

Proposal for Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council

Policy Position Statement: Protecting Safe Access to the Millennium Greenway

1. Background and Statutory Context

The Millennium Greenway is a critical strategic sustainable transport asset serving Mickle Trafford, Guilden Sutton, and surrounding communities. As a vital segment of the **National Cycle Network (Route 45/56)**, it provides a traffic-free corridor linking local communities to Chester, the Wirral, and North Wales.

The Greenway directly supports the statutory objectives of the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** and the **Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan** by encouraging active travel, reducing car dependency, and improving public health.

However, community access to the Greenway from both Mickle Trafford and Guilden Sutton relies heavily upon local rural networks—particularly **Station Lane** and its connecting routes. These pinch points possess severe, documented constraints:

- Complete absence of dedicated, segregated cycling infrastructure.
- Substandard, fragmented, or entirely absent pedestrian footways.
- Narrow, rural carriageways with blind bends and limited passing capacity.
- Conflicting road use between agricultural vehicles, HGVs, commuter traffic, and vulnerable road users.
- High-risk conditions for less confident cyclists, children, and pedestrians.

The Parish Council notes with concern that recent major planning applications and windfall development proposals across the area threaten to significantly increase vehicular movements on these specific access lanes. **The Council asserts that the integrity of a traffic-free active travel asset is fundamentally dependent upon users being able to reach it safely.**

2. Strategic Planning Alignment

To ensure this Position Statement carries weight as a material consideration, it operates in strict alignment with the following higher-tier planning policies:

- **NPPF Paragraph 114 & 116:** Demands that developments ensure "safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users" and that "appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be—or have been—taken up."
- **NPPF Paragraph 115:** Explicitly states development should be prevented or refused on highways grounds if the residual cumulative impacts on the road network are severe, or if **"the development would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety."**
- **CWAC Local Plan (Part One) Policy STRAT 10 (Transport and Accessibility):** Requires development to mitigate transport impacts, protect the environment, and improve safety for vulnerable road users.

- **CWAC Local Plan (Part Two) Policy DM 40 (Development and Transport):** Explicitly states that development must provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists, and must not impair the safety or efficiency of the surrounding highway network.

3. Special Circumstances & Evidence Base

Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council considers that the presence of the Millennium Greenway creates a **unique spatial constraint and special circumstance** when assessing the highway impact of development proposals.

Any intensification of vehicular traffic on Station Lane and connecting access corridors does not constitute a standard "rural road impact"; rather, it directly degrades a strategically designated active travel corridor. Incremental increases in traffic numbers will result in a severe cumulative impact on highway safety for vulnerable users attempting to access the National Cycle Network.

4. Formal Resolution

Mickle Trafford and District Parish Council **resolves to adopt this Policy Position Statement** and determines that:

*"The Millennium Greenway is a strategic sustainable transport corridor. The protection, maintenance, and improvement of safe, unhindered pedestrian and cycle access to it from the settled areas of the parish is a **material planning consideration** in the determination of local planning applications.*

*Accordingly, in its capacity as a statutory consultee, the Parish Council will **formally object** to any residential, commercial, or agricultural development proposal likely to increase traffic volumes or HGV movements on roads used to access the Greenway, unless the applicant's Transport Assessment explicitly demonstrates through robust evidence that:*

(a) Vulnerable User Safety: *Safe, convenient, and attractive pedestrian and cycle access to the Greenway is preserved or measurably improved in line with LTN 1/20 (Cycle Infrastructure Design) standards;*

(b) Active Travel Impact Assessment: *A dedicated Walking, Cycling, and Horse-riding Assessment and Review (WCHAR) has been conducted to quantify the specific impact of increased vehicular conflict on non-motorised users of the access lanes;*

(c) Proportional Mitigation: *Developer contributions (via Section 106 or CIL) are formally secured to deliver physical highway mitigation—such as speed reduction measures, footway extensions, or active travel priority schemes—on the affected access routes; and*

(d) Preservation of Sustainability: *The development does not undermine or actively discourage the community's modal shift towards sustainable transport and safe active travel.*

Where an applicant fails to satisfy these criteria, the Parish Council will request that Cheshire

*West and Chester Council **refuse planning permission** on the grounds of unacceptable impacts on highway safety and non-compliance with NPPF Paragraph 115 and CWAC Local Plan Policies STRAT 10 and DM 40."*

5. Implementation and Communication Strategy

Upon adoption, the Clerk is instructed to:

- **Submit** this formal Position Statement to the Head of Planning at Cheshire West and Chester Council to be held on file as the Parish Council's standing policy framework for local allocations.
- **Append** this resolution text to every future Parish Council consultee response submitted on the CWAC Planning Portal for applications impacting the area.
- **Engage** Guilden Sutton Parish Council to seek the adoption of a mirrored, joint policy statement, creating a unified cross-parish protection corridor.
- **Distribute** copies to the CWAC Ward Councillors, the local Member of Parliament, Sustrans, and the Chester Cycling Campaign to secure wider political and advocacy backing.