Council will work with partner authorities and the rail industry to seek a timely resolution to these constraints.

Action 7.2 – We will continue to work with Transport for the North (TfN) and partners at the sub-regional and national level to influence the specification of rail franchises in the best interests of the Borough

7.6   Growth Trends

7.6.1   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[25]. 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.

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[25] Office of Road and Rail (2017) *Regional Rail Usage*
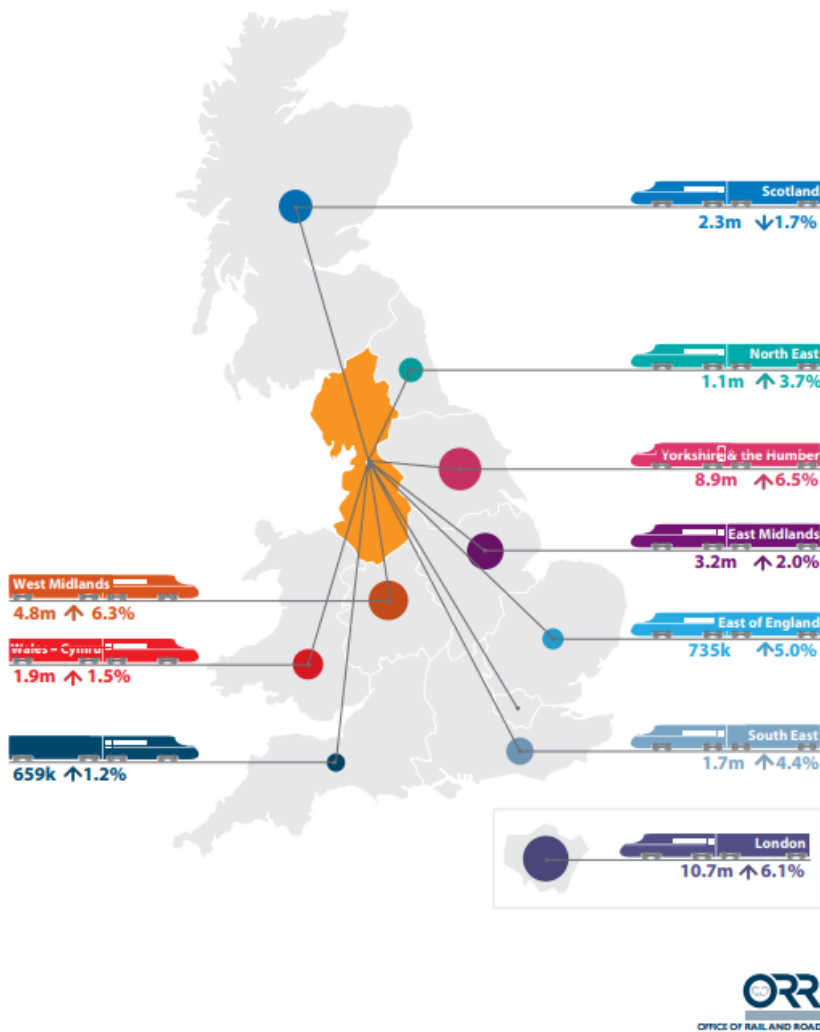
7.6.2 Station Usage

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 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%[26]. 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

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

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

7.7   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[27]. 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 existing 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 7.4 – We will work with partners to renew and improve rail stations and facilities, including at Macclesfield

7.7.1 National Passenger Growth

The emerging vision of Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) presents an opportunity to increase the rail connections across and beyond the north of England. Despite the relatively low proportion of travellers that use rail on average across the North compared to the road network at this time, there is significant potential for rail to increase its share in the growing demand for transport which is required to unlock transformational economic growth. The Council will work alongside TfN to benefit from opportunities arising from NPR.

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 assent in February 2017, and the Hybrid Bill for Phase 2a as far as Crewe is currently going through Parliament with royal assent expected in late 2019.   The development of HS2 Phase 2a is

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

supported in the TfN Investment Programme (2019) alongside multi modal access improvements to ensure Crewe HS2 Hub and neighbouring developments are well connected.

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, in order to achieve the full economic potential of HS2 across the borough, the network, frequency and capacity of local rail services will need to increase to improve access to Crewe Hub from areas of North Cheshire, which would release additional benefits of HS2 coming through Crewe and growth for the regional and local economy.

In March 2018, the Secretary of State for Transport published results of the Crewe Hub consultation undertaken in 2017. Recommendations for specific changes to the Phase 2a scheme included the provision of 400m platforms at Crewe station to allow for the splitting and joining of HS2 services, a more efficient design for the proposed platform on the Manchester-independent lines incorporating a transfer deck to the main station. The recommendations also include a change to the design of the southern connection from HS2, to form a connection in which the HS2 line intersects and goes ahead of the central two lines on the existing network. The provision of 400m platforms at Crewe station supports a service to Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield from 2027 and 2033. The integration of Macclesfield presents an opportunity to extend the interconnections and economic benefits of HS2 to the north of the Borough. As such, future transport developments will seek to support the connections through increasing a number of multi-modal travel options between HS2 stations to principal towns and transport interchanges across the Borough, whilst also improving access to Crewe as a principal town.

The Crewe Station Hub Area Action Plan (CSHAAP) will establish a development framework which will facilitate and manage development around Crewe Hub Station. Consultation on the CSHAAP was issued for public consultation in February 2019 and the consultation closed on the 26th March 2019. A second round of consultation took place between 22nd July and 2nd September 2019. The Plan will be updated in light of the feedback received during the public consultation. Once finalised, the Plan will set out a vision for the area, a series of policies and a development strategy which will include a series of ideas of how development could take place around the future HS2 hub station.

Action 7.5 – We will work to achieve maximum Borough wide benefit from HS2 whilst achieving mitigation measures to minimise negative impacts on residents

Action 7.6 – We will use HS2 as an opportunity to drive substantial investment and improvement in Crewe, including through the development of the Crewe Masterplan

7.7.2 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.

The proximity of Cheshire East to Manchester Airport presents an opportunity to benefit from economic growth and global connections since the Airport is a major economic hub and trip attractor. A central component of the original SEMMM Strategy was the A6MARR which is now open to traffic and provides a complete route between Hazel Grove and Manchester Airport. However, the public transport connections between Manchester Airport and north Cheshire are limited, and car mode share for travel to the Airport is therefore expectedly high.

Under current rail provision, a service exists between Wilmslow and Manchester Airport, and a direct hourly service exists from Crewe to Manchester Airport. The recent upturn in the popularity of rail travel has, however, resulted in overcrowding on some peak services, and rail is not always a realistic transport mode if travelling at weekends or during evenings as services do not always operate frequently during these periods. As such, there is scope to improve the frequency and extent of direct rail services to Manchester Airport from towns across Cheshire East, which will assist with access to employment opportunities, contribute to the visitor economy and strengthen economic growth through global connections.

Action 7.7 – We will work to ensure that HS2 does not detrimentally impact conventional services linking to the Borough

Action 7.8 – We will support delivery of Growth Track 360

7.7.3 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. Five authorities, including Cheshire East, are working alongside the Mid-Cheshire Community Rail Partnership to raise the profile of the Mid Cheshire Line, and work towards behavioural change in travel choices and promoting sustainable tourism. The Mid-Cheshire Rail Partnership actively seeks to promote increased usage, and develop facilities along the route, and is cited within the TfN Transformational Programme (2019).

The Cheshire and Warrington LEP has recently commissioned a feasibility study to investigate the re-opening of the Sandbach to Northwich line for passenger services, the potential to provide new stations at Middlewich and Gadbrook Park, and the option to improve passenger services along the Mid-Cheshire railway line. Such improvements would also improve access to Manchester Airport from surrounding areas and create opportunities for economic growth. The Mid-Cheshire rail line is located within the TfN West and Wales strategic corridor and is therefore a focus for developing transport links across the North. The Study provides an opportunity to investigate the potential for the re-opening of the line with further development dependent upon the outcomes of the study.

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.

The Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone is led by the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and presents a significant growth area in Cheshire East, attracting 20,000 jobs and 500 businesses to Cheshire and Warrington. Ensuring that areas within the Enterprise Zone are connected with regional rail links is essential to gaining the greatest economic benefit from such an opportunity.

Action 7.9 – We will work with partners with the aim of reopening the Northwich to Sandbach rail line to passenger traffic

Action 7.10 – We will work with partners with the aim of double tracking the section of line between Crewe and Alsager

7.7.4 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 7.11 – We will promote rail freight as a more sustainable method of haulage except in instances where there are conflicts with passenger services

8.1 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. As outlined in the TfN Strategic Transport Plan (STP), the "Integrated and Smart Travel" programme will aim to support and encourage those journeys undertaken via multiple transport modes. The ticketing system will allow passengers to be confident that they have paid the cheapest possible fare; with the aim of 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.

The Council will also work towards greater ticketing integration with neighbouring authorities. For example, it is recognised that cross-boundary disparities exist in some ticket cost differentials across the Cheshire East and Greater Manchester boundary, particularly in relation to rail fares. The STP aims to review the fares structure across the North to deliver a structure which is perceived as fair whilst also commercially sustainable. The Council will work with TfN to promote the cost differentials between Cheshire East and Greater Manchester to the maximum degree which the strategy allows, to increase the attractiveness of rail travel and improve the quality of cross-boundary journeys.

Action 8.1 – We will work with partners to improve information around bus services and ticketing, including supporting a move to smart ticketing where appropriate

8.2   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.

Alongside improved integration of public transport information and ticketing, efforts will be directed towards aligning public transport and active travel modes to ensure that as a combination, this can offer a sustainable alternative for longer journeys as opposed to the private car. As part of the integration, cycle parking should be available at stations and active travel routes should connect with popular transport hubs, including town rail stations.

Action 8.2 – We will work with partners to improve information at interchange facilities

8.3   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 8.3 – We will promote well maintained and accessible interchange facilities which feel safe to use day or night

8.4 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 brings real benefits on top of expanding the reach of these services. To achieve integration with other transport modes, the Council needs to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to align future strategies and developments.

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.

The potential for cross-border integration between Cheshire East and Greater Manchester through the extension of the Metrolink into the north of Cheshire East has been recognised as a long-term aspiration. Transport for Greater Manchester recently published their Draft Transport Delivery Plan (2020-2025)[28] which outlines the transport aspirations across Greater Manchester between 2020-2025, as a sub document of the 2040 strategy. The options for a tram-train travel mode is currently being tested for feasibility and if successful, this would enable adapted Metrolink vehicles to utilise the same rail lines as trains. Essentially, tram-train is the principle of running a single vehicle seamlessly through both a traditional urban tramway network and a 'converted' traditional heavy railway line.

The 2020-2025 Plan includes an aspiration for tram-train services to operate across the Greater Manchester-Wilmslow border, and options for this are to be generated through a tram-train 'pathfinder' trial. There is potential for this to be delivered by 2025 dependent on the outcome of the trial. The aspiration for tram-train is also included within the SEMMM Strategy outlining the aim for a tram-train network to operate between Stockport, Hazel Grove, Didsbury and Altrincham.

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[28] TfGM Draft Delivery Plan: 2020-2025

Given that Metrolink provision within Cheshire East is a long term aspiration, the Council will continue to focus upon the development of BRT to enhance cross-border connections with Greater Manchester, which could link into the development of the Metrolink in the longer term. Further, as outlined in the SEMMM Strategy, increasing park and ride facilities at both Wilmslow and Macclesfield rail stations is under consideration. The SEMMM Strategy also refers to the option for a Park and Ride facility to integrate with the Stockport-Manchester Airport BRT service, potentially alongside the A6MARR/Poynton Relief Road interchange near Bramhall.

Action 8.4 - 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

9   Roads

9.1   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.

### 9.1.1   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.

The STP published by TfN sets out the case for strategic transport investment through to 2050 required to support transformational economic growth. The Plan makes direct reference to driving forward major transport schemes across the North of England, and within Cheshire East itself. TfN is working collaboratively with Cheshire East in the delivery of HS2 and the Crewe Hub, and continued investment in employment and innovation, with reference to investment in the Cheshire Science Corridor.

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.

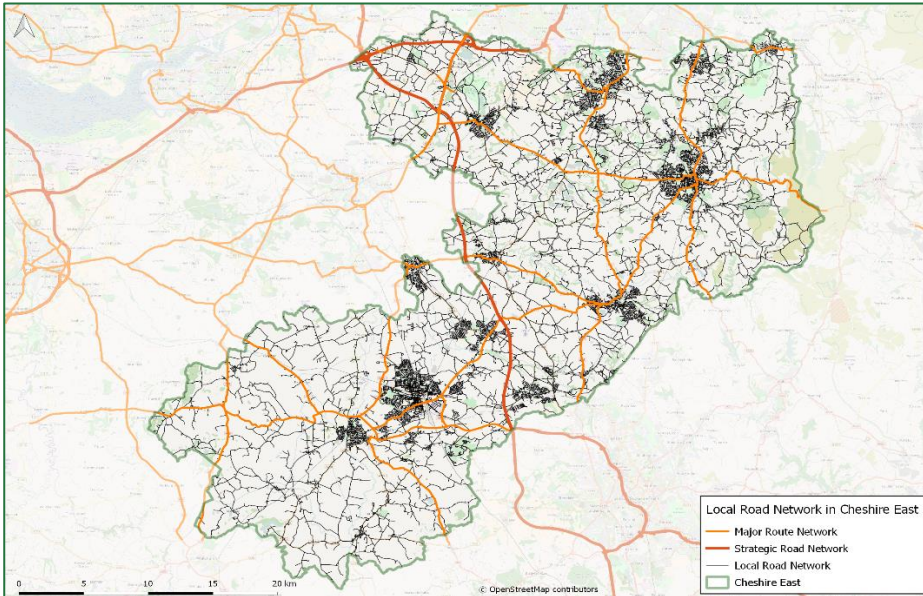Strategic road network in Cheshire East:
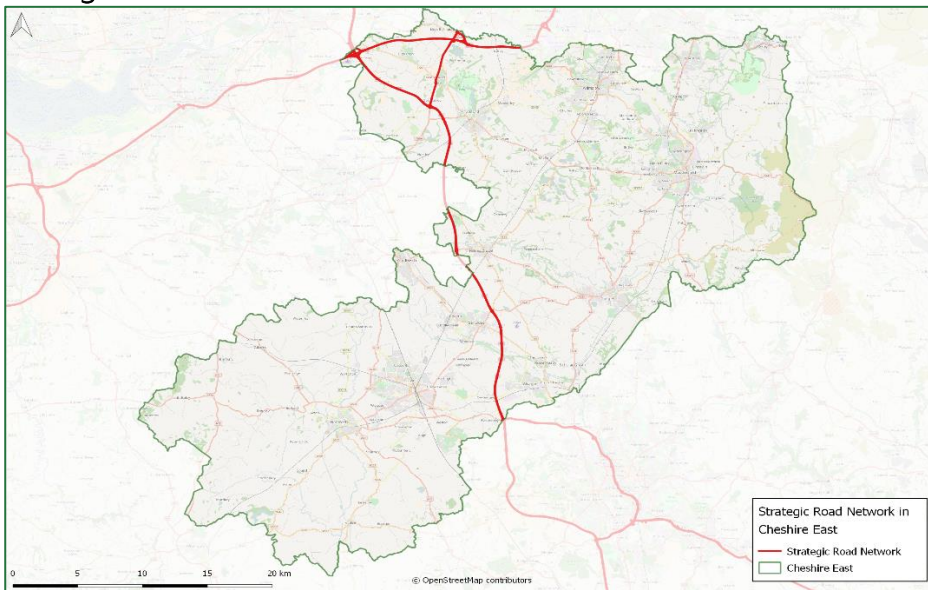
Major road network in Cheshire East:
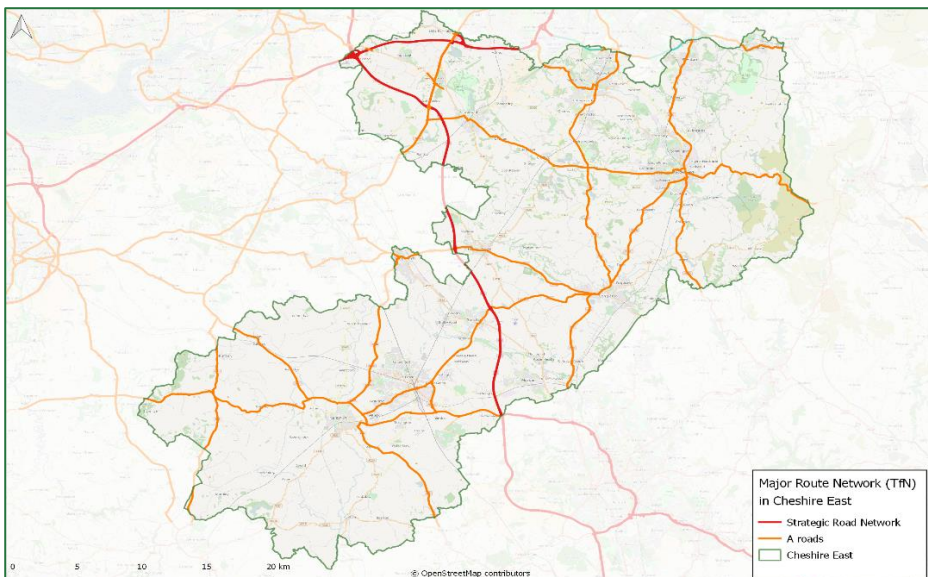
Local road network in Cheshire East:

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. Further to this, the Cheshire East Council Local Plan allocates a number of significant housing developments to all of the principal towns across the Borough which will generate further traffic demand. Whilst housing growth is an essential contribution to the continued development and growth of Cheshire East, road improvements are required to mitigate against any negative traffic outcomes of planned developments.

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 9.1 – 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 9.2 – We will work to improve the connectivity between the local and strategic road networks

9.1.2 Network Performance

In 2017, the average speed on local 'A' road across England was 25.2 mph[29] and 22.8 mph across the North West of England. By comparison, the average speed on local 'A' roads across Cheshire East was 28.3 mph, which is of a greater speed than both the North West and national average. While it is recognised that there may be a range of reasons affecting average road speeds, as a broad measure, this data indicates relatively favourable network conditions in the context of those across the UK.

However, a recent shift towards a change in commuter behaviour has resulted in prolonged periods of high traffic frequency as a result of increased car ownership and a change towards variable working patterns. There is a need for a behavioural change amongst residents and visitors in order to successfully reduce traffic levels in the long term. If a greater proportion of residents and visitors were to complete short journeys via sustainable travel modes, this would relieve pressure on the network leading to greater travel speeds as a result of reduced congestion levels. In this regard, the Council recognises the importance of integration between travel modes to assist in the integration of sustainable travel modes as the entirety of a short journey or as a section of a longer journey

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[29] DfT Travel Time Data (2018)

9.1.3 Pinch points and congestion

It is recognised that whilst the overall road network is operating relatively efficiently pinch points exist on the network where congestion levels are above average and therefore require intervention. In such areas, traffic congestion 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;
- Nantwich Road in Crewe;
- 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 9.3 – 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 9.4 – We will work to minimise the negative impacts of development on the highway network and seek suitable mitigation measures of all types where required

9.1.4 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 9.5 – 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

9.1.5 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 the refresh of SEMMMS which was originally published in 2001. This refresh is linked to delivery of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road which opened to traffic in October 2018. The SEMMMS refresh was required 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 the opening of the A6MARR, several schemes delivering improvements to the local and major road networks are either currently under construction or planned. These are detailed within the table below; the associated weblinks reflect up-to-date timescales of construction commencement and scheme opening dates:

Local and major road network schemes		Individual Highway Scheme Webpage
Crewe Green Roundabout	Redesign of the Crewe Green Roundabout	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/crewe-green-roundabout/crewe-green-roundabout.aspx
Sydney Road Bridge Improvement, Crewe	Replacement of the rail bridge by a bidirectional bridge	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/sydney-road-bridge-crewe/sydney-road-bridge-improvement.aspx
Middlewich Eastern Bypass	Bypass for Middlewich to relieve congestion	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/middlewich-eastern-bypass/middlewich-eastern-bypass.aspx
Congleton Link Road	Bypass for Congleton to relieve congestion	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/congleton_link_road/congleton_link_road.aspx
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.	http://www.semmms.info/semmms/a6marr-construction/
A500 Dualling, Crewe	Dualling of the A500 between M6 J16 and the A531 and B5472 at Mere Moss Roundabout	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/a500-dualling.aspx
Poynton Relief Road	Bypass for Poynton to reduce congestion and support growth	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/poynton_relief_road/poynton_relief_road.aspx
Southern Link Road Bridge, Crewe	A proposed new road bridge south of Crewe Station spanning over the railway between Weston Road and Gresty Road.	https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/roadworks/major-projects/southern-link-road-bridge-slrb/southern-link-road-bridge-slrb-access-options-consultation.aspx#

The majority of the above schemes align with those included within the Cheshire East Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IDP broadly identifies the infrastructure required to support the level and location of development growth envisaged within the Local Plan Strategy. As such, the above road improvement schemes can be considered as necessary infrastructure improvements to support planned development levels across the Borough. The TfN Transformational Programme (2019) also cites a number of major road schemes within Cheshire

East as 'specific interventions before 2027' including Poynton Relief Road and the A500 Dualling scheme. The Council will work in partnership with TfN to develop future major road schemes across the Borough.

The Council will aim for the delivery of major road schemes to be funded by developers to the greatest degree, as and where possible. For a number of the planned road schemes above, significant developer contributions have already been sought, including contributions towards Congleton Link Road and Poynton Relief Road.

Action 9.6 – 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 9.7 – We will seek effective delivery of identified major schemes on the local and major route networks

9.1.6 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. Since Electric Vehicles is a technological field which continues to rapidly evolve, it is expected that the purchase cost of these will decrease as the vehicle range expands, allowing electric vehicles to complete a longer distance journey on a single charge as battery technology becomes more advanced. This would increase the attractiveness of the technology and as such, offers a potential solution to improving air quality across the borough. In order for take-up to be significant, the necessary charging infrastructure and initiatives would need to be implemented.

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.

The Council will produce an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which will outline the ambition to increase electric charging infrastructure provision, and seek funding opportunities and initiatives which encourage the uptake of electric vehicle usage.

Action 9.8 - 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 9.9 – Encourage the private sector to invest in Electric Vehicle charger stations at petrol stations, supermarkets and new developments.

9.2   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[30].

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.
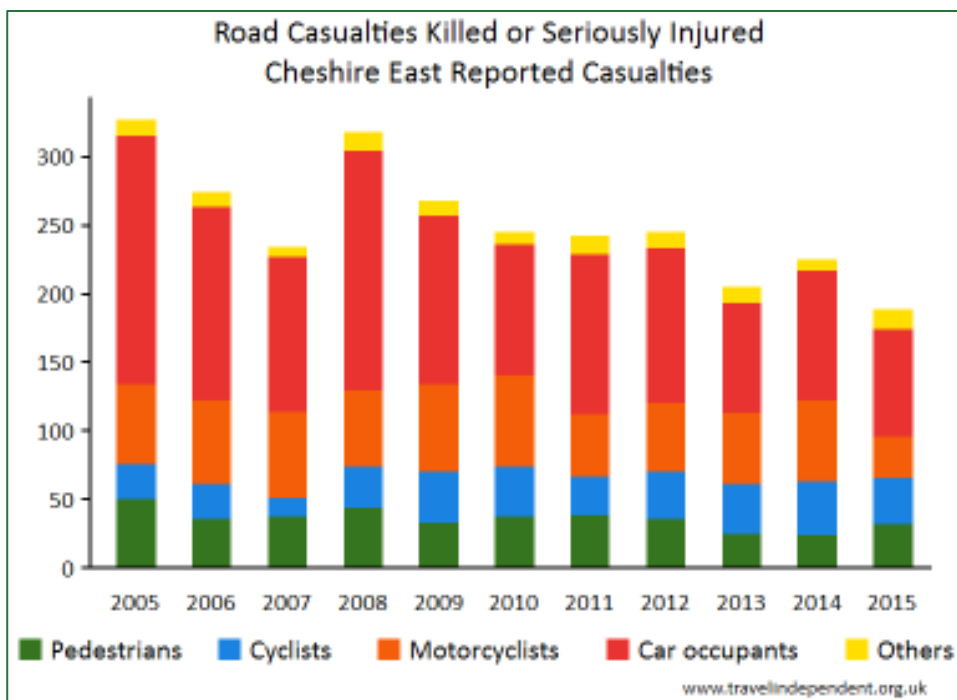
This is an issue the Council takes extremely seriously and it has invested in numerous road safety projects, including working with local and sub-regional partners including the Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue and other external organisations to provide education and training services to high risk groups (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

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

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. Care should be taken 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 9.10 – 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 9.11 - 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 9.12 - 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 9.13 – 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

9.3 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. Cheshire East Highways also maintains 1,900 km of footways, 1,700 bridges and structures, and over 600 km of cycle routes. 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.

The Council consulted on the Well Managed Highway Infrastructure (WMHI) in July-August 2018. The consultation sought to identify strategic infrastructure in the borough that may require inclusion in the 'resilient network'. The WMHI document promotes the adoption of an integrated asset management approach to the management of highway infrastructure based on prioritising local levels of service through risk-based assessment. This aims to prioritise maintenance activities on the network to deliver efficiency savings and more efficient outcomes from finite budgets.

9.3.1 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[31] (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.

The Council has a Network Management Plan which identifies challenges on the network, and sets out how we will manage and maintain our highway network so that it delivers an effective transport system. The coordination of Street Works is included within the Plan which is achieved through the West and Shires Permit Scheme, which requires an activity promoter to apply for a Permit in order to 'book road space'. The Council issue Permits with attached Conditions which seek the mitigate the impact of the activity on road users and other stakeholders. A Permit Scheme Evaluation Report is produced annually, with the 2015/16 report showing that the newly introduced Permit Scheme successfully reduced road occupancy by approximately 20% and less than 1% of works overrunning beyond the agreed planned end date.

The Cheshire East Programme of Highway Works 2018/19 aims to present a definitive programme for effective management of highway assets however this may be subject to change throughout the year due to unforeseen circumstances. Cheshire East Highways will notify residents, businesses and stakeholders affected by any road closure by carrying out a letter drop before works commence. The Council will update advance information boards and roadworks map with any changes in date for the roadworks.

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[31] 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 9.14 – We will continue to take an asset led approach to maintenance of our transport assets in an effort to achieve maximum value for money

9.3.2 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 9.15 – We will seek to ensure that the transport network is increasingly secure against extreme weather events and disruption

9.3.3 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 9.16 – We will introduce a permitting scheme with the aim of reducing the negative impact of utility and other works on highway function

Action 9.17 – We will seek provision of further functionality and continued development of the range of information on roadwork's and delays that is provided electronically

9.3.4 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. This can have a negative impact on both human health and sensitive habitats.

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)
A533 Middlewich Road,	Sandbach	NO_2 (Annual Limit)

Sandbach		
A5022/A534 Sandbach	Sandbach	NO_2 (Annual Limit)

Action 9.18 - 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 9.19 – We will support technological advances which reduce the environmental harm caused by vehicle use

9.4   Parking

9.4.1 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 parking can encourage car travel to areas which suffer unduly from congestion as well as causing other environmental and social issues.

9.4.2 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 have parking charges reflective of the length of stay.

In developing a 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 through making our towns attractive and supporting local economic growth.

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

It is important to ensure that the economic viability and vitality of our town centres is preserved, and 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 range 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 in areas where Park & Ride could be a convenient option.
- Commuters/workers require long stay parking 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.

The Council is also responsible for creating 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 will 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 would 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 Based Delivery Plans which the Council is developing and delivering. These are to be reflected in the proposed programme of work.

Wilmslow formed the first of the town Parking Strategies and a draft Wilmslow Parking Strategy was produced through a review of existing parking provision which allowed for potential measures and packages of improvements to be identified. The Strategy was published for public consultation in January 2019 followed by a consultation period, in which stakeholder feedback was gathered.

It is the intention for parking to be evaluated within other principal towns across Cheshire East, subject to funding availability. This aims to support the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and people who work in each town, and to ensure parking compliments other transport provision in each town.

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 successfulness 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:

- 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, and public transport. Travel Plans are also seen as a key element in reducing car usage by tackling different aspects of business transport.

Parking impacts on traffic flow and on-street parking can reduce the capacity of the road network. Provision of adequate, safe and 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. The Act requires local authorities 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 informed by 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 the 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 a review of parking within each town, 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

The need for efficient parking enforcement is fundamental to any Parking Strategy, 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 follow 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 unlawful or inconsiderate parking is dangerous.
- Taking action where emergency vehicles are prevented from travelling along a road

- Taking action where spaces intended for disabled users only are used by non-disabled users.
- 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 poor and dangerous parking, utilising our respective powers promptly, efficiently and in concert.

Local Parking Standards

The adopted Cheshire East Local Plan Strategy 2010-2030 (Appendix C) 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 appropriate 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 whether 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 environmental 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 with 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 demand grows, and assess whether 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, including a review of 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, creates 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 it is recommended these are made available where requested.

Contract Permits – Off-Street Car Parks

It is proposed that contract permits will be car park specific (currently, some permits 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 Parking Strategy recommends that national disabled parking standards for car parks and all new developments are applied across the borough.
- The Parking 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, since Snow Hill car park in Nantwich is currently the only car park facilitating such spaces.

9.4.3   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. 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, and 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 streets.

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 borough's 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 on other road users and the damage it can cause.

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

9.4.4   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 Strategy identifies 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 9.21 – We will continue to seek to minimise the adverse impacts of parking at the school gates

9.5   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 9.22 – We will implement improved car parking and cycle parking at bus and railway stations across the Borough where the opportunity exists

Action 9.23 – We will promote development which facilitates travel by a variety of transport modes

10.1 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 objectives 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.

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

10.2 Borough wide actions

This strategy identifies the Borough wide challenges, objectives and actions in relation to transport. As outlined previously, it will be supplemented by eleven Town Delivery Plans in phase 2 of the LTP 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
4.1	We will work with the LEP and other bodies e.g. TfN to agree sub-regional transport priorities
4.2	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
4.3	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.
4.4	We will seek to ensure that development delivered in line with the Local Plan is accessible by different transport modes
4.5	We will support activities which reduce the carbon intensity and resilience of our transport system.
4.6	We will review and update our Local Air Quality Strategy
4.7	We will support the delivery of green and blue infrastructure improvements
4.8	We will support increased levels of active transport, including through delivery of the Cycle Strategy
4.9	We will deliver our Highway Asset Management Strategy
4.10	We will work closely with partners to support maintenance of transport infrastructure which falls outside our remit
4.11	We will deliver a major infrastructure investment programme
4.12	We will support investment in quality of place supporting the creation of high quality town centres

Active and smarter travel	
No.	Action
5.1	We will continue to promote smarter choices as a means of supporting leisure, commuter and business journeys to be made in more sustainable ways
5.2	We will continue to support employers, schools and other trip generators to develop, implement and monitor effective travel plans
5.3	We will support children and young people to access schools and educations sites via sustainable modes wherever possible. Our approach to this has been identified in our Sustainable Modes of Travel to School Strategy
5.4	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
5.5	We will connect existing parts of the pedestrian network, close gaps and address safety concerns at identified hotspots
5.6	We will continue to maintain and improve the existing cycling infrastructure and develop a network of strategic high quality cycle routes connecting the Borough
5.7	We will support the delivery of improved walking and cycling infrastructure as part of the delivery of other major transport schemes
5.8	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
5.9	We will seek to ensure that developments are planned in a sustainable way through the inclusion of active travel facilities and linkages
5.10	We will maintain, improve and promote the paths available for leisure use, including horse riding
5.11	We will seek to ensure that the publically accessible highway and transport network supports accessibility for all and does not exclude anyone
5.12	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
5.13	We will facilitate the use of walking and cycling to access leisure destinations and for leisure trips
5.14	We will seek external funding from all sources to support active and sustainable travel interventions
5.15	We will seek opportunities to reallocate road space to pedestrian and cycling uses

Bus	
No.	Action
6.1	We will support socially-necessary bus services where possible within budgetary constraints.
6.2	We will consistently review the supported bus service provision to provide as wider coverage as possible to meet the needs of users whilst operating within budgetary constraints.
6.3	We will look to draw closer ties with Bus User Groups (BUGs), including agreeing a memorandum of agreement.
6.4	We will look to maximise the availability and usage of the flexible transport service (Flexilink) within the budget available.
6.5	We will maximise opportunities to work with and alongside our communities to encourage community led transport initiatives.
6.6	We will continue to work alongside neighbouring authorities to ensure cross boundary services with Cheshire East operate effectively
6.7	We will work with the development planning process to provide bus accessibility for new developments, seeking to establish commercially operated services through securing developer contributions to support initial operation of bus services.
6.8	We will work alongside Stockport Council and Transport for Greater Manchester to examine the feasibility of developing of Bus Rapid Transit system in the north of Cheshire East.
6.9	We will work to ensure that Crewe bus station is delivered.
6.10	We plan to ensure that bus services are integrated with HS2 connections.

Rail	
No.	Action
7.1	We will lobby for investment in rail infrastructure where it will unlock opportunities for improved rail services within the Borough
7.2	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
7.3	We will work to support additional rail services in the Borough where they will bring most benefit
7.4	We will work with partners to renew and improve rail stations and facilities, including at Macclesfield
7.4	We will work to achieve maximum Borough wide benefit from HS2 whilst achieving mitigation measures to minimise negative impacts on residents

Rail	
7.5	We will use HS2 as an opportunity to drive substantial investment and improvement in Crewe, including through the development of the Crewe Masterplan
7.6	We will work to ensure that HS2 does not detrimentally impact conventional services linking to the Borough
7.7	We will support delivery of Growth Track 360
7.8	We will work with partners with the aim of reopening the Northwich to Sandbach rail line to passenger traffic
7.9	We will work with partners with the aim of double tracking the section of line between Crewe and Alsager
7.10	We will promote rail freight as a more sustainable method of haulage except in instances where here are conflicts with passenger services
7.11	We will promote rail freight as a more sustainable method of haulage except in instances where there are conflicts with passenger services

Public transport information and ticketing	
No.	Action
8.1	We will work with partners to improve information around bus services and ticketing, including supporting a move to smart ticketing where appropriate
8.2	We will work with partners to improve information at interchange facilities
8.3	We will promote well maintained and accessible interchange facilities which feel safe to use day or night
8.4	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
9.1	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
9.2	We will work to improve the connectivity between the local and strategic road networks
9.3	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
9.4	We will work to minimise the negative impacts of development on the highway network and seek suitable mitigation measures of all types where required

Roads	
9.5	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
9.6	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
9.7	We will seek effective delivery of identified major schemes on the local and major route networks
9.8	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.
9.9	Encourage the private sector to invest in Electric Vehicle charger stations at petrol stations, supermarkets and new developments.
9.10	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
9.11	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
9.12	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
9.13	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
9.14	We will continue to take an asset led approach to maintenance of our transport assets in an effort to achieve maximum value for money
9.15	We will seek to ensure that the transport network is increasingly secure against extreme weather events and disruption
9.16	We will introduce a permitting scheme with the aim of reducing the negative impact of utility and other works on highway function
9.17	We will seek provision of further functionality and continued development of the range of information on roadwork's and delays that is provided electronically
9.18	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
9.19	We will support technological advances which reduce the environmental harm caused by vehicle use
9.20	We will produce town parking studies for the two principal towns and nine key service centres across the Borough

| Roads	
9.21	We will continue to seek to minimise the adverse impacts of parking at the school gates
9.22	We will implement improved car parking and cycle parking at bus and railway stations across the Borough where the opportunity exists
9.23	We will promote development which facilitates travel by a variety of transport modes

11.1 Town Delivery Plan Process

Phase 2 of the Local Transport Plan will focus on how the issues and opportunities identified in the Boroughwide strategy relate to specific areas within the Borough in the form of Town Delivery Plans. The Town Delivery Plans will set out specific schemes and interventions to improve the transport network in line with the issues and opportunities identified in this Boroughwide strategy.

The Town Delivery Plans will also consider 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 outlined below 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:

- Principal Towns
  - Crewe, and
  - Macclesfield.

- Key Service Centres
  - Alsager,
  - Congleton,
  - Handforth,
  - Knutsford,
  - Middlewich,
  - Nantwich,
  - Poynton,
  - Sandbach, and
  - Wilmslow.

Travel to Work Data (Census, 2011)
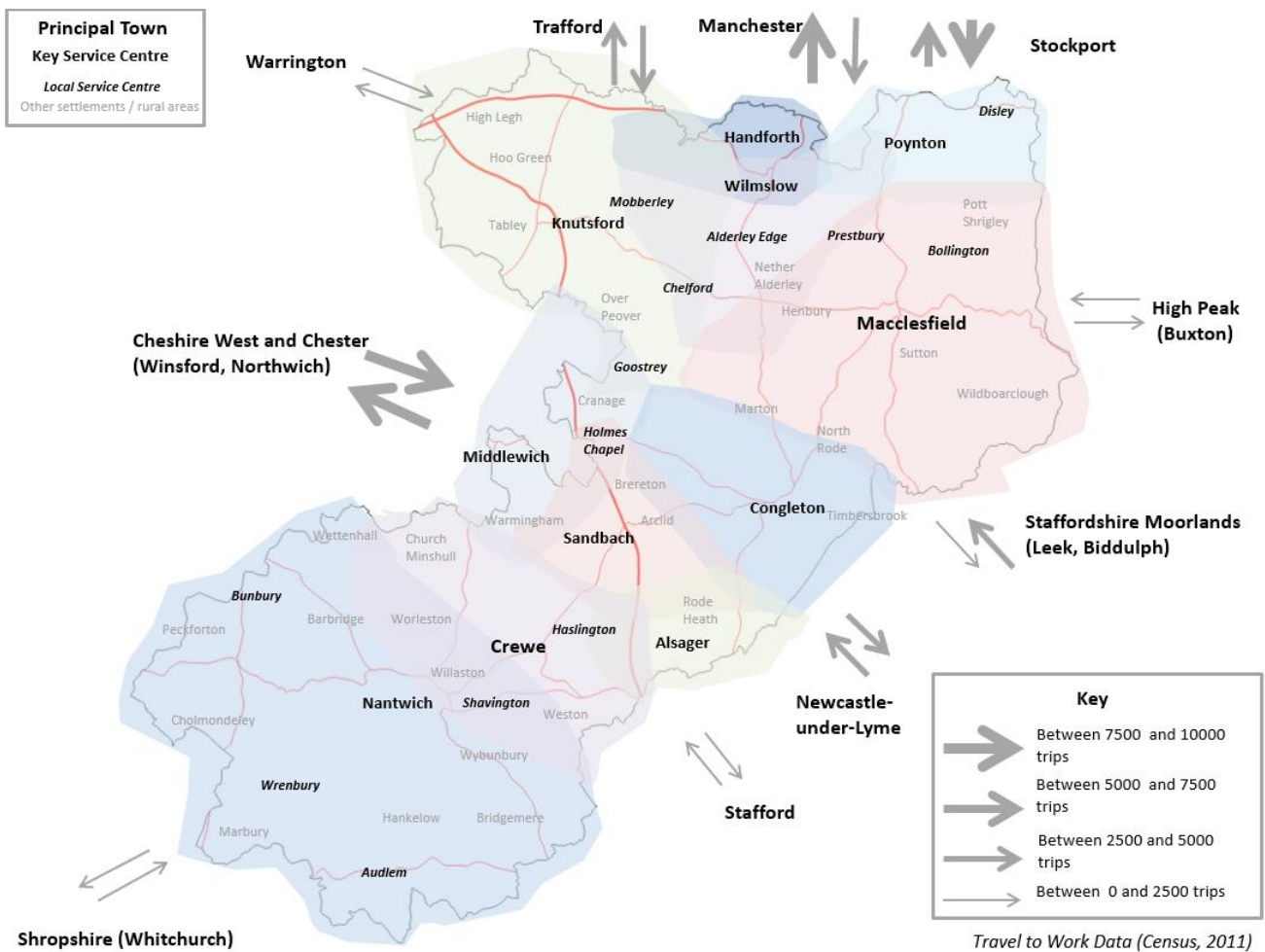
Following on from the LTP borough-wide strategy, the process for development of the Town Delivery Plans is outlined below:

1. **Generate options to resolve challenges**: through examination of the evidence base and detailed stakeholder engagement, including meetings with Town and Parish Councils options will be identified.

2. **Appraisal of options**: the feasible policy options will be appraised and their likely effects predicted through stakeholder workshops, policy refinement and filtering.

3. **Select preferred options**: the strongest set of preferred policy options and priorities will be identified as influenced by stakeholder input workshops, the evidence base and emerging draft strategy consultation feedback.

4. **Strategy delivery**: the preparation of an Implementation Plan which identifies priorities and delivery phasing.