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Introduction

Methodology

Between 14th July and 14th September 2015, Cheshire East Council consulted residents, cyclists, and other stakeholders, on their recently drafted Cycling Strategy. The aim was to gain feedback on the latest draft of the strategy, to help shape the final version of it.

The latest draft of the Cycling Strategy (http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/highways_and_roads/cycling_in_cheshire_east/consultation-on-the-cycling-strategy-for-cheshire-east.aspx) was made available to anyone that requested it, and those who wished to could either send their comments about the strategy to the Council via email, or by letter.

Alternatively, respondents could complete a survey about the strategy, with online and paper versions of the survey being made available.

The consultation was promoted on the Council’s webpages, through a social media campaign on the Council’s main social media platforms, and most notably via emails sent out to a wide range of stakeholders.

Number of responses

10 people submitted a consultation response via email – These full responses can be found in section 3 of this report.

857 people completed the consultation survey, with 91% (776) completing the survey online, and 9% (81) completing a paper version of the survey. A summary of responses to this survey can be found in sections 1 and 2 of this report.

Survey respondent characteristics

Survey respondents were not an accurate reflection of Cheshire East residents as a whole. Survey respondents were more likely to be male (66% survey Vs 49% Cheshire East), and
were more likely to be aged between 35 and 64 (73% survey Vs 50% Cheshire East), than Cheshire East residents as a whole.

This suggests that cyclists are more likely to be male, and aged between 35 and 64, and therefore had more interest in the survey. It also means that survey results cannot be treated as representative of the whole Cheshire East population.

Survey respondents were fairly evenly spread from across Cheshire East, with some answering the survey who lived in Cheshire West and Chester – See the map overleaf.
Section 1: Survey closed question analysis

Chapter 1 – Frequency of cycling

Overall, 91% of survey respondents had cycled at least once in the last 12 months, with 9% never having done so. Survey respondents were far more likely to cycle as compared to the whole Cheshire East population – in Cheshire East only around 30% of residents actually cycle\(^1\) (compared to 91% in the survey).

The most popular reason for cycling was “for leisure / health purposes”, with 64% of respondents cycling for this reason at least weekly.

Thereafter, the most popular reasons for cycling were more practical – “to visit local places / people”, “to go to the shops” and “to go to work” were the most common reasons for cycling (between 30% and 36% of respondents did these things at least weekly).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the last 12 months, how frequently have you cycled for/to each of the following?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For leisure / health purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To visit local people / places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the pub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect to public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To school / college</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number answering the questions between 655 and 856

Females cycled less frequently than males overall, with 57% of female respondents cycling once a week compared to 79% of male respondents.

\(^1\) Source: Cheshire East Council’s citizens’ panel (called Influence Cheshire East), Summer 2013 survey
Chapter 2 – The Cycling Strategy vision

The vision of Cheshire East Council’s Cycling Strategy is “to enable more people to cycle in safety, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys”.

A very large majority of respondents (89%) agree that this vision is good, with just 5% disagreeing.

Cyclists (91%) were significantly more likely to agree the vision is good compared to non-cyclists (66%). Almost 1 in 5 non-cyclists answering the survey (18%) disagreed that the vision is good.
Chapter 3 – Barriers to cycling

Respondents highlighted two main barriers to cycling more often:

- Worries about safety around motor traffic (28% of total number of selections)
- The lack of dedicated cycle lanes (21% of total number of selections).

Just 6% of respondents said that “nothing prevents me from cycling more”, which suggests that respondents would cycle more often than they do now if the main barriers to cycling were addressed.

Cyclists were more likely to answer “I worry about having my bike stolen” (9% cyclists vs 3% non-cyclists) as a reason for not cycling more, whereas non-cyclists were more likely to answer “I don’t feel fit enough” (1% cyclists Vs 11% non-cyclists).
Chapter 4 – Improving cycle networks

When asked what the priority for improving the roads for cyclists should be, respondents again identified the need for dedicated cycle lanes to separate them from motor traffic, whether these were to be shared with pedestrians or not.

29% of respondents stated they wanted “off-road cycle routes which can be shared with pedestrians”, and 19% stated they wanted “cycle lanes painting on roads”. Just 9% stated they wanted speed limits reducing, and just 7% stated they wanted cyclists and pedestrians separated at all times.

Cyclists were more likely to select “paint cycle lanes on the roads” (20% cyclists Vs 12% non-cyclists), and “give priority to cyclists at junctions” (13% cyclists Vs 1% non-cyclists).

Non-cyclists were more likely to select “widen pavements so that cyclists and pedestrians can share the pavement” (14% cyclists Vs 23% non-cyclists), and “ensure that cyclists and pedestrians are separated at all times” (6% cyclists Vs 15% non-cyclists).

This suggests non-cyclists would be more likely to cycle on pavements.
Respondents also identified improving links between towns and villages, including improving the rural network, as their highest priority for improving the cycle network (31%), as well as improving links between homes and local centres (21%).

Which 2 of the following do you think should be the Council’s priorities for improving the cycle network for cyclists?

- Improve links between towns and villages and improve the rural network: 31%
- Improve the local network and create links between homes and local centres: 21%
- Improve the cycling network for children cycling to school: 17%
- Install cycle parking facilities in town centres and at key destinations around the borough (e.g. hospitals, bus stations): 11%
- Manage and maintain the existing network: 11%
- Improve leisure cycling areas such as BMX track and Mountain Bike centres: 5%
- Other: 3%

Number answering the question = 849
Chapter 5 – Encouraging and promoting cycling

Results for which type of journey should be increased most were fairly mixed, with the top 3 answer options being separated by just 2%. It was generally felt that adult cycling trips should be increased ahead of child and young adult cycling trips, and that practical trips, such as to work or school, should be increased ahead of leisure/everyday cycling trips.

The top 4 types of journey that respondents felt should be increased most were:

- Adults cycling to work
- Children and young adults cycling to school
- Adult leisure / health cycling
- Adults using their cycles on everyday cycling trips.

Cyclists were more likely to select practical trips such as “adults cycling to work” (21% cyclists Vs 15% non-cyclists), “children and young adults cycling to school” (19% cyclists Vs 12% non-cyclists) and “adults on everyday cycling trips” (16% cyclists Vs 1% non-cyclists).

Non-cyclists were more likely to select leisure cycling trips such as “adult leisure/health cycling” (19% cyclists Vs 33% non-cyclists) and “children/young adults leisure/health cycling”
(7% cyclists Vs 23% non-cyclists) – Had there been more non-cyclists answering the survey than cyclists, results to this question would have looked very different.

In terms of letting cyclists know where to cycle, respondents felt that direction road signs for cyclists would be best, followed by an app on a smartphone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which 2 of the following do you think are the best ways to let people know more about where to cycle?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direction road signs for cyclists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An app on a smart phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web site information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A paper map designed specifically to show cycle routes in an area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A GPS system e.g. Sat Nav for bicycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordnance survey paper map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please write in)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number answering the question = 834
To promote cycling, respondents felt that the Council should work with local cycling groups who promote local cycle events and bike rides.

Which 2 of the following do you think are the best ways for the Council and its partners to carry out cycle promotion?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with local cycling groups who promote local cycle events and bike rides</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support and promote ‘Bikeability’ (cycle training) for young children</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support local cycling events</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support national events at a local level, such as, ‘Bike Week’</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host ‘Bikeability’ (cycle training) events for adults</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support major cycling events which attract elite cyclists</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please write in)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number answering the question = 828

Cyclists were more likely to think the Council should promote cycling by “working with cycling groups” (29% cyclists Vs 22% non-cyclists), by “supporting local cycling events” (17% cyclists Vs 10% non-cyclists) and by “supporting national cycle events” (12% cyclists Vs 6% non-cyclists).

Non-cyclists were more likely to think the Council should promote cycling by hosting ‘bikeability’ (cycle training) for young children (18% cyclists Vs 29% non-cyclists), and for adults (11% cyclists Vs 18% non-cyclists).
Section 2: Survey open question analysis

Chapter 1 – Improving the strategy itself

Throughout the survey respondents made a number of comments about the draft Cycling Strategy itself. These began with some respondents stating that they felt the strategy was good, and that it should be applauded (11 comments).

However, others were concerned that the strategy would not have enough impact, as they felt it was not an issue high on the agenda of the Council, that it isn’t at the forefront of Council strategy, and that “without the political will and funding nothing will change”. They felt that budget constraints mean that significant changes would not be implemented, that “adequate budget” is a percentage of road spending that is achieved in places like the Netherlands, that the Council has “not allocated anywhere near enough money (to it)”, and therefore (the Council) will simply be “rearranging the deckchairs on the titanic” (10 comments).

Others suggested practical improvements that could be made to the strategy. Some felt the strategy is too long, wordy, verbose, uses too many buzz words, that it needs an executive summary, and that the Council should “cut it by 80%” (13 comments).

Whilst some felt it was too long, others felt that “it lacks detail”, that it is “vague”, lacks “clear direction on design guidelines”, needs some “specific strategy”, and that the Council should “delete all parts (of it) that are generic”. They felt that “the strategy is welcome, but that it lacks sufficient detail about how significant change will be brought about”, and suggested that “there should be specific and hard targets for the Council to meet which should be in the medium and long term so that progress can be measured and demonstrated”, and that “there don’t seem to be any measurable goals, clear ideas or key performance indicators that could be monitored”. One respondent simply wanted to know whether the cycle networks were going to be extended: “It sounds good in theory but are the actual cycle networks going to be extended? This isn't clear!”; whilst another listed several specific goals that could be in the strategy, including:
• All principal towns will have secure covered cycle storage at health, sports and shopping centres by 2020
• All sports facilities will have marked cycle lanes from main local residential areas
• All cycle paths will have no potholes (redefine for cycling as the current 50mm is too large)
• All main towns will have a local cycle route to access the main cycle paths e.g. Middlewood Way etc.
• All school children will have access to a cycle through a free cycle loan scheme
• A cycle ranger will be employed to lead cycle rides in Cheshire parks
• (Train operators) will have capacity for at least 10 bikes per train journey
• There will be a business rate discount for all business promoting or supporting the cycle economy.

Along the same theme, others commented that “you don't need to have such an all-encompassing strategy. Keep it simple. Remember ‘from small acorns (mighty oaks do grow)” (13 comments).

In terms of adding detail to the strategy, some felt that incorporating guidelines, such as LTN 02/08 (Local Transport Note on Cycle Infrastructure Design https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-208) would be advantageous, they felt that “this document should be front and centre” of the strategy (5 comments).

Some also felt that the strategy should incorporate best practice examples from around Europe, with Finland, Holland and Cambridge being specifically mentioned, as these places had been addressing these issues for many years (8 comments).

There were a number of comments made about spelling and grammar in the strategy:

• The document must be written in Plain English (2 comments)
• In bibliography 15 the word “transportation” is spelt wrong. Use UK spell check, not US (1 comment)
• Please research the difference between the words, "advanced" and "advance" (1 comments)
• What is that phrase "Cycle Proofing"? It is not defined in the document, and every planner / developer will interpret this in their own way. The final Strategy document must have the term "Cycle Proofing" removed. Other options that make the intention clear would be "Cycle Enabling" or "Cycle Facilitating" (2 comments).

There were also some comments about the format of the document:

• The maps are too small to be legible, and need to be made bigger (1 comment)
• The document is not printable in black and white (1 comment).

Finally, there were some others comments made about the strategy, including:

• The strategy focuses on Crewe and Nantwich too much (1 comment)
• The strategy should target those in areas lagging behind Crewe in terms of % of people cycling (e.g. Wilmslow) (1 comment)
• The strategy needs to be well publicised (1 comment)
• The strategy is not ambitious enough (1 comment)
• The vision is too long, suggest "Let’s go cycling" instead (1 comment).
Chapter 2 – High level improvements to cycling

As well as comments about the Cycling Strategy document itself, respondents also listed improvements that could be made at a “high level” to help improve cycling in the borough.

Cycling as part of planning, development and Council strategies

Some felt it essential to consider cycling needs at the planning stage of any new development, or during any road improvements – “Incorporate cycle paths in all new roads and when road improvements occur” and “Cycling issues need to be considered within proposed developments before planning applications are submitted”.

It was also felt that creating cycling infrastructure could be achieved during redevelopment of Crewe and Macclesfield – “Cheshire East needs to make a statement and be bold, redevelopment of Crewe/Macclesfield is an ideal opportunity”, that it should be incorporated into transport plans – “the strategy needs to create a solid case for cycling to be included within any overall transport plan”, as well as all other strategies “Cycling is not a standalone issue so a lot of what is in the cycling strategy also needs to be incorporated into other Council strategies”.

Respondents also felt planners had a role to play – “What about making developers incorporate cycle ways etc. in their developments – not being an optional extra” and that the Council should “send town planners and councillors out on bikes” to get a feel for the scale of the changes required (17 comments).

Cycling as a transport priority

Some felt that cycling and walking should become main transport priorities, and that the Council should “promote the idea that walking and cycling are the primary goals for local transportation in the area, with less pandering to the ‘motor lobby’”. They felt that “cycling should be encouraged over cars to a) reduce carbon emissions, and b) to get people healthier and more active” (4 comments).
Some also felt that cycling to work and school, or the more functional types of journey, should be the priority for journeys by cycle. They felt this would reduce traffic at peak times, and that at the moment, not enough people are using the cycles to make these types of journey. One respondent also “strongly resents the term 'serious cyclists' for people who go out for the occasional sport and would not even consider regular utility cycling” and felt that “the elderly lady whose only form of transport to the shops by cycle is far more serious” (9 comments).

**Educating young people**

Respondents also felt it is essential to educate young people and children about cycling, to “sell the idea (of cycling), especially to young people, until it becomes part of local culture, just like in the Netherlands” and “concentrate on children and young adults, with high quality cycle skills training to give the confidence to cycle safely” (9 comments).

**Promoting cycling**

Some felt that “(the Council) should do more to attract elite cycle sport events e.g. Tour of Britain. This does more to raise the profile of cycling than any other measure, and also showcases the county to the world via TV exposure.” (8 comments).

**Right of way**

Finally, some felt that bicycles should have priority over cars, as is the case in the Netherlands. They suggested referring to the “Manual for Streets” for further information (see here: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/manual-for-streets)) as produced by the UK government (5 comments).
Chapter 3 – Practical improvements to cycling

As well as making comments about the strategy itself, and about high level improvements to cycling, respondents also made many comments about what the specific problems with cycling in the borough are now, and about how cycling could be improved.

Barriers to cycling

Respondents highlighted the following barriers to cycling more:

- **Safety** – They felt that cycling on roads is just too dangerous, due to lorries/HGVs and buses especially, and wanted safer routes for both adults and children. They felt that rural journeys were especially dangerous, due to a lack of footpaths, traffic speed and carriageway width (20 comments)

- **Car drivers** – Respondents also highlighted the attitude and behaviour of car drivers to cyclists as a problem, and felt that driver education should feature more in the strategy – “Recognise driver behaviour as a threat to a cycle friendly culture ... If there was a single thing you had to address, it is the constant, persistent, bad and dangerous behaviour of drivers. I cannot make a single trip by bicycle anywhere without some fear for my safety and I am a competent and experienced cyclist. The biggest threat to people cycling more is fear of injury from drivers” (28 comments)

- **Speed limits** – Further to perceived bad driver behaviour, respondents highlighted speed limits as a barrier to cycling, feeling they were too high, or that drivers tended to ignore them (8 comments)

- **Road surfaces** – Respondents felt road surfaces put them off cycling, particularly potholes. One respondent felt that “the consequences (of poor road surfaces) are many, including: 1) Cyclists swerving to avoid potholes etc. which may result in an accident 2) Cyclists not able or willing to stay safely at the left of the carriageway 3) Certain routes being avoided altogether 4) Increases incidence of punctures/damage which eventually discourages future cycling (22 comments).
Cycle paths

Away from barriers to cycling, respondents made many comments about cycle paths/lanes.

In the first instance, and ideally, some respondents wanted cycle paths separate to, or away from, roads and pedestrians – “We need clear dedicated space to cycle safely” and “Ideally, there would be room to have a separate lane for cyclists on each side of major roads separated from both pedestrians and road traffic - a dream, I realise”. The main reason for this was because of the danger posed by traffic (37 comments).

On the other hand, a small number of respondents felt that cyclists shouldn’t be segregated from cars: “There is an over reliance on developing separate cycle networks. CE already has an extensive road network, and this should top the hierarchy of cycle routes – “Separate cycle paths should be a last resort not a first one” (3 comments).

Respondents were also clear that, as well as having more cycle lanes separated from traffic and pedestrians, they needed to link up better with each other, and with key locations. Respondents wanted the Council to identify key sites, and link them up, such as town centres, libraries, schools, leisure centres, railway stations, hospitals and shopping centres. The felt that cycle lanes are currently “disjointed and dangerous”, and felt they often end too suddenly, go up and down pavements, and stop at points where traffic gets busy causing danger for cyclists. They also felt cycle paths crossed junctions badly (20 comments).

They also felt that the maintenance of cycle paths was important, as some felt current ones are not swept, vandalised, and because hedges are not cut back (6 comments).

Some suggested that utilising canal tow paths as much as possible would be a good way to extend the amount of cycle paths in the borough. They felt they were all safe from traffic and it will open up a much under used asset (4 comments).

Finally, there were a number of other comments related to cycle paths given by 1 or 2 respondents, including:

- Sometimes cyclists don't use cycle paths, and use the road instead, which defeats the object of having cycle paths (2 comments)
• Making cycle paths attractive would make non-cyclists want to start cycling (1 comment)
• Having more white painted lines for cycle paths on roads is a simple way to separate cars from cyclists where the road is wide enough, cyclists feel safer in the cycle lane no matter how wide (1 comment)
• Cycle paths need to be cross Council borders (1 comment)
• Cycle lanes need to be well designed (1 comment)
• Having space at the front at traffic lights are a bad idea, as they can put people in danger if the lights turn green and they haven’t got there (1 comment).

Pavements

There was conflicting arguments expressed by some respondents about pavements and cycling. Some felt that cyclists shouldn’t be able to use them, as it scares pedestrians (3 comments), whereas others felt that not being able to use pavements puts people off cycling, and that overall, whether cyclists could use pavements should be clarified.

Better cycle facilities, including at work

A number of respondents stated that they felt better cycling facilities were needed generally, including cycle parks/storage (4 comments).

This included some respondents stating that they felt cycle facilities at work (including cycle parking and showers) could be improved to encourage more people to cycle to work. This included at Cheshire East Council, with one respondent stating “we can start with making the council cycle friendly (which it currently isn’t)” (4 comments).

Some suggested that the Council “must encourage business to adopt and support cycling to / from work, and also schools”, with another suggesting there should be awards for cycle friendly businesses, schools colleges etc. (2 comments).

Public transport

Respondents also felt that cycling could be integrated with public transport better, mainly saying that too often there is little space on trains for cycles (5 comments).
Open access land and bridleways

A few respondents suggested that it would be a good idea to consider the open land access laws, such as they have in Scotland, as this would immediately triple or quadruple the available cycle network. They also suggested looking for "easy wins" by giving existing bridleways an upgraded all-weather surface – “There is an enormous network out there already (Figure 3.2 Existing Public Rights of Way Network) just waiting to be tapped into, but all too often public rights of way these days are overlooked, underfunded and overgrown!” (4 comments).
Section 3: Consultation email responses

Section 3 contains all full written responses received as part of the Cycle Strategy consultation. Cheshire East Council has either responded to, or will respond to in due course, each separate response.

Response from LC, 04/08/2015

I have read the draft report which I think is excellent, but why is there no mention of Holmes Chapel which is a fast growing area with lots of development, surely some of the new building developers can integrate something into their plans or provide money to help the borough develop your plans?

Many thanks, LC, Holmes Chapel.

Response from PT, 27/07/2015

I have read the draft strategy and found it a worthwhile document; however much of it is extremely aspirational and therefore long-term and expensive.

I think the single most-effective action would be to implement the "twenty's plenty" initiative in all towns in Cheshire East. This has had excellent results in Scotland.

PT, Wilmslow.

Response from PS, 08/09/2015

All this money spent creating cycle lane in and around Wilmslow and they are almost unusable due to lack of maintenance.

They would benefit from a sweep once in a while clearing them of stones and other debris enabling cyclists to use them fully rather than travelling on the line very close to traffic.

Response from KB, 11/09/2015

To whom it may concern,
As I am involved in the management of the Tatton Estate, I am writing to express our concern that we feel that not enough is done by Cheshire East Council to prevent cyclists using footpaths as cut-through routes across the estate. As an estate, we are trying to mitigate the extent of this and it would be greatly appreciated if Cheshire East council could support us more with this, as currently the support is somewhat lacking.

I would appreciate it if you could send your response and all future correspondence regarding this matter to LB who is cc’d in this email.

**Response from MR, 01/09/2015**

Dear Sirs, In response to your consultation on the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy, I respond on behalf of the CLA (Country Land and Business Association) with the following points:

**Landowner consultation**

There appears to be no mention of land owners who may be affected by proposals, or of how these key stakeholders will be engaged with, to:

- Upgrade existing footpaths to Bridleways or Cycleways
- Upgrade the surface of existing routes to make them more suitable or attractive to cyclists
- Undertake any Section 26 Creation Orders for new rights of way.

It is important that were proposals will affect landowners, that these owners are engaged right from the outset to ensure that their views are listen to and any negative impacts suitably mitigated against at the initial stages. It is important to consult with the landowners prior to taking any scheme to the public.

**Funding**

The document states under Opportunities and Threats for Project Delivery that there are:

Opportunities from:

- Private Developments (CIL / S106)
• Partnership with Department for Transport through the proposed Cycling Delivery Plan
• Potential for new Government funding initiatives
• Neighbourhood Plans
• Develop SMART targets.

Threats from:

• Limited central government funding
• Reducing Local Authority funding.

This would imply that with limited and reduced local and national government funding streams, greater demand will be placed on the likes of S106 agreements and CIL to deliver projects. Given the level of house prices, it seems unreasonable to expect the purchasers of new houses to be financing yet more infrastructure.

Yours faithfully, MR, Staffordshire.

Response from VA, 14/09/2015

Thank you for the opportunity of commenting on the above strategy and delivery plan. I think the strategy has all the elements that one would expect to see with the exception of the provision of cycles at a reasonable price. Many places combine this with re-cycling and creation of jobs or volunteering opportunities.

Two main points and a suggestion:

A sense of what is a priority cannot be ascertained. All is important. My experience is that not all will be delivered so what is most important?

I think the targets need interim measures of progress. E.g successful development of cycling routes connected to new housing development etc. we don't want to get to the end of the planning period and discover that none of the steps that will influence the end point targets are in place. My suggestion is to pay some attention to the opportunity and risk related to the new road linking disley to the airport.
Response from TN, 18/08/2015 – On behalf of Peak District National Park Authority

Dear Sirs

Thank you for providing the Peak District National Park Authority with the opportunity to comment on the Cheshire East Draft Cycling Strategy. As you may be aware, the Peak District National Park Authority with partners has been fortunate enough to gain significant grant funding from Cycling England and the DfT over recent years; a partnership approach has been the key element to this success.

We have also worked with partners, including from Cheshire East Council to formulate the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy and Action Plan, which was adopted in October 2014 – see link below:

http://www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/looking-after/strategies-and-policies/cycle-strategy

There are very strong synergies between the Cheshire East Draft Cycling Strategy and the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy, which offers opportunities for joint working to deliver greater benefits.

If you have any queries about any of the points raised in this response, then please contact me.

Kind regards, TN.

Dear Sirs

Re: Cheshire East’s Draft Cycling Strategy

Thank you for providing the Peak District National Park Authority with the opportunity to comment on Cheshire East’s Draft Cycling Strategy. As you will be aware, approximately six percent of the area of the National Park lies within Cheshire East, with this area proving a
popular destination for visitors. Officers of the National Park Authority have liaised with those of Cheshire East Council and others in relation to cycling over recent years. In 2013, this resulted in a successful bid to the DfT’s Linking Communities fund for cycling in National Parks. Whilst more recently, a partnership approach led to the production of the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy and Action Plan in 2014.

We are pleased to see that Cheshire East Council is also taking a partnership approach to delivering a strategy for increasing cycling in the borough, with this commitment embedded in the first paragraph of the document.

The Vision and objectives of the Strategy are good and well aligned with those of the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy, which should mean that the two are complimentary to each other.

Paragraph 3.6 makes reference to part of the borough being in the National Park and goes on to state that it is better suited to mountain bikes and off-road trails. In many ways, this is selling the offer short, the Cat & Fiddle route and other road routes in this part of the borough are associated with challenging road riding, and could be promoted as such. The Tour de France and the forthcoming Tour of Britain have and will promote challenging road routes including hill climbs to both residents and visitors to the area. This offers a valuable opportunity to draw in staying visitors to towns like Macclesfield and Congleton, who can then enjoy challenging road riding in and around the Peak District. This approach also offers opportunities to draw in sport cycling events, which in turn contributes to the local economy, whilst promoting cycling to a wider audience. This approach, not only draws in cyclists themselves but a wide range of spectators and commercial opportunities. A good example of this is the three day Eroica Britannia festival held in Bakewell during 2014 and 2015.

Within the Strategy, you refer to the Cheshire Cat Sportive as being a key way of promoting cycling within the area. The event’s use in 2015 of roads within the National Park highlights their attractiveness for road riding. The National Park Authority is supportive of well organised events of this nature.
Under the SWOT analysis within the Strategy, reference is made to an opportunity to provide access to tourist attractions for cyclists, with Tatton Park being named as an example. It is important to note that perhaps the busiest tourist destination is the National Park, and enabling cycle friendly access, combined with good marketing, could bring a wide range of benefits, including growth in the tourism economy. The principles and requirements outlined for rural leisure routes within Table 5.1 are applicable to across the whole of the borough, including that part which lies within the National Park.

We welcome the fact that the Peak District National Park Authority is referred to within the Strategy as a key stakeholder, along with neighbouring local authorities. Recent experience has demonstrated that collaborative working with partners to deliver cycle routes and associated infrastructure makes best use of limited financial resources, whilst achieving great results. In the spirit of this commitment to partnership working, we would be grateful if you could make reference to the Wider Peak District Cycle Strategy within the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy.

I hope that these comments are useful to you in finalising the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy, if you have any queries about any of the points raised, then please contact me.

Yours faithfully, TN.

Response from AR, 14/09/2015

Further to my responses to the Draft Cycling Strategy survey, I wish to set down my responses to the draft document in a little more detail.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate the team on a thorough, well-informed and encouraging document. Inevitably, my comments will major on the omissions and weaknesses, but I wish you could see my copy, with the number of paragraphs marked with a large tick.

Secondly, to myself. I am a cyclist though not a very frequent one. I commute and ride for leisure and have been known to tour. I attended most of the Cycling Strategy Seminar meetings. I am involved in drawing up the Neighbourhood Plan for Holmes Chapel and have just completed a long report on cycling in the village and what needs to be done to
encourage utility cycling, very much along the lines proposed by the Strategy. It has given me an insight into the difficulties and limitations of the process, not to mention the long hours required.

1. My reading of the document is that the Council will draw up the strategic network, 'which shows where links can be created BETWEEN the communities of Cheshire East', but local groups will create the Town Plans to plan networks on a more local level. This is good, but where does it leave villages? Do village Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) count as town plans for the purposes of the Strategy? Not all will want to create a Neighbourhood Plan and may not have the manpower to do so. Even in a village the size of Holmes Chapel (6000 residents), there are only about three of us involved in this kind of work. I foresee that the Council may have to do the donkey work and consult with local residents in such cases.

I have restricted my work to within the parish boundary -- the limit of the NP. And HC is large enough to make that a worthwhile exercise as it is a compact place where all journeys within that boundary are excellent candidates for cycling. But it is far from the whole picture. When setting off to work or for a leisure ride, one leaves the boundary in a minute or two. HC is surrounded by the satellite villages of Cranage, Brereton and Goostrey, all within a five-mile round trip, and without safe routes to HC which is their main service provider. Cranage, one mile away, sends children to one of the primary schools, but there is no safe cycle route: just the A50. For the secondary school, the catchment area extends more widely still: Cranage, Allostock, Plumley, Lower Peover, Over Peover, Blackden Heath, Chelford, Ollerton, Twemlow Green, and Brereton Green. The furthest bike journey would be 13 km from Ollerton.

The NP is powerless to make any difference to those journeys as they cross into other parishes. To the south and east especially, the parish boundary hugs the settlement line so that even new developments that are really an extension of HC fall within a different PC's jurisdiction. We are not, in other words, totally masters of our own fate as a village, even within the limitations of the NP process in general. Any improvement to cycle routes or plan becomes a matter of liaison and co-operation, which as you can imagine is both daunting and difficult. Relationships between neighbouring PCs are not necessarily good, and there is
no synchronisation. For example, Brereton has already submitted their NP, while we are still
drawing ours up.

My point is that Cheshire East may need to be a lot more hands-on than is currently
envisaged, and may need to create frameworks in which things can happen. This may
necessitate developing plans at different levels: a very local one in the parish, then a
broader one for the immediate area (e.g. shopping trips to the local service centre) and
wider still for school journeys, shopping trips to town etc. (And to complicate matters
further, some of those trips cross county boundaries too. I sometimes cycle to Northwich to
shop, for instance.) You would need a group of people drawn from all the affected areas,
which may be difficult if volunteer numbers are low. This would create an overlapping, but
co-ordinated, set of plans. Would each of them have to be adopted by all the PCs/Town
Councils?

The point was made at one of the Seminars that much of the literature surrounding cycle
planning is centred on urban areas, but CE is very largely rural. This poses different
challenges and we need to do something new here. It is the organisation of the whole
process that will be key.

Note that plans will need to be continually revised and improved, and adapt to changing
circumstances. This needs to be planned for from the start.

That is my main point. I will now briefly mention other things. If any of these comments lie
outside the remit of the Strategy, please consider them for your future planning.

2. § 6.4 -- 'Infrastructural measures ... not visible to drivers from parallel roads'. Suggest
adding a note that this can be counteracted by signage on the main road.

3. § 6.6 -- you mention ASLs. I realise this was just to clarify a point but I wouldn't want ASLs
to be confused with good cycle infrastructure. They can be darned dangerous.

4. § 5.27 reference to routes designed 'to the higher standard'. I don't think it was meant to
imply that some cycle routes may be designed to a poorer standard than others, but I fear it
may be read like that. Routes should always be designed to an appropriate standard for the
traffic they carry. If a route is a mountain bike trail, it should be designed to a good standard for a mountain bike trail. A secondary cycle route in a town should be designed to the same standard as a primary route, but reflecting the lower traffic level (so it may be narrower, for example).

5. Section 9 Targets

The document bemoans (rightly) the lack of baseline data, but proposes two targets: to double the number of cycle stages by 2025 and increase leisure cycling 3-5 times a week by 10% by 2026. Both are approximately ten year targets. (Why are they different?) While I agree that targets must be achievable and momentum may be slow to build in the early years, they are not ones destined to deliver the cycling revolution of which Mr Cameron speaks or bring levels to approaching the best in either the UK or the Netherlands. You don't quote the current figure for stages, but if we assume 2-3%, then increasing to 4 or 6% is hardly a great achievement. But if it is nearer 10% in, say, Crewe, achieving 20% would be something to be proud of. Increasing the leisure cycling of 3-5 times a week, given in table 3.2 as 4.00% + 5.6%, i.e. 9.6%, 10% increase only takes us to 10.56% and is probably within the error margin of the statistics. All in all, these targets fail to recognise that we need a sea change in transport use because of the health and environmental issues now assailing us, and I would urge you to adopt some absolute targets rather than proportional ones, e.g. 15% of all stages to be by bike by 2025.

6. Policies. One 'quick win' would be to adopt 20 mph as the default for residential areas, and 40 mph for rural roads.

7. § 7.9 etc. Don't underestimate the need for a sea change in Planner's minds either. While I am sure they keep themselves up to date with the literature and the Council has a training plan, as cyclists we see a lot of infrastructure that fails to cut the mustard. The response to a cyclist's death last year south of Handforth was to NARROW the cycle lanes -- on a road with a 40 mph limit where lanes are not appropriate anyway, and most cyclists use the pavement, ignoring the lanes; there was the Hind Heath Lane débâcle; and the response to a complaint about motorcycles on the Hind Heath Lane bridge was to suggest installing a gate or chicane of bollards across the cycle path. Theses attitudes need to change and
nothing replaces hands-on experience. Consider job shadowing with Dutch engineers both in NL and here. Consider a study tour in NL (e.g. http://www.hembrow.eu/studytour/) or even a cycling holiday for the whole department in NL at the tax payers' expense -- it would be worth it!

TOOLKIT

7. 'Internal Road Network'. Lots of designers still use dendritic layouts rather than grids for e.g. housing estates, despite their being out of fashion. I suggest adding, 'E.g. direct routes to distributor roads help to keep speeds down.'

8. The document mentions site layout and parking, but does not address house design. Make it clear that houses should incorporate outdoor storage for cycles, i.e. accessible from the front of the house. E.g. wider garage, space for cycles in the porch. I am convinced that having a bike where you can just jump on it and go, without having to wheel it from the back garden, is of vital importance. Bikes are competing with the car stood on the driveway - - we must build everything, not just roads, to favour the bike. Don't let builders fob you off with 'owners can buy a garden shed if they want'. It won't happen.

9. Post-decision

Big omission is post-build inspection. Contractors often fail to understand cycle requirements and leave drop kerbs with an upstand that can catch a bike tyre, or as at Hind Heath only have the drop across half the width of the cycle path... Don't forget inspections after road works and other alterations too. When a trench has been cut across a road and it starts to sink a few months after it is reinstated, the result is an uncomfortable ride as well as an early failure of the surface.

10. Road Works

We need standards to address continuity of cycle provision during works. It is not good enough to subject cyclists to long detours or place them in jeopardy. For example, long stretches of light-controlled single lane working are a problem for cyclists because they hold up the rest of the traffic and feel bad about it, and sometimes the lights don't last long enough so they are suddenly confronted with oncoming traffic.
11. I deliberately haven't proof-read the document, but I will mention that a 'palette of materials' is correct and not 'palate' as the spelling checker won't catch that. I would be happy to proof read when the document reaches its final form if that would help.

I hope this helps. I am happy to answer any questions or discuss.

Yours sincerely,

AR.

Response from RM, 08/09/2015
LTP@cheshireeast.gov.uk

I strongly agree with Cheshire East Cycling strategy to enable more people to cycle in safety, more often and with confidence for everyday and leisure journeys.

Currently many people never cycle or cycle very infrequently because they consider that cycling on open roads is too dangerous and current off-road routes do not connect places where they would like to go to. The Cheshire East cycling strategy has to provide safer and more convenient off-road cycling routes.

**Make full use of the Public Rights of Way network to extend and create off-road cycle routes**

The Public Rights of Way (PROW) network provides the simplest and most cost effective means of providing safe off-road cycling routes.

Currently the potential of the PROW network is limited because there are insufficient cycleways. Where there are cycleways they don’t connect places that people want to cycle to/from, ie, they are piecemeal and disjointed,

To realise the full potential of the PROW network to provide safe cycleways it will be necessary to redesignate 'footpaths' that should be cycleways as cycleways. For example 'footpaths' such as below should be redesignated as cycleways.
Experience in Cheshire East and in other parts of the country shows that off-road cycle routes can be satisfactorily and safely shared with pedestrians.

Improve links between towns and villages and improve the rural network

Improve the local network and create links between homes and local centres (i.e. shops and leisure centres)

Remove obstructive structures on cycleways, ie, so that it not necessary to dismount unnecessarily. (An alternative would be to provide more cycle friendly access points.)

Provide cycleways through town centres (Alternatively permit responsible cycling in town centres).

Where it is not possible to cycle on a particular footpath Cheshire East Council should confirm the right of pedestrians to proceed on foot accompanied by their bike on a public footpath to enable them to access cycleways such as bridleways.

**Promoting cycling**

The best ways to let people know more about where to cycle are information leaflets, maps designed specifically to show cycle routes in an area. It is also necessary to make information available on websites, eg, Google Maps, Open Street Maps.

**Cycle Training**
The 750 meter perimeter trail around the athletics track at Macclesfield Leisure Centre should be restored and developed as an off-road cycle training and young cyclist development circuit.

Cheshire East should work with partners such as United Utilities to develop improved cycle trails in Macclesfield Forest (plus safe off-road routes to/from Macclesfield and Macclesfield Forest).

Benefits of increased cycling

In addition to health benefits for cyclists, safer and more convenient cycling routes will reduce traffic congestion, reduce CO2 emissions, increase employment opportunities (cycle shops, cafes etc) and will provide opportunities for farmers and landowners to diversify by providing services for cyclists. Other benefits include:

Support Government initiatives to cut red tape

Support the Government's National Walking and Cycling Investment Strategy

Support Cheshire East's Rights of Way Improvement Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Save money and cut costs</th>
<th>Cost savings would result from:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduced expenditure on red tape associated with current PROW legislation. Each Local Authority has a 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan', however because of the red tape associated with any changes there is very little, if any, improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduce need for new road building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reduce costs associated with obesity and lack of exercise.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improve services</th>
<th>Resource savings can be used to improve other services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Improve accessibility of Public Rights of Way | The Public Rights of Way network is an immeasurable national public transport and leisure |
resource. However optimal use of this resource is limited by the disjointed and piecemeal nature of the network. Removing unnecessary restrictions and improving the network would enable increased use of PROW for transport and leisure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduce traffic congestion and CO2 emissions</strong></td>
<td>An improved PROW network would enable more journeys to be made by cycling rather than motor vehicles. This would reduce congestion, CO2 emissions and the need to build more roads.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduce road traffic accidents</strong></td>
<td>Increasing the number of off-road cycling options would reduce the need for cyclists to share busy main roads with fast moving motor vehicles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improve healthy lifestyles</strong></td>
<td>Increased numbers of people walking and cycling for transport and leisure would lead to healthier lifestyles and reduced NHS costs associated with obesity and lack of exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contribute to development of local (including the rural) economy</strong></td>
<td>Increased numbers of people walking and cycling for transport and leisure would encourage development of local businesses to meet their needs, eg, bike shops, cafes, tourist and visitor accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration with interested parties will facilitate identification and adoption and sharing of best practice</strong></td>
<td>CTC (Cycle Tourist Club), British Cycling, SUSTRANS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cheshire East Council cycling strategy should review the extent to which they are able to adopt the OpenMTB - (The New English and Welsh National Trail Organisation) proposals for responsible access, eg,

Existing rights of way classes should be consolidated under a common sense test of reasonable and responsible use. There is an unassailable argument for extending cycle and horse access to existing tracks across open access and publicly owned land. It makes no
sense that a stone track, built over open access land with public funds, where walkers are allowed to roam freely, should remain off limits to cyclists for no justifiable reason.

Interim steps that should be taken to improve the working of current legislation, and reduce the administrative burden placed on all parties by rules that predate the existence of mountain biking as a recreational pastime include:

Allowing Cheshire East to permit minor diversions around farmyards without an expensive definitive map modification process

Amendments to the Cycle Tracks Act and the rules governing events on public rights of way.

British Cycling and CTC's practical proposals to increase access for cyclists that could be achieved immediately thorough simple changes in existing policies, without need for legislative change.

**Examples of 'footpaths' that should be redesignated as cycleways in Cheshire East (Rainow Parish) to provide routes connecting villages and towns and circular leisure routes.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of route</th>
<th>Route</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-road route connecting Kettleshulme, Rainow and Bollington</td>
<td>Lyme Handley Footpath 41, Rainow footpaths 18, 20, 21 22 and 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainow leisure cycle route (Yearnslow, Lamaload, Tower Hill)</td>
<td>Rainow footpath77, 78, and 62 (Plus Macclesfield Forest footpath 36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-road route connecting Rainow with Tegg's Nose (and Macclesfield Forest)</td>
<td>Rainow footpath 63 (or 70), 65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off road route connecting Rainow with Bollington</td>
<td>Hough Hole millpond to Kerridge side bridleway (footpath 49 to junction with footpath 43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainow leisure cycle route (HedgeRow to Billings Head)</td>
<td>Rainow footpath 21, 25, and 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A key element of the Cheshire East cycling strategy must be implementation, ie, there is no point in developing a strategy if it will never be implemented

RM, Macclesfield.

Response from JB, 13/09/2015

Introduction

I am delighted that Cheshire East Council is developing a draft Cycling Strategy. I am sure this will improve co-ordination and help the council to promote cycling within wider initiatives. I have made several suggestions below which I hope will strengthen implementation of the strategy. Also, as a Disley resident, I have made some specific suggestions relevant to my area. My recommendations are summarised in the shaded boxes.

The Delivery Plan

Appendix B – the draft delivery plan - is perhaps the most important part of the strategy and I have therefore started with this section. I am glad to see that it contains delivery dates and responsibilities. However, I was disappointed to find that it did not include a list of priority routes and other improvements, such as can be found in the Wider Peak District Cycling Action Plan. Without a list of priority improvements, funding and other opportunities for implementation (such as those identified in table 8.3) could easily be missed.

Fortunately action A2 in the Delivery Plan (Develop strategic cycle network) is due to be completed this month and can therefore be incorporated into the final Delivery Plan. However, before this is done, key stakeholders need to be consulted on its conclusions.

1. Consult key stakeholders on the conclusions from action A2 – Develop Strategic Cycle Network.
2. Incorporate a list of priority routes and other improvements (derived from action A2) into the final Delivery Plan. This should also include potential funding sources or other means of delivery (drawing on the mechanisms in table 8.3).

The Delivery Plan also needs to be clearly sign-posted or possibly issued separately to enable regular updating.

3. Include the Delivery Plan in the Contents Page and add a Heading to Appendix B. Or issue it separately.

Baseline position, data and targets
Cheshire East Council was formed from several existing councils – some of which may well have developed cycling strategies. It would be a pity if all this earlier work was lost. The Peak District National Park Authority also has a Cycling Strategy which covers part of Cheshire East.

4. Review the cycling strategies of predecessor local authorities and discuss what could be carried forward into the current Strategy and Delivery Plan and what should be abandoned and why.
5. Discuss the Peak District Cycling Strategy and how this will integrate with the Cheshire East Strategy.

The Baseline Position considers existing cycle networks and routes in the borough. But cyclists have an odd habit of riding across local authority boundaries and so connections to neighbouring routes – such as Sustrans Route 68 in Derbyshire and the Stockport sections of Sustrans Route 55 - are also important.

6. Identify key routes in neighbouring boroughs and how these do or don’t connect with routes in Cheshire East.

It should be relatively easy to gather data on cycling to education facilities for inclusion in the strategy. Any future data gathering could also distinguish between cycling for different purposes. Ambitious long-term targets are welcome, but it would also be useful to set targets for different types of cycling and assess progress against each of these.

7. Gather data on cycling to education facilities for inclusion in the final strategy.
8. Include data on cycling to education facilities in the list of data to be gathered in paragraph 7.14.
9. Distinguish between different types of cycle journeys in data collection (paragraph 7.14 and action D6), e.g. travel to work, travel to education facilities, access to services and leisure cycling.
10. Create separate targets for different types of cycling, e.g. travel to work, travel to education facilities, access to services and leisure cycling. (Paragraph 9.1.)

A Cycle Friendly Environment

I welcome the opportunity for local cycling groups to be involved in the development of Town Cycling Plans. However, I am concerned that they are expected to lead on this important project because:

- Not all areas will have cycling groups that have the commitment, time, or expertise for plan development. (This may be especially true of areas with low cycling rates.)
- Local cycling groups may also be unaware of the potential impact on cyclists of developments in the pipeline - such as major new housing developments, roads or retail facilities.
- Local cycling groups are sometimes more focussed on leisure cycling and may neglect other important journeys such as travel to work, services and education.
• Any proposals will need to be supported by Town and Parish Councils if they are to be progressed and fully integrated with Neighbourhood Plans.

I therefore believe that town and parish councils are better placed to develop cycling plans with the support of local cycling groups and Cheshire East Council.

11. Change recommended action A3 to “Town and Parish Councils to lead on the development of Town and Parish Cycling Plans with the close involvement of local cycling groups, major employers, schools and colleges.”

Enabling children and students to cycle to school and colleges should be a core feature of this strategy. Getting young people cycling is not only important for their immediate learning and health, but will also create habits that are likely to be carried into adulthood. At the moment this is only covered under section 6 – A Cycle Friendly Culture, but safe cycle routes to education facilities are also essential. This is so important that it warrants a separate sub-section with its own recommendation within the Cycle Friendly Environment section.

12. Include a sub-section on routes to education facilities within section 5. This should set out how the council will work with schools, parents groups and cycling organisations to identify and enhance safe cycling routes to schools and colleges.

13. Create a new recommendation on safe routes to education facilities and follow this through into the Delivery Plan.

**Organisation and Delivery**

Paragraph 7.6 notes that “a senior member of the Public Health Team will take lead responsibility for co-ordinating the promotion of walking and cycling”, but implementation of the strategy and delivery plan will require cross-departmental support and co-ordination. This should be established by the Strategy.

14. Table 8.2 - Core Responsibilities - should identify which department will lead on each responsibility.

15. Include a recommendation in section 7 that an inter-departmental cycling group is formed comprising officers who are leading on the responsibilities listed in table 8.2. The Cycling Champion could also attend and possibly chair this group.

**Cycling in and around Disley**

As a resident of Disley and living close to the Peak District National Park, I was surprised to read in paragraph 3.6 that “the terrain (in the Peak District National Park) is more suited for mountain bikes.” Anyone who travels through the Macclesfield Forest or the Lyme Park / Disley areas of the borough will observe large numbers of on-road cyclists and road bikes, not to mention the wide array of cyclists and cycles that take part in the annual Disley
Cycling Festival. The A6 through Disley carries significant numbers of both leisure and commuter cyclists.

16. Amend paragraph 3.6 to note that road cycling is also very popular in the Peak District National Park.

Cyclists along the A6 in Disley already face daunting traffic with large numbers of heavy vehicles. Conditions are expected to deteriorate further as traffic through Disley is predicted to increase by a third as a result of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road. An increase in lorries carrying aggregates to the site is likely during the construction phase. New housing developments in Disley and surrounding areas (e.g. Whaley Bridge, Chapel en le Frith) may also add to traffic congestion along the A6. The threat to cycling from infrastructure and other development should therefore be included in the SWOT analysis.

Given the anticipated deterioration in the cycling environment for Disley residents, both Disley Parish Council and Poynton Town Council support the creation of a cycle route from Disley to Poynton which avoids the A6. This would benefit Disley school children travelling to Poynton High School as well as residents trying to reach medical and other services in Poynton and Macclesfield. I therefore strongly urge that this route is included within the Strategic Cycle Network (action A2 in the Delivery Plan) and in a list of priority improvements in the final Delivery Plan. I have included more information about the proposed route in an appendix at the end of this document.

The Department for Transport’s funding for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road includes a budget for cycling mitigation measures. Some of this is being used for cycling improvements in Cheshire East, but none is currently being directed towards Disley. Funding of this type should be included in the Potential Funding Mechanisms in table 8.3 and identified as a potential funding source for the Disley to Poynton cycle route in the Delivery Plan.

17. Include the proposed Disley to Poynton cycle route in the Strategic Cycle Network currently under development (action A2 in the Delivery Plan) and in a list of priority improvements in the final Delivery Plan.
18. Include DfT funding for the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road as a potential funding source for the Disley to Poynton cycle route within the final Delivery Plan.
19. Include the threat to cycling from new infrastructure and other developments within the SWOT analysis.
20. Include DfT highways improvement budgets as a potential source of funding in table 8.3.

APPENDIX: PROPOSAL FOR A NEW SAFE CYCLE ROUTE LINKING DISLEY AND POYNTON

WHY IS A NEW SAFE ROUTE URGENTLY NEEDED?

Disley lies within Cheshire East Council, but for non car users it is becoming increasingly isolated from its education and health services in Poynton and Macclesfield. Nearly all secondary school students in Disley attend Poynton High School. (They travel by special
school buses.) Disley Surgery normally sends patients to either Macclesfield Hospital or Care UK at Poynton Health Centre for tests and treatment.

There are no direct public transport services from Disley to Poynton. Only two buses run from Disley to Macclesfield daily and these run at times that make it difficult to fit in with hospital appointments.

Currently the most direct route for cyclists from Disley to Poynton is along the A6 into Stockport (High Lane) and then via Norbury Hollow Road / Correction Brow / Middlewood Road into Poynton. As well as being a considerable diversion, this is very dangerous for cyclists. The A6 is narrow, carries large numbers of heavy lorries, including numerous vehicles carrying aggregates from the Peak District, with several blind bends near the Lyme Park entrance. Current traffic levels along the A6 through Disley are already daunting for cyclists and it is projected that they will increase by over a third as a result of the A6 to Manchester Airport Relief Road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Current &amp; projected traffic along A6 through Disley (Average daily vehicles)</th>
<th>% increase from 2009 traffic levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>13500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 without relief road</td>
<td>14900</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 with relief road</td>
<td>19400</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

A new safe cycle route between Disley and Poynton that avoids the A6 would bring several benefits:

1. A cycle route to school for Disley secondary school students. At the moment Disley students have little option but to travel by special school buses at fixed times. A safe cycling route would give them new flexibility and help to develop life-long healthy lifestyles.

2. A cycle route to health services for Disley residents. Residents could cycle to Poynton Health Centre for tests and join the Middlwood Way (safe off-road cycle route) for travel to Macclesfield town and hospital.

3. Encourage cycling among Disley residents. Most cycle routes out of Disley are either very steep or along the forbidding A6. Only the most committed cyclists are likely to use them. A safe route to the Middlewood Way and the Cheshire plains would help to encourage more residents to use their bikes with consequent leisure and health benefits, as well as reducing traffic along the A6.

4. Attract new visitors to Lyme Park. The Middlewood Way attracts large numbers of leisure cyclists. A link from this route into Lyme Park would encourage more cyclists to visit the Park.
5. A safe cycle link from Cheshire to Derbyshire and between two important cycle routes. The route would greatly improve cycle links from the Cheshire Plains to the Peak District and between the Middlewood Way and Sustrans National Cycle Route 68 which passes through New Mills and Whaley Bridge.

SUGGESTED ROUTE

The map overleaf suggests two options. Both follow existing roads and tracks.

JB, Disley.
SUGGESTED CYCLE ROUTE ACROSS LYME PARK LINKING DISLEY AND POYNTON

Option 1

Option 2

Cycle route

Paynton High School

Joan Bennett: joanbennett2@btinternet.com, 01663 762 036.
Summary and conclusions

Number of responses

The number of responses to the survey was high, as it was well promoted among cycling groups in Cheshire East.

However, it is clear that respondents to the consultation survey were not an accurate representation of Cheshire East residents as a whole, with males, and those more likely to cycle, overrepresented in the survey.

Although the survey captured the views of non-cyclists, results to many questions in the survey would have been quite different if 70% of respondents had been non-cyclists, as is the case in Cheshire East.

Support for the Cycling Strategy vision

A large proportion of respondents, 89%, agree that the Cycling Strategy vision is good. This is a very high level of agreement, and suggests that the Cycling Strategy is along the right lines.

However, non-cyclists were less likely to agree the vision was good (91% of cyclists agreed it was good Vs 66% of non-cyclists). This suggests that the vision, and possibly the strategy, does not meet the needs of non-cyclists as well as it does cyclists.

The main barriers to cycling

It seems clear, from this survey and other surveys, that the main barrier to cycling is safety – Both cyclists and non-cyclists agreed that this is their number 1 barrier to cycling more. Cheshire East residents do not feel safe cycling around Cheshire East, and therefore, do not cycle as much as they might do.

Improving cycling in Cheshire East

It also seems clear that to mitigate safety concerns, respondents want dedicated cycle lanes throughout the borough, separating them from traffic. Respondents were not concerned if cycle lanes are shared with pedestrians.
Alongside a lack of dedicated cycle lanes, respondents also highlighted HGVs, buses, speed limits (too high and not respected), the attitude of car drivers, poor road surfaces and a lack of cycle facilities as some of the reasons for not feeling safe, and for not cycling more.

**Encouraging and promoting cycling**

There was a significant split between cyclists and non-cyclists as to the types of journey they felt the Council should try to increase most. Cyclists felt that practical trips, such as to work or school, should be increased most, whereas non-cyclists felt that leisure trips should be increased most. This may indicate that non-cyclists need to build up their confidence, before considering cycling for practical trips.

**Cycling at a holistic level**

Overall, respondents felt that to improve cycling within the borough most effectively, a cultural change within the Council is required. They wanted cycling and walking to become the main transport priorities within the borough, and wanted cyclists to be given the right of way on the roads. Respondents were also concerned that the strategy would not have enough impact if enough funding was not made available to make cycling a main priority for the Council. Ultimately, they felt improving cycling needed to be at the forefront of Council strategy, being incorporated into as many strategies within the Council as possible. They also felt it needed to be at the forefront of any future planning and development within the borough.

**Improving the strategy itself**

Respondents also identified ways in which the strategy itself could be improved. They felt the strategy was too wordy, or verbose, but also that it required more detail as to how changes would be achieved, with specific targets being listed. They would also like to see more reference being made to guidelines such as LTN 02/08.

**Overall conclusions**

Overall it is positive that the consultation achieved such as high response, and that respondents were generally supportive of the strategy – It is clear that certain members of the Cheshire East population would like to see much more being done to improve cycling within the borough.
Further research may be necessary, particularly with non-cyclists, as the views of these types of resident were not captured within this consultation as much as they could have been.

Ultimately, it may not be possible to achieve what cyclists want – separate cycle lanes throughout the borough – without significant change within the Council, and “buy-in” from key stakeholders. However, anything that can be achieved to make cycling safer, and to provide more cycle ways, will no doubt be much appreciated.