Feet First
- A Walking Strategy for Cheshire
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for further information:

Dave Gennard
Cheshire County Council
Engineering Service
Backford Hall
Chester
Cheshire CH1 6EA

Tel: 01244 603778

Email: gennardd@cheshire.gov.uk
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Executive Summary

Cheshire County Council recognises the importance of walking as a means of transport in its own right, as well as the health and recreational benefits to be gained from regular walking. The needs of pedestrians will now be given priority in transport and land use proposals in order to encourage walking and contribute to the County's vision of greater transport choice for all.

**WALKING SUMMARY**

**Aim:**
Cheshire County Council aims to 'make it safe, pleasant and convenient to walk for all within Cheshire'

**Objectives:**
* raise pedestrian priority
* develop network of routes
* more crossing facilities
* integrate with other transport modes
* improve safety
* work with partners
* promote accessibility for all
* inform and educate on walking issues
* promote rural issues
* emphasise maintenance

**Problems and Opportunities:**
* rising traffic levels
* high traffic speeds
* high car ownership
* fear for personal safety
* lack of revenue support
* sizable rural population
* cheap mode of transport
* socially inclusive
* partnership working
* health benefits
* opportunities to promote alternative to car
* economic benefits

**Strategy Implementation via Area Schemes:**
* network of pedestrian routes to key destinations
* increased number of crossing points
* speed reduction initiatives eg 20 mph zones, home zones, quiet lanes
* Safer Routes to School & School Travel Plans
* Company Travel Plans
* road safety training for children
* design of new developments
* improvements for mobility impaired
* update of technical guidelines
* footway maintenance and cleansing
* publicity and information
* rural issues

**Targets and Monitoring:**
* no countywide target for increase in walking
* increased numbers using key routes
* School and Company Travel Plans
* pedestrian casualty reductions
* footway 'trip' claims
* number of partnership initiatives
* number of full pedestrian audits on key routes
1. Introduction

Walking has a significant part to play in the transport system of the 21st century – it can be regarded as the ‘glue’ which binds the transport network together. It is undeniable that we are all pedestrians. Even the most car dependent are walkers too. For many, walking is the link connecting them to public transport or is their only option. The availability of a car does not mean that all members of the household have access to it, especially children and the elderly.

Walking as a mode of transport is on the decline in the UK: in 1986 people made, on average, 350 journeys on foot, declining to 288 in 1996 – a drop of 18%. The predominance of vehicles in towns has led to unacceptable levels of congestion and pollution and has helped create unfavourable conditions for walking. Combine this with a lack of well sited and easily operated crossing facilities available to both able and mobility impaired users, and it is easy to understand many of the reasons behind the decline in walking. On a more positive note, the National Travel Survey 1998/00 (NTS) revealed that 27% of journeys in the UK were made entirely on foot, which rose to 80% for journeys of under a mile: the Walking Strategy aims to build on this foundation and increase the levels of walking for all users.

Routes and facilities have to be upgraded and improved to accommodate all users, including persons with a mobility impairment. This term encompasses a wide range of people, from wheelchair users and the visually impaired using a white cane or guide dog, to parents with pushchairs and shoppers with heavy shopping bags. Improving the highway for these road users will improve it for all road users.

‘The proportion of journeys made on foot has fallen in recent years. It will be a challenging task to increase levels at the same time as reducing casualties, but we do not believe it is impossible’ (Para 9.3)

It is this challenge, set out in the Government’s National Road Safety Strategy, ‘Tomorrow’s Roads – Safer for Everyone’ (DETR 2000) that the Walking Strategy aims to take on. Already Cheshire’s Local Transport Plan has put walking at the top of its hierarchy of road users, meaning that the needs of pedestrians will be at the forefront of the thinking of planners and engineers when looking at road improvements.

The Walking Strategy will examine the current state of walking throughout the County, the problems and opportunities that have to be faced and what the Council and its partners can do about them. It shows how the County Council intends to promote and encourage walking, but much of the change will come when we all, individually and as a community, appreciate the pleasure, convenience and cheapness of walking as a serious mode of transport.
2 Walking – the Wider Picture

2.1 National Policies

The Government’s Transport White Paper, ‘A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone’ (DETR 1998) sets the current framework for transport policy in the UK and stresses the need for an integrated approach to transport and the promotion of alternatives to the car. It requires the County Council to produce a Local Transport Plan (LTP), which sets out how the Council intends to deliver this policy for integrated transport within the County, and the bid for Government funds to achieve it. A key element of the LTP is the requirement to develop and adopt a Walking Strategy. This document is consistent and compatible with the advice published in a further government document, Encouraging Walking: Advice to Local Authorities (DETR 2000) and Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot (Institute of Highways and Transportation 2000). Other national policies, which impact on the Walking Strategy, include:

- Walking in Towns and Cities (Environment, Transport & Regional Affairs Committee and Government Response 2001)
- Older People – Their Transport Needs (DETR 2001)
- New Directions in Speed Management – A Review of Policy (DETR 2000)
- Tomorrow’s Roads – Safer for Everyone (DETR 2000)
- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation (Dept of Health 1999)

- School Travel – Strategies and Plans (DETR 1999)
- The Benefits of Green Travel Plans (DETR 1999)
- Crime and Disorder Act (1998)

2.2 Cheshire’s policies

Cheshire’s Local Agenda 21 sets out a plan of action for environmental sustainability in Cheshire in the 21st century. It identified key issues relating to transport and set targets which include:

- reducing journeys to work by car from 70% to 60% between 1991 – 2011;
- increasing travel by public transport from 12% to 20% by 2005;
- developing a network of safer routes to schools.

Regular monitoring will report on progress towards these targets.

Travelwise is a campaign that the County Council signed up to in 1996, which aims to raise the awareness of the problems associated with car usage and to promote the greater use of sustainable transport. It has actively supported the production of a number of walking guides and leaflets.

Travel Plans are being created and implemented by businesses, including the County Council, to encourage their employees to consider more sustainable ways of getting to work thus reducing the impact of traffic congestion at peak hours.

Cheshire Sustainable Tourism Strategy (1996) puts forward aims, which are consistent with developing sustainable tourism in Cheshire.
Two of the principal aims are especially relevant to walking:

- 'To increase the proportion of visitors coming to, and exploring, Cheshire using public transport' - aims to link public transport to leisure walking routes, so as to offer people an attractive alternative to using the car.

- 'To encourage recreational activity as a special way of exploring Cheshire's countryside and heritage without depending on a car' - the strategy supports the improvement and development of infrastructure for walking in both urban and rural locations.

**Cheshire’s Community Sport & Recreation Strategy** will be prepared in the next 12-18 months following consultation and approval by the County Council.

**Cheshire Cycling Strategy (1998)** promotes cycling through similar aims and objectives as will be outlined later in this strategy for walking. They include:

- increasing safety for cyclists;
- meeting the demand for cycling especially in urban areas;
- changing attitudes to cycling as a mode of transport; and
- increasing the proportion of short journeys by cycle.

**Cheshire’s Bus Strategy** will be prepared in 2001 following consultation in line with the requirements of the Transport Act 2000.

**Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Cheshire Local Access Forum** are new statutory duties arising from the **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**. The Local Access Forum advises the County Council on recreation and access strategies amongst other things and membership must include transport interests among a range of other countryside interests. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan, envisaged as having similarities to the LTP, has already been identified as having a necessary direct link with the LTP.

The implications of all these policies to the Walking Strategy will be discussed further in the appropriate section.
3. Why encourage walking?

3.1 Walking is sustainable transport

Walking is an important but often under-emphasised mode of transport, particularly in urban areas. It can replace a large number of short car journeys, which contribute to congestion, pollution and the need for car parking. According to the National Travel Survey 1998/00, 80% of short journeys, (under one mile), were made on foot. Of all journeys under two miles, almost 60% were walked. Although there has been a decrease in the number of journeys on foot (from 350 per person per year in the mid – 1980s to 288 in 1996/98), the average length of journey has remained constant at about 0.6 miles; this has not changed in the last 20 years. We are just making fewer trips on foot, a fact that should be used as positive encouragement for walking in the future.

Walking is flexible in route choice and uses less space per person than any other form of transport. It can be cheap; both in costs of travel and infrastructure construction in comparison to motorised vehicles. It is reliable and has a guaranteed journey time. High quality, direct routes to public transport interchanges can improve access to public transport and encourage its usage and the consequent modal shift away from the car.

3.2 Walking is healthy

For the majority of the population, walking is the best overall physical activity for maintaining and improving fitness and health. Government health improvement advice states that just 30 minutes brisk walking 5 times a week can bring about significant reductions in the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. It can be easily incorporated within daily lifestyles and requires no specialised equipment and facilities. An increase in walking and other sustainable travel modes that leads to a decrease in traffic and an improvement in air quality, can bring about benefits to the increasing number of people with asthma and other respiratory problems. The health of wheelchair users can be improved if they have opportunities to propel themselves about freely.

The major health benefits include reduced risk of heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis, obesity and high blood pressure, as well as the psychological benefits. Keeping the body fit and healthy helps elderly people retain the ability to get out and about for longer and makes them less dependent on others. A priority area in Cheshire’s Health Improvement Programme is the provision of services for the prevention and treatment of coronary heart disease, which includes prescribed walking as part of patient referral by GPs across the county.

3.3 Walking is part of community life

Walking can promote neighbourliness, help to develop a sense of community and reduce isolation. The County Council is working in partnership with the Countryside Agency and Health Authorities to promote an initiative called ‘Walking the Way to Health’, which aims to increase the health and fitness of people and reduce social exclusion. It is a series of short volunteer led walks centred on the local community to get people out of their homes and back on the streets.
Being a pedestrian is not just about walking, but also about social interaction; streets are public places where people come into contact with their neighbours, local traders and the community. Communities can be revitalised, as larger numbers of people regularly walking in an area can reduce crime, such as vandalism, and the fear of crime.

Walking is important in itself to the local economy. Almost a quarter of walking journeys are for shopping purposes; this accounts for about one third of all shopping trips (NTS 98/00). Pedestrianisation of shopping areas has been proved to increase consumer spending as well as provide an environment that is safe and convivial for all people.

Walking is the most socially inclusive mode of transport and is available to nearly everyone, regardless of age, gender, education or income. In Cheshire 35% of residents do not have regular access to a car, so providing good conditions for walking throughout the community helps to ensure that their everyday lives are not limited by reduced access to employment, retail and education opportunities. It is also vital to the elderly who may no longer have access to a car.

It is estimated nationally that 20% of peak hour traffic is linked to delivering children to school. A reduction in traffic on the roads would also bring benefits to parents and the community. These include savings in time and money by removing the hassle of driving and parking, alongside a reduction in complaints from local residents about the congestion, pollution and inconvenience caused by parental parking. The underlying deterrents, namely fear of traffic and strangers, have to be addressed before any large-scale increase in walking to school can be achieved.

The County Council’s Safer Routes to School programme aims to make it safer and easier for children to walk and cycle to school, instead of relying on the car for the school run, through the promotion of schemes, such as the ‘walking bus’.

### 3.5 Walking is an important leisure activity

Although there has been a decline in journeys on foot, walking is easily the most popular outdoor recreation pursuit, with 49% of adults in the UK regularly going for a walk (General Household Survey 1996). Leisure walking has a wide appeal to all social classes and age groups. Cheshire can provide a wide range of locations for walking such as the historic centre of Chester, middle distance recreational routes, like the Sandstone Trail, and ‘green corridors’, such as the Shropshire Union Canal towpath.

Given an improvement in the urban walking environment, it should be possible to encourage these leisure walkers to choose to walk for other purposes.

### 3.4 Walking is an important freedom for children

Walking to school is an important step in encouraging children to become regular walkers in adult life. The benefits to a child include:

- healthy exercise in the fresh air, helping them start the day more alert;
- the chance to learn vital road safety skills;
- opportunities to interact with their parents or peers; and
- developing confidence and independence.
4. Objectives of the Walking Strategy

The general aim of the Walking Strategy is to 'make it safe, pleasant and convenient to walk for all within Cheshire'.

The strategy will achieve this aim through the following measurable and deliverable objectives:

The County Council will

1. Raise the priority of pedestrians above other road users.

2. Identify and develop networks of safe, accessible and attractive pedestrian routes to everyday facilities.

3. Promote and increase the number of safe, convenient and innovative pedestrian facilities at places where pedestrians want to cross.

4. Put an increased emphasis on the inspection and maintenance of footways.

5. Improve actual and perceived safety for all pedestrians.

6. Carry out pedestrian and accessibility audits to ensure that transport schemes and new developments are 'pedestrian friendly'.

7. Integrate walking effectively with other transport modes.

8. Work with partners to raise awareness of the leisure and health benefits of walking.

9. Promote and encourage walking as part of the development of the sustainable rural economy.

10. Provide and publicise up-to-date and relevant information on walking issues.
5. Problems and Opportunities

To enable the County Council to develop an effective strategy to achieve its objectives, it is imperative that current problems and opportunities for pedestrians in Cheshire are identified. Many of these key issues have a direct impact on walking in Cheshire today.

Problems
5.1 Pedestrian safety

Pedestrians are vulnerable road users, susceptible to a higher level of crashes than other modes for distances travelled.

The decline in walking over the last two decades has not been reflected in a commensurate drop in crashes involving pedestrians. Any proposals which actively encourage an increase in walking must be accompanied by measures which reduce the risk for all users, taking into account the special needs of more vulnerable groups, like children, the elderly and people with mobility problems. Speed and dominance of traffic is a major deterrent to walking, especially where it causes severance of communities.

Figure 1 shows the 1998 pedestrian casualty rates by age in Cheshire. This clearly shows that the most vulnerable groups are the under 15s and the 65+ age groups. This could be both as a result of more exposure to risk, as they are likely to be making more journeys on foot than other age groups or because of their inability to cope with traffic conditions. This could be as a result of an inability to make accurate judgements on traffic speeds or failing faculties.

![Figure 1 - Pedestrian casualty rates in Cheshire by age (1998)](image_url)

*Source: Police Stats 19 & Registrar-General’s Mid-Year Estimates 1998*
Although there has been a gradual drop in numbers in every age group, this is likely to be due to a decrease in numbers of people walking and therefore fewer people exposing themselves to risk, rather than the road network being made safer.

At 40 mph a pedestrian hit by a car stands an 85% chance of dying

At 30 mph the figure is 45%

At 20 mph the figure is 5%

Figure 2 – Pedestrian Fatality Rates by Speed
Source: Department of Transport 1992

Figure 2 shows the role played by speed in pedestrian crashes and indicates the importance of speed management in encouraging more pedestrians to walk safely. Their vulnerability in residential areas may be reduced by the future introduction of speed reduction measures e.g. 20mph and home zones.

The condition of the footway network can also limit whether people will walk along the streets. The long-term effects on physical and psychological health of a bad fall can be severe especially for elderly pedestrians, who may be disproportionately affected by uneven or broken footways. The Council tries to ensure that the footways are in good condition; but it is inevitable that faults will occur.

Every year the County Council receives a number of compensation claims resulting from 'trips' – pedestrians falling on the footway, though it is likely to be only a fraction of the total number of falls. Monitoring of claims has shown that there is a reduction of up to 90% in trips following maintenance schemes. Table 1 shows that the level of claims has remained consistent, though the number of successful claims has dropped.

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<tr>
<td>Number of footway claims</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of successful claims</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
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Table 1 – Compensation claims for footway trip accidents

5.2 Personal security

Fear of crime is often cited as a reason for not walking, especially after dark. The facts do not justify the level of concern, but it is perception that is important. Women, children and the elderly are groups who feel most vulnerable from attack; but young men are the most frequent victims of street assaults. Subways, dimly lit streets and areas of low pedestrian activity all contribute to a feeling of insecurity.

5.3 Car Ownership & Usage

Cheshire has a level of car availability above the national average; 84% of households have access to one or more cars compared to 72% nationally (Quality of Life Survey 2000). One in three households have access to more than two cars. Low ownership levels can be identified for lower socio-economic (groups D&E) households, where 35% do not have a car (Consulting the Community Survey 1998).
Easy access to a car makes it more difficult to persuade many residents to leave their car at home, even for short journeys. In the Quality of Life Survey 2000 31% of residents said that nothing would persuade them to use their car less. Walking is a relatively slow mode of transport, which does not fit in with busy lifestyles – the image of walking inhibits its growth for households with high levels of car availability.

5.4 Travel to work and school

High levels of car availability also affects how people travel to work and take their children to school. Figure 3 (below) shows how residents travelled to work in Cheshire when surveyed in 1998.

![Mode of transport used for home to work journey](image)

* Powered 2 wheeler

A countywide survey of modes of travel to school by primary pupils showed that 58% of children were taken by car, as opposed to 37% on foot and 15% by bus. This figure is twice the national average of 29%.

It is likely that more children are taken by car to school in Cheshire than the national average because of:

- A higher proportion of families owning two or more cars than nationally (43% in Cheshire against 29% nationally);
- 25% of residents live in rural areas, where the car may be the only mode available.

Practical proposals have to be developed bearing in mind that these facts suggest that Cheshire is a car dependent society and it will take a major shift in mind set to make them consider other modes of transport, especially to work and on the school run. Changing lifestyles make walking less easy e.g. working parents, out of town shopping.

5.5 Consultation

It is difficult to reach all sectors of society to get truly representative opinions on walking issues. Socially excluded groups are the least likely to respond on proposals, where they could be the main beneficiaries. Children and people with mobility problems, especially young parents pushing pushchairs, are especially difficult to reach. It is hoped to overcome this by targeting these groups through the media and community and interest groups.

5.6 Urban/rural priorities

The priority in the Walking Strategy will inevitably be biased toward urban walking
networks, based upon potential for impact; there are more pedestrians, more traffic, more barriers to walking and more pedestrian accidents in urban areas than in rural. On the other hand, this then puts the 25% of Cheshire’s residents who live in rural areas at a disadvantage in terms of funding. If we are to encourage these residents to make the fullest use of local facilities in villages, like shops, post offices and schools, which are often within manageable walking distance, money should be set aside specifically for small scale pedestrian schemes which will make these journeys possible.

5.7 Funding

Public funds for capital schemes are obtained from the Local Transport Plan settlement, but the costs of routine maintenance and cleansing have to be found from revenue funding, (both County and District Councils), which is more limited. Consideration should be given to installing high quality, low maintenance facilities which will require minimum maintenance for whole life costing.

Opportunities

5.8 Pedestrian Safety

The Local Transport Plan objective of promoting alternatives to the car, particularly for short journeys, opens up opportunities for promoting walking. As well as schemes being designed to reduce accidents, there is also scope for more imaginative and wide reaching schemes, like home zones, 20 mph zones and quiet lanes initiatives. These provide the potential to increase levels of walking safely in residential and rural areas.

5.9 Partnership

Great potential for partnership and community involvement exists within the strategy, as well as funding opportunities. Potential partners include:

- Local Authority departments, e.g. Community Development, Education, Economic Development and Social Services;
- Borough and Parish Councils;
- other public bodies e.g. Countryside Agency, Health Authorities, Highways Agency;
- interest groups e.g. mobility groups, Pedestrian Association, recreational user groups;
- neighbouring local authorities;
- businesses and developers;
- public transport operators;
- police; and
- the public.

It should be noted that the objectives of partners might not always coincide with those of the Strategy.

5.10 Priorities

By defining a hierarchy of road users in urban areas with priority given to pedestrians, a clear direction is given to policy makers and developers to take note of the needs of pedestrians, especially in new developments. This can only benefit groups whose needs are often excluded by traffic and development schemes e.g. people with no regular access to a car, the elderly and children.
5.11 Current walking situation

There are encouraging signs that walking, even to work, is taking place across the County. Figure 4 (below) shows that, within urban areas, there is a great disparity between the percentages of people who walk to work.

More than twice as many people walk to work in Northwich than in Alsager and Ellesmere Port. The reasons behind these figures would need investigating further, but it shows that there may be a latent demand in some areas, which could be tapped into by the improvement of facilities. Nationally, the Commission for Integrated Transport reported in 2001 that 26% of people would travel to work less by car if the conditions for walking locally would be better.

5.12 Economic Benefits

Pedestrianisation of shopping streets can increase trade because people prefer to shop in an environment that is not dominated by the motor vehicle and its accompanying noise, pollution and speed. Evidence from many towns has shown that while retailers have initially been dismayed by the removal of passing trade, a more positive view is taken once the benefits of the scheme are felt.
5.13 Leisure Opportunities

Opportunities for leisure walking can be maximized by encouraging people to gain access to the countryside for recreational walking by identifying linkages with public transport. For instance, the Sandstone and Gritstone Trails are now being promoted with walking links to stations at either end: Whitchurch and Frodsham in the case of the Sandstone Trail and Disley and Kidsgrove for the Gritstone Trail.

What improvements would help change this situation?

The latest survey of the attitudes and opinions on walking in Cheshire was recorded as part of the Local Transport Plan consultation exercise in 1999/2000 as set out in Figure 5 (below).

All these comments have been addressed in the aim and objectives of the Walking Strategy.

Cheshire County Council’s ‘Quality of Life Survey 2000’ surveyed the opinions of Cheshire residents on ways of improving the traffic and transportation situation within their area. 46% of respondents felt that the roads have become less safe in the last five years. The ways cited to improve the traffic situation (% of residents who put it in the top three priorities) included:

- ‘improve public transport’ (50%);
- ‘better road maintenance’ (40%);
- ‘increase traffic calming schemes’ (37%);
- and
- ‘reduce traffic in town centres’ (34%).

All of these suggestions would have a positive impact on walking.

Figure 5 – Comments on walking in the LTP consultation replies
6. The Strategy

Objective 1 Raise the priority of pedestrians above other road users

Cheshire County Council recognises the importance of walking as a means of transport in its own right, thus the needs of pedestrians will be given priority in transport and land use proposals in order to encourage walking. Special requirements for the mobility impaired and other vulnerable road users will always be taken into account.

In busy urban areas there will be competing demands for road space. It is impossible to improve conditions for all road users so priority has to be given and a hierarchy created. Walking should be at the top of the hierarchy in residential areas and around shops and schools.

We will

- Adopt the following road user hierarchy, as set out in the Local Transport Plan, in the planning and development of transport schemes:
  1. Walking
  2. Cycling
  3. Public transport
  4. Motorcycles/scooters
  5. Taxis
  6. Delivery Vehicles
  7. Cars

In practice this means that the needs of pedestrians will be given the highest priority in future developments or improvements to the highway network.

- Provide incentives and opportunities for pedestrians by re-allocating road space, particularly the replacement of carriageway space with footway space in appropriate locations.

Objective 2 Identify and develop networks of safe, accessible and attractive pedestrian routes to everyday facilities

It is essential to identify key priority routes and the obstacles and risks to pedestrian movement along these routes. The aim then will be to install measures to overcome these problems thus creating a core pedestrian network across Cheshire, especially within urban areas.

In urban areas most roads have footways. The challenge is mainly one of quality and suitability of the network for vulnerable groups, such as children, the elderly and mobility impaired.

In rural areas the challenge is to provide footways which allow easy and safe access to local facilities, like post offices, schools and community centres, in order to support and sustain rural communities.

We will

- Show what can be done for pedestrians, at a relatively low cost, by means of pilot/demonstration projects, particularly developing routes to/from bus and rail interchanges.
- Support the Public Rights of Way Unit, in the development and promotion of the public rights of way network as a safe and convenient network both within the urban and rural areas of the County.
- Make routes direct without unnecessary detours for crossings, restrictions, underpasses or footbridges. They should be smooth, wide, unobstructed, well lit and signposted and accessible to all.
- Set up a budget for low cost pedestrian measures, which would allow the County to react to local requests from Borough and Parish Councils. Simple procedures would be adopted and the only criteria would be that funds must be used to benefit pedestrians and meet Best Value standards (a precedent has already been set by the Safer Routes to School minor improvements budget).
- Ensure, as far as possible, the continuity of routes by raising the carriageway to the level of the footway across side road junctions and at busy crossing locations.
- Identify Safer Routes to School zones and implement a programme of improvements to make routes within the zones safer and more attractive for children and parents.
- Aim to reduce severance of communities and thus reduce social exclusion.
- Install additional facilities to help the mobility impaired follow routes e.g. tactile paving, ‘rotating cones’.
- Remove any superfluous street furniture after auditing routes.
- Integrate routes with speed reduction initiatives e.g. traffic calming, 20 mph and home zones.
- Create shared surfaces with cyclists and horse riders, especially in rural areas, wherever it is safe and reasonable to do so if providing on carriageway facilities is impossible.

Objective 3 Promote and increase the number of safe, convenient and innovative pedestrian facilities at places where pedestrians want to cross

The weakest link in any pedestrian network is the point where the pedestrian needs to cross the road - real barriers can prevent, disrupt or discourage people from walking even on short journeys. One way to overcome this problem is to provide pedestrian facilities at locations where they would most benefit the pedestrian. Facilities can include footways, traffic lights, controlled crossings, pedestrian refuges and traffic calming features e.g. build outs and speed tables. It is essential that they are located, in a safe position for the convenience of the pedestrian rather than vehicles, although a balance has to be struck so as not to penalise other forms of sustainable transport. Care has to be taken to ensure that facilities are accessible to all users including people with pushchairs, the elderly, visually impaired pedestrians and wheelchair users.

The safety aspects of under used pedestrian facilities has to be borne in mind, with care being taken to ensure that the facility is tailored and located according to usage i.e. more pedestrian refuges, road narrowings.

We will
- Provide pedestrian facilities with the following characteristics:
  - users should feel safe and not intimidated by vehicles;
  - crossing points should coincide with desire lines;
  - adequate opportunities should be provided to cross in any direction quickly and efficiently;
  - wide enough to cope with peak pedestrian demand;
  - respond quickly to demand from a pedestrian and not delay to accommodate approaching vehicles; and
  - reduce use of guard-rails to an absolute minimum.
- Minimise physical barriers for the mobility impaired by improving/updating facilities and providing new facilities where a need has been identified. It is necessary to take
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into account the aids people use to get around when designing or improving the highway. A person walking can cope with a narrow footway en route, but a wheelchair user or a visually impaired pedestrian guided by a dog could not. These facilities can include tactile paving, dropped crossings, ‘rotating cones’ and audible sounds at controlled crossings as well as ensuring that street clutter is kept to a minimum.

- Adopt a standard for maximum pedestrian delay of 20 seconds at controlled crossings and 20 seconds at traffic signals, with ‘red on demand’ for cars in urban areas.
- Examine how the Urban Traffic Control System can be used to assist and encourage pedestrians.
- Avoid the use of pedestrian crossings involving multiple stages.
- Replace subways and footbridges with signalled controlled crossings at road level.
- Discourage pavement parking by physical measures, enforcement and publicity campaigns.
- Investigate examples of innovative practice, which seek to assist pedestrians and explore opportunities for implementing them in Cheshire.
- Develop and implement a set of technical guidelines for the assessment and installation of pedestrian facilities. Appropriate training will be given for traffic professionals.

Objective 4 Put an increased emphasis on the inspection and maintenance of footways

People will walk further and more frequently when the walking environment is attractive, well designed and of high quality. Any deterrents can be overcome when constructing and upgrading footways, but they need to be well maintained, cleansed and salted to encourage people to keep using them.

The costs of falls on footways due to trips should not be underestimated from both a financial and psychological point of view. The fear of falling is a very strong disincentive to walking amongst the elderly and the mobility impaired and uneven and broken footways will do little to change this opinion. There is also the cost saving potential from reducing claims to a minimum.

We will

- Co-ordinate streetworks wherever possible to minimise disruption.
- Ensure footways are regularly and adequately maintained and cleansed so as to reduce the cost of injury claims suffered from trips. All reported potential hazards will be checked and every effort will be made to remove the dangers within 24 hours.
- Seek to minimise the number of streetlights not working as planned (as set out in the Best Value Indicators) and make every effort to rectify minor faults within five working days of them being reported. Major faults and structural damage will be repaired within 24 hours.

Objective 5 Improve actual and perceived safety for all pedestrians

The volume of road traffic with its noise and closeness to footways can be intimidating for pedestrians. It can make them feel unsafe and uncomfortable. The decline in walking over the last 20 years has not been reflected in an accompanying drop in crashes involving pedestrians. Any encouragement to increase levels of walking must be accompanied by an improvement in the walking environment which includes a reduction in the risk from traffic, especially to vulnerable groups like children and the elderly and people with mobility problems.
There is a desire to increase levels of walking and cycling, but this can create problems where the users are on shared use facilities or cyclists are on the pavement.

Fears about personal security, especially to women at night, are also a deterrent to walking. An increase in the number of people in the streets can help to alleviate this as can a greater sense of community.

We will

- Identify reasons why people do not walk and find out what factors would encourage people to walk more, thus addressing the issue of suppressed demand.
- Improve pedestrian facilities to minimise the risk posed by traffic.
- Reduce the vulnerability of pedestrians by developing and implementing appropriate schemes to reduce road casualties.
- Promote home zones and 20 mph zones as part of the speed reduction strategy.
- Try to increase the harmony between walking and cycling, especially on shared use facilities through education and publicity. This will reduce the perceived dangers of cyclists to pedestrians – wherever possible facilities for cyclists should be provided on the carriageway.
- Promote the safety and security of pedestrians by working in partnership with the police through local crime reduction strategies.
- Reduce the fear of crime by improving the openness and lighting on pedestrian routes.

**Objective 6 Carry out pedestrian and accessibility audits to ensure that transport schemes and new developments are ‘pedestrian friendly’**

Designers can create safer and pedestrian friendly developments by making specific provision for pedestrians and people whose mobility is impaired, so providing more transport choices.

Connections should also be made with the existing highway network to allow continuous routes to local facilities. This is of increased importance on estates where incomes and car ownership are low and there is a long way to go to access facilities.

We will

- Prepare a checklist of pedestrian issues, which can be used to help with an assessment of the pedestrian environment and facilities for pedestrians in existing situations and all proposed new schemes. It will help set high standards for design and quality.
- Require developers to design developments according to national and local standards e.g. Design Brief 32, Places, Streets and Movement and Design Aid for Cheshire (currently under review). These requirements should be effectively enforced.
- Ensure that developers, wherever practicable, provide local facilities easily accessible by foot in planning applications for new major developments and elsewhere to provide good pedestrian access to existing local facilities.
Objective 7 Integrate walking effectively with other transport modes

Walking forms a part of all journeys, whether it is to a railway station, taxi rank or bus stop or from the car to final destination and vice versa. If people are to make safe and convenient journeys it must be possible for them to connect seamlessly from one mode of transport to the next. Integrated access is a key aim of the greenways and quiet lanes initiatives promoted by the Countryside Agency.

We will

- Audit walking routes to bus stops, taxi ranks and rail and bus stations with a view to making them as direct, safe, convenient and attractive as possible.
- Provide direct links out of interchange facilities, such as bus and railway stations; on to existing routes (e.g. National Cycle Network) so as to form an integrated transport network from door to door.
- Work with the public transport providers to locate and design facilities such as bus stops in ways that make them attractive and safe for pedestrians. Interchange facilities should conform to the minimum standards set out in national design guidelines e.g. Design Brief 32.
- Work with partners to bring about the improvement of facilities at bus and train stations to make journeys easier e.g. left luggage lockers, seats, shelters, timetable information and toilets.

Objective 8 Work with partners to raise awareness of the leisure and health benefits of walking

The process of raising the profile of walking is important, especially at the early stages of implementing the strategy. To do this successfully will mean working with a variety of partners to implement a variety of measures to influence the travel choices of as many people as possible.

The benefits of walking have already been set out in Chapter 3.

We will:

- Develop a Safer Routes to School programme with children, parents and teachers as part of School Travel Plans.
- Co-ordinate programmes of improvements through local area integrated transport programmes and strategies.
- Seek to develop practical pedestrian training for children through the Road Safety Unit as part of Safer Routes to School projects.
- Develop links with the Local Health Authorities to promote walking for health as part of their Health Improvement Programmes.
- Feature walking as a high priority in the County Council’s Travelwise programme.
- Work with employers to promote walking through their Travel Plans and set a good example by encouraging County Council staff to walk to work wherever practicable.
- Work with the Public Rights of Way Unit, Countryside Agency and British Waterways to promote access to the countryside through the public rights of way network and to promote the development of key countywide footpath networks using canals, quiet lanes and green corridors.
- Set up seminars, forums and exhibitions to involve those with an interest in walking and to promote the Walking Strategy to the local community.
Objective 9 Promote and encourage walking as part of the development of the sustainable rural economy

Walking has a significant part to play in maintaining and revitalising the rural economy of Cheshire. The Government’s White Paper ‘Our Countryside: The Future. A Fair Deal for Rural England’ (DETR 2000) states that the government wants to see:

- More locally provided services (shops, banks, health services) which people can reach without the need to travel long distances.
- Improved rural road safety; with measures to minimise the impact of traffic in rural areas and to facilitate cycling and walking.

Measures to improve mobility will therefore continue to be an important element in ensuring fair and equitable access to services in rural areas.

The percentage of rural households in England with good access to a bus service (i.e. living within 13 minutes walk of a bus stop with a service of at least once an hour) rose from 35% in 1989/91 to 47% in 1998/00 (NTS 98/00) – the challenge now is to provide the way to safely and easily access the bus stops on foot.

Leisure walking has a wide appeal to all; in the ‘Quality of Life Survey 2000’, 53% of Cheshire residents, when asked ‘What do you like to do in your spare time?’ listed ‘walking/rambling’ as their top outdoor activity. Walkers use local hotels, public houses, restaurants and shops, thus making significant contributions to the local economy and providing local employment opportunities.

We will

- Promote access to facilities on foot or by bicycle through use of the bridleways, footpaths and along appropriate sections of highway, provided any specific safety issues have been addressed – emphasis will be put on making routes contiguous, well signposted and maintained.
- Investigate the feasibility of greenways and quiet lanes initiatives, aimed at improving existing and developing new corridors/routes, where vehicles have the lowest priority, within rural areas.
- Work with partners, both within the County Council e.g. Economic Development, Transport Co-ordination, Community Development and outside e.g. Countryside Agency, District and Parish Councils, to develop and promote walking as part of leisure activities and tourism in rural areas.

Objective 10 Provide and publicise up to date and relevant information on walking issues

There are various ways in which walking can be actively promoted, in addition to making physical improvements to the walking infrastructure. ‘Softer’ measures, like advertising campaigns, can play a critical role in making people think about why they might choose to walk more, and encouraging them to do so. They can also be relatively quick and cost-effective to introduce.

We will

- Use a wide range of media to publicise walking, including newspapers, leaflets, posters and exhibition displays, as well as more personal approaches, like meetings.
- Support and promote publicity campaigns, which raise awareness of the problems caused by traffic and promote the environmental and health benefits of more sustainable modes of transport e.g.
Travelwise campaigns, 'Walk to School' Week and 'Active for Life' (Health Education Authority campaign).

- Develop a Walking site, on the Cheshire County Council website, providing up-to-date information on local walking issues.
- Promote leisure walks developed by the Countryside Service.
- Ensure high quality signing of walking routes, both urban and rural, to make it easier for people to reach their destinations.
- Investigate the feasibility and level of interest in the setting up of a Countywide Walking Forum.

7. Consultation and Implementation

This Walking Strategy is intended to provide a framework for walking within Cheshire. It will be put out for consultation to groups within the County Council e.g. Environmental Planning, Public Rights of Way Unit, Economic Development etc. and outside e.g. District and Parish Councils, residents, businesses, local mobility and environmental groups and other interested bodies within each of the Districts. The responses to this exercise will help build consensus to the needs of the people of Cheshire.

The Area Teams and Local Joint Offices will implement the objectives of the Walking Strategy by choosing schemes that meet their identified local needs and priorities. Implementation schemes will be amended over time as funding opportunities and circumstances change.

The full implementation of the Walking Strategy is not the sole responsibility of the Engineering Service, but is distributed across several of the departments of Cheshire County Council, as laid out in Tables 2 and 3.
Table 2 – Implementing the Walking Strategy by Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Activities related to Walking &amp; the Mobility Impaired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Responsible for all matters relating to the highway</td>
<td>See Table 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Co-ordination</td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsible for a range of public transport services e.g. non-commercial bus services, County fleet transport, passenger information service, improvements to interchange facilities.</td>
<td>Co-operate to provide an integrated approach to transport journeys. Work with bus operators to provide safe, high quality &amp; easily accessible facilities for pedestrians &amp; the mobility impaired at bus interchanges. Encourage bus operators to provide easy access buses to aid the mobility impaired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Act as the County’s Planning Authority</td>
<td>Ensure that regard is taken to the needs of pedestrians when planning applications are considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Policy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Travelwise campaign</td>
<td>Actively helps to promote walking as an alternative to the car through publicity campaigns Encourage walking to work as part of a package of measures designed to help employers reduce the impact of traffic congestion &amp; offer employees alternatives to the car for the journey to work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>Rural &amp; Recreation</td>
<td>Support the Cheshire community in the development of recreational facilities to enhance their quality of life. Look after the natural environment</td>
<td>Countryside Management – promotes walks to explore the Cheshire countryside, maintains and enforces public rights of way &amp; manages Tatton Park (an attraction frequently used by walkers) Public Rights of Way Unit – keeps the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way &amp; is working to develop greenway routes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development</td>
<td>Sectoral Promotions &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Promote tourism in Cheshire</td>
<td>Supports rural diversification through tourism Publishes leaflets &amp; guides on walks in Cheshire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Table 3 – Implementing the Walking Strategy by the Engineering Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Division</th>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Activities related to Walking &amp; Mobility Impaired</th>
<th>Responsible contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>Accident Investigation &amp; Prevention (TA)</td>
<td>Investigate the occurrence &amp; distribution of road crashes on Cheshire's roads. Devise engineering measures to reduce the risk of future crashes.</td>
<td>Local Safety Schemes to increase pedestrian safety. Safety Audits on new highway schemes or improvements of existing roads to ensure the safety of vulnerable road users.</td>
<td>David Hughes X3619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cycling (TB)</td>
<td>Promote cycling throughout Cheshire. Design &amp; implement safe urban cycle networks &amp; facilities. Develop links to the National Cycle Network.</td>
<td>Co-ordinate schemes so as to reduce conflict between cyclists &amp; pedestrians on shared facilities</td>
<td>Anna Geroni X3617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Traffic Control (TC)</td>
<td>Install &amp; maintain signal controlled junctions &amp; pedestrian crossings</td>
<td>Install measures at new controlled crossings &amp; upgrade existing facilities to assist visually impaired people to cross e.g. 'rotating cones' and audible signals.</td>
<td>David Threadgold X3658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable Projects (TG)</td>
<td>Provide guidance on sustainable transport policies. Develop &amp; implement standards &amp; audit procedures for sustainable modes. Develop links with relevant voluntary &amp; interest groups.</td>
<td>Research, develop &amp; maintain best practice &amp; strategies for walking &amp; the mobility impaired. Oversee the carrying out of pedestrian and accessibility audits.</td>
<td>David Gennard X3778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provide a focus for all activities relating to the promotion &amp; improvement of pedestrian facilities. Develop &amp; implement a Walking Strategy for Cheshire</td>
<td>Caroline Burwell X3717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 – Implementing the Walking Strategy by the Engineering Service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Responsible contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traffic &amp; Transportation Projects (TP)</td>
<td>Monitoring of targets related to traffic growth &amp; travel demand by different modes to aid the future development of strategies &amp; targets.</td>
<td>Arrival mode surveys. Targeted pedestrian cordon/screenline counts around Cheshire town centres.</td>
<td>John Moss X3600</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Safety &amp; Safer Routes to School (TS)</td>
<td>Minimise road crashes &amp; casualties within Cheshire through education, training &amp; publicity and working with other professionals. Safer Routes to School.</td>
<td>Provide educational materials for schools &amp; playgroups. Analyse road accident data. Advise on school crossing patrol policy. Encourage more people to walk, cycle and car share to school.</td>
<td>Janet Mills X3730</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Teams (T1, 2 &amp; 3)</td>
<td>Develop, implement and monitor the capital programme of improvements to the highway network to ensure delivery of the integrated sustainable transport agenda as set out in the Local Transport Plan.</td>
<td>New highway design &amp; layout. Road space reallocation. Traffic calming/speed reduction measures. Home/20mph zones. Pedestrianised zones. Rural management strategy. Provision for the mobility impaired. Securing 'planning gain' under Section 278 agreement for pedestrian facilities</td>
<td>Charles Lloyd (Chester &amp; Ellesmere Port) X3578 Arthur Shapcott (Vale Royal &amp; Crewe) X3770 John Gray (Macclesfield &amp; Congleton) X3572</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance Operations</td>
<td>Maintain the highway infrastructure network to provide efficient movement of people, taking account of all modes of transport.</td>
<td>Maintenance of the footways and street lighting to enhance safety &amp; security Statutory Undertakers’ reinstatement of footways and inconvenience caused to pedestrians.</td>
<td>David Grant Jones X3545</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network Management</td>
<td>Monitor &amp; assess highway network condition.</td>
<td>Carry out regular safety inspections on footways to identify defects such as potholes, loose/broken paving slabs and broken ironwork e.g. manholes.</td>
<td>Peter Simm X3560</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Funding

It is envisaged that funding will come primarily from Central Government as a result of the LTP bid. In certain circumstances, further capital funding can be obtained from planning agreements with developers under Section 278 (Highway Act 1980), which will provide new pedestrian facilities.


9. Targets and Monitoring

The Local Transport Plan states ‘due to the complexity and local nature of walking trips, it has not been considered appropriate to develop a broadly based walking target. Instead we intend to develop specific targets in conjunction with schools and employers and in relation to specific initiatives’. The only performance indicator that directly relates to walking is for crossing facilities for disabled people (BVPI 165).

As the aim of the Walking Strategy is to ‘make it safe, pleasant and convenient to walk for all within Cheshire’, it is appropriate to choose performance indicators which relate to the quality and quantity of initiatives, rather than to monitoring the level of demand for walking. Quality of service should be considered a key ingredient in improving walking. Final decisions on how to monitor the strategy will need to be made in conjunction with the methodology chosen to monitor other transport modes e.g. cycling.

A timescale and programme will be set for analysing annual progress towards these performance indicators and for a formal review of the Walking Strategy in five years time.

Improvements in public transport should have a positive effect on pedestrian activity as people walk to and from interchanges, but could also depress walk trips if mode switching occurs from walking to cycling, bus or rail. Provided the County Council succeeds in improving conditions for existing trips and in making the walk element of a public transport journey more attractive, we can count even a small increase in the modal shift of walking as a success.
Table 4 – Performance Indicators and Targets for Walking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Targets</th>
<th>To meet Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of people walking to key destinations on improved routes.</td>
<td>Arrival mode surveys. Targeted pedestrian cordon/screenline counts around town centres across Cheshire.</td>
<td>10% increase in before and after surveys within 2 years.</td>
<td>1,2,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public satisfaction with footway conditions.</td>
<td>Footway trip claims. User satisfaction survey.</td>
<td>10% reduction in successful claims over 5 years.</td>
<td>3,4,5,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of crossings with facilities for disabled people.</td>
<td>Internal records.</td>
<td>85% by end of 2005/06(BVPI 165).</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pedestrians involved in falls &amp; road crashes.</td>
<td>A&amp;TE records. Stats 19. Internal records.</td>
<td>Reduce number of killed or seriously injured by 40% of 1994–8 average by 2010 (50% for children).</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of full pedestrian audits on new/existing key pedestrian routes.</td>
<td>Internal records.</td>
<td>3 audits per year across the County.</td>
<td>2,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness of pedestrian benefits in publicity campaigns.</td>
<td>Questionnaire/Interview survey relating to particular campaign</td>
<td>More than 10% of target market to be aware of campaign message after 4 weeks.</td>
<td>8,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of work journeys on foot.</td>
<td>Census 2001. Company travel plans.</td>
<td>80% of companies with over 100 employees to have a travel plan by 2011.</td>
<td>1,2,7,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of school journeys on foot.</td>
<td>School Travel Plans.</td>
<td>50% of schools with School Travel Plan by 2006 – 100% by 2011.</td>
<td>8,10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of partnership initiatives promoting walking.</td>
<td>e.g. Health Improvement Programme.</td>
<td>No target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To have your say on pedestrian and mobility issues...

Responses to issues and questions raised by this document should be sent to Dave Gennard by any of the following means.

Post to:
Cheshire County Council
Engineering Service
Backford Hall
Chester
Cheshire CH1 6EA

Tel: 01244 603778
Fax: 01244 603729
Email: gennardd@cheshire.gov.uk

For further copies of the strategy:

Copies of the Strategy are available from the above address.

Reference copies can be seen in all Cheshire libraries.

The Strategy can also be viewed and downloaded from the County Council website at:

www.cheshire.gov.uk/walking