

FEBRUARY 2021



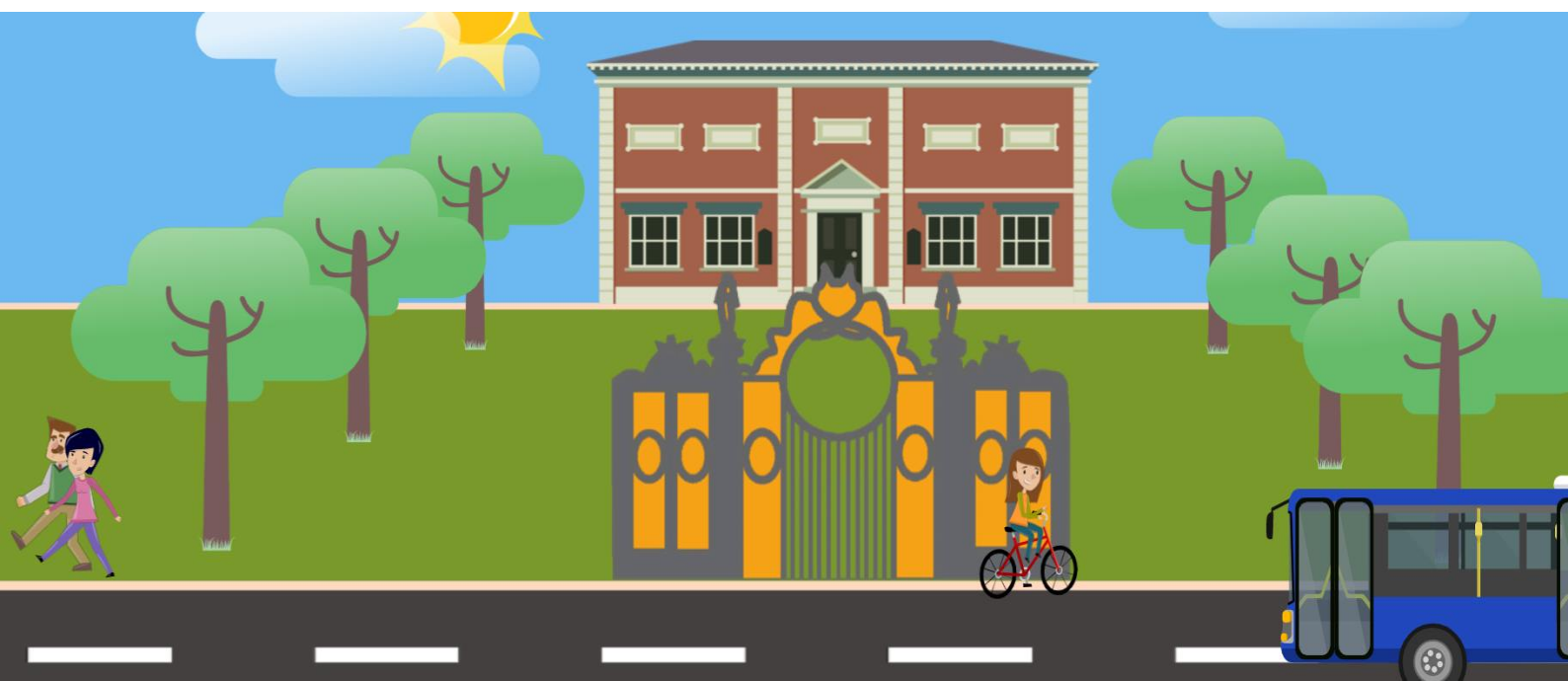
WARRINGTON
Borough Council

WARRINGTON

FOURTH LOCAL

TRANSPORT PLAN

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2021



Foreword

I am pleased to present the first Annual Progress Report on our fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

LTP4 was adopted as Council policy in December 2019. The time since then has been an extraordinary period for all of us due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This has had an unprecedented effect on transport in Warrington, with a huge drop in vehicles using our highway network, a large drop in public transport use, and increases in walking and cycling like we have never seen before.

This progress report explains how we have responded to the challenges and opportunities that the change in travel patterns has presented. This includes ensuring that key workers are able to get to work, working with local bus operators to maintain suitable levels of service, and putting measures in place to create a safer environment for the increased numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.

Our work to respond to the pandemic has been done alongside a wide range of other work that is being done to deliver the LTP4 vision to make Warrington a thriving, attractive, accessible and well-connected place with popular, high quality walking, cycling and public transport networks supporting our carbon-neutral future.

This includes developing the full Business Case for the Warrington Western Link. We have opened a new rail station at Warrington West and made significant progress on a number of major active travel and highway schemes including Centre Park Link, Omega Local Highways, and Warrington East.

The report outlines the great work that we are doing to manage, maintain, and improve safety on our highway network; and how we are supporting people to travel in more sustainable ways. It also sets out how we are undertaking study work to ensure that our transport network in the future will continue to support economic growth, improve air quality, and reduce carbon emissions.

Councillor Hans Mundry
Cabinet Member
Highways, Transportation and Public Realm



ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2021 - SUMMARY

Our Vision: Warrington will be a thriving, attractive, accessible and well-connected place with popular, high quality walking, cycling and public transport networks supporting our carbon-neutral future

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant fewer cars on our roads, and big increases in walking and cycling, providing a opportunity to implement long-lasting shift to sustainable transport.

Post Covid Recovery Active Travel Funding

Phase 1 – June/July 2020

We:

- Widened key footways
- Increased cycleways
- Prioritised pedestrians at crossings
- Made roads more pedestrian and cycle focused
- Made cycling into the town centre more accessible

Phase 2 – From Nov 2020

With a £650,000 award we are:

- Monitoring the Phase 1 measures
- Proposing to create meaningful improvements
- Aiming to increase active travel
- Delivering improvements by spring 2021

Highway Maintenance since 2016/17

67

A, B, C Class Road Schemes

214

Unclassified Road Schemes

150

Footway Scheme

£5m

In 2020 we delivered a £5 million active travel programme including new cycle schemes in Omega, Woolston, Appleton Thorn, Latchford, Birchwood, Sankey Bridges and Padgate

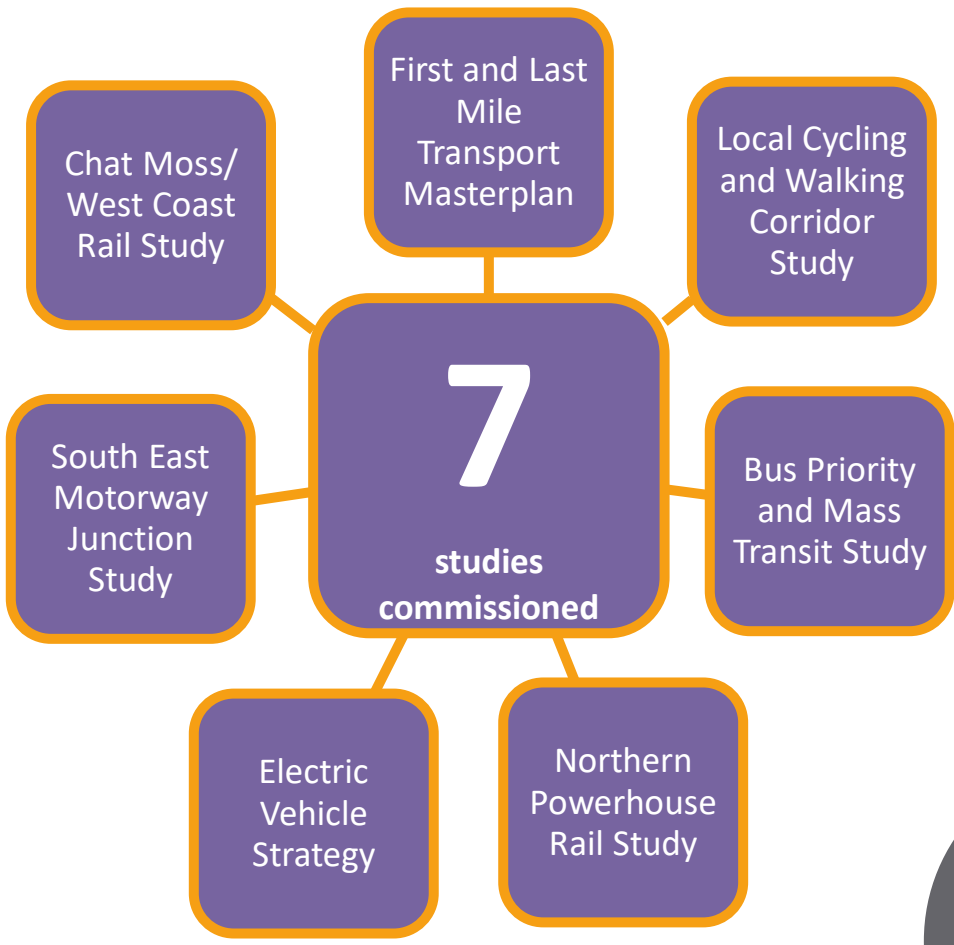
Significant progress on 11 major schemes:

- Warrington West Station – Now Open
- Centre Park Link (CPL) – Opening Soon
- Warrington East Phase 2 – Now Open
- Warrington East Phase 3 - Now Open
- Omega-Burtonwood Accessibility Improvement – Construction Started
- Chester Road Foot/Cycleway – Coordinated with CPL work
- Trans-Pennine Trail Upgrade – Completed by March 2021
- Omega Boulevard/Lingley Green Avenue – Complete May 2021
- A57 Liverpool Road/Lingley Green Avenue – Construction Started
- Whittle Avenue/Lingley Green Avenue – Construction Started
- Burtonwood Road/Whittle Avenue – Scheme in Development

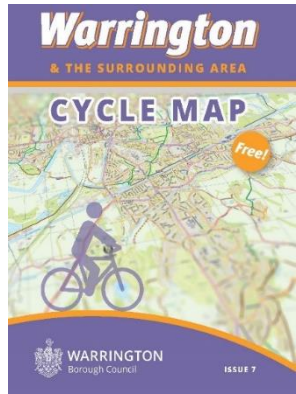
And work is progressing on Western Link

11

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2021 - SUMMARY



- Funding secured for a new bus depot on Dallam Lane
- New bus depot will have passive provision for electric buses
- Proposals developing for an electric bus fleet
- Increasing use of RingGo app for parking
- Developing proposals for on-street EV chargers
- Town Centre Travel Plan in development
- Our first school streets project launched



Updated Warrington Cycle Map distributed to residents across the borough

17
2020 saw 17 fewer bridge swings in the peak than 2019

FEBRUARY 2021



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FOURTH LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT 2021



Introduction

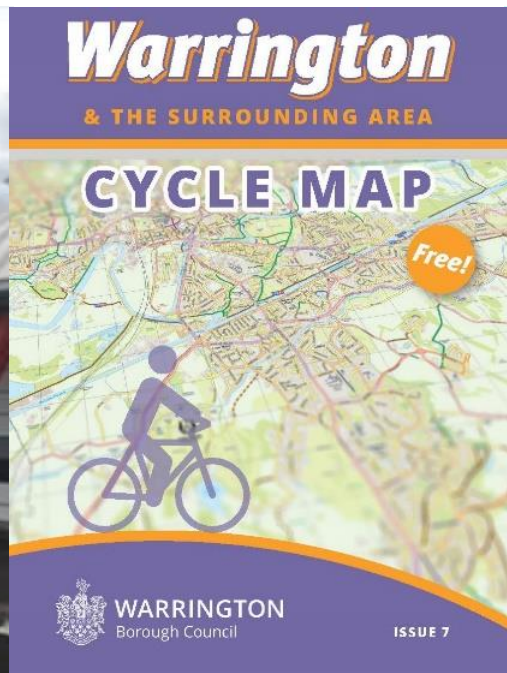
Local Transport Plan 4

Our fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) was adopted in December 2019 following an extensive consultation and engagement process. It sets objectives for transport to support our wider goals and ambitions; establishes policies to help us achieve these objectives; and contains plans for implementing these policies. This Annual Progress Report assesses the delivery of LTP4 during the first 14 months since its adoption.

Vision

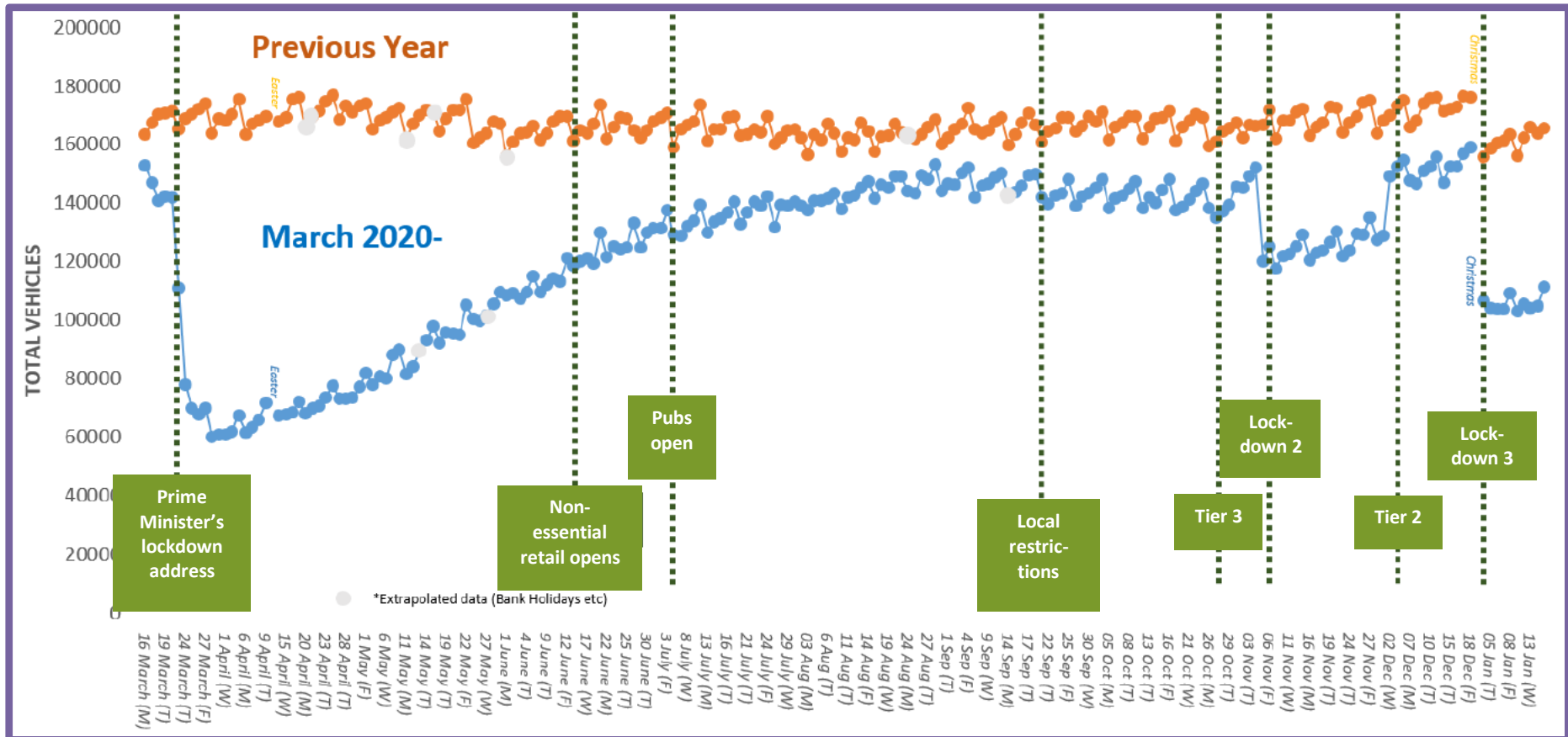
The vision that we set out for transport is that:

Warrington will be a thriving, attractive, accessible and well-connected place with popular, high quality walking, cycling and public transport networks supporting our carbon-neutral future

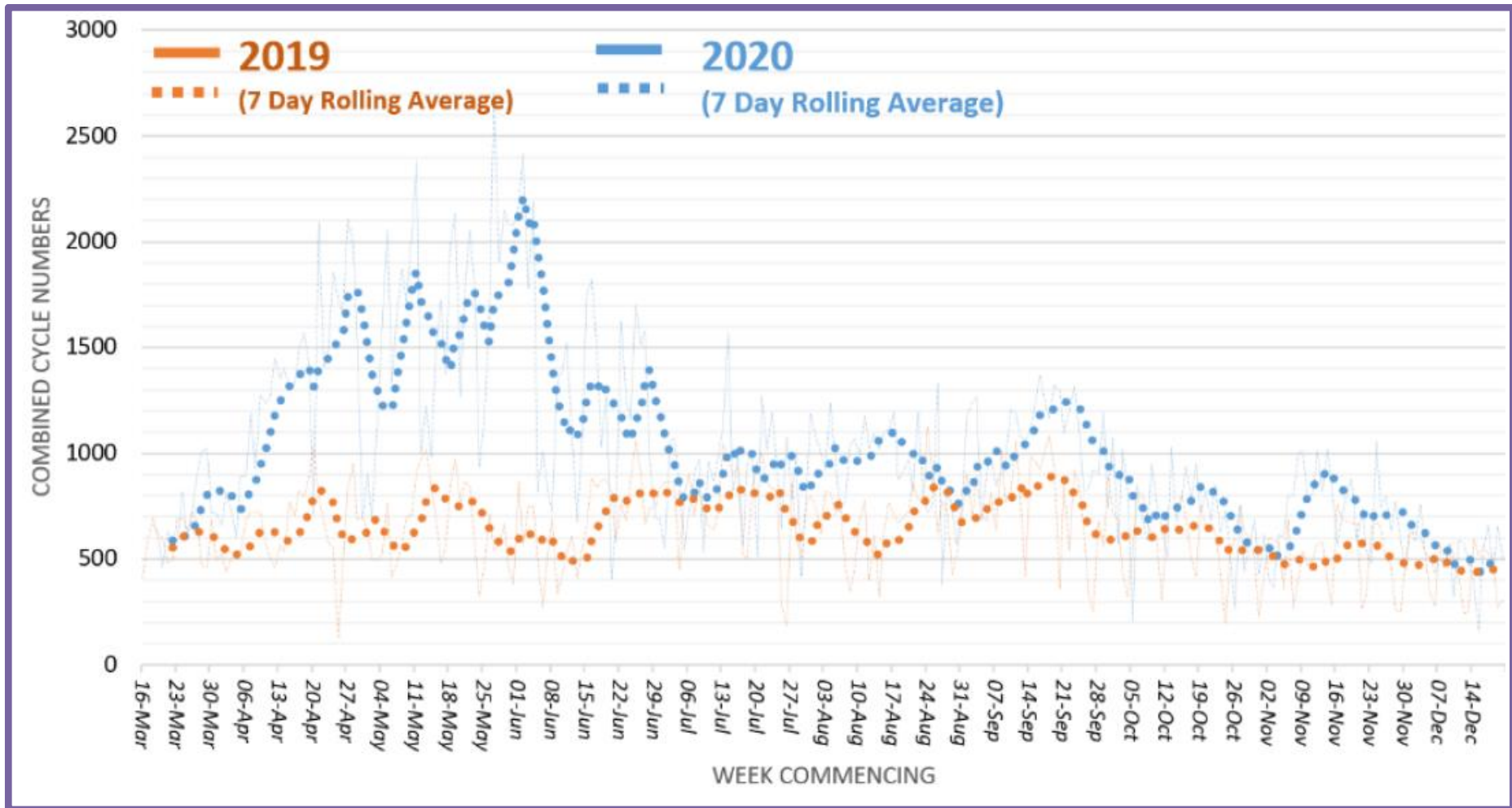


Effects of COVID-19

In the months since LTP4 was adopted Warrington, along with the rest of the UK, has been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. This resulted in unprecedented changes in the how, why, and how much we all travel. A year on year comparison of the number of vehicles on our network is below:



This created challenges for transport in Warrington, such as ensuring that key workers are able to travel to work, and a significant decline in public transport use. However, this change in travel behaviour has led to far fewer cars on our roads, and there has been increases in walking and cycling at rates that have never been seen before. This has provided a unique opportunity to implement long-lasting change to support and encourage the increase in demand for sustainable travel options. A year on year comparison of cycling trips is below:



Active Travel Funding

Phase 1 - Emergency Active Travel Funding June and July 2020

In summer 2020 Government made funding available to local authorities to support the re-start of local transport and enhance active travel. We used this funding to:

- widen key footways in shopping areas by removing pedestrian guard rails and installing temporary barriers at pinch-point areas to accommodate the increased numbers in pedestrians and provide room for social distancing
- increase the number of dedicated cycle lanes, using temporary barriers and signs
- change some traffic signals to prioritise 'green time' for residents and ensure pedestrian and cyclist safety
- change some town centre roads, including new one-way roads, to make it more pedestrian and cycle focused
- make cycle ways into the town centre much more accessible, by replacing existing trails with long-lasting and fit-for-purpose cycleways

Phase 2 - Active Travel Funding Announced November 2020

We have been awarded £650,000 from Government to help create a safer environment for cyclists and pedestrians in the borough through Phase 2 of the Active Travel Fund.

This grant represents an excellent opportunity to bring forward a wide range of active travel initiatives for our residents. Many of the schemes and measures that we put forward in our bid form part of our existing strategic vision.

Our bid centered around creating meaningful, quality improvements to the transport network that are focused on shifting some of the long-held priorities of the network away from vehicles, to cyclists and pedestrians.

In support of the Phase 2 bid, we have been monitoring the range of temporary emergency schemes implemented with the Phase 1 funding, in order to determine which are having the desired impact and which would be suitable to be made permanent.

Public and stakeholder consultation will be a key element of rolling out the measures, and public consultation will be carried on proposed permanent measures to be implemented. The schemes will then be delivered by spring 2021.

We launched our first School Streets project in November. This has been well received and increased demand for similar projects in other school communities.

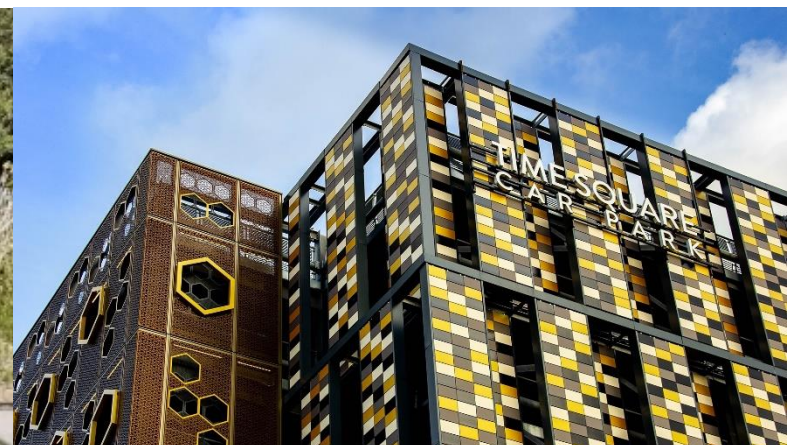


Local Transport Plan Studies

Planning for the future of transport in Warrington requires us to undertake the study work that will help us to identify the right schemes to take forward and ensure that we achieve best value from any capital funding that becomes available for schemes.

Study	Status	Summary
First and Last Mile	Ongoing study commissioned Jan 2020	A Transport Masterplan is being developed by the Warrington First & Last Mile study, with the aim of providing high quality and fit for purpose transport infrastructure to make walking, cycling and public transport the obvious way to get to, from, and through Warrington town centre.
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	Ongoing study commissioned Jan 2020	The Warrington LCWIP is the main delivery vehicle to meet the ambitious target set in LTP4 to more than treble cycling and walking over the next 20 years. Study work is underway to develop some of the key corridors concepts into deliverable transformational schemes.
Bus Priority and Mass Transit	Ongoing study commissioned June 2020	LTP4 contains an ambitious target to triple the use of public transport over the next 20 years by delivering a transformational change in the local public transport offer. This work will identify improvements to the public transport network in the short and longer terms.
Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR)	Report being finalised	Warrington has been designated as an 'Other Strategic Economic Centre' on the NPR route and it has been confirmed that a Warrington station will be an integral part of the network. This study made the strategic economic case for this station to be located in the centre of Warrington rather than in a rural parkway location.

Study	Status	Summary
Electric Vehicle	Draft report ready for consultation	This study is setting out a strategic response to the emergence of electric vehicles. It identifies, scopes and addresses the infrastructure needs and issues related to electric vehicles.
South East Motorway Junctions	Ongoing Study	Warrington's Draft Local Plan proposes a major urban extension through the release of Green Belt in south east Warrington. This new Garden Suburb connects to the strategic road network at junction 20 of the M6 and junction 10 of the M56. The study will identify preferred improvement options for both junctions.
Chat Moss / West Coast Rail	Report being finalised	Study commissioned by Transport for Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Cheshire East Council to develop a strategic plan for the Chat Moss and West Coast rail network, considering a timescale for interventions of up to 2040.
Cheshire Bus Strategy	Ongoing Study	We are working with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership on a Regional Bus Strategy. This will be informed by, and support, the emerging National Bus Strategy



Major Scheme Updates

Western Link

A Detailed Design partner has now been appointed and the first stage of this design commission has commenced which will culminate in submission of a planning application for the scheme, currently programmed for May 2021. Surveys and site investigations to inform the detailed design process are ongoing with a suite of Ecology surveys taking place until early 2021. Air quality monitoring requirements for the scheme are agreed with the Councils Environmental Protection Officer for Air.

Scheme funding and progression remains subject to the approval of a full major scheme business case, which will be scrutinised by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Engagement continues with delivery partners and stakeholders.

Warrington West Station

The construction activities are now complete and the station opened to the public on 15th December 2019. Reports are that the station, car park, drop off, cycle facilities and buses were well used before the pandemic reduced travel.



Centre Park Link



Construction commenced on site June 2019. Work has progressed on site despite Covid-19 restrictions, with changed working practises to comply with safe site operating procedures guidance. The New Mersey Bridge has now opened for access only, with the full scheme completed and open to traffic early 2021. The scheme remains within budget.

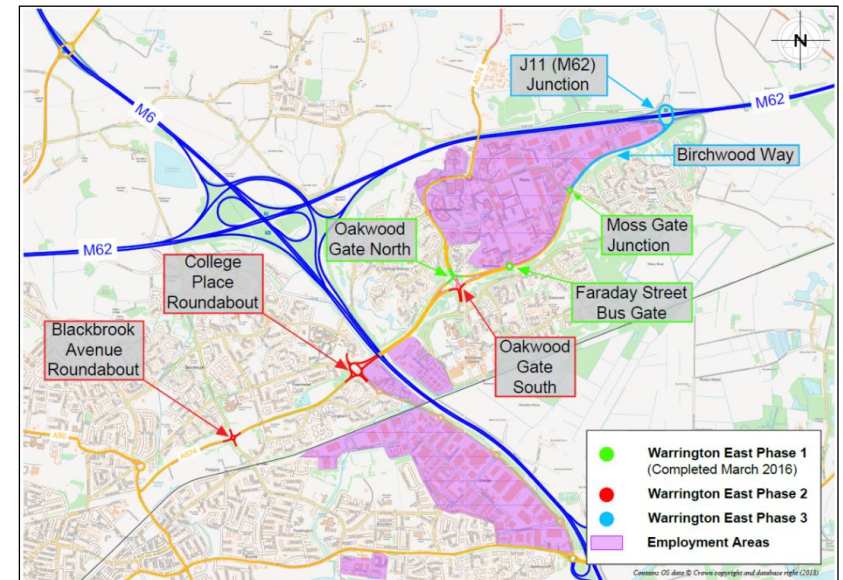
Warrington East Phase 2 & 3

Phase 2 was completed in October 2019, with Phase 3 following closely behind in December 2019 with both now fully open to traffic. Landscaping work is complete and verges and planting areas are now under a maintenance period

Post-scheme monitoring is to take place to confirm performance, and the benefits of the project in terms of improved traffic flows are already noticeable.

Trees and saplings have been planted on the south side of the new carriageway in Phase 3 to blend into the existing woodland.

Some additional signage and road marking are to be installed at College Place to help guide traffic around the junction, aiding operation and safety.



Strategic Cycle Improvements

Omega to Burtonwood Accessibility Improvements (£1.35m)

A new shared use footway cycleway between M62 Junction 8 and Burtonwood village alongside Clay Lane. The project is funded by Omega S106, Local Growth fund and WBC borrowing. The scheme was completed in February 2021.

Chester Road Footway Cycleway Improvements (£900,000)

New/upgraded shared use footway along Chester Road between the new Centre Park Link Bridge and Lower Bridge Street. Includes improved crossing facilities. Funded by Local Growth Fund and WBC borrowing. Programme of works being planned to coordinate with Centre Park Link works and start in February 2021.

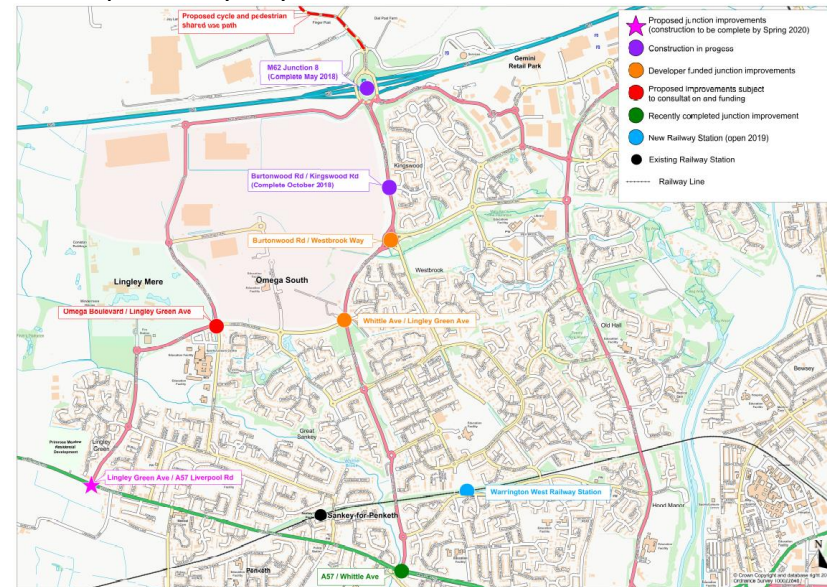
Trans Pennine Trail Upgrade (£750,000)

Upgrade of Trans Pennine Trail between Wilderspool Causeway and Knutsford Road, including new crossing facilities. Funded by Local Growth Fund and WBC borrowing. The scheme is now under construction and expected to complete in April 2021. .

Omega Local Highways

Phase 1 – Omega Boulevard/Lingley Green Avenue Junction Improvement

LGF3 and S106 funded project. Enlarged roundabout plus capacity improvement at Hub junction. Includes extensive pedestrian and cycle facilities linking back to Omega Boulevard, Park Road and Kingsdale Road. Works commenced on site July 2020 and are due for completion by July 2021.



Phase 2b – A57 Liverpool Road/Lingley Green Avenue Junction Improvements

Junction capacity enhancement plus pedestrian and cycle facilities, linking to Phase 1. Main construction works provisionally programmed to commence on site January 2021.

Phase 3b – Whittle Avenue/Lingley Green Avenue Roundabout Improvements

Capacity improvement with widened approaches to roundabout plus improved pedestrian and cycle facilities. Funded from £8.2m S106 payment received from Omega Warrington Ltd for mitigation measures related to Omega Zones 3-6. Construction started on 13th January 2020 and is ongoing with completion in January 2021.

Phase 3c – Burtonwood Road/Whittle Avenue Roundabout Improvements

Option testing currently taking place to determine the form that the developer funded junction improvements should take to provide maximum transport benefit with the balance of the £8.2m received as a S106. Subject to scheme development and public consultation, it is currently programmed that the construction phase of the scheme will commence in 2021/22.

LTP Theme Updates

Active Travel

Impact of Covid-19

A doubling of cycling during the lockdown months of March, April and May with ongoing high figures throughout the summer months despite the return of most of the traffic on the network

Active Travel Programme Delivery

During 2020/21 we are delivering a £5 million active travel programme that includes new cycle schemes in Omega, Woolston, Appleton Thorn, Latchford, Birchwood, Sankey Bridges and Padgate.

Further Planned schemes

Improvements are planned to paths within Sankey Valley and on the Trans-Pennine Trail near Lymm. New paths will also be constructed in Westbrook, Birchwood and Fearnhead.

Priorities for next 12 months

The priorities for Active Travel for the next twelve months are:

- Completion of LCWIP corridor study and identifying potential funding
- Delivery of Active Travel Fund schemes

Smarter Travel Choices

Progress on Projects

- **The Town Centre Travel Plan** continues to be researched and developed. A brochure has been produced to inform partners of possible schemes and activities to be included. Initial funding has come from current developer contributions, to allow active travel schemes for the town centre to be set up and sustained.
- **Warrington West railway station** - a travel plan was developed to encourage passengers to travel sustainably to the station. Large bus and cycle route maps have been erected within the waiting room, secure cycle parking erected, and routes to the station improved to encourage active travel.
- **The Warrington Cycle Map** - updated to reflect recent additions to cycle infrastructure. Funding from Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund has allowed it to be distributed to residents borough-wide.

Impact of Covid-19

With many office-based workplaces empty since employees have been furloughed or started working from home, the business park-based travel activities with commuters have slowed. Meanwhile many of the distribution warehouses have been busier than ever and employees have been supported to cycle to work by additional events including bike maintenance checks and route advice.

With greater numbers of novice cyclists taking the opportunity to get out on bikes while the roads were quieter than normal, a programme of adult and family cycle training was promoted to ensure they had the skills to continue once the roads became busier. Over two months a total of twenty five residents benefitted from this free road-skills training and it is planned to continue this offer to encourage more to cycle safely.

The Sustainable Travel to School strategy has been updated to reflect the ongoing challenges of Covid-19. Concerns were raised that with national messaging on the high risk of infection by travelling on public transport, many families would resort to driving to school, bringing greater parking and network congestion than could be contained in local areas. A Schools Restart programme started in June to support the reopening of schools to some year groups in July, and to all in September. Each school site was visited and audited to determine if additional safety measures were required, including pavement space for social distancing and parking enforcement. A comprehensive messaging programme was also developed to promote greater use of active travel to school and that the careful use of school bus transport is safe. Follow-up school visits are currently underway to identify any other measures needed to support the return to school.

Priorities for next 12 months

A programme of support will be developed to help jobseekers travel to new workplaces. This will include 'How to Get to' guides and support to cycle to work for those who can. The adult cycle training programme will be further developed, as will the Bikeability offer to schoolchildren and teenagers

Bus

Effect of Covid-19

When lockdown restrictions on travel were first introduced, the number of services operating was reduced and bus patronage dropped as low as 4% of what it had been in the same week the previous year. During the third lockdown period we have seen patronage of 20-30% of the previous year. Throughout this period we have worked with local bus operators to maintain suitable levels of service frequency using Government funding. This has seen service provision maintained for key workers and essential journeys.

Cleaner Buses Proposals

We submitted an Expression of Interest to Government to become the UK's first all-electric bus town, which would have seen all service buses that operate in the borough to be replaced by an electric bus. Although ultimately unsuccessful, the proposal is a sound basis that can be revised for submission for future funding that is made available for introducing zero emission buses. We have also submitted an application for the Air Quality Grant that, if successful, will see 11 buses that operate the Pops route upgraded from Euro V to Euro VI emission standard by retro-fitting exhaust equipment.

New Bus Depot

Warrington is set to receive £5.2m from Government for a new bus depot on Dallam Lane, closer to the bus interchange. The new depot, on land owned by the Council, has already received planning permission and will involve the relocation of Warrington's Own Buses Depot from its current site to a purpose-built new depot. The existing Warrington's Own Buses bus depot on Wilderspool Causeway will be re-developed for town centre housing.

Rail

Effect of Covid-19

Operators have continued to run day-to-day services on reduced timetables. There has been a temporary suspension of existing franchise requirements during this period, which has seen significant reductions in service levels

Train Operating Companies

The government, as Operator of Last Resort, took over the running of services across the Northern network on 1st March 2020. Government announced that overcrowding the network would be a priority for improvement.

Avanti took over operating the West Coast franchise in late 2019. We are working with them to identify opportunities at Warrington Bank Quay.

Safer Travel

Highway Infrastructure Improvements Programme

The Local Transport Plan Integrated Block capital allocation to deliver highway infrastructure improvements in 2019/20 includes allocations for programme themes of Local Safety Schemes, Pedestrian Crossing Improvements, Traffic Management Minor Works, and Safe Routes to School. Additional schemes are being accelerated through allocations from the Challenge Fund. The overall programme identified consists of 3 pedestrian crossing improvements, 3 potential Local Safety Schemes, 6 Traffic Management Minor Works and 2 projects to assist the journey to school.

Priorities for the Next 12 Months

Traditional approaches for road safety behavioural change have been severely limited as a result of Covid restrictions and the changes in travel and work patterns. The natural platforms for personal and group engagement have been removed meaning we must further develop road safety promotion in digital resources and virtual engagement. We will continue to focus on our established priority casualty groups and work-related road safety, whilst being proactive in the promotion of measures reduce the potential increased risk to cyclists and pedestrians as we look to further promote these modes of travel in Warrington. We will also continue to support schools and promote the opportunities of School Streets schemes.

Cleaner Fuels

EV Strategy

We have commissioned consultancy support to develop an Electric Vehicle Strategy for Warrington. This includes:

- A review of current national, regional, sub-regional and local policy and legislation and how this relates to the objectives for Warrington
- Evidence base and analysis
- Identification and appraisal of potential measures
- Identification of future charging infrastructure locations

We are now developing a Taxi Electric vehicle strategy aimed specifically at increasing uptake of electric vehicles in the taxi industry.

Town Centre On-Street Chargers

We are developing an application for funding to install 30 on-street electric vehicle chargers on streets in central Warrington where the majority of residents do not have off-street parking.

Priorities for Next 12 Months

The priorities for the Cleaner fuels for the next twelve months will be progressing the actions identified in the Electric Vehicle Strategy in order to support the uptake of Electric Vehicles in Warrington.

Freight Management

Freight Study Work

We have commissioned consultancy support to undertake a desktop study and literature review including best practice and case studies regarding:

- Clean Air & Consolidation Centres
- Construction Logistics Plans and Construction Consolidation Centres
- Lorry Parking in the Warrington Area
- Potential for Multimodal Freight Transport in Warrington

Network Management

Effect of Covid-19

The lockdown associated with the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on traffic levels, with both traffic flow and parking demand dropping by 80% compared to 2019. Lockdown easing saw traffic flow and parking demand increase again. By mid-August these had reached 83% of 2019 figures, before dropping again with later lockdown announcements.

Parking Payment App

Use of the RingGo app to pay for parking has increased rapidly since lockdown began to ease. Use had been increasing slightly year on year prior to lockdown but usage has now doubled overall, with the main contributor being Walton Hall Gardens (1150 in July 2019 compared to 4237 in July 2020).

Manchester Ship Canal

2020 saw a significant reduction in the number of sailings on the Manchester Ship Canal, with a total of 214 sailings for the year and only 29 of these being in the peak periods (approximately one every two weeks). By comparison, in 2019 there were a total of 375 sailings with 46 peak time sailings.

Priorities for Next 12 Months

Priorities for next 12 months for Network Management and Parking are:

- Continue to implement the traffic signal replacement programme
- Use the Challenge Fund allocation to completely upgrade Chester Road / Ackers Road junction with the inclusion of pedestrian phases.
- Roll out of Warrington Intelligent Transport System (WITS) App
- Monitor the impact of Covid Re-Start Tranche 1 and 2 schemes
- Re-tendering of Civil Parking Enforcement contract
- Roll out of bus lane enforcement
- Complete refurbishment of the Forge car park
- Installation of more town centre CCTV cameras

Asset Management

Effect of Covid-19

Covid-19 has inevitably affected delivery of the Structural Maintenance Programme, however, many schemes were re-programmed to enable some schemes to be delivered in more rural areas to minimise contact with residents and high numbers of customers. This proved to be an effective strategy.

Highway Maintenance Investment

£40M funding, from prudential borrowing, has been allocated to 3 key areas: Major structural Maintenance (£14.24m), Unclassified Roads (£9.33m), and Footway Improvements (£2.5m). The 6 year project commenced in September 2016 and 2020-21 is year 5. Schemes are progressing very well, with all schemes on time and budget. The Unclassified Roads and Footway programmes have resulted in an impressive 214 carriageway schemes and 150 footway schemes delivered to date (in addition to 67 major structural maintenance schemes). Excellent progress is being made with regard to the programme for delivery, as shown in the table below:

Highway Investment (completed to July 2020)	YEAR 1 2016-17	YEAR 2 2017-18	YEAR 3 2018-19	YEAR 4 2019-20	YEAR 5 2020-21	TOTAL
Road Schemes (A, B, C)	36	13	9	9	-	67
Road Schemes (U)	74	53	35	40	12	214
Footway Schemes	51	30	36	25	8	150

Ward Allocations

£12.5M was allocated to deliver an additional programme of works to ensure all Wards would receive a fair funding allocation.

Outcomes - Carriageway Network: The latest survey information indicates that we are on target to achieve Steady State in respect of the Classified Road Network. In 2016/17, the condition of the U class network deteriorated to where 21% should have had some form of maintenance considered. This has reduced to 11% in 2019/20 and is expected to reduce further this year.

Outcomes - Footway Network: In 2015/16, the footway network deteriorated to 86.5% of all footways either being structurally unsound or functionally impaired. Through a targeted approach, this has reduced to 71% in 2020/21

Priorities for Next 12 Months

Although on target to achieve 'Steady State' (is defined as halting the general overall deterioration of the Road Network) by the end of next year, deterioration of the carriageway will continue from that point as there will still be a significant backlog. This means that we need to stop the current rate of decline to reduce significant reactive maintenance costs.



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