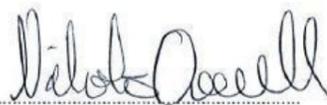


Chester Transport Strategy & Vision

Recommendations Report



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1 Introduction



Capabilities on project: Transportation

1 Introduction

1.1 Outline

In February 2012, a Notice of Motion was passed at a meeting of Cheshire West and Chester Council's Executive, calling for:

"...the Directors of Regeneration, and Environments and Communities to work alongside Chester Renaissance to deliver a scheme that would remove vehicles from St. Werburgh Street and introduce an alternative route ... for vehicles requiring access to city centre premises such as retail outlets and hotels outside permitted early morning goods delivery times ... This would allow the creation of an area of public realm in one of the most prestigious parts of Chester and would facilitate an improvement of the visitor experience."

In the wake of a number of desirable but, at the time untested aspirations within the One City Plan and other regeneration documents to improve accessibility and remove sources of severance, this Notice of Motion became the catalyst for a comprehensive and all-encompassing Transport Strategy for the City of Chester, to guide Transport Policy for the following 15 years.

The Council's Executive endorsed the preparation of a new transport strategy for Chester in May 2012. This was considered essential to support the delivery of the One City Plan, the Local Plan and wider regeneration and development aspirations for the city including the Northgate Development and the new theatre.

The Transport Strategy was commissioned to provide guidance on investment and to prioritise transport schemes within an area that is focussed on the city centre, and extends to include the whole of Chester's urban area, and its wider zone of influence including other parts of West Cheshire, Merseyside, and North East Wales. Indeed, it was found during early desktop research on the city's travel patterns, that Flintshire (and specifically Deeside) has the highest inter-dependence with Chester outside of the city limits, in terms of proportions of people travelling to and from work.

In order to undertake the study by the most comprehensive and inclusive means possible, AECOM employed a methodology that included baseline research, on-site auditing and surveys, stakeholder engagement, option identification, and option appraisal to produce an emerging Transport Strategy for the city that could be put to the general public and tested using specialist industry standard network modelling tools.

The previously issued "Baseline Report" (revised draft, September 2013) and "Options & Assessment Report" (September 2013), summarise the key findings and outputs from each of these stages, however for the purposes of this report, the process resulted in a list of 28 transformational super-schemes for Chester which were then packaged by timescale, spatial dimension and

theme and presented to the public during a six-week public consultation process between early September and mid-October 2013. Proformas ("Emerging Transport Strategy – Scheme Proformas" September 2013) detailing each of these were produced and made available online and in hard copy format prior to the consultation.

The schemes and their groupings are detailed in **Section 2**, broken down by spatial reference (i.e. 'Historic Core', 'City Wide', and 'Outer Area').

Each scheme is also referenced against seven goals, which were identified following analysis of the key issues and opportunities. These are shown in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: CTS Key Goals

1. Supporting city centre development and the aspirations of the One City Plan;
2. Enhancing transport connectivity to and from the rural hinterland, and across local, regional, and national borders;
3. Improving Chester's sustainable accessibility and alternative transport offer;
4. Responding to changes in residential and other land use patterns;
5. Increasing the reliability, safety and efficiency of core transport networks for the city;
6. Safeguarding quality of life within Chester by securing the long term future of its environment; and
7. Responding to strategic transport changes.

1.2 Report Contents

This document, the final of three documents, contains the recommendations of the Transport Strategy and the results of the public consultation, noting which schemes found most approval amongst the general public and which were not generally supported. The key outcomes of the strategic network modelling exercise are also presented. This highlights how the network is expected to react to the measures suggested in the context of the city centre and wider development, including an assumed implementation of the under-consultation greenbelt strategy.

The report goes on to discuss estimated costs and funding mechanisms for each of the measures described, and this will then provide an indication of the relative affordability of each. Ultimately, a balance must be found between the requirements to provide each measure (as determined by the baseline work, consultation and modelling), and the practical likelihood of

obtaining funding so that a strategy that is based on a real-world situation may be developed. This will then represent the final refinement in the strategy development.

To conclude, this report will discuss the envisaged Phasing Implementation plan for each component of the strategy and will then present an immediate Action Plan of first steps for the Council to ensure delivery of key schemes by key milestones. A good example of this phased process is in the delivery of Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange, which will be necessary prior to the opening of the Northgate Development, and the wider Northgate Street/St. Werburgh Street improvements that form an early stage of the strategy.

In short, this document represents the final stage of the Strategy development and passes the baton to the Council and the people of the City of Chester to take forward their own strategy for the next 15 years. Ultimately it will be down to those that live, work and enjoy the city to help to deliver the schemes necessary to ensure that the city maintains its place as a premier destination within England, the UK and Europe, and that it does so without grinding to a halt, utilising modern and efficient transport networks.

This document provides a roadmap that, with the support and hard work of the people and their elected representatives, should help to deliver the regeneration and sustainability aspirations, including the Northgate Development, new Central Business Quarter and new Theatre, Library and Cinema and ensure that Chester continues to play a major role in the sub-regional economy.



2 Draft Strategy: Our Consultation Proposals



Capabilities on project: Transportation

2 Draft Strategy: Our Consultation Proposals

2.1 Outline

The Transport Strategy is to be an all-encompassing and visionary transport plan for the Chester area including the city's **historic core**, the wider city's **urban area**, and the longer distance **journey-to-work catchment** extending to Wirral, parts of North Wales, and other towns in West Cheshire including Ellesmere Port and Northwich.

The emerging strategy was presented in a series of 28 scheme proformas, each one containing details of the issues which the proposal is seeking to address, potential impacts, inter-dependencies and key actions.

A summary of the schemes and their respective spatial dimension, is shown in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1: Chester Transport Strategy Super-Schemes

Name	Scheme Summary	Spatial Dimension
1. Northgate St / St. Werburgh St / Cathedral Area	Delivery of Traffic Management and enhanced public realm in the heart of Chester.	HC
2. Gorse Stacks Bus Station and Hoole Way Roundabout	Provision of a modern fit-for-purpose bus station at Gorse Stacks, including a revised junction layout at Hoole Roundabout to provide enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities.	HC
3. Amphitheatre Area Public Realm Enhancements / Shared Space	Provision of enhanced walking and cycling facilities and public realm on the Southern arm of the Inner Ring Road.	HC
4. Mobility Impaired Access / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride	Provision of enhanced facilities for persons with mobility impairments in the City Centre, including parking facilities and shopmobility.	HC
5. The Bars pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements	Provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities at The Bars Gyratory, linked to the removal of the subway.	HC
6. Northgate Junction Area Improvements	Provision of enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities at Northgate Junction, linked to capacity enhancements on the Inner Relief Road.	HC
7. Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities	Development of a City Centre Coach Strategy and enhancements of the existing facility at Little Roodee.	HC
8. City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements	Provision of a range of cycling and pedestrian enhancements in the City Centre including east-west cycle routes, access to waterways and provision of shared space.	HC

Name	Scheme Summary	Spatial Dimension
9. Active Traffic Management	Provision of a holistic approach to congestion reduction, incorporating an extended Variable Message Signing Package, enhanced gateway treatment and parking routeing, and urban traffic control enhancements, to link key junctions and optimise staging patterns, better managing flows.	HC / C
10. Chester Parking Strategy	Continued delivery of comprehensive parking strategy.	HC / C
11. Junction Hotspots	Package to tackle key congestion and queuing at pinchpoints on the local highway network.	C
12. Race and match day sustainable access from city centre	Package of measures to improve the accessibility and legibility of major destinations, including Park & Ride facilities, shuttle buses and enhanced walking and cycling routes.	C
13. Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre	Provision of enhanced cycling and pedestrian connections from Hoole to the City Centre, including the development of a Masterplan for the wider area.	C
14. Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton	Provision of Bus Priority Measures on selected corridors to improve journey time reliability and promote modal shift towards sustainable modes.	C
15. Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit	Development of the Park & Ride Network including enhancement of facilities and services and provision of cross-city services and intermediate stops.	C
16. Travel Planning Package	Package of measures to promote efficient and sustainable access to key sites.	C / OA
17. SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing	Development of a SmartCard system to enhance multi-modal and cross-border journeys.	C / OA
18. Enhanced Cycle Priority: Chester to Sealand, Boughton and Wrexham	Provision of designated cycle routes to key locations, including Airbus / Boughton and Wrexham.	OA
19. Bus Service Improvements	Package of schemes to improve bus services and infrastructure, including City Rail Link extension, frequency and hours of operation, express and feeder services, DRT enhancement, and Quality Partnerships / Contracts.	OA
20. Enhanced station facilities and car parking	Delivery of station enhancements and accessibility improvements by non-car modes.	OA

Name	Scheme Summary	Spatial Dimension
21. New Park & Ride at Hoole Road	Delivery of new Park & Ride site adjacent to junction 12 of the M53.	OA
22. Cross-Border Connectivity	Working with partners to deliver the recommendations of the North East Wales Integrated Transport Taskforce.	OA
23. Chester Western Relief Road	Delivery of Relief Road to provide enhanced access to jobs and services and relief to traffic congestion.	OA
24. Rail Electrification	Delivery of electrification schemes to provide journey time enhancements.	OA
25. New Rail Stations	Delivery of new rail stations to improve connectivity, including proposals at North Wrexham, Queensferry, Waverton and Daresbury.	OA
26. Rail Service Enhancements	Package of rail service measures, including rolling stock, airport express services, mid-Cheshire and Wrexham Line service improvements.	OA
27. Halton Curve Reinstatement	Reinstatement of the Halton Curve to facilitate direct trains between Chester, North Wales to Liverpool and Liverpool John Lennon.	OA
28. Smarter Choices Package	Package of measures including cycle training, wayfinding, public information, travel training and transport node accessibility to promote modal shift.	ALL

Spatial Dimension: HC - Historic Core; C - City Wide; and OA - Outer Area

The package is illustrated in **Figures 2.1 - 2.3**.

Figure 2.1: Historic Core Schemes

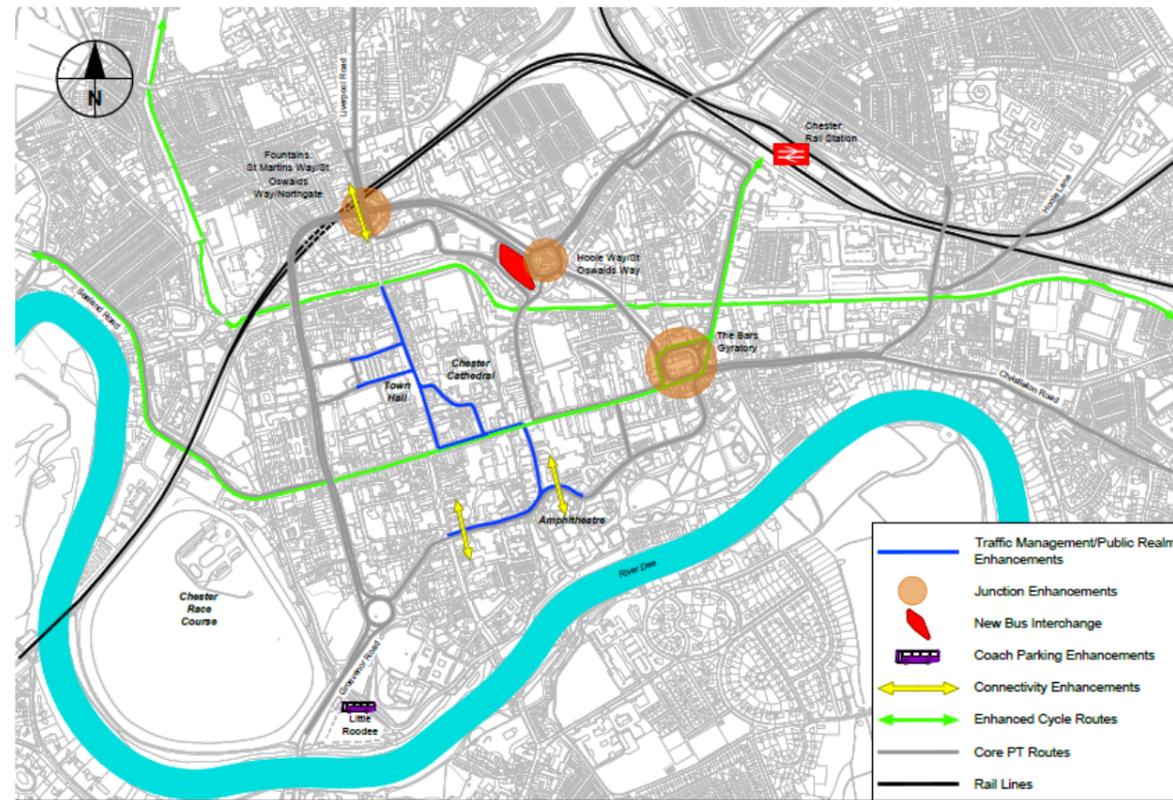


Figure 2.2: Urban Area Schemes

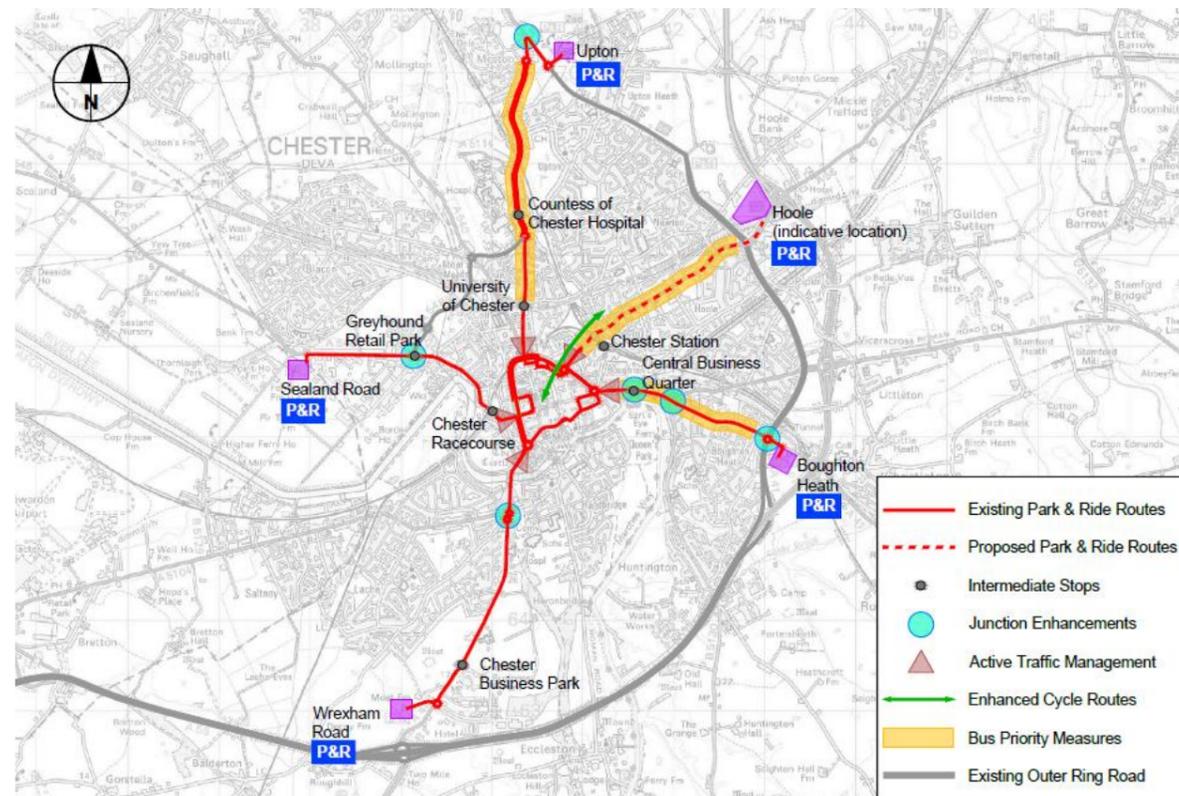
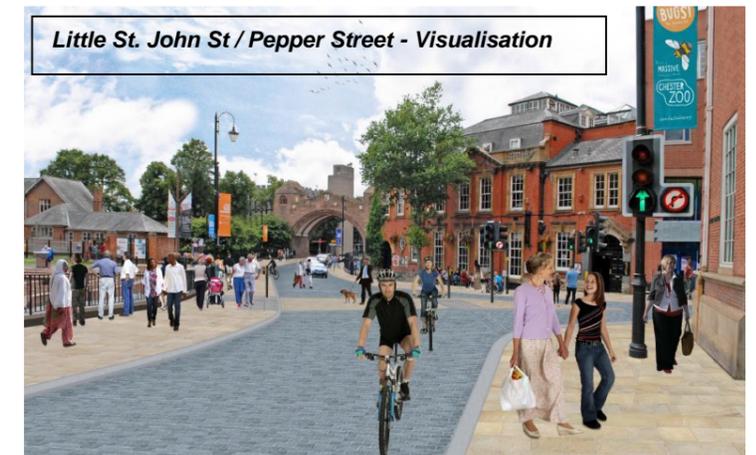
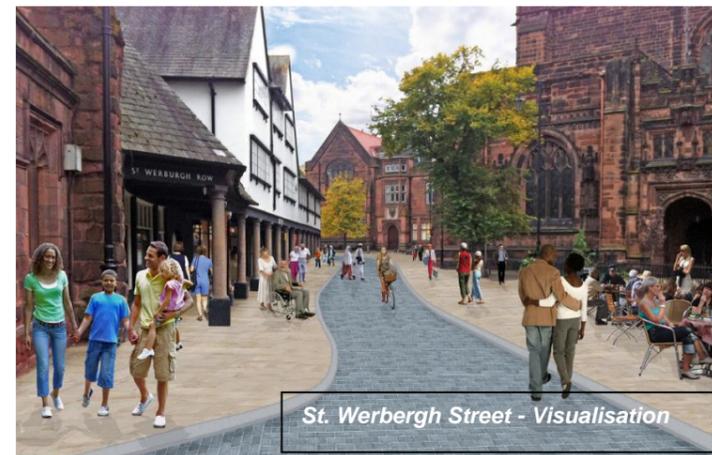
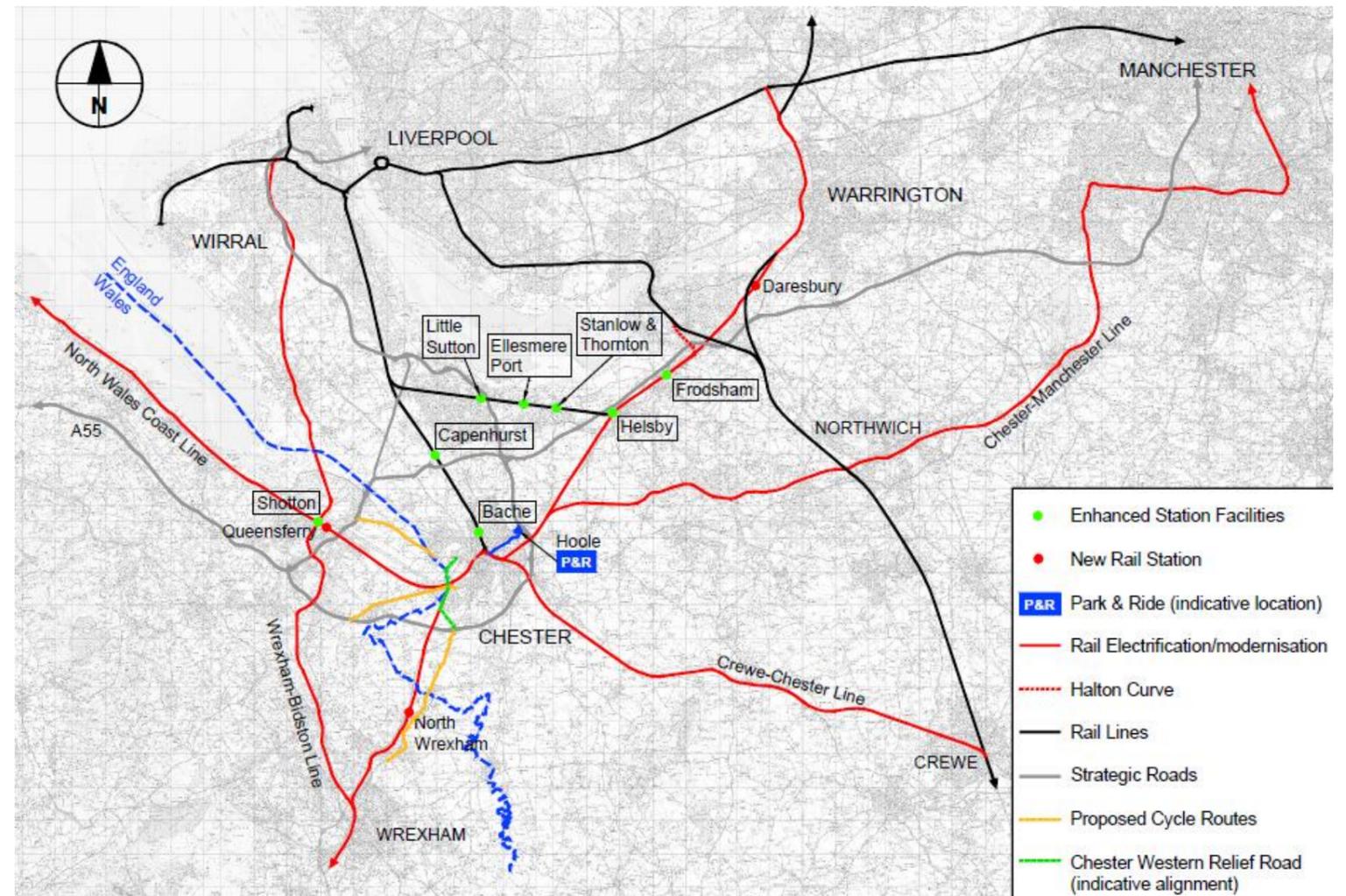


Figure 2.3: Outer Area Schemes



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Table 2.2 maps each scheme to one of the seven key goals identified in the Option and Assessment stage.

Table 2.2: Chester Transport Strategy Scheme Mapping

Key Goal	Scheme
1) Supporting city centre development and the aspirations of the One City Plan	2. Gorse Stacks Bus Station and Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements; 7. Coach Strategy and Little Roodee enhancement of coach facilities; 8. City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements; 13. Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre.
2) Enhancing transport connectivity to and from the rural hinterland, and across local, regional, and national borders	10. Chester Parking Strategy; 15. Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit; 19. Bus Service Improvements; 20. Enhanced station facilities and car parking.
3) Improving Chester's sustainable accessibility and alternative transport offer	4. Mobility Impaired Access / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride; 12. Race and match day sustainable access from city centre; 17. SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing; 18. Enhanced Cycle Priority; 22. Cross-Border Connectivity.
4) Responding to changes in residential and other land use patterns	11. Junction Hotspots; 16. Travel Planning Package; 23. Chester Western Relief Road; 25. New Rail Stations.
5) Increasing the reliability, safety and efficiency of core transport networks for the city	6. Northgate Junction Area Improvements; 9. Active Traffic Management; Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton; 26. Rail Service Enhancements.
6) Safeguarding quality of life within Chester by securing the long term future of its environment;	1. Northgate St / St. Werburgh St / Cathedral Area; 3. Amphitheatre Area Public Realm Enhancements / Shared Space; 5. The Bars pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements; 28. Smarter Choices Package.
7) Responding to strategic transport changes.	21. New Park & Ride at Hoole Road; 24. Rail Electrification; 27. Halton Curve Reinstatement.

From the modelling assignment, it can be concluded that in the short-term, the network is likely to become increasingly congested, particularly in the PM Peak due to the increased demand in Chester relating to the Northgate Development, Central Business District and other development.

In the case of the Medium-Term network, whilst in the AM Peak there is a slight increase in delay, there is also a problem in the PM Peak. The conversion of the Fountains Roundabout to a signalised junction appears to offer some benefits to the operation of the network as a whole and warrants further detailed modelling.

In the Long-Term scenario, the network functions similarly to that of the Medium-Term, with the AM Peak functioning and the PM Peak model failing. There are only minimal differences in the average vehicles delays; between this network and the Medium-Term.

The modelling shows that whilst it is possible to deliver some of the short and medium-term improvements on the currently configured network, the Western Relief Road (WRR) is required to facilitate a number of the medium and longer-term schemes proposed in the city centre, as well as providing improved connectivity to jobs and potentially generating growth through land release.

2.2 Transport Strategy Modelling Findings

In order to understand existing and future transport network issues, the outputs of Local Plan SATURN modelling undertaken by Atkins, applying development packages to 2030, was applied to a PARAMICS model of Chester City Centre.

The methodology and assumptions are contained in **Appendix A**.

3 You Said: The Results of our Consultation Exercises



3 You Said: The Results of our Consultation Exercises

3.1 Overview of Consultation

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

3.1.1 Stakeholder Events and Public Consultation Events

In order to test the emerging Transport Strategy, a series of consultation events were arranged 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 (04/09);
- Chester Renaissance Marketing and Transport Group (05/09);
- Labour Group Briefing (09/09);
- Transport Strategy / Local Plan Joint Public Drop-In (10/09);
- Transport Strategy / Superfast Broadband Joint Business Breakfast: (12/09);
- North East Wales / Mersey Dee Alliance Meeting (12/09);
- Weekend Public Drop-In (14/09);
- Full Member Briefing (17/09);
- Upton, Hoole and Newton Local Community Forum (LCF), (23/09);
- Corporate Disability Action Forum (24/09);
- Local Residents Groups Briefing (01/10);
- Northgate Street Traders Association (01/10);
- Chester Cathedral (02/10);
- Chester University (02/10);
- City LCF (02/10);
- Chester Access Action Group, (3/10);
- Lache LCF(7/10);
- Hoole Test Bed (9/10);
- Chester Civic Trust (10/10);
- King Street Residents Association (14/10);
- Chris Morland (Northgate Development) and Graham Lister (Theatre Project Manager), (15/10); and
- Grosvenor Hotel - Jan Roberts (16/10) and Jonathan Slater and Phil Cookson (30/10).



3.1.2 Feedback Forms

As part of the consultation strategy, a Feedback Form was designed for people to rate the priority level for each scheme and provide their comments.

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.

3.1.3 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.

3.2 Scheme Results

This chapter presents the results of the consultation process, by scheme. A full summary of the Consultation on the emerging strategy is contained in a separate report "Chester Transport Strategy – Consultation Report", January, 2014.

3.2.1 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 personal 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).

The majority of the written correspondence related to **concerns regarding access to the Cathedral**, particularly for those who were elderly and disabled. Concerns included:

- Potential constraint on the Cathedral's ability to host events and potential to attract tourists, with potential financial implications; and
- Isolation of the Cathedral and negative impact on the role of the Cathedral in the city.
- **Access to and impact on residents and businesses** within the area.

It was also evident that **further reassurance is needed that any disabled parking removed would be replaced**.

At a briefing held with the Northgate Street Traders to understand their view on the proposals, Rod Cox, Northgate Quarter Association, presented alternative proposals to reverse the flow on Hunter Street and Northgate Street. Twenty eight respondents completing the feedback form agreed with the Northgate Quarter Association proposal.

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**.

3.2.2 Scheme 2: Consolidated Bus Interchange at Gorse Stacks and Hoole Way Roundabout Pedestrian/Cycle Accessibility Improvements

The consultation revealed a **broad agreement that there is a need for a new bus station in Chester**, with 48% deeming the scheme as a 'very high' / 'high' priority.

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.

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. These **accessibility concerns were**

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particularly relevant to the elderly, disabled and those with young children in prams. Some reassurance was noted, however, that good bus links would still connect with the Northgate area.

In response to issues over its location, 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, helping to help address issues of connectivity.

3.2.3 Scheme 3: Public Realm and Traffic Reduction on St. John Street/Vicars Lane to Improve Links Between the City Centre and the Amphitheatre/Groves

The 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). In addition, feedback on the visualisations at the consultation was generally positive.

Chester Civic Trust supported the improved conditions for pedestrians and Chester Cycling Campaign felt the 20mph speed limit was good, as did the Chester Access Action Group, which welcomed wider footways.

3.2.4 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.

At a session with the Chester Access Action Group, there was a view that if blue badge parking was removed from St. Werburgh Street it would be accepted if additional blue badge parking was provided at Kaleyards. There was also **support for additional shopmobility sites to be built to serve different parts of the city**.

3.2.5 Scheme 5: The Bars Pedestrian/Cycle Accessibility Improvements

There was a **general acceptance of the need to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at the junction**. Indeed the 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.

Furthermore, the 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.

3.2.6 Scheme 6: Northgate Junction Area Improvements

Whilst most responses about this scheme were generally supportive, The Chester Cycling Campaign and a few other respondents highlighted their view that the new four-arm junction would be less effective than the roundabout and would cause greater congestion.

3.2.7 Scheme 7: Coach Strategy and Little Roodee Enhancement of Coach Facilities

This scheme divided opinion with regards to the level of priority, with 37% indicating 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 in particular.

The future location of the National Express facility also attracted a number of comments, with one respondent at the Transport Strategy/Local Plan Joint Drop-In event, commented that a good facility is vital for creating a positive first impression of the city. Chester Cycling Campaign also 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 Chester Accessibility Group was concerned that all coaches might be expected to drop-off passengers at Little Roodee car park only as disabled passengers would struggle to travel to the city centre.

3.2.8 Scheme 8: City Centre Pedestrian/Cycle Enhancements

In general this scheme was supported with **most respondents keen for initiatives which improve cycle provision**, for example cycle parking, cycle paths and integrated cycle routes; however, a variety of suggestions for the scheme were also made, including:

- Designating the whole of the city centre as a 20mph speed zone;
- Utilising subways as additional cycle routes rather than filling them in; and
- Resurfacing and lighting of the canal towpath between the city centre, university and hospital.

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.

Councillor Sullivan, Councillor Daniels and Chester Cycling Campaign 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.

Whilst the emphasis on cycling was welcomed by some, one resident felt improving cycle 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, Councillor Daniels stated there had been complaints about cyclists on bridges, footpaths, and pedestrian zones, so suggested clearer signage is required.



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.

3.2.9 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.

3.2.10 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 number of respondents 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 Hoole and the Garden Quarter as areas with parking difficulties. 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

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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:

- Creation of a large capacity underground city centre car park within the Northgate Development;
- 30 minutes free parking outside shops on Northgate Street to benefit small businesses; and
- Creation of Residents Parking Zone to show greater consideration for city centre residents needs.

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.



3.2.11 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.'

3.2.12 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 identified that 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.

3.2.13 Scheme 13: Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre

This scheme **ranked joint 4th with regards to respondents' scheme preference**. 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, Councillor David Robinson expressed his support for the cycle schemes and the removal of the barriers between Hoole and the City Centre, whilst Councillor Butcher and Councillor Thompson 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.

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

There was a **mixed opinion** between respondents on this scheme. Whilst, Stagecoach felt bus priority was essential as it would improve bus flow and bus journey times and potentially complement existing work at several of the AQMAs, there were concerns raised that the roads identified for bus priority measures, except for Boughton, were too narrow. Furthermore, Honorary Alderman 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.

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. Similarly, there was a suggestion that **Hackney Licensed cabs could also be permitted to use bus lanes**.

3.2.15 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 would provide 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, Tattenhall and District Council and the Bus Users Cymru 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.

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.

3.2.16 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.



3.2.17 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

Capabilities on project: Transportation

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.

3.2.18 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, including the Barrow Parish Council, 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.

As stated, 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.

Other routes suggested for improvements included Saughall Road (from Cheyney Road), Old Whitchurch to Hatton rail route and improvements to the canal towpath between Ellesmere Port and Chester (towpath deemed to be of poor quality).

3.2.19 Scheme 19: Bus Service Improvements

This 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 enhanced evening and weekend service provision and provision of enhanced real-time information suggested to improve the passenger experience. At the meeting with Chester Civic Trust, it was suggested that there was a **need to 'sell the benefits' of buses to local residents**.

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 would **need to be a significant step change in service provision and infrastructure to significantly impact on patronage levels**.

3.2.20 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 interchange options between modes** at the stations within the travel to work area.

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.

3.2.21 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.

Several respondents felt an additional Park & Ride facility was not necessary as the existing sites were not operating at maximum capacity. 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 flow.

3.2.22 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 gathers 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. Bus Users Cymru Group stated some services terminate at the existing bus exchange which is inconvenient for the main shopping area and onward travel. However, they did state 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.

3.2.23 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 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;
- Potential impact on Blacon; and
- Concern the school would be separated from the community.

Councillor Reggie Jones felt there was a lack of information about the impact on the Dee Flood Risk Management Strategy and no comprehensive understanding of flood drainage in the Sealand/Blacon Basin area.

Finally, several respondents felt there was a **need for greater consultation and discussion with the relevant residents, councils and organisations**. 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."*

3.2.24 Scheme 24: Rail Electrification/Modernisation

Rail electrification was broadly supported in the responses given. Merseytravel 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,

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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.

3.2.25 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 stations at these locations with some suggesting additional stations** which could be created including Beeston, Ledsham, Mickle Trafford, Saltney and Waverton. 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.

Merseytravel 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.

3.2.26 Scheme 26: Rail Service Enhancements

This scheme was well supported with respondents keen for rail service enhancements; for example, Ann Jones 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**, which was welcomed. 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, **Merseytravel 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.

3.2.27 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**. Merseytravel in particular welcomed the reference and support to the proposal and is working with partners including the Welsh Government to progress this.

3.2.28 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.

3.3 Other Comments

Appendix B includes a summary of non-scheme specific comments.

3.4 Summary

The findings from the autumn consultation have built on the outcomes of other recent stakeholder exercises (e.g. One City Plan, Parking Strategy, Bus Strategy, etc). This allowed us to assess and consider a broader and fully comprehensive set of views relating to transport issues in the City from a range of partners, stakeholders and the wider public.

4 Realising the Strategy: 'Our Recommendations for the Future'



4 Realising the Strategy: 'Our Recommendations for the Future'

4.1 Outline

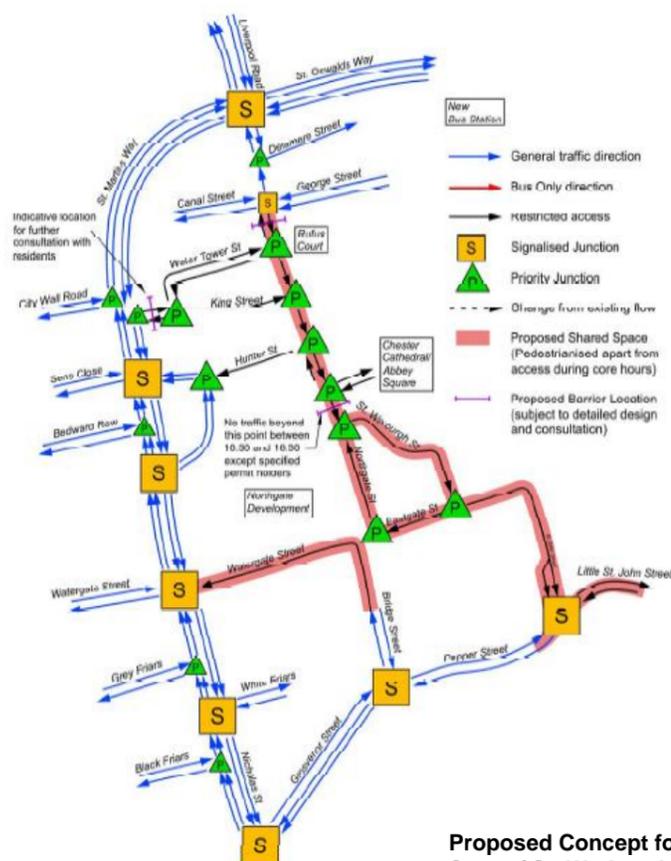
In this section, the final recommended packages of schemes are identified and discussed, incorporating changes derived as a result of the numerous consultation events undertaken with the public, Council members and officers, key stakeholders and user groups, local residents, businesses and other interested parties as detailed in the previous section. As noted earlier, the consultation was based upon a total of 28 super-schemes that incorporated the various scheme elements found during the appraisal of options stage to be of most benefit to the Transport Strategy.

The super-schemes are listed in **Table 2.1** and are discussed in more detail in the previous Pro-Forma report for consultation ("Emerging Transport Strategy: Scheme Proformas", September 2013).

Following the public consultation, and in full-consideration of its findings as described in the Consultation Report for this study, each of the schemes was refined and packaged into a final list of 10 recommendations for the transport strategy. These packages are shown in **Table 4.1**, along with the specific schemes that make up each package.

Table 4.1: Chester Transport Strategy Recommendation Packages

New Ref.	Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	Indicative Timeframe
A	City Centre Pedestrianisation & Public Realm Improvements		
	Northgate Pedestrianisation / Shared Space (Core Hours) (1)	HC	ST
	Amphitheatre Area Public Realm Enhancements / Shared Space (3)	HC	MT / LT
	Frodsham Street Shared Space (8)	HC	MT / LT
B	Bus Strategy & Infrastructure		
	Gorse Stacks Bus Station (2)	HC	ST / MT
	Bus Priority on Hoole Road (14)	C	MT
	Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road and Boughton (14)	C	LT
	City Rail Link extension / 'Shopper Hopper' (19)	C	ST / MT
	Review of frequencies and hours of operation (19)	C / OA	MT
	Development of rural express and feeder bus services (19)	OA	LT
	DRT enhancement (19)	C	LT
Quality Partnerships/Contracts (19)	C	MT	
C	Congestion Relief & Access to Employment		
	Junction Hotspots, including Northgate Junction (6), (11)	C	ST / MT
	Active Traffic Management including VMS, UTC enhancements, and Gateway Treatment (9)	HC / C	MT
	Cross-Border Connectivity (22)	OA	MT / LT
D	Chester Parking Strategy		
	Delivery of City Centre Parking Strategy (10)	HC / C	ST / MT
	Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit (15)	C	MT / LT
E	Mobility Impaired Accessibility / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride		
	Mobility Impaired Access / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride (4)	HC	ST
F	Rail Services and Infrastructure		
	Enhanced Station Facilities & Imp'd Access by Non-Car Modes (20)	OA	MT / LT



Proposed Concept for Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street

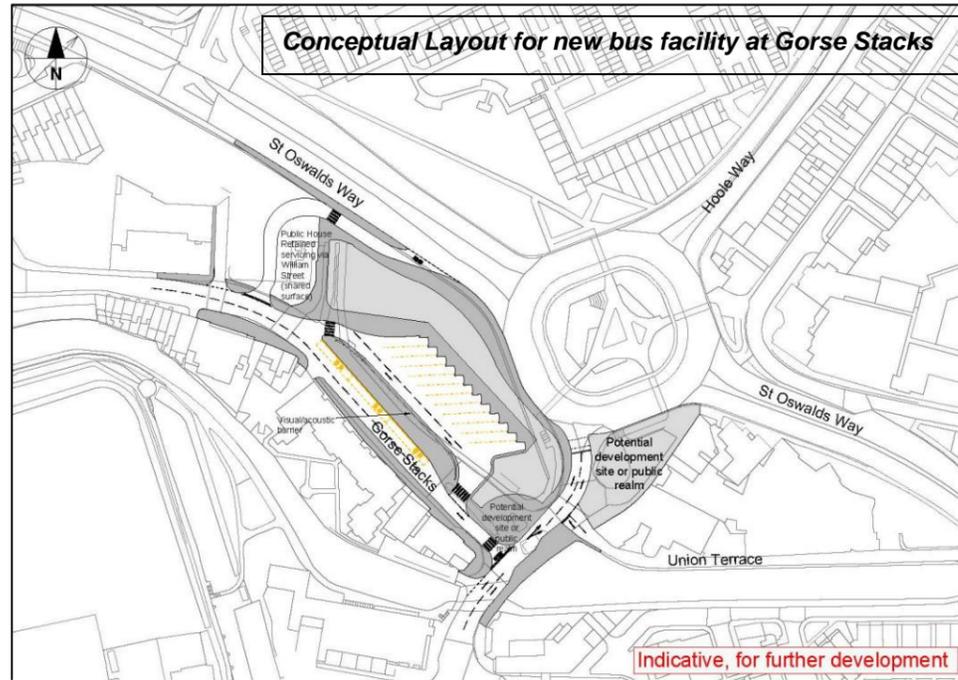
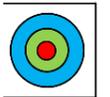
New Ref.	Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	Indicative Timeframe
	Cross-Border Connectivity (22)	OA	MT / LT
	Wrexham - Chester Dualing (22)	OA	ST
	Warrington - Chester & Crewe Chester Rail Electrification (24)	OA	LT
	New Rail Stations (25)	OA	LT
	Rail Service Enhancements (26)	OA	LT
	Halton Curve Reinstatement (27)	OA	MT
G	City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements		
	Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements (2)	C	MT
	The Bars pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements (5)	HC	ST / MT
	East-west cycleway (8)	HC	LT
	Improved access to and quality upgrades of towpaths (8)	C	MT / LT
	City Centre cycle hire (8)	C	MT / LT
H	Strategic Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements		
	Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre (13)	C	MT / LT
	Chester City Centre to Sealand Road (18)	C	LT
	Chester to Airbus / Broughton Retail Park (18)	OA	LT
I	Smarter Choices / Behavioural Change		
	Race and match day sustainable access from city centre (12)	C	ST
	Travel Planning Package (16)	C / OA	MT
	SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing (17)	C / OA	LT
	Smarter Choices Package (cycle training, wayfinding, public information, travel training and transport node accessibility) (28)	ALL	MT
J	Coach & Taxi Strategy		
	Coach Strategy Development (7)	HC / C	ST / MT
	Taxi Strategy Development	HC / C	ST / MT

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The proformas on the following pages provide, for each, a description of the packages, the most significant amendments as a result of the public consultation, their key benefits including to wider economic growth for the city, and likely timescale and phasing of components. A more detailed description of each scheme is contained in **Appendix C**.

In this section, the final recommended packages of schemes are identified and discussed, incorporating changes derived as a result of the numerous consultation events undertaken with the public, Council members and officers, key stakeholders and user groups, local residents, businesses and other interested parties as detailed in the previous section. The schemes to be taken forward may be divided into ten packages and the sub-sections below will, for each, note their key benefits including to wider economic growth, new housing and development within the borough. Links to the Local Plan, One City Plan, and related objectives are also discussed in this section.

4.2 The Packages



Scheme Summary Outline

This scheme package combines proposals for a new bus interchange at Gorse Stacks, ‘Shopper Hopper’ circular service, and bus priority on key arterials, with service improvements via quality partnerships, and enhancements to rural bus provision including Demand Responsive Transport and the creation of feeder services on higher frequencies and until later in the evening.

It should be noted that the ‘early start’ of the bus interchange work is required in order to facilitate several other schemes including Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street pedestrianisation, the Northgate Development, and the rejuvenation of the Gorse Stacks area. As such, this is considered to be one of the first priorities of the Transport Strategy.

Consultation Findings

The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- There was 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;
- There is 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;
- There is the need for a potential city metroshuttle / shopper hopper to resolve issues of connectivity;
- There is concern that roads identified are too narrow for extensive bus priority; and
- It was suggested that bus lanes to include cyclists and Hackney Licensed cabs.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme changes have been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Provide some form of ‘Shopper Hopper’ bus service to connect the bus station with the Northgate area;
- Improve signage and legibility along Gorse Stacks, George Street, and Northgate Street for pedestrians and cyclists;
- Accommodate National Express, Park & Ride, and ‘Shopper Hopper’ services within or near the bus interchange, utilising space on-street for additional through-service stops;
- Consider ways of mitigating against noise and visual intrusion of reversing and laying over vehicles including screening barriers and green buffers; and
- Following bus station feasibility work to be undertaken shortly, and consultation on potential Youth Zone concept, adapt and amend design accordingly.

Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- Provision of a new, purpose built, state of the art, modern bus interchange;
- Better integration between bus services;
- Better integration with the rail station;
- Reduced delays / more consistent bus journey times;
- Increased bus patronage and reduced single occupant private car use;
- Improved air quality at key areas in the city; and
- Increased rural connectivity.

Wider Benefits

The key benefits of this package to the wider economy in Chester are as follows:

- Bus interchange is essential to support the successful delivery of the first phase of Northgate Development;
- The site is the only location in the city centre which can accommodate the facility, which is demonstrably required in terms of numbers of services per hour, and the need to facilitate interchange, and offers the potential for beneficial redevelopment of the area;
- Enhanced accessibility of the city (especially at evenings / weekends), improving the evening economy; and
- Will ensure that retail demand is better distributed around the city centre and not solely at Northgate, by passing benefits to Frodsham Street and Brook Street traders, revitalising retail offer.



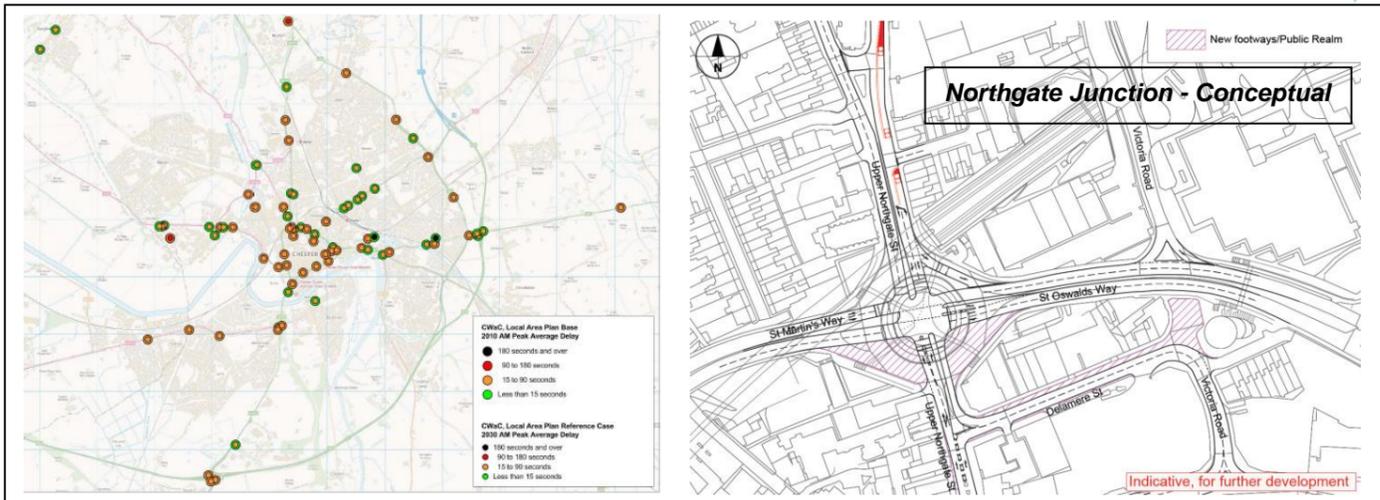
Recommendations

- Build a new city centre bus interchange at Gorse Stacks ensuring full integration with, and connectivity to, the Railway station and the Central Business Quarter;
- Maintain bus access across the city centre including improved hubs / interchanges on Delamere Street and within the new Northgate development as well as maintaining existing stops such as those along Frodsham Street and Foregate Street;
- Introduce a “shopper hopper” city centre shuttle bus to improve links between the new bus interchange and other parts of the city centre including the Little Roodee Coach Park;
- Examine opportunities to introduce bus priority measures along key corridors to the city centre including the A540 Parkgate Road, A5116 Liverpool Road, A56 Hoole Road and A51 Boughton corridor; and
- Work with bus operators to establish further Quality Bus Partnerships with a particular focus on improving service frequencies and hours of operation.

Phasing

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	Timeline																											
		2013/14	2014/2015	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26+														
Bus Strategy & Infrastructure																													
Gorse Stacks Bus Station (2)	HC																												
Bus Priority on Hoole Road (14)	C																												
Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road and Boughton (14)	C																												
City Rail Link extension / ‘Shopper Hopper’ (19)	C																												
Review of frequencies and hours of operation (19)	C / OA																												
Development of rural express and feeder bus services (19)	OA																												
DRT enhancement (19)	C																												
Quality Partnerships/Contracts (19)	C																												

Legend: F: Feasibility, D: Detailed Design, I: Implementation, Review / Future Development



Scheme Summary Outline

This package aims to tackle key congestion and queuing at pinch-points on the local highway network, which in some cases may be triggered by future housing growth and development. Schemes that come forward will combine opportunities for junction remodelling and capacity improvements along with opportunities to improve signalisation and Urban Traffic Control (UTC) to improve traffic flows and reduce queues. In the longer term, a higher intervention scheme such as Chester Western Relief Road may be required, and the strategy recommends further study for this.

Consultation Findings

The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- 60% of respondents felt junction improvements were of 'high' or 'very high' priority and the 4th highest ranking scheme based on preferences;
- Overall, there is a need to reduce congestion and also consider opening up development / housing sites and improving access to employment;
- It was noted that there is a political desire in North East Wales to work with partners to provide improved cross-border infrastructure and services;
- In terms of the Chester Western Relief Road, 41% said 'high'/'very high' priority, yet 38% felt 'low'/'not a priority at all';
- There is support for a reduction of traffic in city centre, but the options suggested generated numerous opinions;
- Specific concerns included the use of greenbelt land, potential for encouraging further development and the flood risk;
- Further discussion / engagement with stakeholders on the Chester Western Relief Road is clearly required.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme changes have been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Undertake detailed modelling to better define need and requirements for congestion relief around the borough and across its border;
- Make use of funding opportunities from the Local Pinch Point fund to design and construct junction improvements;
- Continue dialogue with wider stakeholders including Mersey Dee Alliance, Taith and Flintshire County Council as Highways Authority, to examine case for scheme, alongside route options and potential cost; and
- Focus on interface between route and A5104 to minimise congestion along this corridor.

Phasing

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	2013/14	2014/2015			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			20I	21I	22I	23I	24I	25I	26+	
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	21	22	23	24	25	26
Congestion Relief & Access to Employment																												
Junction Hotspots, including Northgate Junction (6), (11)	C																											
Active Traffic Management including VMS, UTC enhancements, and Gateway Treatment (9)	HC / C																											
Cross-Border Connectivity (22)	OA																											
Chester Western Relief Road Feasibility Study (23)	OA																											

F: Feasibility
 D: Detailed Design
 I: Implementation
 R: Review / Future Development

Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- Reduced congestion, air pollution and delay, making the city a more attractive place in which to work, shop, and visit;
- Reduced traffic congestion in the city centre, affording opportunity to reconsider potential roadspace reallocation for sustainable uses in the future e.g. Nun's Road and Liverpool Road / Parkgate Road;
- Reduction in congestion at key nodal hotspots due to the ability to co-ordinate traffic signals;
- Reduction in the amount of time spent searching for a car park space, and corresponding value-of-time savings;
- Enhanced air quality due to more efficient movement of vehicles and reduced overall vehicle mileage;
- More reliable public transport journey times;
- Improved pedestrian and cycle safety at a key junctions;
- Enhanced public realm and environment at key interchange nodes providing higher quality and more attractive gateways to the city; and
- Improved linkage to the city centre from the north including the University.

Wider Benefits

The key benefits of this package to the wider economy in Chester are as follows:

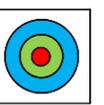
- Enhanced accessibility to and from key employment sites in Cheshire West and North East Wales e.g. Broughton, Saltney, Hawarden Airport, and Deeside Industrial Park;
- Improved development potential of land North of River Dee, with potential future connection opportunities to the south side of the river and Saltney / Broughton;
- Provides improved access to new employment and housing sites;
- Improves overall attractiveness of city as a place to do business and invest; and
- Reduces overall cost of congestion to business and the economy.



Recommendations

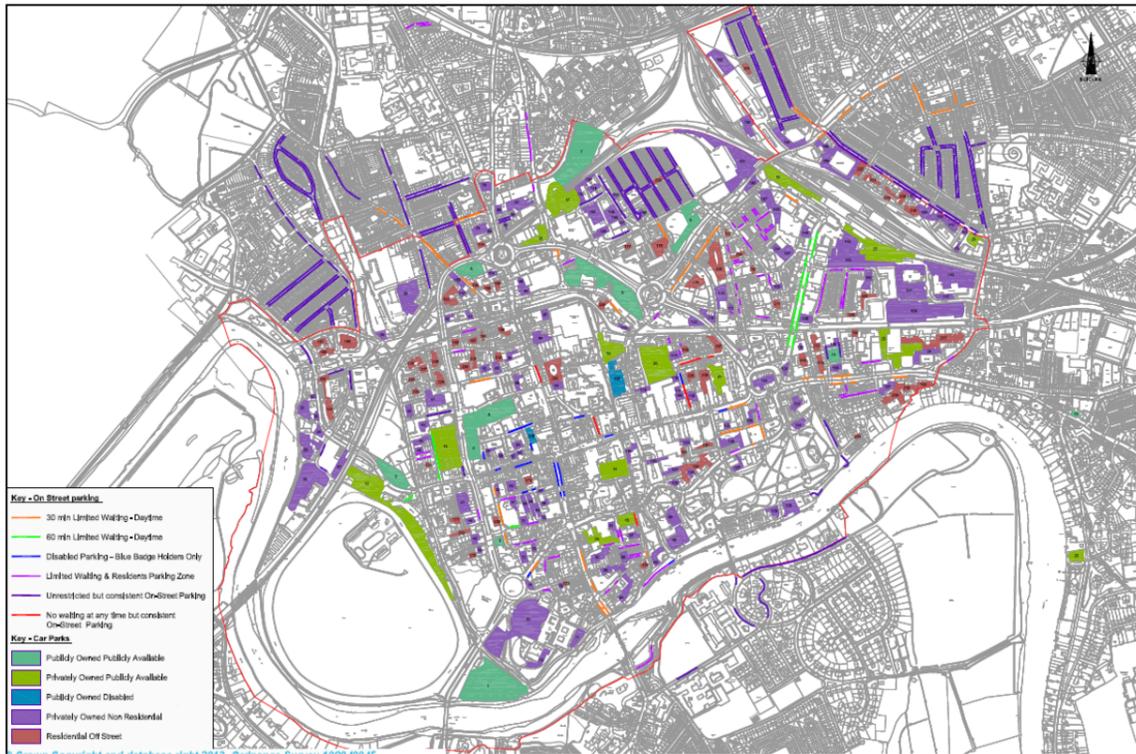
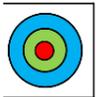
- Identify, design and deliver junction improvement schemes to address current and future traffic congestion and pinch-point problems;
- Identify and improve highway capacity through the introduction of signalisation, Urban Traffic Control, Active Traffic Management and Variable Message Signing schemes where appropriate including Air Quality Management Areas;
- Working with Flintshire County Council, Welsh Government and Saltney Community Council, undertake a detailed feasibility study and enter into dialogue with all potential stakeholders to examine the viability of the proposed Chester Western Relief Road including an examination of alternative routes to its current protected alignment; and
- Continue dialogue with Welsh Government and local authority partners to identify and bring forward schemes to improve cross-border access and connectivity and help reduce congestion.

Spatial Dimension



All

Chester Transport Strategy Package C: Congestion Relief and Access to Employment



Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- Improved and direct access to the new Northgate Development and wider city centre;
- Making best use of the latest payment technologies to speed up and streamline parking payment;
- Better management and use of available parking facilities and a more transport pricing and marketing policy;
- Provision of a Park & Ride site on the most important approach route from the north and west via the M53 and M56 strategic highway corridors; and
- Removal of a significant amount of traffic, noise and vehicle emissions on a day-to-day basis from the most congested streets and junctions of the city.

Wider Benefits

The key benefits of this package to the wider economy in Chester are as follows:

- A better managed and more convenient parking offer, providing access to all areas within the city centre, but removing unnecessary vehicle trips, improving quality of life and air quality for residents and visitors; and
- Provision of a more convenient, legible and useable Park & Ride service than currently, providing additional parking outside the city centre to accommodate increased demand from new retail, employment, and leisure.

Scheme Summary Outline

A strategy has been developed, in consultation with key stakeholders including residents, members of the general public, Council officers and Councillors, and in full agreement with the objectives and aspirations of the One City Plan for Chester, to begin to address the issues identified during audit and consultation. This represents a suitable balance between best practice elsewhere, innovation, use of new technology, and better methods of working to reduce inefficiency in the system, maximise potential benefit, and to make the city a more sustainable and healthy location in which to live and work.

Consultation Findings

The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- Delivering the parking strategy ranked 3rd overall and was deemed by almost 3/5 of respondents to be a 'very high' or 'high' priority;
- There was a mixed opinion on City Centre car park pricing; and
- There was a 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.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme changes have been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Include Park & Ride contract renewal specification as a key component of the scheme, including the need to provide a concessionary fare scheme for passengers transferring from rural services;
- Consider various options for Park & Ride contract type including a Quality Partnership or Zero Subsidy model, clarifying the classification of the service as a public transport and/or parking facility;
- Incorporate the potential development of adjacent land into the Hoole Road Park & Ride scheme to take advantage of any available developer funding for the facility; and
- Emphasise aspiration for direct access to the Hoole Road site from the primary road network i.e. from M53 / A55 / A56 junction if no direct solution from A56 is available.



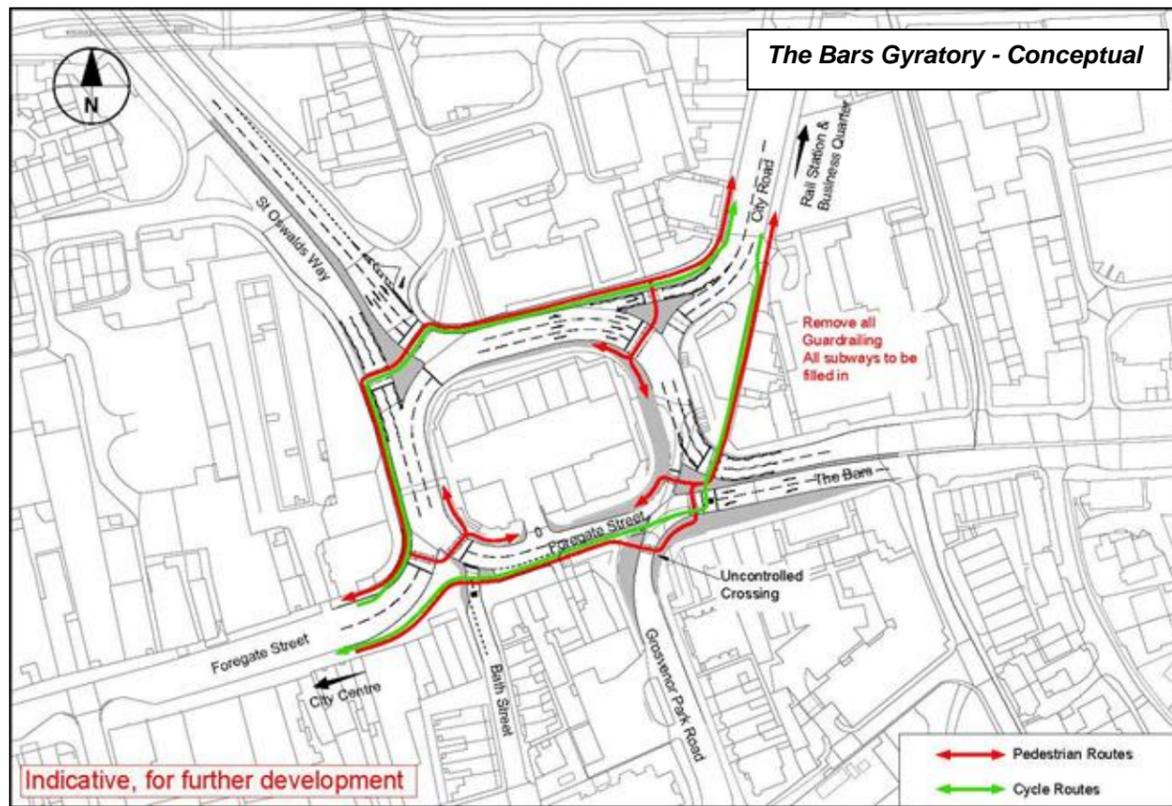
Recommendations

- Continue the delivery of the Council's Parking Strategy;
- Explore proposals for the creation of improved car parking for Chester Station on the site of the former Chester Enterprise Centre in conjunction with other complementary uses and connected to the City Centre by improved pedestrian and cycle links;
- Introduce more innovative and cashless solutions to pay for car parking;
- Establish a Member led working group to examine Park & Ride service improvements, including cross-town routing and the introduction of intermediate stops, to be incorporated and introduced as part of a new Park & Ride contract in 2016;
- Develop a full business case and detailed design for a fifth Park & Ride site serving the A56 Hoole Road corridor; and
- Review problems associated with on-street car parking within residential areas and introduce residents parking schemes where these are requested and supported by the local community.

Phasing

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	2013/14		2014/2015				2015/16				2016/17				2017/18				2018/19				2019/20				2021	21	22	23	24	25	26	26+																								
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4																													
Chester Parking Strategy																																																											
Delivery of City Centre Parking Strategy (10)	HC / C	[Feasibility]																																																									
Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit (15)	C	[Feasibility]																																																									
New Park & Ride at Hoole Road (21)	OA																																																										

F: Feasibility D: Detailed Design I: Implementation Review / Future Development



Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- Improved environment for pedestrians on a key thoroughfare;
- Removal of the subways at Hoole Way Roundabout which are perceived as unsafe, unattractive and intimidating especially at night. By replacing these with at-grade crossings, connectivity can be preserved between Frodsham Street, Brook Street, Hoole Way and the bus station;
- Improved safety for pedestrians and cyclists. Improved accessibility and safety for pedestrians accessing the city from the rail station, Central Business Quarter or the eastern Boughton Road corridor;
- Reduced anti-social and criminal behaviour associated with the subways; and
- Better disabled accessibility around the junction due to the removal of subways and installation of at-grade crossings.

Wider Benefits

The key benefits of this package to Chester are as follows:

- Reduced congestion and vehicle related emissions leading to a more pleasant environment in which to live, do business and visit for leisure purposes; and
- Enhanced health and vitality of the population, increasing productivity, prosperity and economic activity.

Scheme Summary Outline

A comprehensive package of schemes is proposed in order to improve the city centre environment in terms of connectivity, accessibility and safety. The enhancements package is formed of several key improvements in terms of accessibility and removal of severance, and supports the aspirations of the Council's new Cycling Strategy.

The package include improvements to the Bars gyratory and Hoole Way roundabout, an upgrade to the quality of the east-west route along the canal, enhanced cycle hire and cycle parking provision across the city centre, and the potential provision of traffic management / imposition of 20mph zones where feasible and supported by communities.

Consultation Findings

The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- The Bars Improvement scheme was not identified in the feedback forms as a preferential scheme, however there was acceptance that the current layout needs redesigning with greater priority and safety for peds and cycles;
- There was mixed opinion regarding the use or closure of subways;
- On the whole, there was general demand for further improvements to cycle facilities with many suggestions for new routes and infrastructure;
- There was some concern over conflict between cyclists and pedestrians and complaints about cyclists misusing facilities/ cycling in pedestrian zones; and
- A key priority was identified as being a new or improved cycle/pedestrian crossing across the River Dee.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme changes have been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Close subways at the Bars in a phased programme commencing with current proposals to address anti-social behaviour and aggressive begging;
- Undertake a review of provision of at-grade puffin and toucan crossings in light of on-going modelling of the Bars;
- Look for ways to improve cycle access across the River Dee, in particular potentially allowing cyclists to access and use the existing suspension bridge into Handbridge. This may require bridge strengthening, widening and/or cycle segregation;
- Consider a blanket 20mph speed limit on all links within the Inner Ring Road; and
- Promote the canal as the primary traffic-free east-west cycle link across the city, focussing on access points.



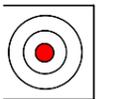
Recommendations

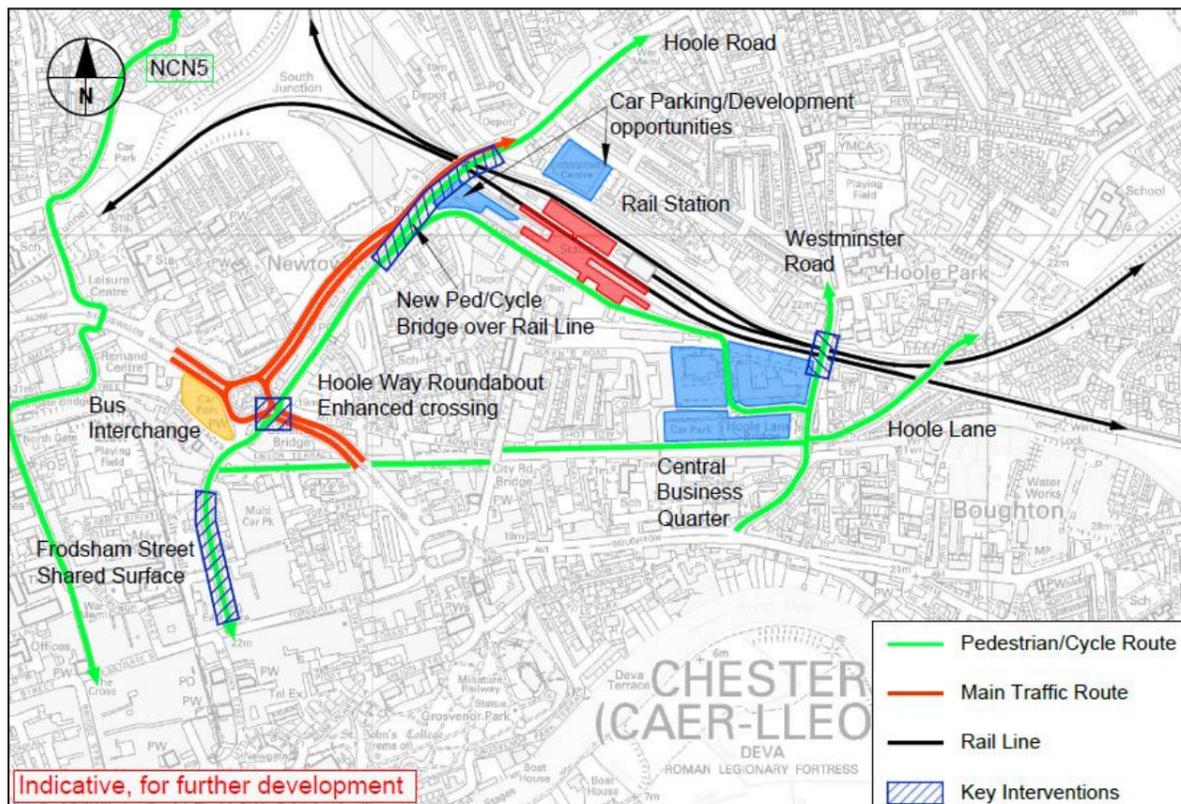
- Develop and implement a package of schemes to benefits pedestrians and cyclists within the city centre including the provision of improved, secure cycle parking;
- Improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclist by replacing subways with at-grade crossing points including links between the city centre and the Railway Station / Chester Business Quarter and the University campuses on Parkgate Road and Liverpool Road;
- Ensure that schemes act to complement the objectives set out in the Council's Cycling and Waterways Strategies; and
- Where appropriate, support the existing policy to introduce 20 mph zones where they are supported by local residents.

Phasing

City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements		Phasing																		
Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian/cycle accessibility improvements (2)	C																			
The Bars pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements (5)	HC																			
East-west cycleway (8)	HC																			
Improved access to and quality upgrades of towpaths (8)	C																			
City Centre cycle hire (8)	C																			

F: Feasibility
 D: Detailed Design
 I: Implementation
 R: Review / Future Development





Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- To improve the safety and security of those walking and cycling to the station and into the city centre from Hoole;
- To remove a key barrier to the use of sustainable modes for residents of a key district of the city;
- Connecting disparate communities;
- Enhanced journey reliability by bicycle;
- Improved health and vitality of users; and
- Reduced vehicle related greenhouse gas emissions.

Spatial Dimension



All

Wider Benefits to the Economy

The key benefits of this package to the wider economy in Chester are as follows:

- To regenerate and improve a key route into the city centre from the rail station, and integrate into the enhanced public realm associated with the station and Central Business Quarter;
- To facilitate the redevelopment of the Rail Station West Car Park area to include a car park and potential additional development site; and
- Increased accessibility to employment opportunities e.g. Airbus, Broughton Retail Park and Wrexham Industrial Estate etc.

Scheme Summary Outline

This package aims to improve the accessibility of the city centre by walking and cycling from further afield, to increase the take-up of these important modes of transport within the wider outer area of study. The package includes a significant improvement in the level of access between Hoole and the city centre via a new foot and cycle bridge, enhanced cycle priority on key inbound routes, improved cycle routes to Wrexham, and additional potential future cycle links.

Consultation Findings

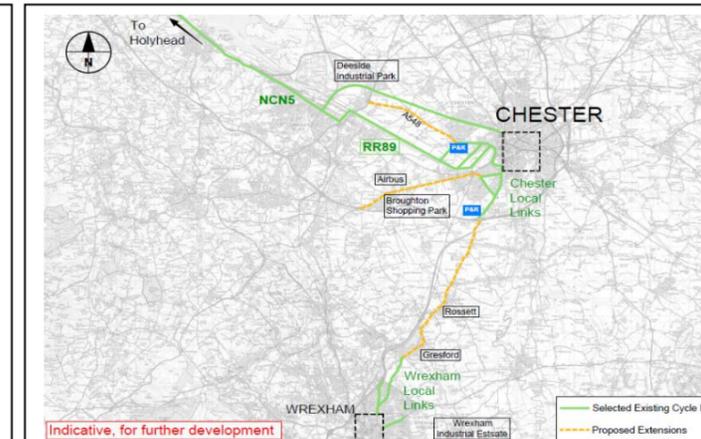
The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- The Hoole Road Bridge scheme was considered a high priority scheme and ranked joint 4th overall;
- General improvements to pedestrian/cycle access from Hoole was widely supported;
- The level of cycle priority to be applied to key links divided opinion, however, and a number of other routes were suggested for improvements:
 - 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.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme changes have been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Revise potential scheme in light of the demolition and redevelopment of the Enterprise Centre, making full use of any developer funding opportunities that are created here;
- Consider removal of on-street parking, and signalisation of junctions on Hoole Road to incorporate crossings and cycle lanes to remove barriers to pedestrian and cycle use of this corridor;
- Consider incorporation of a contra-flow cycle lane on Brook Street to proposals – though would require removal of parking bays and as such would require detailed consultation; and
- Consider additional strategic corridors noted within the Consultation Report.



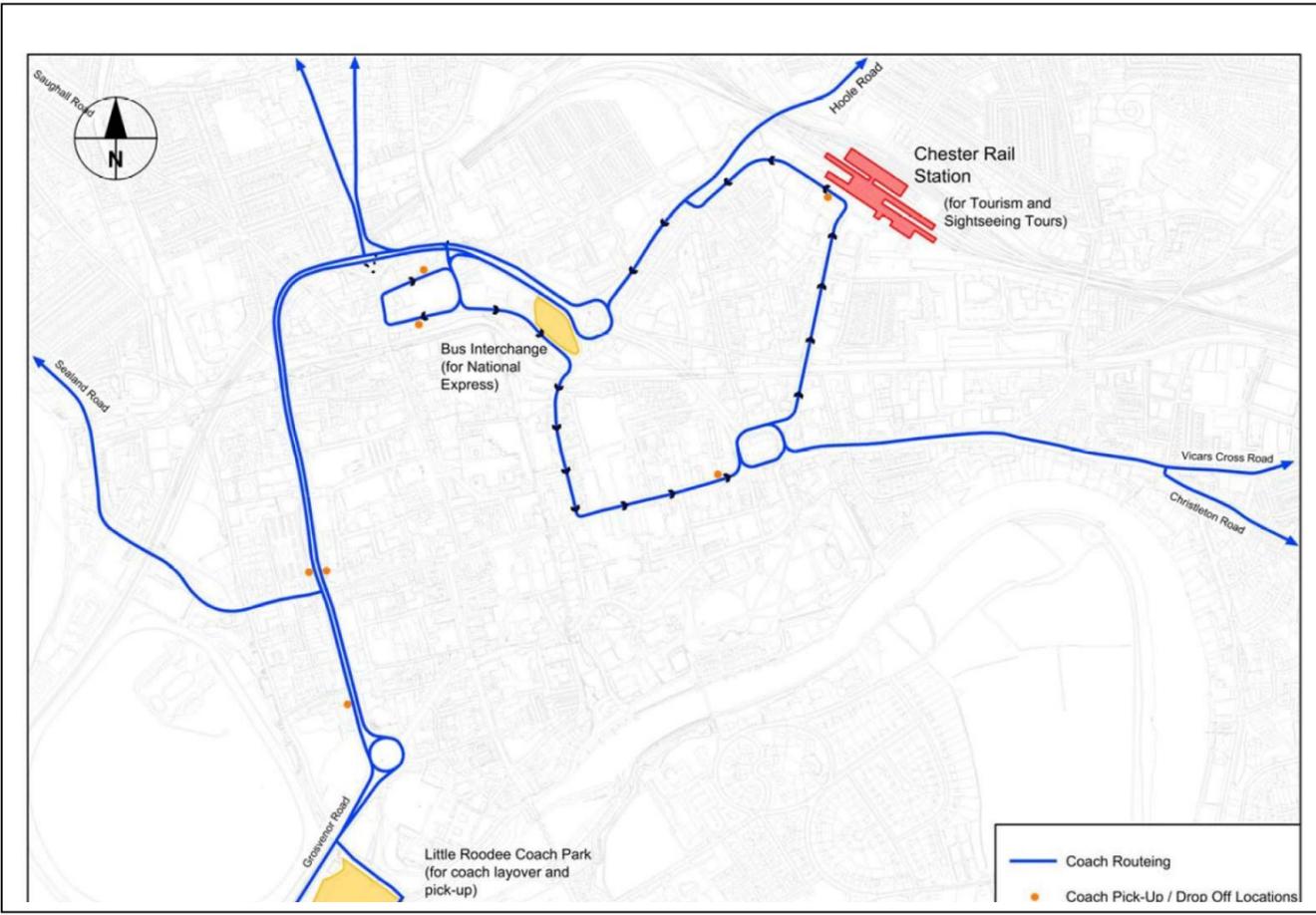
Recommendations

- Undertake a feasibility study to determine options and funding opportunities to provide a dedicated pedestrian / cycle bridge sited in parallel to the Hoole Road railway bridge to provide safer access to the city centre and Railway Station / Chester Business Quarter from Hoole (in conjunction with developing the solution to the car parking as per recommendations in section 4);
- Ensure that the Highways agency A55 / A483 junction improvement scheme safely accommodates cyclists needs;
- Examine opportunities to improve cross-border cycling links using the A5104 corridor between Chester and Broughton and the A483 / B5445 corridor between Chester and Wrexham;
- Continue to secure opportunities to improve the connectivity of local pedestrian and cycle networks;
- Maintain existing cycle routes, multi-user paths and towpaths to a high standard for the benefit of all users; and
- Examine the longer term opportunities for a long distance cycle / footpath / bridleway route making use of the disused Hatton – Whitchurch railway alignment.

Phasing

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	Year																										
		2013/14	2014/2015			2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20			20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26+	
Strategic Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements																												
Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre (13)	C																											
Chester City Centre to Sealand Road (18)	C																											
Chester to Airbus / Broughton Retail Park (18)	OA																											
Chester to Wrexham (18)	OA																											

F Feasibility
 D Detailed Decision
 I Implementation
 Review / Future Development



Transport Benefits

The main transport related benefits of this package are as follows:

- Provides enhanced legibility of the coach network for passengers and tourists with clearly defined drop-off and pick-up points and waiting facilities at Little Roodee;
- Provides clear guidance for coach operators and provide an acceptable solution to all parties without causing inconvenience to users;
- Enhances existing coach and passenger waiting facilities at Little Roodee, increasing capacity and environment, and integrating with potential new development at this site;
- Provides suitable guidelines to shape future council policy with regard to taxi rank location, routing and specific routing prohibitions;
- Removes conflicts between taxis and other road users; and
- Provides a review of current licensing policy.

Wider Benefits

The key benefits of this package to the wider economy in Chester are as follows:

- Reduces the impact of coaches waiting within the city centre and the disruption, economic and environmental effect this can have; and
- Supports the aspirations of the wider transport strategy including the removal of buses from Northgate Street, whilst still providing good levels of access to city centre amenities and new developments such as the Theatre and Performing Arts Centre, and the Northgate retail development.

Scheme Summary Outline

A coach strategy for Chester would bring together various strands including tourist travel, heritage and sight-seeing, and National Express long distance, and provide a strategy for accommodating these vehicles in convenient locations around the city. One of Chester's biggest coach assets is the successful coach park at Little Roodee, and the strategy would include specifying an enhanced role for this and its facilities including cafe, heated waiting area, retail outlet and toilets, and considering how this may be better linked with the city centre.

Alongside this, a strategy for taxis is proposed with the aim of simplifying the existing network. This would lay down clear guidelines for taxis advising on ranking facilities, penetration into the pedestrian zone, layover and idling, and provision of facilities for drivers. It would also lead to greater clarity over existing routing issues and conflicts between taxis and other road users and residents.

Consultation Findings

The following points summarise the key findings from consultation:

- It is clear that the consulted public is divided on opinion with regards to the priority of a coach strategy;
- There was broad support for the scheme and removal of coaches from Northgate Street;
- There was, however, some concern over a perceived lack of integration between National Express services and New Bus Station; and
- It was agreed that a comprehensive taxi strategy should be a key output of the wider Transport Strategy.

Scheme Changes Following Consultation

The following scheme change has been proposed as a result of the public consultation:

- Inclusion of taxi-related issues which was considered to be an oversight during the consultation exercise.



Recommendations

- Work with appropriate partners to prepare a coach strategy for the city. This will encompass parking provision for coaches, access to the city centre including the location of pick up / drop off points, layover / overnight parking, marketing and promotion; and
- Work with appropriate partners to develop a taxi strategy for the city, including both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. This will encompass city centre access, reducing conflicts within sensitive city centre residential locations, location and operation of taxi ranks, layover, licensing guidelines and use of bus lanes by taxis.

Phasing

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Spatial Dimension	2013/14																								
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Coach & Taxi Strategy																										
Coach Strategy Development (7)	HC / C																									
Taxi Strategy Development	HC / C																									

Legend: F: Feasibility, D: Detailed Design, I: Implementation, Review / Future Development

Spatial Dimension



Historic Core

5 Costing/Affordability and Funding of Schemes



Capabilities on project: Transportation

5 Costing/Funding and Affordability of Schemes

5.1 Indicative Scheme Costings

This section contains an attempt to realistically cost the component scheme elements using suitable benchmark schemes from elsewhere in the country, and by making some assumptions. The costs presented below are therefore drawn from a variety of sources including previous work for TfGM, Merseytravel, and others in an attempt to give a realistic flavour for the quantum of cost incurred for each scheme. It should be noted, however, that further scoping and feasibility is required and therefore, the information is more speculative in nature and should not be taken as definitive costs in any way.

Table 5.1 presents *indicative* scheme costings for the CTS. For each scheme element, a selection of information is presented. Firstly, an estimate of the order of capital cost, optimism bias, alongside potential partner organisations who, it is envisaged, will be primarily responsible for the raising of scheme funds and potential funding sources. As before, this is opinion only and should not be taken as definitive.

Table 5.1: Indicative Scheme Costings

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Indicative Cost	Optimism Bias (@44%)	INDICATIVE TOTAL	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Revenue Implications
A. City Centre Pedestrianisation & Public Realm Improvements						
Northgate Pedestrianisation/ Shared Space (Core Hours) (1)	£3,626,000	£1,595,440	£5.2 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions	
Amphitheatre Area Public Realm Enhancements/ Shared Space (3)	£2,900,000	£1,276,000	£4.2 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions	
Frodsham Street Shared Space (8)	£1,000,000	£440,000	£1.4 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions	
B. Bus Strategy & Infrastructure						
Gorse Stacks Bus Station & Associated works (2)	£15,129,000	£6,656,760	£21.8 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions	
Bus Priority Feasibility / Design (14)	£150,000	-	£150k	-	CWaC LTP	
Bus Priority on Hoole Road (14)	£660,000	£290,400	£1 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB	
Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road and Boughton (14)	£4,895,000	£2,153,800	£7 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB	
City Rail Link extension / 'City Centre Shuttle' (19)	£850,000	£374,000	£1.2 million	-	Developer Contributions	R
Review of frequencies and hours of operation (19)	TBC	-	-	-	CWaC LTP	R

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Indicative Cost	Optimism Bias (@44%)	INDICATIVE TOTAL	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Revenue Implications
Development of rural express and feeder bus services (19)	TBC	-	-	-	CWaC LTP	R
DRT enhancement (19)	TBC	-	-	-	CWaC LTP	R
Quality Partnerships/ Contracts (19)	TBC	-	-	-	CWaC LTP	
C. Congestion Relief & Access to Employment						
Junction Hotspots, including Northgate Junction (6), (11)	£2,350,000	£1,034,000	£3.4 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions, DfT	
Active Traffic Management including VMS, UTC enhancements, and Gateway Treatment (9)	£750,000	£330,000	£1.1 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions, DfT	
Chester Western Relief Road Feasibility Study (23)	£150,000	-	£150k	Flintshire County Council, Taith, Welsh Govt.	CWaC LTP, Welsh Govt.	
D. Chester Parking Strategy						
Delivery of City Centre Parking Strategy (10)	£501,500	£220,660	£700k	-	CWaC LTP	
Park & Ride Enhancements / Cross City Transit (15)	£800,000	£352,000	£1.2 million	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Developer Contributions, DfT	
New Park & Ride at Hoole Road – Site Only (21)	£7,100,000	£3,124,000	£10.2 million	-	CWLEP, Developer Contributions.	R
E. Mobility Impaired Accessibility / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride						
Mobility Impaired Access / Shopmobility / Dial-a-Ride (4)	£220,000	£96,800	£300K	-	CWaC LTP	
F. Rail Services and Infrastructure						
Enhanced Station Facilities & Improved Access by Non-Car Modes (20)	£275,000	£121,000	£400k	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB	

Capabilities on project: Transportation

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Indicative Cost	Optimism Bias (@44%)	INDICATIVE TOTAL	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Revenue Implications
Cross-Border Connectivity (22)	TBC	-	-	Flintshire County Council, Wrexham County Council, Taith, Welsh Govt.	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB, Welsh Govt.	
Wrexham - Chester Dualing (22)	£25,000,000	£11,000,000	£36 million	Welsh Govt. Network Rail	Welsh Govt., Network Rail	
Warrington - Chester & Crewe Chester Rail Electrification (24)	TBC	-	-	Northern Rail Franchise, Network Rail, Welsh Govt.	Network Rail	
New Rail Stations (x3) (25)	£21,125,000	£9,295,000	£30.4 million	Northern Rail Franchise, Network Rail, Welsh Govt.	CWLEP/LTB, DfT, Welsh Govt., Developer Contributions	
Rail Service Enhancements (26)	TBC	-	-	Northern Rail Franchise, Network Rail, Welsh Govt.	Network Rail	
Halton Curve Reinstatement (27)	£12,000,000	£5,280,000	£17.2 million	Merseytravel, Halton Borough Council, Taith		
G. City Centre Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements						
Hoole Way Roundabout pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements (2)	£340,000	£149,600	£500k	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB	
The Bars pedestrian / cycle accessibility improvements (5)	£500,000	£220,000	£700k	-	CWaC LTP, CWLEP/LTB	
East-west cycleway (8)	£64,000	£28,160	£100k	-	CWaC LTP	
Improved access to and quality upgrades of towpaths (8)	£175,000	£77,000	£250k	-	CWaC LTP	
City Centre cycle hire (8)	£100,000	£44,000	£150k	-	CWaC LTP, DfT, Private Enterprise	R
H. Strategic Pedestrian / Cycle Enhancements						
Pedestrian and Cycle Access: Hoole to City Centre (13)	£2,235,000	£983,400	£3.2 million	-	CWaC LTP, DfT	
Chester City Centre to Sealand Road	£50,000	-	£50k	-	CWaC LTP, DfT	

Scheme Name (Old Reference)	Indicative Cost	Optimism Bias (@44%)	INDICATIVE TOTAL	Potential Partners	Potential Funding Sources	Revenue Implications
Feasibility Study (18)						
Chester to Airbus/Broughton Retail Park Feasibility Study (18)	£50,000	-	£50k	Flintshire CC, Taith, Welsh Govt.	CWaC LTP, DfT, Flintshire CC, Taith, Welsh Govt.	
Chester to Wrexham Feasibility Study (18)	£50,000	-	£50k	Wrexham CC, Taith, Welsh Govt.	CWaC LTP, DfT, Wrexham CC, Taith, Welsh Govt.	
I. Smarter Choices / Behavioural Change						
Race and match day sustainable access from city centre (12)	£625,000	£275,000	£900k	-	CWaC LTP	R
Travel Planning Package (16)	£1,000,000	£440,000	£1.4 million	-	CwAC LTP, DfT	
SmartCard development for cross boundary, linked trip and joint event ticketing (17)	£75,000	£33,000	£100k	Merseytravel, Taith (+ Cheshire East, Halton)	CwAC LTP, DfT	R
Smarter Choices Package (cycle training, wayfinding, public information, travel training and transport node accessibility (28)	£1,000,000	£440,000	£1.4 million	-	CwAC LTP, DfT	
J. Coach / Taxi Strategy						
Coach Strategy Development (7)	£50,000	-	£50k	-	CWaC LTP	
Taxi Strategy Development	£50,000	-	£50k	-	CWaC LTP	

Key:

Strategy / Feasibility:

Funding Sources:

- CWaC LTP – Cheshire West & Chester Council Local Transport Plan
- CWLEP/LTB – Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership / Local Transport Board#
- DfT – Department for Transport

Capabilities on project: Transportation

5.2 Funding Options

A review of the available potential funding sources for the strategy has been undertaken. The strategy has been produced with a view of starting the short-term strategy in 2014 with a number of urgent actions including the relocation of the Bus Station to Gorse Stacks, required to facilitate the construction of the Northgate Development. In this context, the authority will need to begin the process of developing a more detailed programme that integrates with the wider development activity in the City Centre. This local level funding will be the primary source of funding for the authority to deliver schemes wholly within their control.

In addition to the anticipated local and sub-regional funding streams, opportunities to obtain funds from 'one-off' pots should be identified as they arise. These 'one-off' funding streams are usually linked to the achievement of specific policies and the scheme within the strategy that meet these policy objectives should be put forward as the opportunity arises. There is also the opportunity to develop more innovative ways of using existing/new funding streams, for instance the New Homes Bonus or the Local Pinch Point Fund, to deliver much needed funding for infrastructure.

Within the development context, there is always the ability to raise funding for infrastructure through the land use planning system by working in conjunction with private developers to secure mutually beneficial infrastructure funding. The traditional section 106 and 278 agreements are well understood mechanisms used by local authorities and developers. There are also non-traditional forms of funding mechanisms developing which CWaC Council will need to investigate.

This section outlines some of the existing funding streams that CWaC could utilise to deliver the schemes within this strategy.

5.2.1 Local Transport Plan Funding

The LTP is the traditional funding mechanism for funding transport schemes. CWaC's total allocation over the period 2011/12 to 2014/15 is £34.405million, with an approximate split of 70% Maintenance Block and 30% Integrated Transport Block.

Current funding levels have seen reduced levels of Integrated Transport Block (ITB) funding which has led to an emphasis on maintenance in recent years of the current LTP period. **Table 5.2** details the current DfT Settlements.

Table 5.2: CWaC LTP Funding Allocations¹

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
ITB	£2,169,000	£2,314,000	£2,314,000	£3,254,000
Capital Maintenance	£6,204,000	£6,112,000	£6,229,000	£5,809,000

It is clear the current levels of LTP funding for CWaC and more specifically for Chester, would not meet expectations against the schemes forwarded, however we suggest that many of the schemes and costs identified should be focussed towards delivering through engaging other bodies and sources of funding.

In addition to the capital grant funding afforded by the LTP, local authorities are able to fund certain schemes with a strong justification from a wider local pot. However, owing to current financial pressures and competing demands, such as housing and education, this is likely to be difficult.

5.2.2 Sub-Regional Funding

The Government has initiated moves towards the decentralisation of power, removing regional tiers of strategy and giving local authorities greater scope to initiate and fund transport projects. The 2011 Transport White Paper², went on to stress the importance of local solutions, in particular when encouraging sustainable transport.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

Following the abolition of Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), **Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)** now undertake the main role in strategic transport planning at the local level. 24 LEPs were approved by the Government in the Local Growth White Paper on 28 October 2010, including Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP). There are currently 39 LEPs in operation.

Primarily, LEPs are funded through a combination of private sector and local authority support, facilitated by initial Government investment to assist their development. Although LEPs will not be funding schemes in their own right, they will have a key role in co-ordinating funding bids and prioritising spend at the sub-regional level. Going forward, LEPs are being encouraged to facilitate the leverage of private investment on a project-by-project basis.

Growing Places Fund

The Growing Places Fund (GPF) is intended to be used by LEPs to invest in key items of infrastructure to enable development. It is a revolving pot with the loaded money invested to be returned to the LEP for re-investment in further provision of infrastructure.

CWLEP has been allocated £13.1million for their GPF, of which £12.2million is capital and £900k is revenue. Applications to the fund have included the Tower Wharf project to deliver 33 housing units.

Local Growth Fund

The Local Growth Fund (LGF) is part of the Growth Deal which the government will negotiate with each LEP. From April 2015, the LGF will bring together resources to support housing, transport and skills, decentralising those funding streams that are appropriate for devolution.

The size of the LGF for 2015/16 is £2.0billion for England including funding from Local Authority Transport Majors, Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) and the Integrated Transport Block. The fund is intended to support housing, transport and skills.

The allocation of the LGF will be partly competitive, based on each LEP's Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and partly based on formula or on a process reflective of the funding source in question (for example, New Homes Bonus funding will be determined by the delivery of new homes in each local authority area).

The CWLEP produced a draft SEP in December with inputs from key members and partners including CWaC. A final SEP will be submitted to Government in March 2014. It is anticipated that the priorities in the SEPs will inform the allocations in the LGF. In most instances, it is envisaged that funds will be spent on capital projects identified as priorities in the SEP, on the basis of a business case, which will then be appraised by the LEP.

Local Major Transport Schemes/Local Transport Board

Local Major Transport Schemes (LMTS) is a pooled transport investment fund offering grants which aims to 'improve transport infrastructure to secure significant connectivity gains in the support of economic growth and prosperity'. The LMTS was devolved to the newly created Local Transport Bodies (LTBs) in September 2012.

Covering Chester, the Cheshire & Warrington Local Transport Body (CWLTB) will be the awarding body from 2015.

The LMTS had an original budget of £1.1billion which was distributed per capita across the LTBs to match LEP areas. CWLTB was originally allocated £21.8million from the DfT for the LMTS covering the period 2015-19. This has since been revised down to £14.5million and is to be shared between Cheshire West & Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington.

CWaC submitted 6 schemes to the LTB in the preliminary rounds of bidding for LMTS funds. Two of these schemes (Chester Bus Station and New Bridge Road / A5117 Link Road, Ellesmere Port) were entered into a Development Pool for further development and appraisal.

As the CWLTB is closely aligned to the work of the CWLEP, a strong transport case is a key element of the SEP, given that transport funds will constitute a significant proportion of the LGF. Projects that are likely to be funded through this mechanism are those which improve transport infrastructure to secure significant connectivity gains in support of economic growth and prosperity.

It is understood that in time, the CWLTB will look to develop a 'transport investment fund' which will involve joint working with economic development teams to identify other funding sources, including private sector funding contributions and investments.

¹ Cabinet Report 16th February 2011

² Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon, Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen (January, 2011)

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North East Wales Integrated Transport Taskforce

In recognition of the significant cross-border interaction between North East Wales and adjacent areas in England and the economic potential of the North East Wales / West Cheshire cross-border area, the Welsh Government commissioned a Transport Task Force, which reported in June 2013. CWaC played an active role in helping to formulate the Task Force report, which also takes into account the views from representative organisations in North East Wales and Merseyside.

The Task Force identified a vision to create an integrated transport network that links people sustainably to the best jobs, services and education possible, providing viable alternatives to car-based access improving the prospects for growth and benefiting the people of North Wales and the areas of North West England that it relates to. The Final Report included a series of recommendations for potential schemes that would help to deliver the vision.

The Task Force also acknowledged the differing governance arrangements either side of the border and the impact on the delivery of transport interventions that support access to employment and services. In response, the report made a recommendation to work to develop a suitable vehicle for improving transport delivery seamlessly across the border.

Finally, the Task Force also acknowledged that the availability of public sector funding is highly uncertain, and recognised that innovative funding options are required to ensure that transport schemes can be delivered in this constrained environment. One such option mooted was the development of a 'ring-fenced' fund for delivering cross-border transport schemes through an identified delivery agency or Special Purpose Vehicle for the North East Wales/Cheshire West Travel to Work Area. This clearly requires further dialogue between partners and the English and Welsh Governments.

Case Study 1: Sub-Regional Partnership - Mersey Dee Link

Merseytravel and the Welsh Government is currently funding a study that is looking to assess the demand and potential economic and social benefits of reopening the Halton Curve in both directions, and potentially progress the scheme to outline design.

The scheme has been developed in partnership between Merseytravel, Halton Borough Council, CWaC, the Welsh Government and the TAIH consortium of North Wales authorities.

The project has been identified as a potential devolved major scheme as had not performed particularly well in a Liverpool City Region prioritisation as the benefits of the schemes result across a wider region. It is hoped that the refreshed business case will help enhance its status. Network Rail has recently indicated that the necessary infrastructure works could be built for a reduced £10million if delivered alongside other works scheduled for 2016, rather than £16million if delivered in isolation.

European Regional Development Fund

Following the abolishment of the Regional Development Agencies, the management of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) is now carried out by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and can include transport related projects where they support business and tourism.

The ERDF 2014-2020 Convergence Programme allocates funding to underperforming regions in EU member states with the objective of improving the performance and competitiveness of these regions, as well as ensuring equality of opportunities. The ERDF has a range of thematic objectives which reflect the priorities of the fund.

The CWLEP will be responsible for both ERDF and European Social Fund (ESF), with the latter aimed at employment, social inclusion and skills for the 2014-2020 programme. The ERDF will be spent on projects that meet the thematic objectives of the fund following submission of business cases which would be appraised by the CWLEP. As per the LGF, it is expected that relevant projects will need to have been identified within the SEP.

The types of projects/infrastructure that the ERDF is intended to support, includes any that contribute to one of their seven thematic objectives, which of relevance includes 'Low Carbon', 'Climate Change Adaptation' and Sustainable Transport.

5.2.3 Government Transport Funds Challenge Funding

In recent years, an increasing proportion of Government funding for transport schemes has been channelled through competitive funding rounds, with significantly lower levels being allocated through the traditional block grants. Examples include the **Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF)**, **Cycle City Ambition Grant**, **Better Bus Area Fund**, and the **Pinch Point Fund** for the local road network. As this trend looks set to continue, it is important for local authorities to have schemes ready to advance as opportunities arise.

Case Study 2: DfT Local Sustainable Transport Fund Project – “Connect to Jobs”

As discussed, the LSTF was established as part of the 2011 Transport White Paper as a means of supporting transport investment and subsequently strengthening local economies and responding to the issue of climate change. It is intended that the LSTF funding is used to deliver those measures that support sustainable travel.

Local authorities were invited to develop packages of measures and submit competitive bids for a proportion of LSTF. £560million has been set aside in the four year period to 2014-15 - approximately 60% of the fund is allocated to revenue spend with 40% assigned to capital expenditure. Authorities were able to bid for packages of under £5million and larger packages of up to £50million.

Chester West and Chester Council (CWaC) was successful in bidding

for £4.6million of funding from Department for Transport (DfT) to deliver a Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme to 2015. The primary focus of the programme, known as 'Connect to Jobs' is to improve access to key travel to work corridors between Chester, Merseyside and Deeside, which connect significant existing and emerging employment opportunities with existing and potential employees.

The project has been broken down into three themes and includes the following components:

1. Improve local access to longer distance commuter trips.
2. Addressing local trips and active modes.
3. Smarter choices communication / engagement.

Case Study 3: DfT Local Pinch Point Fund – Northwich Town Centre Gyrotory and Leicester Street Roundabout

In December 2013, it was announced that CWaC was successful in securing £1.77million from the DfT towards a scheme which will see the installation of a permanent gyrotory which requires alterations to five signal junctions and incorporates two swing bridges over the Weaver Navigation. There will be physical remodelling of the junctions and new signal equipment required that will link to an Urban Traffic Management Control system. The associated Leicester Street roundabout approximately half a mile to the east of the gyrotory will be significantly enlarged to create a signal controlled roundabout, again linked to UTMC.

We suggest that a major advantage of having a district-wide strategy or 'goal' is that it starts to allow other funding sources to be developed, ranging from that available via organisations such as the CWLEP, ERDF or Chester Renaissance itself through to that from groups such as Sustrans.

Highways Agency

Subject to feasibility and scope, it is likely that the Chester Western Relief Road would need to be progressed through the Highways Agency motorways and major trunk roads programme, or equivalent DfT funding.

Network Rail

In recent years, Network Rail has provided opportunities for funding such as the Rail Station Improvement Fund which invited local authorities to bid for monies relating to commercially focused improvements. Opportunities may also emerge from changes to future franchising arrangements and development opportunities around the sites. Station improvements in general will be considered as part of Network Rail's Control Period 5 (2014-2019), which is due to be published in February 2014. In order to maximise the opportunity

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for sourcing Network Rail funding, it will be important for CWaC to undertake regular engagement with relevant officers at Network Rail, both in terms of building support for the scheme and navigating the potential routes within the organisation.

5.2.4 Non-Government Funding Options

As discussed, sourcing non-Government funding for local major schemes has become increasingly important in recent years as the DfT has sought to reduce the proportion of the scheme costs that are paid for by central Government.

This section details a number of key non-Government funding sources that are potentially available to CWaC.

Section 106 and 278 Funding

Section 106 and 278 agreements are the traditional negotiated developer contributions made as part of a traditional planning application. The funds are provided by a developer to either mitigate against the negative impacts from their development or to facilitate improvements in areas directly relating to their development proposals. These contributions need to be shown to be directly related to the development and are therefore limited in their scope.

CWaC needs to be tactful in their approach to developer contributions to ensure that the right levels of funds are requested during negotiations. Chester wants to encourage development activity by not being overly prescriptive, but needs to ensure that their requirements are not overly onerous on the developer. Such developer contributions should be used to build up a pot of money to deliver against a prioritised 'wish-list' of schemes.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The CIL is a recent vehicle that would allow local authorities to raise monies to pay for the demands on infrastructure that new development produces. This could cover everything from schools to transport and would be wider-reaching than the existing arrangements around Section 106/278 funding. It is currently estimated that only 6% of developments have contributed in any way to the abatement of the demands on the infrastructure that they create³. CIL is a tariff-based approach to raising contributions from development and needs to be agreed at the authority level. This ensures that, regardless of the size of the development, each developer is aware of the contribution they would be expected to pay.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

TIF is a financial mechanism through which public authorities can borrow money against future rises in tax revenue. It is used to fund infrastructure necessary to enable development up front and plug funding gaps. The subsequent rise in tax revenues generated by development is used to service the debt from the loan. The model has been used to great effect in the US and facilitated the delivery of numerous redevelopment schemes. However if CWaC was to pursue

this as a model for financing upfront infrastructure, there a number of things to consider:

- An audited study of the financing and development arrangements needs to be conducted to ensure that the investment will deliver significant increases in development activity;
- There needs to be certainty that development will occur post-borrowing. If no development occurs, there is no subsequent rise in tax revenues and the council will end up in debt with no discernable benefit; and
- Need to consider the wider liability of the development activity.

Private Business/Employers

Within the Strategy, there is particular opportunities to work with developers and stakeholders to deliver mutually beneficially schemes that facilitate development whilst enhancing access. Mutually supportive developments and enhanced public realm and improved access are essential components of enhancing the city centre as a place to invest.

At the same time co-ordination with land use planning is required to ensure future development does not undermine transport aspirations (including Medium and Long-Term). Beyond the accepted direct contributions that developers and private interests (section 106 and 278 contributions) make through the planning system, there are many other ways that they can contribute to the delivery of the strategy. This extends to inputs of time and skills with an aim of showing how public and private organisations can work together to produce tangible outcomes for Chester City Centre. Potential ways that private interests can contribute to the delivery of this strategy include:

- Travel Planning and Behavioural Change: organisations can become agents for change by being travel planning 'champions' and supporting members of staff that wish to travel to work using more sustainable means. This could mean offering support through supporting various schemes such as the 'Cycle to Work' scheme or the provision of shower cubicles in the office. CWaC has a wealth of experience internally that could support private organisations in this endeavour, most recently through the Connect to Jobs Programme.
- Home and Tele-Working Schemes: business can help to reduce the burden on employees to travel through providing them the means to work from home. This could be a company-wide policy initiative, such as allowing all employees to work from home one per week or specifying that it is role dependant.
- Cycle Parking: cycle parking is a cost effective way of providing employees with the means to cycle to work.

Charities and Voluntary Groups

Charities and voluntary groups with an interest in transport could help to fund and deliver some improvement works as part of the strategy. Examples of charities that are involved in the transport sector include:

- Sustrans: national sustainable transport charity concerned mainly with the development of walking and cycling networks; and
- Blue Badge Network: providing advice and information on disabled transport.

Charitable and voluntary groups can be strong advocates for their cause, provide a wealth of knowledge about a particular issue and can be good catalysts for change. They are generally very keen to provide support on the delivery of projects but are not commonly the principal funders of transport infrastructure

³ <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1897278.pdf%20>

6 Implementation and Phasing



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6.2 Phase One Action Plan

This section focuses on key actions within the short-term strategy (i.e. 2013/14 to 2015/16). It outlines the key considerations that need to be undertaken to help deliver the strategy, building on the previous section which includes details of the timescales as they relate to the wider developments. It needs to be remembered that there are wider ongoing initiatives in the City Centre that may affect the timescale and delivery of the schemes. These actions need to be progressed alongside re-engagement with stakeholders, identification of funding sources and bidding.

Both these elements are important to the strategy, the proposed delivery process outlines how to progress the schemes through to implementation and the strategy phasing and key considerations for bringing the schemes forward.

Northgate Street/St. Werburgh Street/Town Hall Square/Cathedral Area Shared-Space/Pedestrianisation/Public Realm Improvements

Key Actions

- Liaise with Northgate and Re:New Design Teams to determine access and movement requirements as proposals emerge.
- Undertake detailed consultation with key stakeholders (residents, landowners & businesses) to determine access and servicing requirements.
- Undertake detailed design.

Bus Strategy

Key Actions

- Commission Feasibility Study and Concept Design into potential relocation of bus station to Gorse Stacks.
- Consult on design of Gorse Stacks Bus Station with Bus Operators.
- Subject to outcomes, produce Business Case and undertake Detailed Design for Gorse Stacks Bus Station and Prepare Planning Application.
- Commission Feasibility Study and Concept Designs for bus enhancements on key corridors, in particular on the A56 Hoole Road linking in with new bus station and potential Hoole Road Park & Ride.

Parking Strategy including provision for Mobility-Impaired Persons

Key Actions

- Continue delivery of approved parking strategy.
- Liaise with Project Managers of Northgate and Re:New projects to

ensure adequate provision for persons with mobility impairments / access needs.

- Undertake further consultation with disabled groups regarding potential relocation of Blue Badge Holders from Northgate Street / St. Werburgh Street.
- Commission Feasibility Study and Concept Design as required, including Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) implementation.

Park & Ride Improvements

Key Actions

- Creation of a Working Group to define future Park & Ride Service Specification and assess potential for development of intermediate stops.
- Liaise with partners and planning team to determine feasibility of Park & Ride in the vicinity of M53 Junction 12/A56.
- Undertake detailed needs analysis and demand assessment of potential fifth Park & Ride site and progress to Business Case development.

Addressing Congestion on Radial Routes at Pinch Points

Key Actions

- Undertake further modelling to review problem junctions / corridors.
- Commission Feasibility Study and Concept Design and progress to Detailed Design as required.

Cheshire West Relief Road Feasibility Study

Key Actions

- Undertake detailed consultation with key stakeholders (incl. Flintshire County Council, Mersey Dee Alliance, Taith and Welsh Government) to consider potential route options and aspirations.
- Commission Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment into route options.
- Undertake Public Consultation.

7 Summary/Way Forward



7 Summary

7.1 Summary

The key recommendations in the report are set out below and in more detail in **Section 4**.

Table 7.1: CTS Recommendations

City Centre Pedestrianisation and Public Realm Improvements

- Extend the city's core pedestrianised area to include Northgate Street, St. Werburgh Street and Hunter Street during the core hours of 10.30 and 16.30.
- Improve the overall public realm and attractiveness of Northgate Street, Town Hall Square and part of Hunter Street (adjacent to the Theatre), St. Werburgh Street, Eastgate Street and St. John Street including the re-location of current on-street parking provision for blue badge holders.
- Establish agreements to permit limited vehicle access to the new pedestrianised area during core hours to maintain essential access requirements for residents, the Cathedral, central hotels and others as appropriate, and identify how this access will be controlled and managed.
- Introduce a shared-space environment on Little St. John Street to improve pedestrian links between the city centre and the Amphitheatre, Roman Gardens, St. John's Church and the Groves.
- Review options to provide a shared-space environment along Pepper Street.
- Introduce a shared-space environment along Frodsham Street to provide an improved pedestrian environment linking the planned new bus interchange with other parts of the city centre; and
- Consult with the residents of King Street and Water Tower Street to seek agreement on how best to manage access to this area and prevent rat-running and bring forward a scheme that works with the pedestrianisation of Northgate Street.

Bus Strategy and Infrastructure

- Build a new city centre bus interchange at Gorse Stacks ensuring full integration with, and connectivity to, the Railway station and the Central Business Quarter.
- Maintain bus access across the city centre including improved hubs / interchanges on Delamere Street and within the new Northgate Development as well as maintaining existing stops such as those along Frodsham Street and Foregate Street.
- Introduce a "shopper hopper" city centre shuttle bus to improve links

between the new bus interchange and other parts of the city centre including the Little Roodee Coach Park.

- Examine opportunities to introduce bus priority measures along key corridors to the city centre including the A 540 Parkgate Road, A5116 Liverpool Road, A56 Hoole Road and A51 Boughton corridor.
- Work with bus operators to establish further Quality Bus Partnerships with a particular focus on improving service frequencies and hours of operation.

Congestion Relief and Access to Employment

- Identify, design and deliver junction improvement schemes to address current and future traffic congestion and pinch-point problems.
- Identify and improve highway capacity through the introduction of signalisation, Urban Traffic Control, Active Traffic Management and Variable Message Signing schemes where appropriate including Air Quality Management Areas.
- Working with Flintshire County Council, Welsh Government and Saltney Community Council, undertake a detailed feasibility study and enter into dialogue with all potential stakeholders to examine the viability of the proposed Chester Western Relief Road including an examination of alternative routes to its current protected alignment.
- Continue dialogue with Welsh Government and local authority partners to identify and bring forward schemes to improve cross-border access and connectivity and help reduce congestion.

Chester Parking Strategy

- Continue the delivery of the Council's Parking Strategy.
- Explore proposals for the creation of improved car parking for Chester Station on the site of the former Chester Enterprise Centre in conjunction with other complementary uses and connected to the City Centre by improved pedestrian and cycle links as set out in Section 4.
- Introduce more innovative and cashless solutions to pay for car parking.
- Establish a Member led working group to examine Park & Ride service improvements, including cross-town routing and the introduction of intermediate stops, to be incorporated and introduced as part of a new Park & Ride contract in 2016.

- Develop a full business case and detailed design for a fifth Park & Ride site serving the A56 Hoole Road corridor.
- Review problems associated with on-street car parking within residential areas and introduce residents parking schemes where these are requested and supported by the local community.

Mobility Impaired Accessibility/Shopmobility/Dial-a-Ride

- Relocate and accommodate existing on-street blue badge parking provision from Northgate Street, St. Werburgh Street, Eastgate Street and St. John Street to other central car parks with a particular focus on the use of the Kaleyards car park and existing Shopmobility centre.
- Ensure that adequate blue badge/disabled parking provision is allocated within the new Northgate Development and the Delamere Street development car parks.
- Provide a new Shopmobility centre within the Northgate development to complement the existing site in the Kaleyards.
- Undertake access audits to help improve routes from the new bus interchange and car parks for blue badge users to other parts of the city centre.
- Examine opportunities to incorporate a satellite Shopmobility service within the new Gorse Stacks bus interchange.
- Ensure that Dial-a-Ride and specialist transport have ready access to Shopmobility sites as well as local bus in interchanges and hubs.

Rail Services and Infrastructure

- Work with rail partners to improve facilities, enhance interchange and, where appropriate, increase car parking at Chester and other local railway stations to improve the attractiveness of rail based commuting to and from the city.
- Work with the Government's Electrification Task Force to lobby and make the case to support the electrification of the Crewe – Chester – Holyhead, Chester – Warrington, Mid-Cheshire Chester – Manchester Lines; and the upgrade of other lines around Ellesmere Port and Halton.
- Work with partners to identify and make the case for new railway stations to enhance opportunities to increase levels of rail commuting to reach the city including potential locations such as Newton by Tattenhall and a site on the Chester – Wrexham Line.
- Work with train operators to encourage increased levels of rail based commuting both to and from the city and take full advantage

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of the opportunities presented by the Northern Hub scheme in Manchester.

- Work with partners to establish the business case to take forward the Halton Curve scheme to help improve rail access from Chester and North East Wales to South East Merseyside and Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

City Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Enhancement

- Develop and implement a package of schemes to benefits pedestrians and cyclists within the city centre including the provision of improved, secure cycle parking.
- Improve connectivity and safety for pedestrians and cyclist by replacing subways with at-grade crossing points including links between the city centre and the Railway Station / Chester Business Quarter and the University campuses on Parkgate Road and Liverpool Road.
- Ensure that schemes act to complement the objectives set out in the Council's Cycling and Waterways Strategies.
- Where appropriate, support the existing policy to introduce 20 mph zones where they are supported by local residents.

Strategic Pedestrian and Cycle Enhancements

- Undertake a feasibility study to determine options and funding opportunities to provide a dedicated pedestrian / cycle bridge sited in parallel to the Hoole Road railway bridge to provide safer access to the city centre and Railway Station / Chester Business Quarter from Hoole (in conjunction with developing solutions to car parking as per recommendations in section 4).
- Ensure that the Highways Agency A55 / A483 junction improvement scheme safely accommodates cyclists' needs.
- Examine opportunities to improve cross-border cycling links using the A5104 corridor between Chester and Broughton and the A483 / B5445 corridor between Chester and Wrexham.
- Continue to secure opportunities to improve the connectivity of local pedestrian and cycle networks.
- Maintain existing cycle routes, multi-user paths and towpaths to a high standard for the benefit of all users.
- Examine the longer term opportunities for a long distance cycle / footpath / bridleway route making use of the disused Hatton – Whitchurch railway alignment.

Smarter Choices and Behavioural Change

- Work with developers on major developments to create a

sustainable transport network (bike hire, cycleways, park & bike, green energy) and support the take up and delivery of workplace, school, residential, station and personalised travel plan projects.

- Undertake travel behaviour and awareness campaigns and projects that help to encourage the use of sustainable types of travel.
- Support mobile, flexible and new ways of working that aim to reduce /remove the need to commute on a regular basis.
- Take advantage of new technology, such as passenger transport Smartcards, particularly for cross-boundary trips.
- Work with partners to develop measures that encourage visitors and tourists to consider using more sustainable modes of transport to reach the city.
- Introduce measures to reduce the impact of congestion arising from Racedays, festivals and similar events on the city's roads.

Coach and Taxi Strategy

- Work with appropriate partners to prepare a coach strategy for the city. This will encompass parking provision for coaches, access to the city centre including the location of pick-up/drop-off points, layover/overnight parking, marketing and promotion.
- Work with appropriate partners to develop a taxi strategy for the city. This will encompass city centre access, reducing conflicts within sensitive city centre residential locations, location and operation of taxi ranks, layover, licensing guidelines and use of bus lanes by taxis.

7.2 Way Forward

This work has drawn together a Transport Vision and Strategy for Chester and immediate environs over the next 10-15 year period. It represents a first step in establishing a clear vision across a variety of agencies, most notably CWaC as the Highway and Planning Authority and Chester Renaissance who are driving the economic and development agenda. Success will depend on the level of cross agency co-operation and the ability to respond to opportunities as and when they are presented.

Clearly, the funding of schemes is likely to require greater resources than is otherwise currently available. Therefore the strategy relies upon creativity, vision and energy to secure funding and keeping the wider vision on the table.

It is also clear that there should be a series of strands of transport related projects that have to be inter-related to each other and tied closely to land use planning. There is significant opportunity for the Chester to take major steps forward in relation to its transport provision,

particularly in light of the compact nature of the core centre and an ability to demonstrate real change.

Upon approval of the strategy, it is necessary to identify a core group of individuals within CWaC and across the spectrum of stakeholders, supplementing the existing Steering Group to oversee delivery of the Transport Strategy. It is vital that this group has a wider view than transport because of issues surrounding both funding and programming.

As detailed in the report, there are a number of schemes that are closely aligned to major development projects, such as the relocation of the Bus Station to Gorse Stacks to facilitate the Northgate Development. Therefore, it is suggested that any opportunities for funding and construction efficiencies are identified at an early stage. As the schemes contained within the short-term element of this strategy are considered a priority it is recommended that those related to wider development proposals are taken forward first.

It will be necessary to, in conjunction with the relevant departments, begin to progress a number of key schemes to more detailed design and costing stages. In the case of infrastructure, this will need working to a minimum of feasibility design stage in the first instance.

A review process for the strategy needs to be established to ensure the relevance of the schemes within future contexts is assured. As planned development begins to reshape the City Centre, it will be necessary to ensure that the proposed schemes, particularly in the medium and long-term phases of the strategy, are reviewed and addressed accordingly. Initial review periods of 2016, 2019, 2024 and 2029 are suggested.

7.3 Next Steps

In summary, the following recommendations for delivering the early stages of the strategy are as follows:

- Gain political approval for the strategy;
- Establish a cross-cutting CTS Steering Group action group to oversee delivery of the strategy and take ownership of the outcomes;
- Integrate the schemes contained within the strategy with the wider City Centre Development proposals;
- Further testing and design development of the Phase One priorities;
- Further engagement with the relevant stakeholders as required; and
- Establish an evaluation framework (recommended every five years) to assess the relevance of each scheme within the changing development context.

Appendices



Appendix A: Transport Strategy Modelling

A.1. Networks/Modelling Methodology

Four network scenarios were tested; a short-term network, a medium-term network, a long-term network and a long-term network with the inclusion of the proposed Western Relief Road (WRR), corresponding to the envisaged phasing of Chester Transport Strategy schemes, as presented in the consultation (see section 3). As the changes to the network for long-term and the WRR are not within the PARAMICS modelling area, only a short and medium-term network were developed in PARAMICS. The other networks were tested using demands produced from the strategic SATURN model of Chester and the surrounding area.

Base Network

As part of the development of the Chester Transport Strategy, AECOM was provided with an existing PARAMICS model of Chester City Centre. This model was updated to include any recent changes to the network and extended to the North (Parkgate/Liverpool Road) and East (A51 Boughton Road).

Short-Term Network

The short-term scenario network allows for the relocation of the Bus Station from Northgate to Gorse Stacks as part of enabling works associated with the Northgate Development using a draft layout for the preferred Gorse Stacks Bus Station at the time of the assessment.

It was shown that the option modelled did not have a significant impact on the model. There is little difference to the network and the difference in flow experienced was no more than what could be expected by daily variations. The average delay to vehicles as a result of the relocated bus interchange compared to the base network is 0.9 minutes.

The short-term network also included the partial pedestrianisation of Northgate and St. Werburgh Street.

Medium-Term Network

The medium-term network includes the additions detailed in the short-term network along with:

- Fountain's Roundabout being converted to a four-arm signalised junction (see **Figure A.1**), with an additional new junction created between St. Oswald's Way and Victoria Road South for buses and general traffic.
- Rural bus route truncations and Park & Ride bus frequencies increased: this includes the removal of bus services Townlynx route 6 (Chester to Pantymwyn), Route 13 (Chester to Loggerheads, Routes 41/41A/41B (Chester to Waverton), Routes 81/82/82A/82B/X82 (Chester to Northwich), Route 83 (Chester to Bulkely) Route 84 (Chester to Crewe) and Route C56 (Chester to Wrexham) and the increased frequency of the Park & Ride services to six per hour.

- The Bars Pedestrian and Cycle improvements: additional signalised crossings at the Bars Gyrotory and layout alterations to the right turn from A51 Boughton with the removal of the dedicated turn lane (see **Figure 2.5**).
- Park & Ride at Hoole Road: this Park & Ride site is not located within the model area, but a new bus route has been added linking the Park & Ride site to the Gorse Stacks bus interchange via Hoole Road.

Figure A.1: Fountains Roundabout (left) and Proposed Fountains Junction (right)

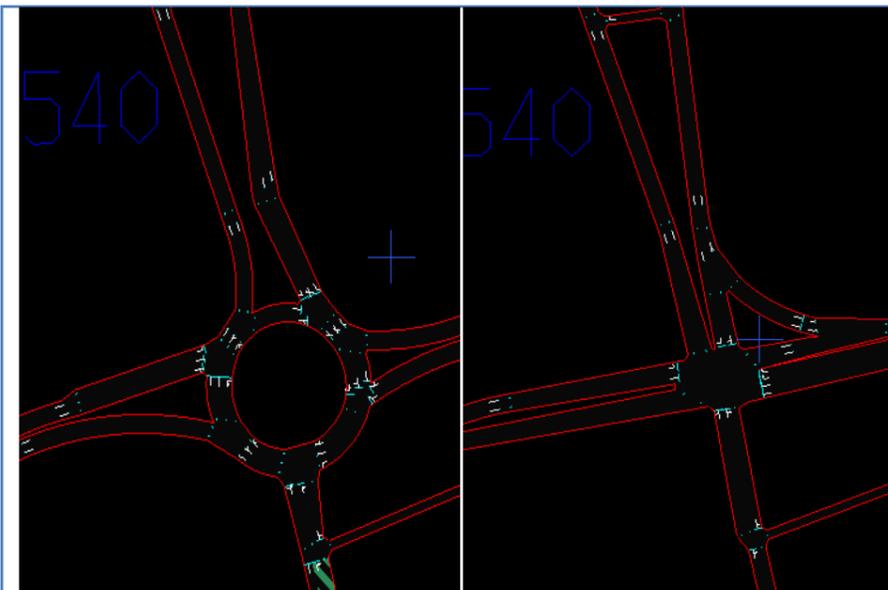
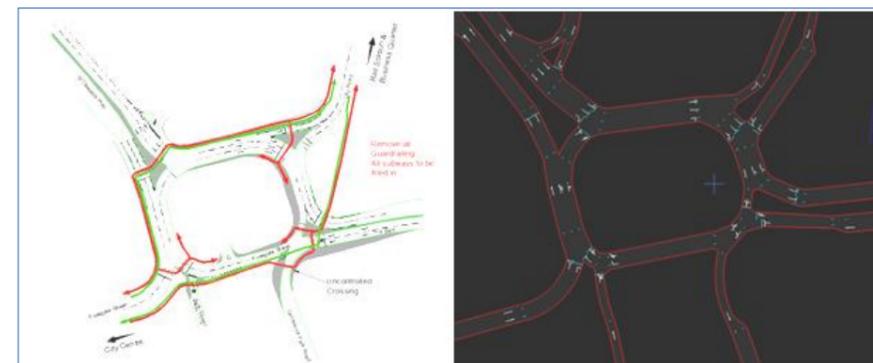


Figure A.2: Bars Gyrotory



The medium-term network was tested with the closure of Vicars Lane adjacent to the Amphitheatre, except for access, as part of the Amphitheatre Shared Use Scheme. However, this caused the network to block as there was too much demand placed upon the Fountains Junction. It was therefore determined that a shared-use scheme in

which traffic routing via the Amphitheatre corridor is maintained (at least during the peak hours) is more appropriate for this location, and this formed the basis of the remaining modelling tests.

The model was also tested with a dedicated bus lane at the proposed Fountains Junction; on approach to the junction from Liverpool Road (north) and on Northgate Street and Delamere Street, south of the junction to serve buses travelling towards the new Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange. This reduced the volume of traffic accessing the junction from the north and south and again caused the network to block; therefore the junction design was revised and the bus lanes removed. It is concluded that, if bus priority facilities are to be included in this location, significant further design work is required to establish a working junction, however for the purposes of this exercise, a junction without specific bus priority is to be tested.

A.2. Demands

The 2030 demand matrices were provided to AECOM by Atkins from the Strategic SATURN model which includes the strategic road network in and around Chester. The PARAMICS model network and zoning has been constructed to align with the Chester SATURN model, however there are some cases where demand has to be split between two zones due to the location of the connectors onto the network.

A factor of 0.77 has been applied to the demand matrices produced from the strategic model to convert them for the use in micro-simulation. This was derived by comparing the 2010 base flow demands between the SATURN strategic model and the 2010 calibrated PARAMICS models – the latter in conjunction with observed data. A factor of this magnitude is common when scaling between strategic and micro networks. This factor has been applied to all scenarios.

Atkins used two development scenarios to run the Strategic SATURN model:

- Reference Case matrices to include only the impact of additional non-greenbelt housing developments as specified in the draft Local Plan for consultation; and
- Test Case matrices also incorporating the Greenbelt developments as specified in the Local Plan.

Short Term Demand FY2030

The short-term demand has been derived using the Reference Case matrices in the SATURN model; it represents the current network with a growth to year 2030 and does not include any Greenbelt developments.

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Medium Term Demand FY2030

The medium-term demand has been derived using the Test Case matrices in the SATURN model. This incorporates the Greenbelt developments and the following network modifications:

- Bus Priority on Parkgate Road, Liverpool Road, Hoole Road and Boughton Road:** The proposals for bus priority along Parkgate and Liverpool Road consist primarily of bus lanes and therefore a corresponding decrease in link capacity for general traffic. This is equivalent to a loss of lane width of 3.5m – 4.5m in each direction where feasible. Liverpool Road north of the junction with Countess Way is a dual-carriageway link with two lanes in each direction, at this location a bus lane will reduce maximum link capacity by approximately half. Hoole Road is different from the above corridors, due to the limited opportunities for bus lanes. Consequently priority for buses and Park & Ride vehicles is achieved by ‘Selective Vehicle Detection’ and prioritisation of the mainline flow along Hoole Road. In practice, this would require the signalisation of several junctions with side-streets between the A41 and Hoole Bridge, and prioritising the flow along Hoole Road at these. Bus prioritisation from the east is concentrated between the Boughton Gyratory and the Bars with one lane in each direction given over to buses.
- Impact of rural bus routes terminating at Park & Ride sites, and increased Park & Ride services:** a number of bus routes into the city centre have been removed. Park & Ride services have been increased to a 10 minute frequency throughout the day.
- Hoole Road Park & Ride:** This consists of the addition of a 10 minute frequency Park & Ride route along Hoole Road accessing the network at a point between the M53 and A41 junctions, and extending into the city centre. The key impact of this is a reduction in car traffic along Hoole Road, particularly at peak times.
- Impact of Active Travel/Smarter Choices Measures:** In addition to the above measures, there has been the inclusion of several Smarter Choices/Active Travel, Travel Planning measures. In line with the methodology for evaluating the impact of Saighton Camp development, a car traffic reduction factor of 7% has been applied to all internal-internal, and external-internal trips (in terms of Production- Attraction trip matrices), throughout the model. The reduction factor of 7% is based on literature highlighting the impacts of ‘trip reduction’ measures employed in urban areas and has been agreed with Cheshire West & Chester Council.

Long-Term Demand FY2030

Both long-term demand scenarios are as above with the inclusion of an additional two schemes representing a change to the modelled network.

The first is the removal of Old Dee Bridge as a vehicular traffic link (remaining open to bicycles, buses, and pedestrians only).

Long Term Demand with WRR FY2030

The second long-term scenario is the inclusion of the WRR which links the A483 Wrexham Road with the A548 Sealand Road.

A.3. Strategic Model Delay Results

Using the Strategic SATURN Model Atkins provided, the following plans showing changes in junction delays in each scenarios; ‘Medium-Term’, ‘Long-Term’ and ‘Long Term with the WRR’, compared against the Reference Case and the Test Case (incorporating the Greenbelt Development). From these plans, there is little effect to delays within the city centre within the Strategic Model.

When compared against the Test Case, all scenarios experience reductions in delays on Watergate Street and St. Martin’s Way on the approach to Fountains Junction in the PM peak; this is not true when compared against the Reference Case, therefore it is concluded this must be a result of the Greenbelt Development.

A.4. Model Outputs

All demand scenarios were tested in the base network, short-term network and medium-term network.

Some of the scenarios tested could not produce valid results as the models were fully congested and became ‘blocked’ before the end of the peak hour.

Table A.1 gives a summary of how each network performs when loaded with the relevant demand. Using data logged from a model run any case where the average delay per vehicle exceeds 20 minutes, it is considered the network has blocked.

Table A.1: Network Performance Summary Table

Network \ Demand	AM			PM		
	Base	Short	Med	Base	Short	Med
2030 Short	Working	Working		Working	Network Blocked	
2030 Med	Working	Working	Working	Working	Network Blocked	Network Blocked
2030 Long	Working	Working	Working	Working	Network Blocked	Network Blocked
2030 Long WRR	Working	Working	Working	Working	Network Blocked	Working

It should be noted that, in cases where the model is considered ‘working’, congestion on the network may still be above a desirable level.

The primary difference between the ‘Short’ and ‘Medium’ networks is the conversion of Fountains Roundabout to a four-arm signalised junction.

The network becomes blocked in the PM peak as the demand increases and, ultimately, the network is only made to function with the inclusion of the proposed WRR.

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Table A.2 provides comments on each of the test scenarios and where network problems occur.

Table A.2: Network Performance Synopsis

Demand	AM		Comments
	Congestion Begins	Network Blocked	
2030 Short AM	50 min	After peak hour	The network becomes congested along St. Martins Way as a result of vehicles going north from Fountains Roundabout backing up back onto the roundabout. Buses are being blocked due to vehicles queuing to get on to Fountains Roundabout from the south.
2030 Medium AM	25 min	n/a	The network experiences some congestion. Vehicles from Canal Street are being blocked from accessing the network as there is queuing on Northgate Street of vehicles approaching Fountains Junction from the South; this also causes queuing along George Street. There are also queues forming on A51 approaching Bars Gyratory and Grosvenor Road approaching Grosvenor Roundabout.
2030 Long AM	n/a	n/a	Network performs similar to 2030 Medium AM
2030 Long WRR AM	n/a	n/a	Network is running smoothly.
2030 Short PM	55 min	n/a	Congestion begins to build up approaching Bars Gyratory from the north just before the end of the peak hour, but this does not cause any additional problems. As is the case in the Reference demand, vehicles are limited from entering the network from Hoole Lane.
2030 Med PM	Before peak hour	20 min	The network becomes congested during the build up period. This starts at Fountains Junction with vehicles turning right from St. Oswald's Way onto Parkgate Road. Queuing builds along both St. Martin's Way and St. Oswald's Way causing the network to become blocked.
2030 Long PM	Before peak hour	20 min	Network performs similar to 2030 Medium PM
2030 Long WRR PM	n/a	n/a	There is some queuing along Hoole Road, however this is a currently observed issue and is not considered to be significantly worse than existing levels of congestion.

Appendix B: Non- Scheme Specific Consultation Outcomes

B.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;
- 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.

7.3.1 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. Some respondents specifically stated there was a need to encourage public transport use, whilst others suggested further recommendations for bus and train services:

- Three respondents suggested the re-introduction of a tram system in Chester;
- Councillor Daniels noted the importance of considering elderly residents who are dependent on bus services.
- Elderly resident mentioned bus service cancelled in Highfield Road and Oakfield Road, Blacon and would like this to be reinstated;

- Honorary Alderman suggested all buses travel anti-clockwise around the inner ring road so that bus doors would be on city side and passengers would not need to cross the road;
- Great Boughton Council concerned about recent changes to bus services and routes. Furthermore, the parish has high elderly population and it was felt current services did not serve the sheltered housing development; and
- 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.

B.2. 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 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.

7.3.2 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, the Secretary of 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.

B.3. 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 Cheshire West & Chester Council 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.

B.4. Overall Strategy

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

- Councillor Sullivan concluded the proposals were sensible, but lacked final detail which would be provided following further analysis;
- Councillors Stuart Parker of Chester Villages and Razia Daniels of 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;
- Councillor Reggie Jones 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.

Appendix C: Detailed Scheme Descriptions

City Centre Pedestrianisation & Public Realm Improvements

This scheme aims to significantly enhance traffic management and the public realm at the ‘Heart of Chester’, an area incorporating Northgate Street, St. Werburgh Street and extending to Hunter Street. The scheme will provide a significantly improved pedestrian environment during core hours of the day (10:30 – 16:30), that integrates with (but is not reliant upon) the proposed Northgate Development, Theatre (Re:New) and Town Hall Square and is facilitated by the proposed relocation of the bus station to Gorse Stacks. In particular, Northgate Street between Abbey Square and George Street would be pedestrianised except for essential access during core hours, and south of Abbey Square (including St. Werburgh Street, Northgate Street South, Eastgate Street and St. John Street) would be fully pedestrianised during the same core hours. Public realm would also be improved along the length of the route to give it a similar appearance to other parts of the pedestrian zone, with signage clutter removed. Prior to the Northgate Development, traffic from Abbey Square could continue to exit via Princess Street, however during and following construction of Northgate, all traffic during core hours will exit via Hunter Street, although allowances would be made for temporary street closures for external festivals as currently. Buses would be removed completely from Northgate Street and diverted to a new Bus Interchange facility at Gorse Stacks.

Any solution taken forward will need to maintain current access arrangements to the Cathedral Complex, Abbey Square, the central Hotels and Rufus Court. Servicing would be allowed outside of core hours only, and access would be retained for emergency services at all times. A control barrier would be provided in Upper Northgate Street, and an escape route provided for prohibited vehicles – the next phase of work would establish the best form of control here. Additional pick-up and drop-off would also be available at Kale Yards for developments such as the Cathedral Free School. During core hours, no vehicles except for exceptional permit holders would be able to travel south of Abbey Square via St. Werburgh Street, Eastgate Street and St. John Street with blue-badge holder parking concentrated in off-street locations such as Trinity Street, the proposed Northgate car park and Frodsham Street car park, integrating better with Dial House and Shopmobility, new facilities for which should be provided as part of the Northgate development proposals.

The Theatre, to be constructed concurrently with the Northgate Retail Scheme, is envisaged to be accessed during core hours via St. Martins Way with coaches dropping off, picking up and laying over within facilities to be provided as part of the development. These details are to be reviewed and agreed during the finalisation of the Northgate Development plans.

The package includes the improvement of pedestrian access between the retail core and the waterfront via the Amphitheatre and Roman

Gardens. The aspiration to improve the public realm and crossing facilities in this location forms a key part of the One City Plan Proposals. It is acknowledged that the current route between the retail core, the key public transport nodes, the Amphitheatre, and the River Dee riverside suffers from traffic dominance and severance. The Union Street, Vicars Lane, Pepper Street corridor forms the nominal southern arm of the Inner Ring Road, however it does not benefit from the high capacities and wide multi-lane carriageways of the rest of the ring road. The route also effectively cuts off the Amphitheatre and riverside from the rest of the city centre for pedestrians and cyclists, and creates a poor image of the southern section of the city, detracting from the architectural heritage and attractive Roman Gardens.

The first phase of the scheme would greatly enhance the carriageway area between Chester Visitors Centre and the historic city walls on Pepper Street through the creation of a shared-surface environment aimed at enhancing crossing quality and generating more activity and vitality. The inclusion of street furniture and the removal of street markings and signage will serve to reduce the psychological impact of the carriageway, enhancing safety by promoting controlled uncertainty over priority as is currently in place elsewhere. The scheme would seek to discourage through movements and be supported by the designation of a 20mph speed limit. It is envisaged that the scheme will facilitate an enhanced visitor offer at the Amphitheatre, and will integrate directly with improved routes to the riverside via the Roman Gardens, The Groves, Grosvenor Park, and St. Johns Church.

Bus Strategy and Infrastructure

This scheme package combines proposals for the bus interchange, ‘Shopper Hopper’ circular service, and bus priority on key arterials, with service improvements via quality partnerships, and enhancements to rural bus provision including Demand Responsive Transport and the creation of feeder services on higher frequencies and until later in the evening.

The scheme creates a bus station on the existing car park at Gorse Stacks, which provides drop-off, layover, pick-up and interchange space for the majority of bus and Park & Ride services in the city. The project would provide supplementary bus stops on-street and would include public realm work on Gorse Stacks, Frodsham Street and on Hoole Way roundabout, potentially incorporating satellite Shopmobility services. As part of the overall vision, the scheme includes pedestrian / cycle enhancements at Hoole Way roundabout including at-grade crossing facilities, and removal / re-development of the existing subways, for better access to the core city centre. It also incorporates improvements to canal access and frontage in the area. It is hoped that the scheme could act as a catalyst for regeneration on Frodsham Street and Brook Street with improved links to the rail station.

To address concerns of accessibility to key areas such as Northgate, it is proposed to create a smaller scale bus hub within Northgate to be accessed directly off St. Martin’s Way (since buses will no longer use Northgate Street). It is further proposed to extend the City Rail Link or

new ‘Shopper Hopper’ bus service to form a wider city centre circular route and a better connection between the bus station, Northgate and Foregate Street, as well as the rail station. Extensions to the river front, Groves, and Little Roodee areas are also possibilities. This would provide a frequent connection to all parts of the city from Gorse Stacks. It should also be noted that Chester has a compact city centre and is therefore considered highly walkable for able bodied people.

Many of the key radials into the city centre currently experience congestion issues to varying degrees. Bus priority measures have already been implemented on parts of Wrexham Road, Hough Green, and Sealand Road, however there are currently limited bus priority measures in place on several of these corridors including the A540 Parkgate Road, A5116 Liverpool Road, A56 Hoole Road, and A51 Boughton Road. Buses therefore experience the same congestion issues as general traffic resulting in delays, inconsistent journey times and low passenger satisfaction. A series of priority measures along the key corridors into the city could reduce this impact, including selective vehicle detection at traffic signals, potential bus-gates and bus-only links to aid swift entry and penetration into the city centre. Specific areas to target for greater bus priority include the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) at Boughton, the potential AQMA at the confluence of Liverpool and Parkgate Roads, and Hoole Road.

The Bus Service Improvements package of schemes includes a number of suggested service improvements aimed at addressing key identified issues with the existing bus network in Chester. Building upon the success of Quality Bus Partnership schemes on the existing Blacon Pointer and Chester – Liverpool services, it is recommended that service frequencies and hours of operation be improved especially for weekend and evening services. Enhanced and more frequent services to destinations including Chester Business Park are also recommended in order to provide a viable link to work for residents without direct access to a car and not on a core public transport route.

For those living in rural areas, additional Demand Responsive services where exact routing can be flexible, are also proposed. For those nearby large-scale locations not served by a direct rail service from Chester, such as Mold, express limited stop bus services may offer a viable alternative.

Congestion Relief and Access to Employment

This package aims to tackle key congestion and queuing at pinch-points on the local highway network, which in some cases may be triggered by future housing growth and development. Schemes that come forward will combine opportunities for junction remodelling and capacity improvements along with opportunities to improve signalisation and Urban Traffic Control (UTC) to improve traffic flows and reduce queues. The package looks at pinch-points from across Chester, but a major priority is the Fountains junction at the northern end of Northgate Street. For a combination of safety and capacity reasons, it is considered beneficial to replace the existing partially signalised roundabout with a fully signalised and pedestrian/cycle

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accessible four-arm junction. This would involve the removal of subways, the prohibition of certain movements, and the creation of a new upstream junction between Victoria Road south and St. Oswald's Way. This arrangement has been shown to work in principle, however more detailed feasibility work, design, and testing is clearly required. Owing to potential development on Wrexham Road, it is likely that capacity enhancements will also be required at the Overleigh Roundabout. This forms the confluence of two major routes into Chester City Centre, namely A5104 Hough Green and the A483 Wrexham Road and also represents the main access / egress to/from Handbridge. The likely focus also includes some or all of:

- Liverpool Road/Moston Road (A41)/Liverpool Road (A5116);
- Vicars Cross Road/Tarvin Road (A51); Hoole Road (A56);
- Vicars Cross/Tarvin Road (A51)/A55/Ring Road (A41) Junctions;
- Whitchurch Road (A41/A5115)/Ring Road (A55)/Caldy Valley Road;
- Boughton/Tarvin Road (A51)/Christleton Road (A5115) – Existing Air Quality Management Area (AQMA); and
- Sealand Road/New Crane Street (A548).

A concurrent UTC project is proposed to provide an holistic approach to congestion reduction, incorporating an extended Variable Message Signing (VMS) package, enhanced gateway treatment and parking routeing, and urban traffic control enhancements, to link key junctions and optimise staging patterns, better managing flows across the network. Addressing VMS deficiencies will improve information being relayed to drivers on parking availability, reducing unnecessary hunting for parking spaces. This will, in turn, help reduce unnecessary congestion within the city, and it can also be used to link available car parks to specific destinations as displayed on the sign. Rising traffic levels will be better controlled by UTC and Active Traffic Management enhancements, with the ability to co-ordinate traffic signals and reactively respond to congestion issues. This should have a beneficial impact on air quality levels and help to alleviate existing and potential AQMAs in the city.

The promotion of cross-boundary connectivity, particularly by public transport and supporting modes, is a key priority of the Welsh Government and a North East Wales Transport Task Force was commissioned. The report made a number of recommendations for improving cross-boundary links with Chester to relieve congestion and these are supported and endorsed by the Transport Strategy. In particular, schemes relating to rail modernisation, enhanced access for rural communities and the development of cross-boundary multi-modal ticketing are considered priorities.

Finally, the Chester Western Relief Road has been suggested for some time as a means of alleviating congestion within the city centre and has the potential to link the city to sub-region, promoting access to jobs and growth. Previous routeing proposals have shown the road closer into the centre, staying within the boundary of CWaC (an alignment currently protected within the Local Plan). However as part

of this Transport Strategy, an alternative alignment has been considered. This alternate option is situated further west, effectively providing a strategic link connection between Sealand Road (A548), and the A55 / A483, skirting Boughton and Hawarden Airport. The primary benefit of the link would be the elimination of through-trips between areas like Saltney, Boughton and Lache, and Blacon, Saughall and the Countess of Chester Hospital, and reducing the proportion of unnecessary city centre traffic. It is envisaged that the link road would reduce traffic in the city by a substantial amount, and better connect developments.

Chester Parking Strategy

Key interventions include pursuing a policy of increased Council control of the parking stock through service level agreements with private operators, a revised pricing policy based on distance from the city centre to better influence where different users choose to park, improved signage, on-street charging, and enhanced Park & Ride. The strategy recommends that the city centre parking stock be priced to encourage linked, long-stay and tourism related trips, however with a short-stay provision for local residents on essential business with no alternative but to use a car. Commuters would then be encouraged to use outer zone parking and Park & Ride services to access the city. The strategy also recommends the adoption of more innovative ways to pay including cashless solutions.

As suggested in the Parking Strategy for Chester, Park & Ride sites could potentially attract significantly more usage and appeal to additional markets if they offered enhanced facilities such as cafes, tourism shops, cycle-hire/storage facilities, themed events etc (as long as these are consistent with greenbelt uses). At the same time, it is suggested that Park & Ride sites could also become important storage hubs for less frequent rural bus routes which could terminate, and layover at these locations allowing higher frequencies and better reliability on the rural sections. Passengers would then interchange onto Park & Ride services for the final leg of the journey into the centre. In addition, it is recommended that the Park & Ride service patterns and quality be improved and limited intermediate stops added to create more of a regulated 'transit network' feel. Multiple routes could also be linked across the city centre allowing direct connections between, for instance, the University of Chester and Chester Business Park, with interchange at Gorse Stacks and at each Park & Ride site provided for a wider selection of connecting journeys. Vehicle quality and emission levels could be improved using hybrid vehicles, and operating hours extended into the evening. A new Member Working Group has been set up to investigate potential contractual solutions to deliver this upgraded Park & Ride service.

Finally, the scheme would create a long-proposed fifth Park & Ride site adjacent to Junction 12 of the M53 and adjacent to the A56 Warrington Road / Hoole Road, and the A41 Greenfield Lane / Ring Road. This is proposed due to the lack of accessibility to Park & Ride from the motorway network, and traffic from the Liverpool and Manchester directions. The specific site under review is the land bounded by the

M53 to the north east, the A56 to the south west and the former Mickle Trafford railway to the south. The site would be immediately accessible from the M53, A55, and A56 strategic routes and would offer frequent bus-based Park & Ride services into the city centre. The new site also provides the opportunity to create an exemplar Park & Ride hub providing retail, food and drink and public convenience facilities, as well as other local amenities such as cycle hire, delivery collections and waiting facilities to cater for interchange.

Mobility Impaired Accessibility/Shopmobility/Dial-a-Ride

Blue-badge parking would gradually shift focus over time towards a mainly off-street solution, with the Northgate Development a key scheme which would need to provide plentiful off-street parking. Disabled access and parking is to form a key part of the Transport Strategy and several options are being considered, including better linking parking supply with Shopmobility services. Additional opportunities include:

- Improved facilities for users and improved drop off for Dial-a-Ride services at the Gorse Stacks Bus Interchange and within the proposed Northgate Development;
- Sufficient disabled space provision in the new Delamere Street car park, which will also serve the Blue Coat third sector hub and new super surgery;
- Improved pedestrian environment within the core city centre linked to proposals to remove or reduce traffic volumes - access restrictions will only apply during core hours;
- Opportunities to improve parking and access to city centre for people with mobility impairment including improved / enhanced car parking for Blue Badge holders and Parents with children within Kale Yards car park and within proposed facility at the new Northgate Development; and

Improved and enhanced car parking and new Shopmobility Centre within the Northgate Development; and increased provision of Park & Ride disabled parking facilities

Rail Services and Infrastructure

A key recommendation of the strategy is that rail services and infrastructure in the Cheshire West area be improved in a number of ways. Whilst many of these schemes are longer term and are out of the direct control of CWaC (requiring support and funding from key partners within the rail industry), key improvements are noted here as a guide for future Council lobbying and strategising. This takes full account of CWaC's position as a key partner in the 'Rail in the North'; devolved franchise setting group composed of 33 northern authorities with transport responsibility. The scheme proposes the delivery of a series of enhancements at stations consisting of improvements by non-car modes (i.e. cycling, pedestrian and public transport) and increases in car parking capacities at key commuting stations. In particular, improvements at Hooton station to provide more parking

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and better interchange would take advantage of the current 4 trains per hour service into Chester from Merseyside.

Electrification of key rail routes into Chester is a key long term aspiration. The electrification schemes of most relevance to Chester include potential North Wales Mainline Electrification, which would allow high speed electric trains to continue via the Crewe Line to Chester and onwards into North Wales; the Chester to Manchester via Warrington Line which joins the newly electrified Chat Moss Line at Earlestown and could allow eventually allow electric trains from Leeds and Manchester to serve Chester; the Chester – Wrexham Line which is currently single track but is proposed for capacity enhancements under current schemes; and the Mid-Cheshire Line to Northwich, Knutsford and Altrincham.

The creation of new rail stations on each of the main rail lines into and out of Chester provides the opportunity to provide high quality (and low cost) halts using a modular design approach in locations unserved by rail currently, but also presents Park & Ride potential for an expanded catchment of people. A station in North Wrexham (Rossett area) and Queensferry both represent opportunities to provide Park & Riders with fast two-way transport into Chester, Wrexham, Rhyl and beyond and, in the case of Queensferry, represent more convenient locations for the local catchment and for car parking than the existing offer at Shotton. Reopening stations on the Crewe – Chester Line presents the chance to restore previously lost facilities and, as identified as a key network gap, to open up the route to an intermediate market for the first time in a generation. This scheme also comprises a combination of measures aimed at greatly improving the usability and attractiveness of the rail services into and out of the city. This is considered much more feasible in the context of current Northern Hub works, which are expected to lead to additional trains and reduced journey times between Chester and Manchester, and the dualling of track between Chester and Wrexham which will see frequencies on this line double. Specific measures include improved and enhanced rolling stock on key lines including the Chester – Crewe shuttle, and on the Mid-Cheshire Line to Manchester via Altrincham including the possible conversion of the line to tram-train style operation. In addition, the scheme includes the provision of direct limited stop services to Manchester Airport, either via Warrington and Manchester or on the Mid-Cheshire Line using a new spur into the airport (potentially connecting with HS2 services when constructed).

Finally, Halton Curve has been on the agenda for some time, but has lacked the necessary funding to be made a reality. The scheme would reinstate (and resignal) a section of single track railway between Frodsham and Runcorn allowing trains to travel from Liverpool and John Lennon Airport to Chester and onwards to North Wales in both directions. The scheme has a positive business case, with the best results returned for an hourly direct service between Liverpool and Wrexham via Chester. This would provide an hourly service between Chester and Liverpool Airport, and double the frequency between Wrexham and Chester (made possible by ongoing works to redouble

the track). The scheme would also provide the opportunity for services from the North Wales Main Line to access Liverpool and Liverpool Airport directly without requiring a change at Chester or Earlestown.

City Centre Pedestrian and Cycle Enhancements

A comprehensive package of schemes is proposed in order to improve the city centre environment in terms of connectivity, accessibility and safety. The enhancements package is formed of several key improvements in terms of accessibility and removal of severance, and supports the aspirations of the Council's new Cycling Strategy.

The Bars Gyrotory is Chester City Centre's largest junction and is a key source of severance for pedestrians and cyclists arriving from the rail station, or Boughton corridor. Pedestrian movements across the junction are mainly accomplished by way of a network of subways, with some movements requiring multiple subway trips to successful crossing. The subways are also perceived as dark, unsanitary and potential hotspots for anti-social or criminal behaviour.

The proposed scheme improves the crossing potential at this junction by removing the subways and installing new at-grade Toucan crossing facilities catering for every movement. It reduces the dominance of traffic at this key entry point to the city centre. It also enhances the links between the city centre and the rail station, new development on City Road, and Grosvenor Park. A scheme will shortly be implemented to close part of the subway system to address the impact of aggressive begging, however the Transport Strategy package would go further, removing all of the subways and replacing them with a comprehensive system of at-grade crossings for both pedestrians and cyclists.

As part of the overall vision, the package includes pedestrian / cycle enhancements at the Hoole Way roundabout including at-grade crossing facilities, and removal/re-development of the existing subways, for better access to the core city centre. It also incorporates improvements to canal access and frontage in the area. It is hoped that the scheme could act as a catalyst for regeneration on Frodsham Street and Brook Street with improved links to the rail station.

Frodsham Street shared space, creates an enhanced public realm on this key route between the rail station, proposed bus interchange, and the city centre, and reduces the impact of vehicular traffic on the experience of other road users, whilst still maintaining this route as an important bus link. A package of improved access points to towpaths and canalside area improvements will improve east-west connectivity to the north of the city centre, and extending servicing restrictions and allowing bicycles within the full extent of the pedestrian zone will help to improve accessibility within the city centre itself.

A key access point to the towpath to be promoted through the emerging Waterway Strategy is the Cow Lane Bridge Area. This will form a critical welcome point and interface between the waterway, the proposed bus station at Gorse Stacks and access to the wider city.

The scheme incorporates enhanced cycle hire and cycle parking provision around the city centre. Subject to the success of an initial cycle hire pilot scheme at the station, it is considered that the scheme could be extended to include further sites in the City Centre, University campuses and to Park & Ride sites, linking into existing routes.

It is considered that new routes could be enhanced through the provision of traffic management/imposition of 20mph zones where feasible and supported by local communities.

Strategic Pedestrian and Cycle Enhancements

There has long been an aspiration within the Council and amongst local residents to improve cycle accessibility between the key district centre of Hoole and the city centre. The two routes into town, Hoole Lane, and Hoole Road, both suffer from constrained bridges over the railway, with a third narrow bridge on Westminster Road that is signalised to ensure single file traffic. Hoole Road Bridge is particularly difficult for cyclists due to its heavy traffic (forming the A56 route) and its narrow width.

The package proposes the undertaking of a masterplan around the Hoole Bridge area and its interface with the rail station and Brook Street / Station Road, which could be incorporated into the Local Plan Part 2 policies. This would include a potential new foot / cycle bridge to the south of the existing, and its linkage into the Station Road / Brook Street corridor, integrating with a combined use car park and development on the site of the existing Station West car park (owned by Network Rail). The development site and car park could be directly accessed by pedestrians at high level from Hoole Road or lower level on Station Road. It is envisaged that the new bridge would slope down to meet Brook Street at its junction with Black Diamond Street, and would integrate with enhanced public realm and pedestrian/cycle links between the rail station and city centre. It is considered that new routes could be enhanced through the provision of traffic management / imposition of 20mph zones where feasible and supported by local communities.

The package also incorporates feasibility studies leading to design and implementation of enhanced cycle priority on the key corridors of A548 Sealand Road, A5104 Chester Street and A483 Wrexham Road. Measures include, cycle lanes (or off-street cycleway where space is available), advanced stop lines at signals, Toucan crossings at key busy junctions, and enhanced signage.

The package would also extend the existing National Cycle Network Route 5 to provide an unbroken, mainly traffic-free, high quality cycle link between Chester and Wrexham that could provide a viable alternative to other transport modes.

It is considered that new routes could be enhanced through the provision of traffic management/imposition of 20mph zones where feasible and supported by local communities.

Capabilities on project: Transportation

In addition to this, and in response to useful feedback from consultation, the following strategic corridors will be looked at in more detail for cycle improvements:

- 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.

Smarter Choices and Behavioural Change

As part of an overall smarter choices and travel planning package, we recommend the following measures are considered for implementation in order to promote available choice for sustainable modes, and to highlight the potential health and well-being benefits:

- **Workplace Travel Planning/Engagement:** Building on CW&C's 'Connect to Jobs' Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Project, continuing workplace engagement activity to promote sustainable travel modes and smarter ways of working. This should involve greater emphasis on post-development implementation, working with neighbouring authorities and promoting good practice and shared initiatives between companies/organisations;
- **Residential Travel Plans:** For new residential sites (say over 75 dwellings), developers should be obliged to produce a Residential Travel Plan with residents receiving a pack upon occupation. This pack would contain information on how to travel to and from the site by means other than the private car and advice on how to use the facilities/incentives provided. This should complement physical sustainable transport measures as part of the scheme;
- **Personalised Travel Planning:** For certain corridors, where the public transport offer is strong, such as the A56 (Hoole Road) and the A5104 (Hough Green), one-to-one Personalised Travel Planning with residents could help to encourage modal shift for everyday trips;
- **Education Travel Plans:** Working with schools, colleges and the University to help in the development and implementation of existing and new travel plans and ensuring the facilitation of good practice exchange and joint initiatives. This should also include support with delivering infrastructure measures on key approaches;
- **Station Travel Plans:** Working with the rail operators and public transport operators to improve accessibility by non-car modes to stations as part of an approach to targeting the first miles of the whole journey to work. This would target key commuting stations

and aim to improve access to/from the station in the local catchment.

The Smarter Choices Package (cycle training, wayfinding/public information improvements, travel training) will dovetail with the identified walking and cycling infrastructure improvements, and travel planning suggested for the city centre. It will focus more on instilling specific skills required in order to engage in sustainable travel methods, and on other complementary enhancements, to encourage a wider proportion of the population to use sustainable modes. Cycle training involves the holding of skills workshops and practical training sessions designed to teach good practice in relation to safety, road sense and courtesy. Travel training is more closely related to teaching vulnerable road users necessary skills to ensure they can use public transport safely and effectively. The Smarter Choices Package will also focus on addressing transport node accessibility by improving signage and public information of passenger transport, walking and cycling routes and hire, and station accessibility by non-car modes. In combination with travel planning measures at specific developments and destinations, and potential utilisation of business grants for the provision of sustainable infrastructure, this package of schemes will increase awareness, competence and usability of sustainable travel modes.

The scheme improves the accessibility and legibility of key leisure destinations from the city centre – Chester Racecourse and Chester Football Club. The package has four key components. Shuttle services from the rail station and bus interchange, and enhanced walking and cycling routes between the city centre, the Racecourse and Football Club.

For Chester, it is suggested that a SmartCard be developed which can integrate with the systems in neighbouring Merseyside and Greater Manchester (using the ITSO system) and the card be available to use for transport related purchases including at retail outlets, at transport nodes, and for linked-journey and event tickets such as 'Chester Rocks' etc. The ultimate goal is to develop a card which can be topped up online (or at convenient locations) substituted for cash on public transport systems reducing time and administration, and combined with other activities, including those currently undertaken with Charisma (e.g. a residents discount card for the borough).

In the longer term, a larger cross-boundary framework for Smart Ticketing could be worked up to allow SmartCards to be used across local authority borders. This recognises the fact that transport patterns are not contained within a local authority but are instead regional and, in some cases, national and international. An extension of the North Wales Rover ticket using SmartCard technology is one key example of a beneficial improvement.

Coach & Taxi Strategy

A coach strategy for Chester would bring together various strands including tourist travel, heritage and sight-seeing, and National

Express long distance, and provide a strategy for accommodating these vehicles in convenient locations around the city. One of Chester's biggest coach assets is the successful coach park at Little Roodee, and the strategy would include specifying an enhanced role for this and its facilities including cafe, heated waiting area, retail outlet and toilets, and considering how this may be better linked with the city centre.

The strategy for tourist coaches will build upon the existing system and provide drop-off and pick-up accommodation within the most accessible part of the city centre, with the purpose of minimising congestion on the Inner Ring Road and Pepper Street in particular. Given the quality of the facilities it is likely that layover and parking will continue to be provided at Little Roodee car park, however the strategy will look at ways to enhance these facilities and provide improved waiting space for coach tourists. It is considered feasible that a Council owned site on Bumpers Lane could also be used for layover / overnight parking, which subject to feasibility could also appeal to freight operators. The strategy will look in more detail at stop locations, in combination with the wider bus proposals including the removal of bus and coach services from Northgate Street and Hunter Street, to identify the most suitable pick-up and drop-off points for Coaches, and the most effective way of serving the Northgate Street area and proposed Theatre development. In addition, the feasibility of providing accommodation for National Express services at the bus station will be examined, with alternatives investigated and tested for feasibility, convenience and interchange potential, along with improvements to overnight parking facilities at secure facilities, for example at Bumpers Lane.

The scheme would therefore provide clear guidance to each and every form of coach operator and user, clarifying the locations to be served by coaches and removing the existing uncertainty and inefficiency.

Alongside this, a strategy for taxis is proposed with the aim of simplifying the existing network. This would lay down clear guidelines for taxis advising on ranking facilities, penetration into the pedestrian zone, layover and idling, and provision of facilities for drivers. It would also lead to greater clarity over existing routeing issues and conflicts between taxis and other road users and residents. The strategy would be undertaken in full consultation with the taxi industry, as well as other interested parties including local residents, and would seek to provide a mutually beneficial outcome, prioritising the ongoing prosperity of the city and its unique heritage.

Key opportunities for the prospective strategy to address include:

- Development of a strategy for taxis to effectively serve the pedestrianised Northgate Street/St. Werburgh Street/Northgate Retail Development including Theatre environment, during core hours when taxis are prohibited from the pedestrian zone;
- Removal of conflict between taxis and local residents in sensitive streets such as Whitefriars, building on work currently being undertaken to prohibit non-access related traffic;

Capabilities on project: Transportation

- Identify key areas of demand for taxi ranking facilities in the context of constrained highway space, and increased demand for on-street parking space;
- Provision of proper off-street taxi layover facilities to avoid on-street waiting and conflicts with other road users at key times of the day; and
- Review of licensing guidelines to streamline issuing process and ensure that the correct balance is being struck within the city centre in terms of taxi volumes.