



**Draft Local Plan
Transport Frequently Asked Questions
(October 2021)**

Warrington’s Transport Strategy 2
 What is the Local Transport Plan? 2
 What progress has been made since approval of LTP4? 2
Priority Infrastructure and Local Plan Policies 2
 What is the Warrington Western Link and when will it be built? 2
 What transport infrastructure is planned for the South East Warrington Urban Extension? 3
 What is planned for the High Level Cantilever Bridge Crossing? 5
 Is a new crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal needed? 5
 What is the ‘First and Last Mile’ Transport Masterplan? 6
 What is a safeguarded corridor? 7
 What is Blight and does it affect me? 7
 Why are the disused rail corridors being protected against development? 8
 What is planned for Latchford Spur Rail line across the ship canal? 8

Warrington's Transport Strategy

What is the Local Transport Plan?

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is a statutory document setting out a strategy for how we manage and improve the way people travel in Warrington.

The LTP in Warrington was most recently updated following the approval by cabinet and full council of LTP4 in December 2019. LTP4 includes a long term vision for transport in Warrington alongside a series of policies and associated actions identified for implementation over short (0-5years) and long term periods. It covers policies associated with different modes of travel, policies to promote and encourage more sustainable travel, and policies on how the highway network is maintained. The overarching vision for LTP4 is as follows:

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.

Further details can be found online at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/LTP4>

What progress has been made since approval of LTP4?

Since approval of LTP4 in December 2019 progress has been made in a number of areas. A summary is set out below, with more detail provided online at [LTP4 Annual Progress Report Feb 2021](#)

Priority Infrastructure and Local Plan Policies

What is the Warrington Western Link and when will it be built?

The Warrington Western Link is a new road, which would link the A56 Chester Road in Higher Walton with the A57 Sankey Way in Great Sankey.

A funding bid, including an Outline Business Case which demonstrated a strong case for the scheme was submitted to Government in December 2017. In April 2019, the Department for Transport confirmed that this funding bid has been successful and the scheme now has 'Programme Entry' into the Department for Transport's programme. 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).

Following this announcement, work commenced in late 2019 to develop a full business case, a process which has required work in a range of areas to be taken forward. The works have included environmental and geotechnical surveys, land acquisition, detailed highway design, preparation for planning submission and other statutory processes. In November and December 2020 an extensive public consultation exercise was undertaken on an updated scheme to explain progress made to residents and stakeholders and to inform further scheme development.

Design works continue with our consultant team - the first stage of this design commission culminated in submission of a planning application for the scheme in late August 2021. Validation of this application is currently awaited. Planning consultation with the Local Planning Authority and Statutory consultees is continuing alongside dialogue with affected residents, businesses and landholders.

Surveys and site investigations to inform the detailed design process remain ongoing with a suite of Ecology surveys taking place. Contact continues to be made with various stakeholders/landholders to facilitate access for these surveys.

While the Western Link is an important piece of infrastructure to support further growth in the borough as set out in the Draft Local Plan, the scheme has a very strong strategic case in itself. It is a key component of our long term transport vision, removing some through traffic on certain roads in the town centre and allowing us to consider more far-reaching improvements to makes access to and from the town centre easier, quicker and more attractive for all. It is currently anticipated that the scheme will be open to traffic by 2026.

Further detail can be found online at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/westernlink>

What transport infrastructure is planned for the South East Warrington Urban Extension?

In assessing the transport infrastructure required for the SEWUE a package of indicative highway improvements and supporting transport measures have been identified. This package is intended to support the delivery of the development area and ensure that this is done in transport terms in a way which meets the sustainable travel objectives of the Draft Local Plan (as set out in policy INF1) and the approved Local Transport Plan 4.

A number of guiding principles will shape the package of transport infrastructure within the SEWUE:

- *The new development will be designed to ensure that proximity to key services and destinations is improved thus reducing the need to use vehicles for many shorter journeys. To help this, as well as high quality provision for Active Travel within new highway corridors, the SEWUE will include an attractive off road greenway network for pedestrians and cyclists;*

- *A wide corridor is envisaged for many new sections of highway to ensure a network which gives priority for Public Transport and Active Travel and provides sufficient highway capacity to serve the development;*
- *New sections of highway routes will be predominately single carriageway, with dual carriageway sections, if required, limited to where they are needed such as closer to junctions, not a blanket approach;*
- *The improved highway network will provide an appropriate network to access the development as well as improving some existing problems such as the Cat and Lion Junction;*
- *Other existing local roads, such as through Appleton Thorn, are not envisaged to be upgraded to accommodate additional traffic and where necessary, measures would be implemented to prevent significant increases in traffic and specifically HGVs;*
- *The main access point to the employment areas is expected to be from M6 J20, and the council will work with National Highways to deliver improvements to this junction;*
- *If needed, measures to restrict HGVs from other parts of the development, particularly on sensitive residential roads will be investigated.*

The indicative package of transport infrastructure measures therefore comprises:

- *Excellent internal and external accessibility with new dedicated links for walking and cycling both within the development and linking to the rest of Warrington;*
- *Funding to support bus services from and to the development;*
- *Safeguarded mass transit/public transport corridor through the SEWUE linking from the proposed employment area near M6J20 towards A56 Chester Road;*
- *Measures to protect Appleton Thorn from 'through' traffic;*
- *Junction improvements on A49 at Lyons Lane and Longwood Road;*
- *A new link between A49 and B5356 Stretton Road, which allows a section of Stretton Road to be downgraded and stopped up;*
- *The completion of 'D-link' with new highway between Witherwin Avenue and Dipping Brook Avenue;*
- *A new link from the 'D-link' to B5356 Grappenhall Lane;*
- *Funding contributions to motorway junction improvements.*

The alignments associated with these elements of infrastructure are not fixed.

The highway elements of the above indicative package have been included in the traffic modelling exercise to assess the impact of the draft local Plan. The analysis carried out as part of this work confirms that the development traffic effectively uses the new enabling infrastructure and that this infrastructure largely mitigates the impact of the development.

The implementation of the measures above is proposed in phases, but critical elements of the package will be delivered in advance of any significant housing delivery.

A ‘Deliverable proposition’ document has been prepared to help understand how the development of the SEWUE might look and follows the guiding principles and indicative package of infrastructure outlined above. The document and the plans within them are purely illustrative. They have no formal planning status and are not approved as Council Policy.

What is planned for the High Level Cantilever Bridge Crossing?

Through the Draft Local Plan (the Updated PSVLP 2021) we are proposing to continue to safeguard land adjacent to the existing Cantilever High Level Bridge located between Station Road in Latchford and Ackers Road in Stockton Heath. This is because the existing bridge, which is already subject to a weight limit, is likely to require upgrade or replacement in the future, and keeping this land free from further development ensures that the land we might need for this continues to be vacant or is not developed further.

The safeguarding currently in place under the adopted local plan under policy MP6 can be found at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/info/200564/planning_policy/1903/local_plan.

The type of improvement that may be needed at the Cantilever Bridge is not currently known, and we will be undertaking study work during the first 5 years of LTP4 (approved December 2019) to better understand what the requirements are and consider options for any future scheme. The scheme does not have funding in place and the start date is not known.

When it is appropriate any proposals for the Cantilever High Level Bridge Improvement will be subject to a detailed public consultation.

Is a new crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal needed?

The analysis done to support LTP4 and the Draft Local Plan (The Updated PSVLP 2021) does suggest that connectivity between south Warrington and the town centre does need to be improved in the long term. The impact of congestion in centres like Stockton Heath and Latchford, the impact of swing bridge closures on all routes and severance caused to public transport, walking and cycling indicate that these issues will require physical infrastructure improvements.

The approved transport strategy set out in the LTP4, developed in parallel with the Draft Local Plan, includes a conceptual Mass Transit network for the borough which proposes a high quality, frequent public transport network across the borough.

The proposals include a cross-town route linking the development areas in South East Warrington to north-west Warrington via the town centre and an orbital route from the South East Warrington to Birchwood. The exact form, mode, alignment and deliverability of such a Mass Transit network will be subject to further work and study in the first five years of LTP4. This further work will examine whether this mass transit network needs to use a pre-existing or new crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal.

The Western Link scheme includes a new high level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal, but we believe this will not be sufficient in itself to solve these long term connectivity issues.

Within the first 5 years of LTP4 (approved December 2019), the council committed to undertake further study work into what form of additional crossing is required, where it should be located and which modes of travel it should be intended for.

The council has already said it does not intend to construct a road on the disused Latchford Rail Line.

What is the 'First and Last Mile' Transport Masterplan?

Over the years, the road layout on the approaches to Warrington town centre has been developed to cope with growing levels of traffic, and this has resulted in a very car dominated urban environment featuring large multi-armed roundabouts and several dual carriageways. This results in a limited number of crossing points for pedestrians, and a very unpleasant cycling environment. These barriers are often mentioned by local people as reasons for why they prefer not to walk or cycle into the town centre. Bus services into and out of the town centre are also subject to delays and this impacts on their viability as suitable alternatives to the car.

Improving the 'first and last mile' of journeys into the town centre for pedestrians, cyclists and buses was therefore identified as a priority in LTP4. Our aspiration is to provide high quality and fit for purpose transport infrastructure that will make walking, cycling and public transport the obvious way to travel to, from, and through the town centre.

This will support our ambition to grow the town centre and make it more accessible to residents, visitors and workers. A more pleasant environment around the town centre will help with inward investment and business confidence as well as attracting new visitors.

The First and Last Mile Transport Masterplan study is now substantially complete and will be used to inform and support highway and public realm improvements in the town centre.

Recently, it was used to inform the development of a Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Draft Executive summary of the First and Last Mile masterplan can be viewed online at

https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-02/appendix_1_flmtm_-_draft_exec_summary.pdf

and the approved SPD which includes the core principles of the FLMTM can be viewed at https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2021-06/spd_draft_v10.pdf

What is a safeguarded corridor?

Policy INF2 of the Draft Local Plan sets out land which is to be safeguarded from development for future transport schemes, these being as:

- *Bridgefoot Link (formerly known as Bridgefoot Bypass), providing improved access between development sites to the north end of Centre Park, Warrington Bank Quay station and the wider town centre;*
- *A new or replacement high-level crossing of the Manchester Ship Canal between Ackers Road, Stockton Heath and Station Road, Latchford;*
- *Warrington East Multi-Modal Corridor improvement (part of the former safeguarding known as Long Lane Diversion), connecting Birchwood to Central Warrington via Birchwood Way,*
- *Warrington Western Link.*

This policy means that the council will use its planning powers to prevent any future development within these areas of land which would make the delivery of a future transport scheme more difficult or costly. Each scheme is at a different stage of development and in many cases still subject to further consultation and/or funding to be confirmed.

What is Blight and does it affect me?

Blight is often referred to when people are concerned about the impact of a transport scheme on their land or property, in terms of either physical impact or value.

Under the Town and County Planning Act 1990, in certain circumstances land owners and homeowners can legitimately claim 'blight' and would potentially be entitled to, subject to a number of legal tests, a financial settlement when the physical impact of an approved scheme or safeguarding on their property is proven.

The council's policy on blight is that it only accepts claims made which demonstrate statutory blight, whereby the physical impact of a scheme or proposal necessitates specific areas of land or property be acquired to construct the scheme.

Please note that property which is adjacent to a proposed scheme or safeguarding is not eligible for statutory blight.

At a future date, once a scheme is completed, a resident may be able to claim compensation under Part 1 of the Land and Compensation Act 1973 where they have suffered detriment to their property based on direct physical impacts of its use, such as noise and vibration and a reduction in the property value can be evidenced.

Further information and details of the council's position on 'Blight' and 'Part 1' claims can be found on the Western Link web pages at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/western-link>

If you are in any doubt if your property or land is legally blighted by a proposal, you are advised to take appropriate legal advice.

Why are the disused rail corridors being protected against development?

Disused Rail Corridors are routes through Warrington that were previously 'live' rail lines for heavy rail passenger or freight services. Whilst they are no longer used for heavy rail, they have the potential to be used as transport corridors in the future.

Therefore, the draft Local Plan includes provision within Policy INF1 to protect any disused rail corridors from development which would prevent them from at a future date being brought into use for transport projects, including the provision of public transport and sustainable transport schemes and / or corridors to support the sustainable growth of the Borough.

What is planned for Latchford Spur Rail line across the ship canal?

The council does not propose to construct a new road across the ship canal using the disused Latchford rail line or sections of the Trans Pennine Trail long distance greenway.

The draft Local Plan also includes provision within Policy INF1 to protect any disused rail corridors from development which would prevent them from at a future date being brought into use for transport objectives, including the provision of public transport and sustainable transport schemes and/or corridors to support the sustainable growth of the Borough.

How do you know what the impact of the Local Plan will be on traffic in Warrington?

The council is in a fortunate position of having a Borough wide transport model – the Multi Modal Transport Model (MMTM16). This is a digitised representation of the transport road network which allows the council to accurately forecast the impact of new developments and any changes to the network. The MMTM16 has been used to assess the transport implications of Local Plan proposals and a separate report has been produced which is available on the council's website.

The model itself contains over 5,100 links and 2,500 junctions with the highest concentration being in and around the town centre. In addition the borough is divided up into around 400 traffic zones with information available for the origin and destination flows to every other traffic zone.

A vast amount of data was collected in the summer of 2016 including traffic counts, journey time data, mobile phone data and origin-destination data collected from road side interviews. Bus flow information was also collected and the model is capable of simulating future cycle flow movements. The model has been validated and calibrated

against real time measurements and has been accepted as a viable and robust traffic model in full compliance with the government's guidance on traffic modelling (Tag). The Local Model Validation Report (LMVR) was completed in December 2017.

The MMTM16 was first put into use for the PSVLP in 2019. It has also been used since to support the business case development of numerous transport schemes and studies.