

A51 ROAD REPORT

Clotton Hoofield



**Produced by Our Stories Heritage Consultancy on behalf of the
Clotton Hoofield Neighbourhood Plan Group**

2018

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Common Abbreviations

The following abbreviations have been used throughout the report:

CWaC – Cheshire West and Chester (both the area and the local authority)

LTP – CWaC’s Local Transport Plan

LP – CWaC’s Local Plan

DfT - Department for Transporting

TfN - Transport for the North

HE – Highways England

HGV – Heavy Goods Vehicle

PC – Parish Council

HS – September 2017 Household Survey conducted on behalf of Clotton Hoofield PC

NP – Neighbourhood Plan

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership

CCS – Clotton Community Speedwatch

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was commissioned to collate information gathered by residents, community action groups, the local authority – Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC,) The Department for Transport ([DfT](#)) and Transport for the North ([TfN](#)) – the first statutory SubNational Transport Body in England.

These findings are expected to be used in conjunction with a Household Survey (HS) conducted on behalf of the Parish Council, to inform the Parish Council’s Neighbourhood Plan Transport Policy and set out the wider context in which is to be developed; with particular reference to the A51 which has been identified by residents as a major blight on the village. As residents who have lived in the village for many years, and newer activists for change to the A51 can attest, any significant action to address the impact of the road will require not only the support of CWaC and their strategic partners but TfN (which has been tasked with setting out the requirements of the pan-Northern transport network through its Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for the North) in order to secure the necessary funding from Highways England.

KEY FINDINGS

- *Residents in Clotton Hoofield reported a number of major concerns regarding the A51 road. These included safety, damage to property, negative impact on community cohesion, and severe impacts on health and wellbeing.*
- *Residents wished to see a number of improvements put in place to counteract these concerns. These included the completion of a bypass, extension of the 30mph speed limit, speed limit enforcement, traffic restrictions, and pedestrian crossings.*
- *Volunteers from the community have undertaken a speed watch programme and have begun recording accidents and near misses as they happen. A significant number of speeding vehicles were recorded (over 2000 during the duration of the study).*
- *The Department for Transport's figures are not up to date and have not been undertaken since the start of roadworks on the M6, at which point residents report an increase in HGV activity on the road.*
- *The A51 Action Group is ideally placed to continue discussions at a strategic regional level and to update the group going forward. They have received little support at council or parliamentary level, and so support at Parish Council level has been critical.*
- *The A51 through Clotton Hoofield falls under the Major Roads Network corridor D, linking the North West with Wales. As such there is a desire to see improvements to the road, in particular improving traffic flow. While money is available as part of this strategy, it is unlikely that this will complement the changes that residents wish to see.*
- *A study has been proposed to look at the A51 corridor, due to take place in the Autumn of 2018 and be published in Spring 2019. This will assess the viability of the road as part of the MRN and consider the need for an alternative route. Any proposed outcomes from this would be long-term rather than short-term.*
- *The transport strategy for the region makes note of support for improving bus routes and provision for cyclists. Residents indicated that these were priorities and so this may be a vital component of the NP.*

INTRODUCTION

The A51 runs through the village of Clotton. 68 households are located along this stretch of road (out of 126 total households - approx 54%) and so the road is a significant factor in the future vision for Clotton Hoofield. In addition to its impact on the residents of Clotton Hoofield, the A51 also impacts on the staff and visitors of Iddenshall Hall Care Home, the Bulls Head Pub (which has been identified as the only community focal point) and other businesses in the parish.

Initial consultation revealed that the A51 is considered to be a major negative issue for residents, with feedback stating that the volume, speed and type of traffic on the road results in:

- *noise and air pollution which adversely affects the well-being of residents*
- *damage to the road and properties close to it*
- *serious safety concerns with every interviewed by the Parish Council having witnessed accidents or examples of dangerous driving*
- *difficulties crossing the road, which are compounded by a lack of pedestrian crossings*
- *many residents citing the fact that the A51 effectively bisects Clotton, undermining any sense of community, as a cause for concern about the future vitality and sustainability of the parish*

Background to the A51

The A51 road runs from Chester to Kingsbury, Warwickshire, passing through sixteen towns and villages, in the boroughs of CWaC, Cheshire East, and Stafford. The road not only serves local communities but is a principle route for commuter and other traffic movements to access Chester and beyond from the north-east, east and south-east. Travel patterns are also influenced by the nearby conurbations of Merseyside and Greater Manchester and Ellesmere Port.

In 2002 the road was reclassified by the Department for Transport, from a 'Class A Trunk Road in a Rural Area (TR)' to a 'Class A Principal Road in a Rural Area (PR)' when responsibility for the road's maintenance was devolved to CWaC.

The CWaC 2017-2030 [Local Transport Plan](#) (LTP) states that the Council has made modest progress to limit traffic growth but congestion remains a significant problem in many parts of the Borough. With traffic volumes having increased by a quarter since 1993 and forecast to increase by a further 8% by 2030, the inner Chester ring-road and key radial routes such as the A51 have been identified as congestion hot spots.

In order to deliver the key targets set out in the CWaC's [Local Plan](#) (LP) 2016 to 2020 - which include seeking to provide 5,000 new jobs, 4,400 new homes and securing £277m of capital investment in regeneration, housing and key infrastructure, at least 22,000 new homes and over 360 hectares of employment land in the borough – CWaC understand that good transport access and connectivity will be vital to enable this to happen; as evidenced in their Strategic Objective SO5:

“(To) ensure all development is supported by the necessary provision of, or improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities in an effective and timely manner to make development sustainable and minimise its effect upon existing communities.”

These key targets – to improve infrastructure, to support the creation of jobs and build new homes – are essential: CWaC lies between the urban centres of Manchester and Liverpool and the boundary of the spheres of influence of these economic centres runs through the area. The view that Cheshire West and Chester is not at the centre of its own economic geography is supported by the fact that residents can, on average, earn more by out-commuting than working within the borough. The key long term economic issue for Cheshire West and Chester is an ageing population and a decline in the working age population. As increasing numbers of residents reach retirement age there will be implications for total disposable income, retail and service sector vitality and future labour supply which may deter future investment.

Ongoing consultation by CWaC and its partners (see [CWaC LTP 2017-2030](#) for details) over the 5 years since the LTP was first devised have proven that like the Council, residents also value effective transport links as essential for economic growth and addressing social isolation - particularly in rural areas. This was reflected in responses to the initial consultation survey, details of which are provided below.

However, the same survey revealed that many Clotton residents felt that CWaC's failure to address the increasing impact of the volume, speed and type of vehicles passing through the village in recent years, means it is now almost impossible for residents to walk alongside, cycle, or cross the A51 safely; thereby preventing them from calling on neighbours, or accessing community facilities – undermining the viability of these, and reinforcing car usage by inhibiting residents' use of cleaner and healthier modes of transport.

This suggests that if the Council's vision of CWaC as "*a desirable and attractive place to live, work, learn and visit with vibrant towns and rural villages, reflecting the vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy*" (as set out in the Local Plan) is to be achieved, action needs to be taken now to safeguard those communities – such as Clotton – whose character, architecture and residents' well-being, are already suffering as a result of the A51.

RESIDENTS RESPONSES TO THE ROAD

SURVEY CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF CLOTTON HOOFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Residents' responses to the following questions:

1. **Strengths and positive features of the community and parish living**
2. **Weaknesses or Negative Features of Community and living in Parish**
3. **Any changes to parish in the future (10-15 years)**

1. 'Rural nature of parish' 2. '**A51 with it's speed, pollution and dangers.**' 3. 'Ensure maintenance of green belt, maintenance of historical sites eg Iddenshall Rough – moated'

1. 'Living in countryside, nice walks, house backs onto fields, good schools.' 2. 'No affordable housing, hedges overgrown onto foot paths, farmers messing roads and not cleaning them, **potholes in roads; A51 too busy and too fast, they race through here shaking houses.**' 3. 'Affordable housing and A51 road improvements'

1. 'Potentially a great rural environment but hampered by the main road.' 2. '**Main road interferes with normal daily life such as crossing the road to see a neighbour.**' 3. 'Removal of heavy traffic, both volume and weight and encourage closer contact with neighbours and community spirit. **It is fundamentally wrong to bring heavy traffic through any village - the effect is to destroy rural communities such as Clotton'**

1. 'Very convenient for Manchester, Liverpool, Chester and the lovely village of Tarporley. An attractive variety of housing. Attractive countryside around and friendly residents.' 2. **'We can't function as a village though because of the heavy traffic on the road and speeding through it is the norm. Lack of crossing facilities for pedestrians. Missing a focal point other than the pub.'** 3. 'We would like to see the busy road diverted away from the village. A genuine community developed. More involvement by all the community such as participation in local events. A decent footpath/pavement both sides of the road all along the village. **Speed enforcement. Volume of traffic reduced meaning less noise pollution and better air quality.'**

1. 'Open spaces with countryside views - not densely built up. Neighbouring village school.' 2. 'The traffic through the village has increased exponentially. **When we moved in we were promised a by-pass. We have lost our shop and the bus service has been halved.'** 3. 'We need a by-pass! The bus service needs to be improved. It would be nice to have a community shop - especially if it could be part of a village centre. **Clotton needs to co-operate with other neighbouring communities to solve the traffic problem.** Maybe the combined efforts could help to provide sporting or recreational facilities.'

1. 'Living in the countryside. Good local amenities - Rose Farm Shop, golf courses and pubs. Location - good for travel - Liverpool, Manchester, Airport, Crewe.' 2. **'Clotton has limited opportunity to build a strong community as split by A51 - school and church in Duddon.'** 3. 'Focusing on what there already is and make better. In particular footpaths. Improve quality of life by considering effects on community e.g. planning.'

1. 'Good location with great facilities like Tarporley. A very high standard of quality homes, even though too expensive for young people to buy.' 2. 'It has to be the A51. The picture on your brochure is unbelievable (no traffic!) - how was that done? We need a by-pass that joins the A500 to the M53 to help all villages. It would allow the villages to become better and the Bulls Head would be better off.' 3. 'More houses built, and more car parking for school. Being a land owner along the A51 in Clotton the land would be

ideal to develop but it is green belt. We need more affordable houses so families can buy and then use Duddon School. **A51 needs a by-pass from the A500 to M53. The stretch of around 25 miles would help the villages in Chesire. We spend too much time in the very slow traffic and it is so noisy living in Clotton. The A51 should be 30mph all through from Clotton to Duddon and speed cameras near the school, like in Alpraham.'**

1. 'We have good transport links to anywhere in the North West and beyond. We have an adequate bus service, excellent postal service and efficient bin collection. We are conveniently placed for the local shops in Tarporley and Utkinton. We have good footpaths and easy access to the Sandstone Trail.' 2. **'I strongly feel that the 30mph limit should be extended past Iddenshall Hall towards Tarporley for safety. The pavements on both sides of the A51 need attention - moss and weeds are building up..'** 3. 'Whilst St Peter's Church is just beyond Clotton Hoofield PC it certainly is a parish asset. Sadly if it is not better supported both in attendance and financially it may not continue in its present form.'

1. 'The Parish sits in a rural area of rolling pastoral landscape comprising mixed livestock and arable farming. It offered an opportunity to own property with land in what was a quiet village with easy access including bus transport to excellent services (medical, police, shops, restaurants and leisure) in Tarporley (2 Km) and surrounding villages, and to the major motorway networks to Manchester, Liverpool and beyond. The Church and school are important Community establishments, albeit just outside the Parish boundary, and the Pub perhaps the only community amenity within the parish.' 3. **'The Community is defined by the impact of the A51 road that runs through the village. An increase in traffic volumes from 5,000 vehicles per day in the early 1990's to 20,000 vehicles per day now has resulted in social isolation and restriction on any Community activity. Every aspect of the quality of life for residents is restricted by an extremely unsafe road;** it is hoped that the Neighbourhood Plan will identify and stimulate solutions that cannot be ignored.' 3. 'There is clearly a desire by residents to re-establish a strong Community identity in a distinctive rural environment comprising open countryside interspersed with farms, isolated houses and excellent footpaths, including the

Sandstone Trail. There should be improvements to the existing public rights of way including the identification of circular footpaths to encourage walking within the Parish. Hedgerows on pathways adjacent to roads should be maintained to enable residents to walk safely.'

1.'The broader area is of outstanding beauty offering views, walking and other recreational opportunities. Properties offered privacy, space, light and sufficient land for small-scale food production. There appears to be a resurgent desire for better community cohesion. The development of a Neighbourhood Plan offers the opportunity to establish what is needed to re-establish a strong, vibrant and prosperous community.'

2.'A narrow winding old Roman road with properties within feet of the highway has become a 'rat-run' for Continental and National HGVs from the M6 to North Wales and Ireland. As far back as 1992, Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWCC) acknowledged the need for a bypass or alternative new motorway route but had neither the vision nor skill to identify and specify a proposal. This has resulted in the A51 through Clotton becoming a no-go area for pedestrians or cyclists, nor cars seeking access to the road. The elderly cannot cross the road which is so poorly maintained that most adjacent properties are damaged by vibration, and there are many accidents.' 3.' The school, church and village hall are essential components to any village plan and should be referred to despite being outside the Clotton and Hoofield boundary. Clotton should retain a close relationship with Duddon to support these shared facilities.'

2.'CWCC appears to fully misunderstand the problems of high volumes of traffic using an under-capacity and under-maintained road on a Community, and particularly misconstrued the need for a 30mph speed limit throughout the Village, as requested by 100% of residents.' 3.' To achieve such development, there needs to be limited, carefully controlled and preferably dispersed additional housing to meet the broad needs of any workforce required. This could be by infill, backland or small-scale development and comprise a mixture of higher quality and low cost/affordable market housing, the latter especially for young people. It is considered that 20 to 30 houses all in character with the rural setting could easily be accommodated over 5 years. There should be a

maximum of 4/5 adjacent properties. Larger scale estate development would be wholly inappropriate to the rural environment; green spaces, trees, hedgerows and footpaths must be protected and new houses should be landscaped. But in the medium term i.e. within 5 years, **the only solution is a major by-pass to join the dual carriage ways from Junction 16 of the M6, past Crewe and round Nantwich to join up with the Chester ring-road, possibly near the dreaded Sainsbury roundabout.**'

3.' Maintain existing bus services to ensure easy access to community support services (medical, shops, police, restaurants, fuel, leisure). Maintain weekly refuse collection.'

2.' Failed reinstatement of road outside property. **Speeding HGVs. Noise dust and dirt from road. Vibration of property, windows, contents of cupboards and pictures on walls. Affecting sleep due to traffic disturbance.**' [Interested in joining forces with Clotton to look at road issues as she feels her own isolated efforts will have less effect. Has already written to Duddon PC, elected representatives and Sergeant. Attended Bulls Head event on 18 09 17]

3.' I feel there needs to be better consideration for the planning that is awarded within the village for example one recent planning application was supported by the Parish Council despite it being extremely divisive within the community and having an impact on the A51 and on the houses down Willington Road. It is sadly things like this that will prevent a community spirit ever developing. I am aware that businesses need to expand but not at the detriment to the wider community.'

1.' Having been brought up living on a farm and then had 25 years of living in a town, I took the decision to move back to a rural environment. This area provides a clearly different way of life to town living. From peaceful, quiet evenings to the space and tranquility that allows such a mix of wildlife to pass my doorstep or make their homes in my garden, this area has a clear distinction from the urban life I moved away from. Our country has been built on both town and country living and where we live is part of that country tradition. ' 2.' For people who actually want to live in a traditional rural

community, there are few unexpected negative features.’ 3.’ The community should look to maintain the strengths and values of being a rural environment. We should aim to protect the look and feel of the area. Any new developments should be kept to the existing A51 main road allowing the existing lanes to be safe country lanes that can be used by cyclists and pedestrians without concerns over increased traffic. We should look to reduce the use of our lanes as shortcuts by large goods vehicles and ensure these are routed along the main roads where possible. There is a growing need in the UK to stand up to the creeping urbanisation of the countryside. England for years a green and pleasant land is becoming a slowly growing urban sprawl. Rural communities must be strong in keeping the environment distinct from towns and cities. We are not a city or town nor should we aspire to be what they are and to have what they have. We must keep our open spaces and prevent the spaces between rural homes being filled with new builds that change the nature of rural living to street living. Living on a country lane should have the same joys, freedoms and privacy for people in years to come as they do today.’

3.’Outdoor advertisements must be controlled and preferably stopped to prevent a proliferation of signage. Proposals for the provision of new community facilities should be very actively encouraged as should enhancement of existing facilities e.g. pub, church, village hall and school. In summary, the overall objective is to encourage business development and limited housing whilst retaining rural character and ensuring Clotton and Hoofield is a safe place to live and work. **Major improvement to transport by-passing Clotton Village is urgently required if a ‘Community’ is to be re-established.**’

2.’ The Parish population is relatively aged and innovative housing solutions need to be identified.’ 3. ‘There is also some scope for downsizing by existing elderly residents and some small high quality properties may release larger family homes. In summary, a well balanced mix of properties, all with gardens of an appropriate size for rural dwellings using sympathetic local materials but of modern design and energy efficient. All listed properties must be respected. Such small-scale development goals do however **require that the road problems be addressed. This must include short term/immediate**

initiatives such as a 30mph restriction throughout the length of the village with speed controls (as endorsed by 100% of residents living on the road), and diversion of HGVs to an alternative route with weight limits imposed through Clotton Village. The road surface must be significantly upgraded and maintained with improvements made to assist pedestrian and cyclists safety (particularly road crossings).'

*2.'Until very recently, Parish Council representation has been weak with a total failure to influence CWCC to address **the A51 issue**. Nearby Parish Councils also developed Neighbourhood Plans many years ago.'* *3.'The conversion of permanent larger rural buildings for farm diversification or recreation should be supported, particularly if supporting new employment opportunities and provided they are sited sensitively.*

2.' The Pub and Residential Home are the only venues for Community activity within the Parish.' *3.' Small-scale development should be promoted to provide increased local employment and increased economic activity. It is considered that there is significant potential for further business development, particularly in support of agricultural activities. There is also scope for new enterprises, possibly high technology initiatives, but these should be developed sensitively in order not to disturb the rural character of the Parish.'*

2.' No real shop. Speeding down the A51.' *3.' I am supportive of new housing being developed along the A51 on appropriate land (if small developments) as I feel the new development of a community along the linear A51 would lead to pedestrian crossings, **better enforced speed reduction etc (my major safety concerns!) 30mph limit enforced through Clotton with speed cameras such as have been installed in Alraham. When the local police are not there, traffic speeds through and it is unacceptable.'***

1.'The beautiful green fields and rural feeling to this area. We love to see farm animals in the fields around us and love wildlife being in our garden. We both work in stressful inner city jobs and choose this area to live in for its calming atmosphere which is vital to our wellbeing.' *2.' It greatly concerns us that planning permission may be given on the*

beautiful green fields around here. We moved here for calming countryside not to be surrounded by bricks and mortar. If planning permission has to be granted then it should be in keeping with the existing buildings and not contemporary builds.'

3.'Reduction of traffic speed on A51.'

1.' The sense of community. Countryside/footpaths/plenty of walks. Lovely eateries. Ready access to ??? with good bus route.' 2.' Could do with more regular bus service.

Speed and amount of traffic on A51 including congestion. Too many houses being built.' 3.'Speed and amount of traffic on A51.'

1.' The countryside which surrounds us.' 2.'**The road! Which leads to people being quite insular even to which side of the road.'** 3.'**Increase in safety on the road.'**

1.' Having moved to the area only a few months ago, we have been struck by the friendliness and welcoming attitude of so many. ' 2.'**The speed, volume and noise of the A51.** The often impossibility of parking in Tarporley.' 3.' A speed limit or 30mph imposed for the entire A51 through the village.'

1.' Transport links. Rural location with proximity of Tarporley and Chester. It is a small parish and has the potential to have a community spirit and care for the people and properties.' 2.'Volume, speed and size of vehicles travelling through on A51. Presentation of the village(s) signs, road, Bulls Head outside hedges, footpaths, bins left out and maintenance of the A51' 3.'**Maintenance of the A51 and the volume, speed and size of vehicles travelling through village.** Improved footpath signage and presentation. More of a community focus - pub and community hall. Would not want any large scale developments. Would support growth in housing and business if sensitive and needed. More community support for the villages from the residents.'

Summary of Residents' concerns surrounding road

Of the residents' concerns surrounding the A51 road, a number of issues are repeated. Three respondents make reference to damage to properties, in particular HGV's causing vibrations within properties.

Seven respondents mention safety concerns related to other road users but particularly to pedestrians wanting to cross the road. Of these, five stated that concerns over safety had an impact on their day to day activities, including a statement that the village of Clotton had become a 'no go' area due to the road.

Seven respondents felt that the A51 had a negative impact on community cohesion, making it difficult for neighbours to visit one another and preventing people from gathering together.

Alternative methods of transport were raised seven times. Clotton is served by the 84 bus from Chester to Nantwich and Crewe, with a number of bus stops along the A51 throughout the village, including in the 50mph zone. This is a significant safety consideration as the narrow road means that overtaking the bus is often dangerous. Nevertheless, Clotton is part of the commuter belt for Chester (as well as for cities further away such as Manchester and Liverpool). An effective transport system would support those wishing to use buses for commuting or alternatively cyclists. Increasing the bus service is mentioned, as is the need for safety precautions for cyclists.

Clotton is also situated on the major walking route, the Sandstone Trail and has a number of footpaths in the surrounding area. Respondents mention the poor state of the footpaths, the dangers of the traffic to pedestrians and the lack of crossing points. Making the most of the surrounding countryside is a reoccurring theme and residents mention wanting improvements to local footpaths and the provision of circular walks in the area.

The A51 road has a significant impact on the quality of life for residents. Six respondents mentioned an impact on health and wellbeing, including noise and air pollution and even sleep being disrupted by the traffic at night.

Summary of solutions suggested by residents

Respondents to the questionnaire suggest a number of solutions to the issues affecting the A51. Seven respondents mention wanting to extend the 30mph speed limit throughout the entire village. Five respondents wanted to see better enforcement of speed restrictions, weight and size limit to vehicles travelling through the village, a police presence and speed cameras. Four respondents explicitly mention the need for a bypass, while two others mention diverting traffic away from the road. Pedestrian crossings were mentioned by two respondents as a solution to the safety of pedestrians, and two respondents discussed how to ensure that cyclists were safely catered for.

COMMUNITY ACTION

Motorists travelling at excessive speed through neighbourhoods is one of the most common issues raised with Local Authorities and Parish Councils because it not only has an impact on road safety but on the quality of life for those residents who endure it

One resident who is involved in the community action, wrote about their reasons for getting involved and how the community action has developed since 2016.

'About 18 months ago (August 2016), there was a nasty accident just outside our house. It was at 11:15pm when a car hit a lamp post, overturned and slid on its roof 100 m down the road ending in next door's hedge. An ambulance, fire engine and of course the police arrived to pull the drunken driver from the overturned car. He was taken to hospital and probably then onto a police cell. I have never seen a record of this accident in any online documentation nor did it seem to count towards accident data.

I started asking people what they thought about issues on the road such as volume of traffic, the speeds it was going at and what accidents they were aware of. Many people reported seeing minor or major accidents and all were in agreement that drivers were driving too fast for the road conditions etc. I discussed this at length with the Parish Council over some months and we collected a group of concerned individuals to undertake a Speedwatch survey in Clotton. The results of that survey led us to take matters further and ask for a re-assessment of the speeds in particular from the existing 30mph to the old people's home at Iddenshall. To date we have had some sort of agreement that (CWaC) will allow a 40mph buffer zone only and we are still waiting (over a year later) for this to be implemented. Complaints and involvement by A Sandbach have done little to get this plan implemented to date.

Many people have tried before this group to get the volumes and speed of traffic down, and this has spanned a number of years. Indeed at one point a bypass was agreed but never implemented. It was in October last year that we - the Clotton Steering Group - decided we needed a joined up approach to getting things done and an invitation to the Parish Councillors along the whole of the route resulted in over 24 attendees. From this group another steering group formed and it is these people (some of whom were the original instigators of change) who are driving forward on behalf of everyone affected by the road to effect a new route through

or major strategies to improve the current situation. **The Local Authorities are doing very little to help.**

Over the last few months the Government has started a consultation process to get endorsement for their ambitious plans to improve transport connectivity through the A road system. They are putting a lot of money into this. Their agenda is to get more traffic moving faster along the route (the A51 corridor). This does not bode well for communities along the way and we are trying to influence them to put in proper infrastructure (ie a new road) to take the sheer volume of traffic that we believe will be generated when HS2 rail link comes to Crewe in 2020 and to connect with the A55 Wales expressway which could well have even more HGV's coming through Holyhead (possibly a border with EU when we leave after Brexit!!)*

*The Government is currently analysing the feedback from its consultations on “Proposals for the Creation of a Major Road Network” and “Shaping the future of England’s strategic roads (RIS2)” (to view the consultation document please see the gov.uk website ([MRN](#))([SR](#)))

Clotton Community Speedwatch (CCS)

Community Speedwatch through the villages of Clotton and Duddon on the busy A51, was undertaken by a group of volunteers through the month of April 2017 in order to both raise awareness of the levels of speeding and help reduce traffic speeding through the villages.

Working within the community to help control the problem locally, factual data was collected for further investigation with the purpose of finding an acceptable solution to reduce the number of speeding vehicles along the stretch of road between the roundabouts at Tarvin and Tarporley.

The CCS scheme is currently operated throughout Cheshire, and is supported by Clotton Hoofield Parish Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Cheshire Police.

The CCS program aims to check the speeds of vehicles within a 20/30/40 miles per hour speed limit and seeks to promote safer driving in the local community by educating rather than by prosecuting individuals. It was therefore decided not to record vehicle registration numbers but simply to collect data to inform the group and other interested parties (such as Clotton Hoofield Parish Council) in making future decisions.

The Community Speedwatchers were trained by an appropriately qualified person in the use of the speed indication equipment and were given advice regarding conflict resolution. High Viz jackets were worn by all personnel undertaking Speed Watch duties. Identified and assessed areas were targeted only during the hours of daylight. Area 1 was centrally placed just outside the Bulls Head Pub, Area 2 at Duddon, in close proximity to the primary school, and Area 3 outside Tarporley Gates on the South Eastern side of the village. Sessions were organised and data gathered noting the date, time of the day and weather conditions, followed by the types of vehicles using the road and the individual speed of each vehicle. Alternate hours and days of the week were used for the recording. This was completed over a 4-week period during the month of April.

Table 1: Results of CCS

Week / Area	Average no. of vehicles recorded in an hour	% cars	% HGVs	% Delivery vehicles	% travelling 30 mph +	% travelling 36mph +
1. Outside the Bulls Head Pub	488	84%	4%	9%	29%	4% (325 vehicles)
Observations	Vehicles were often slowed down by other vehicles turning in and out of Corkscrew Ln; several near misses were observed (including one involving an HGV) and on day 2 an accident took place outside the pub where a vehicle was sandwiched between the stationary vehicle in front, which was waiting to turn into corkscrew lane and a speeding vehicle which was travelling too fast to avoid the collision.					
2. The Duddon end of the A51 nr Primary School	486	85%	5%	10%	22%	3% (183 vehicles)
Observations	This stretch of road allowed oncoming motorists to see the speed check in advance and many were observed to dramatically reduce their speed on doing so					
3/4 Outside Tarporley Gates	566	78%	7%	14%	47%	16% (1682 vehicles)

Observations	This observation coincided with the Easter weekend so it was decided to split the observation period over two weeks and to omit the holiday weekend. Drivers were observed to being travelling at high speeds well into the 30mph zone and to pick up speed very rapidly before leaving it – possibly because they can see the 50mph sign at a distance and begin to accelerate
NB: Had CCS decided to record the registrations of all the cars speeding over 36mph this would have required 2190 notification letters to be sent out; 77% of these came from the south-eastern section of the road.	

One of the significant issues that CCS identified was that the 30mph sign is positioned just after a bend so drivers cannot easily see the sign and decelerate before they enter the 30mph zone. The group agreed unanimously that based on their observations, the 30mph sign would be more effective if it were placed at the junction with Iddenshall Residential Care Home and the Potato Factory behind it, so that drivers could see the sign and decelerate before entering the village. Future counts should use the DfT format to ensure data is comparable

Department for Transport (DfT) data for Count Point (CP) 6350: The A51, West Cheshire

(source <http://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php?la=West+Cheshire%236530>)

start junction with A54 – end junction with A49, Link Length 4.85miles

Key: Road level Annual Average Daily Flow (**AADF**) Manual Count (**MC**) Estimated (**E**)

AAFYear	Method	PedalCycles	Motorcycles	Cars/Taxis	Buses	LightGoodsVehicles	Total HGVs	Total
2000	MC	9	109	10529	98	1351	838	12925
2001	MC	5	77	10495	128	1166	888	12754
2002	MC	6	65	10133	118	1201	1001	12518
2003	E	5	79	10224	122	1353	973	12751
2004	MC	4	54	10747	116	1281	936	13134
2005	E	5	49	10736	117	1345	892	13139
2006	MC	7	99	10359	95	1331	912	12796
2007	E	7	99	10090	102	1469	974	12734
2008	MC	4	129	10574	97	1348	913	13061
2009	E	4	135	10447	97	1374	812	12865
2010	E	4	119	10249	100	1414	806	12688
2011	E	4	130	10280	104	1496	821	12831
2012	MC	20	108	11244	103	1264	604	13323
2013	E	20	109	11036	94	1357	597	13194
2014	E	16	113	11191	97	1459	610	13469
2015	E	16	108	11058	99	1562	624	13451
2016	E	16	106	11074	96	1633	612	13521

*Traffic figures at the regional and national level are robust, and are reported as National Statistics. However, DfT's traffic estimates for individual road links and small areas are less robust, as they are not always based on up-to-date counts made at these locations. Where other more up-to-date sources of traffic data are available (e.g. from local highways authorities), this may provide a more accurate estimate of traffic at these locations. It is the responsibility of the user to decide which data are most appropriate for their purpose, and if DfT road link level traffic estimates are used, to make a note of the limitations in any published material.

The above data published by the DfT does paint a more conservative picture of the type and volume of the traffic using the A51 - with HGVs estimated to make up only 4.5% of traffic on the road in 2016, and their numbers estimated to be 27% less than were actually counted in 2000. However, the DfT has published no figures for the period since Highways England (HE) began work on the M6 smart motorway project in 2015/16; the work on the M6 between junctions 16 (Crewe) and 19 (Knutsford) is on course to be completed in March 2019 (according to HE's website: www.highwaysengland.co.uk). The aim of the project is to install innovative technology which can actively control traffic flows by varying speed limits and using the hard shoulder as an extra lane during busy times and multiple emergency areas have also been created to avoid congestion caused by breakdowns. Whilst it is possible that

these improvements may result in some decrease in the number of motorists using the A51 as a more predictable and economical alternative in future, since the work began, residents have reported an increased number of HGVs using the road, presumably in order to avoid any delay caused by these works. Many of these HGV's are exceeding the speed limit at all times (as recorded) but particularly during the hours of darkness when - as data the Speedwatch group obtained from CWaC shows - the highest percentage of the volume of vehicles speeding was 86% between 3:00 – 4:00 in the morning and 68% of the volume of vehicles going through were HGV's. This causes severe damage to the road and damage to people's houses, as evidenced by the 2017 Household Survey.

One thing which is apparent comparing the two data sets, is the importance of pressing DfT to carry out manual counts, which they have not done since 2012. These counts can not only be more effectively compared to historical data but used as robust evidence to inform any case for improvements to the road. In the interest of best practise and getting the most value from the time invested by any volunteers who might undertake such a survey again, it may also be advisable to use the above format for counts, so that any information gathered can be directly compared to that produced by the DfT.

There are significant concerns within the community that the number of HGV's may increase as a result of ongoing commercial growth in the area (especially in context of the developing roads strategy detailed in the next sections). This may be worsened further if the port of Holyhead becomes an EU border following Brexit.

A51 Action Group

To build on the findings of the Speedwatch campaign, volunteers formed the [A51 Action Group](#).

The group work to lobby CWaC, MPs, and LEPs on behalf of (and in partnership with) all the Parish Councils along the A51.

The Group's website provides a forum for residents to report property damage and disturbances, as well as find out about relevant Government consultations and share practice with other community Speedwatch groups; it is hoped that this coordinated approach can galvanise and increase support for a call for action on the A51:

'In the past, limited local success has been achieved - now the Internet gives us the prospect of gaining 'strength in numbers'.

The A51 Action Group has been invited to participate in meetings with the LEP and TfN regarding the developing roads strategy. This group maintains the position that a new road is the optimal solution for the area. While this group has been successful in getting their position heard and continue to be involved in the ongoing discussions, they have not received support from the MP Antoinette Sandbach, nor have the CwaC been forthcoming with data when requested.

The arguments for and against the 're-trunking' of the A51 need to be clarified for the NP, as should the road fall outside of the jurisdiction of CWaC this may impact what powers the NP may have on changes made to the road.

TFN

In response to the aforementioned Government Consultations (page 18), the four SubNational Transport Bodies wrote a joint **letter to Roads Minister Jesse Norman** insisting that they play an integral role in the definition and implementations of the Major Roads Network (MRN).

The Government's proposals would see funding made available to improve key 'A' roads managed by local transport authorities, but under its current plans, the MRN would be separate from the Strategic Road Network, while there would also be restrictions on what types of schemes would be eligible for funding.

The STBs argue that investment in Highways England's roads and the more significant local authority roads should be taken forward as a single programme, and that specific eligibility criteria should be removed.

Alongside their own detailed individual responses to the MRN consultation, the STBs have submitted six joint recommendations to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the first time:

- 1. Work with nascent Sub-national Transport Bodies (STBs) to define the Major Road Network. STBs have all worked closely with local government partners to reach consensus on the priority roads in their areas, backed up by robust evidence;*
- 2. Plan and invest in the MRN as a single network to enable it to focus on outcomes for road users for the benefit of residents and businesses;*
- 3. Identify indicative, regional funding levels within which advice on investment can be planned over the long term, to incentivise an effective pipeline of improvements planned and funded by all parties together;*
- 4. We agree with the DfT that investment should have an unerring focus on outcomes for road users, but disagree with the approach to specifically identify eligibility criteria which could limit the holistic view the MRN is seeking to enable;*
- 5. STBs should provide a reporting and monitoring role, considering wider economic benefits and multi-modal options for our areas;*
- 6. The DfT should clarify the long-term role STBs can offer in any further announcements on the MRN. STBs can act as co-creators for the road network, with strong and united voices to support and safeguard delivery of the MRN.*

Transport for the North's integrated rail and major roads report, published in June 2017, identified seven defined Strategic Development Corridors. Each corridor represents an economic area where evidence suggests the most progress towards transformational growth could be made by bringing forward major road and rail investment. The corridors will encompass the needs of people, business, freight and logistics. Corridor D covers the route from the NW to Wales and included the A51 through Clotton Hoofield.

"This corridor links densely populated economic centres and assets, including some of the North's largest cities such as Liverpool and Manchester. Improvements in this corridor will also strengthen the North's cross border connections with North Wales and the Midlands.

Significant economic and population growth is forecast within this corridor which will increase demand on transport infrastructure. Connectivity improvements can support the growth of Manchester Airport, Liverpool John Lennon Airport, Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zones, Atlantic Gateway, North Wales Arc, Port of Liverpool and Crewe HS2 Hub".

The public consultation closed in April 2018 and findings have not yet been published from this. See Appendix One for the response of Clotton Hoofield PC to this consultation.

It is likely that the NP will need to be familiar with the desired outcomes of TfN in order to ensure that the NP is ratified at local government level. The transport strategy proposed by the Local Enterprise Partnership is therefore set out on the next few pages. Of particular note however is the funding available to make improvements to A roads. This is likely to be aimed at facilitating greater traffic flows however and not the improvements residents wish to see.

LEP

Transport Strategy

The LEP has proposed a draft transport strategy as part of their Strategic Economic Plan (SEP). The aim of this is to help deliver and support the planned growth of the economy of Cheshire and Warrington (£50 billion per annum by 2040). Their major objectives in setting out this strategy are as follows:

- *Improve connections to support development of priority employment sites including those within the Cheshire Science Corridor.*
- *Improve connections to neighbouring sub-regions, including international gateways to ensure that business has connectivity to global markets and to facilitate the economic benefits of both out and in commuting that takes place daily.*
- *Resolve pinch points and congestion in the transport network, both road and rail, which act as barriers to growth if left unaddressed. Delays and unpredictable journey times affect business activity directly (e.g. the supply of components to the automotive sector) and indirectly, and influences commuting flows.*
- *Address network resilience issues to deliver predictable and efficient journey times to support business productivity.*
- *Make best use of the existing road (e.g. smart motorways) and rail network (e.g. electrification) to capitalise on existing infrastructure, offering efficient mechanisms for improvement and helping deliver best value for money from investment.*
- *Ensure that the maximum benefit is gained in economic and connectivity terms from the development of the HS2 Hub Station at Crewe.*

In addition to the reference to 'pinch points' above, the document also sets out the intention to undertake corridor improvements along the A51. These have not been set out clearly nor have they been discussed with the A51 Action Group. In addition an A51 connectivity study is due to take place in Autumn 2018 for completion in Spring 2019.

A study to consider options to tackle capacity constraints and network resilience along the A51 corridor between the M6 and A55. The scheme will also help to address severance amongst communities along the route.

This is an area in which further discussions may be essential in order to ensure that the NP is as effective as possible. The delivery of any proposed changes, for example a new road, are currently indicated as being long term (ie up to 10 years) and so the NP may need to look at shorter term strategies for improving the quality of life for residents along the A51.

In consultation with the A51 Strategy Group, the LEP expressed the desire that the A51 be re-trunked. Responses to this suggestion have been mixed, however concerns that the A51 may become more attractive to HGV traffic due to improved traffic flow and better signage. This may generate more noise, pollution and damage to buildings as expressed by residents in the initial consultation survey.

One potentially more positive element of the transport strategy is the commitment to improving bus services in the region. As many residents stated in the initial consultation survey, there is a desire for an extension of the existing bus service from Chester to Nantwich and Crewe. An effective bus service would help residents connect to major rail networks (including HS2 at Crewe) and could form an important element of the commuting journey.

As the strategy states:

The introduction of the Bus Services Act provides new opportunities to establish a more output focused and joined-up way of managing the bus market. New approaches based upon the principles of partnership have the potential to deliver improvements through a more flexible and collaborative process.

To support the growth of the economy the local authorities, supported by the LEP, will need to work with the bus companies to explore a range of solutions for making bus travel more attractive including land-use planning to ensure that developments help provide the critical mass necessary to make bus services viable, improved ticketing, real time journey information, bus priority measures, service patterns and service frequencies.

The NP may wish to engage with this closely in order to address the need for better public transport in the Parish.

Little mention has been made of cycling as a means of transport (although 3% of journeys to and from work within CWaC are done by bike with the potential for improvement). However the NP could argue the case for improving provision for cyclists given the following passage in the Transport Strategy.

Increasing the proportion of trips made by walking and cycling can play a significant role in accommodating demand without adding to levels of congestion on our networks. It can also contribute to achieving wider strategic objectives such as those associated with public health and air quality. To achieve these goals improvements will need to be made to facilities and the local environment to support the establishment of healthy and sustainable communities.

CONCLUSION

With ongoing developments in transport across the region, the Clotton Hoofield Neighbourhood Plan must make an informed intervention in order to ensure that it protects the community as well as exerting pressure where necessary to shape the direction of change. With decisions being taken at a strategic regional level however, the impact of the NP may be limited.

This report has set out the views of residents as well as the data gathered by those involved in lobbying for improvements to the A51 for residents. It has also aimed to set out a number of the key discussions currently ongoing within the region, so as to inform the group. The A51 Action Group are well placed to keep the group updated on any changes and have a presence on the planning group.

It is significant however that any major changes, such as the bypass desired by a significant percentage of the residents of Clotton Hoofield, are long term projects, and shorter term changes, such as the extension of the speed restrictions, and enforcement of these, may be more significant in the shorter term.

APPENDIX ONE

Letter from Clotton Hoofield Parish Council in response to the DFT Consultation

MRN Consultation
Department for Transport
2/15 Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR
By E Mail: MRNconsultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk
18th March 2018

Dear Sirs,

Consultation - 'Proposals for the Creation of a Major Route Network'

Please find below Clotton Hoofield Parish Council's response to the Department of Transport's Consultation 'Proposals for the Creation of a Major Route Network' published in December 2017.

1. Core Principles

We agree with the proposed Core Principles for the MRN outlined in the above document.

Defining the MRN

2. Quantitative Criteria

In principle we agree with the quantitative criteria outlined in the above document and their proposed application. In particular we agree that the use of the latest traffic data is critical in assessing the candidate roads for inclusion within the MRN.

Whilst we have noted that you will be using current traffic data as opposed to projected traffic levels to assess the requirements of the network, we would however suggest that consideration should be given to the impact that 'game changers' such as HS2, BREXIT etc. may have on the MRN. In particular in relation to cross border traffic i.e. road traffic (particularly HGV's) to/from Ireland through the UK ports particularly Holyhead, and its impact upon the Indicative MRN within England i.e. A51 / A41 / A49 in Cheshire.

We fully support the inclusion of De-trunked roads within the MRN. The A51 (Chester – Nantwich) which passes through Clotton Hoofield is a de-trunked road.

3. Qualitative Criteria

We agree with the qualitative criteria proposed to be adopted to assess the MRN. We agree that the MRN must be consistent and coherent across England when considered alongside the SRN.

In particular we have noted that a key consideration in defining the MRN should be its interplays with the SRN, both in terms of access between the two and improving resilience if one should experience disruption or require long terms works.

Clotton Hoofield, which is on the A51 (Nantwich – Chester) is negatively impacted upon when there is disruption on the M6 between junctions 16 (Crewe / Nantwich / Stoke on Trent) and junctions to the north through to junction 21a, as traffic, particularly HGV's seek to find alternatives routes (north and south). We have seen particular increases in HGV traffic on the A51 during the current installation of VMS on the M6 where there has been reduced road capacity due to lane closures.

Improvements to the MRN where they link major ports, airports and key transport hubs are supported.

4. In relation to Clotton Hoofield the identification of the A51 (Nantwich – Chester) as an Indicative MRN is noted and supported, as is the A41 and A49 through Cheshire.

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of the A54 (Holmes Chapel – Tarvin) as a MRN.

5. No

6. Yes – we agree with the proposal how the MRN should be reviewed in future years.

7. We agree with the roles outlined for local, regional and national bodies however see 8 below.

8. We would recommend that at a local level LA's are formally bound to consult with Parish and Town Council's on matters relating to the MRN proposals to ensure that local communities viewpoints can be taken into account. In particular Clotton Hoofield PC and other neighbouring parish councils along the route of the A51 (Nantwich – Crewe) have undertaken traffic surveys and assimilated other data gathering that would help inform preparation of the regional evidence base. We have offered to support the Cheshire & Warrington LEP in making our data available to them in preparing the regional evidence base.

9. Yes we support this.

10. We would highlight the comments made in 8. above. Parish and Town Council's have an important role to play in contributing towards the preparation of the Regional Evidence Base. Many Parish and Town Council's Council's have prepared or are preparing Neighbourhood Plans (Clotton Hoofield is in the process of preparing its Neighbourhood Plan). Their data gathering and consultation responses on Highway and traffic matters, housing, employment etc. reflects the views of the local communities whom they represent, and should be a material consideration in preparing the Regional Evidence Base.

11. We agree with the role that has been outlined for Highways England.

12. In principle we agree with the cost thresholds outlined, however we would request the following matters should be taken into account:

We have noted that a package of improvements along a stretch of road, or corridor where a known issue has been identified would be eligible for funding. Where this is broken down into individual projects albeit part of the wider improvements along a stretch of road or within a corridor we would request that the cumulative cost of all the individual projects is taken into account in assessing the eligibility of the scheme.

We have noted that regions and local authority promoters are to minimize scheme costs through scheme optimisation and the securing of third party contributions, alongside local contributions. It would be helpful if the type of third party contributions sought could be made more explicit i.e. S106, CIL etc.

13. Yes we agree with the Eligibility criteria to be adopted.

14. Yes we agree with the investment assessment criteria outlined.

15. We would request that the following variations should be included within the objective headed 'Reduce Congestion':

(i) Under the first criteria set under 'Environmental Impacts' this should be extended to read "Improve air quality, quality of life, and biodiversity".

(ii) Under the second criteria set under 'Environmental Impacts' this should be extended to read "Reduce noise, vibration, and risk of flooding".

(iii) Under the third criteria set under 'Environmental Impacts' this should be extended to read "Protect water quality, landscape and cultural heritage sites (including Conservation Areas and areas including groups of Listed Buildings)".

(iv) We would request that the following additional criteria should be included:

"Improve and protect the quiet enjoyment of residents".

(v) Under the Objective headed 'Support Housing Delivery' – we would request this is amended to read "Support the creation of new housing developments and community facilities (healthcare provision, schools, local services and facilities including ancillary retail and leisure uses) required to support new housing development by improving access to future development sites and boosting suitable land capacity

16. We do not have any further comments to make at this stage of the consultation process however we would be pleased to provide further input to the process upon receipt of the formal consultation responses during summer 2018. We would be pleased to engage further with the Department directly or via the Warrington & Cheshire LEP or

Cheshire West & Chester Council to support finalisation of an MRN Programme during summer 20918.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Prescott

Chairman – Clotton Hoofield Parish Council