

# Active Travel Capability Ratings 2024 - Local Authority Self-Assessment Survey

## Introduction

Please provide your contact details:

**Name:** Karen Stevens

**Email:** karen.stevens@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

**Role:** Decarbonising Transport Officer

## Section 1 - Organisational Context

1) What is the name of your authority?

Cheshire West and Chester

2) What is the total budget (£) your authority holds for transport this financial year?

1970000

3) What is the total budget (£) your authority holds for Active Travel this financial year?

612000

4) What is the total Full Time Equivalent staffing working on transport at your authority?

117.3

5) What is the total Full Time Equivalent staffing working on Active Travel at your authority?

4.3

6) Do you share any of the following information with developers and planning applicants - and when was it last updated?

If information in an area is shared, select the year it was last updated. If information in an area below is not shared, select 'Not shared'.

For Combined Authorities, please consult the guidance document when answering this question.

Please provide evidence in questions 10 to 12.

<b>Transport Assessment guidance, advice or signposting</b>	Before 2004
<b>Travel Plan guidance</b>	2016
<b>Parking standards (for vehicles and bicycles)</b>	2022
<b>Adoptable standards</b>	Before 2004

7) Do you currently require developers and planning applicants to use LTN1/20? If Yes, please provide evidence in questions 10 to 12.

Yes

8) Have you added ATE's planning application assessment toolkit to your local validation checklist for planning applications?

No

9) When undertaking maintenance / highways resurfacing schemes do you have a process to ensure you consider updating road markings to be in line with TSRGD 2016 and LTN1/20?

Yes

10) Please describe the evidence you have to support your answers to Q6, Q7 and Q9.

Note – Total funding for transport is our Integrated Transport Block grant. This figure does not include ATE, BSIP, Bikeability grants. Funding and staff figures do not include education transport delivery.

Transport Assessment guidance, advice or signposting

Guidance to Transport Assessment documents are used for thresholds of when we require transport assessments, travel plans and transport statements. Highways Development Management advise developers that they need to be taking LTN 1/20 on board in their discussions and correspondence. For LTN 1/20 and MfS, this is discussed at pre-application and early discussions with developers. At the application stage comments are given on what has been submitted.

Travel Plan guidance

The adopted Travel Planning SPD provides guidance on how Cheshire West and Chester Council will assess and deal with planning applications where a travel plan is required. It defines thresholds for requiring travel plans and sets out the process for production, assessment, approval and implementation of travel plans.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act has a provision that from the start of the new plan making system from 2024 that Councils are no longer able to prepare SPDs. This uncertainty means it is not effective to update existing SPDs.

Parking standards (for vehicles and bicycles)

The Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides guidance on what parking provision will be required by CW&C in new developments. It is intended to provide advice for applicants and decision makers. Consultation on an update to the Parking Standards SPD was undertaken late 2021. The revised SPD was then amended to take account of the comments received. The updated Parking Standards SPD was considered by Cabinet on 9 February 2022, where Members decided to adopt the SPD.

Adoptable standards

The Cheshire Design Aid (1996) is provided to developers.

We have begun work on revising our design standards and have very recently completed the 'Streets for All People' scoping strategy, commissioned through Create Streets (attached). This work has considered examples of development and highway works within the borough, existing policy analysis and interviews with officers, and key statistics of street design and health and wellbeing. This document provides recommendations for the next stages of this work.

Local validation checklist

The Council does not have a bespoke validation checklist (currently at an advanced draft stage). We use the national checklist. We expect developers to incorporate the toolkit in their scheme design.

Updating road markings to be in line with TSRGD 2016 and LTN1/20

While we don't have a written process, our inhouse Highways Design Engineering Team review new/upgrading and maintenance schemes with regard to current standards.

11) Please provide links to any supporting published evidence to support your answers to Q6 and Q7. Please provide a maximum of 5.

Adopted Development Plan documents <https://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/kse/folder/59487>

12) Please upload any unpublished evidence here of particular relevance. Please provide a maximum of 5 files.

- File: Adopted Travel Planning Guidance SPD Final.pdf
- File: Cheshire Design Aid.pdf
- File: Supplementary Planning Document Parking Standards Updated February 2022.pdf
- File: Cheshire West and Chester - Streets For All People scoping note 221123.pdf

## Section 2 - Local Leadership

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in leadership support (including leader and transport portfolio lead) for active travel policies:

Level 3 - Has members who are strong proponents of ambitious, LTN1/20-compliant active travel schemes, making it a top transport priority

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in leadership support (including leader and transport portfolio lead) for active travel delivery targets:

Level 3 - Has members who are very committed to increasing active travel in line with the government vision set out in Gear Change

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in commitment to design quality:

See here for descriptions of levels of complexity.

Level 2 - Has documented design quality policies and a track record of completing low and medium complexity LTN1/20 / MfS compliant active travel schemes

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in breadth of policies (as outlined in the introduction to Section 2 above):

Level 3 - Has policies in place to support and deliver an increase in active travel, covering between 8 and 12 of the policies listed

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1d, please select an overall level for local leadership that best represents your authority.

Level 3

3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 500 words.

- Council leader Cllr Gittins and Labour Party manifesto support.
- Deputy leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Highways Cllr Shore chaired the Integrated Sustainable Transport Forum - currently looking at how this group can become more effective in supporting delivery.
- Rose McArthur, Director of Transport and Highways demonstrates strong leadership, leading by example and established specific action, task and finish groups related to sustainable travel.
- Travel Demand Management (Behaviour Change) Working Group which includes Senior Officers, major employers, NHS, university.
- Developing Borough Plan 2024-2028 - completed public consultation. Proposes key priority to ensure sustainable transport is realistic option for residents: Improving public transport and supporting cycling and walking will connect more people to jobs and services, whilst helping tackle carbon emissions and congestion.
- Developing fourth Local Transport Plan - currently consulting ('Let's Talk about Transport'). Will inform drafting of vision and priorities for future local transport. Proposes 'decide and provide' approach. A pipeline of schemes is being developed.
- Close working with community groups eg Chester Residents Association Group, local cycling groups, neighbourhoods. Supported Chester Cycling Campaign and Active Cheshire to deliver ATFest 2023. Chester Councillors considering activities for next year to support Council's schools programme.
- Active Travel Social Prescribing Project in Ellesmere Port being delivered by Healthbox CIC.
- Health Improvement Strategy: Eat Well, Be Active.
- Local Government Declaration on Healthy Weight (signed 2019) - address childhood obesity with action to 'Promote Active Travel across the borough to increase physical activity, for social and employment opportunities and to minimise air pollution.'
- All Together Active Strategy (2022), a Cheshire and Merseyside Population Health Board programme developed to get 150,000 more people active across the sub-region. Whole-systems approach to increasing number of active people and decreasing sedentary behaviour - embedded physical activity to make it easier to be active and change behaviours across all stages of the life course. Active Travel is one of the 5 thematic groups.
- Climate Emergency Declaration 2019 - AT delivery a key element.
- Poverty Emergency Declaration 2020 – AT supports access.
- Mersey Dee Alliance member - commissioned cross-boundary LCWIP (soon be available for public/stakeholder consultation).
- Partnership with Cheshire East Council - commissioning cross-boundary LCWIP to determine AT routes between main settlements.
- ITB AT allocation 31% - developing designs of LCWIP routes and Chester cycle network, and traffic sensors to monitoring schemes. Plus allocation 8% for road safety programme. Also developing scheme designs through ATE, Levelling Up Fund and Natural England grants.
- Two pilot school streets launched 2023. Supported by schools, road safety education/highways/parking services teams.
- Designated Order for civil enforcement powers for moving traffic contraventions granted June 2023.
- Annual Local Safety Scheme Report is produced by the Highways Road Safety Team to inform priorities.
- Declared 4 AQMAs, each with a published action plan. This year, improvements in recorded pollutants has reduced this to Chester AQMA, where road traffic NO2 emissions are the source of the problem.
- Worked with Cheshire Police to identify lighting improvements for Chester footpaths/subways – motion detection and colour temperature providing additional reassurance and highlights individuals.

4) Please provide a maximum of 4 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

<https://www.alltogetheractive.org.uk/uncategorized/all-together-active-one-year-on/>  
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/road-safety/school-streets>  
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/lets-talk-about-transport>  
<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/northwich-regeneration/3083-ID-006-Northwich-Development-Framework.pdf>

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here of particular relevance to the level chosen in Q2, up to a maximum of 4 files.

- File: Ellesmere Port Active Travel Social Prescribing Dashboard 1 (Sept 23).pdf
- File: Labour Manifesto 2023 - transport references highlighted.pdf
- File: Moving Traffic - Designation Order - Cheshire West and Chester Leader of the Council and MPs letter.pdf
- File: Cllr Gittins - Climate Emissions Response to Council December 2023.pdf

## Section 3 - Network Planning

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in development and publication of LCWIPs:

Level 3 - Has finalised LCWIP(s) for all population centres above 20,000 and most (greater than 67%) are published

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in delivery of LCWIP schemes:

Level 1 - Has started delivering some of the schemes (less than 10%) prioritised within LCWIP(s)

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in stakeholder engagement on LCWIPs:

For reference: Equality Act 2010

Level 2 - Has completed engagement with stakeholder groups representing all people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in pipeline development and funding:

Level 2 - Has a mature draft long term (greater than 5 year) pipeline of active travel schemes ready for funding

1e) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in developer involvement:

Level 2 - Has a draft or final 10-year plan considering growth areas and how active travel schemes will help unlock those sites

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1e, please select an overall level for network planning that best represents your authority.

Level 2

3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 500 words.

#### Stakeholder engagement

The Council engages with local walking, wheeling and cycling interest groups, both directly and through the Integrated Sustainable Transport Taskforce (under review), chaired by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Strategic Transport.

The Council publishes consultations and public engagement on the website. Relevant Town and Parish Councils provide additional opportunity to reach wider groups to gather local views on issues and opportunities. Stakeholder groups such as business and community groups also notified of public engagement through Council newsletters and appropriate Forums through our Localities Teams.

#### Recent example of process for Ellesmere Port proposals:

- Early stage, site visit with Access Officer and cycling group
- Corporate Disability Access Forum (CW&C, local and regional disability organisations and local access groups) presentation and questions
- Equality Impact Assessments during scheme design
- Online survey – promoted via social media, newsletters, ward councillors, MP, business and resident letter drop, leaflets
- Drop in sessions at market over 3 weeks
- Results reported to LUF board
- Survey feedback to be published in new year

#### LCWIP Pipeline Projects

In design this year:

- Northwich - Active Travel Tranche 3
- Ellesmere Port - Levelling Up Fund – Active Travel Route, Public Realm and Market
- Ellesmere Port - Active Travel Tranche 4
- Winsford - Road One and Two
- Ellesmere Port - Overpool Road
- Chester - Pink cycle route (city centre to zoo)
- Chester – Lache

#### Local Plan (Part Two) 2010-2030, adopted in 2019:

- Policy CH 2 – Chester Regeneration areas – where relevant must: promote safe walking and cycling routes into and within these areas, and minimise the impact of traffic.
- Policy CH 2.D – Northgate – must be in line with Local Plan (Part One) policies STRAT 3 and ECON 2. Proposals that include the provision of the following will be supported: leisure and retail uses that incorporate active frontages along key pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Policy N 2 – Northwich Regeneration areas – where relevant must: promote safe walking and cycling routes into and within these areas, and minimise the impact of traffic.
- Policy N 5 – Gadbrook Park – Employment development on land to the south-west of Gadbrook Park, should: include measures to improve access by walking, cycling and public transport and provide connections to the surrounding area and established business park.

Recent adopted Frameworks include Northwich and development of Chester City Gateway. An Action Plan from the Lache Masterplan has been approved by Cabinet.

4) Please provide a maximum of 5 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

LCWIP [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/transport/cycling/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-2020-2030.pdf](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/transport/cycling/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plan-2020-2030.pdf)

Local Plan Part Two [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-performance/council-plans-policies-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-part-two](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/policies-and-performance/council-plans-policies-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-part-two)

Northwich ATF3 engagement [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/regeneration-of-west-cheshire/northwich-regeneration/improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-access-in-northwich](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/regeneration-of-west-cheshire/northwich-regeneration/improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-access-in-northwich)

Chester City Gateway <https://chestercitygateway.co.uk/#home>

ATF 2 Engagement Plan [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/highways/major-road-schemes/active-travel/tranche-2-engagement-plan](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/highways/major-road-schemes/active-travel/tranche-2-engagement-plan)

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here of particular relevance to the level chosen in Q2, up to a maximum of 5 files.

- File: CDAF Minutes from 25th October 2023.pdf
- File: Ellemsere Port Active Travel Engagement Report V.3.pdf
- File: 220317\_Lache Engagement Report\_Digital.pdf

## Section 4 - Delivery

1a) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in scheme delivery (complexity):

Level 2 - Has delivered a mix of low and medium complexity LTN1/20-compliant schemes

1b) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in consultation on schemes:

Level 2 - Meets at least the minimum statutory duty for consultation and engages all key stakeholders before implementing schemes, with more comprehensive consultation for more complex schemes

1c) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in network integration:

Level 2 - Is beginning to deliver an integrated network and the majority of new schemes are part of that network

1d) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in developer involvement:

Level 3 - Requires all developers (with developments above 150 residential units or equivalent) to fund and contribute to this network via the planning process

1e) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in capital schemes delivery:

Level 2 - Has delivered some capital schemes (33% to 66%) on time

1f) Please choose the level that best represents your authority in revenue schemes delivery:

Level 2 - Has delivered some revenue schemes (33% to 66%) on time

2) Based on your responses to Q1a to Q1f, please select an overall level for delivery that best represents your authority.

Level 2



3) Please describe the evidence you have to support your assessment in Q2. Maximum 500 words.

Selected Level 1 - Has started delivering some of the schemes (less than 10%) prioritised within LCWIP(s). However we are developing detailed design funded through ITB to provide a pipeline of schemes to enable delivery. We are restricted in delivery if we remain at Level 1. Our Highways Team are also incorporating active travel within the highway network for example installation of signalised crossings and junction improvements.

Capital projects delivered last year:

- A51 Wicker Lane junction – brought up to current standards, increasing capacity and safety for cyclists, including bus stop kerbs
- Norley Road, Cuddington – new Zebra crossing
- Rossmore and Neston area – dropped kerbs
- Pepper Street, Chester - new puffin crossing

Upcoming:

- A540 Raby Park Road – including toucan crossings (£2m 2022-25 delivery autumn 2024)
- PROW King Charles III England Coast Path (£822,545 Natural England grant, delivery January-March 2024)
- PROW NCN 56 Dunkirk to Lea-by-Backford – removal or installation of accessible accesses at 7 locations (£50k Rural England Prosperity Fund, design and construction October-March 2024)

Developer contribution examples include:

- £4.2M S106 agreement was secured through planning committee as part of the Saughton Camp residential development. A Travel Demand Study has been completed to define what measures the monies will be spent on. Sustainable and active travel is at the forefront. We are currently discussing priorities for delivery with ward councillors.
- Wrexham Road S278
- Ledshame Garden Village

Provided 50% match funding for the ATF2 Helsby Active Travel scheme, a significant proportion of our total ITB 2022-23.

We are compliant with the Network Management Duty guidance, last updated in April 2022.

Council applied for delegation of powers in May 2022 and has adopted them for moving traffic offences. Restrictions in parking availability is demonstrated through Residents Parking Schemes, with restriction on pavement/verge parking currently being explored in certain areas.

New speed limit policy to replace the existing 2013 document is in development and focusses on 20mph. A road safety analysis report is completed annually to identify priority areas.

Revenue delivery includes:

Road Safety Education programmes:

- Bikeability Level 2 offered to all Primary Schools. Adult and family training offered when funding allows.
- Junior Safety Officer programme – volunteer pupils are supported throughout the year by monthly newsletters and videos on a range of topics.
- School parking charters
- Modeshift STARS is promoted to all schools to encourage submission of hands up data and other travel planning measures to work towards awards.

Helsby Frodsham Active Travel project 2022-23

- Sustrans commissioned to deliver area project focussing on transition to Helsby High School, active travel activity delivery to support Helsby Active Travel scheme.

Total Environment Team:

- Cheshire West Wellbeing Walks Network includes 25+ walks led by the Health Rangers at CW&C, volunteers and partner organisations. A partnership with Ramblers Wellbeing Walks enables the network to deliver and coordinate volunteer training so they are able to lead walks independently and sustain activities. Walks are supporting 315+ people weekly to increase/maintain physical activity, improve strength and stamina, connect to community and improve health and wellbeing.

4) Please provide a maximum of 6 links to any published evidence referred to in Q3.

King Charles III Footpath [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/king-charles-iii-footpath](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/king-charles-iii-footpath)  
Plans submitted for Ellesmere Port Market Improvements  
[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/plans-submitted-for-ellesmere-port-market-improvements](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/plans-submitted-for-ellesmere-port-market-improvements)  
Improving Walking, Wheeling and Cycling in Northwich [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-in-northwich](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-in-northwich)  
Ellesmere Port Transformation [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/ellesmere-port-transformation-improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-links](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/ellesmere-port-transformation-improving-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-links)  
Ellesmere Port Levelling Up Fund and ATF4 Engagement  
[www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/regeneration-of-west-cheshire/ellesmere-port-regeneration](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/regeneration-of-west-cheshire/ellesmere-port-regeneration)  
Pepper Street pedestrian crossing [www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/road-closure-in-pepper-street-needed-in-early-october-for-new-pedestrian-crossing](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/news/road-closure-in-pepper-street-needed-in-early-october-for-new-pedestrian-crossing)

5) Please upload any unpublished evidence here of particular relevance to the level chosen in Q2, up to a maximum of 6 files.

- File: Chester Safer Walking Routes CWaC-SL072-1300-001-B (column works)-SL072-OVERVIEW.pdf
- File: Saughton Camp Evidence Base Report V3.0.pdf
- File: Sustrans Frodsham and Helsby Active Travel Final Report\_HM\_V14\_14.12.23 draft.pdf
- File: Local Safety Schemes 2023 report.pdf
- File: Wrexham Road (Location 3), Chester (3029287) 13th June 2019.pdf
- File: Ledsham Garden Village 4343234-1300-02-02-001-Phase 6 - 11 Master Plan Colour Rev C.pdf

## Section 5 - Overall Capability Rating

1) As part of Sections 2 to 4 you have provided the following ratings:

Local Leadership - Level 3  
Network Planning - Level 2  
Delivery - Level 2

Please find your current Capability Rating as published March 2023 here.

Based on your responses to Sections 2 to 4 and the criteria below, please provide your own assessment of your current capability. We will validate this as part of the process to derive updated Capability Ratings.

Level 2 - Strong local leadership, with clear plans that form the basis of an emerging network with a few elements already in place

2) If your selected level is different from your current Capability Rating as published in March 2023, please summarise the key evidence supporting the change in level. Maximum of 500 words.

We are now moving forward on developing key policies such as our fourth Local Transport Plan, which is on course for public consultation of the draft Plan in late 2024 with adoption in 2025. Moving to the proposed decide and provide scheme delivery will underpin sustainable transport provision across the borough' highway networks. Newly adopted area frameworks highlight the requirement for active travel, and public and stakeholder consultation has demonstrated that our residents and businesses want this. We have begun work on a new street design code and will be taking this forward to support the vision of LTP4.

Since the previous Capability Rating, we have begun developing a pipeline of LCWIP schemes with detailed design due this year. This is an ongoing programme where will begin delivery next year with some elements funded by our ITB allocation. This puts us in a much-improved position for making funding applications and to deliver. Colleagues from a range of teams across the Council are successfully bidding for grant funding and including active travel in their projects. We have improved the coordination between our Strategic Transport and Highways Teams so that opportunities to deliver LCWIP elements will not be missed. We are also working closely with our Public Health Team on active travel opportunities, key to the health and wellbeing of our residents. Very recently almost 60 council officers from planning, highways, development management, local plan and total environment teams attended LTN1/20 training delivered by PJA. This will improve knowledge for delivery and help to make the case for increasing developer contributions.

This year we are delivering our ATF4 programme to design two schemes within the funding timeframe. We have also got our ATF3 project design underway, after receiving agreement on the project scope from yourselves. Both scheme designs have recently been subject to public engagement and our proposals has received high levels of feedback to inform designs. We will be taking forward detailed design in the new year.

Our LCWIP networks are being developed to link our key settlements. We are working with our neighbouring authorities, both through the Mersey Dee Alliance and with Cheshire East on cross-boundary links. This work means we will have key routes identified to support areas of employment, public transport and residents. Our Climate Emergency and Poverty Emergency declarations will be supported by these links.

Our work with health teams both in the borough and regionally supports active travel for daily lifestyle activity. We are going to build on recent projects to back up infrastructure delivery, both through in-house resource and working with our communities. We are developing promotional resources for active travel which will support our existing programmes being delivered by our enthusiastic Road Safety Education Team.

Continuing political support from Cabinet members is demonstrated by our Leader and Deputy Leader. We are planning a sustainable transport session for new councillors in the new year.

## Section 6 - Feedback

Thank you for completing this survey. We would appreciate your time to provide feedback below.

1 - very easy   2   3 - medium   4   5 - very difficult

How easy was it to complete this survey?

X

Are there any improvements you would recommend for future self-assessment surveys?

Some of the questions are ambiguous.

The restricted word limit makes it very difficult to provide much context or detail beyond lists. This is the same for providing sufficient evidence and links for some sections.

It is difficult to acknowledge the available staff and financial resource available to us. We are competing on delivery (and therefore rating) with Combined Authorities who have significantly more resource available.

Bit frustrating when you get near the end of uploading everything and the survey crashes! This has also happened with previous surveys.

## Finalise your response

Please confirm that your response has been agreed by the Senior Responsible Officer for walking and cycling.

Yes