



# **Wirral Transport Users Association**

## **Chester Region Transport Developments**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023**



# Themes of this presentation

- CW&C Strategic Transport Service – overview
- Strategic rail priorities
- Chester station & Chester City Gateway
- Wrexham – Bidston line
- Extension of Merseyrail beyond Ellesmere Port
- HS2
- Bus services & itravel pre-booked service
- Local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP)
- CW&C Local Transport Plan
- Important role for transport user groups



# Introduction

## Overview of the Cheshire West and Chester Council Strategic Transport Service

- Concessionary travel scheme
- Local bus services
- Publicity and roadside infrastructure
- Strategic rail
- Road safety
- Active travel
- Transport policy / Local Transport Plan

# Strategic rail priorities (summary 1)

- Regular rail service beyond Ellesmere Port with a new station within the industrial area (Will refer to this later in presentation)
- Chester station additional capacity
- Chester - North Wales Coast / Crewe / Warrington - Manchester electrification and service frequency enhancement
- Direct connectivity between Wrexham, Manchester and Liverpool.
- Wrexham – Bidston. At least 2 trains per hour, (Transport for Wales commitment) and through services for Liverpool

## Strategic rail priorities (summary 2)

- Mid-Cheshire line - 2 trains per hour
- Middlewich line service reinstatement and new stations
- Halton Curve – 2 trains per hour
- Winsford, Hartford & Acton Bridge – 2 trains per hour
- Improved airport connectivity
- Improved accessibility at stations



# Chester station

ANNIVERSARY OF  
CHESTER STATION

## 175 ##

YEARS

TUESDAY 1ST AUGUST



## TfW's Station Improvement Vision. Customer facilities at Chester Station (1)

- Brand new CCTV system
- New and extended gate line area
- New customer information screens (CIS)
- New passenger assist point
- New customer service desk area
- Additional ticket vending machines
- Roaming mics and hearing loop systems
- New quiet room



## TfW's Station Improvement Vision. Customer facilities at Chester Station (2)

- New platform and concourse seating
- Refurbished toilets and a new changing place toilet – work underway
- New water refill unit
- Cycle shelter upgrades
- New bins
- New poster cases
- New signage and branding





# TfW's Station Improvement Vision. Customer facilities at Chester Station (3)

Progress:

- The upgrade and extension of the main gate line is completed
- Overall, Transport for Wales report that the project is progressing well and due to be completed in Spring 2024.

# Chester station refurbishment new gateway



# Chester – rail services

- CW&C works closely with TfW, Network Rail, Liverpool City Region and other local authorities to build cases for frequency improvements for Wales cross border services, the Mid Cheshire line, Chester – Crewe and the Borderlands line.
- At Chester we are keen to ensure the station works for passengers and can meet future service aspirations.



# WHAT IS THE CHESTER CITY GATEWAY PROJECT?

- A formal collaboration between Cheshire West & Chester Council, Network Rail and LCR
- Focused on exploring development and regeneration opportunities around Chester Railway Station
- Opportunity to deliver transformational change, including delivering of c. 600 new homes, high-quality public realm and making Chester railway station a world-class experience.





## KEY MOVES

The following **key moves** are proposed which underpin development coming forward within **the Gateway**.



1/ An improved Chester Railway Station experience



2/ Supporting greater accessibility



3/ Consolidating and improving car parking



4/ Delivering high-quality place-making and public realm



5/ Meeting local housing need



# Wrexham – Bidston rail line

- Concern that service disruption has resulted in many passengers changing travel habits away from this line and which may be difficult to recover.
- Transport for Wales Five Point Recovery Plan providing the foundations of improvement is underway.
- This is an example of the role of the rail user group having a major role of raising the profile of issues affecting passengers and helping secure responses.

# Helsby, Ellesmere Port Route Upgrade (HEPRU 1)

- CW&C commissioned and submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the Department for Transport, presenting the case for re-introducing of a regular passenger rail service between Ellesmere Port and Helsby.
- The best performing option is extension of Merseyrail using battery powered trains
- To have a new station within the Ellesmere Port industrial area



# Helsby, Ellesmere Port Route Upgrade (HEPRU 2)

- In April 2023, the Council arranged a site visit to the industrial area and a presentation to colleagues from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA), Department for Transport, Network Rail and Northern Trains.
- Included visiting Encirc, Essar and Stellantis.
- Huge success in highlighting the scale of the industrial area and the pace of investment with a focus on carbon reduction

# Helsby, Ellesmere Port Route Upgrade (HEPRU 3)

- CW&C commissioned a further report providing additional evidence to support the economic & strategic business case for Merseyrail extension.
- **Demonstrating potential significant demand for this service,** especially because a high proportion of workers reside in the Wirral area
- This is one option for Merseyrail extension that the LCRCAs are considering, and an announcement is eagerly awaited.



## **Now cancelled - HS2 Phase 2b**

**The route through the borough of Cheshire West and Chester was to be:**

- North from Crewe
- Passing the east of Winsford and west of Middlewich
- Passing east of Davenham, Rudheath and Lostock Gralam



# There would have been high impacts in our borough (1)

- 3 borrow pits in Wimboldsley
- Train Depot – Wimboldsley – 9 year build
- Highways impacts – Especially during construction
- Vast infrastructure - Viaducts & embankments
- Community severance and change of character

## **There would have been high impacts in our borough (2)**

- CW&C used the petitioning process of the hybrid Bill to seek a wide range of additional measures to help offset negative impacts on communities, businesses and the natural environment
- The Council demonstrated benefits of extending HS2 to Chester

# There would have been significant benefits

In Cheshire and Warrington alone HS2 would:

- add £2 billion per annum to GVA,
- create 27,000 new jobs and
- deliver 6 million sq ft of new commercial floor space and 25,000 new homes.



# HS2 Government announcement

Government statement:

**“We will also provide an unprecedented £1 billion investment to fund the electrification of the North Wales Main Line,** bringing parts of North Wales within an hour of Manchester. We will oversee more punctual, reliable journeys on the 126-mile route between Crewe, Warrington, Chester, Llandudno and Holyhead, where ferry services run to Dublin.



# HS2 Phase 1 - Colne Valley viaduct



# HS2 Phase 1 – Colne Valley viaduct







# Local bus services – Bus Service Improvement Plan

- CW&C has been awarded £1.29m this year with a similar indicative allocation next year.
- Seeking clarification from DfT in terms of Network North announcement for Chester to Northwich bus services
- Welcome the extension of the £2 fare until December 2024
- Propose setting up a bus user group for the borough. Criteria for the group being finalised.
- We continue conversations with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in relation to the impacts of bus franchising on services in our borough

# itravel rural pre-booked bus service

## Connecting People and Places



# itravel rural pre-booked bus service



## When can I use itravel?

The service is available Monday to Friday between 7am and 7pm.

## How do I book itravel?

You can book an itravel journey up to one hour before you wish to travel (depending on availability) and up to 30 days in advance. itravel journeys can be booked in the following ways:

### The itravel app

#### Search

'itravel | on-demand bus'

Download the  
itravel app from:



### Online at:

[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/itravel](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/itravel)

### By phone:

**0330 678 1545**

# Local Cycling and walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- Adopted 2020
- 10 year plan
- Walking and cycling networks:
  - Chester
  - Ellesmere Port & Neston
  - Frodsham & Helsby
  - Northwich
  - Winsford



[transport-and-roads/cycling/cycling-and-walking](#)



# Currently in design

- ATF Tranche 3 Northwich scheme – connecting rail station to retail area
- ATF Tranche 4 Ellesmere Port schemes linked to Ellesmere Port LUF active travel and public realm
  - Ellesmere Port LCWIP (Station to M53)
  - Ellesmere Port LCWIP (York Road - Civic Way)
- Chester Cycle Network - Pink route upgrade
- Chester - Lache Masterplan – transport priorities
- Ellesmere Port - Overpool Road/roundabout
- Winsford - Road One and Two



# Capability Fund

## Ellesmere Port Social Prescribing

- Capability Fund 2021/22 and Social Prescribing Fund
- 12 month project to be incorporated into the Ellesmere Port Social Prescribing service
- Healthbox delivering:
  - Social prescribing to outdoor activities including walking, wheeling and cycling
  - Programmes of adult and family cycle training and walking groups
  - Journey planning for walking routes
  - Monitoring and evaluation
  - <https://www.healthboxcic.com/active-travel>

# Road Safety Education

- Bikeability training
- Pedestrian training - volunteers
- Modeshift STARS
- Parking charter
- School streets
  - Our Lady's
  - Woodlands
  - [residents/transport-and-roads/road-safety/school-streets](#)



# Next

- Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 extension bid
- Monitoring for all modes
- Mapping and promotion
- LCWIP development – cross border routes
  - Mersey Dee Alliance
  - Chester East

# The Future of Transport in Cheshire West and Chester

*Local Transport Plan 4*

## What is a Local Transport Plan?

Cheshire West and Chester Council has commenced development of its fourth Local Transport Plan.

Local Transport Plans are strategic policy documents which set out the Council's approach to planning transport across the borough, across all transport modes, passenger and freight.

Our current Local Transport Plan is over a decade old, meaning it does not reflect our current priorities, address key challenges or changes to policy direction.

## What is Local Transport Plan 4?



An opportunity to make the case for transformative change to our transport network, to meet our net zero targets, poverty challenge and other strategic objectives.



A critical part of integrated policy making, aligning corporate planning (Borough Plan), spatial planning (Local Plan) and transport planning (Local Transport Plan).



Our 'shop front' for transport, a catalyst for attracting investment from central government and other funders to reach policy goals.



A major shift towards a vision-led approach to transport for the borough – which targets activity on realising a vision of the borough we want, rather than focusing on mitigating 'transport as transport's sake' forecasts.





## How to Get Involved

We would like you to help us shape Local Transport Plan 4:

- Engagement live from 20 November 2023 to 21 January 2024
- The consultation will be promoted online and in local press and will be available from at [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/LTP4](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/LTP4) from the 'go live' date.

# Important roles for transport user groups / associations

- Being accessible to transport users to receive feedback and give information
- Provide two-way links with service providers and strategic planners
- “Accessible” – in touch through different formats including for people with additional needs and use of social media
- Collaboration - Sharing of good (and poor?) practice to learn from
- Have an understanding “of the bigger picture”



# Conclusion

**Thank you for inviting me to your meeting today.**

**I very much hope this presentation has met your expectations  
and invite any questions**