
Topic: Public Consultation on the new Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for CWaC Council
Date: 11 January 2010
Respondent: Chester Cycle Campaign (CCycC)
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1. Background to Chester Cycling Campaign

The Chester Cycling Campaign (CCycC) is a grassroots organisation representing cyclists in and around Chester, including members of the Chester and North Wales Cycle Touring Club (CTC) and Chester Road Club, to provide a coordinated voice for cyclists in the area. We know that people want to use their bikes more but that current conditions put people off. CCycC is pushing for a better, greener city by making cycling a safe and attractive transport option in both Chester and West Cheshire.

CCycC maintains contacts with many community groups, Chester University and local businesses. Amongst our active members are professional environmental advisors, transport planners, engineers, project managers specialising in community engagement programmes, cycling trainers, former councillors and CTC representatives. CCycC therefore not only represents a significant community within Cheshire West and Chetser (CWaC) but also offers considerable expertise relevant to transport planning.

2. Working in Collaboration

CCycC has a history of working positively with local politicians, council officers and the media to promote the benefits of cycling and to build a consensus for action. At the start of Chester's Cycle Demonstration Town (CDT) status CCycC joined forces with the Chester and North Wales CTC and Chester Road Club to provide a coordinated voice for cyclists in the area to add momentum to the CDT programme. CCycC was instrumental in Chester winning the CDT and Connect 2 funding.

Furthermore we are keen to help CWaC achieve the National Indicator's (NIs) recently agreed in the Local Area Agreement, in particular:

- NI 186 Per capita reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the Local Authority area
- NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation
- NI 56 Obesity in primary school age children
- NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities.

We want to continue to work constructively for the benefit of our borough and request that we are added to the consultee database for the LTP3. CCycC would like to develop an ongoing partnership with CWaC to assist in reviewing and improving the plan over time.

3. Our Philosophy

CCycC believe that cycling forms an important part of an integrated transport plan. Cycling is a perfect means of travel for commuting and other day-to-day journeys. It helps to improve health, air quality, quality of life, social inclusion, the economy and helps to reduce greenhouse emissions. This paper illustrates how these benefits can be achieved.

We believe that the LTP3 for CWaC should be underpinned by a philosophy, and by planning and design proposals, that ensure a modal shift from the car being the default means of transport to an

integrated public transport network linked to an environment conducive to cycling and walking. Thus, our principles and the measures we want to see implemented are not purely cycling based. This holistic approach is laid out clearly in Vision 2050¹ adopted by the Council in April 2009.

4. Our Principles

CCycC welcomes CWaC Council's long term approach to the LTP3 and the opportunity to link the LTP3 with the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF) and Sustainable Community Strategy, on which CWaC is also currently consulting. Developing the themes and reasoning above, we believe the following principles should underpin the LTP3:

1. Travel is a means to an end rather than a benefit in itself, so LTP3 policies and programmes should firstly look at reducing the need to travel, for example by improved integration between land use and transport planning, and then look at the best way of moving people around rather than focussing on a particular mode.
2. The challenge for LTP3 should be about how to move a growing population around the borough whilst substantially reducing carbon emissions, and not about how to manage an assumption of more car travel and associated emissions.
3. The CWaC LTP3 should also be informed by and fully incorporate concepts from Vision 2050, which was recently adopted by the new Council.
4. Road building or extension should be the measure of last resort. We believe that CWaC should aim to build an integrated transport system enabling residents to cross the borough by bus, rail, bike and foot in 2 hours. Cycling can extend the reach of public transport and therefore increase patronage and revenue, and reduce congestion near stations. In the Netherlands typically 30% of passengers travel to rail and bus stations by cycle compared to around 2% in Chester.
5. Measures to facilitate cycling should be incorporated when existing roads are refurbished, for example by providing cycleways or traffic calming.
6. New developments should be designed to encourage cycling and walking rather than driving, provide cycle parking, and improve cycle permeability.
7. Providing and promoting accessible information about public transport, and making public transport as easy to use as possible, is important to facilitate travel without driving.
8. Advice and training for low carbon transport needs to be available on request to encourage a modal shift away from private car use, e.g. bikeability for all ages, travel plans, walking buses. Measures that have been developed as part of CDT need to be built on to become mainstream and not merely an 'add on'.
9. Low-carbon travel links with locations outside of the borough need to be improved, for example by improving the rail and bus links.

We recognise that CWaC may not have the authority or sole responsibility to undertake every measure that would be needed to achieve these principles. However, we do believe that CWaC has a vital role in achieving these principles and that CWaC should demonstrate strong and clear leadership.

¹ <http://www.goingcarbonneutral.co.uk/press-releases-and-background/>

5. Working Towards Strategic Goals

A low carbon transport plan automatically helps achieve CWaCs other goals apart from tackling climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, including maintaining a strong economy, increasing social inclusion, and improving health and quality of life.

5.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

One of the outcomes of the recently agreed Local Area Agreement is a per capita reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the Local Authority area (NI 186). Transport, and in particular cars, is a significant source of greenhouse gases such as CO₂. CWaC has considerable work to do to reduce emissions from private car travel: the percentage of residents driving to work is 10% above the national average and car ownership and carbon emissions from road transport are also above the national average. (Cheshire West and Chester Integrated Transport Strategy: Summary of Baseline Report).

The effect of climate change is predicted to cause a loss of £1.4 billion for the Cheshire and Warrington economy area if left unchecked (source: the Economic Implications of Climate Change for Cheshire and Warrington, report for CWEA January 2009). CWaC is predicted to be the area most greatly affected. It is paramount therefore that CWaC demonstrates its commitment to a low carbon transport plan.

5.2 Economy

As energy prices continue to rise, the cost of car travel will increase. Rural residents (26% of the total population in CWaC) will be especially affected unless low carbon transport infrastructure has been developed. Thus the long term economic future of CWaC will be stronger with a well developed public transport network linked to cycling and walking routes.

In the short-term, at a time of budget constraint, the economic multiplier of public transport and cycling and walking initiatives is much greater than developing road infrastructure and thus represents a much better allocation of budget. The benefit is also long-term in contrast to roads that quickly become congested. This is of particular pertinence given that the current LTP round has introduced new aims, for example to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets, but has also reduced funding.

The overall cost of accommodating travel demand by cycle is relatively cheap compared to the cost of making provision for a similar journey by private car (or public transport).

Cycling levels in Chester and the rest of CWaC are far below those achieved in comparable towns in England, including importantly historic cities like York and Oxford that are regarded as rivals for investment and tourism. Without increases in cycling, Chester could be less attractive than other tourist attractions.

5.3 Social Inclusion

The poorest in society are least able to run a car and are therefore most dependent on public transport or travelling by foot or cycle. As demonstrated by A Green and Fair Future for a Just Transition to a Low Carbon Economy – TUC www.tuc.org.uk/touchstonepamphlets and Vision 2050, the poor will also be hardest hit by climate change if action is not taken. This will affect the overall economy by increasing the support the state must provide. By providing a low carbon public transport system linked to cycle and pedestrian routes, CWaC can help reduce climate change but also reduce social exclusion by helping the most marginalised travel to jobs and education. This will create a society with more equal opportunities.

5.4 Health and Quality of Life

Increased use of low carbon forms of public transport, walking and cycling improves health and well being and air quality by reducing congestion. At the same time it reduces road injuries and deaths making life safer (a national priority, LTP3 baseline), particularly for the most vulnerable in society. The health benefits of walking and cycling as forms of transport are discussed in a note prepared by the British Medical Association (BMA) Board of Science in November 2009. BMA promotes cycling as a safe, healthy and sustainable alternative to car use. The note prepared by the BMA is attached to this response as Appendix A.

A modal shift towards walking and cycling will also work towards a number of the outcomes of the recently agreed Local Area Agreement, which include:

- NI 8 Adult participation in sport and active recreation
- NI 56 Obesity in primary school age children
- NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities.

6. Implementation

The preceding sections focus on Chester Cycling Campaign's broad philosophies and principles, but there are a number of more detailed principles and actions that we believe need to be part of the final LTP3. CWaC should adhere to the guidance given in the CTC document 'Cycling: A Local Transport Solution' as a matter of policy. This guidance is provided as Appendix B. The following sections discuss actions that are particularly relevant to CWaC.

6.1 Active Travel Major Scheme Package

Walking and cycling need significant continuing investment to create safer and more convenient routes. DfT have informally indicated that they would welcome and view favourably major scheme requests based around active travel. Work in Manchester suggests that Benefit Cost Ratios (BCR) are around 7:1 which DfT regards as very good value for money.

We think that CWaC should define a package of major schemes for walking and cycling that include:

- Implementing the Chester city centre cycle permeability study carried out by Steer Davies Gleave
- Improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists on the Hoole Road Bridge
- Improving conditions for cyclists on the A540
- Extending existing cycleways along the A41/A54 to at least Kelsall
- Installing cycleways along the A56 between Chester and Helsby
- Resurfacing and extending the cycleways along the Shropshire Union canal
- Creating a cycleway along the former Helsby Junction / Mouldsworth freight line
- Creating an off road cycleway between Plemstall and Barrow.

6.2 Smarter Choices

Smarter Choices (SC) are a powerful range of techniques to encourage transfer onto sustainable modes of travel (public transport, walking and cycling) and away from single occupancy private car use. The techniques include individualised travel marketing, travel planning and encouragement of active travel (walking and cycling). Used in combination, SC techniques can close the gaps that exist between the public's perception of sustainable modes and the reality of the performance and cost of the private car. Existing SC activity and resources within CWaC is at a very low level and fragmented at present.

There is a need to determine what should be the appropriate level of SC activity within CWaC. To be effective, SC would also need to target specific areas. Community members in these areas would need to be trained to teach SCs to other members of their community, thus generating a long-term programme. This could also be a source of employment as schemes are extending across the Borough and elsewhere. An example of this type of involvement is Blacon where the community is already proactive in promoting cycling.

Further information about Smarter Choices and case studies are provided in Appendix C.

There is great potential for SC measures to be used to make the most of new infrastructure. DfT have indicated that it is appropriate to include SC (normally regarded as revenue) within major capital bids as long as they are related to the scheme. This is likely to increase the BCR substantially.

6.3 Cycle Network

The existing cycle network in CWaC is fragmented and of varying quality. To facilitate cycling and a shift away from car transport this network needs to be expanded, linked together and the quality improved. New cycle routes could comprise of bespoke facilities such as off-road cycle paths or clearly signed routes along existing 'quiet' roads with crossing points where needed. To achieve the maximum benefit, new cycle routes would need to link communities to existing cycle routes and to employment centres. That is, from rural areas to routes into towns and business parks. A survey to establish where it would be most beneficial to implement new cycle routes should be a first step.

The permeability and safety of urban centres and employment hubs to cyclists also need to be improved. Implementing measures such as

- default two-way cycling on one-way streets;
- large 20mph zones (i.e. the default speed in town apart from arterial roads);
- providing shortcuts for cyclists; and
- designing road junctions to minimise hazards to cyclists

would encourage both local residents and commuters from surrounding areas to use cycles instead of cars. If such measures were implemented consistently over wide areas the benefits would be felt by all residents. In 2009, the Government invited comments on the document '*A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World*'. Britain has some of the worst child accident figures in Europe, and creation of blanket 20mph in residential areas throughout the CWaC area will make a significant contribution to reaching the casualty reduction targets set out in 'A Safer Way'. 20 mph limits will also improve the general quality of life (by reducing noise and local air pollution) in residential areas.

The city centre permeability study carried out for the Chester CDT provides a basis for improving Chester for cyclists and the recommendations in this study need to be considered over the full term of LTP3 and not just limited to the duration of CDT itself.

6.4 Maintenance

Approximately 10% of cyclist's injuries result from road defects (Cycling: A Local Transport Solution, CTC, November 2009). CWaC should commit to maintaining all surfaces used by cyclists including pruning hedgerows, filling in potholes and maintaining drains.

6.5 Integrated Public Transport System

There are currently rail links to major conurbations within and outside of CWaC (LTP3 baseline). If:

- buses linked to these services;
- cycle and pedestrian routes linked to the station; and
- through tickets were provided between the different bus providers and rail services,

this would greatly facilitate travel without driving. Increasing the route coverage and capacity of trains and buses that carry bicycles would also facilitate travel without driving by avoiding the need for commuters to drive to railway or bus stations.

6.6 Building on CDT and Connect 2 and initiatives from outside the Borough

Some work in all of the areas discussed above has been started. CWaC should build on this work to maintain momentum and also incorporate it into mainstream transport planning. Funding for cycling should come out of transport funding and not be seen as an optional extra if additional funding is available. Furthermore, CWaC should actively engage with neighbouring authorities to improve links between them. This is especially true for initiatives that are already proposed such as re-establishing a railway station at Saltney.

6.7 Targets and Monitoring

Success can only be demonstrated if rates of cycling and walking, use of public transport, and corresponding reduction in private car use are monitored against ambitious targets. CWaC must therefore commit to targets to substantially increase cycling, walking and use of public transport, and to monitor progress using robust data collection methods. Based on the achievements of Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns over a 5 year period, as described in Appendix C, we believe that CWaC should adopt the following targets as a minimum:

- Increase in trips by walking by 25% at the end of the 15 year LTP3 term, with interim targets
- Increase in trips by cycling by 35% at the end of the 15 year LTP3 term, with interim targets
- Increase in trips by bus by 50% at the end of the 15 year LTP3 term, with interim targets
- Reduction in trips by private car by 25% at the end of the 15 year LTP3 term, with interim targets.

Targets for increased trips by train should also be set in conjunction with neighbouring councils such as Cheshire East, Greater Manchester and Merseyside and in discussion with train operating companies.

Targets for individual projects that would work towards achieving these overall targets should also be set, for example:

- Greater than 50% of the population should be able to travel to retail or employment centres by cycleways and footpaths.
- Reduce the average time to commute across the Borough by bike, foot, bus and bike by 20%. To monitor this target, a set of journeys between residential and commercial areas should be agreed.

7. Conclusions

The development of the LTP3 for CWaC provides an opportunity to implement measures that result in a modal shift away from private car use and towards low carbon modes of travel including public transport, cycling and walking. The Chester Cycling Campaign has a history of working successfully with local politicians, council officers and the media to promote the benefits of cycling and to build a consensus for action, and would like to develop an ongoing partnership with CWaC to assist in developing, reviewing and improving the LTP3 over the next 15 years.

We believe that the focus of LTP3 should be to cause a modal shift from the car being the default means of transport to an integrated public transport network linked to an environment conducive to cycling and walking. Increasing the number of people that cycle as their preferred choice of transport would be an important component of this modal shift. Moving people by cycle works towards meeting many of the strategic goals that CWaC wants to achieve, including a strong economy, better health and general quality of life, better air quality, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, and increased cultural activity.