

Towpath Meeting with CW&C Officers
Thursday 16th July 2026 – via Teams.

PRESENT

Cheshire West & Chester Council – Duncan Crockett, Chris Hardwick, Cllr Mike Jones (Tattenhall Ward), Kristy Littler, Jack Mayhew, Cllr Stephen Mosley (Christleton & Huntington Ward).

Tattenhall & District Parish Council – Cllr Paul Kerr, Ann Wright (Clerk).

Purpose of Meeting: To receive update.

The meeting started with an introduction to the project to create an accessible route from Chester to Beeston along the towpath and connect with the former railway line initially through to Chowley Oak but on to Malpas and Whitchurch. It was hoped the Towpath project could be extended through Cheshire East to Whitchurch creating a loop.

Chris Hardwick confirmed the new combined authority is now in place with a Chief Executive and Interim Director of Transport. It was noted that all funding for highways and transport will be paid to the new authority from April 2027. Funding will be paid in one tranche to the member authorities based on the Local Delivery Transport Plan (LDTP) which all the member authorities are working on. It was confirmed that the project is included in the draft LDTP.

Active Travel Place Making Enhancements

The project has been included in the LDTP in Active Travel Place Making Enhancements along with a number of other schemes which improve walking, wheeling and cycling accessibility and routes.

It was noted that towards the end of the funding cycle there is always more pressure on funding as such it is better to be able to move forward on the project at the start of the cycle.

It was discussed if it would be easier to phase the project rather than try and deliver such a large project in one phase.

The estimated cost of the project is £5.3m. It was understood there was significant funding from the Saughton Camp development. It was noted that Huntington Parish Council had objected to the funding being used on towpath project. It was agreed the availability of this funding needed to be investigated further. It was noted that the Canal River Trust (CRT) had stated that there would be a significant saving if the whole project was delivered at once.

Former Railway Line

Concern was raised with large planning applications coming forward that a development is not approved which would prevent the former railway becoming an accessible walking/ cycling route. The importance of planning officers understanding the project was emphasized.

It was agreed that developing a concept design for the former railway line is an important next step.

The combination of the towpath and former railway will create an interconnected active travel network which includes the proposed Beeston Railway Station.

It was discussed that the development of the former railway line is more complex than the Towpath.

Steering Group

It was agreed that CW&C need to establish a steering group with a clear terms of reference and includes CRT. It was noted that one of the first actions of the Group will be to address governance issues around using public money to fund works to an asset which is not owned by CW&C.

Membership of the Group to include CW&C officers, CRT representatives, Parish Council reps as required.

It was noted that CW&C officers want to make sure all the accesses to the towpath are all accessible.

Golden Nook Bridge

It was asked that creating a parking area at Golden Nook Bridge be considered, noting vehicles already park by the bridge, as it will provide access to the Towpath and the former railway line.

It was discussed that the Ice Cream Farm is accessible off the Towpath which is the 2nd largest tourist attraction in Cheshire after the Zoo.

Actions

- CW&C establish a steering group inc. CRT.
- CW&C provide a briefing for other departments including Planning, Property & Highways.
- Check planning requirements including listed building consents.
- Consider lighting in more urban areas.
- Timescales to be checked with CRT and fed back.

Active Travel England

It was noted that Active Travel England have just published design statements on standards of paths etc. The project will be checked against these standards.

All were thanked for attending the meeting.

Ann Wright
16/07/2026.