



CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER LOCAL PLAN CPT RESPONSE

Executive Summary

- Any new residential or employment developments, should be designed with public transport in mind and include strategic public transport connections to ensure passengers can access education, employment, leisure activities, retail outlets and other essential services
- Developing a reliable and resilient public transport network will reduce emissions, make travel easier, and create a great place to live and visit
- Bus services can be supported by introducing bus priority measures, which remove buses from congestion and deliver faster, reliable journey times. This in turn leads to more passengers, and cheaper fares
- Coaches provide a comfortable and accessible travel option for many vulnerable passengers and others who would struggle to travel – coach travel can be supported by ensuring sufficient coach parking with space to manoeuvre, safe pick up and drop off points for passengers and driver facilities
- We encourage engagement with local bus and coach operators to ensure that the best locations for bus stops, priority measures, coach parking and are identified

About CPT

We help a dynamic bus and coach industry to provide better journeys for all, creating greener communities and delivering economic growth.

We do this by representing around 800 members from across the industry be they large or small, bus or coach, operator, or supplier. We use our influence on campaign for a supportive policy environment, give our members practical advice and support to run their businesses safely, compliantly, and efficiently and bring the industry together to share ideas and best practice. We are ambitious to make things better for passengers, inclusive in seeking out different perspectives and we are always there when our members need us.

Buses and coaches are at the heart of the nation's economic and social life. 10.2 million¹ journeys a day are made by bus to get passengers to work, education and to access essential services, and the coach sector offers great value inter-city travel, with over 20 million journeys on the scheduled coach network in 2022 and rapid growth since.²

¹ [bus01.ods \(live.com\)](https://bus01.ods.live.com)

² Press statements from Flixbus, Megabus, Mobico



Across Cheshire West and Chester 20,274 people use the bus a day³. Passengers use the bus to access different services, and across the North West region, on average per year, passengers spend £900 million in the leisure sector, commuter passengers spend £735 million when travelling for work and £1,380 million at retail outlets. Additionally, bus journeys that originate from rural areas generate £7.1 billion of spending in local economies⁴.

Visitors to the North West who travel by coach, also contribute significantly to the local economy, with passengers spending £275 million in shopping and leisure facilities, day visitors spending £360 million, and overnight visitors spending £215 million⁵.

You can read more about the economic benefits of both bus and coach in our recently launched reports, [The economic impact of local bus services](#) and [The economic impact of coach services](#).

CPT Response

Proposed Additional Development Sites for Residential and Employment

We appreciate the demand for housing and employment land is always increasing, meaning it is now more important than ever to ensure we are optimising the available road space and infrastructure as much as possible to enable and encourage sustainable travel options.

The bus and coach sector are well placed to provide affordable, accessible, reliable, and sustainable transport options for all passengers. Buses provide vital services connecting people to education, employment, medical appointments, retail outlets and much more, and coach provide essential services for vulnerable passengers and sustainable travel to multiple destinations across the country. Our response outlines how to harness the full potential of bus and coach to deliver environmental and economic benefits across Cheshire West and Chester.

Planning and Infrastructure

We believe that adopting a 'bus first' approach to all planning and placemaking decisions is vital to challenge excessive car dependency and make public transport the preferred option of communities.

By ensuring any new development sites are connected to the strategic bus network, by including new bus stops, or where appropriate a travel hub which provides greater connectivity across travel modes, we can increase modal shift, which will deliver environmental, economic, and social benefits.

Bus Priority Measures

³ [bus01_ods](#)

⁴ The Economic Impact of Local Bus Services, KPMG

⁵ The Economic Impact of Coach



Bus priority measures are designed to improve journey times and connectivity for passengers and to help provide a more reliable service. There are a number of different measures that could be introduced including;

- Bus lanes and gates
- Bus only roads
- Smart traffic lights
- Changes to road layout, including bus priority at junctions and traffic lights
- Park and Ride schemes

All these measures will keep buses out of congestion and improve bus speeds. This will improve journey times, keep fares low and ensure buses are reliable – all factors we know are vital for passengers and the popularity of bus travel.

Investing £200m a year in bus priority measures such as the ones mentioned above, would generate £1bn a year in economic benefits, reducing the need for public funding⁶.

Coach

Coaches are often forgotten from inclusion in Local Transport Plans, however they provide a comfortable and accessible travel option and help those who would otherwise struggle to travel. Coaches provide a wide multitude of services to ensure people can get to where they need to, including rail replacement services, vulnerable group transport, home to school and work transfer services. As well as significantly reducing emissions, congestion and contributing to the local economy, it is important that any development plans consider the needs of coach.

We are therefore encouraging all Local Transport Plans to include measures to support coach travel where possible. This includes sufficient parking for coach trips, with safe drop of and pick up access, plenty of space to manoeuvre and the provision of driver facilities.

Coach Friendly

CPT's coach friendly accreditation is awarded to areas that have introduced measures that supports coach travel by providing designated coach park areas to increase the number of coach visits to the area. It is a valuable way for a local area to increase their earning potential, reduce congestion, improve air quality and the environment whilst continuing to develop tourism. You can find more details on the scheme and how to apply on our website.

Conclusion

It is important that any new developments are built with public transport in mind, bus and coach provide green and sustainable travel options, with one double decker bus able to remove up to 75 cars off the road, and a coach 50 off the road which not only significantly reduces congestion but the associated emissions. They provide essential services connecting passengers to education, employment, leisure

⁶ KPMG, The economic value of local bus services, September 2024, p.6



activities, retail outlets and reduce social exclusion. We encourage Cheshire West and Chester Council to engage with local bus operators and coach operators to ensure that any plans include strategic public transport connections and ensure all benefits are achieved.

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