

Active Travel Fund consultation

Summary of public feedback on the proposed improvement schemes

September 2021

Introduction

This report summarises feedback received from residents and stakeholders about the Council's proposals for the use of the Department for Transport's (DfT) Active Travel Fund to support a number of proposed cycle improvement schemes across Cheshire West and Chester.

Background

In July 2020, the government announced a second tranche of the Active Travel Fund. This is to enable local authorities to implement an environment that is safer for both walking and cycling. Allocations were confirmed in November 2020 alongside a series of conditions to be followed by local authorities to receive the funding. This included consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and the local community to provide an opportunity for people feedback on the proposals.

The consultation focused three proposed schemes in the following areas:

- A56 Chester Road, Helsby – Frodsham
- A559 Chester Way, Northwich
- B5153 Northwich Road, Hartford / Weaverham.

More information about the schemes, including detailed plans, can be found in appendix B.

Key messages

- 752 completed responses were submitted to the Council via the online survey. Although the majority were from local residents, responses were also received from local and national groups and organisations (including schools, cycling groups and community groups). For more detail about who responded please see appendix A.
- The majority of respondents supported all three schemes, with the A56 Chester Road Helsby to Frodsham scheme receiving the highest level of support (68 percent strongly agreed or agree with the proposal compared to 61 percent for the A559 Chester Way in Northwich and 59 percent for B5153 Northwich Road Hartford / Weaverham).
- 61 percent of respondents also agreed that the A56 scheme would encourage them to make more journeys on a bicycle compared to just over half for the Northwich based proposals (53 percent for the B5153 scheme and 52 percent for the A559 scheme, respectively)

- A large number of respondents provided additional proposals and comments. These were largely focused on the need to consider other routes for further improvements, improved segregation between motorists and cyclists, improved segregation between cyclists and pedestrians, general road safety concerns and the need to maintain existing footpaths and cycle routes.

Consultation approach

- The consultation was undertaken between 11th January and 19th February 2021.
- The approach was adapted in light of COVID 19 to ensure respondents could take part in a safe and manageable way. Views were predominantly gathered via the use of an online survey tool but to allow as many people could take part as possible, respondents could also make suggestions over the phone, in writing or via email.
- To increase awareness locally, letters were sent to local residents who may be directly affected by the proposed schemes
- The consultation was widely promoted via key communications channels, including press and social media releases and other targeted methods, including making use of the Council's Localities teams links and networks to target and communicate with key local groups and organisations.

How public feedback has been used and next steps

Based on resident and stakeholder feedback received, the A56 Helsby/Frodsham scheme has been identified as a priority for delivery through the active travel funding allocation for 2021/22, with the Northwich schemes currently scheduled for delivery during 2022/23; subject to successful Active Travel bid to the Department for Transport. Feedback has also been used by the local highway engineers to inform the scheme's design, where practical and affordable to do so. The schemes may be subject to revision once more in-depth site investigation has been carried out. The bid to Government was ambitious, however the allocation received requires significant match funding to deliver the Helsby/Frodsham scheme this financial year.







As we are closer to finalising the scheme designs, officers will engage with interested parties to inform them of the schemes and any revised plans will be available on the Council website once they are finalised.

Key messages from the consultation survey

Scheme 1: A56 Chester Road, Helsby - Frodsham

The proposed footway/ cycle improvements on the A56 Chester Road, Helsby, start to the west of Godscroft Lane with the introduction of a proposed pedestrian / cycle crossing (Toucan Crossing) and continues up to the railway bridge. Further details of these plans can be found in appendix B.

Chart 1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the A56 Chester Road (Helsby – Frodsham) proposal?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		50%	202
2	Agree		18%	72
3	Neither agree nor disagree		14%	56
4	Disagree		3%	14
5	Strongly disagree		7%	29
6	Don't know		8%	34

Base: 407
 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the A56 Chester Road (Helsby – Frodsham) proposal? 50 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 18 percent said agree, 14 percent said neither agree nor disagree, 3 percent said disagree, 7 percent said strongly disagree and 8 percent said don't know.

Chart 1 above shows that over two thirds (68 percent) of respondents agreed with the proposed scheme along A56 Chester Road between Helsby and Frodsham.

Chart 2: Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		42%	167
2	Agree		19%	77
3	Neither agree nor disagree		15%	62
4	Disagree		5%	20
5	Strongly disagree		11%	42
6	Don't know		8%	32

Base: 400
Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle? 42 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 19 percent said agree, 15 percent said neither agree nor disagree, 5 percent said disagree, 11 percent said strongly disagree, and 8 percent said don't know.

Chart 2 above shows that 61 percent of respondents agreed the proposals for the A56 Chester Road would encourage them to make more journeys on a bicycle.

Respondent comments relating to the A56 Chester Road (Helsby to Frodsham) proposal

Of the 230 comments received, the largest number reiterated support for the scheme (78 comments).







Other feedback related to:

- Specific comments relating to design proposals (41 comments)
- The importance of segregating cyclists and pedestrians / not being a shared space (20 comments)
- Respondents stating they weren't in favour of the scheme (15 comments)
- Request for cycle improvements in other areas (10 comments)
- Comments that the scheme is a waste of money (8 comments)
- The need to promote safer cycling (7 comments)
- Requests to reduce the vehicle speed limit (7 comments)
- The need for better maintain existing cycle network (7 comments).

Scheme 2: A559 Chester Way, Northwich

The proposed footway / cycle improvements on A559 Chester Way, Northwich, start to the east of Crum Hill via a dropped kerb, and continues to run along the western side of A559 Chester Way, up until it reaches the existing pedestrian / cycle crossing (Toucan) prior to Station Road. Further details of these plans can be found in appendix B.







Chart 3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the A599 Chester Way, Northwich proposal?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		36%	140
2	Agree		25%	97
3	Neither agree nor disagree		16%	60
4	Disagree		3%	12
5	Strongly disagree		7%	27
6	Don't know		13%	52

Base: 388
 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the A599 Chester way, Northwich Proposal? 36 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 25 percent said agree, 16 percent of respondents said neither agree nor disagree, 3 percent said disagree, 7 percent said strongly disagree, and 13 percent said don't know.

Chart 3 above shows 61 percent of respondents agree with the proposals for the A599 Chester Way in Northwich.

Chart 4: Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council (as outlined above), to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		31%	119
2	Agree		21%	79
3	Neither agree nor disagree		18%	71
4	Disagree		8%	31
5	Strongly disagree		9%	34
6	Don't know		13%	50

Base: 384
 Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council (as outlined above), to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle? 31 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 21 percent said agree, 18 percent said neither agree nor disagree, 8 percent said disagree, 9 percent said strongly disagree, and 13 percent said don't know.

Chart 4 shows around half (52 percent) of respondents agreed that proposals for the A599 Chester Way would encourage them to make more journeys on a bicycle.

Respondent comments relating to the A599, Chester Way, Northwich proposal

Of the 142 comments received, the largest number outlined support for the scheme (39 comments).







Other feedback related to:

- Specific comments about the design proposals (17 comments)
- The need for segregation between motorists and cyclists (16 comments)
- Not being in favour of the scheme (11 comments)
- Better maintenance of existing cycle networks (6 comments)
- Requests for cycle improvements in other areas (5 comments)
- The scheme being unnecessary (5 comments)
- Elements outside of the scope of the scheme (5 comments).

Scheme 3: B5153 Northwich Road, Hartford / Weaverham

The proposed footway / cycle improvements on B5153 Northwich Road, Weaverham starts outside Weaverham Primary Academy and runs south east to the exit from Grange playing fields. Further details of these proposals can be found in appendix B.

Chart 5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the B5153 Northwich Road, Hartford / Weaverham proposal?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		41%	158
2	Agree		19%	74
3	Neither agree nor disagree		14%	56
4	Disagree		4%	15
5	Strongly disagree		8%	33
6	Don't know		14%	54

Base: 390

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the B5153 Northwich Road, Hartford / Weaverham proposal? 41 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 19 percent said agree, 14 percent said neither agree nor disagree, 4 percent said disagree, 8 percent said strongly disagree, and 14 percent said don't know.

Chart 5 shows 59 percent of respondents agreed with the proposals for the B5153 Northwich Road.







Respondent comments relating to B5153 Northwich Road, Hartford / Weaverham proposal

Of the 141 comments received, the largest number reiterated support for the scheme (37 comments).

Other feedback related to:

- Not being in favour of the scheme (15 comments)
- The scheme being unnecessary (12 comments)
- Specific comments relating to design proposals (9 comments)
- Wanting segregation of cyclists and pedestrians (9 comments).

Chart 6: Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle?

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		34%	129
2	Agree		19%	74
3	Neither agree nor disagree		18%	71
5	Disagree		4%	16
6	Strongly disagree		11%	42
7	Don't know		14%	53

Base: 385

Thinking about the improvements proposed by the Council, to what extent do you agree or disagree that these improvements would encourage you to make more journeys on a bicycle? 34 percent of respondents said strongly agree, 19 percent said agree, 18 percent said neither agree nor disagree, 4 percent said disagree, 11 percent said strongly disagree, and 14 percent said don't know.

Chart 6 above shows just over half (53 percent) of respondents agreed that the proposed schemes would encourage them to make more journeys on a bicycle.

Additional comments and suggestions to encourage walking and cycling

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide further comments about the proposals or make suggestions about how the Council could increase the levels of walking or cycling in the borough.

Of the 253 comments received, the largest number reiterated overall support for the proposals (45 comments).

Other feedback related to:

- The need to extend cycle networks generally (31 comments)
- Better maintenance of existing networks, including potholes (22 comments)
- Road safety improvements (20 comments)
- Extending cycle networks in Northwich (16 comments)
- Extending cycle networks in Frodsham/Helsby (12 comments)
- General disagreement with the cycling agenda (9 comments).

Appendices

Appendix A: Profile of survey respondents

Chart 7: Type of respondent









			Response Percent	Response Total
1	A local resident		93%	399
2	A local business		4%	16
3	An elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council		0%	2
4	A Town or Parish Councillor		3%	12
5	A representative or member of a local group with a specific interest in walking and/or cycling		7%	30
6	A representative of a voluntary or community group		3%	14
7	Other		4%	16

Base: 430
 Type of respondent. 93 percent of respondents were a local resident, 4 percent selected a local business, less than 1 percent were an elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council, 3 percent were a Town or Parish Councillor, 7 percent were a representative or member of a local group with a specific interest in walking and/or cycling, 3 percent were a representative of a voluntary or community group, and 4 percent said they were responding as something other than the options listed.

Responses were received from the following organisations:





- 1st Weaverham Sea Scouts
- Active Cheshire
- Bren Bikes
- Cycle North Cheshire
- Cycling UK
- Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
- Helsby Cycle Club
- Helsby High School
- Helsby Hillside Primary School
- Helsby Scout Group / Helsby Hillside
- Runcorn Cycle Club
- Sustrans
- The Community Orchard at Weaverham and Hartford
- Weaverham Trust
- Weaver Valley Cycling Club.

Chart 8: Age group

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Under 16		0%	2
2	16-24		1%	4
3	25-34		7%	30
4	35-44		19%	81
5	45-54		28%	118
6	55-64		24%	101
7	65 or older		17%	72
8	Prefer not to say		3%	13




Base: 421
Age group. Less than 1 percent of respondents were under 16 years old, 1 percent were between 16 and 24 years old, 7 percent were between 25 and 34 years old, 19 percent were between 35 and 44 years old, 28 percent were between 45 and 54 years old, 24 percent were between 55 and 64 years old, 17 percent were 65 years old or more, and 3 percent preferred not to say.

Chart 9: Gender

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Male		56%	238
2	Female		39%	165
3	Prefer not to say		4%	17
4	Prefer to use own terms		0%	2

Base: 422
Gender. 56 percent of respondents were male, 39 percent were female, 4 percent preferred not to say, and less than 1 percent preferred to use their own terms.

Chart 10: Illness, health issue or disability

			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		8%	33
2	No		87%	364
3	Prefer not to say		5%	20

Base: 417
8 percent of respondents said they had a long-term illness, health issue or disability that limits their daily activities or the work they can do, 87 said they did not, and 5 percent preferred not to say.

Appendix B: Further details of proposals

Below are detailed descriptions of key features for each proposed scheme, along with visual plans of the location.

Chester Road, Helsby (A56)

The proposed footway/ cycle improvements on the A56 Chester Road, Helsby, start to the west of Godscroft Lane with the introduction of a proposed pedestrian / cycle crossing (Toucan Crossing) and continues up to the railway bridge. Over these extents, it is proposed to introduce the following specific measures:

- From Godscroft Lane to Kings Church entrance – on the north western side of the A56, there will be a one direction, on carriageway, cycle facility protected from the adjacent traffic by a physical kerbed barrier. The existing footway is to be maintained for pedestrians. On the north eastern side, there will be a shared use footway / cycleway (pedestrian and cycle path).
- From the Kings Church entrance to B5393 Tarvin Road junction – There will be a cycle track on both side of the A56 which will be protected from the adjacent traffic by a physical kerbed barrier. The existing footway is to be maintained on the north western side of the A56 over these extents. The existing layby to north of Kings Church is to be remodelled to accommodate pedestrian / cycle facility.
- From the junction of the B5393 Tarvin Road to Matty's Lane junction – on the north west side of the A56 up to Matty's Lane, there will be a one direction, on carriageway, cycle facility protected from the adjacent traffic by a physical kerbed barrier. Existing footway to be maintained for pedestrians. On the north eastern side, there will be a shared use footway / cycleway (pedestrian and cycle path) up to Matty's Lane.
- From Matty's Lane junction, continuing north to Carriage Drive – on the north east side of the A56 there will be a shared use footway/ cycleway facility up to the Carriage Drive junction. The existing bus shelter on north eastern side of the A56 will be upgraded to accommodate the shared footway / cycle track. The north western existing footway is to be maintained for pedestrians.
- From Dig Lane to the railway bridge – it is proposed to widen the north western footway over these extents. The existing pedestrian crossing (Puffin) is to be retained.

- There will be coloured surfacing across the junctions with Woodhouses Lane, Woodhouses Park and Kings Church.

Chester Way, Northwich (A559)

The proposed footway / cycle improvements on A559 Chester Way, Northwich, start to the east of Crum Hill via a dropped kerb, and continues to run along the western side of A559 Chester Way, up until it reaches the existing pedestrian / cycle crossing (Toucan) prior to Station Road. Over these extents, it is proposed to introduce the following specific measures:

- Existing footway on northern side to be converted to shared footway / cycleway.
- Coloured surfacing across the junctions with Meadow Street, both entrances to Chester Way Retail Park and Church Road.
- At Venables Road, the existing traffic signals will be upgraded to include a dedicated pedestrian / cycle facility.
- The bus stop and shelter located between Crum Hill and Meadow Street is to be improved.
- Vegetation between Meadow Street and Venables Road is to be cut back.
- The Meadow Street junction and the eastern entrance to Chester Way Retail Park and pedestrian refuge, are to be remodelled to include improved crossing facilities.
- Existing pedestrian guardrail on eastern footway of A559 Chester Way, from Station Road to the gyratory is to be removed to accommodate a shared pedestrian / cycleway.

Northwich Road, Weaverham (B5153)

The proposed footway / cycle improvements on B5153 Northwich Road, Weaverham starts outside Weaverham Primary Academy and runs south east to the exit from Grange playing fields. Over these extents, it is proposed to introduce the following specific measures:

- From Weaverham Primary Academy to Keepers Lane – on the north eastern side there will be an off carriageway segregated footway and cycle track.
- Along Keeper's Lane on the north eastern side up to the primary school entrance there will be a shared footway / cycle way. Waiting restrictions over these extents will be introduced to prevent parking on the proposed facility.

- From Keeper's Lane to the exit from Grange playing fields – on the north eastern side there will be a shared use footway / cycleway.
- There will be coloured surfacing across the junctions with Forster Avenue, Wood Lane and Keepers Lane