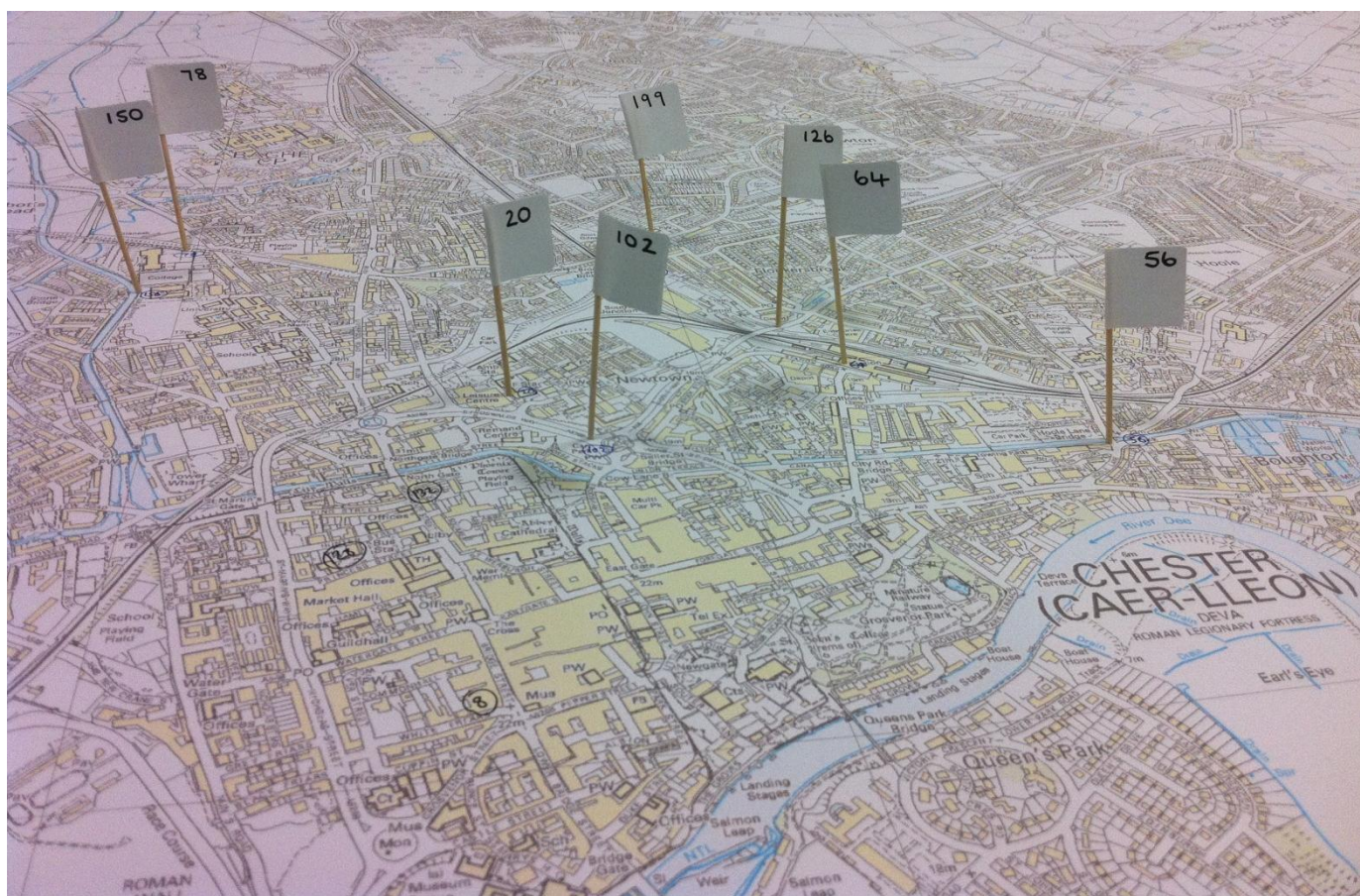


Chester Transport Strategy – Consultation Report



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Chester Transport Strategy – Consultation Report

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1 Introduction

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

As part of the development of the Chester Transport Strategy (CTS), AECOM was commissioned by Cheshire West & Chester Council (CWaC) to assist in facilitating and delivering the supporting consultation process. The strategy needed to address the specific needs of the city's historic core, the wider transport needs of the city and the needs of long distance commuters.

To ensure all parties affected by the Transport Strategy were engaged in the process, a variety of consultation methods were used. Feedback forms specific to the CTS were issued to the public and local organisations. A number of public consultation events were held to allow all stakeholders an opportunity to discuss each of the proposed schemes and voice any concerns or suggest alternatives. Written responses from the public consultation were also encouraged and reviewed with the other responses.

1.2 Structure of the Report

Following this introduction, the report is divided into a further three sections:

- **Section 2** provides an overview of the three consultation methods: Feedback Forms, Stakeholder and Public Consultation Events and Written/Email Communication;
- **Section 3** provides a summary of the consultation responses, by scheme/package as presented in the 'Options & Assessment Report' and the 'Emerging Transport Strategy: Scheme Profomas' document; and
- **Section 4** reviews the entire consultation process. Each scheme is listed with its preference scoring, from the feedback forms. Any potential scheme refinements are considered and key issues to be resolved are noted for each proposed scheme.

2 Overview of Consultation Methods

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2 Overview of Consultation Methods

This section outlines the core consultation activity undertaken during Autumn 2013.

2.1 Stakeholder Events and Public Consultation Events

2.1.1 Events facilitated or attended by AECOM

A series of consultation events, facilitated or attended by AECOM, took place in September and October 2013. These were advertised on the CTS website and promoted using press releases along with the Council's Facebook and Twitter accounts. In addition stakeholders, partners and other potential interested parties were alerted about the consultation using e-mails. This included contacts from previous engagement exercise, Chester Renaissance business contacts, passenger transport operators, taxis operators, local schools, the Youth Parliament and University of Chester.

In chronological order, these events were as follows:

- **Local Member Briefing: Wednesday 4th September 2013**

This briefing was well attended by six local members including members of the governing Conservative Party and the Labour opposition. At the session, the full presentation for the consultation was delivered and questions were taken.

- **Transport Strategy / Local Plan Joint Public Drop-In: Tuesday 10th September 2013**

The first drop-in session (combines with the One City Plan drop-in session on the same day), ran from 10:30-18:30 at Chester Town Hall and was a shared event with the Local Plan Team. The event, advertised through a Press Release and existing Chester Renaissance mechanisms, was extremely well attended throughout the day. In general, members of the public were extremely supportive and complimentary of the proposals.

- **Transport Strategy / Superfast Broadband Joint Business Breakfast: Thursday 12th September 2013**

A business breakfast event was held at the Riverside Innovation Centre, Chester on 12th September between 08:00 and 10:00. The consultation presentation, introduced by Councillor Mike Jones, was delivered and a Question & Answer session followed. The event was attended by approximately 20 people and included representation from numerous companies/organisations, including Chester Zoo, Countess of Chester Hospital, Marketing Cheshire, University of Chester, Stagecoach and Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE).

- **North East Wales / Mersey Dee Alliance Meeting: Thursday 12th September 2013**

This session was attended by representatives from Taith (Iwan Prys-Jones & Michael Whittaker), Flintshire County Council (Kevin Sutton) and the Mersey Dee Alliance (Fil Prevci). At the session, the full presentation for the consultation was delivered informally before a general discussion on the key issues and proposals.

- **Weekend Public Drop-In: Saturday 14th September 2013**

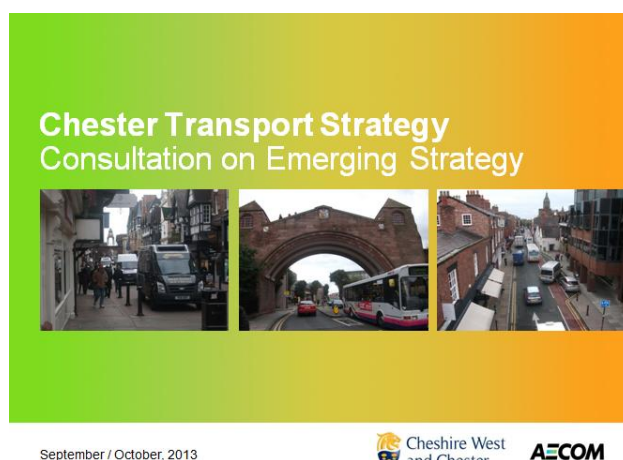
The second drop-in session was significantly less well attended than the first, and the majority of comments from the first half of the session were equivalent to the previous drop-in.

- **Full Member Briefing: Tuesday 17th September 2013**

Since many of the Council Members directly affected by the strategy had been previously briefed, this was envisaged as a mop-up session for other Councillors across the authority. Consequently the event was only attended by Councillors from Ledsham and Manor Ward & Hoole.

- **Local Residents Groups Briefing: Tuesday 1st October 2013**

A briefing was held on the evening of Tuesday 1st October 2013 for local residents groups and campaigns within the Chester area. The event was well attended by representatives of the Handbridge Residents Council White Friars Residents Association, King Street Residents' Association, as well as Chester



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Cathedral and Chester University. The event was introduced with the Consultation presentation, followed by a question and answer session and subsequent informal consultation.

- ***Northgate Street Traders Association: Tuesday 1st October 2013***

Following the Residents Groups session, a private briefing was held for the Northgate Street Traders Association. The same presentation was delivered and a question and answer session undertaken. The event wasn't particularly well attended as it was understood that the 17:30 start was not convenient for many of the traders.

2.1.2 Additional Events

In addition to the events above, the CWaC Project Managers (Jamie Matthews and Dave Thomas) have also attended a series of consultation events across the borough. In chronological order, these included:

- Local Member Pre Consultation Briefing, Wednesday 4th September;
- Chester Renaissance Marketing and Transport Group, Thursday 5th September;
- Labour Group Briefing, Monday 9th September;
- Upton, Hoole and Newton Local Community Forum (LCF), Monday 23rd September;
- Corporate Disability Action Forum, Tuesday 24th September;
- Chester Cathedral, Wednesday 2nd October;
- Chester University, Wednesday 2nd October;
- City LCF, Wednesday 2nd October;
- Chester Access Action Group, Thursday 3rd October;
- Lache LCF, Monday 7th October;
- Hoole Test Bed, Wednesday 9th October;
- Chester Civic Trust, Thursday 10th October;
- King Street Residents Association, Monday 14th October;
- Chris Morland (Northgate Development) and Graham Lister (Theatre Project Manager), Tuesday 15th October;
and
- Grosvenor Hotel, Wednesday 16th October and Wednesday 30th October.

2.2 Feedback Forms

As part of the consultation process for the Chester Transport Strategy (CTS), a Feedback Form was designed for people to rate the priority level for each scheme and give their comments.

In order to facilitate comment / feedback, each scheme was allocated a scheme reference, as per **Table 2.1**.

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Table 2.1: CTS Scheme Reference

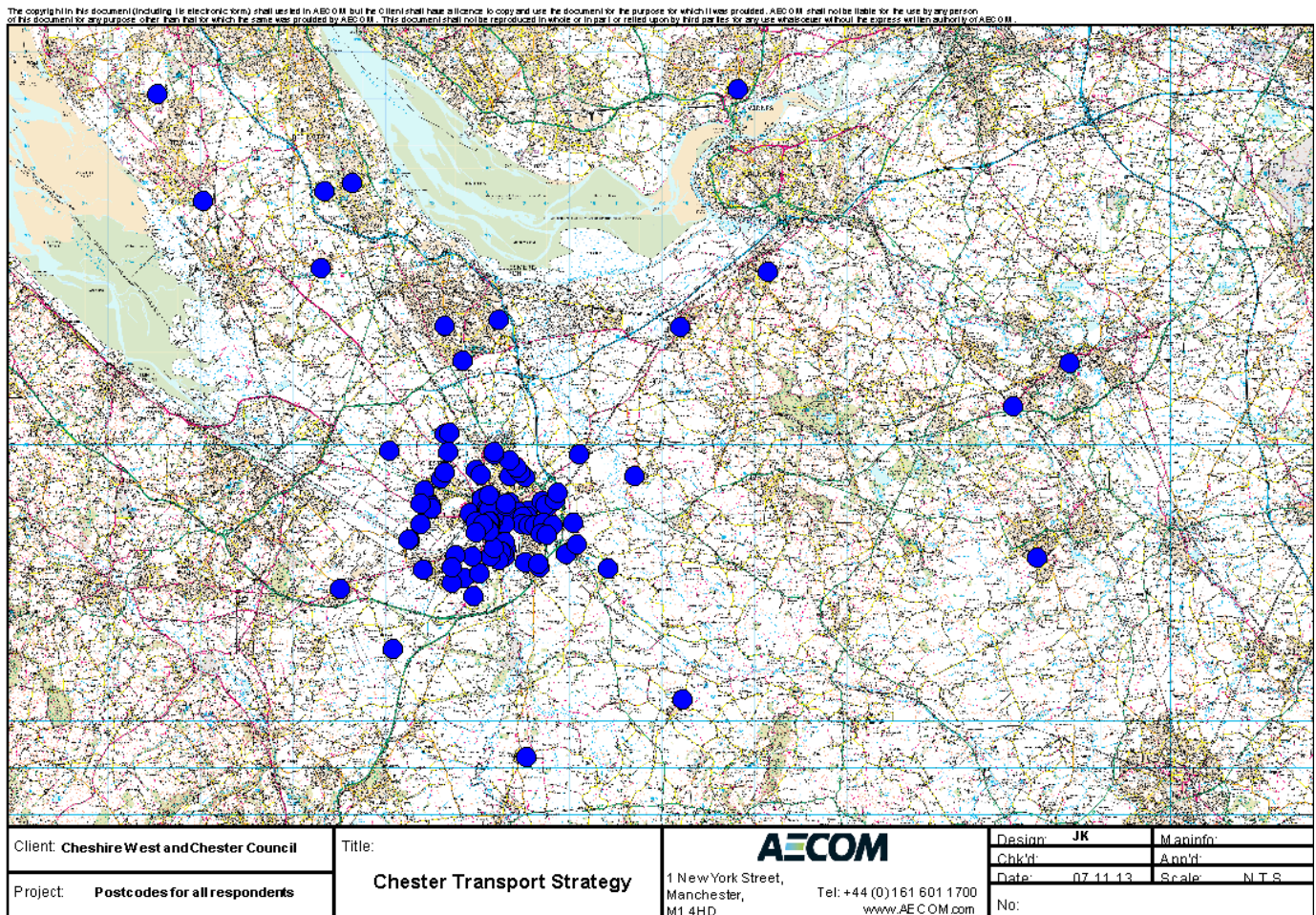
No.	Scheme	No.	Scheme
01	Traffic management and public realm enhancements at Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street / Town Hall Square.	15	Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit.
02	Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements.	16	Travel Planning Package, incorporating workplaces, schools and residential areas.
03	Public realm and traffic reduction on St. John Street / Vicars Lane to improve links between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre / Groves.	17	SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing.
04	Enhanced parking and shopmobility facilities for persons with mobility impairments.	18	Enhanced Cycle Priority: Chester to Sealand, Broughton and Wrexham.
05	The Bars Pedestrian / Cycle accessibility improvements.	19	Bus Service Improvements.
06	Northgate Junction Area Improvements.	20	Enhanced station facilities and interchange opportunities.
07	Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities.	21	New Park & Ride at Hoole Road.
08	City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements.	22	Cross Border Connectivity.
09	Active Traffic Management including enhancements to Variable Messages Signs and Urban Traffic Control.	23	Chester Western Relief Road.
10	Chester Parking Strategy.	24	Rail Electrification / Modernisation.
11	Junction improvements to tackle congestion at key pinch points - linked to emerging housing and development proposals.	25	New Park & Ride rail stations at North Wrexham, Queensferry and Daresbury.
12	Race / events / matchday sustainable access from the City Centre.	26	Rail Service Enhancements.
13	Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre.	27	Halton Curve Reinstatement.
14	Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton.	28	Smarter Choices Package encouraging modal shift towards sustainable modes.

In summary:

- 182 respondents completed the feedback form, including the Handbridge Residents Council, Chester Licensed Hackney Association, Pubwatch, Amber Lounge, Chester Civic Trust, Northgate Quarter Association, Post Office, Handel's Court Gallery and Cheshire West Older People's Network.
- Thirty one respondents completed the form on behalf of an organisation; 16 were private sector organisations, 8 were from the public sector and 7 were voluntary/community groups.
- More than half (53%) of the respondents were male and a third (34%) were aged 65 or over.
- Seventeen percent (n=30) of respondents considered themselves to be a disabled person; 18 respondents had a physical impairment that caused mobility issues and 11 had a long-standing illness or health condition.
- Of the 182 respondents, 171 provided their postcode. From this, it was found that 90% of respondents were from the immediate Chester area (postcodes CH1 to CH5), 5% were from North Cheshire (postcodes CH60 to CH66), 2% were from the Crewe area, 2% were from the Warrington area and 1% were from the Liverpool area.

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Figure 2.1: Location of Respondents



The key trends from the Feedback Form have been identified in Section Three in the summary of consultation responses by scheme. However, detailed charts with these results can be found in **Appendix A**.

2.3 Written and e-mail Communication

Throughout the September/October consultation period, a freepost address was provided for communication from individuals and organisations about CTS. In total, 91 items of correspondence were received via e-mail or through letters.

3 Scheme Results

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3 Scheme Results

This chapter presents the results of the consultation process, by scheme.

3.1 Scheme 1: Traffic Management and Public Realm Enhancements at Northgate Street/ St Werburgh Street/ Town Hall Square

This scheme divided opinion throughout the consultation process and 60% of the emails/letters received referred to this scheme. Overall, it was third in the scheme prioritisation exercise (59% said it was of ‘very high’ or ‘high’ priority, with two fifths (40%) stating it was a ‘very high’ priority) and first in the scheme ranking exercise within the feedback form (62 respondents ranked it within their top 5 schemes).

It should be noted that the Cathedral was very active in encouraging its congregation and tenants to respond to the consultation, as was the Northgate Quarter which accounts for the polarised views on this particular scheme.

The majority of the written correspondence related to concerns regarding access to the Cathedral, particularly for those who were elderly and disabled. This was especially pertinent on Sundays when public transport is less frequent. Several respondents felt it was essential for vehicular access to the Cathedral at all times of day given the services and events throughout the day. A number of respondents also referred to the Cathedral as an event host and key tourist destination in Chester with this ability believed to be constrained in this proposal. For example, the Cathedral and University of Chester highlighted the expected impact on graduation ceremonies should the proposals be realised. It was also felt the scheme would restrict the delivery of heavy duty equipment to the



Cathedral when setting up for graduation ceremonies, as well as restrict access on-the-day for graduates and their guests to the ceremony. Several respondents felt the Cathedral would be isolated / landlocked under the proposed scheme, which would have a negative impact on the role of the Cathedral in the city. The consequences for the Cathedral were considered to include the financial impact of fewer visitors which would put the Cathedral at risk as it funds itself. At the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint ‘Drop In’ event, a number of respondents raised concerns that a new access to the Cathedral would be created, which was a potential suggestion in the ACME Masterplan, and people were seeking reassurance that the walls would not be breached.

“Your proposals will turn a thriving centre of worship and community service into an isolated building which cannot do the work it is there to do.” [Local Resident]

“The Cathedral can ill afford the effect of restrictions on the movements and on the finances of those who freely give of their time to support it.” [Friends of Chester Cathedral]

“The Cathedral is a very busy, active, vibrant part of the city” [Feedback Form Respondent]

Respondents were also concerned about the access and impact on residents and businesses within the area as a result of the scheme. Both residents and non-residents of the area highlighted concerns about resident access to their homes under the proposed scheme. Businesses were concerned about the consequences for visitors to their offices, tradesmen and deliveries and how this would impact their business. Businesses were also concerned about staff parking as several stated their employees needed access to their car during the stated pedestrian zone times and felt there was no suitable alternative to their current parking. A Northgate Street proprietor discussed the need for access and servicing throughout the day and was therefore concerned about potential pedestrianisation.

Some respondents described how the scheme would result in fewer people in the area resulting in shops struggling and potentially being forced to close. For example, one shop felt the upper part of Northgate Street would be isolated unless pedestrians were encouraged to enter the city in this direction. Combined with the Cathedral perceived to suffer a loss of visitors, it was expected the city as a whole, would be negatively impacted.

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“It would be financially and spiritually suicidal to close the access to both business organisations that operate within Abbey Square and access to worshippers and volunteers who regularly attend the cathedral.”
[Local Resident]

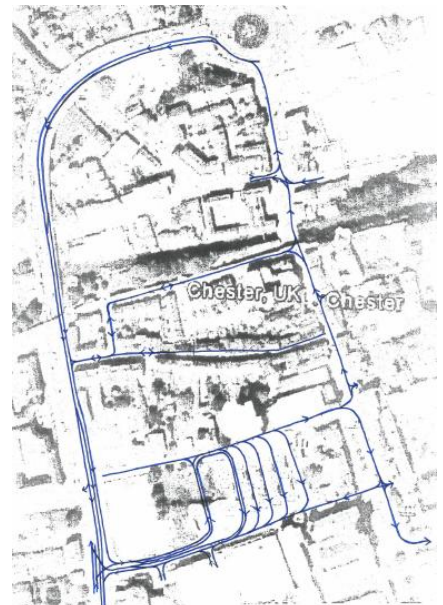
“You say it will vitalise Chester, having streets closed off? I think the opposite.” [Local Resident]

“It is absolutely vital that our service users with complex needs, their support staff and their families have access to our premises during specified core hours” [Special Needs Care Limited]

The potential consequence for disabled people was an issue raised by some respondents who stressed it was important the needs of those with disabilities were also considered in the Strategy. The respondents suggested they would be happy with pedestrianisation assuming the needs of disabled people were catered for; *“It is time for pedestrianisation in Chester, but we must make sure disabled people are considered”*. It was also evident that further reassurance is needed that any disabled parking removed would be replaced; for example, one respondent was a blue badge holder and stated they were initially concerned about the loss of disabled parking, but after reading the proposals in full they were reassured this provision would be reallocated elsewhere.

At the Local Residents Briefing, a query was raised as to where the barrier would be on Northgate Street and what plans there were for a further barrier on King Street to prevent unauthorised access. It was noted that bollards would likely be required at the top of King Street, but that further design would be required for this. A representative from the Kings Street Residents Association, also highlighted that a one-way option would not be acceptable for fears of increasing speeds. A permanent bollard at the top of King Street with the junction to Northgate Street was also a top priority at the King Street Residents Association. At the King Street Residents Association meeting, it was requested that once the walls were repaired and Water Tower Street reopened, the traffic is two-way within the street itself and a no-right turn is placed at the top of the street to allow exit onto Northgate Street back out of the city (not turning right into the city centre), therefore reducing rat running. Similarly, Chester Civic Trust had questions about the logistics of the scheme during their meeting; asking how traffic will exit once Princess Street is removed as part of the Northgate Development as it is not desirable to have traffic going down St. Werburgh Street during the core period.

There was a briefing held with the Northgate Street Traders Association and further comments included the reliance on the Northgate development and critical dependencies identified as the relocation of bus interchange and blue badge parking. An alternative ‘interim’ option was presented by an attendee [see adjacent plan] in which buses access the existing bus station from and to St Martin’s Way via Princess Street, and servicing for Northgate Street be undertaken via Hunter Street eastbound. It was noted that this had already been looked at and constrained turning circles for buses required the removal of a large number of stops. Concern was expressed that options were being ignored at the behest of senior officers within the Council, without proper consideration. Twenty eight respondents completing the feedback form agreed with the Northgate Quarter Association proposal to reverse traffic flow on Hunter Street. A trader on Northgate Street felt pedestrianisation during core hours would reduce accessibility and devalue the area making it a poor place to trade. However, he did support the proposed alternative scheme as it minimised the amount of servicing traffic along Northgate Street.



At a one-to-one meeting with the Grosvenor Hotel, the need to maintain access to the hotel based on the current level of provision was emphasised and in general was supportive of the measures to improve the city, especially as this helps to encourage more guests. Current access is controlled by one of their staff on Town Hall Square and they have list of guests arriving each day for Grosvenor (but not Blossoms). It is also understood that the hotel would seek to retain a personal greeting as part of any future scheme.

It was stated that most guests access the hotel from NCP car park (Pepper Street), although some like to drive to the front door and / or have car brought round to front when leaving. It was noted that there are circumstances where guests may arrive by taxi (e.g. from railway station) during the core hours, so there is a need to guarantee access. Similarly, afternoon tea, weddings and events require guaranteed access. As most guests tend to check in after 4pm and check out before 10am, there is a need to consider this within the accessibility during core hours.

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The movement of servicing vehicles must also be considered if there are plans to widen footpaths and narrow the carriageway; there are some complaints that some retailers are sending in HGV service vehicles before 6.00am causing disturbance to guests. Lastly, it was also suggested there is abuse of the current system for blue badge parking.

During the meeting with the Project Manager for the Northgate Development, it was noted that the current projection is the Northgate Development team will be in place by spring 2014 and if everything runs to plan the first phase (new market, cinema and car park) will be constructed between October 2016 and February 2018. Further to issues associated with the potential working of a more restricted Northgate, the Project Manager was happy with the short stretch of two-way running in Northgate Street between Hunter Street Junction and Abbey Square to facilitate access to Abbey Square and avoid exit via St. Werburgh Street if and when Princess Street closes. It was stated that it has to be the “right” scheme for the “right” environment. Chris noted that access for servicing to the new market may be an issue for further consideration as this area is not serviced by underground access unlike other parts of the concept scheme.

During a meeting regarding the proposed Theatre, the Project Manager confirmed the timetable is for the planning application to be made by summer 2014, to be onsite by January 2015 and to open by autumn 2016. The Project Manager was supportive of the need for as much of a pedestrianised environment as possible outside the theatre, but felt it was a question of balance. He had concerns about the impact of core hour pedestrianisation on access to theatre, for example, there could be touring companies seeking access to the theatre on a weekly basis via Hunter Street, usually on Sunday or Monday). It was noted that there needs to be consideration to access by coaches especially for matinees and for afternoon pantomime sessions. There was a preference for drop-off / pick-up / layover to be as close to the theatre as possible, for example, there could be a lay-by on St. Martin’s Way or at a new bus interchange within Northgate. It was assumed that the current market car parks would serve the site until the new car park is built and the proximity to Linen Hall Car Park was also noted. The potential impact on additional traffic on the Inner Ring Road prior to and following popular events was acknowledged. It was also raised that there needs to be a consideration to disabled/taxi drop-off facilities and where these would be during core hours.

Finally, a number of respondents stated support for pedestrianisation in principle as they liked the intention to improve the environment for pedestrians. For example, one resident was frustrated with disability car parking restricting deliveries, another resident was keen for the whole of the city centre to be pedestrianised and one participant at the Weekend ‘Drop In’ said they felt the selected removal of traffic from the city core would drive forward the visitor economy. However, several felt it was not appropriate for the whole of the stated area, particularly around the Cathedral, to be pedestrianised.

“I am all for pedestrianisation, but you must allow 7 days a week access to Chester Cathedral. It’s not just desirable but essential.” [Reverend, Chester Cathedral]

“I wish to add my own name to the list of those who urge a constructive solution. Not necessarily one which does away with all the pedestrianisation proposals, but certainly one which will allow the cathedral to continue its multi-faceted service to the city and the hinterland.” [Local Resident]

A late response to the consultation was received from Chester Municipal Charities, which owns the Blue Coat Building and is seeking to establish a third sector hub and as such want to maintain blue badge parking in close proximity to the site, preferably in Northgate Street outside Sanctuary Group and Chester District Housing Trust (CDHT).

Key Findings

- In principle, broad support for pedestrianisation. Ranked 1st with regards to importance for Chester and ranked 3rd with regards to personal priority.
- Concern about access to the Cathedral, particularly for the elderly and people with mobility impairments and during events.
- Some concern that the scheme could be detrimental to local businesses and organisations.

Issues to Resolve

- Securing access to the Cathedral for the Elderly and the Disabled.
- Access arrangements for events at the Cathedral (e.g. graduation ceremonies).
- Servicing / accessing existing businesses on Northgate Street, Abbey Square (including planned Free School) and St. Werburgh Street and hotel requirements.

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- Facilitating future Cathedral development aspirations, including a boutique hotel.
- Egress arrangements from Abbey Square – may necessitate section of 2-way to maintain exits via Hunter Street and ensure no additional penetration of St. Werburgh's Street.
- Location and type of access restrictions, management and enforcement (entire zone) with consideration to access by emergency services.
- Suggestion for alternative routing on Hunter Street as an interim solution.
- Access arrangements for the Theatre, including layby/drop-off for coaches and potential integration with Northgate Interchange.
- Phasing of scheme delivery, incorporating consideration to access the Theatre whilst Northgate Phase 1 is under construction and potential; temporary use of Princess Street.
- Requirements of parking outside the Blue Coat Building as part of the Third Sector Hub.
- Enabling temporary full closures for Northgate Quarter street events and associated diversionary routes.
- Traffic management on King Street to limit access to Northgate.

3.2 Scheme 2: Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements

Several respondents, including Bus Users Cymru Group, Chester Civic Trust, Chester Cycling Campaign, felt a new bus station was needed in Chester and discussed the need for a bus station which is used by almost all of the local services, accommodates coach travel and has better transport integration. However, whilst some were happy with the station at Gorse Stacks, others had concerns about the relocation with some suggesting the bus station should remain at its existing location. Furthermore, an attendee at the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Public Drop-In was keen to understand the implications of the Gorse Stacks bus station proposal on the site.

"The proposed new bus station could certainly be a better facility than the existing one and could be large enough to cope with all bus services and also provide a drop-off and pick-up point for coaches" [Local Resident]

"It is important a city the size of Chester has a decent bus station" [Local Resident]

Firstly, a number of respondents did not feel the location was appropriate due to the access to the city centre. At the Business Breakfast, one bus company representative queried how Gorse Stacks had been identified as the best site as it is further from the market than the existing facility. In general, the proposed site was considered to be inconvenient and the distance too far to the shops, market, services and entertainment in the city centre by those making written comments and members of the public attending events. Furthermore, the walk from the proposed location to city centre was considered to reinforce the lack of accessibility due to the *"narrow pavements, poor surfaces and dangerous crossings"* [Local Resident]. Similarly, Chester Accessibility Group noted *"narrow streets, poorly lit, steep and/or cobbled"* within their description of the walk from Gorse Stacks to the city centre whilst at the Chester Access Action Group event the location of the bus station outside city walls on the periphery of the town with difficult access routes to central locations was discussed. These accessibility concerns were particularly relevant to the elderly, disabled and those with young children in prams.

The Cheshire West Older Peoples Network felt the walk would be difficult for those with a sight impairment, physical disability or mobility problems, therefore, believing it would be difficult accessing the shopping areas from the proposed location. During the Local Member Briefing, a Blacon Ward Councillor raised concerns regarding the relocation of the bus station due to the difficulties for elderly and disabled people accessing the market. Some reassurance was noted, however, that good bus links would still connect with the Northgate area. Interestingly, one elderly couple said the walk from the proposed bus station *"wasn't far if you know the shortcuts"* at the Weekend Public Drop-In session.

"Many elderly residents have raised concerns about the position of the new bus station at Gorse Stacks as it will not be a convenient place for many elderly residents who want to access shops, banks, post office and entertainment in the city centre." [Handbridge Park Councillor]

"The idea of locating a new bus station at Gorse Stacks goes contrary to all the proposals to make access to Chester City Centre easier." [Local Resident]

Some respondents, including the Chester Archaeological Society and Chester Civic Trust highlighted concerns regarding the potential change to bus routes in the city centre. The importance of services continuing to serve the city centre was stressed by these respondents. It is likely this is related to the perceived accessibility concerns

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between Gorse Stacks and the city centre. One bus operator felt bus access into Frodsham Street and Foregate Street was essential for Chester's economy and thought the proposed bus station would lack "*sufficiently suitable gateway into the city.*"

The station design was a concern to some respondents, particularly the 'drive-in, reverse-out' proposal, for example, one bus operator was opposed to the 'reverse-out' aspect of this design. This layout was thought to be noisy to local residents due to the reversing beepers and unsafe for users of the station as the buses are reversing. A Councillor from Blacon highlighted Gorse Stacks was visitors' first view when they arrived into Chester from the Hoole Bridge direction and felt the current design had a poor impression on visitors. Similarly, Chester Civic Trust suggested landscaping solutions need to be integrated with the bus station design.

Finally, several respondents, including residents, Chester Archaeological Society and Chester Civic Trust, suggested a frequent shuttle/circular bus on a route around the city centre to key destinations, such as, the railway station, bus station, Park & Ride sites and main shopping streets. Furthermore, at the Chester Access Action Group it was stated that if this service is provided it should operate after 6pm to ensure the mobility impaired can take advantage of the night time economy (particularly access to Northgate and Theatre). The shuttle/circular bus was suggested to address the accessibility concerns between Gorse Stacks and the city centre, as well as for the integration between the rail and bus stations. The need for the bus station to be better integrated with existing transport infrastructure, particularly the railway station, was identified by some respondents with some concluding Gorse Stacks was too far away from the existing transport infrastructure. One bus company suggested the Northgate development should have sufficient space for buses to terminate and layover which would integrate local and national bus and coach services.

"Provision of a city circular bus service should be seriously considered, especially if the bus station is moved to Gorse Stacks." [Local Resident]

"Gorse Stacks should not be developed as a bus interchange as Chester needs a transport interchange." [Local Resident]

Key Findings

- Broad agreement that there is a need for a new bus station in Chester. In the consultation feedback, 48% deemed the scheme as a 'very high' / 'high' priority.
- Concern over access between Gorse Stacks and Northgate, particularly for the elderly, disabled groups and regular bus users, though noted that linkages to other areas are improved.
- Concern about the impact on wider City Centre bus routes.
- Importance of integration between travel modes.
- Need for a potential city metroshuttle / shopper hopper to resolve issues of connectivity.

Issues to Resolve

- Connectivity with the Core City Centre / Market Area (including walking routes).
- Design and size (plot size, no. of stands) of bus layout – some negativity over potential 'drive in – reverse out' facility and uncertainty over potential shared land uses (e.g. Youth Zone aspirations / public house).
- Extent of services using the bus station, impact on other key nodes within the City Centre.
- Number and type of services within revised Northgate Development.
- Inclusion / integration of Coach and Park & Ride Services at the station – relates to Coach Strategy.
- Access and design of Hoole Way Gyratory and maintaining direct access to Frodsham Street. Consideration also required to access through Fountains Roundabout and /or new access into Delamere Street.
- Link to wider Bus Strategy (Schemes 14 & 19).

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.3 Scheme 3: Public realm and traffic reduction on St. John Street / Vicars Lane to improve links between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre / Groves



Feedback on the visualisations at the consultation was generally positive. Written comments made on this proposal were varied, but generally supportive. For example, Chester Civic Trust supported the improved conditions for pedestrians and Chester Cycling Campaign felt the 20mph speed limit was good. However, several respondents sought clarification regarding how the scheme would reduce the volume of traffic and where this traffic would go. Two residents were concerned congestion would increase on the wider Inner Relief Road if the scheme went ahead. At the Chester Access Action Group, a 20mph zone on the inner ring road around the amphitheatre was welcomed alongside wider footways. It was also

stated that currently there are difficulties crossing Pepper Street.

Key Findings

- Scheme was broadly supported in face-to-face discussions at events and written comments, but did not score highly with regards to priority and the overall scheme preference ranking (i.e. 21/28).

Issues to Resolve

- Confirmation of traffic management and routeing arrangements.
- Phasing of delivery – potential requirement for providing more capacity at Fountains Roundabout prior to delivery.

3.4 Scheme 4: Enhanced parking and shopmobility facilities persons with mobility impairments

As expected, this scheme was considered to be of the greatest priority amongst those with a disability with 89% considering it a 'high'/'very high' priority, compared with 56% of respondents overall, of those completing the Feedback Form. At the Chester Access Action Group event, the location of shopmobility was considered important with Kale Yards believed to be a good location. The provision of blue badge parking was also discussed at the event; there were worries that disabled parking is being pushed to the periphery and it was stressed adequate blue badge parking needs to be retained in the central car parks and not on the edge of the city centre, such as, Little Roodee. This concern was echoed by a representative from the White Friars Residents Association, who was concerned over the potential displacement of blue badge parking to White Friars and similar locations at Northgate Street.

The Chester Access Action Group also highlighted that disabled people may return to their vehicle with small amounts of shopping and make a number of trips while parked. It was stated that additional blue badge parking would be welcomed at Kale Yards if it was removed at St. Werburgh Street. Finally, at the event there was strong support for Kale Yards to be retained once the Northgate Development was completed and two additional shopmobility sites be built to serve different parts of the city.

In written correspondence, respondents stressed the importance of shopmobility and disabled parking being located in the city centre rather than on the periphery. Chester Accessibility Group stressed the importance of disabled parking not being reduced and highlighted disabled people were concerned about the One City Plan proposal to build on Kale Yards Car Park. A Handbridge Park Councillor thought the proposed schemes should not have a negative impact on those relying on disabled parking. Chester Cycling Campaign felt there was a dependency on the Northgate Development for new facilities. Finally, two respondents discussed the current abuse of the blue badge scheme and the need to enforce disability parking.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Key Findings

- More than half of the respondents deemed the scheme to be a 'very high' / 'high' priority.
- Quantity and location of blue badge parking important.
- Principal objections to relocation of blue badge parking came from Cathedral users rather than shoppers.
- Support for extended disabled provision on Kaleyards due to relationship with shopmobility.

Issues to Resolve

- Ensuring alternative provision is sufficient to meet demand and located in close proximity to key destinations (e.g. Northgate Development should include adequate blue badge parking, Dial-a-Ride access and additional shopmobility).
- Impact of relocating Blue Badge parking on other areas of the City Centre.
- Phasing of proposals to ensure adequate provision is maintained, with due consideration to ensuring accessibility audits are undertaken and accessible routes are provided.
- Potential conflict in increasing disabled parking provision at Kale Yards with potential use as free school drop-off / pick-up point.

3.5 Scheme 5: The Bars Pedestrian / Cycle accessibility improvements

Chester Civic Trust agreed with the Urban Land Institute that the current layout at the Bars Roundabout was a hindrance for pedestrians travelling to /from the station and a poor gateway to the City Centre. Chester Accessibility Group felt the southern side of the roundabout was unsafe at ground level and pedestrian crossings needed greater priority suggesting subways should be closed and pelican crossings becoming a green light within 10 seconds. The Chester Cycling Campaign also supported the pedestrian and cycle movement improvements at the roundabout, however, they were also concerned that the crossings may be misused and/or create conflict between users. The Campaign also suggested the subway complex could be converted to a secure cycle hub for city centre employees. Similarly, a resident felt strongly that the subways should not be filled in but suggested they remain as crossings, as it was felt at-grade crossings cannot compete with the usefulness of subway crossings.

"Chester Civic Trust has long argued for improved conditions for pedestrians in this area so we welcome this proposal." [Chester Civic Trust]

"What need to be done is to make pedestrian crossings the higher priority." [Chester Accessibility Group]

Key Findings

- Scheme not identified in the feedback forms as a preferential scheme, however acceptance that current layout needs to be redesigned with greater priority and safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Mixed opinion regarding the use of subways.

Issues to Resolve

- Potential conflict between users and impacts on congestion / Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Boughton.
- Future use of subways should they be filled in.
- Importance of improving pedestrian links between city centre and Station / Central Business Quarter.

3.6 Scheme 6: Northgate Junction Area improvements

Most responses about this scheme were generally supportive and one resident identified an additional benefit as the Victoria Road access would result in vehicles travelling to Tesco avoiding the need to use Northgate Junction. This is interesting as the impact of traffic for Tesco was identified by Chester Accessibility Group as an existing problem with queues to Fountain Roundabout as people queue for the Tesco car park. Congestion concerns were also raised by the Chester Cycling Campaign who felt the new four-arm junction would be less effective than the roundabout and would cause greater congestion. The change from a roundabout to 4-arm junction was a concern which other residents were unsure about also as roundabouts were felt to be more effective at regulating traffic flow. One respondent discussed the building of a new medical centre on Northgate Roundabout and the impact of this on traffic flow.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

“The proposal to revert it back to being a standard ‘cross roads’ does not immediately convince me that it will work better.” [Local Resident]

Key Findings

- Consequences for local developments.

Issues to Resolve

- Impacts on queuing and congestion on wider Inner Relief Road – more detailed modelling required.
- Access / egress arrangements to Delamere Street / Bus Station / Medical Centre.
- Link to wider review and assessment of schemes to address pinch points and congestion on radial routes (Scheme 11).

3.7 Scheme 7: Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities

This scheme divided opinion with regards to the level of priority (37% felt it was a ‘high’/‘very high’ priority and 35% thought it was a ‘low’ priority/‘not a priority’ at all). Despite this, the majority of respondents submitting a written comment supported this scheme and the removal of coaches from Northgate Street in particular.

During the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop-In event, one attendee commented on the need to revise the strategy for coach arrangements to the City Centre as it is seen as vital for creating a positive first impression. However, several issues were identified; firstly the future location of the National Express facility. Chester Cycling Campaign highlighted this issue and was concerned the National Express services would be located at a separate location from the new station at Gorse Stacks which would limit the integration of services. The issue of city centre coach parking was discussed at the Business Breakfast with a query regarding whether this had been considered in the current proposal for Gorse Stacks as the understanding was that the proposed site would be for National Express services. One respondent suggested the Stagecoach depot could be enhanced to accommodate coaches arriving during the day.

Secondly, Chester Accessibility Group was concerned all coaches could not be expected to drop-off passengers at Little Roodee car park as disabled passengers would struggle to travel to the city centre. At the Chester Access Action Group meeting questions were raised as to whether three stands would be sufficient for the coaches at the Northgate bus interchange and improved drop off facilities closer to the city centre was an issue identified by other respondents also during the written correspondence. The Chester Accessibility Group also highlighted the time it takes for a full coach to disembark, particularly if there are elderly or disabled passengers. Finally, the impact on the city centre was discussed at the Northgate Street Traders Association session, particularly with regards to the coach routing to the new theatre and the need for coaches to disembark on the left to minimise safety issues of passengers needing to cross the road upon disembarking the coach.

Key Findings

- Divided opinion with regards to priority.
- Broad support for the scheme and removal of coaches from Northgate Street.
- Some concern over lack of integration between National Express services and New Bus Station.

Issues to Resolve

- Need to successfully accommodate coaches, but minimise impact on traffic movements / air quality.
- Integration of coach services with new bus station.
- Consideration of maximising use of Little Roodee, whilst considering access for persons with mobility difficulties to/from the City Core.
- Pick-up / drop-off arrangements at new Theatre / Library and in context of proposals for Northgate.
- Link to wider visitor strategy (Scheme 12).

3.8 Scheme 8: City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements

On the whole this scheme was supported with most respondents keen for initiatives which improve cycle facilities, for example cycle parking, cycle paths and integrated cycle routes; however, a variety of suggestions for the scheme were also made. Whilst the emphasis on cycling was welcomed by some, one resident felt improving cycle

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

facilities showed an indifference to other users, whilst some felt the enhanced cycle provision could cause conflict with pedestrians so opposed the scheme in particular locations. For example, the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on Grosvenor Bridge was highlighted during the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop In event. Furthermore, a Handbridge Park Councillor stated there had been complaints about cyclists on bridges, footpaths, and pedestrian zones so clearer signage was required.

Chester Civic Trust was opposed to cycling being permitted when other vehicles are barred. The proposal was welcomed by some because buses would continue to use Frodsham Street and Foregate Street, which were regarded as important for public transport users.

“I just do not understand this council’s obsession with cycleways without regard for other users.” [Local Resident]

“Pedestrian zones are for pedestrians and cyclists should be given facilities close by not mixed in with pedestrians for safety if not other reasons” [Local Resident]

“I applaud any scheme to enhance cycle paths.” [Feedback Form Respondent]

“On Hough Green, the cycleway weaves around obstacles and has give way signs for every little side road.” [Feedback Form Respondent]

“Riding on pavements, cycling through red lights and riding in the wrong direction is now endemic in Chester.” [Feedback Form Respondent]

Several respondents felt the scheme should have included a new or improved cycle / pedestrian crossing across the River Dee. The current bridges were said to be at capacity and as they have historic status are unable to be widened.

“The lack of provision of improved cycle crossing for the River Dee is deeply disappointing” [Handbridge Park Councillor]

A number of suggestions were made including:

- The 20mph speed limit being extended to the whole of the city centre;
- Subways as additional cycle routes rather than filling them in;
- Resurfacing and lighting of the canal towpath between the city centre, university and hospital;
- Cycle provisions to be more substantial than white lines;
- Remove cycling restrictions from the suspension bridge; and
- Consulting with cycle and pedestrian user groups with regards to detailed design work for crossing points, shared-use areas and the east-west cycle route.

Chester Cycling Campaign suggested developing existing ‘Cycle Points’ to improve information for cyclists travelling to and around the city, as well as clearer signing of the key cycle and pedestrian routes.

Finally, to summarise this support for the scheme; 55% of Feedback Form respondents thought it was of a ‘high’, or ‘very high’ priority and it was ranked 7th overall with regards to scheme preference.

Key Findings

- On the whole, general demand for further improvements to cycle facilities with many suggestions for new routes and infrastructure.
- Some concern over conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and complaints about cyclists misusing facilities/ cycling in pedestrian zones.
- New or improved cycle/pedestrian crossing needed across the River Dee.

Issues to Resolve

- Acceptability of removal of prohibition of cycling on the Suspension Bridge.
- Minimising conflict between pedestrians and cyclists and seeking to ensure respect of highway rules (e.g. cycling on footways, in pedestrianised areas and other shared areas).
- Provision of secure cycle parking at key destinations.
- Feasibility of improved cycle/pedestrian crossing across the River Dee.
- Need to ensure synergy with emerging Chester Renaissance Waterways Strategy.
- Link to wider cycling schemes (Scheme 13 and Scheme 18).

3.9 Scheme 9: Active Traffic Management including enhancements to Variable Message Signs and Urban Traffic Control

Very few comments were made about this scheme, but responses made were positive with one resident stating urban traffic control had a positive impact on traffic flows since it was implemented.

Key Findings

- Scheme ranked lowly and very few comments were made about the scheme.

Issues to Resolve

- Link to wider review and assessment of schemes to address pinch points and congestion as part of wider inter-related package (Schemes 6, 11 and 23).

3.10 Scheme 10: Chester Parking Strategy

Forty five respondents included this within their top 5 ranked schemes making it one of the more popular schemes (overall ranking of 3rd).

A Handbridge Park Councillor discussed parking problems in Handbridge as a result of shoppers, worker and racegoers taking advantage of the free parking. Similarly, a number of residents also identified Handbridge as an area with parking difficulties, alongside other comments relating to Hoole and the Garden Quarter. Chester Civic Trust felt the objective that the city centre parking should be priced to encourage linked long-stay and tourism related trips was the purpose of Park & Ride facilities and city centre parking should primarily be for short-stay use.

Respondents commented that the high parking charges in the city centre compared with free parking at out-of-town sites has resulted in the decline of city centre shopping. Suggestions for the parking strategy included:

- Large capacity underground city centre parking, as in continental cities such as Heidelberg, could be implemented within the Northgate Development;
- 30 minutes free parking outside shops on Northgate Street to benefit small businesses;
- Creation of Residents Parking Zone to show greater consideration for city centre residents needs;
- All new developments to include resident and client parking; and
- Parking ban on Easton Road, Handbridge as it is used as a shortcut to enter the city.

The recently published parking strategy for Chester was produced following an extensive consultation programme and as such the strategy has taken these comments into account.

Key Findings

- Delivering the parking strategy ranked 3rd overall and was deemed by almost 3/5 of respondents to be a 'very high' or 'high' priority'.
- Mixed opinion on City Centre car park pricing.
- Variety of suggestions for the parking strategy: underground parking, residents parking zones, parking ban, 30minutes free parking outside shops and new developments to include parking.

Issues to Resolve

- Need to resolve issues of commuter parking in City Centre fringe e.g. Handbridge, Hoole and the Garden Quarter.
- Conflict between promoting parking for economic reasons and wider aspirations and benefits of reducing vehicular traffic in the City Centre.
- Extension of existing Residential Parking Zones.
- Making better use of the existing road network.
- Links to wider parking strategy and Park & Ride proposals (Schemes 4, 15 & 21).

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.11 Scheme 11: Junction improvements to tackle congestion at key ‘pinch points’ – linked to emerging housing and development proposals

Three fifths (60%) of respondents felt this scheme was of ‘high’ or ‘very high’ priority, and it was placed second with regards to the priority of the schemes. Furthermore, the scheme was ranked joint 4th when respondents were asked to rank the schemes they felt were important to Chester. At the business breakfast, an attendee was pleased the bottleneck at Hoole Bridge was being addressed.

Those making a written comment on the scheme were generally supportive, but had reservations, for example, Chester Civic Trust noted the improvements were easier said than done and Chester Cycle Campaign felt cyclist facilities needed to be included within the junction design. There were also concerns about changes to junctions following the perceived failures, and increased delays, associated with the ‘Hamburger Roundabout.’

“I agree that all the identified sites need critical appraisal.” [Local Resident]

Key Findings

- 60% felt this was of ‘high’ or ‘very high’ priority and 4th highest ranking scheme based on preferences.
- Overall need to reduce congestion and also consider opening up development / housing sites and improving access to employment.

Issues to Resolve

- Further analysis needed to understand hotspots and pinch points (refer to Atkins modelling) and identify potential quick-win and longer-term schemes.

3.12 Scheme 12: Race / events / match day sustainable access from the City Centre

Nearly all of the written responses were positive about this scheme and the need to reduce traffic on these occasions with one respondent noting it was best to simply avoid the city centre on race days. One suggestion was to use a new council-run facility at Bumpers Lane as part of race day parking with a shuttle service from this location, whilst extending Park & Ride bus services to the racecourse on event days was also suggested. Chester Cycling Campaign thought better cycle parking facilities were needed at these venues for staff and visitors. However, one respondent suggested the expected benefits were over optimistic and combining the Park & Ride shuttle with a match day shuttle could be problematic for existing users. Furthermore, one respondent felt race day traffic would get worse.

Key Findings

- Very positive written response, but only 38% ranked it as a ‘high’/‘very high’ priority.
- Number of suggestions to improve the scheme, including better cycle parking facilities.

Issues to Resolve

- Potential for Park & Ride at Bumpers Lane on race days.
- Potential solutions linked with more flexible use of Park & Ride and the Coach Strategy. Need to identify drop-off / collection points. Further dialogue with key stakeholders needed, including the Racecourse Company and the Police.
- Wider consideration of other special events needed e.g. Concerts, Fireworks etc.

3.13 Scheme 13: Pedestrian and Cycle access: Hoole to City Centre

This scheme ranked joint 4th with regards to respondents scheme preference and improved access to Hoole, particularly the changes to Hoole Railway Bridge and improved pedestrian and cyclist safety, was welcomed by all of those making a written comment on this scheme and those attending the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Public Drop-In event. At the Local Member Briefing, one Councillor expressed his support for the cycle schemes and the removal of the barriers between Hoole and the City Centre, whilst two Councillors also expressed support at the Full Member Briefing. Chester Cycling Campaign made further suggestions:

- Usefulness of a new bridge over the railway line at Hoole would be enhanced with a link between Lightfoot Street and Hoole side of Hoole Bridge and Millennium Greenway;
- 20mph speed limit applied to all cycle and pedestrian routes; and
- Cycle contraflow lane along Brook Street.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

“Improved access to Hoole would be a godsend.” [Local Resident]

“I think the importance of enabling better pedestrian/cycling access to the City from surrounding housing areas, Hoole in particular should be prioritised.” [Local Resident]

“It would be wonderful and would make a huge difference if there was a separate pedestrian / cycle way.”
[Local Resident]

Key Findings

- High priority scheme; ranked joint 4th overall.
- Improved pedestrian/cycle access from Hoole widely supported.

Issues to Resolve

- Future aspirations for adjacent development sites and wider Masterplan (including development at former Enterprise Centre and new station car park).
- Feasibility of new structure(s) across the rail line.
- Link to wider cycling schemes (Schemes 8 and 18).

3.14 Scheme 14: Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton

There was a mixed opinion between respondents on this scheme. There were concerns raised that the roads identified for bus priority measures, except for Boughton, were too narrow. Furthermore, one respondent felt reducing the width of Hoole Road would cause traffic congestion of an unacceptable level and was concerned about access to developments along this route. One bus operator stressed they felt bus priority was essential as it would improve bus flow and bus journey times. Chester Civic Trust argued junctions were significant to optimising traffic flow rather than the roads between junctions. Some suggested that traffic signal priority responding to demand rather than fixed time signal phasing would improve traffic flow, for example, either end of Love Street were suggested.

Chester Cycling Campaign felt the improvements to bus services would encourage usage, but sought clarification as to whether cyclists would be able to use bus lanes also as this would improve cycle access. One respondent did not think the measures would reduce delays, whilst another felt it would reduce capacity for motorists with little increase in bus patronage. One suggestion was for bus priority lanes to also include Hackney Licensed cabs. Finally, it was felt the bus priority measures, alongside several of the other proposals, would complement existing work on the AQMAs.

“Other than on parts of Boughton, there is no space for bus lanes.” [Local Resident]

“There a number of items that complement the work done for the AQAP [Air Quality Action Plan] such as bus priority measures on the A51/A5116, enhancing cycle priority, the proposal for a park and ride in Hoole, active traffic management at the Bars, improved access to the canal towpath and even the western relief road.” [Cheshire West and Chester Council]

Key Findings

- Mixed opinion between respondents on this scheme.
- Concern that roads identified are too narrow for extensive bus priority.
- Suggestions for bus lanes to include cyclists and Hackney Licensed cabs.

Issues to Resolve

- Feasibility of engineering measures (e.g. bus lanes, bus gates etc) – need for feasibility studies.
- Potential impact on traffic flows/congestion and confirmation of priority (i.e. needs of public transport users ahead of motorists)?
- Phasing of proposals, potentially linked to delivery of any future Park & Ride at Hoole.
- Link to wider Bus Strategy (Schemes 2 & 19).

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.15 Scheme 15: Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit

The response to this proposal was generally positive, for example, limited intermediate stops were considered a good idea. However, Chester Civic Trust questioned whether this would be acceptable as competition to commercial services. Whilst the integration with rural services was understood, there were concerns that elderly passengers with concessionary passes would be disadvantaged as they would have to pay for the Park & Ride service when their current service is free. Furthermore, several respondents, including residents, a local council and bus group, felt the need to change would be inconvenient, lengthen journey time and potentially make public transport less attractive. Similarly, another respondent felt the proposal for rural services to interchange at Park & Ride sites was not user-friendly as people prefer direct services.

At the Business Breakfast, a representative from the Countess of Chester Hospital was receptive to the idea of an intermediate Park & Ride stop serving the hospital, but noted that this would need to be considered alongside a consideration on the impact to hospital parking revenue.

Chester Cycling Campaign suggested cheaper ticket prices for those who 'Park & Cycle', improvements in the quality of routes between the Park & Ride sites and city centre and the potential for buses to have bicycle racks in case cyclists choose to travel by bus one way.

"The Park & Ride sites need significant upgrading; they are very poor quality at present." [Local Resident]

"It is an established fact that in planning public transport, the more changes the passenger has to make the less attractive it becomes." [Local Resident]

"This [routing rural services to Park & Ride sites] will lengthen journey times and be an inconvenience to people with mobility issues and people with young children in prams/pushchairs." [Local Council]

Key Findings

- 43% deemed that the scheme was a 'very high' / 'high' priority.
- Integration with rural services considered good, but concerns the need to change will be inconvenient and lengthen the overall journey time.
- Concerns elderly passengers with concessionary passes would have to pay for Park & Ride facilities and as such not really supported.

Issues to Resolve

- Concessionary pass holders to pay for Park & Ride?
- Competition with commercial services and contractual agreements.
- Impacts on journey times and overall patronage.
- Links to wider parking and bus strategies.

3.16 Scheme 16: Travel Planning Package, incorporating workplaces, schools and residential areas

Just 28% of respondents felt this was of a 'high' or 'very high' priority, the lowest score of all the schemes, whilst a further 28% said it was 'low' priority or 'not a priority' at all. Furthermore, very few comments were made about this scheme yet those which were made were supportive of the proposal. Suggestions included residential travel plans to apply to any development of 5 or more dwellings and for new developments to contribute to improving the pedestrian, cycle and bus networks.

Chester Business Park Management Company Limited supported these proposals with respect to work planning, public transport, cycling and pedestrian access. However, previous travel to work surveys completed by the Business Park showed other schemes may impact these results. For example, 25% of cars to/from the Business Park come from the city centre direction, therefore measures to reduce city centre congestion which will increase congestion on Wrexham Road could have a negative impact on the site.

Key Findings

- Lowest ranking scheme with regards to priority (28% 'high'/'very high' priority).
- Chester Business Park Management Company Limited support scheme, but felt other measures would impact the results of the initiative.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

Issues to Resolve

- Need to identify long-term funding streams to continue Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) activity.

3.17 Scheme 17: Smartcard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing

Just over two fifths (41%) of respondents completing the Feedback Form felt this was of 'low priority' / 'not a priority' at all. Very few comments were made regarding this scheme; however, all were supportive with an additional benefit identified by one resident as reduced delay at bus stops. Chester Cycling Campaign suggested the proposed cycle hire schemes should be included within the smartcard system.

"Reduces artificial barriers to using public transport." [Chester Cycling Campaign]

One Councillor suggested a Resident's Card, which would entitle residents to cheaper car parking in Chester.

Key Findings

- Scheme ranked lowly in terms of preference, with 41% citing it was of 'low' priority / 'not a priority' at all.

Issues to Resolve

- Extent and aspirations for Smartcard system.
- Cross-border implications.

3.18 Scheme 18: Enhanced cycle priority: Chester to Sealand, Broughton and Wrexham

The scheme priority results showed this scheme divided opinion with regards to the level of priority for this scheme. Despite this, on the whole, written responses regarding this proposal were supportive of measures to improve cycle provision, however, a variety of comments and suggestions for the scheme were also given. For example, one resident stressed the importance of providing safe cycle routes from outside the city centre, rather than an emphasis on provision within the city centre. A couple of respondents highlighted the need for an extension of cycle route from Mickle Trafford to Great Barrow to enable cycling without use of the A56 and A54.

Several respondents thought an additional crossing was needed over the River Dee with most suggesting a pedestrian/cycle crossing facility from Handbridge, whilst one respondent felt a second bridge was required from Saltney to Chester. One participant, at the Transport Strategy/ Local Plan Joint Public Drop-In, highlighted the need to improve cycle signage/routeing through Handbridge to the City Centre, particularly through Edgar's Field and also identified a need to reduce the numbers of individuals riding on the footway of Dee Bridge in particular, through 'on-the-spot' enforcements.

Other routes suggested for improvements included:

- Saughall Road (from Cheyney Road);
- Old Whitchurch to Hatton rail route;
- Upgrade of canal towpath from Hatton to Chester;
- Canal towpath between Ellesmere Port and Chester (towpath deemed to be of poor quality);
- Cross-border cycle routes from Eastham in the Wirral to Hooton and Ellesmere Port; and
- Completion of the link between Racecourse and The Cop.

Generally with regards to cycling, some respondents highlighted the impact on other mode users; one resident discussed the potential conflict between pedestrians and cyclists, whilst another highlighted the importance of improvements for cyclists not being at the detriment to the rest of the public and their needs.

Key Findings

- Divided opinion with regards to level of priority.
- Number of other routes suggested for improvements.

Issues to Resolve

- Inclusion / promotion of additional commuting routes.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

3.19 Scheme 19: Bus Service Improvements

This was the scheme ranked first, with regards to priority, amongst all Feedback Form respondents and those aged 65 or over. Almost two thirds (63%) of respondents completing the Feedback Form felt this scheme was of a 'high' or 'very high' priority and this was a slightly greater proportion when only examining those aged 65 or over. In addition, the scheme ranked 2nd overall with regards to respondents' scheme preference.

Several respondents commented on this proposal with a wide range of opinions and suggestions about how to improve the bus services, including:

- Need to improve information and contact information following closure of the information kiosk at Chester Bus Exchange and other locations;
- Extension of bus services beyond 5/6pm into the evening, including to/from rural areas and reinstatement of Sunday/Bank Holiday services;
- Provision of an extended circular shuttle linking key destinations with the rail station;
- Working with operators to provide bike racks on buses so that it is possible to cycle for part or one leg of the journey and use the bus the other way (e.g. if poor weather, bike damage);
- Provision of enhanced real-time information suggested to improve the passenger experience; and
- Provision of "Weather proof bus stops" at the main locations.

One respondent at the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop In event was pleased the proposals included improvements to rural bus frequencies and the use of Park & Ride sites as hubs with enhanced services to the City Centre. At the meeting with Chester Civic Trust, it was suggested that there was a need to 'sell the benefits' of buses to local residents.

Route/location specific comments included:

- 15 or 15a bus service should go to Blacon shops. Passengers from Saughall have to alight in Savon Way and then walk to the shops, which is difficult for the disabled and/or in poor weather;
- Blacon Pointer evening and Sunday service needs to be improved, particularly when the shops have extended opening hours;
- Need for a cross-city bus route service, for example, from Hoole, Boughton across to Sealand Road;
- Diverting some services to the Town Hall rather than all terminating at Frodsham Street;
- Travelling by bus from Huntingdon and Great Boughton requires passengers to depart at the library and walk down City Road which was considered a long distance from the market;
- Greater frequency of bus services are required from Guilden Sutton;
- Need well located bus stops throughout the historic core; and
- Need for a direct, and therefore faster, bus service to Liverpool.

"I cannot believe that I can't get a bus that goes direct between Chester and Liverpool." [Local Resident]

In addition to the above comments, one local Council expressed concerned about a lack of proposals to improve accessibility from the rural south (Tattenhall and Malpass), citing the example of the need to take three buses to access the Countess of Chester Hospital.

Whilst most responses were positive about bus service improvements, whether this was the proposed enhancements or suggested alternatives, there were some concerns raised. For example, one respondent felt the improvements would be nice but to increase use of bus services this would have to be a significant improvement to encourage this growth of bus use. Another respondent, noted that any future integration has to include all of the bus companies, which is difficult as they tend to work independently which can be to the detriment of customers.

Key Findings

- 63% identified that bus improvements were a 'very high' / 'high' priority.
- Numerous suggestions about further improvements to bus services.
- Needs to be a significant improvement in bus services to encourage bus use.

Issues to Resolve

- Commercial reality of rural feeder services serving Park & Ride sites.
- Integration between bus services and between rail and bus services.

Capabilities on project:
Transportation

- Feasibility of extending bus services beyond 5-6pm / reinstating weekend and bank holiday services.
- Feasibility of providing Cross-City services.
- Frequencies of services to/from rural areas and journey times.

3.20 Scheme 20: Enhanced station facilities and interchange opportunities

Typically, those commenting on the scheme were positive as it was seen to encourage public transport use. With regards to the level of priority, the scheme was ranked 3rd amongst those aged 65 or over compared with a rank of 7th out of all respondents. The majority of comments referred to improving the interchange between modes at the station; Chester Cycling Campaign and Chester Accessibility Group suggested more cycle racks as the demand for the current provision is greater than supply with people resorting to using the railings.

The availability of car parking was also discussed as it was stated that Helsby Car Park overflows on weekdays, Bache is full by 8am on weekdays, and there are issues in Hoole and at Chester itself with provision considered inadequate. Finally, it was suggested the bus service from Blacon to the station should be timetabled to connect with some of the frequent trains.

“Much more cycle storage is needed, the current racks are already overfull and some people use railings. New bike parking should be as close to platforms as possible.” [Chester Cycling Campaign]

Key Findings

- 54% of respondents deemed the scheme to be a ‘Very high’ / ‘high’ priority.

Issues to Resolve

- Land availability / affordability of increasing parking spaces.
- Improved interchange between modes.

3.21 Scheme 21: New Park & Ride at Hoole Road

A proposed Park & Ride site at Hoole Road divided opinion. Some respondents stated their support for the scheme, for example the Chester Accessibility Group felt a new site at Hoole Road would take the pressure off demand at the Upton Park & Ride facility. The majority of responses were concerned about the potential impact of developing green belt land, whilst some were happy for the land to be used for the Park & Ride facility they were concerned this would lead to other developments of green belt land which they did not support. Meanwhile, others were strongly opposed to the use of green belt land for a Park & Ride facility. Chester Civic Trust felt the scheme wording needed careful consideration as the description mentions retail potential which leads to worries of a supermarket.

“It should be remembered that this site lies in the Green Belt and the possible creation of a Park & Ride terminus there should not be a springboard for further developments.” [Chester Archaeological Society]

“We would recommend that the release of the greenbelt for this purpose be treated as a special case and be subject to a covenant stating that the land should be returned to a field in the event of a Park & Ride no longer being required.” [Great Boughton Parish Council]

Several respondents felt an additional Park & Ride facility was not necessary as the existing sites were not operating at maximum capacity. Indeed, one Councillor felt the most suitable solution would be to expand the Whitchurch Road Park & Ride site (Boughton Heath) if the extra demand existed. Respondents also identified concerns regarding access to the site and the consequences for the road network; for example, two residents discussed the bottleneck of traffic at the bridge which would hinder improving the traffic flow.

“Existing 4 Park & Ride sites are not operating at maximum capacity and in most cases could be extended if needed” [Local Resident]

“Reducing the width of Hoole Road will cause unacceptable congestion and reduce accessibility to Hoole shops, as well as to the station and the city centre.” [Local Resident]

A Planning Consultant, acting on behalf of the Developer behind a proposed housing scheme at Mannings Lane, highlighted that the scheme put forward for consideration in the emerging development plan, includes provision of a Park & Ride site (c. 650 spaces). Whilst the proposed capacity is under the ultimate envisaged capacity of the site

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(based on consultants' need and demand assessment work), they highlight that given no other funding is forthcoming, the proposal is an attractive proposition given the Council's transport and economic aspirations. They also identified that a new signalled junction on the A56 would not be feasible as it contradicted their advice that the junction would have negative impact on the A56 flows.

Key Findings

- Scheme divided opinion amongst respondents with one side seeking to reduce incursion of the green belt and suggesting that alternative sites are preferential to those who recognise the strategic positioning of the site.
- Concerns regarding access to the site and consequences for the road network.
- Mannings Lane housing scheme proposal includes provision of a Park & Ride site.

Issues to Resolve

- Demand for an additional Park & Ride facility and size of facility against alternative proposal to expand the Boughton Heath
- Use of green belt land / appeal of Mannings Lane Housing scheme.

3.22 Scheme 22: Cross-Border Connectivity

The cross-border interdependency was acknowledged at the North East Wales/Mersey Dee Alliance Session; Flintshire County Council noted they are working with Merseytravel and CWaC to deliver a cross-border bus service between Runcorn and Mold, a public transport hub at Sealand Road was suggested for consideration as the Northern Gateway Development picks up pace and the issue of cross border ticketing was recognised as complex but necessary. Similarly, at the Chester Access Action Group, the need for parity of concessionary travel provision for rail travel across the border was highlighted.

Just nine respondents ranked this scheme within their top 5 with regards to importance for Chester and the scheme priority showed a divided opinion regarding the need for this scheme. However, those respondents making a comment on the scheme were generally supportive about improving connectivity. Several responses noted the need for more integrated working, for example, between train and bus companies and between authorities. Similarly, it was stated some services terminate at the existing bus exchange which is inconvenient for the main shopping area and onward travel. However, it was suggested that the development of a centralised bus station would resolve this problem. There were also concerns that elderly residents in Wales would have to pay to complete their journey if the bus services changed at Park & Ride sites.

"There is recognition of the problems of cross-border travel from both sides." [Bus Users Cymru Wales]

Key Findings

- Only nine respondents ranked this within their top 5 schemes but those respondents making a comment at events or in written communication were supportive of measures to improve connectivity.
- Political desire in North East Wales to work with partners to provide improved cross-border infrastructure and services.

Issues to Resolve

- Integration between rail and bus needed, as well as between authorities.
- Difficulties associated with integration between authorities in England and Wales.
- Impact of Bus Services Operators Grant (BSOG) changes in Wales.

3.23 Scheme 23: Chester Western Relief Road (CWRR)

This scheme divided opinion; whilst 41% felt it was of a 'high' or 'very high' priority, 38% felt it was of 'low priority' or 'not a priority' at all. Similarly, the scheme generated numerous written responses and comments at the Weekend Public Drop In session with a wide range of opinions, from those who thought a *"relief road for easier transportation is a fantastic idea"* to those who were opposed to any extension of the Outer Ring Road. In general, there was support for a scheme to reduce traffic in the city centre and the Inner Ring Road, for example Chester Accessibility Group said the scheme was of a 'very high' priority as it would link the A55 and A483 taking a lot of traffic out of the city centre. Furthermore, Chester Civic Trust stated their support particularly with the proposed construction of

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1,300 new homes and increased traffic flow this would create. Comments on the Feedback Form showed slightly more respondents had a preference for Option Two compared with Option One.

The majority of comments were regarding Option Two from the written correspondence and this option was opposed for numerous reasons;

- Traffic levels on Sealand Road already too high;
- Use of Green Belt land and potentially encouraging future developments on this land;
- A Blacon Councillor felt there was a lack of information about the impact on the Dee Flood Risk Management Strategy objectives and no comprehensive understanding of flood drainage in the Sealand / Blacon Basin area;
- A Blacon Councillor thought links to Airbus area should be based on improving rail and bus connectivity for the residents and employees in the area;
- At the Local Member Briefing, a Blacon Councillor further highlighted concerns regarding the impact on Blacon if Option Two was implemented and followed Ferry Lane; and
- Concern the school would be separated from the community.

Finally, several respondents felt there was a need for greater consultation and discussion with the relevant residents, councils and organisations. For example, at the North East Wales/Mersey Dee Alliance session, Kevin Sutton stated Flintshire County Council were not supportive of Option Two but welcomed the opportunity for discussion with the community of Saltney.

“The Chester Western Relief Road is long overdue and should be given a high priority.” [Handbridge Park Councillor]

“In principle we strongly support the construction of this road in order to reduce the weight of through traffic on the western section of the Inner Ring Road. However, we do not consider that either of the proposed routes is satisfactory.” [Chester Archaeological Society]

“Opposed to Option 2 as it believed it would exacerbate the traffic problems which the Community already ensures by increasing the already high traffic volumes.” [Local Council]

A letter from Flintshire County Council, received after the closure of the consultation period, suggested that there is a need for further assessment / evidence to highlight the benefits of the scheme and aside from this consider that “the scheme would be so cost prohibitive as to make it an unviable proposition on any timeframe.”

Key Findings

- 41% felt ‘high’/‘very high’ priority, yet 38% felt ‘low’/‘not a priority’ at all.
- Support for reduction of traffic in city centre, but options suggested generated numerous opinions.
- Concerns included the use of greenbelt land, potential for encouraging further development and the flood risk
- Further discussion / engagement with residents, councils and organisations required.

Issues to Resolve

- Use of greenbelt land and technical feasibility.
- Consequences for Dee Flood risk.
- Political acceptability in Wales to pursue an alignment in Wales.

3.24 Scheme 24: Rail Electrification/Modernisation

Rail electrification was broadly supported in the responses given. One transport authority felt the Chester-Warrington Line was the most important as it is an extension of the North Trans-Pennine electrification and would allow electric services from Chester to Leeds. Meanwhile, the Chester Cycling Campaign felt the Mid-Cheshire Line should be the focus as it connects residential and employment areas and the current service is of poor quality. Tattenhall Council noted their support for the electrification of the Crewe-Chester Line and suggested Tattenhall as a new station as it is the largest settlement on the line.

“Merseytravel supports all the extensions of electrification in principle.” [Merseytravel]

Key Findings

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- Broadly supported but different suggestions with which lines were most important.

Issues to Resolve

- Understanding wider implications of electrification / modernisation, Northern Hub and High Speed 2.

3.25 Scheme 25: New Park & Ride rail stations at North Wrexham, Queensferry and Daresbury

This scheme was ranked last according to respondents scheme preference with just eight respondents including it within their top 5 schemes. Despite this, the written responses were generally supportive of new Park & Ride railway stations at these locations with some suggesting other stations which could be created including Beeston, Ledsham, Mickle Trafford, Saltney and Waverton. For example, at the Weekend Drop In session, the need for a new rail station at Saltney, potentially located behind Morrisons, was suggested as it was considered a growing area and would benefit Handbridge. In addition, at the North East Wales/Mersey Dee Alliance session, a representative from Taith suggested a new rail halt at Hawarden on the North Wales Coast Main Line serving a number of the key employment sites, which would be suitable for the promotion of Park & Ride.

Furthermore, Chester Accessibility Group stressed Park & Ride should be encouraged at stations to reduce the number of vehicles on the road.

A neighbouring transport authority identified a number of concerns about the proposed stations, it was thought Daresbury could have an adverse impact on Runcorn East and considered it unlikely Virgin would stop long distance services at both Warrington Bank Quay and Daresbury. With regards to Queensferry, it was felt this could have an adverse impact on Shotton. Similarly, Halton Borough Council stated the suggestion of a Park & Rail facility at Daresbury (Halton) should be reviewed as this is no longer an aspiration in Halton's recently adopted Core Strategy.

Key Findings

- Ranked last with regards to respondents scheme preference (only eight respondents included it within their top 5 schemes).
- Suggestions for other stations including Beeston, Saltney and Ledsham.
- Potential adverse impact at other locations if the new stations are built.

Issues to Resolve

- Daresbury no longer an aspiration in Halton Borough Council's Core Strategy.
- Wider aspirations for new stations.
- Location of Daresbury and Queensferry and impact on existing stations (i.e. Runcorn East and Shotton).
- Feasibility of additional stopping services / demand for faster service connections.

3.26 Scheme 26: Rail Service Enhancements

This scheme was largely supported with respondents keen for rail service enhancements; for example, a representative of the CPRE was particularly pleased that there were long-term plans for rail enhancements. The majority of those making a written comment referred to the improved service on the Mid-Cheshire Line and a direct service to Manchester Airport. Chester Civic Trust highlighted there are regular direct train services to/from Manchester Airport to Sheffield, Leeds, Scarborough and Blackpool, but not to Chester or North Wales. However, one transport authority felt the Northern Hub should provide a second Chester-Warrington-Manchester service, rather than an airport service.

Respondents also suggested new stations and increasing service frequency, for example, at the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Public Drop In event, one respondent suggested there should be a new station at Beeston. One respondent also thought there needed to be greater consideration for cyclist provision on trains. At the North East Wales/Mersey Dee Alliance session, a representative from Flintshire County Council highlighted the need to consider greater parking opportunities at Chester Railway Station, for example, the current hours of operation result in no parking being available for those travelling on early trains to London.

"The upgrading of the mid-Cheshire Line together with linking it to the proposed HS2 station at the airport would provide a major improvement to rail travel throughout mid-Cheshire and beyond." [Local Resident]

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“I commute to Runcorn East....It would be wonderful if there were more trains on this line.” [Local Resident]

Key Findings

- Welcomed improved service on the Mid-Cheshire Line.
- Direct service to Manchester Airport supported as currently no direct service despite services to other major cities.
- Suggestion for a second Chester-Warrington-Manchester service rather than an Airport service.

Issues to Resolve

- Greater consideration for cyclist provision on trains.
- Second Chester-Warrington-Manchester service rather than an Airport service.

3.27 Scheme 27: Halton Curve Reinstatement

Nearly half (46%) of the respondents completing the Feedback Form thought this scheme was of ‘low’ priority or ‘not at a priority’ at all. However, almost all of those commenting on this scheme were supportive, particularly as a result of the improved connectivity to Liverpool and Liverpool Airport. One local transport authority in particular welcomed the reference and support to the proposal and was actively working with partners including the Welsh Government to progress this.

Key Findings

- Nearly half (46%) thought this was of ‘low’ priority or ‘not at a priority’ at all.
- Supportive of improved connection to Liverpool.

Issues to Resolve

- Working with adjacent authorities to promote delivery of the scheme.

3.28 Scheme 28: Smarter Choices Package encouraging modal shift towards sustainable modes

Just nine respondents ranked this scheme within their top 5 with regards to their scheme preference and very few respondents commented on this scheme, however, any comments made were encouraging. One suggestion was to focus on providing environmental and infrastructure improvements before promoting Smarter Choices.

Key Findings

- Very few comments on this scheme and just nine ranked it within their top 5 schemes.

Issues to Resolve

- None.

3.29 Other Comments (not Scheme Related)

3.29.1 Walking and Cycling

Several respondents discussed the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians, and the Trust discussed their recent campaign ‘Share the Space, Drop your Pace’ which encourages users to be considerate of others. A number of respondents suggested additional cycle initiatives which included:

- Enhanced provision of cycle parking facilities;
- Improving the safety of cycling;
- When there are steps, for example over the footbridge by the railway line near the racecourse, provision of a wheeling ramp to help push the bike up;
- Separate cars and cyclists;
- Encourage employers to incentivise cycling (and walking) by not charging for car parking on days when they do not travel by car;

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- Creation of more shared-space areas, for example outside Chester station;
- System of safe cycle routes linked together, for example, there is no easy and safe cycle route from the north of the city into the city centre. Furthermore, example of too many very short sections which of little use;
- One resident felt that whilst a variety of cycle initiatives had been implemented there were very few cyclists with many who do cycle choosing to ignore the cycle lanes provided; and
- At the Chester Access Action Group an improved pedestrian footbridge was argued to be needed in the vicinity of St. Martin's Way in order to cross the canal.

At the Chester Access Action Group improvements to walking were suggested with regards to better maintenance of existing pavements (including overgrowing hedges) and the need for a walking strategy to complement the cycling strategy. One resident made a suggestion to improve walking facilities and this was to improve pedestrian routes outside the radial routes from the Inner Ring Road.

3.29.2 Public Transport

The need for greater integration between transport modes, particularly rail and bus, was highlighted by several respondents in the written comments and at events. Similarly, some respondents completing the Feedback Form stated their selection of top 5 schemes during the Scheme Ranking exercise reflected the interdependence of schemes. Some respondents specifically stated there was a need to encourage public transport use, whilst others suggested further recommendations for bus and train services:

- *"Encourage more people onto public transport by offering discount fares if you buy weekly, monthly or annual tickets";*
- *"The plan must ensure the very best possible facilities for public transport";*
- *"There must continue to be bus access to the market/library/town hall/Cathedral area";*
- Three respondents suggested the re-introduction of a tram system in Chester;
- A Handbridge Park Councillor noted the importance of considering elderly residents who are dependent on bus services. The example of a recent change in route for services from Handbridge to City Centre with buses turning left into Grosvenor Street rather than right into Pepper Street was used. This meant passengers have to walk further from the bus stop to main shopping area and the Pepper Street stop is preferred because it is near to the escalator into the Grosvenor Shopping Centre;
- Elderly resident mentioned bus service cancelled in Highfield Road and Oakfield Road, Blacon and would like this to be reinstated;
- One respondent suggested all buses travel anticlockwise around the inner ring road so that bus doors would be on city side and passengers would not need to cross the road;
- One Local Council was concerned about recent changes to bus services and routes. Furthermore, as a parish with a high elderly population and it was felt current services did not serve the sheltered housing development;
- At the Chester Access Action Group there were concerns that CwaC will not allow use of concessionary bus fares before 9.30am and on Park & Ride facilities. Other concerns raised at the Group included bus movements around the Countess Campus and concerns about the introduction of shared space schemes, particularly for those with visual impairments.

3.29.3 Private Car

Whilst one respondent felt cars were essential to Chester due to the rural location, others felt the speed limits should be reviewed, there should be greater parking restrictions and improvements to the traffic flow. During the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Public Drop In suggestions were made for the utilisation of right-hand turn green filters on Grosvenor Street / Lower Bridge Street (towards Handbridge) and Bumpers Lane / Sealand Road (towards Chester City Centre) to aid traffic flow [n.b. both requests were issued to the Area Highways Team 16/09 to investigate and respond] and the need to improve vehicular signage for visitors leaving the City Centre. Chester Archaeological Society stated a more positive view of the private car needs to be considered, particularly with the competition from out-of-town sites such as Cheshire Oaks. Similarly, one resident felt excluding private cars did not reflect people's relationship with the car.

"Chester as a shopping centre has fallen about 40 places (over the past decade) in public esteem, part of the problem is an unwelcoming traffic flow system so this requires improvement."

"Improve the sequencing of traffic lights at busy junctions."

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3.29.4 Taxis

The need to provide greater consideration of private taxis in the strategy was raised by a number of respondents, in both written comments and at events, and this could potentially include permitting Private Hire vehicles to use bus lanes. Chester Licensed Hackney Association noted the exclusion of public hire (black cabs) from the integration of the transport system. The Association stated they represent over 170 vehicles in the city and provide a service at all times, therefore, felt taxi ranks needed to be provided within the city so that an efficient service could be provided.

At the Weekend Public Drop In, a representative from the White Friars Residents Association, wanted to understand if any proposals for White Friars / taxi routeing were included in the emerging strategy. At an additional briefing session with the Local Residents Groups, the necessary role of taxis for the night time economy was noted, but that too many licences had been issued with negative layover impact on Bridge Street and adjoining streets. Similarly, a representative from the White Friars Residents Association noted there was significant taxi activity on White Friars at the weekends, which caused issues for local residents. It is understood that the issue of taxis on White Friars is currently being considered by the Highways Team.

3.29.5 Waterways and Towpaths

The Canal and River Trust highlighted the value of the region's waterways; it was felt waterways and towpaths have an important role in offering greater travel choices for cycling, walking and travelling in a car-free environment. The Trust highlighted the use of the canal at Gorse Stacks as an entry point to the city and thought new development around the proposed bus station could contribute to this welcome to visitors to Chester. Similarly, improvements to the canal, particularly as it passes the University, Hospital and high residential development areas in the east, were suggested at the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop In session. The Trust stated they were keen to work with CwaC to agree on improvements and ensure the towpath is well integrated into the city network. As detailed above, during the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop In session, the need to improve the maintenance (surface and vegetation) of the Shropshire Union Canal towpath to Ellesmere Port was identified.

3.29.6 Overall Strategy

A number of comments were made about the overall strategy and these were:

- A Handbridge Park Councillor concluded the proposals were sensible, but lacked final detail which would be provided following further analysis;
- Two Councillors (from Chester Villages and Handbridge Park) were supportive of the study and welcomed the opportunity to provide comments on the strategy throughout the consultation;
- One resident felt all transport should be at one central exchange so visitors and locals can more easily travel around the area;
- One resident thought it was important the historic nature of the city is considered by the Strategy and thought changes needed to enhance the appearance or efficiency of the city;
- A Blacon Councillor stated the Strategy, Northgate Proposals and Local Plan were inter-dependent;
- At the Transport Strategy/ Local Plan Joint Drop In event, key themes were the need to prioritise access for the elderly, particularly as there is an ageing population, and preserving the city's history; and
- At the North East Wales / Mersey Dee Alliance Session, representatives were supportive of the synergy between the strategy and the recently published North East Wales Integrated Transport Taskforce (NEWITT) Report.

4. Summary of Consultation

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4 Summary of Consultation

4.1 Summary

Table 4.1 gives a synopsis of the feedback from the consultation process for each proposed scheme. The priority rating and overall ranking is also listed. Any refinements to the schemes or items to be addressed are detailed to inform the selection process for the Chester Transport Strategy.

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Table 4.1: Summary of Consultation

Scheme	Scoring		Potential Scheme Refinements	Key Issues to Resolve
	Priority 'Very High' / 'High'	Overall Ranking (based on scheme Preferences)		
1. Traffic management and public realm enhancements at Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street / Town Hall Square.	60%	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suggestion for alternative routeing on Hunter Street as an interim solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Securing access to the Cathedral for the Elderly and the Disabled. - Access arrangements for events at the Cathedral (e.g. graduation ceremonies). - Servicing / accessing existing businesses on Northgate Street and Abbey Square. - Facilitating future Cathedral development aspirations. - Egress arrangements from Abbey Square – may necessitate section of 2-way to maintain exits via Hunter Street and ensure no additional penetration of St. Werburgh Street. - Location and type of access restrictions, management and enforcement (entire zone).
2. Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements.	48%	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of a City Metroshuttle / Shopper Hopper. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connectivity with the Core City Centre / Market Area (including walking routes). - Design and size (plot size, no. of stands) of bus layout – some negativity over potential 'drive in – reverse out' facility. - Extent of services using the bus station, impact on other key nodes within the City Centre. - Number and type of services within existing Northgate Development. - Inclusion of Coach and Park & Ride Services.

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Scheme	Scoring		Potential Scheme Refinements	Key Issues to Resolve
	Priority 'Very High' / 'High'	Overall Ranking (based on scheme Preferences)		
3. Public realm and traffic reduction on St. John Street / Vicars Lane to improve links between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre / Groves.	38%	21	-	- Increase in congestion on the Inner Ring Road.
4. Enhanced parking and shopmobility facilities for persons with mobility impairments.	56%	6	-	- Ensuring alternative provision is sufficient to meet demand and located in close proximity to key destinations. - Impact of relocating Blue Badge parking on other areas of the City Centre.
5. The Bars Pedestrian / Cycle accessibility improvements.	38%	18	- Suggestion to reuse subways for alternative purposes e.g. cycle hub(s).	- Impact of provision of at-grade facilities on traffic queues and knock-on impact on AQMA at Boughton.
6. Northgate Junction Area Improvements.	38%	17	-	- Impacts on queuing and congestion of wider IRR traffic. - Access arrangements to Delamere Street / Bus Station / Medical Centre.
7. Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities.	37%	20	-	- Integration with new bus station. - Pick-up / drop-off arrangements at new Theatre / Library and in context of proposals for Northgate.
8. City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements.	55%	7	- Inclusion of a new pedestrian / cycle bridge across the Dee. - Removal of prohibition of cycling on the Suspension Bridge. - Creation of 20mph zone in the City Centre.	- Acceptance of permitting cycling in pedestrianised / shared-space zones. - Enforcement of penalties for cyclists on footways.
9. Active Traffic Management including enhancements to Variable Messages Signs and Urban Traffic Control.	36%	18	- Develop existing cycle points to improve information for cyclists.	-

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Scheme	Scoring		Potential Scheme Refinements	Key Issues to Resolve
	Priority 'Very High' / 'High'	Overall Ranking (based on scheme Preferences)		
10. Chester Parking Strategy.	58%	3	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overspill parking in City Centre fringe. Conflict between promoting parking for economic reasons and wider aspirations to reduce impact of vehicular traffic in the City Centre. Need for extension of Residents Parking Zones.
11. Junction improvements to tackle congestion at key pinch points - linked to emerging housing and development proposals.	60%	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to resolve 'Hamburger junction'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further analysis to understand hotspots and pinch points – refer to Atkins Modelling.
12. Race / events / match day sustainable access from the City Centre.	38%	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race day Park & Ride from Council Facility on Bumpers Lane. Better cycle parking facilities. 	
13. Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre.	52%	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link between Lightfoot Street and Hoole side of Hoole Bridge and Millennium Greenway. Cycle contraflow lane along Brook Street. 	
14. Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton.	37%	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permission for taxis to use bus lanes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility of engineering measures (e.g. bus lanes, bus gates etc) – need for feasibility studies. Potential impacts on traffic flows / congestion.
15. Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit.	43%	13	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Competition with commercial services. Elderly have to pay for Park & Ride service? Lengthen journey times
16. Travel Planning Package, incorporating workplaces, schools and residential areas.	28%	25	-	-
17. SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing.	33%	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include cycle hire scheme within SmartCard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feasibility of a Residents' Card.

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Scheme	Scoring		Potential Scheme Refinements	Key Issues to Resolve
	Priority 'Very High' / 'High'	Overall Ranking (based on scheme Preferences)		
18.Enhanced Cycle Priority: Chester to Sealand, Broughton and Wrexham.	35%	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resurfacing and Lighting Improvements on the Canal towpaths (e.g. between City Centre, University and the Hospital). - Extension of cycle route from Mickle Trafford to Great Barrow. 	-
19.Bus Service Improvements.	63%	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Direct services from Park & Ride sites more desirable. - Additional information notice board at Chester Bus Exchange following closure of kiosk. - Cross-city bus routes. - Extend evening bus services. - Reinstate Sunday/Holiday services. - Circular shuttle bus. - Bicycle racks on buses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration between bus companies. - Commercial reality of rural feeder services serving Park & Ride sites.
20.Enhanced station facilities and interchange opportunities.	54%	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bus times to coincide with train departures. - More cycle racks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Car parking availability - Improve interchange between modes at stations
21.New Park & Ride at Hoole Road.	37%	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alternative: Expand the Boughton Heath (Whitchurch Road) Park & Ride. - New signalled junction on A56 not recommended. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Projected size of facility. - Local Plan appeal for Mannings Lane site. - Impact of development on Green Belt land. - Impact on traffic – bottleneck at bridge.
22.Cross Border Connectivity.	34%	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centralised bus station 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration between rail and bus companies. - Difficulties associated with integration between authorities in England and Wales. - Impact of BSOG changes in Wales.
23.Chester Western Relief Road.	41%	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further discussion with residents and organisations affected required for this scheme to be considered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feasibility of route in Flintshire Boundary. - Use of Green Belt land. - Impact on Dee Flood Risk Management Strategy.

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Scheme	Scoring		Potential Scheme Refinements	Key Issues to Resolve
	Priority 'Very High' / 'High'	Overall Ranking (based on scheme Preferences)		
24. Rail Electrification / Modernisation.	46%	13	Suggestions for lines for be considered: - Chester-Warrington Line - Mid-Cheshire Line - Crewe-Chester Line with Tattenhall as a new station	- Selection of line to be prioritised.
25. New Park & Ride rail stations at North Wrexham, Queensferry and Daresbury.	29%	28	- Reopen other stations (Beeston, Saltney and Ledsham).	- Station at Daresbury not currently being pursued by Halton Borough Council. - Daresbury could have an adverse impact on Runcorn East. - Location of new station at Queensferry or enhanced facility at Hawarden Bridge – impact on Shotton. - Feasibility of additional stopping services / demand for faster services / connections.
26. Rail Service Enhancements.	53%	8	- Provide direct service to Manchester Airport. - Improve service on Mid-Cheshire Line.	- Upgrade the Chester-Warrington- Manchester service before providing additional services.
27. Halton Curve Reinstatement.	35%	21	-	-
28. Smarter Choices Package encouraging modal shift towards sustainable modes	34%	26	-	- Consider promoting environmental and infrastructure improvements before promoting “Smarter Choices”

Appendix A: Scheme Priority and Scheme Ranking Results

Appendix A: Scheme Priority and Scheme Ranking Results

The following charts show the Scheme Priority results overall and for those who are aged 65 and over and those who are disabled.

Figure A.1: Overall Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by level of Scheme Priority)

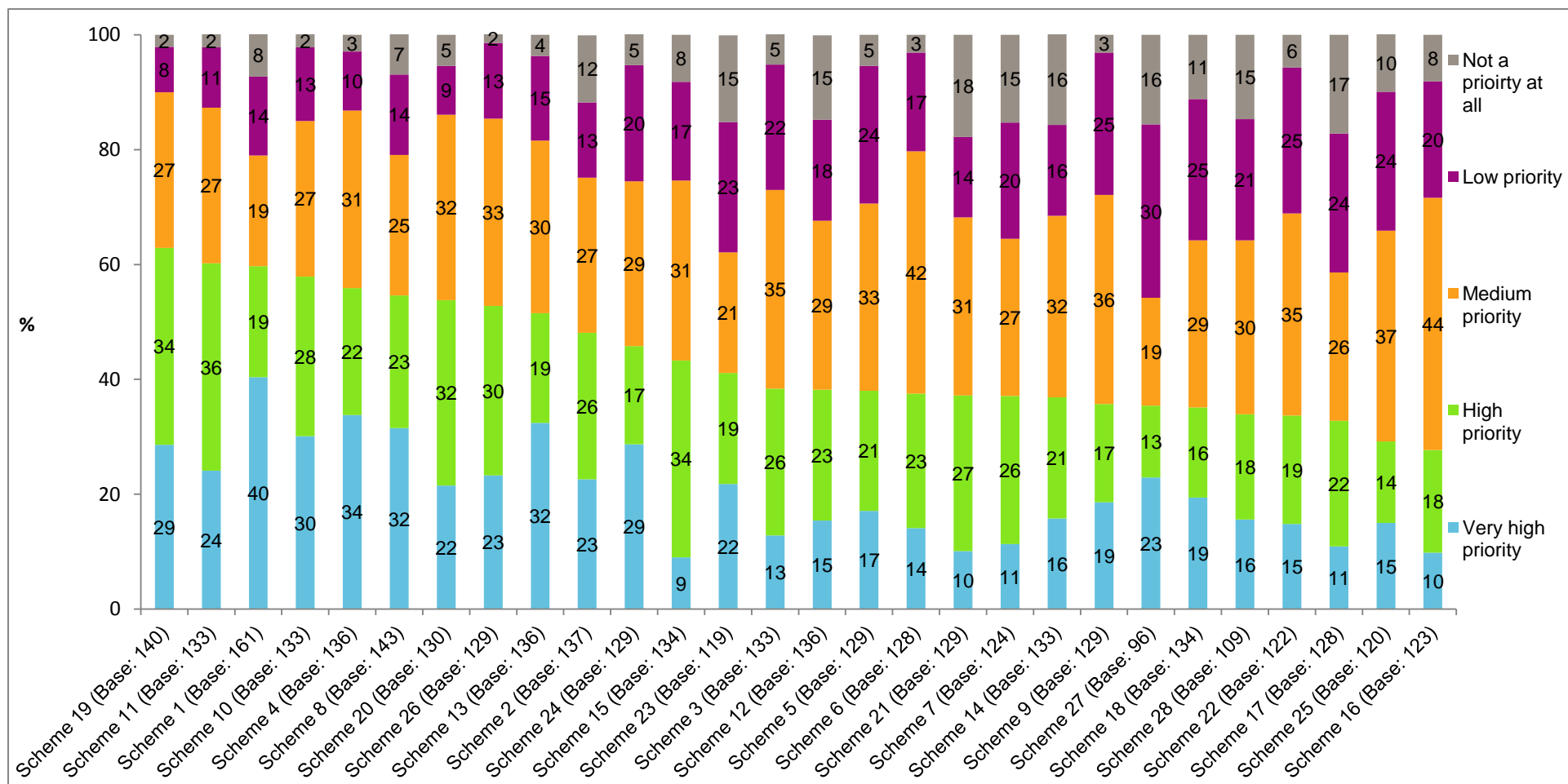


Figure A.2: Overall Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by Scheme Number)

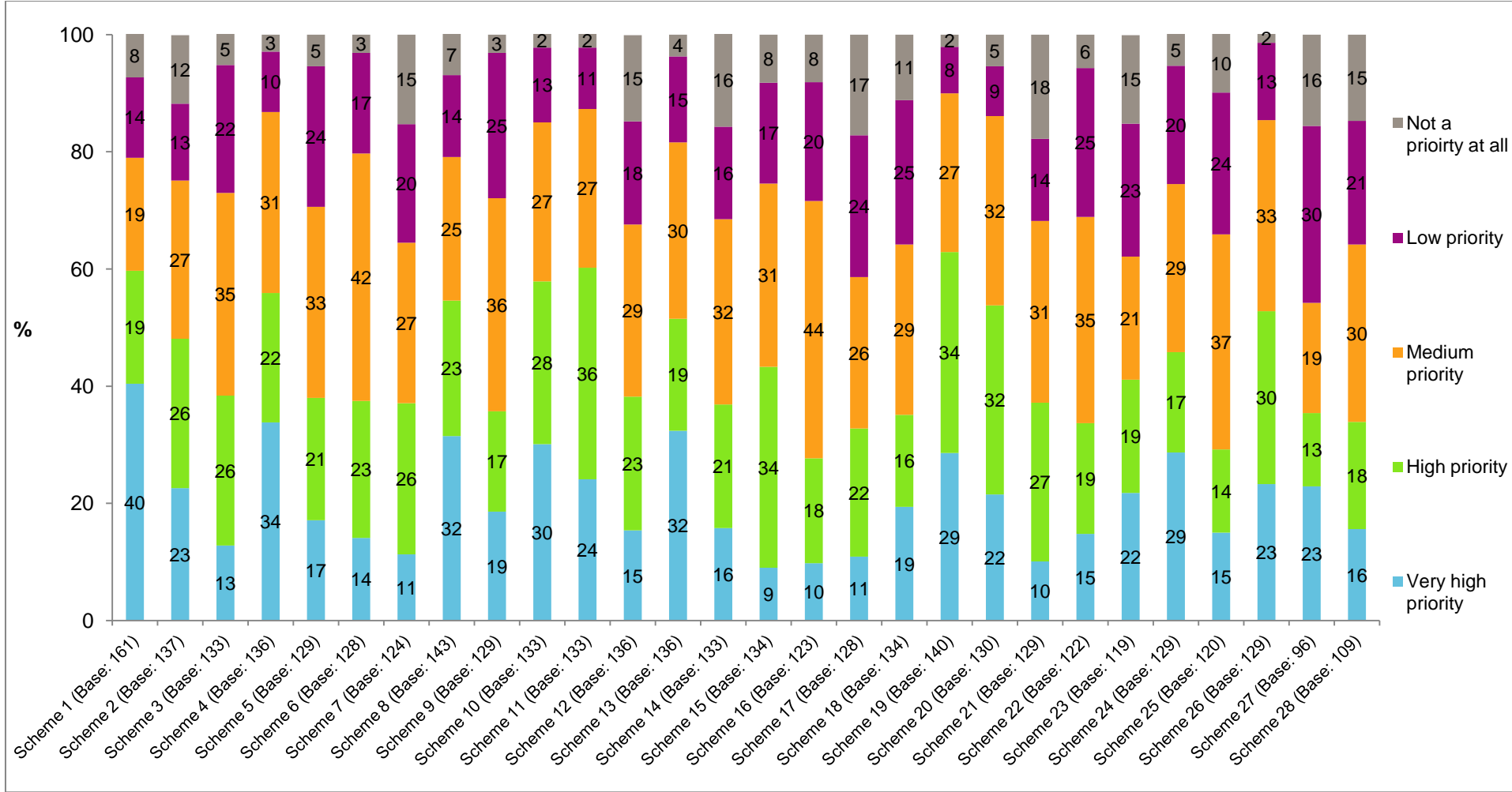


Figure A.3: Over 65's Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by Level of Scheme Priority)

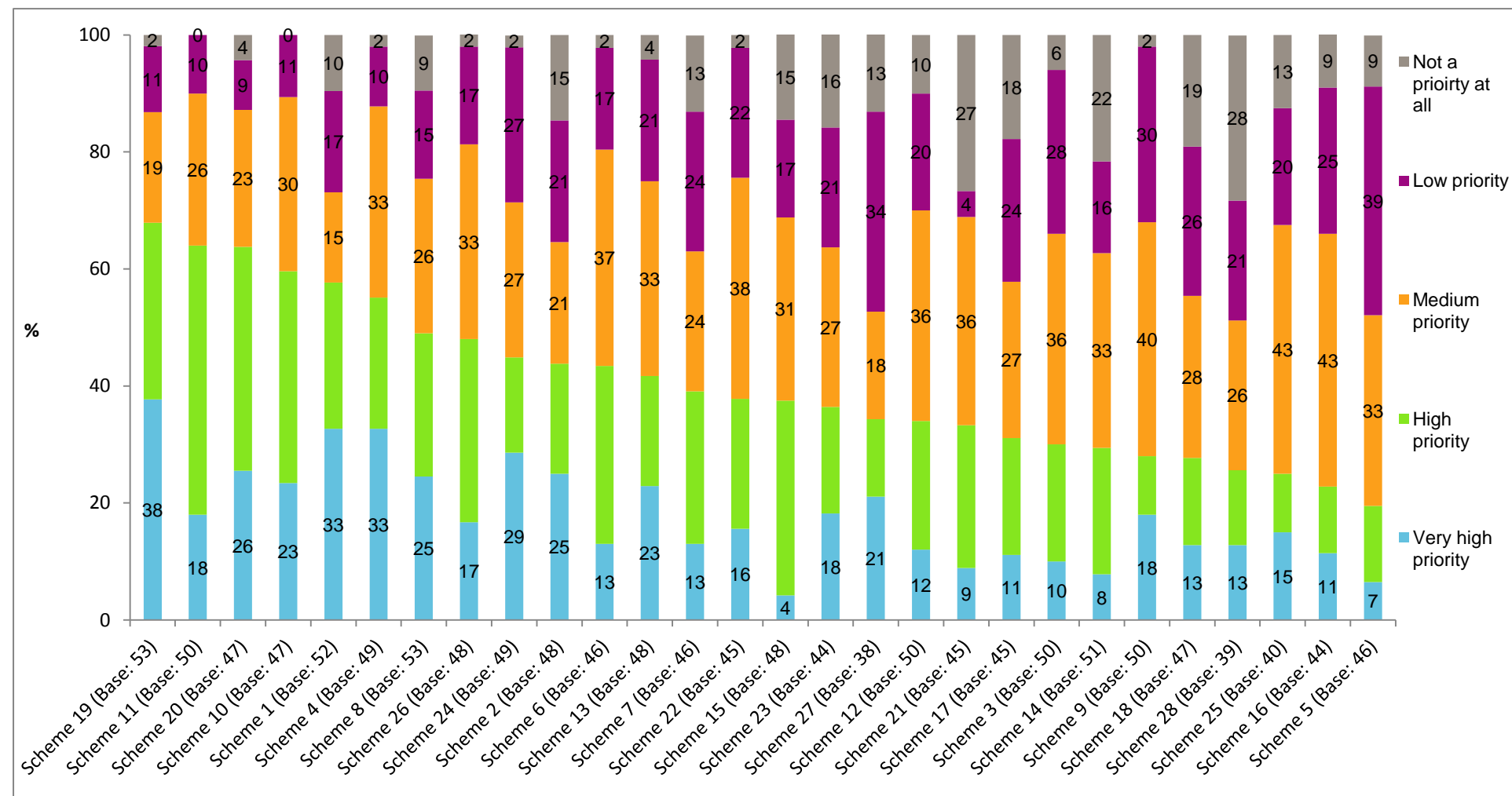


Figure A.4: Over 65's Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by Scheme Number)

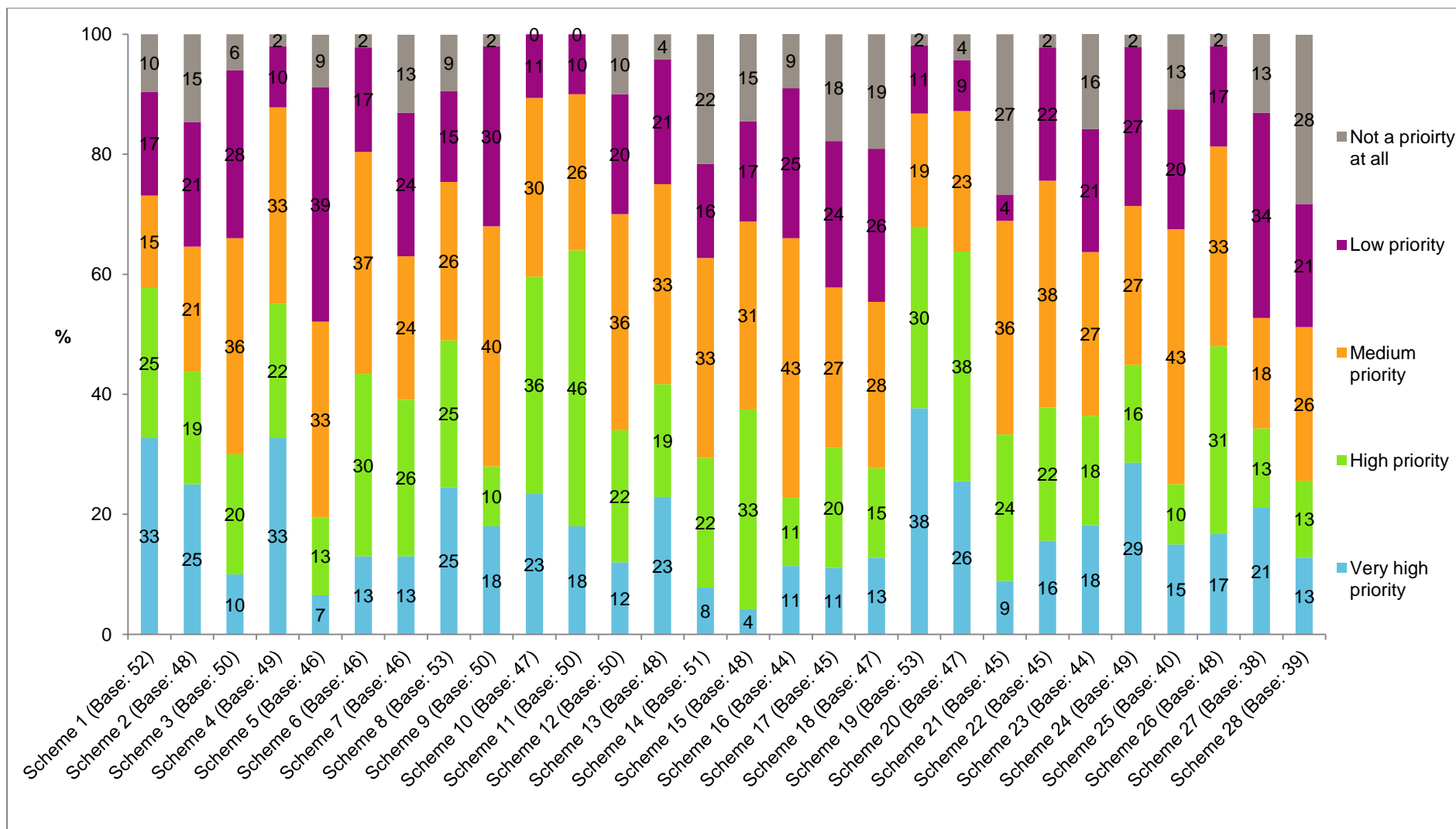


Figure A.5: Disabled Persons Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by Level of Scheme Priority)

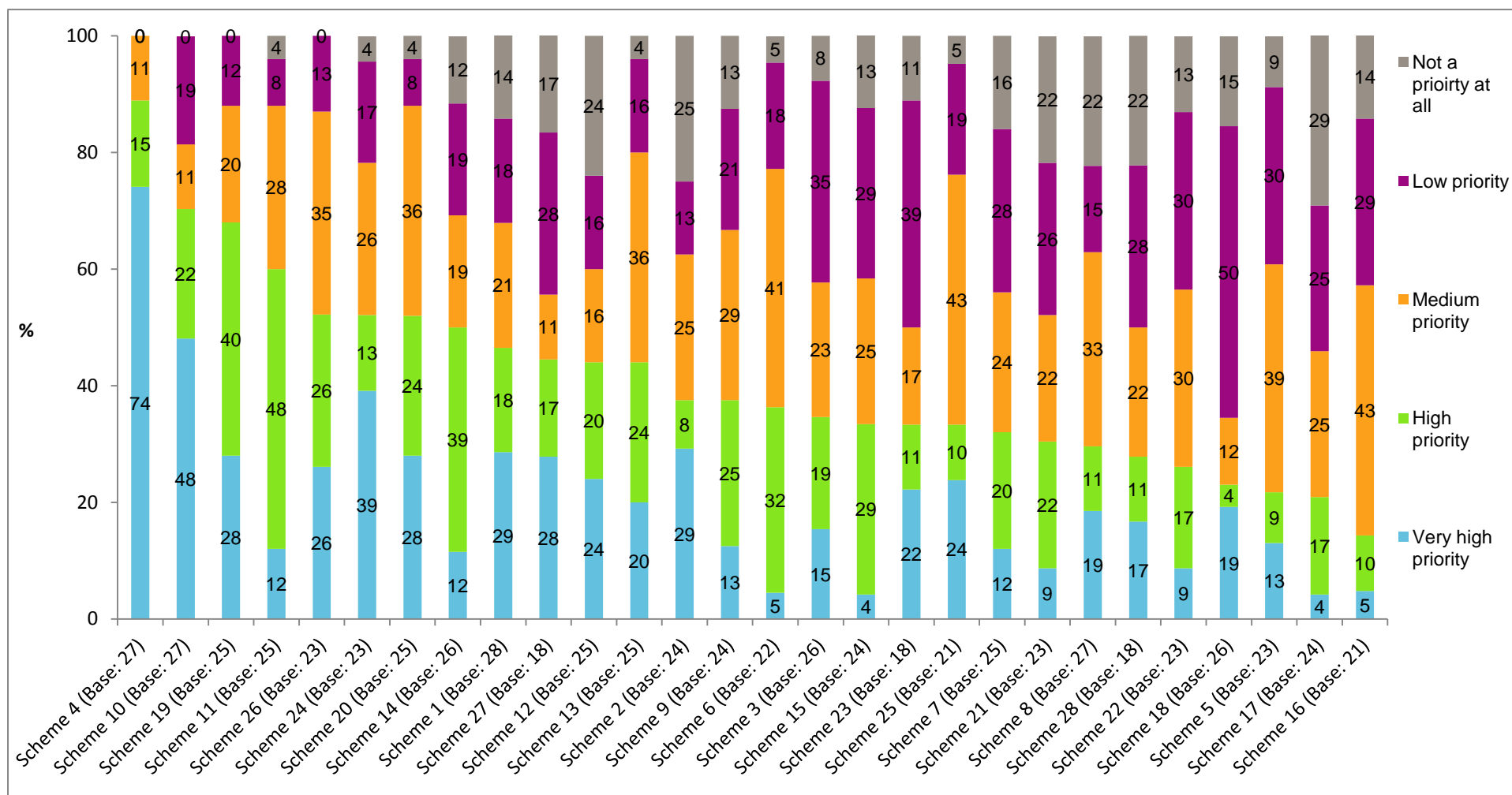


Figure A.6: Disabled Persons Level of Priority for each Scheme (Ordered by Scheme Number)

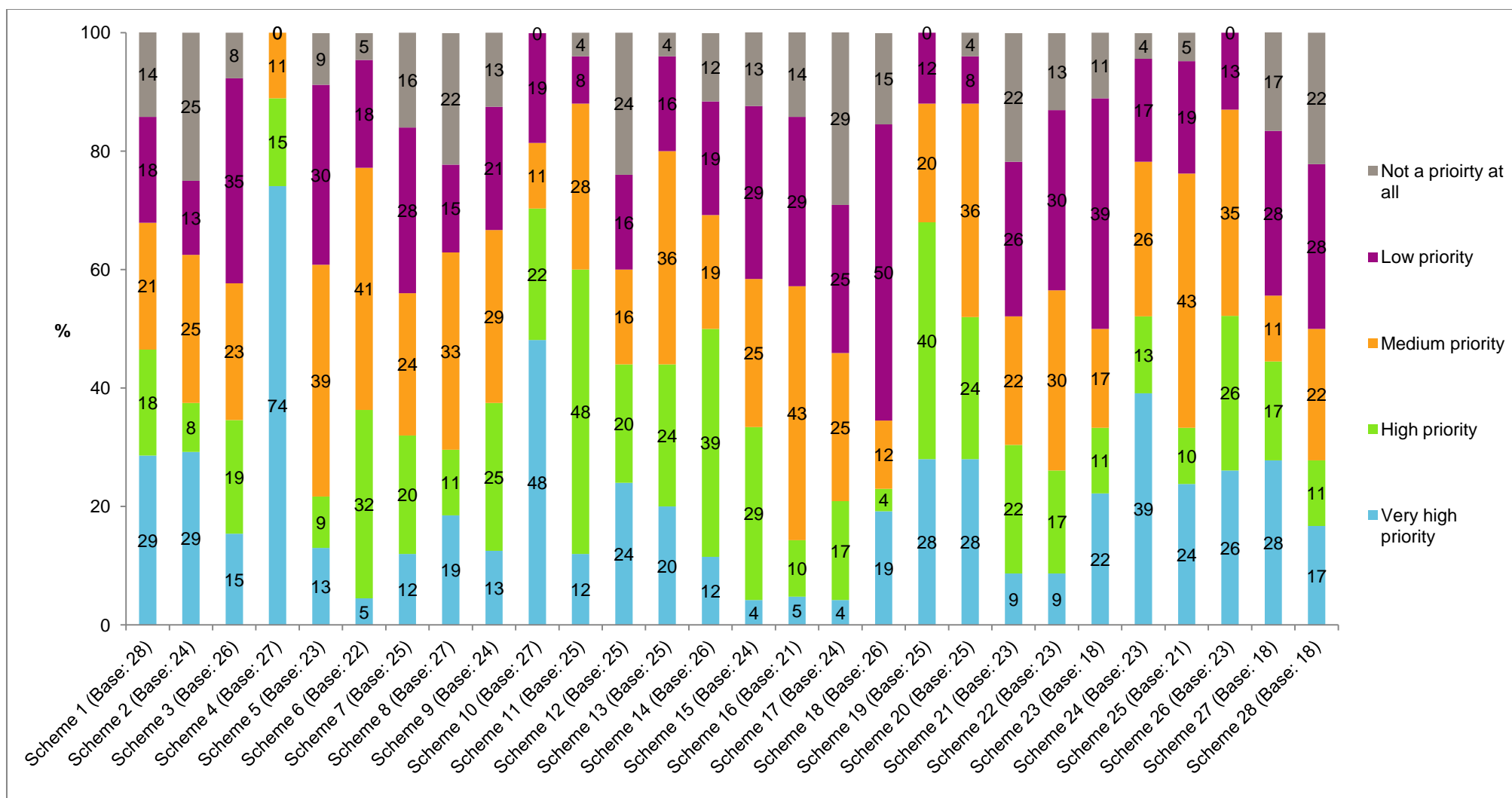


Table A.1: Scheme Ranking (by Scheme Number)

	Scheme	Rank One (n)	Rank Two (n)	Rank Three (n)	Rank Four (n)	Rank Five (n)	Ranked in Top Five (n)	Over all Rank
01	Traffic management and public realm enhancements at Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street / Town Hall Square.	40	8	3	3	8	62	1
02	Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements.	5	7	5	7	3	27	9
03	Public realm and traffic reduction on St. John Street / Vicars Lane to improve links between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre / Groves.	1	3	1	3	6	14	21
04	Enhanced parking and shopmobility facilities for persons with mobility impairments.	23	5	6	1	6	41	6
05	The Bars Pedestrian / Cycle accessibility improvements.	2	3	3	8	1	17	18
06	Northgate Junction Area Improvements.	2	5	2	5	5	19	17
07	Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities.	1	2	3	6	4	16	20
08	City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements.	9	10	6	8	6	39	7
09	Active Traffic Management including enhancements to Variable Messages Signs and Urban Traffic Control.	4	4	5	4	0	17	18
10	Chester Parking Strategy.	8	17	11	5	4	45	3
11	Junction improvements to tackle congestion at key pinch points - linked to emerging housing and development proposals.	6	5	11	10	10	42	4
12	Race / events / matchday sustainable access from the City Centre.	0	6	7	4	3	20	16
13	Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre.	17	11	8	4	2	42	4
14	Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton.	2	3	5	7	5	22	11
15	Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit.	5	3	6	2	5	21	13
16	Travel Planning Package, incorporating workplaces, schools and residential areas.	1	3	2	2	2	10	25
17	SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing.	0	0	5	2	4	11	24
18	Enhanced Cycle Priority: Chester to Sealand, Broughton and Wrexham.	3	4	2	2	1	12	23
19	Bus Service Improvements.	10	12	9	8	8	47	2
20	Enhanced station facilities and interchange opportunities.	2	3	5	6	5	21	13
21	New Park & Ride at Hoole Road.	2	3	4	5	8	22	11
22	Cross Border Connectivity.	0	2	1	3	3	9	26
23	Chester Western Relief Road.	10	6	3	3	4	26	10
24	Rail Electrification / Modernisation.	3	1	5	5	7	21	13
25	New Park & Ride rail stations at North Wrexham, Queensferry and Daresbury.	1	1	2	4	0	8	28
26	Rail Service Enhancements.	2	7	6	6	7	28	8
27	Halton Curve Reinstatement.	4	0	4	2	4	14	21
28	Smarter Choices Package encouraging modal shift towards sustainable modes	1	1	3	2	2	9	26
Base (n)		164	135	133	127	123		

*n.b. 25 respondents only ranked their first choice [Scheme 1]

Table A.2: Scheme Ranking (by Overall Rank Position)

	Scheme	Rank One (n)	Rank Two (n)	Rank Three (n)	Rank Four (n)	Rank Five (n)	Ranked in Top Five (n)	Overall Rank
01	Traffic management and public realm enhancements at Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street / Town Hall Square.	40	8	3	3	8	62	1
19	Bus Service Improvements.	10	12	9	8	8	47	2
10	Chester Parking Strategy.	8	17	11	5	4	45	3
11	Junction improvements to tackle congestion at key pinch points - linked to emerging housing and development proposals.	6	5	11	10	10	42	4
13	Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre.	17	11	8	4	2	42	4
04	Enhanced parking and shopmobility facilities for persons with mobility impairments.	23	5	6	1	6	41	6
08	City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements.	9	10	6	8	6	39	7
26	Rail Service Enhancements.	2	7	6	6	7	28	8
02	Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements.	5	7	5	7	3	27	9
23	Chester Western Relief Road.	10	6	3	3	4	26	10
21	New Park & Ride at Hoole Road.	2	3	4	5	8	22	11
14	Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton.	2	3	5	7	5	22	11
15	Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit.	5	3	6	2	5	21	13
20	Enhanced station facilities and interchange opportunities.	2	3	5	6	5	21	13
24	Rail Electrification / Modernisation.	3	1	5	5	7	21	13
12	Race / events / matchday sustainable access from the City Centre.	0	6	7	4	3	20	16
06	Northgate Junction Area Improvements.	2	5	2	5	5	19	17
05	The Bars Pedestrian / Cycle accessibility improvements.	2	3	3	8	1	17	18
09	Active Traffic Management including enhancements to Variable Messages Signs and Urban Traffic Control.	4	4	5	4	0	17	18
07	Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities.	1	2	3	6	4	16	20
03	Public realm and traffic reduction on St. John Street / Vicars Lane to improve links between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre / Groves.	1	3	1	3	6	14	21
27	Halton Curve Reinstatement.	4	0	4	2	4	14	21
18	Enhanced Cycle Priority: Chester to Sealand, Boughton and Wrexham.	3	4	2	2	1	12	23
17	SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing.	0	0	5	2	4	11	24
16	Travel Planning Package, incorporating workplaces, schools and residential areas.	1	3	2	2	2	10	25
22	Cross Border Connectivity.	0	2	1	3	3	9	26
28	Smarter Choices Package encouraging modal shift towards sustainable modes	1	1	3	2	2	9	26
25	New Park & Ride rail stations at North Wrexham, Queensferry and Daresbury.	1	1	2	4	0	8	28
Base (n)		164	135	133	127	123		

*n.b. 25 respondents only ranked their first choice [Scheme

