

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Local Transport Strategy

Integrated Transport Strategy 2017-2030



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Cheshire West
and Chester

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For full details about our transport strategy and its supporting documents visit our website: <http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/public-transport/transport-strategy.aspx>

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like a copy in a different format, in another language or require a BSL interpreter please email us at equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or telephone 0300 123 8123 / textphone 18001 01606 867 670

Foreword

Welcome to Cheshire West and Chester Council's revised and updated Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This has been prepared to review and set out our plans and proposals for taking forward our transport priorities between now and 2030. A lot has happened since we published our previous LTP in 2011 and it is timely that we have updated this document to reflect these changes and how we intend to respond to them.

Listening to local views and those of our partners remains central to our thinking. We have made sure that information collected from Community Surveys, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, our Let's Talk consultation, the 2011 Census and other recent transport studies have closely informed and provided evidence to update this strategy.

There continues to be strong local support for ensuring that our roads are well maintained and steps are taken to reduce congestion in our town centres and on our main strategic roads and motorways linking us to neighbouring areas. Rail modernisation, electrification and the opportunities presented by the HS2 hub at Crewe will be vital to ensure that Cheshire West and Chester is well positioned to take full advantage of its location as the gateway to the Northern Powerhouse alongside its strong inter-relationship with the North Wales economy. At a local level residents are telling us that we need act to improve bus services so they can take people where they want to go and times that are convenient to the passenger; that we improve road safety and reduce the number of casualties on our roads; we encourage the use of more sustainable types of transport, especially walking and cycling and we fully embrace the opportunities presented by new technology and ultra-low emission vehicles.

All of this will be essential if we are to deliver the key targets set out in the Council Plan for 2016 to 2020. This includes seeking to provide 5000 new jobs, 4400 new homes and securing £277m of capital investment in regeneration, housing and key infrastructure. Indeed, in the period up to 2030 the Council's Local Plan is seeking to deliver at least 22,000 new homes along with over 360 hectares of employment land. Good transport access and connectivity will be vital to enable this to happen.

The next few years will be very challenging as we work to deliver our priorities. The Council still faces considerable spending reductions and savings. Nevertheless, we will work to make the best use of our existing transport networks and invest in schemes which will provide the best possible outcomes, value for money to enable further economic growth and wider objectives to be achieved.

Our overall goal is to work towards providing and managing a well maintained, safe, integrated, sustainable transport network for the future. This is essential to support the Council's wider social, economic and environmental goals and priorities. It will also help to underpin our approach to localism and aspirations to help the Borough thrive as we work to boost our economy, address inequalities, tackle health and wellbeing, enhance our local environment and neighbourhoods and improve safety and security.

This plan provides the basis to turn our vision, and that of our partners, into a reality.



Councillor Samantha Dixon
Leader of Cheshire West
and Chester Council



Councillor Brian Clarke
Cabinet Member, Economic
Development and Infrastructure



SECTION ONE:
**Setting the context for our new
Transport Strategy**

1.1 Introduction

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

1.1.2 Cheshire West and Chester Council's published its Local Transport Plan (LTP3) in March 2011. This set out our over-arching strategy and objectives for improving local transport in the Borough for the next 15 years.

1.1.3 There have been many significant changes to both the national and local transport agenda since 2011 and, as a statutory document, the Council has a duty to keep the LTP under review to ensure that it remains relevant. As a result, it has been decided that it is now timely to revisit and refresh our strategy in order to bring it up to date, to account for the changes that have occurred over the last five years and to respond to the likely challenges and opportunities that are to come in the years ahead.

1.1.4 This document, therefore, sets out our updated LTP proposals. It has only been amended where appropriate to take into account new evidence and the main changes since 2011 that build on our existing objectives rather than replacing them. The plan's time horizon has also been extended by four years to 2030 so that it runs concurrently with the Council's Local Plan (Part One) which was adopted in 2015. It contains

- An assessment of the characteristics, future trends and issues that will have an impact on travel on West Cheshire in the years to come;
- An overview of local views and aspirations relating to transport including an assessment of issues raised since the previous LTP consultation exercise was completed in 2011;
- Our goals and objectives that support both national and local aspirations for transport; and
- An analysis of local transport issues, challenges and opportunities alongside a series of policies and suggested actions to deliver our transport priorities over the plan's lifetime.

1.1.5 The remainder of this section examines the wider social, economic and environmental characteristics that have influenced the development of our new strategy. In doing so, it considers the trends and issues that make West Cheshire the place it is now and what it will become in the future. Reference is also made to national and sub-regional transport policies that this new strategy supports.

1.2 Setting West Cheshire in context

1.2.1 The Borough of Cheshire West and Chester is located in the North West of England between the Welsh border and the Wirral in the West, the Mersey Valley to the North and the Shropshire border to the South. It includes the historic city of Chester, the towns of Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford, together with a number of sizeable local centres including Neston, Frodsham, Helsby, Tarporley and Malpas.

1.2.2 The Borough has an area of 91,664 hectares. Its current population is 332,000 people living in some 141,000 households. An estimated 32% of the population live in rural areas. The population is forecast to increase by 11% over the next 15 years with the biggest growth expected to be in the over 65 age group (who now exceed the under 16 age group in number).

1.2.3 West Cheshire possesses a strong local economy. GVA per head of population is the fifth highest in the North West and is currently estimated at £8.3billion per annum. GVA per employment (ie, the number of people in work rather than the whole population) is the second highest in the region.

1.2.4 Skill levels are above the national average with 29% of people educated to HNC level or higher. Of those in employment, 79% work in the service sector while 19% work in manufacturing or construction. The unemployment rate is 3.5% which is below the national and regional averages.

1.2.5 The 2011 Community Survey found that 85% of residents are satisfied with the local area. 82% of residents consider that their health is “good” or “very good”.

1.2.6 From a transport perspective there are extensive motorway, trunk road and rail networks which carry a significant amount of local, regional and national traffic. There are strong commuter links with neighbouring areas including North East Wales, Halton, Warrington and with Cheshire East and travel patterns are also influenced by the nearby conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

1.2.7 A considerable amount of social, economic and environmental evidence and data was updated and used to help prepare this strategy. This information has been used throughout this LTP. A detailed LTP baseline evidence report is also available on our transport strategy website.

1.3 The policy context

1.3.1 At a national level the Government’s vision for transport is set out in the **Department for Transport (DfT) Single Departmental Plan**.

1.3.2 This sets out details about how the government is investing to make journeys better, simpler, faster and more reliable to support jobs, enable business growth and bring the country closer together.

1.3.3. The plan sets out the following objectives -

1.3.4 **Boosting economic growth and opportunity** - Transport is at the heart of the economy, moving people and goods around, connecting homes and businesses. There is a recognition that better transport provides opportunity and increase productivity. It directly reduces the cost to businesses of getting materials they need and delivering their goods to market. Better transport also increases the range of jobs people can access.

1.3.5 This will be addressed by

- Investing in infrastructure, increasing the level of investment in transport by 50% by 2020, delivering the transport schemes in the National Infrastructure Plan and maintaining a commitment to rail investment including the delivery of the HS2 high speed rail network;
- Getting the regulatory framework right including cutting red tape and further deregulating the transport sector; and
- Supporting the UK transport sector, for example, by addressing skill shortages in the transport sector and in supply chain partners.

1.3.6 **Building a One Nation Britain** – Ensuring that every part of Britain benefits from a growing economy and that everyone who works hard has an opportunity to succeed. This is a response to the fact that economic growth in the UK in recent decades has been too dependent on London. There is significant untapped potential in other cities, regions and rural areas. Transport investment and improved connectivity is key to unlocking that potential. This theme is also explored in more detail in the Government's **Building our Industrial Strategy Green Paper** which was published in January 2017. This sets out a vision to build on the UK's strengths, close the productivity and wealth gap between different regions and make Britain one of the most competitive places in the world to start and grow businesses. Upgrading infrastructure is one of the ten pillar that help drive growth.



1.3.7 This will be addressed by

- Rebalancing the economy by building the Northern Powerhouse including working with Transport for the North to develop the Northern Transport Strategy and committing some £13 billion of investment in highways and rail improvements and the roll out of smart ticketing;
- Investing in the regions including significant road and rail investment including electrification schemes and upgrading the M1 and M6;
- Devolving further transport powers to Scotland, Wales and English regions including establishing Transport for the North as a statutory body; and
- Keeping costs down for commuters and making transport accessible to all including keeping rail fares capped to in real terms, maintaining concessionary passes for older and disabled people and take steps to improve access to public transport by disabled people.

1.3.8 Improving Journeys - The reliability of the transport system is crucial for business confidence and is at the heart of people's daily travel experience.

1.3.9 This will be addressed by

- Enhancing and maintaining our transport networks, investing in local highway maintenance, renewing the Strategic Road Network, delivering improvement schemes to address known highway pinch points and negotiating service quality improvements in new rail franchise contracts; and
- Rolling out new technology and innovation on our transport networks including the continued roll out of smart motorway technology and increasing the use of digital signalling on the rail network.

1.3.10 Safe, Secure and Sustainable transport – Making sure that we have the highest standards of security and safety on our transport systems, working to make sure that transport networks are resilient to extreme weather and incidents to minimise disruption and that transport has a key role to play in meeting the Government's objectives on the environment and public health.

1.3.11 This will be addressed by

- Ensuring the safety of people using and working on the transport system including the development of a road safety plan, investing in safer infrastructure on the highway network and taking steps to reduce the number of road users killed or injured on the roads;
- Supporting wider government objectives to protect the environment and public health and ensuring that transport plays its part in delivering the government's climate change obligations, the delivery of the national air quality plan and promoting the use of active transport; and

- Maintaining and improving the security and resilience of the transport system against the full range of threats and hazards.

1.4 Additional national and sub-regional policy

1.4.1 A series of other national Government plans and policies have also been considered in preparing this document. These include -

- Cities and Local Government Devolution Act (2016);
- Draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2016);
- Transport and Engine for Growth (2013);
- National Planning Policy Framework (2012); and
- Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen (2011).

1.4.2 A number of sub-national and local level strategies and policies have also been noted as part of this work. They include,

1.4.3 **Northern Transport Strategy** – This sets out the transport priorities necessary to deliver the ambitions of the Northern Powerhouse. The strategy aims to

- Transform city to city rail connectivity, north – south through HS2 and east – west through a new Northern Powerhouse rail network which will reduce travel times and increase service capacity and frequency;
- Ensure sufficient capacity on rail commuter services to meet resurgent demand;
- Enhance performance on the North’s Strategic Road Network;
- Set out a clearly prioritised multi-modal freight strategy for the North to support trade and freight movement;
- Pursue better connections to Manchester Airport; and
- Develop integrated and smart ticketing structures to support the vision of a single economy across the North.

1.4.4 **Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) Business Plan** – The MDA aims to enhance the profile and identify of the North Wales / West Cheshire / Wirral border region and maintain and promote the region’s competitiveness and shared economic, social and environmental interests. This includes work to promote and make the case for further investment to enhance the local strategic transport network to improve access and connectivity particularly to the Northern Powerhouse. The links between transport and future economic growth are explored in the MDA prospectus “Unlocking our true potential” published in March 2017.

1.4.5 Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership Strategic Economic Plan (2014) – This sets out a 10 year strategic growth plan for Cheshire and Warrington to enable significant growth and transformation so that by 2030 there will be a £35 billion GVA economy delivered by the creation of 75,000 new jobs and 100,000 new homes. The SEP recognises the importance and need to invest in a number of strategic highway and rail projects (including smart motorway and rail electrification) if this ambition is to be achieved. Work is currently underway to review and update the SEP and it is planned that this will be published in 2017. Once it is completed it is also proposed that a new Cheshire and Warrington LEP Transport Strategy will be prepared in order to set out how transport priorities and investment will support the delivery of these updated ambitions.

1.4.6 At the local level a number of the Council's own strategies have also been taken into account. These include the **Council Plan, The Local Plan (Part One) and the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-20**. The links between these strategies and the LTP are explored in more detail in section three of this document.

1.5 LTP Guidance

1.5.1 It remains a statutory duty for all local authorities to prepare a LTP and this must be consistent with the framework set out in national guidance which was published in 2009. This sets out the importance of the strategy considering and addressing a series of national goals for transport. The top priorities are:

- To support national economic competitiveness and growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks; and
- To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases with the desired outcome of tackling climate change.

1.5.2 These are complemented by additional goals:

- To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society;
- To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health; and
- To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment.

1.5.3 The Council's response to the national goals is set out in Section Three of this document. This section also shows how these goals are closely linked to the Authority's own Council Plan, Local Plan and Health and Well Being Strategy.

1.5.4 A more detailed review of the various national and local policies which have influenced the preparation of this strategy can be found in the LTP Baseline Evidence Report on the transport strategy website.

1.6 The format of the new Local Transport Plan

1.6.1 The remainder of this document sets out the Council's new Integrated Transport Strategy.

- **Section two** provides an overview of how we consulted on the proposals set out in the LTP and reviews our response to issues, concerns and local aspirations raised during this process;
- **Section three** sets out our long term vision and objectives for transport and outlines how these relate to the Council's overall priorities for the future. It also shows how these objectives will help to meet the wider aspirations that are contained in the Sustainable Community Strategy and in our Corporate Plan;
- **Section four** reviews and sets out proposals relating to how transport can help support economic growth and regeneration;
- **Section five** contains information about how we propose to reduce carbon emissions from transport and how we plan to adapt to the longer term impact of climate change;
- **Section six** considers the Council's approach to asset management with a particular focus on how we plan to maintain our roads and bridges;
- **Section seven** reviews a number of themes relating to how transport can improve safety, security and health;
- **Section eight** sets out our approach to supporting equality of opportunity and focuses on how we can improve accessibility to jobs and key services as well as outlining how we intend to remove barriers to mobility especially to meet the needs of disabled and elderly people;
- **Section nine** assesses how transport can help to improve our quality of life including protecting the built and natural environment and enhancing biodiversity. It also sets out how we can improve access to leisure activities and the countryside including our Public Rights of Way network;
- Finally, **section ten** outlines how the LTP will be kept under review.

1.6.2 An executive summary document has also been prepared which sets out our plans in a more concise format. This is also available to download from our website.





SECTION TWO

Consultation and local aspirations

This section outlines the how Cheshire West and Chester Council worked with partners and the wider community to consider a wide range of issues, concerns and aspirations for transport. It then sets out how they influenced the preparation of the LTP. An assessment of a number of more recent surveys and consultation exercises, undertaken since 2011, is then examined to bring this section up to date.

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 Listening to local views has been an important part of our work to produce the new transport strategy. This provided a better understanding of local issues and challenges which, in turn, helped to inform the development of our strategy and our delivery proposals.

2.2 Our previous findings

2.2.1 When we prepared the LTP published in 2011 our work to consider local views and issues was developed in three stages. These were -

- **A preliminary round of “soundings”** to seek views on overall priorities and to consider local issues and concerns. This was undertaken between October 2009 and January 2010 to seek views and feedback on the national goals for transport. Consultees were also invited to consider whether these should be ranked in a priority order.

The conclusion of this exercise found that there was overall support for giving the highest priority to supporting economic growth with addressing climate change a close second. Safety, Security & Health and Quality of Life issues came joint third while Equality of Opportunity was ranked last.

- **An examination of views and comments relating to transport from previous community surveys undertaken by the Council.** Particular attention was paid to the results of the 2010 Community Survey which assessed the views of a random sample of 5000 residents on a number of potential improvements.

The results found that addressing highway maintenance was considered to be the top priority for the local residents in all parts of the Borough alongside steps to address the impact of traffic congestion, which was considered to be the third highest priority and passenger transport improvements which was ranked fifth.

A further question examined attitudes relating to climate change. 78% of respondents agreed that reducing carbon emissions was important compared to 7% who disagreed. However, only 17% were willing to make more use of public transport and less than 4% were prepared to be part of a car sharing scheme to help make a difference.

- **A final round of consultation undertaken between October and December 2010 to seek feedback on the proposals contained in a draft Integrated Transport Strategy.** This included meetings with stakeholders and partners, the use of specialist focus groups and assessing the results from over 1500 completed questionnaires.

2.2.2 When reviewing overall priorities tackling crime and fear of crime, congestion, maintenance, improving passenger transport and winter gritting were considered to be the most important priorities for action.

2.2.3 Tackling crime and fear of crime was perhaps surprisingly seen as the highest priority but it may well be the case that respondents were thinking about it in the wider sense rather than just related to transport issues. Likewise, the importance attached to winter gritting may have been due to the consultation taking place during extremely snowy and icy weather conditions during late November and December 2010.

2.2.4 The views expressed by focus group members were similar. Tackling congestion and highway maintenance were clear priorities for action. There was also strong support for co-ordinating roadworks to minimise traffic disruption, improving public transport, parking management, improving transport links to neighbouring areas and encouraging the use of new fuels and technologies to reduce carbon emissions. The least popular options included improving access to leisure activities, minimising noise from the transport network, improving air quality and adapting to climate change. See Table 2.1 below



Table 2.1- Top priorities (data available in Appendix)

Priority	Most important	In top three priorities
Tackling crime and fear of crime	19%	41%
Tackling congestion	14%	22%
Supporting regeneration and new housing	9%	16%
Highway and bridge maintenance	8%	22%
Improving health	6%	16%
Winter gritting	6%	24%
Improving public transport	6%	23%
Road safety	4%	14%
Encouraging use of new fuels and technology	3%	12%
Increased cycling and walking	3%	11%
Protecting the built and natural environment	3%	16%
Co-ordinating roadworks	3%	16%
Removing barriers to mobility	3%	5%
Improving transport links to neighbouring areas	3%	9%
Encouraging more sustainable transport	2%	9%
Improving accessibility to jobs and services	2%	10%
Parking management and enforcement	2%	5%
Access to leisure	2%	12%
Air quality	1%	4%
Minimising noise from road traffic	1%	3%
Climate change adaptation	1%	6%
Street lighting	0%	4%

2.2.5 Similar themes were also highlighted when respondents were asked to consider potential spending priorities. This is shown in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2 Spending Priorities

Priority	Most Important	In top three priorities
Road Maintenance	44%	65%
Reducing congestion / traffic management	11%	39%
Supporting local bus services	9%	36%
Road Safety	8%	30%
Winter gritting	7%	27%
Adult social care / health services transport	4%	17%
Cycling	4%	15%
Concessionary bus fares	3%	14%
Street lighting	3%	13%
School transport	2%	13%
Improving bus facilities	2%	11%
Community transport / dial a ride	1%	9%
Bridge maintenance	1%	8%
Local improvements	0%	2%

2.3 Bringing local views up to date

2.3.1 The Council has undertaken a number of consultation exercises with local residents since LTP3 was published in 2011. A short summary of the findings of the most recent “Let’s Talk” consultation and Community survey are set out below. Reference is also made to other transport related consultation exercises that have been undertaken during the last five years.

2.3.2 **Let’s Talk Consultation (2016)** - The Let’s Talk consultation acted to engage all residents of the Borough to their seek views and on the Council’s Four Year Plan and how the Council’s budget would be best used to deliver this. Over the twelve weeks of the exercise there were direct meetings with residents, businesses and community groups, drop in sessions and focus groups and over 1800 people participated and shared their views with the Council.

2.3.3 Amongst the themes examined was the need for a well-connected and accessible Borough. It was highlighted that effective transport links are essential for economic growth in terms of attracting investment and supporting existing businesses. Good, reliable transport is considered key for addressing social isolation, particularly in rural areas. Younger and older people in particular rely on public transport to be able to get to social activities, medical appointments and work.

2.3.4 Overall residents, businesses and partners confirmed that they see good transport links as essential and in need of improvement. There is a need to reduce traffic congestion and improve transport links including rail and bus in both urban and

rural areas. There were concerns about reductions in local bus services especially in rural areas. Continued investment in highway and pavement maintenance remains a top priority.

2.3.5 Proposed outcomes that were supported include,

- Continuing to invest in key transport infrastructure initiatives such as the new Chester Bus Interchange and to support wider regeneration across the Borough such as the Winsford masterplan;
- Introducing 20mph speed limits, where appropriate, such as by schools and in certain residential areas;
- Promoting cycling across the Borough and maintaining and improving local cycle networks. Promoting cycling was also seen as important for people's health and wellbeing with the suggestion that this should be promoted more in schools as well as a broader approach to encouraging healthy and active lifestyles;
- Introducing an active approach to promoting more efficient ticketing technology including the use of smart cards on local buses and trains;
- Maintaining the quality of the road network;
- Developing a new car parking strategy for the Borough; and
- Taking steps to reduce carbon emissions.

2.3.6 **Our Community Survey (2011)** - Undertaken and published after the preparation of the last LTP, the Our Community Survey was based on a questionnaire sent to a random sample of 28,000 households at the end of 2011.

2.3.7 Results revealed that road and pavement repairs were identified as the top priority for improvement by our residents. Tackling traffic congestion was ranked fourth and public transport improvements was the fifth highest issue.

2.3.8 These results closely match the outcomes and findings of the earlier Community Survey which was used to inform the last LTP.

2.3.9 **Additional consultation evidence** – The publication of the national Census data from 2011 has given a fresh insight into numerous trends and travel to work data. In addition, a number of significant transport studies and strategies have been developed over the last five years that have included detailed public consultation and dialogue with partners. These include

- Chester Parking Review and Strategy (2012);
- Cheshire West and Chester Cycling Strategy (2013);

- Chester Transport Strategy (2014);
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Examination in Public (2014);
- Cheshire West and Chester Inequalities Report (2015);
- Health and Wellbeing Statistics Report and Strategy (2015); and
- Winsford Transport Strategy (2016).

2.4 Our response to issues raised during our consultation exercises

2.4.1 The following table sets out the main issues that were raised during this exercise and outlines how the new transport strategy has been developed in response to these challenges.

Table 2.3 - Issues raised during consultation and response in Integrated Transport Strategy

Supporting economic growth

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
Highest priority given to managing an efficient transport network to minimise congestion and delay.	The strategy sets out the Council's Network Management Duty. It also notes our aspirations to build new strategic roads to open up development sites and to improve network capacity and take steps to encourage the use of sustainable types of transport.
High priority for improving links to North Wales, Crewe, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, particularly by rail.	Detailed rail aspirations are included including aspirations for the modernisation of the North Wales coast line and other Growth Track 360 objectives, improved link to Liverpool via the Halton Curve and longer term plans to take advantage of the planned HS2 hub at Crewe.
Better interchange at local railway stations.	Steps to improve interchange, passenger facilities and parking at local stations are included in the strategy.
Support given to supporting economic viability in our main centres and at tourist attractions.	Improving access to jobs and to town centres, parking measures and options to support the visitor economy are outlined in the Economic Development section of the strategy.

Reducing carbon emissions

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
High priority given to need for new developments to be built in locations that help to reduce the need for car travel.	The role of development control planning and the Local Plan to achieve this objective is noted.
High priority for providing and encouraging the use of smarter choices and sustainable modes of transport. Including measures to increase walking and cycling.	The strategy reviews the importance and opportunities to encourage the use of travel plans, active travel and passenger transport.
Better integration between bus and rail services.	The need for improved interchange is considered

	when examining options to enhance local rail services.
More to be done to address flooding.	Climate change adaptation is considered. Drainage improvements are set out in the Asset Management Section of this document.

Managing a well maintained transport network

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
Highest priority given to repairing poor quality roads and keeping existing roads in good condition maintained to a high standard.	A detailed review of our planned highways and bridge maintenance programme is set out in Section Six of the strategy.

Contributing to better safety, security and health

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
Highest priority given to reducing the number of people killed or injured on our roads.	A programme of education, engineering and enforcement measures will be pursued to make our roads safer including the widespread development of 20mph zones.
Strong support to promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging more walking and cycling.	A range of initiatives are proposed which will promote and encourage the use of active forms of travel.
Call for improved safety at bus and railway stations.	Improved design and better liaison with Community Safety Team will seek to improve safety and address fear of crime.

Promoting equality of opportunity

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
Highest priority given to improving access to employment and training opportunities.	This strategy sets out a number of approaches to improve opportunities for people to reach jobs and education.
High degree of support for improving access particularly from rural areas to key services.	The strategy supports measures to enhance rural accessibility.
Strong support for improved local bus services.	Opportunities to work with operators to consider new and improved services including taking advantage of potential measures proposed in the Buses Bill and integrated smart ticketing are included in Section Eight of the LTP.
Strong support for improved community transport services.	The development of enhanced community transport and demand responsive transport is considered. The growing importance of taxis is part of this approach.

Improving quality of life

Issues raised	Response in transport strategy
Highest priority given to setting high standards for the design and quality of new transport schemes.	The importance of using high quality design standards is considered in the strategy.
Support for protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment.	Measures to protect the built and natural environment, particularly biodiversity and landscape are addressed.
Need to enhance access to leisure by improving pedestrian and cycle routes including the Public	An outline of the importance of green infrastructure and PROW is set out in Section

2.5 Conclusions

2.5.1 The response and findings of our more recent community engagement exercises clearly match the issues and comments raised in our previous LTP consultation exercises. Outcomes have provided us with a very comprehensive overview and assessment of the range of issues and concerns felt by the local community relating to transport. As noted in the following sections of this document, these have been considered to help us develop our updated Integrated Transport Strategy.

2.5.2 A detailed report setting out the all results of this consultation exercise can be found on the Council's Transport Strategy webpage. See:

http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/transport_and_roads/plans_and_policies/local_transport_plan.aspx





SECTION THREE

Our vision and objectives

This section sets out our long term vision and objectives for transport and outlines how these relate to West Cheshire and Chester Council's overall priorities for the future.

3.1 Introduction

3.3.1 To frame our vision, the LTP has taken account of both national and local priorities for transport. It is also important to show how these goals and objectives help to support our wider community aspirations which are contained in the Council Plan, Local Plan and our Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

3.2 The national goals for transport

3.2.1 As noted in Section One, transport is not an end in itself but is a key factor in helping to improve quality of life, develop our economy, increase accessibility, enhance the environment and tackle poverty. This is recognised by the Government in setting out their objectives in the DfT Single Departmental Plan and within the national goals for transport outlined in the previous LTP guidance. These are:

(i) Single Departmental Plan 2015 – 2020

- Boosting economic growth;
- Building a One Nation Britain;
- Improving Journeys; and
- Safe, Secure and sustainable transport.

(ii) LTP National Goals for Transport

Top priorities:

- To support national economic competitiveness and growth by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks; and
- To reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases with the desired outcome of tackling climate change.

Supporting priorities:

- To contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;
- To promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and
- To improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users and promote a healthy natural environment.

3.3 The local dimension – considering the importance of the national goals for transport in West Cheshire

3.3.1 It is important for local Councils to consider the relative importance of the Government's goals for their local areas and build their transport strategies around these themes. These can be modified to meet specific local challenges and, where appropriate, additional local objectives can be added as well.

3.3.2 This was something that we considered during our previous consultation exercise. As noted in Section two of this document, the majority of our respondents indicated that supporting economic growth and addressing climate change should be the top priorities for action in West Cheshire.

3.3.3 In addition, numerous local engagement and consultation exercises have repeatedly shown that for the majority of our residents the most important transport issue in the Borough is the state of the highways and the need for these to be well maintained. In response we have decided to add highway maintenance as an additional top priority for the LTP.

3.4 Our over-arching vision – The Council Plan 2016 – 2020

3.4.1 "Helping the Borough Thrive" the Cheshire West and Chester Council Plan sets out a vision

To help the Borough, including residents, communities and the local economy, to thrive by 2020.

3.4.2 The vision links into three themes and ten specific priorities. These are -

Thriving Economy	A well connected and accessible Borough.
	A great place to do business.
	People are well educated, skilled and earn a decent living.
Thriving Communities	Cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods in the country.
	Good quality and affordable housing that meets the needs of diverse communities.
	Vibrant and healthy communities with inclusive leisure, heritage and culture.
	Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents.

Thriving Residents	All of our families, children and young people are supported and get the best start in life.
	Older people and vulnerable adults are compassionately supported to lead fulfilled and independent lives.
	Vulnerable adults and children feel safe and are protected.

3.4.3 Amongst the actions identified in the Plan to make a difference relating to transport are commitments to -

- **Invest in key transport initiatives** such as the new Bus Exchange in Chester and the associated plans for public realm improvements. This is accompanied by our plans to improve congestion hot-spots across the Borough;
- Work with Government to introduce **transformational schemes to improve connectivity** including the M56 Smart Motorway and rail electrification between key towns;
- **Maximise the benefits of HS2**, and take full advantage of the planned hub interchange in Crewe. This would have major benefits for areas such as Northwich and Winsford as well as connecting the Borough to wider growth opportunities;



- **Introduce 20 mph speed limits in residential areas** across the Borough where appropriate;
- **Promote cycling** across the Borough by providing better facilities for cyclists and challenging perceptions about cycling. This will include a widespread education and training programme on cycling safety, promoting cycling to council staff, and a marketing campaign to promote the benefits;
- Introduce an active approach to promoting **efficient ticket technology** across the Borough to encourage and enable more residents to use public transport;
- Ensure that **new development takes place in accessible locations** which minimise the need for travel;
- Work alongside Highways England to make the case for the introduction of a **Smart Motorway Scheme** for the M56 in Cheshire to make the motorway safe and reduce traffic delays. This will build on the work that is already underway to bring the M53 in Ellesmere Port up to smart motorway standards;
- Work with our partners to make sure that we continue to put action in place to **reduce the numbers of people killed and seriously injured** on our roads;
- Prioritise **winter maintenance and gritting** during adverse weather conditions;
- **Maintain the quality of our key road networks** across the borough;
- **Extend community transport across the Borough** to make services more accessible and tackle social isolation; and
- Build on the **Winsford Transport Strategy** and investigate options to improve links and reduce congestion between the town and junction 18 of the M6.

3.4.5 Additional commitments set out in the Plan that will have an influence on our transport priorities include –

- Develop and implement an **Inward Investment Strategy** to attract further businesses into the area and provide dedicated account management to support business to locate and grow;
- **Seek further devolution and collaborate in economic growth at a sub-regional level.** This will include working with the neighbouring Councils of Warrington and Cheshire East and will also involve working closely with North Wales Councils on joint projects for business growth. Key priorities will be to maximise the benefits of high speed rail across the wider geography, and the expansion of superfast broadband in the area;

- **Invest in regeneration** projects including the Northgate development in Chester, the Barons Quay scheme in Northwich and the continued regeneration of Ellesmere Port;
- **Promote public health** through healthy eating and active lifestyles such as promoting active travel; and
- **Reduce carbon emission**, for example, by reducing unnecessary travel.

3.4.6 The relationship between these priorities and our objectives for transport is explored below.

3.5 The Local Plan 2015 - 2030

3.5.1 The Council's Local Plan (Part One – Strategic Policies) was adopted in January 2015. This will deliver at least 22,000 new dwellings and 365 hectares of employment land up to 2030.

3.5.2 The Plan set out a strategic objective to -

“Provide and develop reliable, efficient transport networks that support sustainable growth and improve accessibility to jobs and services.”

3.5.3 It also includes and re-affirms the Council's LTP goals (as set out below) and states that new development will be required to demonstrate –

- Additional traffic can be accommodated safely and satisfactorily within the existing, or proposed, highway network;
- Satisfactory arrangements can be made to accommodate the additional traffic before the development is brought into use;
- Appropriate provision is made for access to public transport and other alternative means of transport to the car; and
- Measures have been incorporated to improve physical accessibility and remove barriers to mobility, especially for disabled and older people. The safety of all road users should be taken into account in the design and layout of new developments.

3.5.4 The Local Plan (Part Two – Land allocations and Detailed Policies) preferred approach was published in draft form for consultation in November 2017. It is anticipated that this will be formally adopted in 2018.

3.6 Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 - 2020

3.6.1 The Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy was published in 2015. This supersedes the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy which was referenced in the previous LTP strategy. The new Strategy sets out a vision -

"To reduce health inequalities and improve the health and wellbeing of people in the borough, enabling our residents to live more fulfilling, independent and healthy lives. We will do this by working with communities and residents to improve opportunities for all to have a healthy, safe and fulfilling life".

3.6.2 This includes a priority to ensure that people have healthier lifestyles under the theme of "Living Well". Factors relating to transport that that will assist this priority include -

- Promoting physical activity for all age groups including increased levels of walking and cycling;
- Addressing the number killed and seriously injured on our roads; and
- Air quality including steps to respond to the problems found in our Air Quality Management Areas.

3.7 Setting out our local transport goals and objectives

3.7.1 This Transport Strategy is essentially one of the route maps to enable the delivery of the Council Plan by 2020, our Health and Wellbeing Strategy and to guide us to where we want to be in the longer term by 2030 during the life time of our Local Plan. To achieve this, we have set the following goals and supporting objectives for transport in the Borough.

Our top priorities

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

- Reduce traffic congestion and enhance the capacity of the Borough's local and strategic transport networks;
- Develop transport schemes and measures that help support the economic viability of towns, villages and leisure attractions in West Cheshire;
- Support the delivery of new developments and housing while limiting the impact of additional traffic; and
- Improve connectivity between West Cheshire and surrounding areas particularly to North Wales, Cheshire East, Merseyside, Greater Manchester and to local airports and the Port of Liverpool.

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

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

Manage a well maintained transport network.

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

Our supporting priorities

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.8 Links to wider priorities

3.8.1 It is important to demonstrate how the new Transport Strategy will contribute to meeting the priorities set out in our Council Plan and the Health and Wellbeing. The following tables show how our goals for transport will act to support the delivery of the fifteen priority areas set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and the main themes for action contained in our Corporate Plan.



Table 3.1 The impact of the transport strategy on the priority themes in the Council Plan

Theme	Thriving Economy	Thriving Communities	Thriving Residents
	<p>A well connected and accessible borough. A great place to do business. People are well educated, skilled and earn a decent living.</p>	<p>Cleanest, safest and most sustainable neighbourhoods in the country. Good quality and affordable housing that meets the needs of our diverse communities. Vibrant and healthy communities with inclusive leisure, heritage and culture. Our resources are well managed and reflect the priorities of our residents.</p>	<p>All of our families, children and young people are supported and get the best start in life. Older people and vulnerable adults are compassionately supported to lead fulfilled and independent lives. Vulnerable adults and children feel safe and protected.</p>
Provide and develop reliable and efficient transport networks that support sustainable economic growth in West Cheshire and the surrounding area.	3	2	1
Reduce carbon emissions from transport and take steps to adapt our transport networks to the effects of climate change.	1	3	1
Manage a well maintained transport network.	3	3	1
Contribute to safer and secure transport in West Cheshire and to promote types of transport that are beneficial to health.	1	3	2
Improve accessibility to jobs and key services which help support greater equality of opportunity.	3	3	2
Ensure that transport helps improve quality of life and enhances the local environment in West Cheshire.	2	3	1

Key

3 = Strong direct impact

2 = Moderate direct impact

1 = Slight direct/indirect impact

Table 3.2 The impact of our new transport strategy on the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy Priority	Impact of Transport Strategy	Commentary
Starting well – every child and young person has the best start in life.		
Excess weight in 4 - 5 and 10 - 11 year olds.	2	Promotion of walking and cycling supported by school travel plans and targeted road safety campaigns.
Local 16 – 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)	1	Targeted engagement with Job Centres and recruitment agencies to raise travel horizons and indirectly supported by the accessibility agenda to enhance access to education, training and job opportunities.
Living Well – people have healthier lifestyles.		
Excess weight in adults and physical activity in adults	2	Variety of measures to provide and encourage the use of healthier modes of transport. Promoted through cycle and walking campaigns and associated investment in local cycle networks. Delivery of Rights of Way Improvement Programme.
Killed and seriously injured (KSI) road casualties.	3	Delivery of road safety investment and training programmes to reduce casualty levels.
Air quality.	3	Identification of Air Quality Management Areas and development and delivery of Air Quality Action Plans to respond to specific issues.
Ageing Well – older people live healthier and more independent lives, feel supported and have a good quality of life.		
Health related quality of life for older people.	2	Supported by the Council's accessibility agenda, passenger, community and specialist transport and opportunities presented by free concessionary travel on local bus and rail services. Seeking to improve access to new and existing developments.

Key

- 3** = Strong direct impact
2 = Moderate direct impact
1 = Slight direct/indirect impact



SECTION FOUR

Supporting economic growth

Supporting our goal to provide and develop reliable and efficient transport networks that support sustainable economic growth in West Cheshire and the surrounding area.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Cheshire West and Chester possesses a strong, prosperous and vibrant local economy. The challenge for the future is to ensure that our existing transport networks provide the accessibility, connectivity and capacity that will be essential to meet both current and future travel demands. In addition, we need to make sure that our future transport investment priorities, and those of partner organisations such as Highways England and Network Rail, help to fully support and enable future growth and regeneration opportunities to come forward in order to deliver a thriving economy and enhance our economic competitiveness and wellbeing.

4.1.2 This is our highest priority for action within this transport strategy.

4.2 What you said – Feedback from consultation

4.2.1 Our initial consultation exercise found that economic growth was considered by respondents to be the top priority to be addressed in our transport strategy.

4.2.2 Our discussions also found that tackling congestion is the top priority for action. There was also strong support given to supporting the economic viability and accessibility of our towns and local centres, and improving links to neighbouring areas. There was less support overall for the better management of our car parks.

4.2.3 Feedback from workshops and public meetings noted the frustrations felt when experiencing traffic congestion particularly in Chester and Northwich. There was strong support for improving rail services to Merseyside and Greater Manchester and the need for improvements to local rail stations and interchanges. There were also calls for more integration between rail and bus services. The need to address local congestion was also highlighted as an important focus for future action. Respondents were particularly keen that the Council took steps to manage and maintain our road network so as to minimise traffic disruptions and delays.

4.3 Issues raised since 2011

4.3.1 The Let's Talk consultation in 2015 revealed that there remains strong support for the council to introduce more measures that help ease traffic congestion and improve road and rail links.

4.3.2 There is also a desire to see the Council, and its partners, investing in transport infrastructure to support wider regeneration and economic growth in the Borough.

Setting out the background evidence

- There are some 159,000 people employed in West Cheshire. Key employment sectors include finance and other business services (25%), public administration, education and health (24%), retail (18%) and manufacturing and construction (12%).
- The Borough is part of a successful sub-region economy along with Cheshire East and Warrington. The Borough's GVA per head of population is the fifth highest in the North West. The combined Cheshire & Warrington GVA per head of population is the highest in the North West with economic output (measured as GVA per head) 34% higher than the North West regional average, and 11% above the English regions average.
- The Council has significant ambitions for the ongoing development and economic success of the Borough. The Local Plan is seeking to deliver at least 22,000 new dwellings and 365 hectares of employment land by 2030.
- Since the publication of the last LTP in 2011 4,600 new dwellings have been built in the Borough. Major regeneration projects underway include the new theatre and bus interchange in Chester and the Barons Quay development in Northwich all of which should be in use by early 2017.
- Future aspirations during the lifetime of this plan include the delivery of the Northgate development and the further expansion of the Chester Business Quarter as well as the redevelopment of Winsford town centre.
- The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership has set out a vision that by 2030 the sub-region's GVA will have grown to £35 billion, 115% of the UK average based on the creation of 75,000 new jobs supported by the provision of 70,000 new homes.
- The Borough also sits at the gateway to the Northern Powerhouse and is well placed to take advantage of the proposed transport improvements to boost local connectivity and access to jobs. This is part of the Government's wider plan to boost economic growth in the north and help rebalance the Country's economy.
- Chester is at the heart of a sub-region providing economic links with North East Wales, Ellesmere Port and Neston and Merseyside. There is a large amount of employment in the financial, health, leisure and retail sectors. There is also an important focus on the education sector with the University of Chester continuing to expand in the City and in Ellesmere Port.
- Manufacturing still represents 23% of jobs in Ellesmere Port and Neston but this figure has fallen by 7% in the last five years. The largest employment sector in the town is now distribution, hotels and restaurants accounting for 27% of employment. The town also

possesses a strong retail sector centred around Cheshire Oaks.

- The local economy of Northwich is also based around the financial services sector, with Barclays being a major employer based at Gadbrook Park. Manufacturing is also of importance. Lostock Triangle Business Park is currently being developed which will offer another high quality development site.
- The Winsford economy is based on manufacturing and industry. However a high proportion of people travel to work in other nearby centres such as Northwich, Middlewich and Crewe.
- The unemployment rate is 4.0% which is below the regional and national averages. Unemployment rates have been dropping consistently since 2011/12. Long-term unemployment is 0.3%, half the English average.
- The Cheshire visitor economy is currently worth an estimated £1.6 billion and attracts around 31 million visitors to the Borough each year. The economic value of tourism has grown by 20% in the last three years. Tourism related employment in West Cheshire accounts for approximately 8.5% of the workforce.

Transport facts and figures

- Car ownership and use in the Borough is above the national average. The 2011 Census found that 81% of households own at least one car and 40% own two or more vehicles.

- 74% of residents use a car to travel to work compared to 5% who use a bus and 13% who either walk or use a bicycle. Local surveys and Census data shows that travel to work by car continues to increase in the Borough while trips by bus and cycle have decreased.
- Some 63% of local residents work within the Borough itself compared to 65% in 2001. Of these, 72% of residents use a car to travel to work, 16% walk, 5% travel by bus and 4% cycle. Nearly 6% of residents mainly work from home.
- Just over 35% of inbound commuter trips originate in North East Wales with a further 34% starting in Merseyside (22% coming from the Wirral). Just over 17% of trips come from Cheshire East and 7% come from Greater Manchester.
- Outbound commuter patterns reveal a more varied pattern. Some 32% of trips are to Merseyside, 23% to North East Wales, 20% to Cheshire East, 15% to Greater Manchester and 8% to Warrington.
- These patterns reflect the national trend for travelling further and the increased mobility offered by growing levels of car ownership. Equally, they also provide a reflection of the dynamics and changes to employment and economic opportunities in the sub-region and neighbouring cities which influence commuter travel.
- There is a very high dependence on using the car for longer distance commuter trips. Approaching 90% of all inbound and outbound trips are made by car. Commuter trips by bus and rail are low. The exception is for trips to Merseyside where 22% of commuters use the train and to Manchester where the figure is 8%. The highest level of inbound rail commuting is from Merseyside accounting for 16% of trips from this area. Bus use for inbound trips is also particularly high from Wales into Chester. 8% of trips from Flintshire and 6% of trips from Wrexham are made by bus.
- The Council has made modest progress to limit traffic growth but congestion remains a significant problem in many parts of the Borough. Nevertheless, traffic volumes have increased by a quarter since 1993 and levels are forecast to increase over the course of this strategy by a further 8% - see Table 4.1 below.
- This growth and the complexity of travel patterns, mean that congestion will remain a problem for the foreseeable future. Table 4.2 below highlights where current and future congestion hot spots will occur.

Table 4.1 – Projected traffic growth 2015 – 2030 (Tempro 5.4 Average Day – percentage rise)

Projected Growth	%
Great Britain	10.9%
Chester	6.9%
Ellesmere Port and Neston	15.1%
Northwich and Winsford	5.7%
Cheshire West and Chester	8.3%

Table 4.2 - Location of congestion hot-spots in West Cheshire

In Chester:	<p>The inner ring-road and on key radial routes such as A51, A41, A5116 and A5104;</p> <p>The A483 / A55 junction in the vicinity of Chester Business Park;</p> <p>Congestion problems also occur when accidents lead to the closure of the A55; and</p> <p>Problems worsen particularly in the run up to Christmas or when seasonal events occur such as Chester Races or during school holidays.</p>
In Northwich:	<p>The town centre;</p> <p>A533 through Winnington and Barton and the swing-bridge over the River Weaver;</p> <p>A556 around Gadbrook Park;</p> <p>A559 through Hartford; and</p> <p>B5082 Middlewich Road, Rudheath.</p>
In Ellesmere Port:	<p>At the A41 in the vicinity of Hope Farm Road;</p> <p>The A5117 and on approach roads / within Cheshire Oaks especially during the Christmas shopping season; and</p> <p>The A41 through Little Sutton is also a diversionary route from the M53, which loads much more traffic onto this route when there is an incident on the motorway.</p>
On Inter-urban and rural roads:	<p>M56 / M53 - Motorways can carry significant volumes of purely local traffic, particularly within urban areas such as the M53 in Ellesmere Port.</p> <p>A550;</p> <p>A49/A54 signal junction;</p> <p>A51 corridor</p> <p>A54 between Winsford and the M6 Junction 18, particularly in Middlewich;</p> <p>A49/A533 Bartington Crossroads;</p> <p>A556 between Davenham Roundabout (A533) and the A530 and access to Gadbrook Business Park; and</p> <p>Motorway diversionary routes affect mid Cheshire and can greatly increase volumes on rural roads.</p>

4.4 Issues and challenges

4.4.1 Improving connectivity and accessibility - Major scheme priorities - “Cheshire and Warrington Matters” the Strategic and economic Plan for the sub-region sets out the Local Enterprise Partnership’s vision to secure a local economy of £35 billion GVA per head by 2030.

4.4.2 This is under-pinned by the development of three inter-connected spatial proposals that will increase and accelerate growth, enhancing the sub-regions economic impact within the Northern Powerhouse. These are

- Mersey Dee Economic Axis – building upon collaborative links to unlock growth and employment sites in Chester, Ellesmere Port, North East Wales and Wirral;
- Constellation Partnership – capitalising on the anticipated benefits of High Speed Two (HS2) and the anticipated construction of a HS2 hub station at Crewe by 2027; and
- Warrington New City – taking advantage of the town’s intersection with the strategic rail network including the West Coast Mainline, HS2 and the proposed Trans-North network.

4.4.3 To create the right conditions for this growth to occur, the LEP identify that it will be critical to make significant investment in transport over the lifetime of the Strategic Economic Plan and its subsequent revisions. The rationale for this is –

- To improve connection to neighbouring sub-regions, and in particular international gateways, to ensure business has connectivity to global markets and to facilitate the economic benefits of commuting;
- Pinch point and congestion in the transport network, both road and rail, act as barriers to growth if left unaddressed. Delays and unpredictable journey times affect business activity directly and indirectly and influence commuter flows;
- Network resilience needs to be addressed to deliver predictable and efficient journey times to support business productivity;
- Making the best use of the existing road and rail networks to capitalise on existing infrastructure and help deliver best value for money from investment; and
- Capacity constraints on the strategic road and rail networks including the West Coast Mainline and the M6.

4.4.4 In response, the LEP has prepared a transport major scheme priorities study to identify and assess the projects necessary to support the delivery of the partnership's vision. This combines schemes that will need to be delivered by strategic partners such as Highways England, Network Rail and HS2 alongside locally sponsored infrastructure funded in part by individual local authorities and making use of Government funding as part of the Local Growth Fund. This will be of particular importance to support the ambitions of the Northern Gateway Development Zone which is seeking to unlock the full potential of the HS2 investment across Cheshire, North Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent by seeking to create 120,000 new jobs and build 100,000 homes by 2040. Additional work has also been undertaken by the Mersey Dee Alliance to identify strategic transport investment which is considered essential to assist further economic growth within the MDA area in the years up to 2040. Outcomes are set out in the "Unlocking our true potential" report which was published in March 2017. Proposed priorities for Cheshire West and Chester are set out below including schemes in neighbouring areas which will have a significant impact on local connectivity.

Table 4.3 Proposed Strategic Transport Investment Priorities for Cheshire West and Chester 2017 - 2040

Highways England	M56 Smart Motorway. M53 Smart Motorway. A550 Dualling. M6 Smart Motorway and longer-term capacity improvements. A483 / A5 Dualling south of Ruabon.
Network Rail / Train Operating Companies	Crewe - Chester - Holyhead rail modernisation and electrification. Chester - Warrington rail electrification. Mid Cheshire Line electrification and extension to Manchester Airport. Chester Station - capacity improvements. Wrexham – Bidston rail improvements. Chester – Liverpool journey time improvements. Hooton – Helsby service improvements and new station at Thornton. Returning the Crewe – Middlewich – Northwich line to passenger traffic and consider opening new stations to serve this route at Middlewich and Gadbrook Park.

HS2 / DfT	Construction of HS2. Crewe HS2 hub station and service depot.
Welsh Government	A55 / A494 / A548 capacity improvements. A483 capacity improvements.
Local Priorities	Winsford Transport Strategy including improved access to the M6 Junction 18. Chester Western Relief Road. Northwich Transport Strategy. * Ellesmere Port Transport Strategy. * Chester City Gateway package including option for fifth Park and Ride site to serve the A56 corridor. Chester local pinch point capacity improvements. A556 Steel Bridges - strategic structural maintenance. A5268 St Oswalds Way – strategic bridge maintenance. A51 corridor upgrade.

** Specific priorities and detailed schemes to be confirmed through forthcoming transport studies.*

4.4.5 Many longer term regeneration projects in the Borough are likely to require the provision of major transport investment schemes. However, it is anticipated that over the lifetime of this transport strategy there will be only limited funding available for such projects. To ensure that schemes are correctly prioritised, understandably, successful schemes will need to demonstrate a very strong business case and will be required to show how they will contribute to support strategic national and sub-national objectives especially for economic growth in order to secure funding from the Government.

4.4.6 A number of important rail schemes will also potentially come forward during which will benefit Cheshire residents. This includes opportunities to increase the frequency of trains to Manchester arising from Network Rail's Northern Hub / Ordsall Chord proposals to reduce bottleneck problems in and around Greater Manchester. It is anticipated that this should be open by the end of 2017.

4.4.7 Work is also underway to return the Halton Curve to passenger traffic which will enhance rail access from West Cheshire and North East Wales to Liverpool and particularly to Liverpool John Lennon Airport (via Liverpool South Parkway). It is planned that this will be completed and operational by 2018.

4.4.8 Highway schemes include the Mersey Gateway (a second crossing of the river between Runcorn and Widnes to provide an alternative route to the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge and the Queensway and Kingsway tunnels). This is scheduled to open by the end of 2017. It is estimated that this will help kick start a major 20 year regeneration programme in Halton and the surrounding area. This will support the creation of an estimated 4600 new jobs through direct employment, regeneration and inward investment and will generate some £62 million a year in GVA from new jobs by 2030. Highways England have also completed work on the A556 Knutsford to Bowden improvement to reduce congestion and improve links between the M6 and M56. This opened to traffic in spring 2017.

4.4.9 The Council is also working closely with Highways England to make the case for investment in the strategic network that will benefit the local area as part of the Route Investment Strategy. The upgrade of the M53 and parts of the M6 in central Cheshire to Smart Motorway standard have been included in the current road investment programme and will be delivered by 2020. Dialogue is now taking place to ensure that a similar programme is prepared for the M56 as early as possible in the next investment period starting in 2020. The dualling of the A550 between Deeside and the M53 junction at Hooton is a further goal to improve connectivity between this area, North Wales and Merseyside, especially the new port development.

4.4.10 **Transport for the North** - Looking towards the future, Cheshire West and Chester Council is a member of Transport for the North (TfN). This is the organisation set up to deliver a world class transport system to better link up the towns and cities of the north of England and enable the region to function as a single economy. TfN are now working to develop a portfolio of strategic, prioritised transport investment opportunities to support economic growth. It will take the lead in prioritising and planning transformative transport intervention to secure enhance connectivity, improved journey times, improve capacity and resilience and simplify how this is undertaken.

4.4.11 Work is evolving and it will be crucial for Cheshire West and Chester to take full advantage of its location as a gateway to both the Northern Powerhouse and to North Wales to make the case for investment to deliver local strategic priorities that improve access to jobs and growth. These include upgrading the M53 and the M56 to Smart Motorway standard, rail modernisation and electrification and taking full advantage of the TfN passenger transport smart ticketing project.

4.4.12 Tackling local congestion - In response to these challenges, and within the level of resources available to make a significant difference in the short term, the Council's proposed response to these issues largely focuses on how to make the best use of our existing network.

4.4.13 This includes making full use of our statutory Network Management Duty to limit the impact of road works, planned events and accidents to ensure that roads operate efficiently and without unnecessary delays. Our approach will also include making modest improvements to junctions, road signs and traffic signals and using Traffic Regulation Orders to improve the efficiency of the local road network.

4.4.14 Our approach also includes measures to promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport and demand management. These are considered elsewhere in this document.

4.4.15 Supporting local regeneration and new housing - Maintaining and enhancing the vitality and economic viability of the Borough's urban centres, its villages and leisure attractions will be crucial to the overall success of our economy and quality of life. Regeneration projects will be supported by detailed transport studies to review the potential impact of development proposals on local transport networks.

4.4.16 Recent examples include the preparation of the updated Chester Transport Strategy, published in 2014, to support the delivery of the Chester One City Plan and the Winsford Transport Strategy, published in 2016, which is supporting the delivery of the Winsford Neighbourhood Plan. Work has now commenced to prepare a new Transport Strategy for Northwich and this should be completed in early 2018. A future study will also be set up to examine transport issues in Ellesmere Port.



4.4.17 Detailed local transport assessment work is also being undertaken to support the delivery of specific schemes such as the Northgate Development and City Place in Chester alongside assessing the impact and associated mitigation necessary to support the delivery of new housing developments at larger, strategic sites.

4.4.18 This work will also help to identify measures to reduce the possible negative impact of such schemes including steps to ensure that new sites are accessible by a range of modes and the use of travel plans to encourage more sustainable journeys.

4.4.19 An additional challenge is how transport investment can enable key sites to come forward for development, for example, by providing transport infrastructure so sites are ready to come forward. It will equally be important that the Council's emerging Local Plan (Part Two) identifies and promotes sites that are accessible by a range of modes to jobs and services. In doing so, the Council will seek to use the planning process to maximise opportunities to secure developer funding to contribute towards the cost of new highway and transport improvements wherever appropriate.

4.4.20 A high proportion of local jobs are linked to the tourism sector and the Council and its partners are seeking to boost the culture and tourism sector across the Borough. Many tourism and leisure trips are currently made by car. It will be essential in the future to increase the proportion of trips to such attractions by more sustainable types of transport. A starting point for this has been the recent completion of a Coach Strategy for Chester which sets out a number of options to boost the attractiveness of the city's coach offer.

4.4.21 **Parking** - Local parking provision and the Council's approach to how this is managed and regulated plays a critical role in supporting the local economy. An important challenge for the Council will be to take forward its new Parking Strategy which was adopted in July 2017. It is considered that the new strategy recognises the need to balance the needs of local town centres while managing traffic congestion.

4.4.22 Work has already assessed parking needs in Chester leading to the adoption of a new Parking Strategy for the city in 2012 and updated as part of the adoption of the new Parking Strategy in 2017. One of the outcomes of this work has been the preparation of a new contract relating to the operation of the Park and Ride network in the city and the challenge to increase overall passenger numbers. The new contract was introduced in July 2016.

4.4.23 Car parking at railway stations is also of importance. There is a particular problem at a number of popular commuter stations where limited car parking capacity is leading to on-street car parking in surrounding streets. These issues, and ways to reduce these problems, are being examined in more detail as part of our work to prepare local transport strategies.

4.4.24 Parking enforcement and residents parking schemes are also of importance to improve traffic movements and reduce problems caused by illegal or inappropriate parking particularly in urban areas.

4.4.25 Making the case for rail modernisation – The Council is working with HS2 Ltd, the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and the Mersey Dee Alliance to make the case for significant investment in the rail network. This is considered to be vital to help improve connectivity and between West Cheshire, North Wales and the wider rail network, particularly to take full advantage of HS2 and improve access to the Northern Powerhouse.

In the case of HS2, the Council recognises that investment in our current rail network is essential to meet the continued growth of passenger numbers and to improve connectivity within and beyond our region. The opportunities for generating sustained economic growth arising from the delivery of the high speed rail network is also noted. However, the Council also considers that the proposals will have an adverse impact on our local communities and the environment impacted on by the proposed route. In the absence of further details and information, the council is currently unable to support the HS2 proposals. In response, we are requesting that HS2 Ltd work to establish a technical forum as well as working with affected communities and businesses to determine whether the proposals are suitable and whether robust and effective mitigation measures can be developed to an exceptionally high standard.



4.4.26 Working in partnership with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, a prospectus entitled “Growth Track 360” has been published which calls for significant rail investment to help boost the cross-border economy. It is suggested that this could help contribute to the unlocking and the creation of up to 70,000 new jobs and double GVA in West Cheshire and North Wales to £50 billion within the next 20 years.

4.4.27 The prospectus forms the basis for further dialogue and lobbying with the DfT, Welsh Government, TfN, Network Rail and Train Operators to help achieve its ambition to transform the economy.

4.4.28 Improvements and access to the local rail network - In order to take advantage of the service improvements outlined above, the Council recognises that there is a need to make the most of our local rail network and also improve interchange at railway stations. There are major opportunities improve service frequencies on local lines such as the Mid Cheshire Line, Hooton – Helsby line, and the Wrexham – Neston - Bidston route. Likewise, there is the potential to return freight routes to passenger traffic such as the Crewe – Middlewich – Northwich line (along with re-opening new stations on this route at Middlewich and potentially Gadbrook Park) to enable wider connectivity. There is also scope to enhance cycle, walking and local bus access and to increase car and cycle parking capacity at a number of stations to take advantage of current and future service improvements. The Council is also keen to promote local grass roots station improvements supported through Community Rail Partnership projects.

4.4.29 Freight and access to airports - A significant amount of freight traffic makes use of the road and rail network in the Borough on a daily basis. There is a need to better understand the longer term needs of the freight industry particularly with the growth of the Port of Liverpool and inter-modal freight terminals in neighbouring areas. In the longer term, there is also the need to consider the potential to transfer appropriate cargos to rail or waterways.

4.4.30 The Borough is also well connected in terms of its close proximity to both Manchester and Liverpool John Lennon Airports. Good links to international gateways is an important issue for many companies considering inward investment in an area, and working to improve links to the airports will be an important consideration in the longer term for this strategy.

4.4.31 There are good road connections to both airports but, currently, there are poor bus and rail links from West Cheshire and North East Wales. Both the Northern Hub and Halton Curve schemes may help improve access in the future.

4.5 Policy objectives for supporting economic growth

The Council will:
1. Reduce traffic congestion and enhance the capacity of the Borough's local and strategic transport networks;
2. Develop transport schemes and measures that help support the economic viability of towns, villages and leisure attractions in West Cheshire;
3. Support the delivery of new developments and housing while limiting the impact of additional traffic; and
4. Improve connectivity between West Cheshire and surrounding areas particularly to Merseyside, Greater Manchester, North East Wales and to local airports and the Port of Liverpool.

Policy actions for supporting economic growth

Major schemes projects	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Work with the DfT, Cheshire and Warrington LEP, developers and other partners to make the case and secure investment to deliver major transport projects and support economic growth in the Borough.</p> <p>Develop detailed design and business cases to form the basis for attracting major transport scheme investment.</p> <p>Engage and work with Highways England, Network Rail and Welsh Government to ensure that local strategic road and rail priorities are included as part of their future plans for national investment programmes.</p> <p>Work with Transport for the North to make sure that the interests of Cheshire West and Chester, and the wider sub-region, are considered as part of their future transport investment decisions to support the Northern Powerhouse.</p> <p>Work with HS2 to determine whether the HS2 proposals are suitable and whether robust and effective mitigation measures can be developed to an exceptionally high standard.</p> <p>Continue to work with the MDA and partners in North Wales to pursue the objectives set out in the "Unlocking our True Potential" report and the "Growth Track 360" prospectus.</p> <p>Work with partners to endorse and support the delivery of major scheme projects in neighbouring areas which will deliver mutual benefits for the local economy.</p>	<p>Identify and maintain a "pipeline" of major schemes up to date in order to take advantage of future spending rounds.</p> <p>Work with Cheshire East Council and other partners to identify and prioritise the necessary transport improvements to enable the sub-region to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the Northern Gateway Development Zone and HS2.</p>

Tackling local congestion	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Manage the highway network in the most efficient way in line with the Council's Network Management Duty.</p> <p>Implement minor junction and signal improvements to address localised congestion problems.</p> <p>Design and deliver local pinch point schemes.</p> <p>Manage the urban traffic management and control system to ensure the efficient flow of traffic in Chester.</p>	<p>Consider the introduction of urban traffic management measures elsewhere in the Borough.</p> <p>Consider enforcing moving traffic offences to minimise delay on the network.</p> <p>Identify and design schemes to improve local pinch points elsewhere in the Borough identified through local transport studies.</p>
Supporting local regeneration and new housing	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Continue to develop and deliver a programme of local area transport studies to support continued growth in Northwich and Ellesmere Port.</p> <p>Undertake schemes to improve access to the Borough's towns and local centres to support their economic viability.</p> <p>Use planning conditions and obligations to secure the provision of appropriate transport measures, infrastructure and travel plans to minimise the impact of additional traffic arising from new developments.</p> <p>Promote and encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport to support the visitor economy.</p>	<p>Support longer term regeneration projects and undertake transport studies and review planning applications and traffic assessments to consider the full implications of these proposals on the local transport network.</p> <p>Support the development of the new Cheshire Local Enterprise Partnership and work with partners to assess and secure strategic transport improvements to boost the sub-region's wellbeing and viability.</p>

Parking	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Prepare and adopt action plans to roll out the delivery of the Council's Parking Strategy.</p> <p>Implement and make full use of the Council's new parking standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).</p> <p>Actively manage parking enforcement and residents parking schemes in the Borough.</p> <p>Work to enhance the quality and improve passenger waiting facilities at Chester's Park & Ride sites and boost overall passenger numbers.</p> <p>Examine opportunities to enhance and increase car parking at railway stations and work to reduce problems associated with on-street car parking in such locations.</p>	<p>Keep car parking policies under review.</p> <p>Review the options and business case for the development of a fifth Park & Ride site for Chester to serve the A56 corridor.</p>



New housing and development	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Undertake traffic modelling and assess transport assessments to identify preferred locations for proposed housing and employment development sites.</p> <p>Ensure that new housing is located in locations which are fully accessible to employment opportunities and local services by a range of modes.</p> <p>Use the planning process to secure funding to provide appropriate transport measures and infrastructure within new housing and employment developments to reduce the impact of traffic congestion and to encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport.</p>	<p>Strengthen the links between the transport strategy and the new emerging planning framework to further integrate transport and land use planning.</p> <p>Use planning obligations and conditions to secure residential travel plans for larger scale housing proposals.</p>

Travelling to neighbouring areas	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Work with the railway industry and neighbouring authorities to secure rail modernisation and service improvements that benefit West Cheshire and the surrounding area.</p> <p>Work with partners to improve interchange and passenger facilities at local railway stations.</p> <p>Continue to support the Community Rail Partnerships.</p> <p>Support coach travel and build on Chester's reputation as a "coach friendly" destination.</p>	<p>Examine opportunities to increase car and cycle parking at railway stations and improve accessibility to local stations by all modes of transport.</p> <p>Support the delivery of schemes that improve the Manchester Hub and reopen the Halton Curve to passenger traffic.</p> <p>Support the proposals to re-open the Crewe - Middlewich</p> <p>Support longer term strategic rail improvements, not least HS2 and the proposed new rail hub in Crewe, that will benefit the Borough and the surrounding area.</p> <p>Consider the longer term needs of coach travel in the Borough.</p>

Freight and access to airports	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Support schemes that improve access to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and to local sea ports.</p> <p>Ensure that the interests of the Borough are fully reflected in the TfN Freight Strategy.</p>	<p>Develop a freight strategy for the Borough.</p> <p>Encourage the provision of more through trains and improved access from West Cheshire to Manchester Airport.</p>





SECTION FIVE

Tackling climate change

Meeting our goal to reduce carbon emissions from transport and take steps to adapt our transport networks to the effects of climate change.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This section outlines proposals to reduce carbon emissions from transport and how we proposed to adapt our transport networks to the longer term impact of climate change.

5.2. What you said – Feedback from consultation

5.2.1 Reducing problems associated with climate change, along with supporting economic growth, was clearly supported as an important priority by the majority of those who participated in the first round of consultation.

5.2.2 Our initial round of consultation found that the highest priority was given to ensuring that new developments (particularly schools, health centres and employment sites) are located in locations that are easily reached to reduce the need for car travel. There was also support for reductions in greenhouse emissions by providing and encouraging sustainable forms of transport. Planning to ensure local transport networks can cope with severe weather conditions was considered to be less important.

5.2.3 Feedback from focus group meetings found that people were keen to see more integrated transport to help to reduce car use. There was strong support for taking steps to improve cycling and passenger transport. Tackling traffic congestion through the use of smarter choices (such as workplace and school travel plans and personalised journey planning) was also supported alongside proposals to examine the use of alternative fuels and new technologies as a means of reducing carbon emissions. A small proportion of respondents also highlighted the need to reduce the risk of flooding.

5.3 Issues raised since 2011

5.3.1 Little has changed since the LTP was published in 2011. The 2015 Let's Talk consultation showed that there remains support for the Council to work to help reduce carbon emissions particularly steps it can take itself and to lead by example.

Setting out the background evidence

- Climate change is recognised as posing a major threat to our environment, the economy and our way of life. The principal cause of climate change is identified as carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from a range of sources.
- The overall climatic trend in the UK has been for hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters and projections suggest that these trends will continue.
- The Climate Change Act includes a target to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions by 80% on 1990 levels by 2050 and by 34% by 2020. In response, the UK Low Carbon Transition Plan makes clear that transport has a critical role to play in helping the UK reach this target.

- The North West Climate Change Impact Study (2003) and the Local Climate Impact Profile (LCILP) for Cheshire West and Chester (2010) predict that a changing climate is likely to affect future flooding, water supply, agriculture, biodiversity, tourism and leisure in the Borough.

Transport facts and figures

- Since 1990, greenhouse gas emissions from transport have increased by 12% and now represent over 20% of total UK domestic emissions. Of this, domestic road transport is by far the biggest source of emissions at around 92%.
- There have been positive steps in West Cheshire as there has been an overall decrease in CO₂ levels by 18% between 2005 and 2013. The level of emissions from transport has fallen by nearly 11% during this period.
- However, emissions in West Cheshire tend to be higher than the national average with a higher proportion arising from industry and business than the UK average and a lower proportion from road transport and energy production. This reflects the nature of the local economy, which retains a number of energy-intensive processes – see Figures 5.1 and 5.2.

- Greenhouse gas emissions are higher per head of population in West Cheshire than the national average. In 2014, the average emissions from road transport (931 million tonnes) are the equivalent of 2.81 tonnes per head of population per year. This compares with the national picture of 1.91 tonnes.
- Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen: (2011) sets out how the Government intends to boost economic growth but to do so in a way that is also greener and safer and improves quality of life in our communities as well. This recognises that public transport, walking and cycling will not represent a viable alternative to the private car for all journeys. In response the Government is also encouraging greener car travel by promoting the use of electric and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

Figure 5.1 CO₂ emissions by sector – Cheshire West and Chester (2014)

Road Transport = 22.9%
 Industry and Commerce = 62.3%
 Domestic = 14.8%

Figure 5.2 CO₂ emissions by sector – UK (2014)

Road Transport = 29.8%
 Industry and Commerce = 43.1%
 Domestic = 27.1%

5.4 Issues and challenges

5.4.1 Smarter travel choices, travel plans and the journey to school - Smarter travel choices consist of effective and low cost actions to influence behavioural change. A number of successful workplace travel plans have been introduced in West Cheshire and in a number of locations car use has been reduced by as much as 15%.

5.4.2 Where appropriate, new developments within the Borough are required to produce a Travel Plan and submit this as part of the planning application. The Council assesses these to make sure that suitable measures are in place to reduce the impact of any new development on the local highway network and to encourage sustainable travel.

5.4.3 The Council was also successful in securing Government funding to work with local employers to deliver a package of sustainable travel measures as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) project between 2012 and 2016.



5.4.4 All schools in the Borough are encouraged to prepare and maintain a travel plan. These outline a range of measures, including the use of walking buses, safer walking and cycling and awareness campaigns which are designed to encourage pupils, along with their parents, to use more sustainable types of transport for the journey to school. An important part of our LSTF project was to work with the University of Chester, local Further Education colleges and schools in the Hartford area to support and bring about changes in travel behaviour and reduce reliance on car borne trips.

5.4.5 **Walking and Cycling** – Walking is an important mode of transport in its own right and it is estimated that this accounts for 25% of all journeys and 80% of journeys under 2 km. Census data shows that 16% of West Cheshire residents walk to work on a daily basis, this being an increase from 13% in 2001. Nevertheless, the proportion of people who regularly walk for all journeys is decreasing and often even relatively short journeys are made by car. The Council recognises that pedestrian routes need to be safe and convenient. Links to local schools, shops, healthcare services, recreation and employment all need to be fully accessible by foot.

5.4.6 There has been considerable investment in the local cycling network over the last 15 years. Chester was successful in gaining Cycle Demonstration Town status between 2008 and 2011 and this led to an increase in the number of people cycling in the City. Further investment continued as part of the delivery of the LSTF project which concluded in March 2016.

5.4.7 The Council published a new Cycling Strategy in 2013. This set out proposals to make cycling easier, cheaper, safer and more convenient. The goal is to encourage more people to choose cycling as their preferred type of transport particularly for shorter trips. The Council Plan recognises that the challenge for the future is to provide better facilities for cycling and, at the same time, challenging perceptions about cycling through the use of education, training and promotional programmes. It is also recognised that there is a need to respond to complaints about the small minority of cyclists who fail to comply with highway regulations, or who cycle inconsiderately on multi-user and shared paths.

5.4.8 Active travel and its contribution to supporting healthier lifestyles is an important objective within the Council's new Health and Wellbeing Strategy published in 2015. This strategy will help guide how we develop our plans in the years to come.

5.4.9 **Passenger Transport** – Encouraging the increased use of Local bus and rail services is an important part of the Council's work to promote and influence increased levels of sustainable travel. Issues and proposed policies relating to these types of transport are set out in sections Four and Eight of this strategy.

5.4.10 **Supporting a shift to new technologies and low emission vehicles** – The use of new technologies and fuels can help to lower the consumption of fossil fuels and the emission of greenhouse gases. The DfT Office for Low Emission Vehicles is a team working across Government to support the early markets for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEV). Over £900 million has been set aside to position the UK

at the forefront of ULEV development, manufacture and use. The Council has successfully bid for funding to install exhaust management technology to existing engines in a growing proportion of the local bus fleet. Opportunities to secure further ULEV funding over the lifetime of this LTP will be pursued to enable the building of additional charging points for electric vehicles and for encouraging the introduction of more hybrid engine technology. Furthermore, the Council's new Chester Park and Ride contract stipulated the use of low emission vehicles to operate this service.

5.4.11 Improved efficiency of conventional fuel engines, plus the use of sustainable biofuels, hybrid vehicles, emerging hydrogen fuel cell technology and other alternative fuels, including methanol, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG), are all likely to be of increasing importance over the lifetime of this transport strategy. Improved traffic and speed control systems may also act to influence the way we travel in the future.

5.4.12 There are strong synergies between these measures and our air quality and public health agendas. While measures to promote ULEV help us address problems associated with climate change, at a local level they are very beneficial to deal with current air pollution problems. This is explored in more detail in section seven of this document.

5.4.13 Market-based measures to encourage a shift to lower carbon transport - Market forces have the potential to play an important role to encourage people to consider making more use of low carbon forms of transport. Road tax already significantly favours ULEV and acts to financially penalise vehicles with higher emission levels.

5.4.14 Potential measures include road user charging, workplace parking charges, public car parking charges, taxation measures that could favour low carbon travel but penalise less sustainable options and fuel price taxation. Many of these approaches will require the lead of central government but it will be important for the Council to be ready to respond to these issues if they arise during the lifetime of this strategy.

5.4.15 Reducing the need to travel – Managing and pro-actively working to influence travel behaviour is an important part of our approach to reducing traffic levels and associated emissions.

5.4.16 The Local Plan (Part One) sets out a policy that new development and associated transport infrastructure should help reduce carbon emissions from transport, not least, by ensuring alternatives to the car are considered and provided within proposals.

5.4.17 The development management and planning process provides a valuable opportunity to influence travel behaviour. The importance of travel plans is highlighted in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (2012). The Council published a new Supplementary Planning Document for Travel Plans in 2016. This sets out the Council's expectations for addressing and dealing with travel plans alongside transport assessments for all appropriate new developments in the Borough.

5.4.18 In addition, the digital revolution offers people the opportunity to enjoy lifestyle choices without the need for regular travel. Examples include the increasing popularity of mobile and flexible working perhaps best typified by the significant increases in home working during the last decade. Installation of high speed broadband, especially in rural areas, and other similar measures can encourage this.

5.4.19 Climate change resilience and adaptation – It is anticipated that the impact of climate change will be felt for at least the next four to five decades as the climate will be slow to respond to the planned measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As a result, it will be important that measures are in place to adapt to the impact of potential changes in the climate. At a national level considerable work is already underway to adapt the strategic road and rail networks. The resilience of local networks remains the responsibility of local authorities and the Council is working to develop a broad corporate approach to respond to this challenge.



5.5 Policy objectives for tackling climate change

The Council will:
1. Support an overall reduction in levels of greenhouse gas emissions by supporting and encouraging the use of sustainable (low carbon) forms of transport and technology;
2. Ensure that new development takes place in accessible locations and is designed to reduce the need for car borne travel and minimise carbon dioxide emissions; and
3. Plan ahead to ensure that local transport networks are resistant and adaptable to the impacts of climate change including adverse weather conditions.

Policy actions to tackle climate change

Smarter choices, travel plans and the journey to school	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Develop and promote smarter choices initiatives and projects to actively encourage the increasing use of sustainable types of transport.</p> <p>Use the Council's Travel Plan SPD and make use of planning conditions and obligations to support the preparation and introduction of effective travel plans for new development sites and, where appropriate, secure developer contributions to support their successful delivery.</p> <p>Encourage the voluntary take up and delivery of workplace, school and residential travel plans at existing sites.</p> <p>Monitor statutory travel plans, prepared to meet planning obligations and conditions, and take enforcement action, if appropriate, where plans are failing to meet agreed targets.</p>	<p>Continue to make bids and secure developer funding to deliver sustainable travel projects.</p> <p>Ensure that sustainable travel options are examined and considered when preparing new strategic and local transport strategies.</p>

Cycling and walking	
Short term action	Longer term actions
<p>Work to support the delivery of the Council's Cycling Strategy.</p> <p>Deliver awareness and training programmes to encourage safer cycling.</p> <p>Ensure that new highway and development schemes meet the needs of cyclists and pedestrians.</p> <p>Make use of the planning process to provide improvements and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians especially where new developments require a travel plan.</p> <p>Promote the tourism and leisure benefits of walking and cycling.</p> <p>Encourage cyclists to abide with highway regulations and promote a more considerate approach to cycling when using shared paths.</p>	<p>Improve local linkages to the National and Regional Cycle Network and work with neighbouring authorities to maintain cross-boundary links.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities to further improve cycle access in Chester, Ellesmere Port, Northwich and Winsford.</p> <p>Ensure that design guides have better standards for cyclist and pedestrians and improve safety.</p> <p>Promote the development of footpath and cycle networks using canals, the Public Rights of Way network and other "green corridors".</p>
New technologies and fuels	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Promote and support the adoption of new transport technologies and fuels that help support carbon reduction projects.</p>	<p>Continue to make bids to secure funding from the Government's ULEV programme.</p>
Market mechanisms and reducing the need for travel	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Undertake transport assessments for all new developments to assess overall accessibility and suitability to support sustainable travel patterns.</p> <p>Promote flexible and mobile working as part of Smarter Choices initiatives.</p>	<p>Support the provision of high speed broadband in rural areas.</p> <p>Review the longer terms use of market forces to encourage a shift to lower carbon transport but only introduce such measures if they secure the widespread support of the local community.</p>
Adapting to climate change	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Complete reviews, assessments and related requirements to comply with national standards for climate change adaptation.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Council's Asset Management Plan and Programme considers and responds to addressing climate change issues and resilience.</p>



SECTION SIX

Managing and maintaining our assets

Meeting our goal to manage a well maintained transport network.

6.1 Introduction

This section sets out the Council's plans for highway and bridge maintenance and includes a short summary to set out progress on the preparation of our Transport Asset Management Plan.

6.2 What you said – Feedback from consultation

6.2.1 The need to improve the poor state of the road network was clearly expressed during the original consultation exercise. Results were also cross-referenced with the outcomes of a separate maintenance survey conducted during autumn 2009.

6.2.2 The results found that highest priority was given to repairing poor quality roads so they are of a good standard. Support was also given to keeping roads that are already good quality maintained to a high standard, maintaining pavements and pedestrian areas, and maintaining main roads. Additional comments focussed on a number of issues including the need to improve the condition of footpaths and Public Rights of Way. There were also a number of responses calling for the de-cluttering of street furniture.

6.2.3 Apart from the importance of undertaking maintenance, the second round of consultation revealed strong support for co-ordinating road works to minimise traffic disruption and for improving winter gritting. It should be noted that this consultation coincided with a period of very cold and snowy weather.

6.2.4 Similar themes also emerged in workshops and written responses. Additional comments called for action on repairing pot holes, the need for better and longer lasting repairs, acting to maintain existing footpaths and cycleways and concerns about the impact of maintenance activities on biodiversity. Discussions about street lighting revealed contrasting views about turning off some street lights overnight to reduce energy consumption versus views that good levels of street lighting helps to reduce crime and fear of crime.

6.2.5 Comparing these results with the separately commissioned highways maintenance survey found that the findings from both surveys were broadly similar. Both placed *“repairing poor quality roads so that they are of a good standard”* as the top priority along with *“maintaining local roads”*.

6.3 Issues raised since 2011

6.3.1 The 2013 Community survey revealed that road condition and highway maintenance remain an important issue in the minds of Cheshire West and Chester residents. In terms of items in most need for improving road and pavement repairs continues to be ranked as the highest priority across the borough out of a list of 20 themes.

6.3.2 The 2015 Let's Talk consultation also showed that there is continued support to maintain the quality of the road network from both residents and businesses. Cyclists in particular were keen to ensure that road surfaces are safe.

Setting out background evidence

- As Highway Authority, the Council has a legal duty to maintain and repair the condition of our highway network.
- The network supports the safe movement of people and goods and is used by the majority of our residents, commuters and visitors on a daily basis.
- An efficient and well maintained transport network is essential to meet many of the objectives and proposals set out in this strategy.
- The condition of the network is in decline. Reversing this decline is our top priority for action in this Strategy.
- Investment in the network is crucial as it underpins the Council's pledges to provide effective and safe transport and improve standards of maintenance for the highway.

Transport facts and figures

- The Council is responsible for 328 km (205 miles) of Principal Road; 642 km (401 miles) of classified and 1359 km (849 miles) of unclassified road.
- A further 70 km of Motorway and Trunk Road including parts of the M6, M56, M53, A55 and A550 is managed by Highways England.
- In addition, the Council is responsible for 482 highway bridges and structures of which 116 are found on Principal Roads. Two bridges are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and 17 are Listed Buildings including the Grosvenor Bridge in Chester.
- The Council is also responsible for the maintenance of the City Walls in Chester, a 3 km long Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Walls are a major tourist attraction and are used by over 2.5 million visitors each year.
- Approximately 50,000 street lights and illuminated traffic signs are currently maintained by the Council. There is an on-going LED street lighting replacement programme underway for 27,000 lamps.
- The Council estimates that the current replacement cost of the highway network, and its associated assets such as bridges, is £4 billion.
- The public consistently place improving the condition of local roads as a top priority for action by the Council.

6.4 Issues and challenges

6.4.1 Highway maintenance – Prior to the last LTP being published in 2011 the Council undertook an in-depth review of the condition of the highway network in West Cheshire. It found that the network at that time was best described as being in a state of managed decline. In response, an action plan was prepared to prioritise additional investment by the Council for maintenance activities to help reduce the level of deterioration.

6.4.2 To maintain our highway in the best possible condition our continued response combines making use of our Transport Asset Management Plan to guide day to day activities alongside the delivery of a longer term approach to reduce the highway maintenance backlog and improve the overall condition of the network.

6.4.3 In parallel to this, the Council has used the National Highways and Transport Network (NHT) survey to identify those highway related issues that people consider need tackling as a priority. In West Cheshire the highest priorities were highway condition, safer roads and pavements. In response, the Council has invested an additional £26.5m over and above LTP maintenance funding secured from central

Government during the last six years as part of its targeted Asset Recovery Programme. This targeted funding for preventative resurfacing and structural works has resulted in improved national indicators across the whole of the highway network.

6.4.4 The Council also works closely with the DfT to adopt sound asset management practices. The Highways Maintenance efficiency Programme has provided substantial direction to help local authorities in his approach including making use of the Highway Infrastructure Asset Maintenance Guidance. It also includes the introduction of a national £578m incentive fund to further assist investment in road improvements.

6.4.5 A self-assessment questionnaire is used to review the Council's overall approach to asset management, resilience, benchmarking, operational delivery and its relationship to the customer. Outcomes are then assessed and the level of incentive fund awarded depends on the overall score achieved.

6.4.6 In 2016/17 the Council assessed itself to be in Band One. Additional resources have been procured to assist a goal to move to Band Two in 2017/18 and to set a path to achieving Band Three in the years to follow.

6.4.7 The creation of the incentive fund has helped asset management become an even greater driving force in the transformation of service delivery for local authorities. In order to excel in this new era, authorities are going to have to adapt. It is recognised that this will inevitably involve leaner working practices, more collaboration and adopting new technologies in order to succeed.

6.4.8 It remains essential to balance our structural maintenance objectives, to improve the overall condition of the highway network, with broader routine maintenance activities. This includes grass cutting, lighting improvements, gully emptying and drainage work, maintaining footways and cycleway and the repair of highway infrastructure including road signs and dealing with carriageway and footway defects, potholes and minor repairs and tree maintenance. Work is also undertaken to ensure that road signs and markings are kept in good condition.

6.4.9 **Winter gritting and maintenance** – The Council prioritises its winter gritting on approximately 1900 km (40%) of the main highway network. Our approach ensures that the roads which carry the most traffic are routinely salted whenever freezing conditions are forecast. A national review of Winter Resilience has examined the national response to the severe winter of 2010 and the impact that this had on the country's transport networks. Its recommendations have been noted by the Council and have been taken into account in our approach to winter gritting.

6.4.10 **Street lighting** - Street lighting plays a very important role in improving safety on the highway network as well as on footpaths and cycleways. It is planned that our approach to street lighting will continue to be developed to ensure that the level of service provided meets set standards and public expectations. This will include measures to improve the quality of light, reduce levels of light pollution, reduce the

amount of energy used by street lighting and make sure that lighting levels assist reducing crime and fear of crime.

6.4.11 Drainage - Until recently, the highway drainage network in the Borough has grown and evolved on a relatively ad-hoc basis. As a result, the quality of the records that we possess is variable. In response, a new database has now been established to properly record data. It will also be important to share data with partners such as the Environment Agency and utility companies to help provide a more co-ordinated approach to drainage issues and flooding.

6.4.12 Bridge Maintenance - A regime of General Inspections is undertaken on a biennial basis. Inspections provide a key source of information that feed into the asset management process and which help to prioritise maintenance work. A full bridge assessment programme has been completed and many bridges have been strengthened or weight restrictions imposed as a result of this. The authority still has a number of structures that are considered to be weak. The majority of these relate to weak footway / verges rather than the carriageways. In addition, the authority has a legal liability for some weak bridges that are owned by Network Rail and the Canal and River Trust. These activities feed into our 50 year lifecycle plan to produce a detailed overview of the future maintenance requirements of our bridge stock. Also, the results are included in the Council's Lifecycle Plan to allow a prioritised approach for improvements.

6.4.13 Sustainability and highway maintenance – The Council is keen to make sure that sustainability is an important part of our approach to maintenance activities. This includes the re-use and recycling of materials and evaluating the use of new techniques and products which may be more sustainable than current practices. We also act to safeguard and enhance the natural environment as part of our ongoing management of the highway network to support habitat and wildlife. Winter gritting salt is carefully stored to prevent pollution from contaminated rain water entering local ecosystems.

6.4.14 Co-ordination of maintenance activities - As part of our Network Management Duty the Council works closely with utility companies and developers to co-ordinate planned road works and maintenance activities to reduce their impact and minimise the disruption that they can cause. The Council will continue to work closely with numerous partners, including neighbouring local authorities and the emergency services, to ensure a co-ordinated approach for such activities. This includes Highways England (HE) who manage and maintain the Motorway and Trunk Roads that pass through West Cheshire. With a number of major HE infrastructure projects coming forward during the next five years, including the planned M53 Smart Motorway project in Ellesmere Port, it will be critical to ensure that there minimal impact on our local roads when construction work is being undertaken.

6.4.15 The NHT survey mentioned above also showed that there is dissatisfaction in the time taken to complete road works and the management of roadworks overall. In order to improve the overall management and reduce highway occupancy for road works the Council has recently introduced a Street Works Permit Scheme. This has

helped to reduce the period of occupancy (the length of time for road works to be completed) by 20% in its first year of operation.

6.5 Policy objectives for managing and maintaining our transport assets

The Council will:
1. Improve the condition of the highway network;
2. Reduce the maintenance backlog;
3. Maintain the highway network in a safe and serviceable condition for the use of vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and all other road users; and
4. Ensure that the highway is kept in an acceptable condition environmentally.

Policy actions for managing and maintain our transport assets

Highway maintenance	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Manage a well maintained and efficient highway network so that it is in a safe and serviceable condition for the use of vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians and all other road users.</p> <p>Work with DfT as part of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme and move to Band Two by 2017/18.</p> <p>Continue to halt the deterioration of the condition of the highway network by tackling the backlog of overdue structural maintenance.</p> <p>Use the Transport Asset Management Plan to improve the highway network and deliver service improvements and cost efficiencies.</p> <p>Ensure that the highway network is kept in an acceptable condition environmentally.</p>	<p>Continue to secure a reduction in the overall maintenance backlog.</p> <p>Work to achieve Band Three of the Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme.</p>

Winter gritting and maintenance	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Undertake gritting and winter maintenance in accordance with the policies and principles set out by the Local Authority Association's Code of Practice for Maintenance.</p> <p>Provide support for communities to bring forward their own localised winter gritting initiatives.</p>	

Street Lighting	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Manage and maintain street lighting as part of the Transport Asset Management Plan.</p> <p>Deliver an ongoing LED street lighting replacement programme.</p>	<p>Continue to review longer term measures to improve light quality, reduce the impact of light pollution, reduce the amount of energy (and carbon emissions) used by the Council's highway lighting stock and consider how to improve lighting on cycleways.</p>



Drainage	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
Undertake repairs and improvements to surface water drainage systems and river protection measures to reduce whole life costs and preserve integrity.	Continue to develop a detailed drainage inventory and associated condition survey to enable the development of a Drainage Lifecycle Plan.

Bridge maintenance	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Address the Council's backlog of overdue bridge maintenance including masonry and concrete repairs and maintenance painting of steel structures.</p> <p>Use the Lifecycle Plan to maintain and improve the highway bridge stock and deliver service improvements and cost efficiencies.</p>	<p>Develop a strategy with Network Rail and The Canal and River Trust to agree a viable strengthening programme within current funding constraints.</p> <p>By the use of whole life costing and lifecycle planning we aim to increase the levels targeted preventative maintenance such as regular routine maintenance and major interventions.</p>

Sustainability and highway maintenance	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Ensure that maintenance activities conform to best practice in reducing, reusing and recycling resources.</p> <p>Undertake roadside maintenance activities that safeguard and enhance the natural environment, promote biodiversity and take into account protected species.</p>	<p>Ensure that maintenance activities support the Council's longer term sustainability objectives.</p>

Co-ordination of maintenance activities	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
Make full use of the Street Works Permit Scheme and work with partners, utility companies and other stakeholders to co-ordinate planned maintenance activities to minimise disruption.	Work with Highways England to minimise the impact of longer term strategic projects that may have an impact on the local highway network.



SECTION SEVEN

Safety, security and health

Meeting our goal to contribute to safer and secure transport in West Cheshire and to promote types of transport that are beneficial to health.

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 There are a number of ways in which transport can improve safety, security and health. Our planned approach to addressing these issues includes road safety, promoting the use of more active forms of transport, improving air quality, tackling crime and fear of crime and reducing the vulnerability of transport networks to natural and man-made incidents.

7.2 What you said – Feedback from consultation

7.2.1 The need to reduce the numbers killed and injured on the roads was considered to be a significant priority by the majority of respondents during our first consultation exercise. Support was also given to promoting healthier lifestyles by encouraging more walking and cycling and ensuring that new transport schemes address public safety concerns.

7.2.2 The importance of addressing crime and fear of crime was the most important issue highlighted during the second round of consultation with road safety ranked second. Addressing air quality issues was, surprisingly, considered to be of least importance.

7.2.3 Feedback from focus groups and written comments also showed the importance of addressing public safety both in urban and rural areas. Requests were made to improve road safety for cyclists and pedestrians. There were also calls for more to be done to ensure that cyclists abided by highway laws. Feedback from workshops highlighted the importance of safer routes to school projects and road safety education. Green infrastructure and the better use of the Public Rights of Way network were identified as options to help promote more active forms of transport.

7.3 Issues raised since 2011

7.3.1 The Lets Talk Survey undertaken in 2015 noted the importance of improving safety across the borough as well as the quality of local health provision. There was support for road safety with cyclists particularly keen to see that road surfaces are kept safe. Cycling itself was seen as important for people's health and wellbeing and should be promoted more at schools. However, cycling on pavements was a concern for people as it was seen as dangerous for pedestrians.

7.3.2 There was also general support for the introduction of 20mph speed limit in appropriate locations such as around schools and residential areas.

Setting out the background evidence

- The 2011 Census found that 82% of West Cheshire residents considered their health to be very good or good. This is higher than the average for the North West of England and broadly the same as the national average. Nevertheless, it is recognised that a number of

communities in the Borough, particularly in deprived areas, fall well below the average for West Cheshire.

- There is an 11 year difference in life expectancy in parts of Ellesmere Port when compared to other parts of the Borough.
- The Council's Public Health Annual Report (2015) shows that the level of child obesity is 18.5%. 23% of children in school reception year are considered to be over-weight or obese.
- 65% of the adult population are considered to be over-weight or obese, the same as the English average. Forecasts suggesting that this figure will continue to increase.
- National statistics suggest that only 37% of men and 24% of women meet the Chief Medical Officers minimum recommendations for physical activity. The cost to the economy of physical inactivity has recently been estimated at over £8 billion, representing in excess of 80,000 lives lost prematurely each year.
- Although evidence proves that West Cheshire is a relatively safe place to live in, there remains considerable public concern about crime and fear of crime. Issues relating to addressing crime and disorder are seen as a priority for action by local residents.
- Further evidence and data is set out in the Council's Compendium of Health and Wellbeing Statistics published in 2016.

Transport facts and figures

- Approximately 90% of road collisions in West Cheshire occur on the locally managed network. The remainder occur on trunk roads and motorways which are managed by Highways England.
- Vulnerable road users (such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists) involved in a collision are statistically more likely to be seriously injured or killed than occupants of motor vehicles.
- Road collisions are the single biggest cause of death for people aged between 16 and 25 and accounts for over a fifth of all people killed or seriously injured on our roads.
- There is a clear recognition that the steady decline in physical activity, especially the fall in levels of walking and cycling, is having a negative impact on our health. It is often the case that even short journeys, previously undertaken on foot or by cycle, are now substituted for trips by car.
- There is strong evidence that moderate physical activity such as walking and cycling can help prevent coronary heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, osteoporosis and arthritis.
- The main transport-related causes of poor air quality are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and 10-micron particulate matter (PM₁₀).



7.4 Issues and challenges

7.4.1 Road Safety - The Council has a statutory duty to promote road safety and make improvements to the highway network to reduce casualties. Reducing casualties is also one of key indicators contained in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020.

7.4.2 Overall, trends show that there is good progress being made to meet road safety targets. It is considered that the steady decrease in road casualty numbers is the combined result of improving safety features incorporated into new vehicles and associated technology, targeting of investment, awareness campaigns and behavioural change and improving vehicle technology and safety measures. Nevertheless, collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists remain at or above the 2004 to 2008 average.

7.4.3 The challenge for the future will be to maintain our overall progress to reduce the level of casualties while targeting activities at the more vulnerable road users. The Council proposes to prioritise a combination of education, engineering and enforcement measures to address these priorities. This will be backed up by a programme of research and data analysis to target our activities where they are most needed. Dealing with speeding will be an important part of this work. The Council is undertaking a major programme to introduce 20 mph zones in residential areas across the Borough between 2016 and 2020. Other speed limit reviews will also be undertaken to assess where further potential improvements can be made. Partnership working with the Emergency Services and the health sector will also continue to be essential to ensure the continued delivery of our local road safety agenda.

7.4.4 Improving health and promoting healthier lifestyles – The Council and its health partners have a shared vision to make the Borough an even more healthy, vibrant and resilient place to live. The approach to achieving this goal is set out in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020. One of the specific challenges identified within this is the need to address the increase in unhealthy lifestyles, leading to preventable diseases and reduce the risk of an early death.

7.4.5 A key outcome is to encourage people to have healthier lifestyles including promoting more physical activity in both adults and children. Developing and encouraging the use of more active forms of transport, not least walking and cycling will be critical in helping to achieve this.

7.4.6 Examples include the encouragement of more active forms of transport within workplace, school and residential travel plans; the delivery of the Bikeability cycle training programme and associated road safety training; building on the legacy of the Chester Cycle Demonstration Town and Local Sustainable Transport Fund projects; and the wider provision and promotion of leisure cycling using the Public Rights of Way, Greenway and Green Infrastructure networks.

7.4.7 It is proposed that a Sustainable and Active Travel Forum will be established to guide and co-ordinate these activities within the Council and with its partners.

7.4.8 Air Quality – Improving air quality is one of the key indicators included in the Council’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-2020. There is a strong association between poor air quality and health. The fraction of mortality attributable to particulate matter in the Borough is estimated to be 4.4% and the majority of this originates from road traffic.

7.4.9 As part of the requirements of the Environment Act (1995) the Council has a statutory duty to monitor local air quality. Where health based air quality standards are breached an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) must be declared and there is a duty to prepare an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) to set out the means by which the Council intends to improve overall air quality within the designated area.

7.4.10 Potential responses to improve air quality problems may include traffic management, the adoption of planning policies to control development, public transport improvements, travel plans and vehicle emissions testing. Modern vehicle emission standards, improvements in engine technology and the growing popularity of ultra-low emission vehicles also make a significant contribution to reducing air quality within AQMA. The Action Plans need to assess the cost effectiveness and feasibility of such measures along with the timescales for their implementation and quantification of the expected impacts.



7.4.11 There are currently three AQMA in West Cheshire where local traffic is the primary source of the poor air quality. These are Whitby Road and Station Road in Ellesmere Port, the area around the Fluin Lane / A56 junction in Frodsham and an area encompassed by the Chester Inner Ring Road which also extends to cover the Boughton traffic gyratory in Chester. AQAP are at various stages of delivery or development for these locations.

7.4.12 The Council will continue to monitor air quality in the current AQMA and other locations where problems may be arising. In addition, an important response to this has been the preparation of a new Low Emission Strategy for the Borough. It is expected that this will be published in early 2018. It will also be important to ensure that the Council's new planning framework avoids locating new development in areas with existing or potential air quality problems arising from local traffic.

7.4.13 Tackling crime and fear of crime – Local concerns about crime and fear of crime were highlighted during the original LTP consultation exercise. The challenge ahead is address these concerns and there is considerable scope to make use of the Council's Community Safety Partnership and Community Safety Team to do so. Opportunities exist to make more use of our Community Safety Wardens who work closely with the Council's environmental protection and CCTV teams, as well as the Police, Fire Service and other partner organisations. They have a clear role to reduce crime and fear of crime, deterring anti-social behaviour and to care for the physical appearance of neighbourhoods.

7.4.14 Well designed transport schemes such as transport interchanges, CCTV in bus shelters and street lighting for footways and cycleways can all play an important part in addressing fear of crime. Elements of this approach are included in recommendations set out in the Design for Streets Manual. Safer and more secure environments for new developments can also be secured through the planning process.

7.4.15 Responding to incidents which may have a significant impact on the transport network – Councils need to keep in mind how local transport networks cope with extreme events, such as extreme weather events, particularly flooding, the failure of key structures such as bridges or incidents on the strategic network leading to considerable local congestion as traffic is diverted. This is an increasing problem when incidents occur on the M56, M53 and A55.

7.4.16 Longer term options under review include changes to construction and design standards to ensure that new transport infrastructure can become more resilient to extreme weather. The Council needs to ensure that such approaches are built into routine and long term planning activities. This will be an important part of our work to develop the new planning strategy for the Borough, particularly in respect to responding to climate change. Lobbying Highways England for the introduction of Smart Motorways on the M53 and M56 will also have the potential to make these routes safer. The Council also has regular dialogue with the operators of Cheshire Oaks to plan ahead for dealing with peak use of this site and its impact on the wider network particularly during the Christmas period.

7.5 Policy objectives for improving safety, security and health

The Council will:
1. Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads;
2. Promote and encourage healthier lifestyles by promoting more active forms of transport such as cycling and walking;
3. Work to reduce transport related air quality problems in the Borough;
4. Ensure that new transport schemes improve public safety and help reduce fear of crime; and
5. Plan for and respond to incidents that may have a significant impact on the transport network.

Policy proposals for improving safety, security and health

Road safety	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Education and awareness</p> <p>Support and promote national road safety campaigns.</p> <p>Make use of casualty data to develop and implement local education, training and road safety awareness programmes.</p> <p>Develop programmes to promote safety on the journey to school and encourage and assist schools to meet the safety goals set out in their travel plans.</p> <p>Develop existing and new partnerships to ensure close collaborative working to achieve casualty reductions.</p> <p>Engineering measures</p> <p>Develop and deliver Local Safety Schemes and associated engineering measures specifically targeted at reducing road casualty levels.</p> <p>Develop and implement minor traffic and transportation improvements to achieve a reduction in road collisions on West Cheshire's roads.</p> <p>Manage and maintain the transport network in the most efficient way with due regard to the safety of all road users.</p>	<p>Review data to identify problem casualty locations and trends and review options to address identified problems.</p> <p>Investigate the underlying causes of road casualties and develop and implement programmes to respond to identified problems;</p> <p>Review the introduction of route management strategies to co-ordinate safety schemes, maintenance, speed management and other improvement works on inter-urban routes.</p> <p>Undertake road safety audits to ensure that road safety issues are given full consideration in the design of highway schemes and new developments.</p>

<p>Enforcement and speed management</p> <p>Introduce a phased programme of 20mph zones in appropriate locations.</p> <p>Continue speed limit reviews and address speed management issues on the basis of 'localism' particularly for residential and rural roads; working closely with the Police, Fire and Rescue and other agency partners, based on extensive consultation with all relevant road users.</p>	
<p>Encouraging healthier transport</p>	
<p>Short term actions</p>	<p>Longer term actions</p>
<p>Identify, deliver and promote schemes and projects that encourage the use of more active forms of travel.</p>	<p>The Council will work with partners, including the health sector, to ensure effective liaison and joint working to help encourage healthier lifestyles.</p>
<p>Air quality</p>	
<p>Short term actions</p>	<p>Longer term actions</p>
<p>Develop and implement Air Quality Action Plans in Chester, Ellesmere Port and Frodsham to eliminate existing air quality problems.</p> <p>Manage and maintain roadside air quality monitors and periodically review their locations.</p> <p>Declare Air Quality Management Areas in locations where poor air quality exceeds levels set out in national standards.</p> <p>Publish a Low Emission Strategy.</p>	<p>Assess new developments to consider their potential impact on air quality.</p> <p>Use the Local Plan and local policies to reduce the impact of air quality problems and promote the use of more sustainable modes of transport.</p> <p>Keep under review the need for AQMA near to European sites covered by the Habitats Regulation Assessment.</p>

Tackling crime and fear of crime	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Engage with the Community Safety Partnership and Team to tackle crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour associated with transport.</p> <p>Design new transport schemes to address public safety concerns, improve personal security and reduce fear of crime.</p>	<p>Ensure that new developments will be expected to conform to design standards that address personal safety and security issues.</p>
Responding to incidents which may have a significant impact on the transport network	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Continue dialogue with key partners to plan and limit the impact of congestion on the local network.</p>	<p>Undertake work to develop resilience planning for transport networks with relevant partners.</p>





SECTION EIGHT

Promoting equality of opportunity

Meeting our goal to improve accessibility to jobs and key services which help support greater equality of opportunity.

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 It is important that people should not be disadvantaged due to poor access to the transport network, particularly if they don't have a car available. This section considers how the Council can respond to this challenge. It includes an outline of the role that passenger transport has to play, the importance of the planning process to reduce barriers to accessibility in the future and considers measures that remove physical barriers to mobility for older and disabled people.

8.2 What you said – Feedback from consultation

8.2.1 Equality of opportunity was ranked as the least important goal for transport during the first round of consultation although this was given highest priority by respondents who were disabled and older consultees. The results found that highest priority was given to improving access to employment and training opportunities, particularly from deprived areas and access from rural areas to key services and access to health care.

8.2.2 The second round of consultation found that the strongest support was given to measures to improve public transport, particularly local bus services.

8.2.3 Feedback from focus groups and written responses called for improvements to all aspects of passenger transport. This included requests for a more integrated approach to how local bus services are planned, lower fares, more direct bus links to local services especially hospitals, increased frequencies, better quality buses including more low floor, dial a ride and community transport services. The decline in the number of bus services serving rural areas was also a concern. Improving mobility, including the importance attached to shopmobility schemes, was also highlighted. Feedback from workshop sessions highlighted the problems of accessing centralised healthcare facilities and the mobility needs of an ageing population.

8.3 Issues raised since 2011

8.3.1 The 2011 Community Survey showed that access to good public transport was considered to be the sixth highest factor in making somewhere a "good place" out of a list of 20 options.

8.3.2 A review of local bus information was undertaken in 2013. This found that the sources of bus travel information are related to the age of the passenger. The most common sources of information are the printed timetables and roadside information as well as the Council's website. Over 80% of users said that they had high levels of satisfaction with these sources of information and the majority of respondents found them easy to use. While there is a move towards online information this study found that the majority of bus users over the age of 65 do not have a smartphone or a computer.



8.3.3 The Let's Talk consultation report published in January 2016 highlighted that residents considered that good reliable transport is key for addressing social isolation, especially in rural areas. Younger and older people in particular rely on local bus services to be able to get to social activities, medical appointments, work and schools and colleges. There was also support for the further development and use of ticketing technology such as "Oyster Cards" to assist more integrated trips.

Setting out the background evidence

- While West Cheshire is generally perceived as a relatively prosperous area, there are a number of pockets of deprivation across the Borough. These tend to be concentrated in the urban areas of Ellesmere Port, Chester and Winsford where there are a number of wards that possess high levels of multiple inequalities and, in total, some 15% of the local population live in areas ranked in the 20% most deprived in England. These are shown in Figure 9.1 below. Further evidence is set out in the Council's Inequalities Report published in October 2015.
- These areas suffer from a combination of linked problems, such as unemployment, low levels of skills and qualifications, low incomes, poor housing and higher crime.
- Within Cheshire West and Chester, 27% of the population live in mainly rural areas and there are specific issues which need addressing in order to connect people in rural communities to employment opportunities as well as healthcare and education.
- Access to health care is recognised as a long standing issue within the Borough. The modernisation and restructuring of the health service and delivery of local services have added to travel problems in recent years and it is likely that such trends will continue in the future. Problems include inflexible opening times, living in a rural area, infrequent public transport, lack of parking, lack of dropped kerbs and difficulties in booking an appointment with your own doctor.

Transport facts and figures

- Buses carry an estimated 10.4 million passenger each year in West Cheshire. However, in line with national trends, there continues to be a serious decline in local bus use. Passenger numbers have fallen by 34% over the last six years.
- Two thirds of residents over the age of 65 regularly use local bus services and are more likely to travel regularly by bus than other age groups.
- The pattern of service varies considerably across the Authority's area. Within the larger urban areas there is a fairly comprehensive network of routes and Chester and Ellesmere Port are particularly well served. There are poorer levels of service in less densely populated areas and many of the Borough's smaller towns and villages are too small to support the provision of high frequency services.
- Wherever appropriate, and within available funding levels, the Council supports socially necessary bus services. Currently 26 local bus services are provided on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester. This is half the number that were supported six years ago.
- The Council is responsible for maintaining approximately 2,500 bus stops and shelters, and approximately 1,400 bus stop timetable displays.
- There are high levels of satisfaction about bus timetable information among users. However, while many respondents are aware about the provision of passenger transport information on the internet, this is less well used by bus users themselves particularly those living in deprived areas and older passengers.
- The Council has developed an award winning itravelsmart app. This is an excellent travel companion while on the move, be it on foot, train, bike or bus. The app has received 186,977 downloads, with 164,874 returning customers and attracts up to 1,000 new users each month.
- The Council also supports the operation of community transport including Dial a Ride services.
- The Council lets contracts for approximately 110 mainstream school bus services and 180 special needs school bus services.
- There are currently some 1437 private hire vehicles and 356 Hackney carriages licensed to operate in the Borough.

8.4 Issues and challenges

8.4.1 Improving accessibility to jobs and services - Accessibility is the ease by which people can reach essential services, such as employment, healthcare, education and other destinations that are important to local residents.

8.4.2 Prior to the publication of the LTP in 2011 the Council prepared a strategic assessment of local accessibility needs. This included detailed consultation and discussions with partners. Results found that the highest priority was the need to improve access to employment and training opportunities.

8.4.3 This became an important part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund project. Work was undertaken in partnership with Job Centres and employers to target and prepare information for job seekers and undertake journey planning to raise travel horizons in disadvantaged area in order to help enable people to access jobs and training.

8.4.4 Accessibility issues are also an important consideration when considering planning applications. It is vital that new development is built in the most appropriate locations which help to reduce levels of car dependency and encourage the use of more sustainable types of transport.

8.4.5 It is important to recognise that accessibility is not just about transport, it is also about how key services are planned and delivered. During our consultation exercises local people have highlighted that accessibility is about getting services to people, and that the Council needs to consider how local services can be retained or returned, particularly to rural areas, to reduce the need to travel in the first place. Consideration should also be given to the use of internet technology. This provides many people with access to everyday services, such as banking, and shopping, including food home delivery services. The continued use of online shopping and services is expected to grow considerably during the lifetime of this plan. Improving Broadband networks and speeds in rural areas will be of importance in this context.

8.4.6 Improving local bus services – Buses play an important role in helping people without ready access to a car to reach jobs, schools, healthcare and everyday services. They also can help to support more sustainable travel and help meet some of our objectives relating to the climate change agenda and tackling traffic congestion. Nevertheless, passenger numbers are in serious decline and there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed if this trend is to be reversed.

8.4.7 The Council is responsible for providing socially necessary local bus services. These include evening, Sunday, Bank Holiday and rural services but there is considerable pressure on the level of funding available to maintain and support these routes. The number of supported services has fallen by a half over the last six years. There is also instability emerging in the bus network as passenger levels fall. This is perhaps best illustrated by the impact of operator GHA going into administration in 2016 with the loss of a significant number of local services. While in the short term

the Council was able to find new operators to provide replacement services this was at additional cost and in many cases at a reduced level of overall service.

8.4.8 Important decisions will need to be made so that the best use can be made of our current network. It is also recognised that bus services will need to reflect and respond to changing travel patterns and the level of resources available to support them in the future. A route and branch review is being undertaken by the Council and should be completed in 2017. This will give the Council a clearer picture on how and where it should act to continue to support the local network within the context of reduced levels of funding in the years to come.

8.4.9 The Council continues to invest to make bus travel more attractive. In June 2017 it opened a new, state of the art bus interchange in central Chester. This is part of longer term plans to enhance the viability of the city and to deliver the new Northgate development. A shopper hopper service has also been introduced to link the new interchange with other important destinations within the city centre. Plans to provide and enhance bus hubs and interchanges elsewhere in the Borough are being considered as part of our programme of local transport studies. For example, the planned redevelopment of Winsford town centre will potentially provide the opportunity to include a new bus hub and improved provision for taxis within the design.

8.4.10 A further challenge will be to continue to work with commercial bus operators to make bus travel more attractive. A partnership approach has been adopted to help work towards common objectives. This includes opportunities to improve the quality of passenger waiting facilities, service frequency and punctuality, providing user-friendly travel and timetable information, marketing and promoting service improvements, bus priority measures, independent travel training and seeking developer contributions to fund new infrastructure and bus services as part of new development proposals. The Council is keen to review what options will be available to it and its partners once the Buses Bill is enacted. This is expected to take place during 2017. It will also be important to further develop the use smart card technology. The Council is working closely with Transport for the North to establish an integrated ticketing smartcard system for the whole of the north in the years to come.

8.4.11 **Concessionary Travel** - The introduction of statutory, free, off-peak concessionary travel for older people and those with certain disabilities has proved popular and has contributed to boost the number of people using local bus services in West Cheshire. The administration of the scheme is undertaken in partnership with Halton and Warrington Borough Councils. The Council will continue to co-ordinate these arrangements and seek to secure best value for money in how this is managed and operated.

8.4.12 **School bus services** - The number of children being driven to and from school has risen dramatically over the last twenty years. Currently, over 40% of local school children are driven to school. This trend is likely to increase and is influenced by a number of factors not least, changing lifestyles, the rise of households possessing more than one car, parental choice in choosing schools outside

traditional catchment areas, and safety and fear of crime issues leading to fewer children being allowed to walk or cycle unaccompanied by an adult.



There are serious concerns about the long term impact of such trends. As part of our response, the Council is delivering a programme of 20 mph zones around schools and in residential areas as a measure to encourage safer environments for walking and cycling. In addition, for those pupils with additional needs, the Council in many cases offers Independent Travel Training to enable pupils to walk, cycle or use public transport to reach schools and colleges.

8.4.13 Rising contract costs means that the Council will continue to face mounting costs to provide school bus services. The Council promotes the use of commercial bus services for pupils and also utilises these where children are eligible for home to school transport. This increases the sustainability of the commercial network and gives school children independent travel skills ready for their adult life.

8.4.14 Community transport, demand responsive and pre-booked transport services - Community transport and demand responsive transport services are often more appropriate than conventional bus services in areas of low demand for public transport services, or for meeting the travel needs of specific groups. This is particularly so in rural areas. The Council works to broker agreements with the bus operators and other transport providers and passengers.

8.4.15 The Council's current community transport is operated by two main providers, Ealing Community Transport in Chester and Ellesmere Port and Cheshire Community Development Trust in the former Vale Royal area. Since 2015 there has been significant investment by the Council in Community Transport and, as a result, it covers the majority of the Borough. It also offers enhanced services in many cases including the use of passenger assistants to assist passengers with more complex needs.

8.4.16 In the longer term, it may be appropriate for the Council to produce an updated Community Transport Strategy to provide a clearly branded and defined service which maximises coverage to serve the areas and people that need it the most. This approach could be extended to include services provided by other organisations such as the ambulance service and the voluntary sector to improve the provision of pre-booked transport in the Borough.

8.4.17 Taxis and private hire vehicles - Taxis have an important and growing role to play as part of a joined up approach to delivering an integrated transport network in the Borough.

8.4.18 Taxi use continues to increase. There has been a 44% increase in the number of private hire vehicles licenced to operate in the Borough over the last six years. This reflects the fact that taxis provide a truly demand responsive service, enabling direct access to destinations such as healthcare, schools and colleges, employment, and leisure attractions at a time when they are required where conventional bus services would not be commercially viable. In the future, it will be important to consider and take advantage of such services to recognise the supplementary role that taxis provide to traditional public transport. This is of particular importance when considering future approaches to the provision of

community, demand responsive transport and the needs of more rural locations especially at a time when the traditional bus network continues to contract.

8.4.19 Removing Physical Barriers to Mobility – Opportunities to remove physical barriers to mobility will be an important challenge for the future, particularly to meet the needs of the mobility impaired, disabled and the increasing number of older people in the Borough. Just over 5% of the Borough’s population currently claim disability living allowance.

8.4.20 It is forecast that over the time of this LTP there will be a steady increase in the Borough’s population with an increasing proportion of older (and more dependent) people. The number of people aged 65 to 84 will increase by just over 40%, and the number of people aged 85 and over will nearly double. Getting on and off buses and trains can be difficult for people with mobility problems. It will, therefore, be important to consider how to make bus and rail travel more accessible. Options include investing in more low-floor buses, providing raised kerbs at bus stops, making sure that all bus and railway station are fully accessible and making use of specialist dial a ride services. Care will also be required to consider the needs of Blue Badge holders as the new Parking Strategy is prepared.

8.4.21 Overall, it will be essential for the Council to continue to fully comply with the requirements of the Equality Act (2010). Promoting equality of opportunity for all people, not just those with disabilities, will be fundamental to ensuring the success of our approach.

8.5 Policy objectives for supporting equality of opportunity

The Council will:
1. Work to increase accessibility to employment and training opportunities, to key services from rural areas; and to health services;
2. Ensure that new developments and local services are built in accessible location;
3. Improve and encourage the use of local bus services; and
4. Improve physical accessibility and remove barriers to mobility especially for disabled and older people.

Policy actions for supporting equality of opportunity

Improving accessibility to jobs and services	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Work with partners to improve access to employment and training opportunities; to key services from rural areas and to healthcare.</p> <p>Use the planning development control process to ensure that all appropriate new development is built in accessible locations which can be easily reached by cycle, foot and local bus services.</p>	
Improving local bus services	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Operate the new Bus Interchange in Chester, maintaining high quality bus hubs elsewhere in the city centre and trialling a shopper hopper bus service to link the new interchange with principal destinations within the city centre.</p> <p>Work with bus operators to improve local bus services in West Cheshire and on cross-boundary routes.</p> <p>Undertake a route and branch review to assess the delivery of the best possible bus network within available resources.</p> <p>Support the provision of socially necessary local bus services within available resources.</p> <p>Provide and maintain high quality bus interchanges, shelters and passenger waiting facilities.</p> <p>Explore the potential to develop 'quality routes' on key public transport corridors and routes in urban areas.</p> <p>Develop and extend smartcard and other appropriate technology and work with Transport for the North to ensure that their smartcard ticketing schemes include Cheshire West and Chester.</p> <p>Work with bus operators and other partners to produce high quality public transport timetable and travel information.</p>	<p>Undertake periodic bus network route and branch reviews to ensure the efficient provision of supported local bus services alongside the commercial network.</p> <p>Secure the provision of new bus stations, interchanges and bus priority measures as a result of town centre regeneration projects.</p> <p>Explore the potential for funding real time bus information at bus stops, stations and other locations.</p> <p>Note the requirements of the Buses Act and work with partners towards the creation of a fully integrated public transport network.</p>

Assess and develop independent travel training projects in the Borough.	
Support the delivery of community, demand responsive and specialist transport services.	
Concessionary fares	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
Provide concessionary fares arrangements in partnership with Halton Borough Council, Warrington Borough Councils and local bus operators.	
Taxi services	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
Seek to make the best use of local taxi services to meet specific door to door travel requirements.	Consider the preparation of a taxi strategy for the Borough.
Removing Physical Barriers to Mobility	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
Work to ensure that passenger transport is accessible to all, particularly those with mobility impairments and the elderly.	Continue to ensure that our transport networks, services and new schemes comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.





SECTION NINE

Improving quality of life

Meeting our goal to ensure that transport helps improve quality of life and enhances the local environment in West Cheshire.

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section considers how transport can help to improve our quality of life including protecting the built and natural environment and enhancing biodiversity. It also sets out how we can improve access to leisure activities and the countryside, including our Public Rights of Way network, and how we plan to respond to problems associated with traffic noise.

9.2 What you said – Feedback from consultation

9.2.1 Transport related quality of life issues were ranked joint third in terms of overall importance during the first round of consultation. High importance was attached to measures to protect and enhance the environment, for example, ensuring that new development in Chester is sympathetic to the City's historic buildings. There was also support for setting high standards for the design and quality of new transport schemes which will enhance the built and natural environment and for improving access to leisure attractions by developing and improving pedestrian and cycle routes including the Public Rights of Way network.

9.2.2 Protecting the built and natural environment was given overall highest priority during the second round of consultation.

9.2.3 Comments received in written responses and at workshops highlighted the negative impact on local communities arising from increased traffic levels as a result of new developments. Measures to improve footpaths and other routes to help improve links to leisure attractions and increasing the use of the Public Rights of Way network were also supported. Calls were made for more to be done to raise awareness and promote attractions which can be readily reached by walking and cycling.

9.3 Issues raised since 2011

9.3.1 The 2011 Community Survey found that 85% of residents were satisfied with their local area and 92% were satisfied that Cheshire West was a good place to live. The highest level of satisfaction was recorded in rural areas.

Setting out the background evidence

- The 2011 Community Survey found that the most important factors in making somewhere a good place to live are the level of crime; health services; clean streets; education provision; and affordable decent housing.
- The quality of our local built and natural environment has an important link to our wider quality of life.

- Improving access to leisure can potentially have a number of significant benefits. These include:-
 - The economy - Access to the countryside can boost the local tourism and visitor sector;
 - Social benefits – Improving access to the countryside can help to reduce social exclusion;
 - Health benefits – By offering a free and accessible means of exercise; and
 - Environmental benefits - Providing a sustainable means of local travel which can contribute to reduced air pollution, noise and traffic congestion.
- Excessive noise levels can disrupt communication, disturb sleep and generally affect our quality of life. Exposure to road noise has been shown to be associated with increased levels of stress and some studies have linked this with the possibility of long-term effects on blood pressure and on cardiovascular disease.

Transport facts and figures

- Transport can have a considerable impact on the built and natural environment. For example:
 - The construction of new roads can have a serious impact on wildlife habitats, affect historic settings and directly damage archaeological sites, monuments and buildings;
 - Increasing levels of traffic can impact on historic areas and can damage buildings and structures themselves through air pollution and vibration;
 - Traffic disturbs wildlife as a result of noise, light and air pollution;
 - Damage may occur accidentally as a result of maintenance work; and
 - Rainwater run off from roads can disrupt and pollute watercourses and groundwater. It can also lead to localised flooding.
- The highway network includes a number of historic and environmental features designated as Listed Buildings or Scheduled Monuments as well as:
 - Three Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
 - Two Local Wildlife Sites;
 - Two bridges are Ancient Monuments and 18 are Listed Buildings;
 - 96 conservation areas designated for their special architectural and historic interests and trees within them;
 - A total of 59 other structures in the highway that are Listed Buildings (eg, milestones, footpath guideposts, crosses, boundary stones, pinfolds, wells, stocks);
 - Eight other structures are Ancient Monuments (eg, crosses, Chester City Walls); and
 - Land adjacent to the highway network also includes approximately 30,000 trees, which add considerably to the visual amenity of the Borough.
- There is an extensive network of public rights of way and cycle routes. This includes a 1261 km Public Rights of Way network including 1088 km of public footpath and 88 km of bridleway. The National Cycle Network in the Borough is some 131km in length, while Regional Routes cover a further 217 km. Additional circular and traffic free routes extend the cycle network by a further 155 km.

9.4 Issues and challenges

9.4.1 Protecting the built and local environment - The quality of our environment has a major impact on our quality of life. Transport planning and the delivery of new schemes provide a real opportunity to enhance the environment and improve our surroundings. In particular, it is important that transport projects comply with local design standards (such as the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) which guide and encourage the provision of high quality urban and rural design that is sensitive to the local surroundings and heritage.

9.4.2 The Council is keen to progress this approach and has already taken forward a number of high quality public realm schemes including the new Chester Bus Interchange, One City Place, the Frodsham Street shared space improvements and the Barons Quay scheme in Northwich. They have significantly enhanced the quality of the local environment. The challenge for the future will be to continue to apply this approach across the Borough, particularly to support regeneration projects and to maintain local distinctiveness.

9.4.3 The Council is also mindful of the visual impact of the road network and associated street furniture, and will seek to provide only road signs and other street furniture that is necessary for the benefit and safety of the travelling public. Reducing unnecessary signage and street furniture will also reduce maintenance costs.

9.4.4 Landscape and biodiversity - Transport schemes can have a major impact on the built and natural landscape, biodiversity geodiversity and protected species. This can be a result of the loss of landscape features, such as trees, ponds and hedgerows, or more general damage to the landscape's overall appearance and character. New developments, including transport schemes, need to be sensitive to the local environment and contribute to the sense of place, identity and diversity of the area in question. This can be achieved by the careful design and alignment of transport schemes to help minimise impacts on sensitive landscapes and habitats. This can then be complemented by careful landscaping and the planting of tree belts and hedgerows or creating ponds or other landscaping features. Highway maintenance activities also need to take such considerations into account. The Council published a Landscape Strategy in 2016 to guide landscape change beyond the built up area in the Borough up to 2030.

9.4.5 Access to leisure activities – The “Green infrastructure” network is characterised by transport routes that are separate from the highway and are largely for the use of pedestrians and cyclists. The network includes the national and regional cycle networks and waterway towpaths including the Shropshire Union Canal and the Weaver Navigation. In places, these are complemented by on-road routes that are promoted as traffic-free or lightly trafficked.

9.4.6 A recent success has been the work undertaken by Sustrans to open the Burton Marsh Greenway in 2014. This now provides a new link between the Wirral and the Deeside Industrial Estate also linking National Cycle Route 5 to Route 56.

9.4.7 There are a number of opportunities to further extend this network in the years to come. This includes further links to the Millennium Greenway in Chester; developing improved links from deprived areas to local town centres (particularly in Ellesmere Port and Winsford), schools and health centres and linking this to active lifestyle promotions; links to Northwich Woodlands including Marbury Country Park; and improved access to the new Further Education colleges in Winsford and Ellesmere Port. In the longer term, if suitable funding can be found, it may be feasible to convert former railway lines into new greenways. Potential examples include the Helsby to Mouldsworth line and the Hatton to Whitchurch line.

9.4.8 **Public Rights of Way** - Public Rights of Way (PROW) form an important part of the transport network in the Borough, both for leisure and wider benefits. The Council is required to prepare a Rights of Way Improvements Plan (ROWIP) setting out where enhancements can be made to develop and encourage the greater use of these paths. This document and its recommendations can be found on the LTP website.

9.4.9 **Noise** - Noise can have a major impact on quality of life and can affect health. The transport network, in particular the road network, is a major source of noise and consequently those residential areas close to major roads and junctions tend to be those that are worst affected by environmental noise. In order to meet future demands for new housing and regeneration projects, the Council will need to assess planning applications for residential development close to existing transport routes to control the exposure of new residents to transport noise. Developers may have to provide measures to reduce noise levels in such locations.



9.5 Policy objectives for improving quality of life

The Council will:
1. Ensure that new transport schemes complement local character and enhance the built and natural environment and biodiversity;
2. Promote access to leisure activities by improving pedestrian, cycle, greenway and Public Rights of Way Networks; and
3. Work to reduce noise levels caused by transport.

Policy actions for improving quality of life

Protecting the built and natural environment	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Develop transport schemes that are designed to enhance and improve the built, natural and historic environment and ensure that such schemes do not have a negative impact on their surroundings.</p> <p>Ensure that maintenance work, including activities undertaken by private contractors and utilities suppliers, is carried out in such a way that quality of the public realm is not harmed.</p> <p>Ensure that schemes conform to local design standards and statements.</p>	<p>Review and, where appropriate, remove unnecessary road signs and street furniture.</p>

Landscape and biodiversity	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Ensure that the design of new transport schemes takes full account of the local built and natural landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity (including emerging ecological network) and follows all relevant legislation and guidance in relation to protected species.</p> <p>Manage the transport network in practical ways which promote the maintenance and enhancement of habitats and species and implement engineering measures which protect wildlife from road traffic.</p> <p>Manage the highways tree stock and associated risks.</p> <p>Follow the recommendations set out in the Council's Landscape Strategy.</p>	<p>Subject all future major transport projects to an environmental appraisal to assess the potential impact that schemes may have on the landscape and biodiversity, and balance these impacts against the benefits of the scheme. The use of Construction and Environmental Plans will be used where appropriate. Consideration will also be given to adopting the Civil Engineering Environmental Quality Assessment and Awards Scheme for future major projects.</p> <p>Longer term schemes will be monitored to ensure that they are compliant with the Habitats Directive.</p>
Access to leisure activities	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Promote healthier lifestyles by encouraging more walking and cycling.</p> <p>Improve access to and awareness of green infrastructure.</p> <p>Manage and maintain cycleways and PROW to an acceptable standard.</p> <p>Prepare an updated Rights of Way Improvement Plan.</p>	<p>Review the further expansion of the green transport infrastructure network.</p> <p>Work to further integrate green transport infrastructure networks with on-highway walking and cycling provision.</p>
Noise	
Short term actions	Longer term actions
<p>Assess the impact and implications of local transport proposals and associated developments which could result in increased noise levels, including the development of new roads.</p>	



SECTION TEN

Reviewing the Council's Transport Strategy

10.1.1 Cheshire West and Chester Council's updated Integrated Transport Strategy has been prepared to review and set out our planned priorities for the period 2016 to 2030. This is the same period of time covered by our Local Plan.

10.1.2 In the past local authorities were required to update their Local Transport Plan every five years. Now, as a result of the Transport Act (2008), authorities can now replace their plans as they see fit. Nevertheless, the Transport Act (2000) still requires local transport authorities to keep their Local Transport Plan under review

10.1.3 A trigger for such a review could include changes to the direction of the Government's national transport strategy, further changes to the provision or level of national transport funding or the emergence of new political or corporate priorities in the local authority itself.

10.1.4 In the absence of any events triggering a review, it is proposed that the objectives and policies contained in this document should remain current for a further five year period. This gives the Council the scope to review and potentially update this strategy again in 2021/2022.

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Local Transport Plan Revised Integrated Transport Strategy 2017 – 2030

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For full details about our transport strategy and its supporting documents visit our website: <http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/public-transport/transport-strategy.aspx>

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