



# Congleton Town Council

Historic Market Town

Chief Officer: David McGifford CiLCA

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

## Second Tranche – Active Travel consultation – Congleton West Road and Antrobus Street

Please see below the comments from Congleton Town Council to the recent consultation on Second Tranche Active Travel measures. Many councillors have also responded as individuals. This has not been discussed at a committee, instead councillors have inputted via emails to build a collective response.

### Proposed solution:

1. Reduced speed limit to 20mph on sections along West Street, Antrobus Street, Mill Street and Swan Bank (including side roads). (blue on the map)

**Comment:** This is something that Congleton Town Council asked for in May 2020 and welcomes the initiative to make these roads 20 mph. This action has worked well in other parts of the country. If budget allowed, we would like to see this initiative widened to include Market Street, High Street and Lawton Street. This will need to be backed up with education about the speed limits, and some enforcement to encourage compliance.

2. Improved crossing points near to the bus stop on Mill Street and at the junction of West Street / Antrobus Street.

**Comment:** The crossing shown in the plan will help pedestrians and is a positive step forward. However, Congleton Town Council questions if this is the best place for the crossing. Our local knowledge would indicate that the greatest demand for crossing the road is from Duke Street (pedestrian area) to the Counting House side of Swan Bank and would welcome a feasibility study into a crossing in this area

Waiting restriction extended to no waiting or loading on the West Street/Antrobus junction to allow an improved pedestrian crossing point.

**Comment:** Junction safety would be improved without parked cars at this site, however with a doctor's surgery, two pharmacies and a drop off point for deliveries on this junction cars are going to wait in this area unless the design is such that it makes it too hard to do so, in which case replacement waiting/ drop off areas would be appreciated. An hour's free parking in Antrobus Street car park could resolve this.

Comments on the two additional Options.

Congleton Town Council does not believe the town is ready for Option One (one-way from the Fire Station towards town with one side of the road dedicated to cycling). Congleton Town Council raised the following concerns and questions about this Option.

1. This option is likely to create traffic problems in the side roads as local traffic may choose to use back side roads rather than use Antrobus Street, Rood Hill, Clayton Bypass to reach West Road. Most of these side roads are narrow and residential or small industrial units and are often choked with cars parking in the road – especially when normal business returns and workers park on side roads rather than pay to park. If parking prices are to increase, we can predict that this problem will be exacerbated
2. Experience of no left turn from Mountbatten Way into Mill Street for events or road works has previously led to traffic congestion in Congleton. This may be less of an issue when the Link Road is in use – but too early to say. For all the traffic coming from Mossley, Buglawton, Biddulph there will be no alternative way over the River Dane but to use Rood Hill.
3. With no left turn from Mountbatten Way, extra measures will be needed to protect the pedestrian area, especially between 4pm and 10am as there will be a greater temptation to use this route as a cut through than take a big detour to get to West Street.
4. Option 1 could make Antrobus Street busier – as the only way to get to the houses, businesses, church and school off Waggs Street will be to either come in via West Street, Antrobus Street and turn into Mill Street, or to cut up smaller side roads like Silk Street, Booth Street or the Crescent.
5. Losing two town centre bus stops to create additional cycle space when we have a lot of town centre housing off these routes and many older people needs more consideration.
6. Question the sense of a cycle park site at the bus stop on West Street – anyone cycling into town would want to get closer, suspect that many people using this East- West route are on a journey to a place and won't want to stop at West Road.
7. Unless much longer section of the route is sorted, this small area dedicated to cycling will not make a difference to people opting to cycle.
8. Recognise that it would be good to get more of the 'through traffic' to use Rood Hill and Clayton Bypass rather than cutting through the town centre, and this needs to be looked at with the opening of the Link Road.
9. More work needed to understand the likely impact on the carbon footprint. Will it mean more people walking or cycling, or just more people unable to use the bus and taking longer vehicle journeys?
10. Impact on Town Centre businesses needs to be brought into the equation.

## Option Two

1. **This is Congleton Town Council's preferred option – with traffic able to turn left from Mountbatten Way and two-way in West Street but with give and take areas to slow the traffic and give greater priority to pedestrians. This, along with a more free-flowing Rood Hill and Clayton Bypass should deter vehicles cutting through.**
2. **Dropped kerbs at junctions along Antrobus Street would be an improvement for pedestrians. This is something we should aim to have at all crossing points in the town.**
3. **With the Give and Take points lessons further consultation should be held with the cycling groups to ensure their safety when vehicles are cutting back into their traffic lane.**

Responses to other questions in the CEC Second Tranche Active Transport Survey

Question 2. Do you believe walking and cycling facilities should be improved in Cheshire East and give reasons?

**In line with Congleton Town Council's comments on Transport Plan Delivery document, Congleton Town Council would like to see improvements in the walking and cycling facilities across the town. We do believe it if it is made easier, safer and more attractive to walk or cycle to local destinations some people will switch travel modes for some of the time. Walking and cycling more has benefits for the individual and for society. Complete routes need to be considered, and it is important to tackle the difficult areas which are the most hazardous for the pedestrian or cyclists – such as the junctions and roundabouts.**

Question 3. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the proposed scheme will improve walking and cycling routes within the area?

**This is not an easy question as it is not obvious what proposed scheme you are referring to – the parts of the scheme that apply to both options. Option 1 or Option 2? Quite possibly option 1 would make it more attractive for cyclists in West Street – but will not help cyclist to navigate the roundabout or improve safety on the rest of the journey!**

Question 4(a). To what extent do you support the proposed scheme?

**As with question 3, it is not clear what scheme or part of the scheme we are being ask if we support.**

Question 4(b). Which is your preferred scheme option?

**Congleton Town Council is NOT in favour of Option 1. Option two is preferred.**

The remaining questions are on a more personal than corporate level.

We would ask that Cheshire East listens to the opinions of businesses and residents in the area that live and breathe these roads. There are many businesses and sporting clubs in the area who need to build back from COVID-19 and will be very concerned about any measures or works that may cause people to stay away from Congleton for longer. We are also aware that £588k spread across five schemes is not a great deal of money in terms of highway projects! If it is not possible to deliver the full project, the preference would be to reduce the speed limit and install the pedestrian crossings.

We look forward to hearing the outcome of the consultation and working with you to make Congleton town centre a safer, greener, more attractive place where businesses can flourish and local people to enjoy spending time.

Congleton Town Council would be happy to contribute further thoughts as the project progresses.

Yours sincerely

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