

Terms of Reference

1.0 Title: Integrated Sustainable Transport Task Force

This is a Terms of Reference to frame what will be known as the Integrated Sustainable Transport Taskforce (ISTT). This is an amalgamation of what was the Sustainable Transport Taskforce and Active Travel Forum. The inclusion of the word integrated in our title is to allow the group the scope to discuss and support all modes of travel as well as all users and work towards a goal of delivering connected transport options that attract all people across the CW&C area to use more sustainable modes.

2.0 Background

The Taskforce has evolved from and supersedes a combination of the Sustainable Transport Task Force (STTF established during 2020) and the Active Travel Forum (ATF). The groups were developed to enhance understanding and engagement in relation to Council activity. The evolution follows recognition that there is both a need to start to spend time progressing schemes, strategies and policies that not only meet local and national objectives and priorities but that can be delivered within existing resources in both short- and longer-term timescales, and that there is significant overlap between the aims, objectives and membership of these established groups. It also acknowledges that there is a need and opportunity to move from 'scheme ideas and thinking' to considering borough wide policy, strategy and appropriate schemes. The group's role needs to reflect this more effectively so that the right opportunities, reflective of Council policies, strategies and funding opportunities are cued up to maximise future funding opportunities.

The Integrated Sustainable Transport Taskforce is therefore established to act as a 'co-production' group for Cheshire West and Chester Council officers and members in developing and delivering appropriate opportunities and initiatives that relate primarily to 'sustainable travel modes' (cycling, walking, wheeling, public transport, and projects that integrate them together such as freight and Electric Vehicles (or other such alternative technologies) to form a holistic transport offer). This is within the context of the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency, the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan and the impending Local Transport Plan review and a target that was unanimously adopted at Council for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2045.

3.0 Remit

The Council remain responsible for identification, development and delivery of projects, in line with government and governance expectations and requirements. The groups have demonstrated the value in ensuring that council are using the local context, knowledge and, where appropriate, technical skills of the wider community to help review, shape and in general make schemes and opportunities more quickly aligned to the needs of their local and wider communities. The overall remit is therefore to harness such positive input to accelerate attraction of funding for, then delivery of excellent schemes as part of a move towards 'net zero' targets.

The group will be representative of our communities and aim to be inclusive and diverse, and at the same time be representative of the range of neighbourhoods and geographies across the borough. No area or person should be 'left behind' in the need for the development of excellent integrated transport schemes.

The overall group will cover the whole authority area and the full range of appropriate modes. The primary role of the core members of the group will be to;

- Help translate overall 'visions' being developed for the borough (and sub-areas of it) into deliverable schemes by acting as an early consultation group on options and ideas, providing feedback that can help to shape thinking on initiatives and opportunities at an earlier stage than would otherwise happen;
- Where appropriate it will act as a 'sounding board' for development of such visions and development of future programmes of work;
- It will help with the prioritisation of activities and opportunities within the above to ensure a 'greener, fairer' approach is taken to transport.
- It will act as a reference group to gain views on specific plans and proposals, providing feedback and links to and from the community, helping shape initiatives in a more balanced manner than would otherwise occur.

In essence the output of the group will be to help provide both feedback and advice on the development of integrated transport opportunities that link to core themes of improving wellbeing (improving health and tackling inequalities), carbon reduction, access to education, access to employment and making the most of leisure time for all residents and visitors on an equal basis.

4.0 Outline for the Group

The taskforce will meet virtually (or where appropriate in-person) at a quarterly frequency for the overall group commencing formally in November 2021.

It is hoped that we will be able to have an addition of an overall group that will meet bi-monthly meeting in each of the three core geographies of;

- Ellesmere Port and Neston
- Chester and environs
- Winsford, Northwich and the east of the borough

These three geographies are not set up to be based strictly on previous political boundaries and will include rural hinterlands but do reflect the anticipated areas of transport influence and very diverse nature of the authority area. At times there will be the need to ensure that thinking of such groups is combined – for example if there is a need to consider a particular corridor that may relate to two of more of them. We are open to trial this and see how this lands with the group.

Council officers and members will help create commonality of discussion and cohesion between the three areas and link the conversations of each group at the overall quarterly meeting, which will include representatives of each area.

The Transport and Infrastructure Team of Cheshire West and Council (supported where needed by their consultants) will act as the secretariat for the duration of the Task force. The taskforce activities, membership and appropriateness will be reviewed annually. The secretariat will record the meeting, provide notes, and updates which can be made available on the Cheshire West and Chester website. Some items will be confidential this will be made clear before entering into discussion on such matters.

The group will provide support to the Council. It is acknowledged there will be occasions where the views and inputs of the group cannot be reflected in outcomes and outputs, however in such a situation officers and / or members of the council will aim to provide reasonable explanation of why such a decision is being made. The aim from all parties will be to provide transparency and create an environment of trust, however the authority will need to retain the right to make ultimate decisions in line with its governmental responsibilities, policy remit and budget.

5.0 Core Membership

The taskforce will need to be consistent, relatively tight in numbers (to ensure that every person has time and space to contribute) and diverse to reflect the community it represents.

The Integrated Sustainable Transport Task Force (ISTT) will be composed of a core group of people which includes but is not limited to:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council
- Cheshire Association of Local Councils (CHALC)
- Cheshire West and Chester Council : Senior Access officer
- Chester University
- Marketing Cheshire
- Sustrans
- Chamber of Commerce
- Business Improvement Districts
- Chester Cycling Campaign
- Sustainability Forum
- Youth Senate
- Cheshire & Warrington LEP
- Active Travel Forum representation
- NHS Cheshire CCG
- Transport Focus
- Poverty Truth Commission
- Chester BID
- Road Freight Representative
- Chester Zoo
- Chester Business Club
- Living Streets
- Brio Leisure
- Public Health
- Active Cheshire
- Canal and River Trust
- McArthur Glen
- CRAG

The above list is not exhaustive and will be reviewed periodically

It is acknowledged that this Task Force will be involved in a wide variety of work across geographies, topic areas and modes. As such the group will consist of a core group with other representatives such as Parish and Town Councils able to observe meetings or to attend specific meetings by invitation. For transparency all meetings will be recorded and made available on the Council website with minutes of the meeting.

In essence the groups will need to be from a range of backgrounds to create a representative view, that can have healthy debate and discussion across a range of matters to help provide balanced and fair inputs. On some occasions expertise from the across or outside the group will need to be used to gain a representative views in relation to, for example, a particular modal issue.

The aim is to keep the group balanced throughout – for example while a group or individual may have an interest in all geographies it will be the topic area that determines representation at the taskforce.

The authority will aim to create an in-person event where members are invited together to provide an ‘annual report’ style meeting, where interaction is enhanced and where themes can be explored. The council will use its network of contacts to make such a meeting one of ‘interest’ to groups, not just a feedback session – for example we will seek to encourage experts in certain areas to provide a keynote presentation. The practicalities of this will be explored as part of the early activity of the group – recognising that for some in-person attendance in another part of the borough is not easy, or that matters such as covid may have an impact on ability to undertake this. Senior officers and members of the authority will be asked to attend such an event.

6.0 Timescales and timing

The group commenced in November 2021. The dates of meetings will be arranged in a programme to be set by Council officers to ensure that their resource, and that of volunteers is evenly spread and that inputs can be maintained.

It is proposed that meetings will be held during core working hours during the day to enable the best representation and to embed within an organisation’s work programme. However, meetings will fluctuate between daytime and evening and attendance will be reviewed by the core group.

7.0 Engagement

Each member will be asked to provide representation that reflects the views of their expertise/circumstance/organisation rather than a personal only view. This will necessitate that they are able to consult or engage with, outside formal meetings other appropriate people (except on matters requiring confidentially) that they feel are legitimate to engage or gain views and inputs from. This format allows consistency but also gives the ability and responsibility to members to act as a positive link between the views of the community they represent and the authority.

While it is acknowledged that there will be times when difference of opinion occurs the overall ethos of all group members, including officers and members of the council, will be one of co-operation and positive development of schemes.

Membership of the group does not exclude members from making formal representations on projects at appropriate times. For example, a member may have given a view in this group on a measure that is contradictory to a decision subsequently made by the authority. For example, they may disagree with the proposed implementation of a cycle lane in a particular location. Membership does not exclude them from making formal comment when that proposal is formally advertised. The overall aim is to reduce such instances by allowing the authority to understand the range of views and where possible develop schemes that 'listen' to views and build cohesion. At an individual level this will not always be possible, since wider considerations (e.g., balance across areas, funding or matters such as land ownership) may have to be made.

8.0 Potential Themes

The groups need to be capable of discussing schemes and options related to (but not limited to) the following.

- Local Transport Plan
- Active Travel Modes (primarily Walking/Cycling/Wheeling);
- Bus and bus-based modes including Park and Ride;
- Rail;
- Freight, servicing and deliveries.
- Transport Hubs and places where modes connect (including e-scooters);
- Placemaking and wider regeneration of the City/towns and other central places;
- Future transport options (e.g. electric/hydrogen);
- Supporting infrastructure (e.g. ticketing or technology);
- Policy reform and integration
- Behavioural change and mode shift
- Funding opportunities
- Other matters relating transport interventions addressing
 - climate change,
 - net zero,
 - air quality and
 - health/wellbeing or
 - social inclusion,
 - equality and poverty,
 - place making

The group will be asked for views and inputs into a range of matters from overall transport vision and plans for the borough or large areas of it, through to individual schemes. For each theme brought forward a series of outputs and deliverables will be agreed by the core group.

The expectation is that focus will be on inputting into scheme development. Where necessary, primarily due to external timescales, additional meetings may be called by the Council to seek input from the group – for example if a competition is set by central government to bid for funding for a particular area of activity the council would like to be able to call on members of the group for views, input and advice or simply broad support, if appropriate.

9.0 Voting

In the unlikely event that a vote is needed. Each of the Core Members will hold one vote only and must have a nominated representative for voting purposes.