



CHESTER CYCLING CAMPAIGN

.....Working to Create a Cycle Friendly City



Press Release: Response to the CW&C Consultation on the Air Quality Action Plan for Chester City Centre

Chester Cycling Campaign welcomes the development of an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Chester City Centre and we responded fully to the recent consultation.

We wish to highlight just some of the points we have made in our full response to Cheshire West and Chester Environmental Protection Team.

We appreciate that the AQAP is short-term (to 2022) because the year of compliance without intervention is estimated to be 2023.

But we feel strongly that the AQAP needs to be more ambitious. Also that change needs to be effected very quickly, for the sake of those people in Chester who will die prematurely as a result of air pollution before the end of the AQAP. The figures are worrying: the AQAP's own figures (which exclude the effects of NO₂!) put the number of deaths at 91*, whilst figures from CWAC's Low Emission Strategy (which include both particulates and NO₂) put the number of deaths at more than double: 190[†]. Even in 33 months, great progress could be made on reducing this alarming number of deaths.

We feel the AQAP could be improved by:

- Making specific reference the Council's Climate Emergency declaration
- Doing more to encourage a modal shift away from motor vehicles and towards non-polluting means of transport – cycling and walking - for shorter journeys. This contradicts CWAC Chief Executive's Report "Cheshire West and Chester's Response to the Climate Emergency Declaration", which stated that:
 - the most impactful intervention is distance reduction, i.e. avoiding powered travel entirely
 - by 2025, a 17 per cent reduction in total travel demand will be required, alongside a 25 per cent reduction in car travel.
- Giving top priority to the speed of reduction of air pollution, given that people will die as a result of air pollution before the end of the AQAP.

Of the 11 measures selected for possible inclusion in the AQAP, only one mentions cycling (Measure 26) - and it is merely to improve cycle route signage. Signage alone will not make people feel safe enough to cycling.

Disappointingly, measure 26 says "*...cycling is unlikely to deliver tangible benefits in the life time of this Action Plan.*" We disagree strongly. Even though the lifetime of the AQAP is

short, moves could be made to make cycling in Chester safe, convenient and easy. It could become a normal thing to do rather than driving.

Many other cities in the UK and around the world have already made impressive changes to infrastructure and have altered travel behaviour to sustainable modes. Chester could do this too.

One of the measures which was excluded from the Air Quality Action Plan is anti-idling publicity and enforcement as it had already been approved through the CWaC Low Emission Strategy and is subject to implementation.

However our members regularly witness motorists in idling stationary vehicles at the kerbside and in car parks and our opinion is that a much more active programme of anti-idling publicity (Press releases, signage, posters and via social media) and enforcement (Measure 32) should be adopted immediately. This is particularly important outside our schools where young children can be impacted and where public transport vehicles are parked such as taxi ranks, Chester bus station and Chester railway station.



CWaC's current campaign which is not being publicised enough

Our full response is available at <https://www.chestercyclecityorg/air-quality-consultation/>