DRAFT CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT
INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2011 – 2026

District Profile:

Cannock Chase District is on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation and is well served by the national highway network comprising the M6, M6 Toll and A5 trunk road. The A34 and A5190, bordering the south of the District, the A460 running through the District and the A51 serving Rugeley, are all part of the County Council’s local network.

The District has good rail connections from stations at Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley, benefiting from services on the Chase Line and West Coast Mainline. The main centres of Cannock, Rugeley and Hednesford all have bus interchange facilities and the District is served by a core bus network of inter-urban and local routes, supported by community transport linking rural areas to Rugeley and Cannock. According to census data around 1% of residents in the District use the train to commute to work, 5% use the bus and around 71% drive. This level of public transport use is lower than the national average.

Cannock Chase is the most deprived District in Staffordshire, generally attributed to the legacy of industrial decline in the area. Despite Cannock’s links to the conurbation, the employment of residents is relatively self-contained within the District, with 9% walking and 1.5% cycling to work. The largest employment outflows occur to Walsall and Lichfield. The District’s older population is expected to increase by nearly 70% by 2029.

Minimising the impact of development on the nationally significant Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and European Special Area of Conservation (SAC), is a key objective for Cannock Chase District. A recent SAC Evidence Base and Visitor Impact Management Strategy suggests that a reduction in the impact of vehicles may be achieved by encouraging walking and cycling and the use of public transport to access and travel within the SAC.

The District Council’s Draft Core Strategy, for the period to 2026, indicates that approximately 900 new homes will be delivered within Rugeley and Brereton, together with 1,000 in Lichfield District, adjacent to Rugeley. 2,400 homes will be built within Cannock, Hednesford and Heath Hayes with the balance being found on an additional strategic urban extension of 750 homes at Pye Green. 200 homes will be allocated to the local centre of Norton Canes and around 700 on urban extensions south of Norton Canes. Limited housing for local need will be provided in the rural areas. Two high quality employment locations are identified at Kingswood Lakeside (Cannock) and Towers Business Park (Rugeley), with the A5(T) corridor identified for potential future employment provision.

In general, the Pye Green Valley area has good access to a wide variety of services and facilities using public transport and walking. High frequency bus services already pass close to development sites. Although development proposals in Norton Canes will benefit from easy access to local facilities within the settlement, public transport improvements will be required to ensure new residents have adequate access to employment, education and retail. Employment development proposals are generally accessible by public transport however a challenge will be to improve bus access to employment proposals near Rugeley Power Station and at Kingswood Lakesides, Cannock.
Transport Achievements:

Recent transport improvements have been achieved through successful joint working between Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Council, rail and bus service providers, the Highways Agency, Midland Expressway Ltd and local developers. Significant infrastructure has been delivered. The Rugeley Eastern Bypass was constructed, achieving value for money on a highly challenging project to aid economic regeneration, access for businesses and to improve Rugeley town centre. The accommodation of the M6 toll road has greatly improved strategic transport links to/from the District. Major housing and economic regeneration sites, such as Park Farm and Kingswood Lakeside, have been accommodated without significantly increasing congestion, by way of sustainable transport and vehicle access provision.

Public transport improvements have also been achieved. Rail services have been enhanced and services and facilities on inter-urban bus links to the conurbation have been improved, ensuring access to services is in line with the Disability Discrimination Act. Many urban residents in Cannock District live within 350m of a bus stop with a better than half-hourly weekday service. This is achieved through the core commercial network and County Council subsidised services. Real Time Passenger Information screens, new shelters and platform level CCTV have been installed at Cannock, Hednesford and Rugeley Town rail stations. Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase Council and Centro have worked in partnership to fund the retention of the weekday evening Birmingham-Hednesford rail service to Rugeley, together with the half hourly Birmingham-Rugeley Saturday service.

Staffordshire County Council is the national leader in discretionary travel allowance. A new travel scheme, adopted in April 2011, allows free 24/7 bus transport to people of pensionable age or with a disability, plus their carer, and under 20s can travel anywhere within Staffordshire for just £1 per journey.

Targets to reduce all road casualties have been achieved in the District through education, enforcement and engineering measures such as safer routes to school, local safety schemes and enhancing the walking and cycling network.

Transport Challenges and Opportunities:

It is expected that there will be a significant reduction in the amount of public money available for transport in the future. With this in mind, a key priority going forward in the next three years, and in the longer term up to 2026, is to make the best use of the existing highway network by focusing on maintaining its condition and ensuring that we continue to reduce road casualties. We also need to improve the quality of life and sustainable travel options of Cannock residents, particularly in deprived local neighbourhoods, and improve sustainable access to the AONB. Wider economic regeneration ambitions will be achieved by continuing to improve local accessibility and accommodating traffic arising from the sustainable development proposals identified in the Draft Core Strategy and Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan. Best value will be achieved through the co-ordination of respective plans and investment programmes.

Funding is already secured by the rail industry for short term improvements to the Chase Line and the ambition is to build on these improvements in the longer term with our partners. County Council resources will continue to support concessionary fare schemes and improve bus services and facilities.
The Pye Green Valley Local Transport Package will support the Blake Total Place Project which is a multi-agency initiative. The Winchester Road Extension has not been included in the package because of insufficient evidence concerning its potential transport benefits. However, as the scheme enjoys local community and political support, Consultants have been appointed to establish whether there are sufficient non-transport benefits to justify the continued protection of the route.

In the longer term, attention will be turned to Rugeley and Norton Canes and maximising the benefits of new technology that will improve bus reliability and service information. Sustainable transport provision in these areas will also be maximised by ensuring local developers provide appropriate contributions to mitigate the impact of their developments.

Congestion is not considered to be a significant constraint on regeneration, away from the strategic highway network. However, local peak travel congestion problems will continue to be monitored and junction improvements will be delivered if necessary, although the priority will be to manage traffic using technology, reducing the need to travel and encouraging sustainable travel. Specific traffic issues that are currently causing air quality problems along the A5(T) are being investigated by the Highways Agency and partners.

Road injury accident data will be continually monitored and analysed across the highway network. Locations will be identified where consistent accident patterns occur that might be prevented through remedial engineering works. These locations will be investigated to identify the underlying causes of the problems and measures will be implemented if appropriate and justifiable. Local safety schemes such as junction modifications and signing improvements tend to represent good value for money, offering high first year rates of return.

The development of a Divisional Highway Programme for Cannock Chase District gives County Councillors the opportunity to directly input into delivery programmes. Councillors work closely with Community Highway Managers, parish councils and other stakeholders to ensure local concerns and challenges are identified and priorities are established, taking into account financial constraints. The Divisional Highway Programme is reviewed twice a year and gives an overview of highway and transport concerns within the local area, such as pedestrian safety and traffic management issues. They are incorporated within the Integrated Transport Strategy if they require capital funding and are proven to meet strategic objectives. Other lower cost road safety and traffic management measures in the Divisional Highway Programme, delivered using revenue resources, will not be specified in this Strategy.

### KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES
- Accommodate sustainable development at Pye Green, Norton Canes and Rugeley
- Support employment sites at Kingswood Lakeside, Rugeley and A5(T) corridor
- Improve public transport links to the West Midlands
- Support regeneration of Hednesford and Rugeley town centres
- Support A5(T) Churchbridge improvement proposal
- Encourage sustainable travel

### KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES
- Vehicle speeds and road safety
- Safety outside schools
- Frequency of bus services
- Pedestrian safety
- On-street parking
DRAFT CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2011 TO 2026

**NEEDS OF OUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOODS**
- Maintain current condition and safety of the highway network
- Improving accessibility and quality of life within local communities
- Reduce air pollution affecting local residents along the A5(T), Bridgtown
- Provide improved public transport access, particularly for areas of deprivation in the District
- Improve and encourage sustainable access to Cannock Chase AONB for local residents and reduce impacts due to car usage

**AMBICTIONS OF THE WIDER PLACE**
- Accommodating significant development at Pye Green, Norton Canes and Rugeley, with a presumption in favour of sustainable development
- Support strategic employment sites at Kingswood Lakeside, Towers Business Park and A5(T) corridor
- Improve public transport and manage traffic levels on links to the West Midlands conurbation to help reduce potential peak hour inter-urban congestion
- Raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage people to lead more sustainable lifestyles

**CHALLENGES**

**PROJECTS THAT WILL ACHIEVE OUTCOMES**

**COUNTYWIDE INITIATIVES**
- 20mph zones and Speed Limit Review
- Parking and loading enforcement through Clear Streets
- Driver training and road safety education and training in schools
- Subsidised bus services, community transport, concessionary fares scheme and bus service information
- Promoting sustainable travel and school travel planning
- Careful consideration of any requests to restrict lorry movements in line with actions and priorities in the Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy (2011)

**LOCAL COMMUNITY PRIORITIES**

**SHORT TERM – 3 YEARS**
- Maintenance
- Community liaison priorities raised by Councillors, focusing on local neighbourhood issues in rural and urban areas
- B4154 Hednesford Road (Heath Hayes) Local Safety Scheme
- John Street, Wimblebury - vehicle speed reduction scheme
- Wolseley Road, Rugeley – traffic management and safety improvements

**LONG TERM UP TO 2026**
- Maintenance and community liaison priorities

**STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT PRIORITIES**

**SHORT TERM – 3 YEARS**
- Chase Line rail improvements: new electronic signals
- Public Transport Partnership Route 2 Cannock to Walsall (raised kerbs and pedestrian improvements)
- Pye Green Valley Local Transport Package: Distributor Road, cycle routes, bus service diversion 32/33, new and improved bus stops, signing, Pye Green Road junction improvements and pedestrian crossing, Cannock Road puff crossing
- Hednesford Town Centre regeneration including cycle parking, pedestrian, bus and junction improvements on Market Street and Green Heath Road, pedestrian crossing and junction improvements on Victoria Street
- Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan: Pear Tree bus gate, improved footways, Leathermill Lane and Love Lane cycle routes, town centre traffic management

**LONG TERM UP TO 2026**
- Chase Line improvements: increased line speed, longer platforms, longer/more frequent trains, Rugeley to Walsall route electrification, booking offices at Cannock and Hednesford
- Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan: Western Springs Road and Burnhill Lane cycle routes and cycle parking. Public Transport Partnership routes 26 Rugeley to Springfield Estates, 24 Rugeley to Breerton Circular, 23 Rugeley to Pear Tree Estate, new bus station. Rugeley Town railway station improvements, improved pedestrian links between Horserfair and Rugeley Town railway station, traffic management and road safety improvements
- Norton Canes Local Transport Package: Norton Canes route 32/33 bus service extension, new minor improvements in the vicinity of the Chase Line station, Bournebank and North A5 corridors
- Rugeley Station: New station building, improved station access, pedestrian and cycling links
- Chase Line: Increased line speed, longer platforms, services from Walsall to Cannock

**JUSTIFICATION / VALUE FOR MONEY / FUNDING / DELIVERY**

- All initiatives are expected to be funded by County Council capital and revenue funds as resources permit.
- Areas targeted for delivery will be influenced by community consultation and data that identifies need. For example, Cannock’s deprived areas may be a priority as they are statistically likely to have more child casualties.
- Criteria will be set to determine which bus services could be supported.
- Value for money will be achieved when initiatives complement other measures in the strategy e.g. promoting the use of new cycling and walking facilities.

- Maintenance will be the main area of County Council expenditure within the strategy period. Making best use of existing infrastructure is considered to be a prudent use of money. Works will be guided by the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP).
- The Council’s revenue funds will be used to fund low cost feasible community, safety and maintenance measures. As a guide, these schemes will generally cost less than £10,000 and will not be listed in the District Integrated Transport Strategy.
- Improvements to air quality in Bridgtown are expected to be delivered by the Highways Agency in partnership with other key stakeholders.
- The need for community and safety schemes will be first identified by monitoring data and consulting local councillors and schemes will only be progressed once feasibility and need is confirmed and when all alternatives have been considered.
- Scheme costs will be closely monitored to ensure value for money.
- Value for money will be maximised when initiatives complement Strategic Planning and Transport Priorities.

- Efficiencies and value for money will be achieved through delivering local transport packages and by pooling public and private sector resources.
- Contract tendering, design and consultation will be carried out to ensure the required outputs are achieved.
- Strategic Planning and Transport Priorities will be reviewed in line with the emerging District Council’s LDF Core Strategy and Area Action Plan which will be examined by an independent Inspector.
- From April 2014, all developer contributions available to deliver this strategy could be collected by the District Council via a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The level of CIL likely to be made available for transport will be influenced by the approved LDF Infrastructure Delivery Plan, informed by this strategy. Direct access to developments will still be funded by S278 and S106 agreements.
- The County Council will support improvements to the trunk road network, funded by the Highways Agency, that help to meet identified transport challenges.
- The County Council will work in partnership to deliver investment in the West Coast Mainline and Chase Line, funded by Network Rail, Centro, the DfT and London Midland. Funding has not been secured for longer term proposals.
- In the short term, County Council transport investment will be focused on supporting development in the Pye Green Valley. The majority of the schemes within the Local Transport Package will be funded by developers. To ensure efficiencies and value for money, public sector funds will be used where necessary to complement private sector investment.
- Focusing investment in the Pye Green Valley, in the short term, will maximise the outcomes achieved by the Blake Total Place Project which is a multi-agency initiative.
- In the long term public and private sector resources will focus on implementing Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan and Norton Canes Local Transport Package and continuing to improve public transport links to the conurbation.
REQUIRED INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS

Main Plan
- Pye Green Valley Development Area
- Proposed New Housing
- Travel Plan Initiatives

Vehicle Traffic:
- Junction Improvements
- Better Signage to Trip Attractors

Public Transport:
- Bus Service Number 25 / 26
- Existing Bus Stops to be Upgraded & Provide Additional Stops

Walking and Cycling:
- Provide Footway / Cycleway for Access to Development & Bus Stops

Other LTP Improvements
- Provide Connections to Schemes in Pye Green Valley Development.
- Provide Pedestrian Crossing Linking Pye Green Road to Green Heath Development
- Provide Pedestrian Crossing at Victoria Street
- Provide Cycle Parking Facilities

COMMITTED SCHEMES - PYE GREEN VALLEY DEVELOPMENT

Inset Plan
- Substitute / Relocate Existing Bus Stop
- Provide Puffin Crossing
- Diverted Bus Service (minimum hourly) & Bus Voucher Scheme
- New Bus Facilities

- New Bus Stops
- Pye Green Valley Distributor
- Speed Reduction Scheme to Stafford Lane
- Provide Cycle Routes / Footways
- New Gateway Scheme
For more information please contact:

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