

Cheshire West and Chester Council

Local Transport Plan

Summary 2011 - 2026

Steve Kent Director of Community and Environment



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For full details about our transport strategy and its supporting documents please visit the Council website (cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) and search for **Local Transport Plan.**

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Foreword



Welcome to Cheshire West and Chester Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP). We've written down what we're proposing for our highways and transport facilities so that you know what our priorities are for the years to come. After all, you have helped us to identify what is important and required to make a difference in Cheshire West and Chester.

Our area is both diverse and unique in character and this has meant that our new transport plan has been prepared to respond to a wide range of issues. We wanted your local views and concerns to be the thing that shaped our work in preparing this new Plan. You have told us loud and clear that you want our roads and bridges to be well maintained; that congestion is reduced in our town centres and on our main roads; that commuter links to neighbouring areas be improved and that local bus services take people where they want to go, at times that are convenient to the passenger. You want to see improvements to road safety and reductions in the number of casualties on our roads and to see more encouragement in the use of sustainable types of transport like walking and cycling.

How we get from A to B affects each and every one of us. So we have spoken to partner organisations and stakeholders to get their thoughts and views on our direction of travel for our new transport plan. In taking this broad approach, the goals that have emerged take into account our local aspirations as well as the Government's national priorities for transport, not least supporting the economy and addressing climate change. Listening to your opinions and what is important to you locally, our top priority for action will be to manage a well maintained and efficient transport network and we are committed to improving the overall condition of our roads and reversing the decline of the network.

The next few years will be challenging as we work to deliver our shared priorities. The economic downturn and the reduction in government spending means that we may have less money available to spend on transport than we have in the past. We will need to make every pound count, making the best possible use of our existing transport networks and investing in low cost measures that can have the highest impact. We will look to innovate where we can, to bring forward new transport services in new ways with new partners. Our investment will be focussed where it can make the biggest difference for all, not least by improving the condition of our roads. It is important to us that over the lifetime of this plan that you helped us create, that we are able to show you how we are making a difference and providing you with the best value for money services.

The Council has committed to deliver a wide social, economic and environmental agenda to its residents, businesses and all who live, work and visit here. To deliver on these priorities, we must deliver our goal of providing and managing a well maintained, safe, integrated and sustainable transport network for today, tomorrow and beyond. Our approach to transport underpins our approach to localism and delivers on our local aspirations to improve our local neighbourhoods, address inequalities, improve health and wellbeing, enhance our local environment and improve our safety.

This plan provides the basis to turn our shared vision into a shared reality.

Councillor Mike Jones
Leader of the Council

Councillor Lynn Riley
Executive Member for Community and Environment



2. West Cheshire's new Local Transport Plan

Transport is an issue for everybody. It is a key factor in helping to support economic growth and regeneration, improving links to jobs and everyday services, improving the environment, addressing climate change, and helping to tackle poverty. The opportunities available to people in how, when and where they travel have a major impact on transport patterns as well as our wider quality of life.

This summary provides details of Cheshire West and Chester Council's plans for improving local transport over the next fifteen years which have been prepared as part of our new Local Transport Plan (LTP). This includes our longer term strategy for transport in the Borough as well as a shorter term implementation plan which contains our future spending programme.



Details about how to obtain a copy of the full LTP can be found on the back cover of this summary.



3. Understanding local concerns and issues

Listening to local views and sharing ideas with our partners has been an important part of our work to prepare the new LTP. Consultation exercises have also helped us to understand the overall level of support for our proposals and plans.

The need to maintain our roads and footpaths to an acceptable standard was seen as the top priority for action by our residents. There was also strong support for steps to help boost the local economy while, at the same time, people recognised that transport must help to reduce problems associated with climate change.

Other priorities identified included:

- Ensuring that our roads and bridges are well maintained and tackling the current maintenance backlog;
- Dealing with increased levels of traffic congestion;
- Improving local bus services and providing a more joined up approach to how buses operate;
- Improving transport links to jobs and services, especially for those without access to a car;
- Encouraging the use of greener and more sustainable types of transport;
- Championing more healthy and active types of transport such as cycling and walking;
- Improving air quality and the environment;
- Improving safety and reducing the number of casualties on our roads;
- Assessing how transport can support economic growth, regeneration and new development;
- Improving commuter links to neighbouring areas, particularly Merseyside, Manchester, North East Wales and Warrington; and
- Responding to the mobility needs of older and disabled people.





4. Our transport vision and goals

Our vision for the future is set out in our Sustainable Community Strategy. By 2026 West Cheshire will be even more prosperous and attractive; a really great place to live, work, learn and visit. The Borough will play a full role in the region and beyond, fulfilling our challenging responsibilities and enabling our residents to benefit from the opportunities in the twenty first century.

Our new LTP sets out how we can work towards meeting this vision. To help achieve this, we have set the following goals and objectives.

1. Provide and develop reliable and efficient transport networks which support sustainable economic growth in West Cheshire and the surrounding area.



This includes plans to:

- Reduce traffic congestion problems;
- Develop transport schemes that help support the local economy;
- Support the delivery of new developments and housing while limiting the impact of additional traffic; and
- Improve links between West Cheshire and surrounding areas particularly to Merseyside, Greater Manchester, North East Wales and to local airports.



2. Reduce carbon emissions from transport and take steps to adapt our transport networks to the effects of climate change.

This includes plans to:

- Improve and encourage the use of sustainable (low carbon) transport;
- Promote the use of new technology and alternative fuels to reduce carbon emissions from transport;
- Ensure that new development takes place in accessible locations which minimise the need for travel; and
- Ensure that local transport networks are resistant and adaptable to the impacts of climate change, including adverse weather conditions.

3. Manage a well maintained transport network.

This includes plans to:

- Improve the condition of the highway network;
- Reduce the maintenance backlog;
- Maintain the highway network in a safe and serviceable condition for the use of vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, equestrians and all other road users; and
- Ensure that the highway is kept in an acceptable condition environmentally.

4. Contribute to safer and secure transport in West Cheshire and to promote types of transport which are beneficial to health.

This includes plans to:

- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads;
- Encourage healthier lifestyles by promoting more active forms of transport such as cycling and walking;
- Reduce transport related air quality problems in the Borough;
- Ensure that new transport schemes improve public safety and help reduce fear of crime; and
- Plan for and respond to incidents which may have a significant impact on the transport network.

5. Improve accessibility to jobs and key services which help support greater equality of opportunity.

This includes plans to:

- Ensure that new developments and local services are built in accessible locations;
- Work to improve transport links to employment and training opportunities, to key services from rural areas, and to health services; and
- Improve physical accessibility by removing barriers to mobility especially for disabled and older people.



6. Ensure that transport helps improve quality of life and enhances the local environment in West Cheshire.

This includes plans to:

- Ensure that new transport schemes complement local character and enhance the built and natural environment and biodiversity;
- Promote access to leisure activities by improving pedestrian, cycle, greenway and Public Rights of Way networks; and
- Work to reduce noise levels that arise from transport.







5. Delivering our proposals

Our new LTP includes an implementation plan that sets out our spending plans and proposals for the first four years of our new transport strategy.

Funding includes:

- £34.4 million of Government funding for transport improvements to be spent between 2011/12 and 2014/15. The majority of this will be spent on highway maintenance activities;
- An extra £1.4 million from the Government to be spent in 2011/12 on fixing potholes caused by last winter's ice and snow;
- £13.5 million of the Council's own Capital Vision funding to be spent between 2011/12 and 2013/14 to deliver the Highways Asset Recovery Plan;
- £4.5 million of Council funding for additional highway maintenance projects over the next three years;
- During 2011/12 the Council will also be spending some £39 million to fund routine maintenance, local bus services, street lighting, school transport and community transport schemes.



We must be realistic and recognise that the money we have available to spend will be lower than in previous years. This will be a particular challenge for us during the early years of this strategy. With this in mind we will:

- Make the best use of our existing transport networks and infrastructure;
- Deliver more low cost / high impact schemes including projects to encourage greener travel such as walking, cycling and car sharing;
- Make sure that our spending is informed by local views, effective prioritisation and the importance of demonstrating overall value for money;
- Work with partners to help combine budgets and deliver projects which meet shared goals;
- Invite contributions from local communities to support the delivery of local priorities;
- Seek to make further efficiencies in the way we work through the integration of activities with our partners and neighbouring councils; and
- Seek bids to obtain additional national funding for our transport priorities by making successful bids to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Regional Growth Fund, as well as securing funding for transport improvements as a result of new developments.



This will be spent on:

- An extensive programme of highway and bridge maintenance to deliver the Council's Highways Asset Recovery Plan;
- A series of Borough wide projects including schemes for improving safety, public transport, tackling congestion, increasing cycling and walking, improving air quality and work to support regeneration projects; and
- A programme of local area based improvement schemes to meet locally determined priorities.

6. Looking to the future

Emerging issues which may impact on the plan in the years to come include:

- **The economy** – The current recession has had a major impact on business confidence and unemployment rates. It will be important to make sure that new transport projects help to support economic growth and improve links to jobs and training opportunities including improving connections to neighbouring areas.
- **Reduced public spending** – An outcome of the economic down-turn is the Government's priority to reduce the economic deficit and manage the Country's debt. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in public spending including a reduction in the amount of money that Councils receive from the Government to spend on transport. This means that maximising efficiencies and securing best value for money will be at the heart of our spending plans
- **Climate change** – It is understood that some degree of climate change is unavoidable as past carbon emissions will continue to influence the climate for at least several decades to come. How we respond to this challenge is likely to have an increasing impact on how we travel in the future.
- **Localism** – The Coalition Government wishes to return power to local communities and create the "Big Society". Central to this is the idea that local people will be given greater involvement in how local priorities are determined and how services are delivered. This could have a significant impact on how local transport budgets are determined and spent in the future.
- **Rising fuel costs** – The cost of petrol and oil in the UK has increased in real terms by 20% over the last 12 years and there is a high probability that fuel prices will continue to rise over the next fifteen years. This could act to limit car use and encourage people to make use of alternative, more sustainable types of transport. It could also see a gradual move towards the use of alternative fuels such as hybrid, electric or hydrogen fuel cell powered vehicles.
- **New technology** - There is every expectation that the use of IT and new technology will continue to grow over the lifetime of our new transport strategy. It is expected that ever increasing levels of internet shopping and home and flexible working will continue to impact on traditional ways of working, shopping and travelling.

As a result, it will be important that our transport strategy is kept under review and is revised and updated at regular intervals to respond to emerging issues and challenges.

We will also monitor and review our overall performance and progress towards delivering our transport priorities. Outcomes and achievement will be published at regular intervals over the lifetime of this strategy.

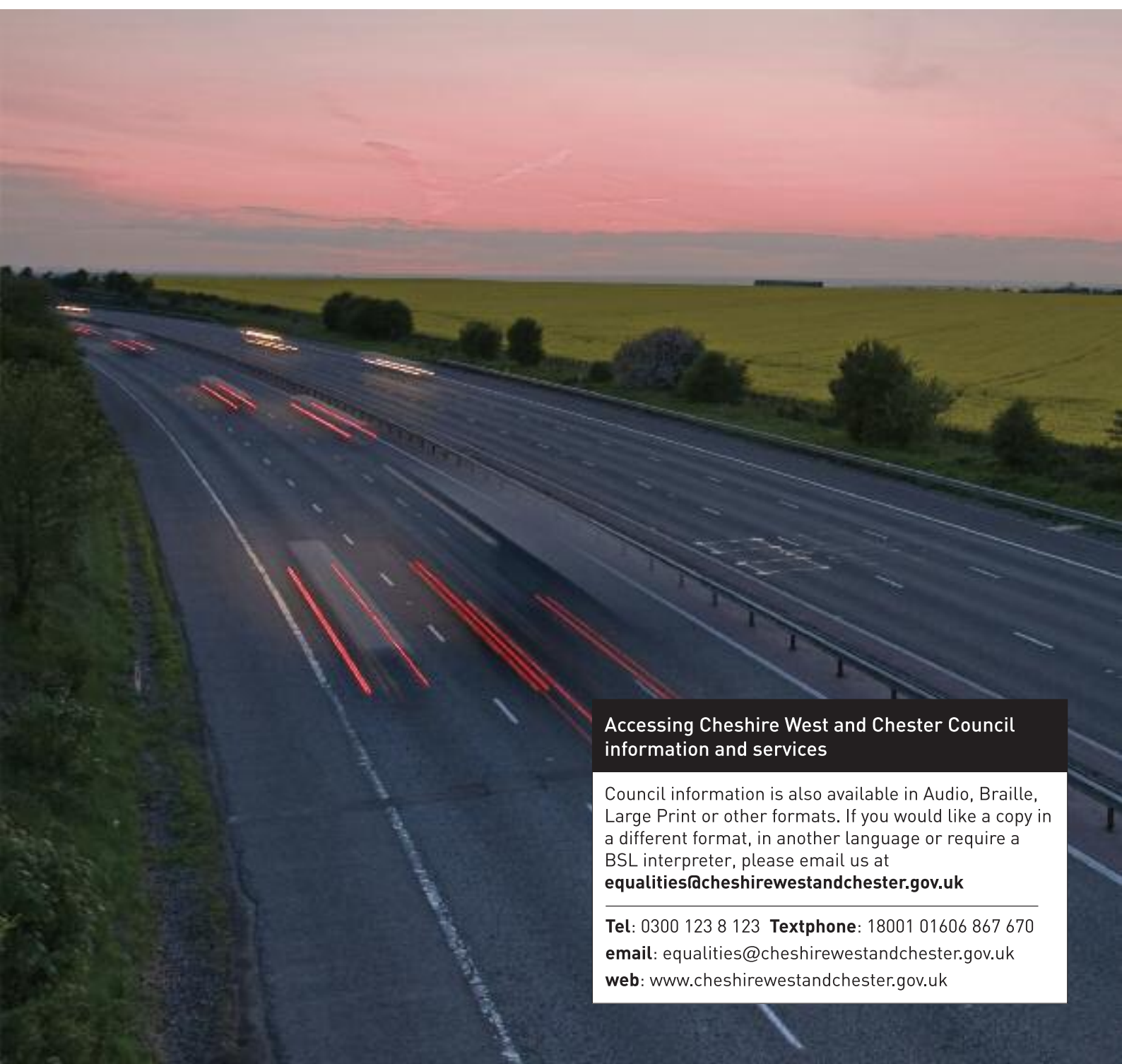


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