

DRAFT RESPONSE BY TATTENHALL AND DISTRICT PARISH COUNCIL TO CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL'S CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF LOCAL TRANSPORT¹

TO BE PRESENTED TO COUNCIL ON 15 JANUARY 2024, AUTHORED BY RICHARD CARDEN

Introduction

An informal discussion was held in December 2023 between myself, Paul Kerr and Peter Clark to share anecdotes and ideas to improve transport options both within Tattenhall and District and also between the village and other key destination within the borough of Cheshire West and Chester. Our discussions largely revolved around giving people more genuine options to leave the car at home and choose more sustainable modes of transport for more journeys.

Bus travel

It was felt that the number 41 between Chester and Whitchurch, which stops in Tattenhall, was not only too expensive compared to driving but also the service pattern was too sparse. The last bus into Chester from Tattenhall High Street departs at 19:20, the reverse journey departs at 18:45 (except on Saturday which is 17:45) and even then you must request that the driver extends the journey to Tattenhall.

This is frankly deplorable especially when you consider that the last bus from Tarporley to Chester (Mon-Sat) departs at 22:07 and the latest reverse journey (Fri and Sat) departs at 22:40. There is a more limited service on Sundays, whereas buses do not visit Tattenhall at all.

As well as increasing buses to Chester we would like to see buses running between other villages such as Malpas, Tarporley and the proposed railway station at Beeston Market in order to facilitate more essential and social connections between these localities for the benefit of all age groups who either can ill afford or simply do not wish to drive a car everywhere. The possibility of a 'flexi-link' bus service which is dictated simply by where eligible persons who book a journey would like to travel to (it is up and running in Cheshire East) was also raised.

The generally unimpressive condition of the buses themselves along with the expensive fares for short distances were considered to put off many residents from choosing to travel by bus even when they qualify for a free bus pass. It was mentioned that young people (under 25) could take more advantage of similarly free bus travel from their adolescence instead of waiting to pass a driving test.

Cycling

In lieu of the expensive cost of driving and keeping a car, and the inflexibility of buses, the choice of bicycle ought to be considered for more journeys both within the parish and to key destinations beyond our community.

One of the most transformative projects which is in CWaC council's gift to help realise is paving the Shropshire Union Canal towpath from Waverton southwards towards Tattenhall Marina and then onwards towards Beeston Market. This will have the effect of significantly cutting journey times to Chester city centre to well within an hour and also provide a mostly car-free route for cyclists.

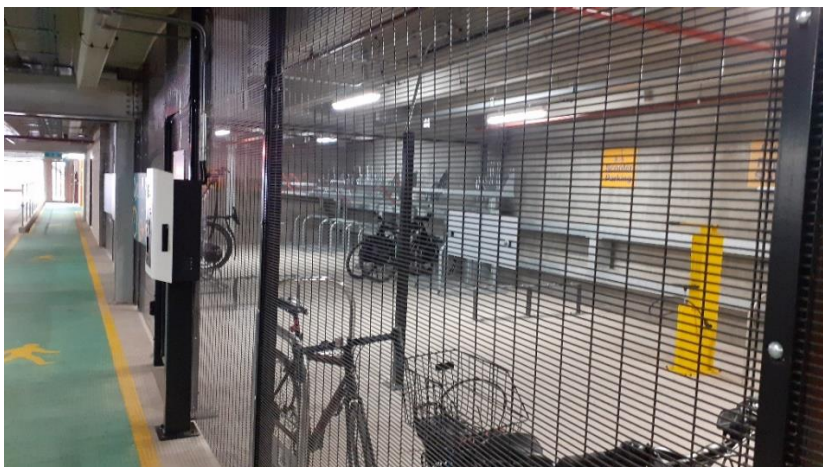


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There is also the possibility of reopening the Tattenhall – Whitchurch railway for active travel use as the relatively shallow gradients of the track bed will make for easier and safer cycling to all destinations south including Broxton, Tilston and Malpas. Both this corridor and the canal are protected against inappropriate development in part two of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (policies T4 and DM37 respectively).

Other interventions considered in our discussion included (but are not necessarily limited to):

- The provision of secure cage structures to park bicycles for longer stays, these have been rolled out in various cities across continental Europe and in the new Chester market. Some of these also have repair and maintenance tools such as track pumps and hex keys. If a cycle was to breakdown on the road then council highways vans could be seconded to assist/rescue stranded cyclists across the borough.² It is thought that this could allay people's concerns about experiencing mechanical breakdowns (e.g. punctures and loose/snapped chains) when out cycling over greater distances.



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- Trialling 'simple' zebra crossings at the mouths of minor road junctions (for example at the end of Chester Road between the school and Alpha House) without the need to install

beacons as has already been done in Cardiff.³ These are ubiquitous in Europe and will reinforce changes to the Highway Code relating to pedestrian priority when crossing junctions.

- Removing centre lines on more roads and substituting them with advisory cycle lane markings *at least* two metres out along both edges of the carriageway. This has the effect of visually narrowing the width of the road for motorists and convincing them to slow down subconsciously with less need to resort to more expensive gimmicks such as electronic signs.
- Painting thermoplastic edge markings along cycleways and/or installing reflective posts for safer cycling at night.
- Providing mains charging sockets for electrically assisted cycles in key service centres and elsewhere to extend their practical range and replace more medium-distance car journeys.
- Instigating a public information campaign to explain the untold health benefits of regular cycling for both young and old as well as challenging misconceptions about the 'superiority' of motorists over other more vulnerable road user groups.
- Expanding cycle to work schemes and providing grants to businesses to purchase electric cargo bicycles to use, for example, on 'last-mile' deliveries.

Summary

The Parish Council would like to see cheaper and more frequent bus services calling at more destinations in the hope that this gives groups ranging from young adults to pensioners more freedom of choice in how they travel. The council would also like to see cycle infrastructure further developed in order to neutralise the crippling effects of car dependency on both people's outgoings and the increasingly fragile road infrastructure. The council also does not believe that larger and heavier electric cars are the silver bullet solution to the pollution and congestion issues affecting towns and villages across Cheshire West and Chester.

Richard Carden

Peter Clark

Paul Kerr

8 January 2024

¹ Fourth statutory Local Transport Plan to supersede the current version which will expire in 2026.

² Hypothetical paid-for cycle breakdown support either provided by the council directly or contracted out. ETA Insurance provide 24/7 nationwide recovery to either a repair shop or the cyclist's home address. ([HTML](#))

³ Cardiff simple zebra crossing trial ([HTML](#))