

Chester Cycling Campaign: Chester Transport Strategy consultation response, October 2013

Scheme	Positive	Concerns	Uncertainties	Suggestions	CWaC Response
City Centre					
1. Northgate	Removal of all cars during core hours	Good bus access to the city centre needs to be maintained with the bus station being moved, independent of the Northgate redevelopment. Appropriate bus stop locations and waiting facilities need to be incorporated throughout the city. Concerned that the image of Northgate Street in the consultation document shows no cycle parking – existing parking needs to be retained and augmented wherever possible.	Clarify whether the city centre is to be 'pedestrianised' or 'shared use': the proposal is not clear on this.	Area is shared use; provide a greater number of bicycle parking spaces than existing in multiple locations, including bike lockers. A secure bike parking facility in provided as part of the Northgate Quarter regeneration, with good access to the new cinema / library / market complex. Facility should include secure bike storage for city centre employees and visitors, showers, lockers and changing areas, repair shop. Consider a cycle link through Abbey Square and Abbey Street to Frodsham Street.	
2. Gorse Stacks	Fit-for-purpose bus station with better transport integration – encourage use. At-grade crossings for Hoole Way roundabout.	As per (1) above. 'Drive-in, reverse out' operation: less efficient and less safe than drive-through operation? Reversing beepers potentially noise for residents.	Key to creating an integrated transport 'hub' will be the connections between Gorse Stacks and the rail station – these are currently poor. This aspect of proposal does not seem to have been considered properly yet, and must be.	Details of improved connectivity to rail station to be developed as a priority, with appropriate consultation. Norwich has a relatively new bus station built on restricted space with similar access to surrounding roads and that operates a drive-through operation: suggest contacting Norfolk County Council / Norwich City Council to see how that works.	

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3. Amph. area	20mph speed limit	No proposals for bespoke cycle paths or shared use cycle / pedestrian paths; cyclists would still have to cycle on the inner ring road main carriageway.	Unclear how proposed public realm enhancements will actually reduce traffic volumes and therefore improve safety and connectivity.	20mph speed limit to apply throughout City Centre core. Clearer proposals on how traffic through the Amphitheatre area would be managed to be reduced.	
4. Impaired Mobility	Removes risk of unsafe parking in city centre.	Dependency on Northgate development for new facilities	N/A	Is there an alternative location for an appropriate shopmobility centre if Northgate does not go ahead or is delayed	
5. The Bars	Improved cycle and pedestrian movement around the Gyrotory. Cycle route west along Foregate street.	N/A	Potential complexity / 'useability' of pedestrian and cycle crossing network. Potential to lead to misuse and conflicts.	Consult with cycle and pedestrian user groups as part of detailed design work for crossing points and traffic signalling. In view of potential closure of subway complex at the Bars, consider use of subway complex as a secure 'cycle hub' for city centre employees that may wish to utilise bikes – by creating a single access point and utilising underground space a valuable space could be utilised effectively. A social enterprise could be a cycle hire/maintenance /storage point.	
6. Northgate Junction	Improved cycle and pedestrian facilities; enhanced accessibility to the Northgate arena.	That the new four-arm junction will work less effectively than the current roundabout and cause more congestion; assumed reduced use of southern ring road (as per 3) could add traffic loadings.	N/A	As per (5) above. Install proper, secure, bicycle parking facilities at Northgate Arena as part of the scheme. These should allow public access rather than just being for Northgate arena customers.	

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7. Coach Strategy	Potential reduced numbers of coaches using / waiting in city centre roads. Potential use of land on Bumpers Lane for layover.	Potential for National Express facility to be separate from the new bus station; this would create a fragmented network.	Lack of clarity on where National Express facilities will be located; current provision is appalling and deters use.	Need to identify suitable drop-off and layover locations for coaches during race days – could use the facility at Bumper’s Lane.	
8. City Centre Pedestrian & Cycling	Towpath improvements; Frodsham St shared space; full bike access to all pedestrianised areas; east-west cycle route.	20mph limit along cycle routes to be decided by local communities – this should be applied as default for the Chester urban area for the route to be a success. No mention of any new cycle or pedestrian bridges across the Dee: this is currently a major barrier to cyclists in particular, especially with the suspension bridge – the only really safe way of crossing - designated as ‘no cyclists’, and with no cycle facilities included in the railway bridge upgrade.	Unclear whether “improvements to canal towpaths and access points” includes resurfacing and additional lighting. No proposals stated to upgrade the junction where Watergate Street crosses the Ring Road; this is major barrier to movement (considered under 12?). Design of contraflow along Foregate / Eastgate: there is limited pavement space so assume removal of current parking / taxi ranks to make space and safe?	20mph speed limit to apply throughout City Centre core and whole of east-west cycle route. Resurface and providing lighting along the canal towpath between the city centre, University and Countess Hospital to make a safe an attractive route between these key locations. Create a formal cycle link through Abbey Square and Abbey Street to Frodsham Street. This would connect Northgate Street with the canal towpath, avoiding the busy Cross area. The most recent Newsletter from the Friends of Chester Cathedral states that one of Cathedral’s plans is to widen the Kaleguard Gate to improve access; this suggestion would fit in with those plans.	

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8. City Centre Pedestrian & Cycling (continued)	See above	Good, safe cycle route and facilities need to be in place before cycle-hire schemes are fully extended – otherwise schemes may fail.	See above	<p>Remove the cycling restriction from the suspension bridge and promote this on maps as the safe way for cyclists to cross the river, reducing conflicts on the road bridges.</p> <p>Consider a new river crossing bridge, e.g. Sandy Lane to the Meadows, or close to the railway bridge (as previously planned under the CDT and Connect2 schemes).</p> <p>Dynamic Connections Mapping should be used to identify popular walking or cycling routes for which a 20mph limit could be requested. This would work by individual residents mapping routes in the city that they may want to cycle or walk (perhaps they don't cycle or walk at present due to traffic speed). Data from many individuals would build up a picture of popular routes. This approach would improve on the current CWaC policy to introducing 20mph speed limits, namely that it is up to individual communities to decide whether their roads should have a 20mph limit. This misses the bigger picture that, for people to walk or cycle, their whole route needs to be safe. People should be encouraged to think about those journeys they would like to be able to travel on foot or by cycle.</p>	

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8. City Centre Pedestrian & Cycling (continued)	See above	See above	See above	Consult with cycle and pedestrian user groups as part of detailed design work for crossing points, shared use areas, east-west cycle route.	
Wider Urban Area					
9. Active Traffic Mt	Better traffic management / reduced congestion.	N/A	N/A	Build on existing 'Cycle Points' to improve information for cyclists entering and travelling around the city. Clearer signing of key cycle and pedestrian routes, e.g. routes from station to city centre and Greenway, towpath etc., city centre to riverside, city centre to racecourse.	
10. Parking Strategy	Improved park & ride. Variable pricing policy (dependent on details).	Uncertain how the "short-stay provision for local residents on essential business with no alternative but to use a car" would be implemented.	Not sure what is meant by "linked, long-stay and tourism related trips". Not sure about encouraging tourists to drive into the city centre; the tourist experience may be improved by using P&R, as opposed to driving through a busy city that you don't know.	N/A	
11. Junction Enh'mnts	Reduced congestion.	No mention of improving cyclist facilities at junctions (e.g. crossing junction arms) – these should be incorporated into junction design.	N/A	Consult with cycle user groups as part of detailed design work for junction improvements.	

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12. Race days & events	Reduced coaches / minibuses in city centre. Improved cycle crossings at junctions.	N/A	Design of improved cycle routes – need proper cycle routes, not lines on bumpy pavements.	Potential to use any new council-run facility at Bumpers Lane as part of race-day parking and shuttle service. Better bike parking facilities needed at venues such as racecourse where there is currently no cycle parking for visitors or staff – important for other events apart from raced days e.g. blood donation sessions, conferences, weddings/ general shows.	
13. Hoole to City Centre	New cycle / ped. bridge. Improved cycle / ped. routes between station and city centre.	20mph limit along routes to be decided by local communities – this should be applied as default for routes to be a success.	N/A	The usefulness of a new bridge over the railway line at Hoole would be substantially improved by providing a link between the Lightfoot Street/Station View junction and Hoole side of Hoole Bridge and the Millennium Greenway. It would have the major advantage of providing a sensible link between the projected Crewe Street student accommodation (for which permission was recently granted) and both the main University & Kingsway campuses. There is space on currently unused land to establish such a path, and rights need to be secured before someone tries to build on it. There is also potential for funding contributions to come from the developers of the recent Crewe St planning approval for student accommodation and potential redevelopment of previous Honda Saunders site and previous Enterprise Centre site.	

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13. Hoole to City Centre (continued)	As above	As above	As above	<p>Consideration of a cycle 'contraflow' lane along Brook St. Current arrangement degrades a potential convenient cycle route to Hoole/Black Diamond St - coming from town, cyclists are directed to the end of the street and then expected to push the rest of the way.</p> <p>20mph speed limit to apply to cycle and pedestrian routes.</p>	
14. Bus priority	Improved bus service and therefore usage; reduced private car use.	N/A	Not clear whether cyclists will be allowed to use bus lanes / links: if the answer is yes, then this would also greatly improve cycle access	Bus lanes and bus links are designated shared use for cyclists as well.	
15. Park & Ride	Innovative proposals for maximising use of the P&R service, to generate a 'transit' style system, and integration with rural services, welcomed. Bicycle facilities at P&R.	Quality of cycle routes between P&R and city centre – routes would need to be high quality and safe for 'park and cycle' to be an attractive option for many prospective users.	Cheaper ticket prices for 'park and cycle'?	<p>Potential for P&R / 'transit' buses to have bicycle racks on them (e.g. as in Vancouver where all buses have these) so that users could take the bus one way if needed e.g. weather conditions, bike damage. This may remove a barrier to use.</p> <p>Review quality of existing cycle route options between P&R and the City; improve where necessary (some may be covered elsewhere)</p>	

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16. Travel Planning	Generally all positive ideas	Risk that developer-lead travel plans become 'tick boxes'. Careful scrutiny needed, and needs integration between CWaC planning and transport officers.	N/A	Potential for new developments to contribute to improved pedestrian / cycle / bus networks and facilities as part of planning gain – i.e. more than just preparing a plan. This could include incentives for cycling to work by provision of secure cycle storage for employees and assisted cycle purchase schemes.	
17. Smartcard	Welcomed – reduces artificial barriers to using public transport	N/A	N/A	Potential for the proposed cycle hire schemes to be included within the smartcard system.	
18. Cycle priority	Improvements and extensions of existing routes welcomed	No mention of the canal towpath between Chester and Ellesmere Port. This, if properly upgraded and lit, would provide a pedestrian and cycle route between the city centre, university, the Countess hospital, and on to Ellesmere Port. The towpath is in very poor condition and is in need of upgrading to make it safe and attractive to use.	N/A	Include resurfacing / upgrading canal towpath between Chester city centre and the University, Countess Hospital, and all the way to Ellesmere Port in the scheme.	

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18. Cycle priority (continued)	Improvements and extensions of existing routes welcomed	<p>There is also currently no signage for direct route from Zoo canal bridge through lanes via Little Stanney to Cheshire Oaks (for employment and Ellesmere Port town centre/college): this is a shorter route than via the canal.</p> <p>Does not address routes between the city and 3 P&R sites.</p> <p>No mention of completing the link alongside the riverside path along New Crane Street between the racecourse and The Cop: currently blocked by a derelict development site next to an unused lock.</p>	N/A	<p>Install signage for direct route from Zoo canal bridge through lanes via Little Stanney to Cheshire Oaks.</p> <p>Include cycle routes between the city centre and the Chester Zoo, Boughton Heath and proposed Hoole P&R sites (to integrate with Scheme 15).</p> <p>Include completing the missing link in the riverside path alongside New Crane Street (A548) between the racecourse and The Cop.</p>	
19. Bus Imprv'ts	Generally all positive ideas	N/A	N/A	Potential for buses to have bicycle racks on them (e.g. as in Vancouver where all buses have these) so that users could take the bus one way if needed e.g. weather conditions, bike damage. This may remove a barrier to use.	

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Travel to Work Area					
20. Railway Stations	General idea of improving facilities to encourage non-car use welcomed	N/A	N/A	Chester – much more cycle storage is needed; the current racks are already over-full, and some people use railings. New bike parking should be as close to platforms as possible (i.e. not in the potential new car parking area north of the tracks).	
21. Hoole P&R	Idea of increased P&R capacity and 'exemplar hub' welcomed	Impact on Greenbelt – support is dependent on findings of all appropriate surveys and designs.	Quality of cycle route between P&R site and the city centre.	As per 18 and 19.	
22. Cross Border	Better communication with other authorities, and not restricting transport schemes to artificial administrative boundaries	Nothing proposed between Wirral and Chester / Cheshire West. E.g. cycle routes from Eastham on the A41 through to Hooton; from Eastham Ferry Road through to Ellesmere Port Vauxhalls etc. Some work is already being undertaken for these links under Wirral and CWaC LSTFs.	No specific proposals to comment on. Assume the relevant aspects of cross-border integration are covered elsewhere in the Strategy.	Include links between Chester / CWaC and the Wirral in the Strategy so that the benefits of work taking place under LSTF are maximised. Partnership working with Wirral Borough Council.	
23. Western Relief Road		Based on a 'predict and provide' approach to car use. Need is still to be demonstrated, especially with the proposed improvements to public transport / cycling / pedestrian.	N/A	Traffic levels, congestion and air quality monitored as all other aspects if the Strategy are implemented. A western relief road should only be considered if this monitoring shows there is a clear need it.	

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24. Rail elect'ion	Generally any improvements to rail services are welcomed	Overly focussed on Chester to London services – this is currently by far the best service out of Chester and is already very well used. More local commuter lines – in particular the woefully neglected mid-Cheshire line – need much more urgent attention and could greatly reduce car traffic into Chester.	N/A	Focus on mid-Cheshire line: this connects key residential and employment areas but the quality of service is currently very poor, expensive and off-putting. There is a real opportunity for a 'step change' here which could take cars off of very busy roads. Provide secure cycle storage at stations as per Merseyrail, bearing in mind that commuters might come from 2 to 4 miles to get to stations to get into Chester.	
25. New rail stations	Proposals for new stations are welcomed	N/A	N/A	Include reopening Beeston station.	
26. Rail service imprv'nts	Proposals are welcomed, especially on mid-Cheshire line	N/A	N/A	As per 24.	
27. Halton Curve	Proposal is welcomed	N/A	N/A	If the aspiration to return this to railway use is not achieved, this could be converted into a useful Greenway.	
28. Smarter Choices	Generally all positive ideas	Good cycle, pedestrian and public transport facilities need to be in place for Smarter Choices to really work.	Locations of targeted areas – need to be when good facilities already exist or are being put in place.	Focus on providing environmental (e.g. default 20mph) and infrastructure improvements (e.g. cycle routes, junction improvements, shared spaces) before pushing Smarter Choices.	