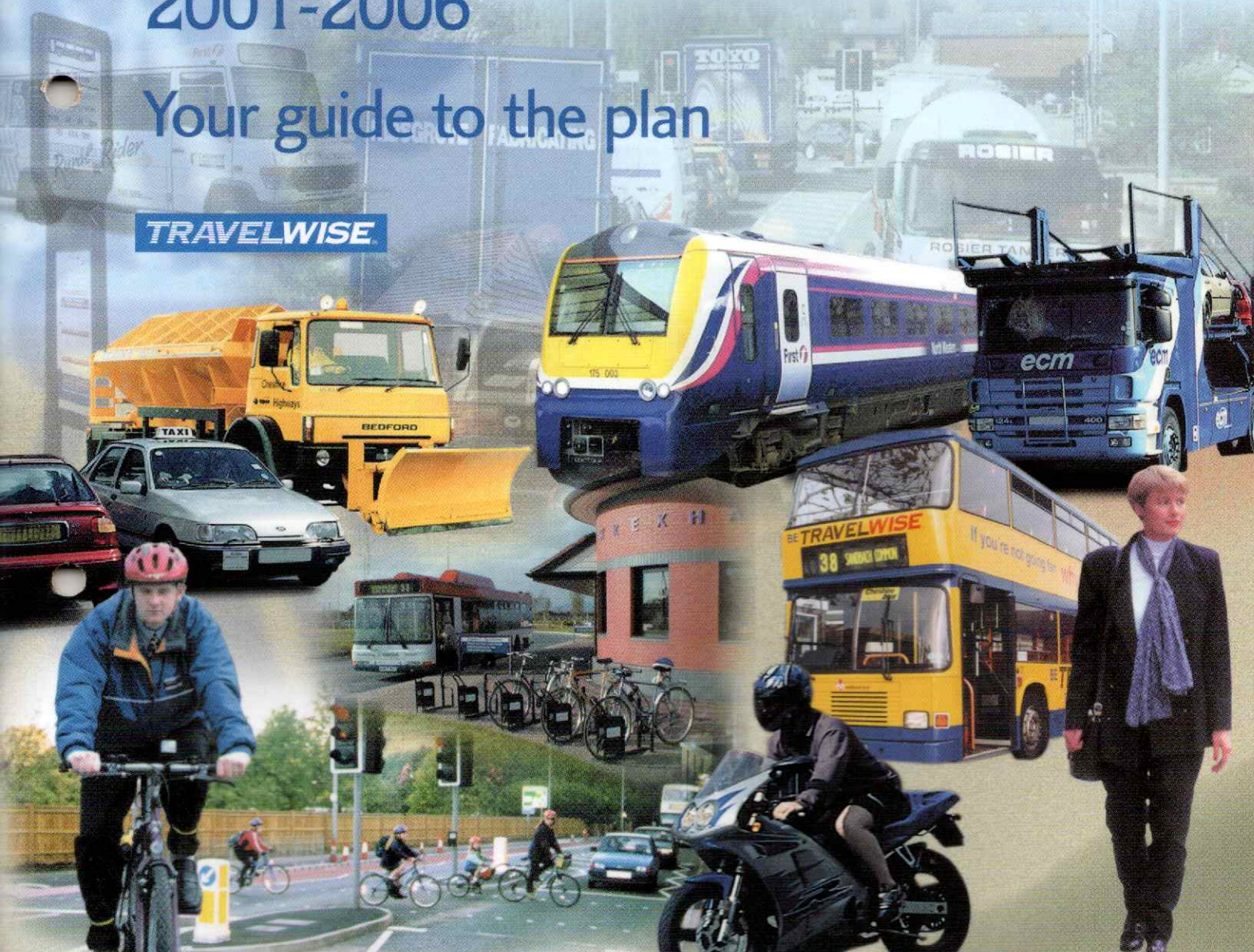


Cheshire's Local Transport Plan 2001-2006

Your guide to the plan

TRAVELWISE



local **solutions**
to our transport problems

Cheshire's Local Transport Plan

2001 - 2006

“We strongly support Cheshire County Council in all its efforts to promote a less car-dependent future for the county. We would like to congratulate members and officers alike for their commitment to a more sustainable future.”

“The draft LTP has made a significant advance in developing a strategy for the transport network in Cheshire.”

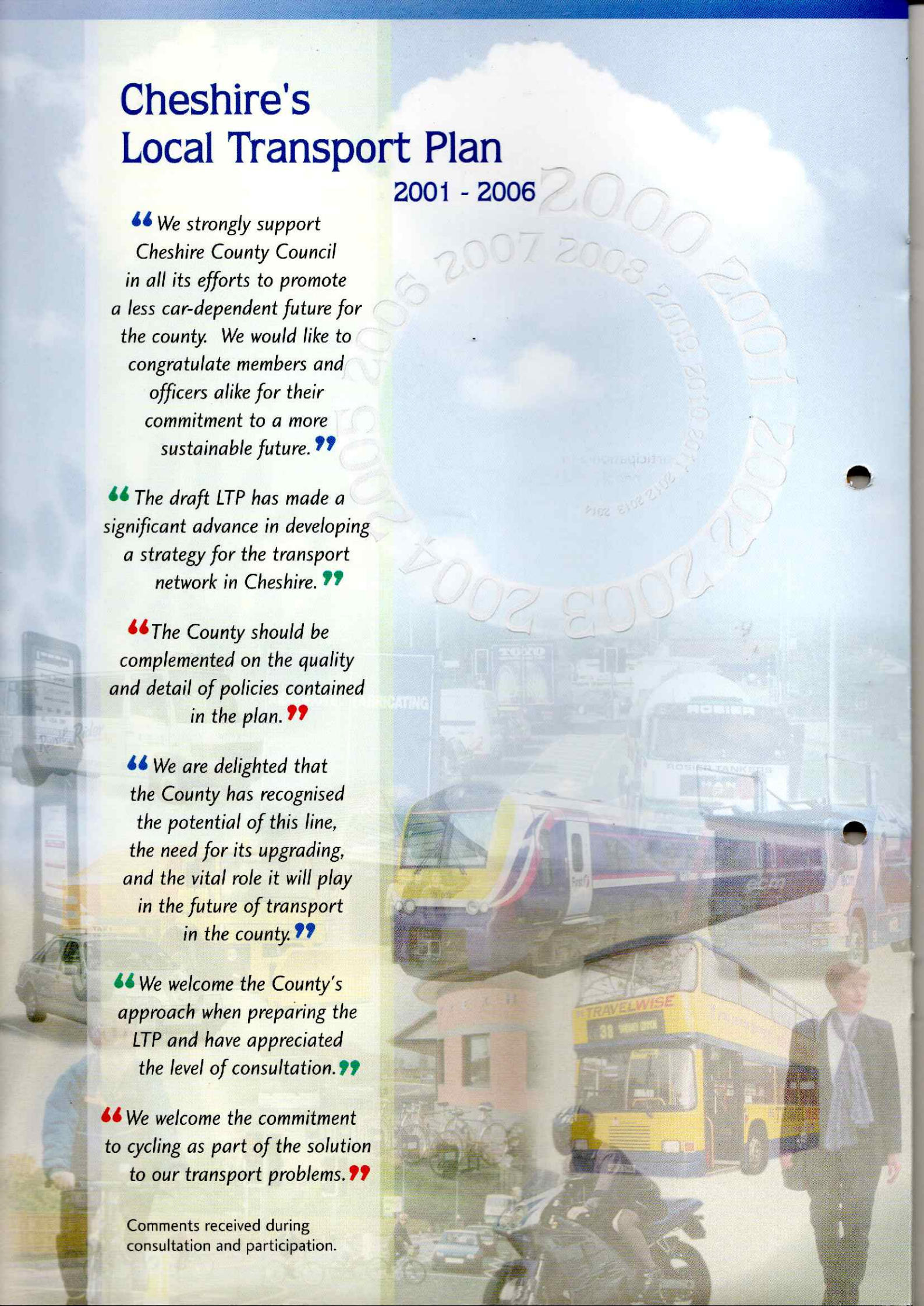
“The County should be complemented on the quality and detail of policies contained in the plan.”

“We are delighted that the County has recognised the potential of this line, the need for its upgrading, and the vital role it will play in the future of transport in the county.”

“We welcome the County's approach when preparing the LTP and have appreciated the level of consultation.”

“We welcome the commitment to cycling as part of the solution to our transport problems.”

Comments received during consultation and participation.



Introduction

In order to improve our transport network, and help overcome today's transport challenges, it is essential that we adopt a balanced and integrated approach to help meet our goals. This booklet summarises how we will achieve this as part of a five year action plan for Cheshire.

Our Local Transport Plan (LTP), published in July 2000, sets out how we will develop this new transport agenda. Its preparation has involved considerable partnership working and widespread participation and consultation with the people of Cheshire. This process has helped give us a clear direction and endorsement for the actions to be delivered over the next five years to respond to today's transport issues and concerns.

A clear set of priorities has emerged that must be addressed. These include the impact of increased traffic, measures to reduce the high level of road accidents in the County, the need to provide

and encourage the use of realistic alternatives to the car, demands for better public transport, the impact of transport on air quality and the requirement for maintenance of our roads to acceptable standards.

Within a County such as Cheshire, these issues can and do vary depending on location. Our proposals have been prepared involving a local input. The resultant Area Programmes allow flexibility in how solutions are prepared to deal with local problems on an area by area basis.

This is just a start. Our 10 year vision for transport in Cheshire aims to deliver an integrated, safer and more reliable transport network that will give people real choice in how they travel. Although this may sound ambitious, I am confident that Cheshire's Local Transport Plan provides the firm foundation essential to make this aim a reality.



David Lloyd-Griffiths

*Chairman, Cheshire County Council
Environment Committee*

The Key issues for Cheshire

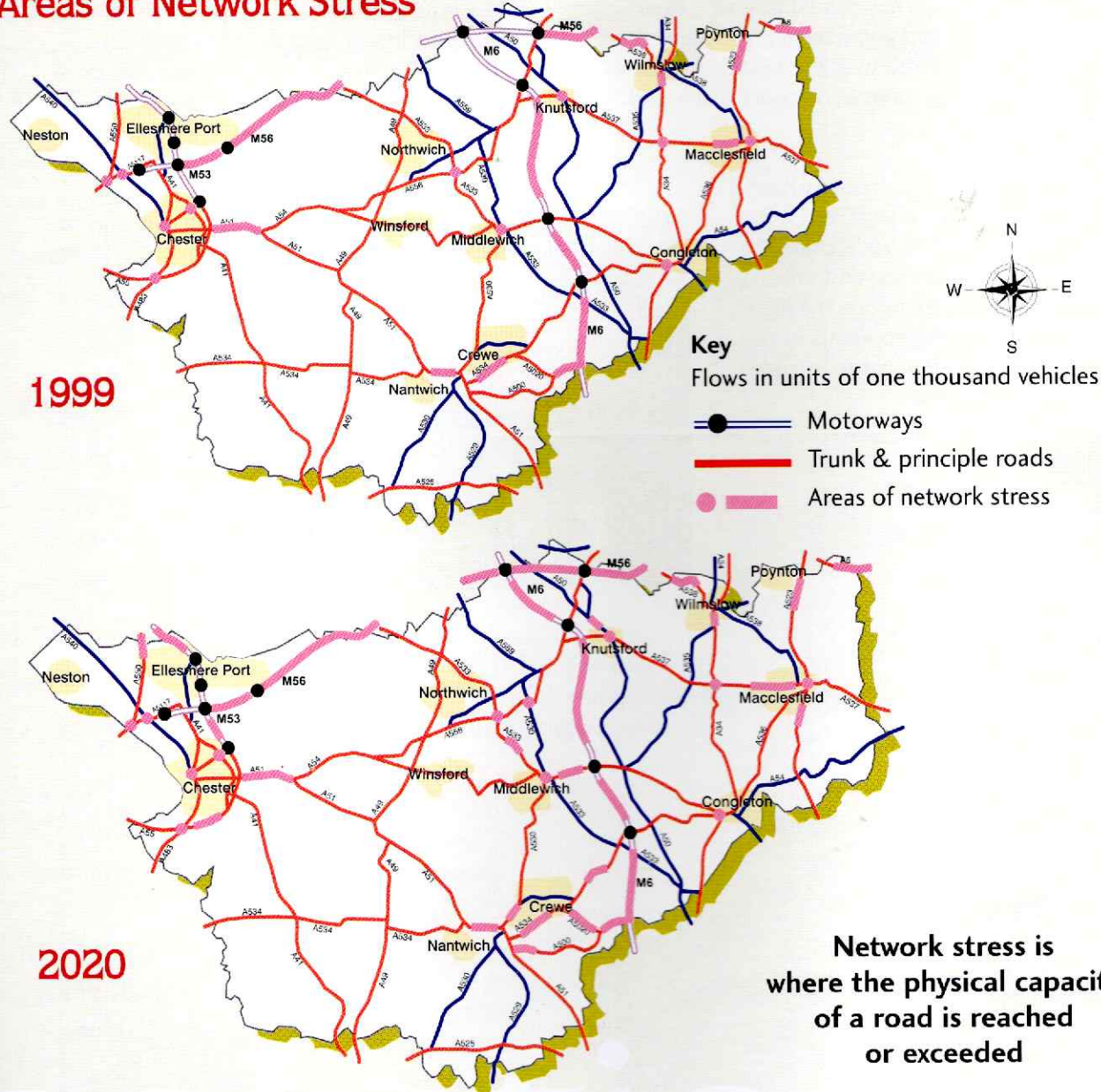
Cheshire is a rural county of mainly medium and small free-standing towns. It is also the "crossroads" of the North West with extensive motorway, trunk road and rail networks all accommodating large flows of both national and regional traffic. Transport patterns are also influenced by the nearby conurbations of Manchester, Merseyside and the Potteries. The County town, Chester, is a unique historic city which attracts millions of visitors each year.

Such diversity means that there is no single transport problem in Cheshire. Instead, our Local Transport Plan has been prepared to meet a wide range of transport issues facing the County.

These are:-

- The deteriorating condition of the road network and infrastructure.
- The high level of road accidents.
- The impact of increased traffic congestion.
- The need for better public transport.
- The need for wider travel choice.
- Opportunities to use improved transport to reduce disadvantage in both urban and rural areas.
- The impact of transport on health and air quality.

Areas of Network Stress



Public participation and consultation

An extensive programme of participation and consultation has been undertaken to help shape the development of our proposals.

This included public meetings held in all Districts. There have also been discussions with specialist interests such as transport operators, environmental organisations, the health sector,

businesses and those representing the interests of rural communities.

Summary booklets and questionnaires proved very successful in revealing public opinion. The use of focus groups also helped widen the consultation process to take into account the views of a very wide cross-section of the Cheshire community.

What people want from the Local Transport Plan

Participation and consultation exercises revealed a wide range of issues, concerns and suggestions. These have greatly assisted the development of the LTP. The key issues and our responses in the LTP are:-

Issues raised

- The need for a wider choice of alternatives to the private car.
- Concerns about the delivery of public transport, particularly buses.
- Road Safety concerns.
- Congestion issues in Cheshire's towns and villages, particularly Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley.
- Concern expressed by local residents regarding CDTs Phase One.
- Lack of knowledge of Local Government responsibilities for transport.
- Support for car parking reforms.
- Problems due to inappropriate traffic speed in rural areas.

Our response within the LTP

An area programme for each of Cheshire's six Districts which gives priority to investment in public transport, cycling and walking.

A range of proposals which include a programme of bus quality partnerships and the development of performance targets.

A comprehensive road safety strategy based on Government casualty reduction targets. Particular emphasis on the safety of children, through a range of education and training schemes and a Safer Routes to Schools' programme.

Construction of the A34 Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley bypass. Promotion of public/private partnerships for relief road proposals in Crewe and Middlewich.

Outcome dependent on results of Public Inquiry held in February 2000.

Circulation of the LTP and summary document, publication of an A-Z of Highway Services and information on the Council Website.

The County Council and the six District Councils who have responsibility for car parking working closely to develop an overall strategy.

Speed management proposals in the area programmes and road safety strategy.

What we aim to achieve

We intend to work with the Government and our other partners to achieve the following objectives:-

- ✓ To promote sustainable accessibility.
- ✓ To improve travel safety and security.
- ✓ To promote the integration of all forms of transport.
- ✓ To contribute to an efficient and sustainable economy.
- ✓ To protect and enhance the environment.

Achieving these objectives will contribute to the County Council's own core aim of helping the people of Cheshire to:-

- ✓ Learn and develop throughout their lives.
- ✓ Have jobs and a good standard of living.
- ✓ Be safe, stay healthy and get help when in need.
- ✓ Care for communities and the environment.

We will deliver this as part of an integrated strategy that responds to both strategic and local issues. It will involve:-

- ✓ **Policies to manage travel demand** such as encouraging people to use alternatives to the car, managing car parking and creating a more integrated transport system.
- ✓ **Measures to widen travel choice** including provision for pedestrians and cyclists, making more use of buses and railways and improved transport services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.
- ✓ **Proposals to enhance the quality and safety of the County's transport infrastructure** to improve and maintain Cheshire's overall transport network, including local schemes to improve traffic safety. This also involves working with partners to improve the rail network, airports, ports and waterways.

We acknowledge that some of the issues raised during consultation have not been given a target. This is because we must concentrate on those areas where it will be possible to review effectiveness within an agreed monitoring framework.

Our Targets and performance indicators

	Performance Indicator	Target
Traffic Growth	In Cheshire	Restrain growth to 15% between 1995 and 2011
	In Chester's urban area	Restrain growth to 7% between 1995 and 2011
	In other urban areas	Restrain growth to 15% between 1995 and 2011
	Public Transport	Double the total number of journeys
Journey to work	Percentage by cycle	Double to 10% between 1997 and 2011
	Percentage by public transport	Double to 14% between 1997 and 2011
	Percentage of firms with over 100 employees who have a Commuter plan	80% by 2011
Cycle usage	% of total journeys	Quadruple to 8% between 1997 and 2012
Provisions for disabled people	% crossings with facilities for disabled people	Increase from 50% in 1999 to 85% by 2006.
Journey to School	Number of schools with a School Travel Plan	50% by 2006 100% by 2011
Public Transport	Number of vehicle kilometres travelled by local bus services ("Best Value" Indicator)	Will be set when information on current usage is available.
	% of users satisfied with local Public Transport information ("Best Value" Indicator)	Will be set following a survey.
	% users satisfied with local bus services ("Best Value" Indicator)	Will be set following a survey.
Road Safety	Accident reduction per £1m invested in Local Safety Schemes.	55 accidents saved per year at these sites.
	Reduction in fatal & serious road casualties.	40% reduction by 2010 from 781 in 1998.
	Reduction in slight road casualty rate	10% reduction by 2010.
	Reduction in child fatal & serious road casualties.	50% reduction by 2010 from 85 in 1998.
Network Condition	% of principal road network with zero residual life ("Best Value" Indicator)	To be identified in the "Best Value" process.
	% of non-principal road network with zero residual life ("Best Value" Indicator)	To be identified in the "Best Value" process.
	% of dangerous carriageway and footway defects made safe in 24hrs ("Best Value" Indicator)	To be identified in the "Best Value" process.
	% of street lights not working as planned ("Best Value" Indicator)	Maintain level at less than 1%.

Improving Cheshire's strategic network

Targeted investment in a small number of major schemes is needed to remove traffic from sensitive areas, to increase sustainable transport choice or to provide access to development areas.

The Chester Deeside Transport System, subject to the findings of a Public Inquiry, would provide a guided busway along the redundant Mickle Trafford - Shotton railway line. It would link Park & Ride sites with Chester City Centre and complement the existing cycling and walking route.

A proposed Environmental Bypass for Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley will remove major traffic flows from two environmentally sensitive village centres on a key part of the County's road network.

There are also a number of opportunities to enhance the road network as part of private sector led development proposals.

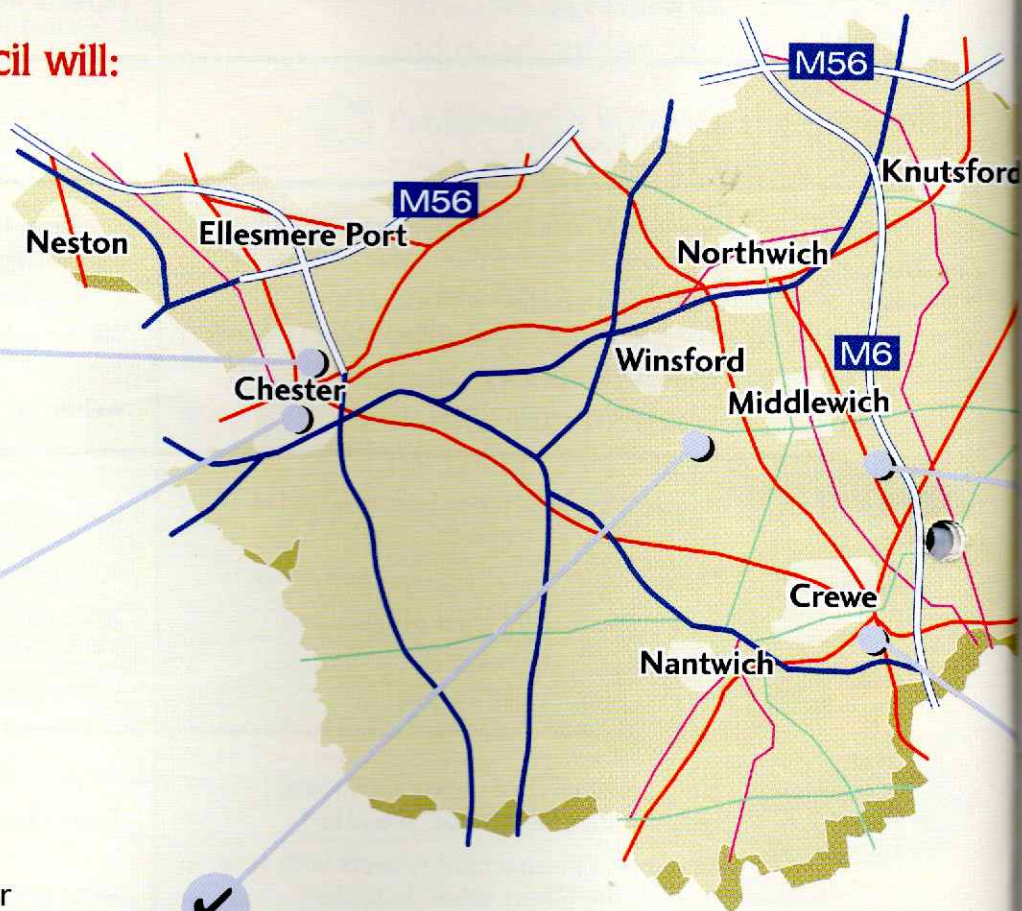
Re-opening the Crewe - Sandbach - Middlewich - Northwich railway line to passenger use will provide an important transport link in central Cheshire. It also offers the opportunity to fully exploit a new rail link to provide services to Manchester Airport.

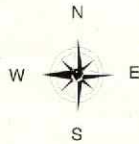
The County Council will:

✓
Make a bid for resources for the Chester Deeside Transport System Phase One.

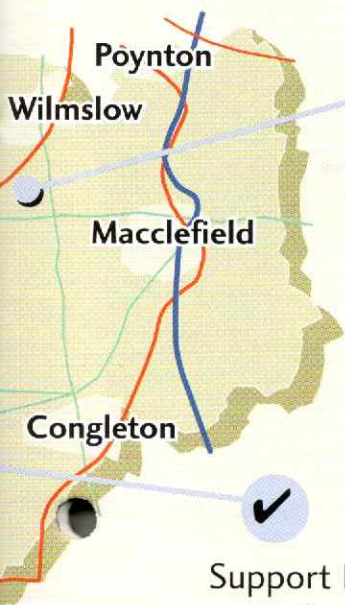
✓
Continue work to investigate the development of Chester Western Relief Road.

✓
Investigate ways of improving links between Winsford / Middlewich and the M6.





-  Motorways
-  Trunk Roads
-  Principal Roads
-  Other Strategic Routes
-  Railway Lines



Make a bid for resources for the Alderley Edge Environmental Bypass.

Support Railtrack's proposals to upgrade the Crewe - Middlewich - Northwich line for passenger use and a new rail link to Manchester Airport from the Mid-Cheshire line.

Seek partnerships with developers to bring forward the Middlewich Eastern Bypass, the Waggon and Horses junction improvement in Congleton and the A500 - A534 link in Crewe.

Our Area Programmes

Local solutions for local problems

An Area Programme has been prepared for each of Cheshire's six districts. These have been developed in partnership with District Councils and contain details about how we will deliver our Local Transport Plan strategy at a local level.

Because of the varying size and needs of Cheshire's towns a structured approach has been adopted:-

Traffic reduction targets are likely to be set for the **large and medium towns** of Chester, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield, Winsford, Ellesmere Port, Nantwich and Northwich. The emphasis will be on bus, cycling and traffic management measures. An assessment of the benefits and impacts of charging for workplace car parking will be made in Chester.

In **local centres** there will be a stress on walking, cycling and public transport for access to larger towns. Traffic reduction targets are unlikely to be practicable but policies would encourage provision and use of local facilities to reduce the need for journeys and promote social inclusion.

In **rural areas** traffic reduction targets are impracticable. The emphasis will be on overcoming social exclusion and reducing high vehicle speeds. Developing public transport and social car schemes will help provide access to essential services.

See page 20 for details of how to obtain your copy of the area programme.

Managing travel demand

Cheshire has higher than average car ownership and use. This has contributed to increased traffic congestion. Yet, there is considerable potential for reducing the number of car journeys and encouraging the use of alternatives to the car, particularly for shorter trips.

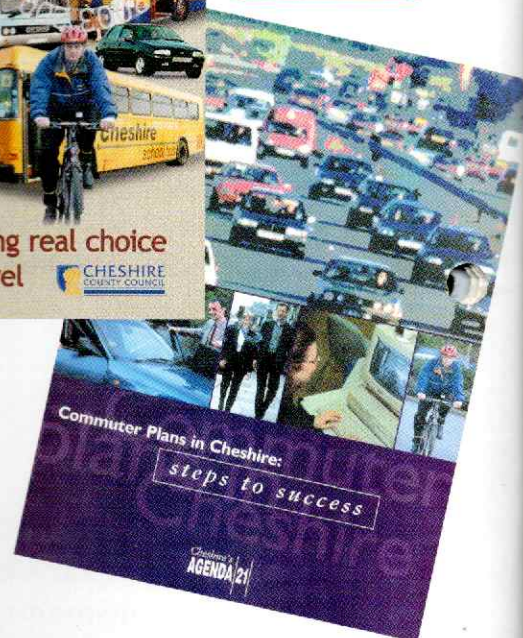
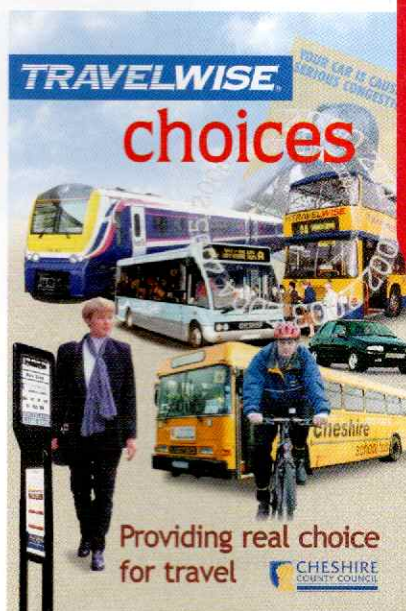
This requires a balance of incentives, such as investment in realistic alternatives to the car, and disincentives, such as parking controls, to help reduce overall levels of car use.

The County Council will:-

- Adopt the following road user hierarchy in the planning and development of our Local Transport Plan and Area Programmes:-

- 1 Walking
- 2 Cycling
- 3 Public transport
- 4 Motorcycles/scooters
- 5 Taxis
- 6 Delivery vehicles
- 7 Cars

- Continue to promote the TravelWise travel awareness campaign in Cheshire.
- Encourage organisations to introduce commuter travel plans making appropriate use of the planning process.
- Lead by example and develop our own County Council staff travel plan.
- Continue the countywide development of a Safer Routes to School programme.
- Develop parking management strategies appropriate to the size of the urban centres involved in partnership with District Councils.



Cheshire County Council is at the forefront of promoting TravelWise and Safer Routes to Schools initiatives to encourage people to think about appropriate means of travel.

- Give careful consideration to proposals to introduce a pilot workplace car park charging scheme in Chester. This is to provide additional funding for Local Transport Plan proposals in the City.
- Proceed with proposals for local government to take over responsibility for the management and collection of fines arising from illegal car parking from the Police Service.

Local Proposals include:-

- In partnership with Congleton Borough Council consultation on parking charges in Sandbach.
- Parking priority allocated to orange or blue badge holders, motorcyclists and cyclists in Crewe and Nantwich.
- Investigation of the benefits of Urban Traffic Control systems in Crewe, Macclesfield and Northwich.

Maintaining the County's Roads

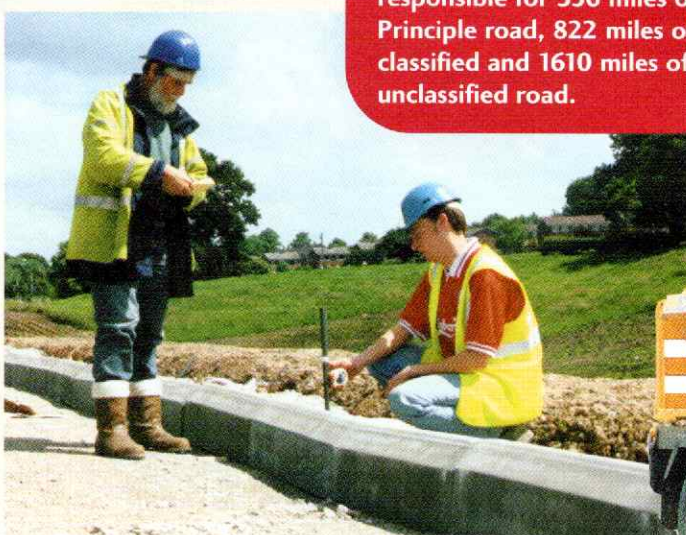
Over 90% of all passenger and freight movements are on Cheshire's highway network.

Due to past cuts in maintenance budgets and increasing flows of HGV traffic, the network has deteriorated. Considerable investment is required to tackle the backlog of road and bridge repairs. A significant increase in the level of funding for maintenance was provided by the Provisional Local Transport Plan for 2000/01. Future allocations at a similar level are needed to meet the Local Transport Plan's aspirations for a real improvement in the standard of the network.

The Motorway and trunk road network is currently the responsibility of the Highways Agency. The management of many trunk roads is set to be transferred to the County Council in our role as the local Highway Authority. This may well place new demands on resources for their maintenance.



Cheshire County Council is responsible for 336 miles of Principle road, 822 miles of classified and 1610 miles of unclassified road.



Cheshire's motorways, already subject to "network stress", will become increasingly overloaded. Government studies are underway to consider solutions to problems found on the M6, South East Manchester and the A550 in Deeside and the Shrewsbury to Chester route.

The County Council will:-

- Give high priority to the road maintenance programme to reverse the deterioration of the County's highway network.
- Continue its bridge inspection, strengthening and maintenance programme including a phased strategy to strengthen all Principal Road bridges to a capacity of 40 tonnes.
- Support the two high priority trunk road improvement schemes identified by the Highways Agency in Cheshire: the A41 No Man's Heath - Macefan bypass and the A500 Basford - Hough - Shavington bypass.
- Ensure that Regional Planning Guidance addresses the M56/A56 east - west traffic movements and will encourage the Highways Agency to work with the Strategic Rail Authority to develop a multi-modal solution.
- Work with the Highways Agency to ensure a smooth transition in the management of parts of the trunk road network.
- Review and assess options to improve Cheshire's network of unclassified roads including byways and bridleways.
- Undertake a feasibility study to develop a solution to address congestion problems in the Winnington Bridge area of Vale Royal.



Walking

Walking accounts for 25% of all journeys and 80% of all journeys less than one mile. Yet, even over such short distances, journeys are increasingly being made by car. This not only leads to more traffic congestion on Cheshire's roads, it may also lead to people exercising less as they substitute a journey by foot for one by car.

The Local Transport Plan recognises that pedestrian routes need to be safe, convenient and high quality. Links with local shops and services, recreation facilities and the workplace need to be fully accessible on foot. Safe pedestrian networks are fundamental to our Safer Routes to School programme. Improved standards for walking as a leisure activity are also important.

Highlighting the health benefits of walking and cycling, is part of the Cheshire Health Improvement Programme and Travelwise Campaign. Closer partnership working with colleagues in the Health Sector will be needed to help meet shared goals.

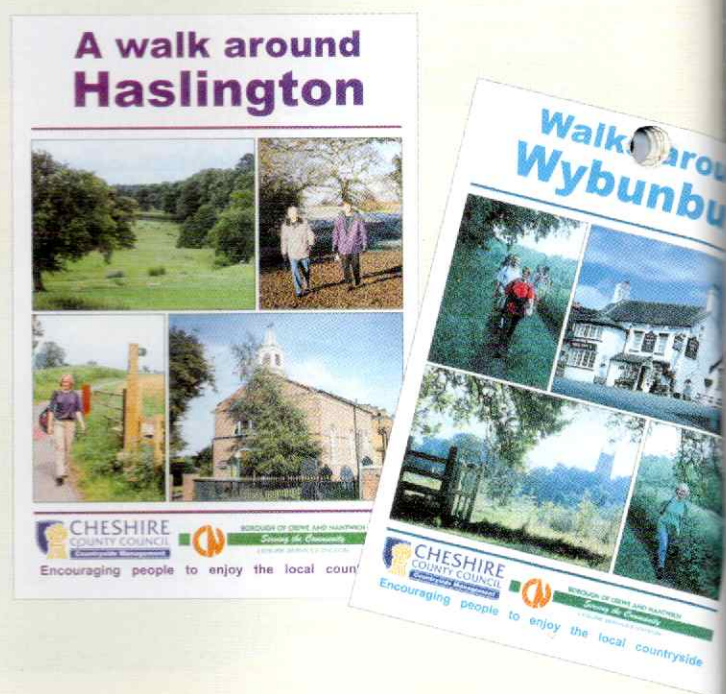
The County Council will:-

- Develop local walking strategies as part of Area Programmes.
- Appoint a dedicated Walking Officer to develop and co-ordinate a Countywide walking strategy.
- Ensure that design guides have better standards for pedestrians and improve pedestrian safety.
- Promote the development of footpath networks using canals and other "green corridors".
- Achieve Countryside Agency Standards for signing and provision of footpaths and other rights of way.
- Promote the advantages of walking as part of our TravelWise campaign.



Local proposals include:-

- Sandbach town centre pedestrian priority.
- Pedestrian priority measures in the Hungerford Road and Earle Street Corridor in Crewe.
- Pedestrian and cycle links on the A538 west of Wilmslow.
- Pedestrian safety improvements in rural areas of Vale Royal.



Cycling

In common with walking, cycling is an energy efficient, pollution free and healthy form of transport. It is an ideal alternative to the car especially for shorter trips and, because of this, it can help reduce traffic congestion.

Despite recent advances, particularly the opening of the Millennium Cycle Route, the Cheshire cycle network is still limited. Cyclists face daily risks sharing space with other road users and there are limited facilities for securing cycles at many destinations.

Providing a safer cycle network is an important part of our Local Transport Plan strategy. We are also keen to promote the benefits of safe cycling through our TravelWise campaign and as part of our Safer Routes to School programme.

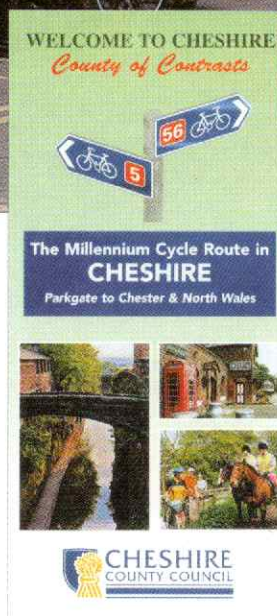
Comments received during consultation have indicated the need to develop a strategy for powered two wheelers (motorcycles and scooters) as well as for cyclists. We have established a motorcycle forum with representative groups to support this work.

The County Council will:-

- Develop local cycling networks as part of Area Programmes.
- Improve safe cycle parking in town centres and at local facilities.
- Make sure cycling facilities are provided for in new developments.
- Support the extension of the National Cycle Network.
- Promote leisure use of cycling and links between tourist attractions.
- Promote safe cycling through our TravelWise campaign.

Local proposals include:-

- Development of a cycle route between Alsager, Sandbach and Middlewich.
- Extension of urban cycle routes in Alsager and Middlewich.
- Implementation of the Cheshire cycling strategy routes on the A534 corridor in Crewe.
- Connections to the Millennium cycleway route in Ellesmere Port.
- Completion of Weaver Valley Cycle Way in Vale Royal.



i Cheshire County Council have already established 302 kilometres of dedicated cycleways in the County. 43 kilometres of this are part of the Millennium Cycleway.



Buses

Buses have a major role to play to help reduce traffic congestion. To achieve this, buses need to be made more attractive, frequent and reliable. Improved passenger comfort, stable fares, integration with other modes and readily available travel information are all essential to make buses more acceptable and attract new passengers.

The County Council will work in partnership with operators to provide a more reliable, frequent and accessible bus network in Cheshire. Our objective is to improve bus services to the level that they provide a real alternative to the car.

The County Council will:-

- Develop "Quality Partnerships" with bus operators to improve the quality and reliability of bus services.
- Introduce bus priority and traffic management measures to help buses avoid traffic delays.
- Ensure that new developments are served by public transport.
- Continue to support non-commercial, socially necessary bus services within available resources.
- Find flexible ways to meet rural transport needs such as taxi-buses and other demand responsive services.
- Promote the use of "cleaner", low emission fuels for buses.
- Give every bus stop in Cheshire easy-to-read bus service information.
- Expand the Cheshire Busline to operate 8am to 8pm seven days a week and cover all modes of public transport.
- Enable Internet users and enquirers at bus station kiosks to obtain details of journeys to any destination in the UK.
- Work towards a ten minute "turn up and go" frequency on main urban bus corridors.
- Provide a lit passenger shelter at all inbound stops in towns.



Local proposals include:-

- Bus priority measures in key corridors such as Hoole Road in Chester.
- A "Smart Card" electronic ticketing system in the Chester and Ellesmere Port areas.
- Traffic management measures to improve bus reliability in two key traffic corridors in Crewe: the A534 and the A532.
- A Quality Partnership to encourage bus use to the Cheshire Oaks development in Ellesmere Port and to Leighton Hospital in Crewe.
- Improved bus - rail interchange at Ellesmere Port and Northwich stations.
- Upgraded town services in Macclesfield and Northwich.
- New or improved bus terminals in Crewe, Macclesfield, Northwich and Winsford town centres.



Cheshire County Council subsidises 25% of the bus services in the county through its Cheshire Bus service. It also has staffed information points at all bus stations.



Passenger Rail Services

Cheshire has an extensive rail network. Trains provide a quick and efficient means of travel especially for travelling to nearby conurbations as well as connections to the rest of the country.

The County Council recognises the benefits of a modern railway network. We are pressing the Shadow Strategic Rail Authority to specify higher standards of service provision and station facilities when rail franchises come up for renewal.

The County Council will:-

- Support Railtrack's proposals for a new rail route linking the Mid-Cheshire line to Manchester Airport, upgrading the Sandbach – Northwich line for passenger services and the re-opening of Middlewich Station.
- Press for more frequent services and upgraded lines in Cheshire.
- Support station improvements to bring them up to a minimum standard.
- Work in partnership with Railtrack and other parties to invest in interchange facilities at Cheshire stations.
- Work to simplify rail/bus ticketing to allow passengers to purchase one ticket for their journey.

BUS SERVICES LINKING THE STATION WITH THE TOWN HALL & BUS EXCHANGE AREA
INITIATED BY CHESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
FREE BUS TRAVEL WITH A VALID RAIL TICKET!

CITY-RAIL link
FAST FREQUENT AND FREE!

CITY-RAIL link B

CITY-RAIL LINK A - Times from the Station	
1600	1610
Then every 12 minutes until 1810	Then every 6 minutes until 1810
1810	1820
Then every 12 minutes until 1910	Then every 6 minutes until 1910

CITY-RAIL LINK B - Times from the Station	
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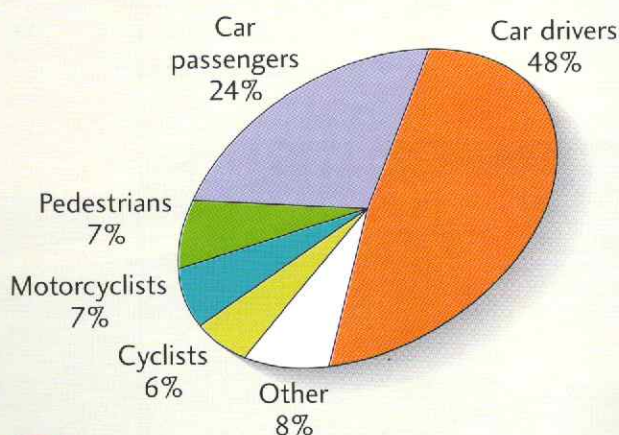
Road Safety

Cheshire's Road Safety Strategy seeks to enhance the safety of all road users regardless of mode of transport. This is particularly important with the Local Transport Plan's emphasis on encouraging the use of more sustainable forms of transport. This may result in more use of higher risk modes.

Our approach builds from the Government's road safety strategy: "Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone". The majority of accidents involve cars and car drivers. Any strategy needs to work on this to target reducing vehicle speed and taking steps to reduce "bad" driving while at the same time protecting vulnerable road users. We will take this forward in partnership with Government, the police and road user groups.

The Journey to School – Travel safety is fundamental to our Safer Routes to Schools programme. The growing number of children being ferried to school by car is a major cause of traffic congestion. The school run now accounts for 20% of all rush hour traffic. There is also concern about the long-term effects of car dependency on children's health and development.

Proportion of Casualties in each road user group in Cheshire (1999)



Working in partnership with schools, the County Council's approach is to make the environment safer so that the travel risks of walking and cycling are minimised. This will be taken forward as part of the Area Programmes.

The County Council will:-

- Introduce a speed management strategy involving measures such as traffic calming, home zones, quiet lanes and 20-mph zones.
- Continue cycling education and training programmes in schools and develop "self-help" materials.
- Continue the countywide development of a Safer Routes to Schools programme.
- Invest in local safety schemes and road maintenance to make our roads safer.



Local proposals include:-

- Additional controlled crossing points in Chester.
- Traffic calming schemes in many towns including Middlewich, Alsager and Sandbach.
- Extend Safer routes to school initiatives to build on the Dane Bank Avenue Area project in Crewe.
- Traffic calming zones including 20 mph zones in Pooltown Road and Princes Road areas of Ellesmere Port.
- Safer Routes to Schools projects in Disley, Knutsford, Poynton and Macclesfield.

Access and travel choice

The County Council is committed to providing travel choice for all. However, in some locations, or for certain groups in the community, conventional transport cannot meet needs.

Consideration must always be given to the specific needs of the mobility impaired to ensure that such groups have equal access to the benefits of a modern transport system.



Cheshire County Council receives £612,000 a year in rural bus grant for new bus services in rural areas. They have won £632,000 of Rural Bus Challenge funding to help develop demand responsive transport.

- Ensure that buses provided under County Council contracts meet minimum access standards.
- Make information available on the accessibility of footpaths and, where possible, improve access for all.
- Continue the current financial support to rural bus services.
- Work effectively with the Cheshire Rural Transport Partnership.
- Find ways of reducing the impact of traffic in rural areas through speed management, the development of 'quiet lanes' networks and, where appropriate, traffic calming.
- Develop a "Greenways Strategy" to provide a better network for recreational horse riders and cyclists.

Local proposals include:-

- Shopmobility access and associated measures in Wilmslow, Knutsford and Handforth.
- Provision of low floor buses on Park & Ride, CDTs and other services in Chester.
- Development of schemes such as the Women's Safe Transport Scheme in Chester and Ellesmere Port.
- A rural village demonstration project in Audlem.
- A pilot "quiet lanes" initiative in the Peckforton/Burwardsley area.
- Speed management measures for the Delamere Forest area.
- Development of new rural bus services in partnership with AstraZeneca and Manchester Airport and the rural bus services grant in Macclesfield Borough.
- Links with South Pennines Integrated Transportation study to restrain traffic movements through the Peak Park.



A quarter of our population live in rural areas. Car use is high but those without cars have poorer access to jobs, services and other activities because there are also fewer bus services. At the same time the countryside is a major destination for leisure traffic. This, and increasing through traffic, put a strain on the rural road network.



The County Council will:-

- Work with partners towards a fully integrated network of flexible public transport services.
- Ensure that improvements to the pedestrian network meet approved standards to benefit the needs of all users.
- Support the introduction of Shopmobility in all major town centres.
- Extend Dial-a-Ride and community transport facilities.
- Work with bus operators to introduce low floor vehicles and accessible bus stops.

Freight

Cheshire is at the heart of nationally important road and rail links. The main through roads, the M6 and M56, are becoming overloaded. The rail network has some potential to carry more freight than it does at present.

The introduction of the 40 tonne weight limit for juggernauts has meant that all bridges in Cheshire have had to be re-assessed.

The Local Transport Plan sets out a Freight Strategy for Cheshire. Its development will be an ongoing process involving dialogue with the freight industry and associated bodies.

The County Council will:-

- Carry out bridge strengthening, initially on principal roads, consistent with environmental objectives.
- Support improvements to the rail network to enhance rail freight capability.
- Press for extra capacity for freight on the West Coast Main Line.
- Support other proposals such as the Central Railway freight line and links from the North West through the Channel Tunnel.
- Explore the potential for developing freight partnerships in Cheshire.
- Continue to negotiate local routing agreements with companies generating large numbers of heavy vehicle movements.



Local proposals include:-

- Elworth HGV access and management scheme.
- Holmes Chapel goods vehicle management.
- Signing strategy to assign HGVs away from A534 corridor in Crewe.
- Support for the development of freight facilities where they will further the use of rail or water freight such as at Basford in Crewe and Ince, near Ellesmere Port.

Airports, ports and waterways

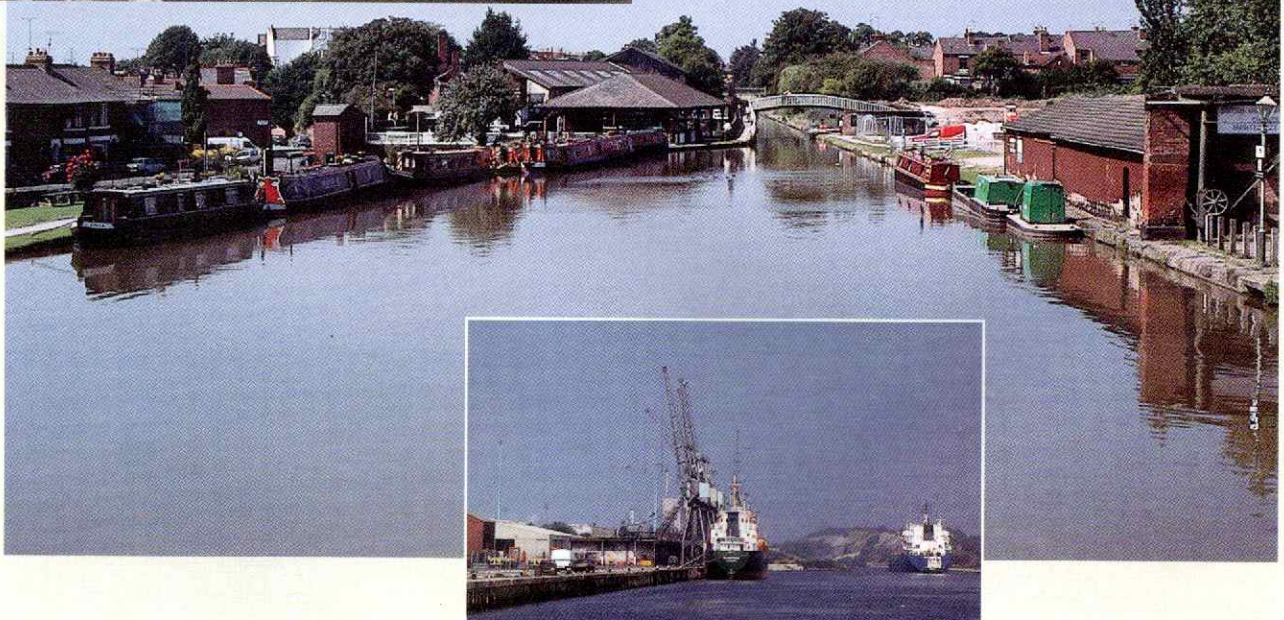
Manchester Airport, Britain's third largest, lies partly within Cheshire. It currently handles more than 18 million passengers a year and this will increase to 28 million with the increased capacity created by the opening of the second runway. Liverpool Airport is a growing departure point for budget and charter flights but is poorly served by public transport.

The County Council actively supports work to improve access to both airports by a range of modes.

The County has two navigable commercial waterways and an extensive network of canals. The County possesses two port facilities at Stanlow and Ellesmere Port. The County Council is keen to seek opportunities to maximise the use of waterways for both freight and leisure purposes.

The County Council will:-

- Continue to promote the Western rail link from Manchester Airport to the Chester - Northwich - Altrincham line.
- Press for the Government's multi modal studies for South East Manchester and the Midlands/ North West Conurbation to propose improved access to Manchester Airport and relief of nearby towns.
- Support the re-development of Crewe Station to provide road/rail interchange for Manchester Airport passengers.
- Encourage Manchester Airport to set a high target for non-car journeys in its business plan for up to 2015.
- Encourage Liverpool Airport to develop public transport links.
- Develop projects which make use of canal towpaths for cyclists and walkers
- Support the use and retention of commercial waterways.

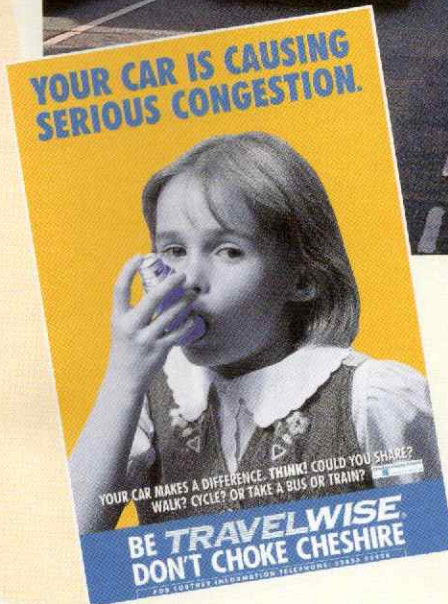
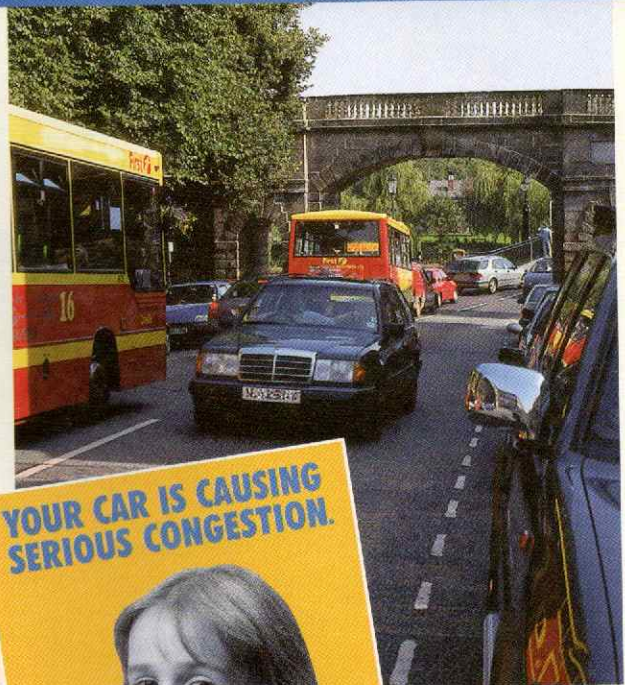


Air quality

There is concern about poor air quality and pollution from transport especially if levels increase in line with forecast traffic growth. Emission levels in Cheshire broadly match the national average although they are higher for levels of oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide. It is suggested that this may be linked to the high proportions of motorway traffic in the County.

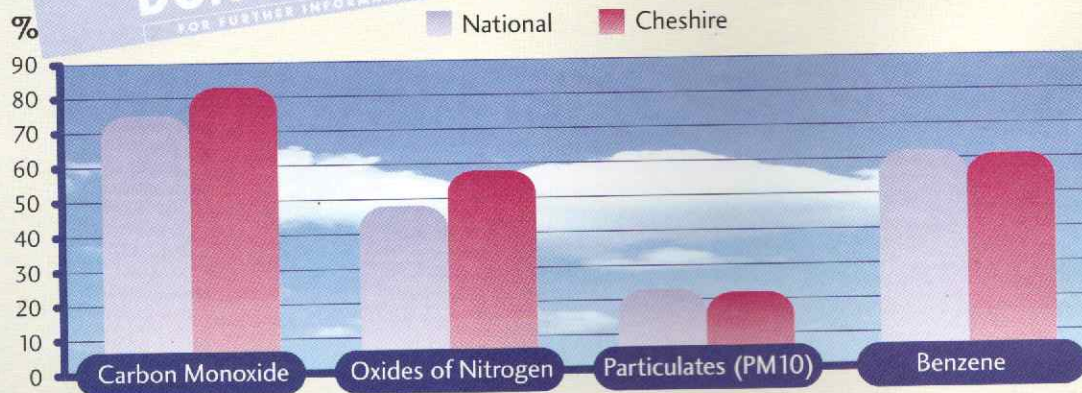
The National Air Quality Strategy sets out health based objectives for reducing the 8 main air pollutants, in most cases by 2005. The role of the County Council, along with key partners, is acknowledged to ensure that objectives are met. The impact of traffic growth leading to increased emissions of "greenhouse" gases is also of consequence.

A comprehensive programme of emission monitoring is being undertaken countywide in partnership with District Councils.



The County Council will:-

- Work to meet the objectives set out in the National Air Quality Strategy.
- Undertake an ongoing monitoring programme to identify pollution "hotspots".
- Develop an emissions database and run a predictive air quality model.
- Work with key partners to tackle designated air quality management areas.



Contribution of Road Traffic to total emissions by pollutants

Funding the Local Transport Plan

The Local Transport Plan is more than a 5 year action plan. It is a bid, made to Government, setting out the level of resources we consider necessary to deliver our strategy. Our 5 year bid is set out below. The Government's response will be made in December 2000.



Figures in £ 000	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Schemes costing more than £5 million (for major schemes such as Alderley Edge bypass and CDTs)	7160	7655	7760	8350	5100
Schemes costing less than £5 million (Area programmes and local improvement schemes)	9000	8850	8970	9175	10250
Maintenance of Principal Highways	7550	7750	8130	8575	8000
Maintenance, assessment and strengthening of bridges	3700	3500	3500	3250	3250
TOTAL	27410	27755	28360	29350	26600

Supplementary funding to support the development of our transport proposals will also be derived from the County Council's own revenue expenditure over the next 5 years. Levels of such expenditure are determined each year as part of the County Council's annual budgeting process. For 2000/01, the County Council's Highways Maintenance budget is £14 million. A further £22 million secures the provision of supported local bus services, school transport, Social Services transport plus Dial a Ride and Shopmobility operations.

A considerable level of private sector investment in transport schemes is also expected over the life of the LTP. This will include a significant level of expenditure by bus companies to provide new vehicles, Railtrack's multi-million pound upgrade of the West Coast Main Line and Train operating companies upgrading rolling stock. Further investment will be provided by Highways Agency improvement schemes to the County's Motorway and Trunk Road Network.

To find out more.....

For copies of Area Programmes

Cheshire County Council
(Local Transport Plan)
Room 264
County Hall
Chester CH1 1SF

Tel 08457 603456 (all calls at local rate)

Fax 01244 602454

e-mail webmaster@cheshire.gov.uk

For copies of the full Plan

Copies of the full Plan are available from the above address at a cost of £25 to Cheshire residents and £35 to non-residents and commercial organisations.

Cheques should be made payable to "Cheshire County Council".

Reference copies can be seen in all Cheshire libraries.

The LTP can also be viewed and downloaded from the County Council website at

www.cheshire.gov.uk/ltp/home.htm

For all passenger travel and timetable information

Travel Line Cheshire

- Chester 01244 602666
- Crewe 01270 505350
- Northwich 01606 815050
- Wilmslow 01625 534850

Travel Line Cheshire lines are open 8.00am to 8.00pm 7 days a week excluding Christmas Day and Boxing Day.