

Cheshire East Bus Service Review Consultation 2024

Information Pack

Working for a **brighter future**  together

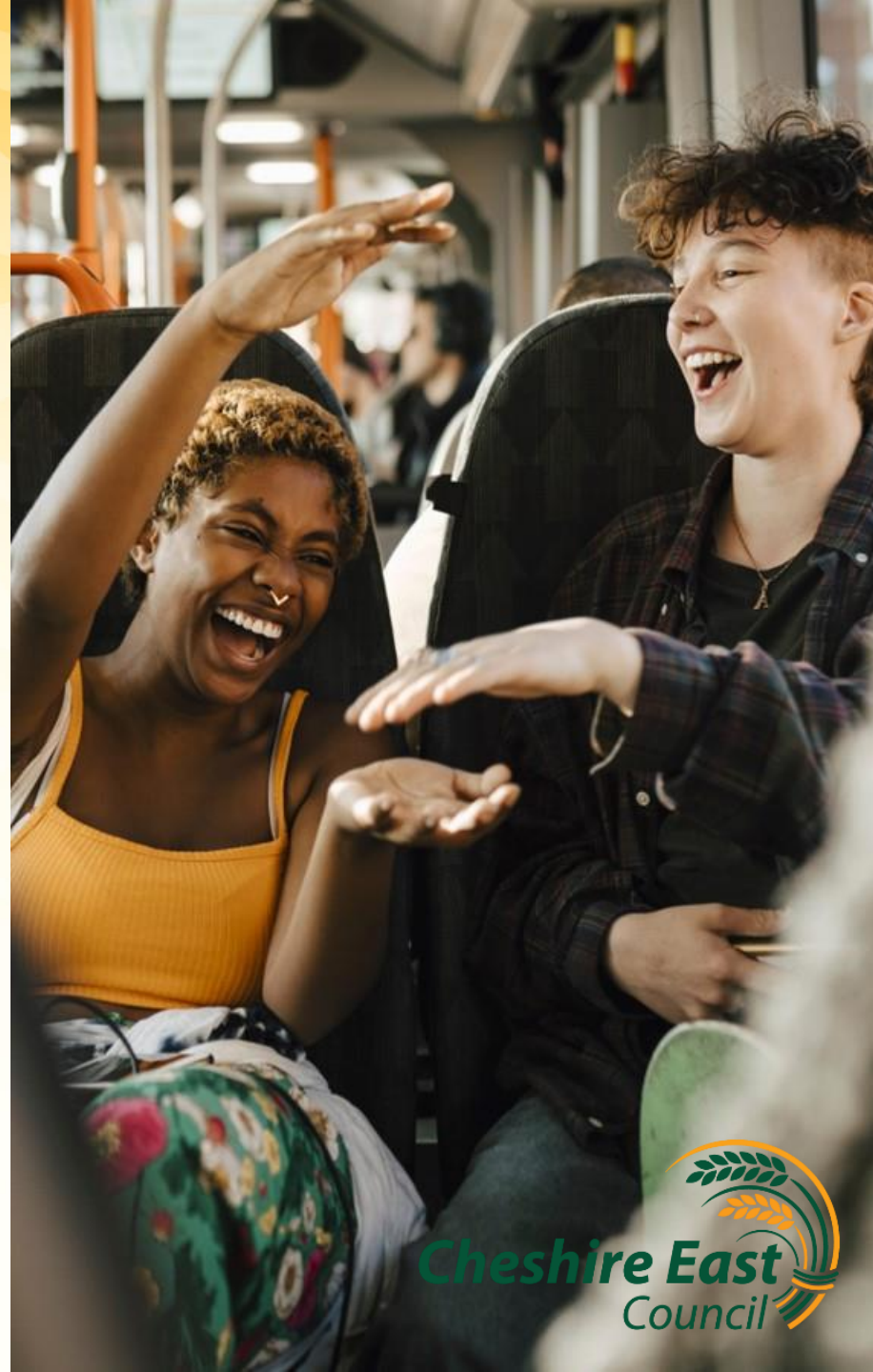


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Introduction

Bus Service Review 2024

- The bus network in Cheshire East plays a key role in providing access to jobs and services by connecting people to places.
- The local bus network is made up of 37 bus services, of which 21 services are fully supported by the Council (57%), a further 8 are partially supported by the Council (22%), such as evening journeys. 8 services (22%) operate on a fully commercial basis.
- The Council currently spends £2.5m supporting bus services which are not commercially viable but are deemed important and socially necessary.
- The last bus service review was undertaken in 2017 and much has changed in that time. In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic struck with significant impacts for passenger transport services.
- This review looks for opportunities to encourage more bus use and get more supported services operating commercially, tweak services to improve performance and passenger uptake and get better value out of what the Council is spending.



Objectives

Our objectives for this review are summarised below:

Maximise opportunities in areas of greatest need;

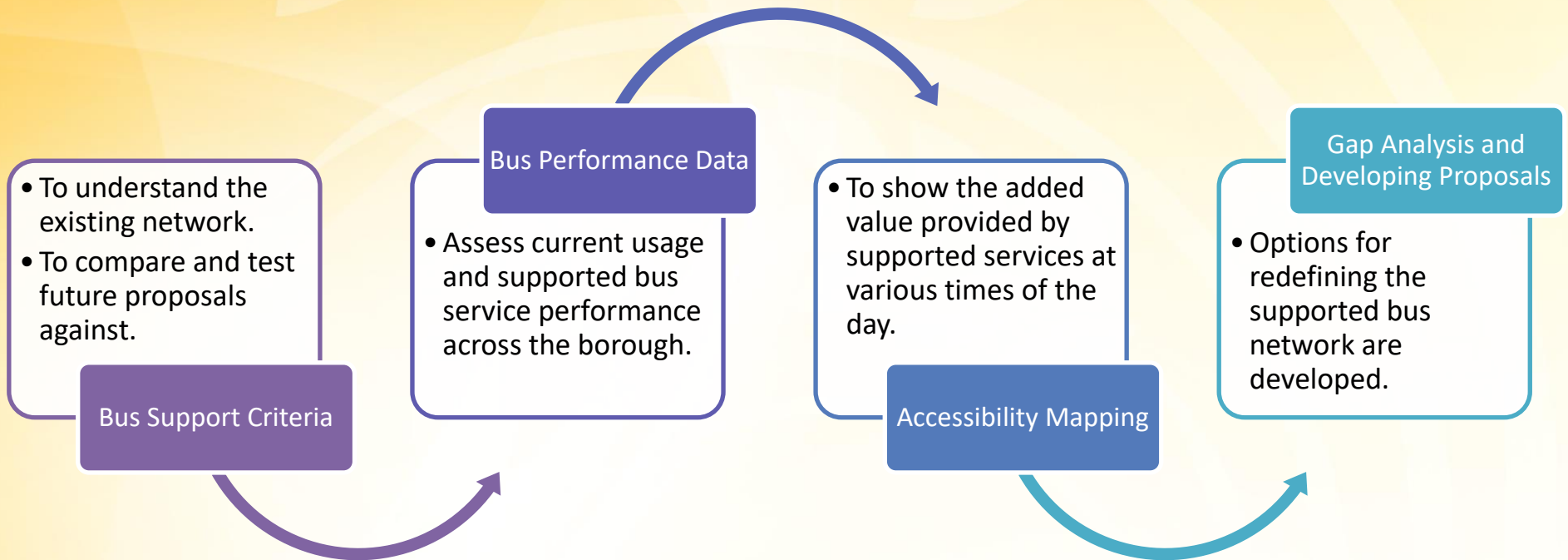
Ensure services complement, not compete with commercial services;

Develop stronger partnership working with commercial operators; and

Identify opportunities to modernise flexible on-demand transport options



Methodology



Bus Support Criteria

- To guide spending decisions, the Council prioritises revenue expenditure using a set of bus support criteria.
- These criteria are used to assess the contribution of each bus service to our three objectives:
 - 1) economy and environmental sustainability,
 - 2) access and social inclusion, and
 - 3) bus service performance.



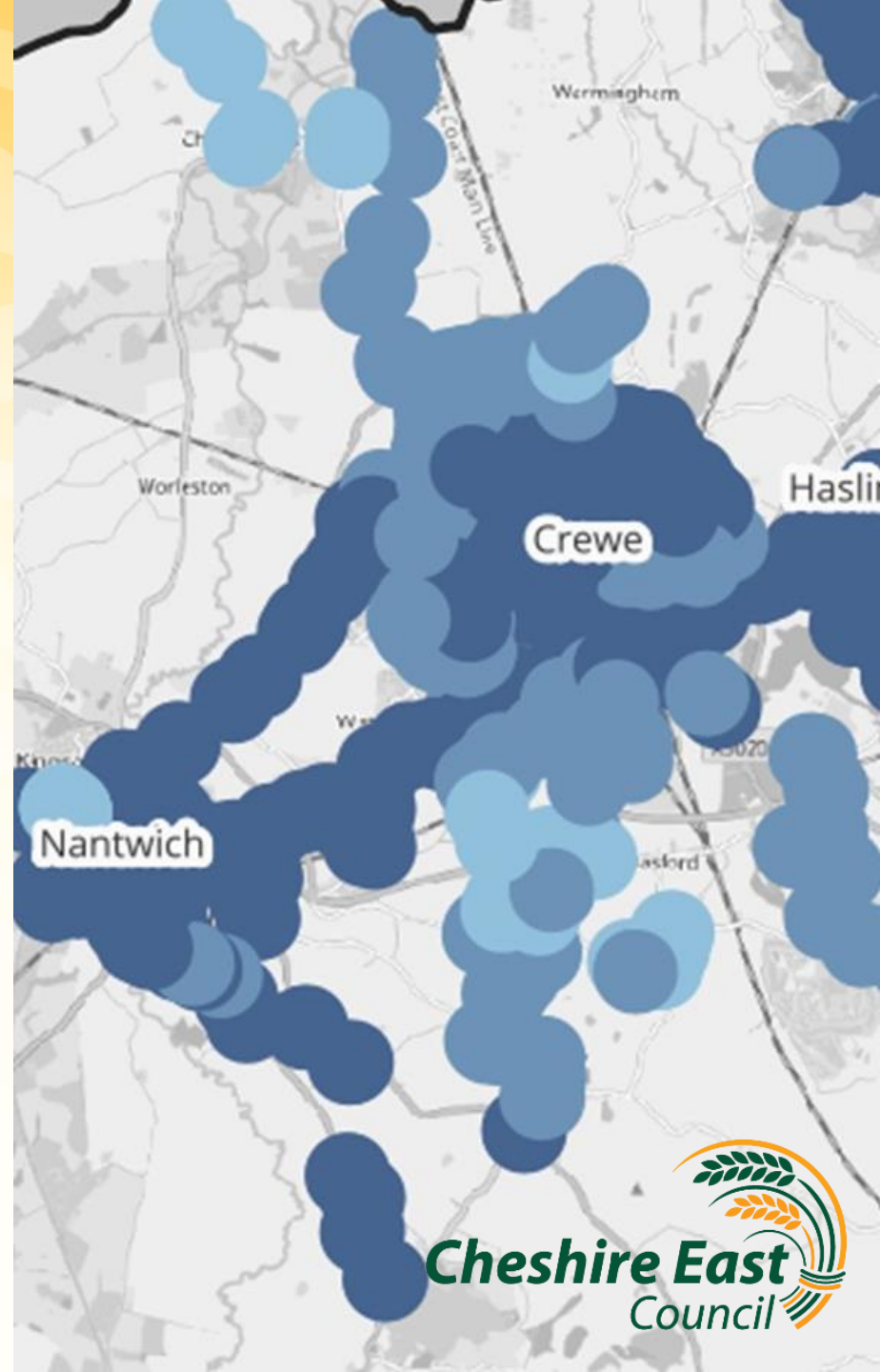
Bus Support Criteria Results

Within the table below 1 = the best performing supported bus service, 25 = worst performing supported bus service.

Service	Description	Ranked Score
130	Macclesfield - Wilmslow - Handforth - Wythenshawe	1
88	Macclesfield-Knutsford - Altrincham	2
89	Northwich - Lostock Gralam - Pickmere - Knutsford-Altrincham	2
39	Crewe - Walgherton - Nantwich	4
42	Crewe - Leighton Hospital - Congleton	5
84	Crewe - Nantwich - Tarporley - Tarvin - Chester	6
60, 60A	Macclesfield - Rainow - New Mills - Hayfield	7
37	Crewe - Sandbach - Middlewich - Winsford - Northwich	8
317	Leighton Hosp - Sandbach - Rode Heath - Alsager	9
58	Macclesfield - Buxton / Chatsworth	10
318	Alsager - Rode Heath - Kidsgrove - Congleton	11
38	Crewe - Sandbach - Congleton - Macclesfield	12
92	Congleton - Buglawton Circular	13
14A	Macclesfield - Sutton - Langley Circular	14
90	Congleton - Bromley Estate (Circular)	15
91	Congleton - Mossley Circular	16
94, 94A	Congleton - Biddulph - Tunstall - Newcastle	17
319	Sandbach - Holmes Chapel Circular	18
19, 19A	Macclesfield - Whirleybarn - Prestbury	19
391, 392	Macclesfield - Stockport	20
73	Nantwich - Wrenbury-Buerton - Audlem	21
72	Nantwich - Sound - Wrenbury - Audlem	22
312	Handforth Dean - Wilmslow	23
316	Sandbach - Cookesmere Lane Circular	24
70	Nantwich - Faddiley - Bunbury - Tiverton	25

Accessibility Mapping

- We have produced maps to understand accessibility by bus across Cheshire East at different times of day and days of week as follows:
 - Morning peak period, weekdays
 - Evening peak period, weekdays
 - Off-peak period, weekdays
 - Evenings
 - Sundays
- We consider places to be accessible by bus when they are within 400m of a bus stop, providing travel to a key service centre in less than 40 minutes.



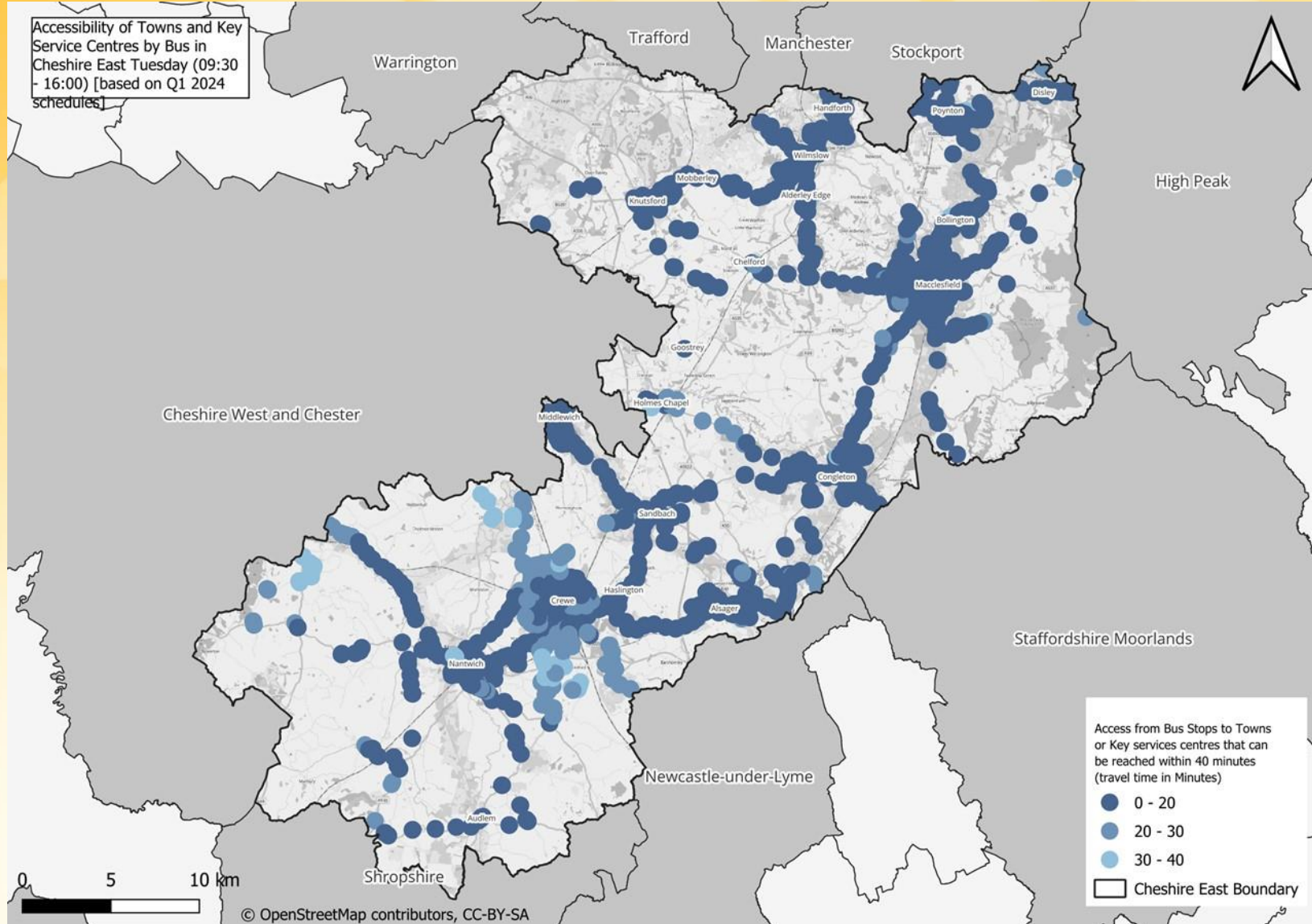
Accessibility Mapping

Weekday Morning

Pockets of limited accessibility in Nantwich, Poynton, Wilmslow

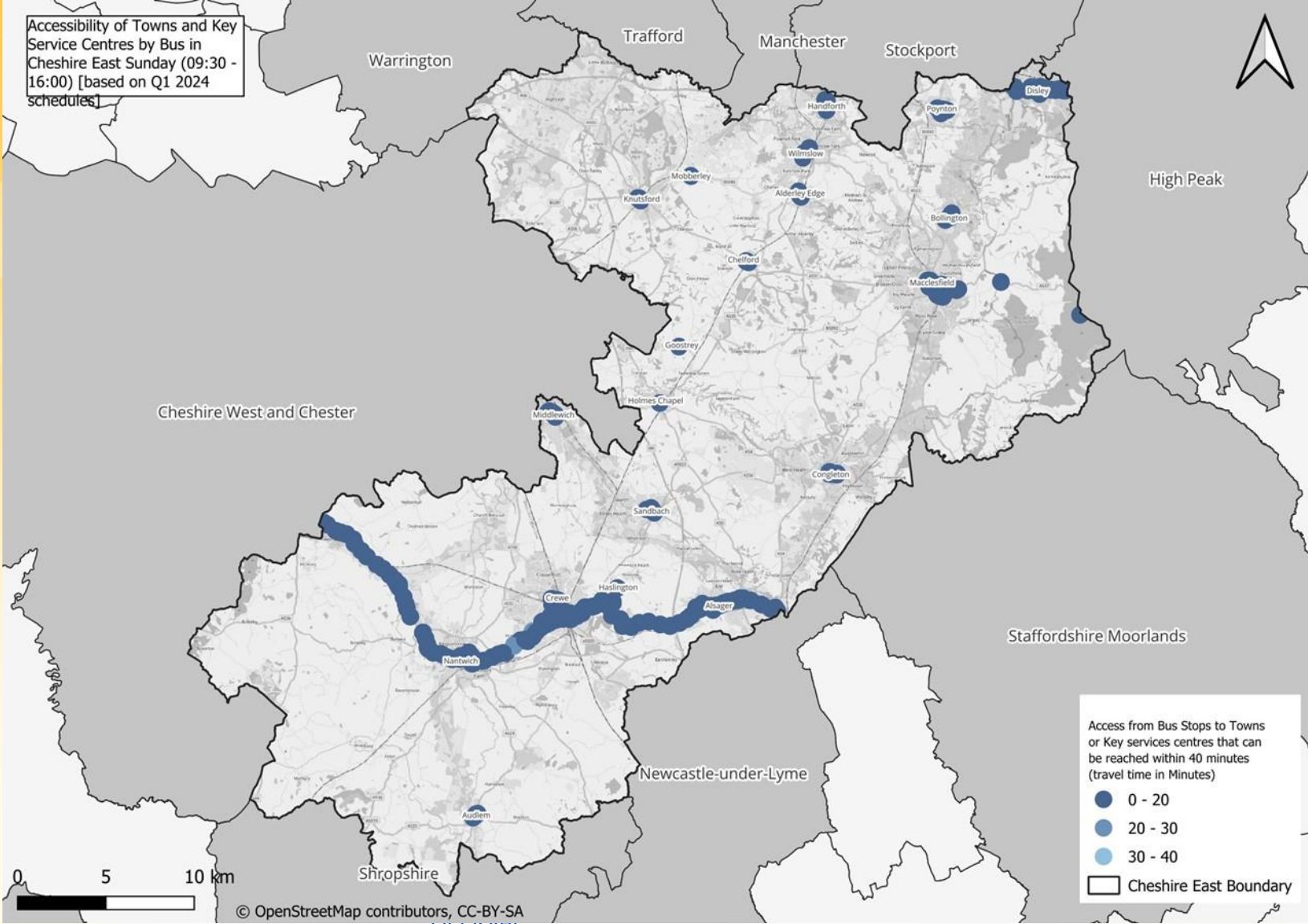
Good levels of accessibility around town centre & key service centre locations.

Sparse services in rural parts of the borough



Accessibility Mapping

Sundays



Limited Sunday services across the borough

Limited connections between key service centres on a Sunday

84 service is the main corridor in operation on Sundays

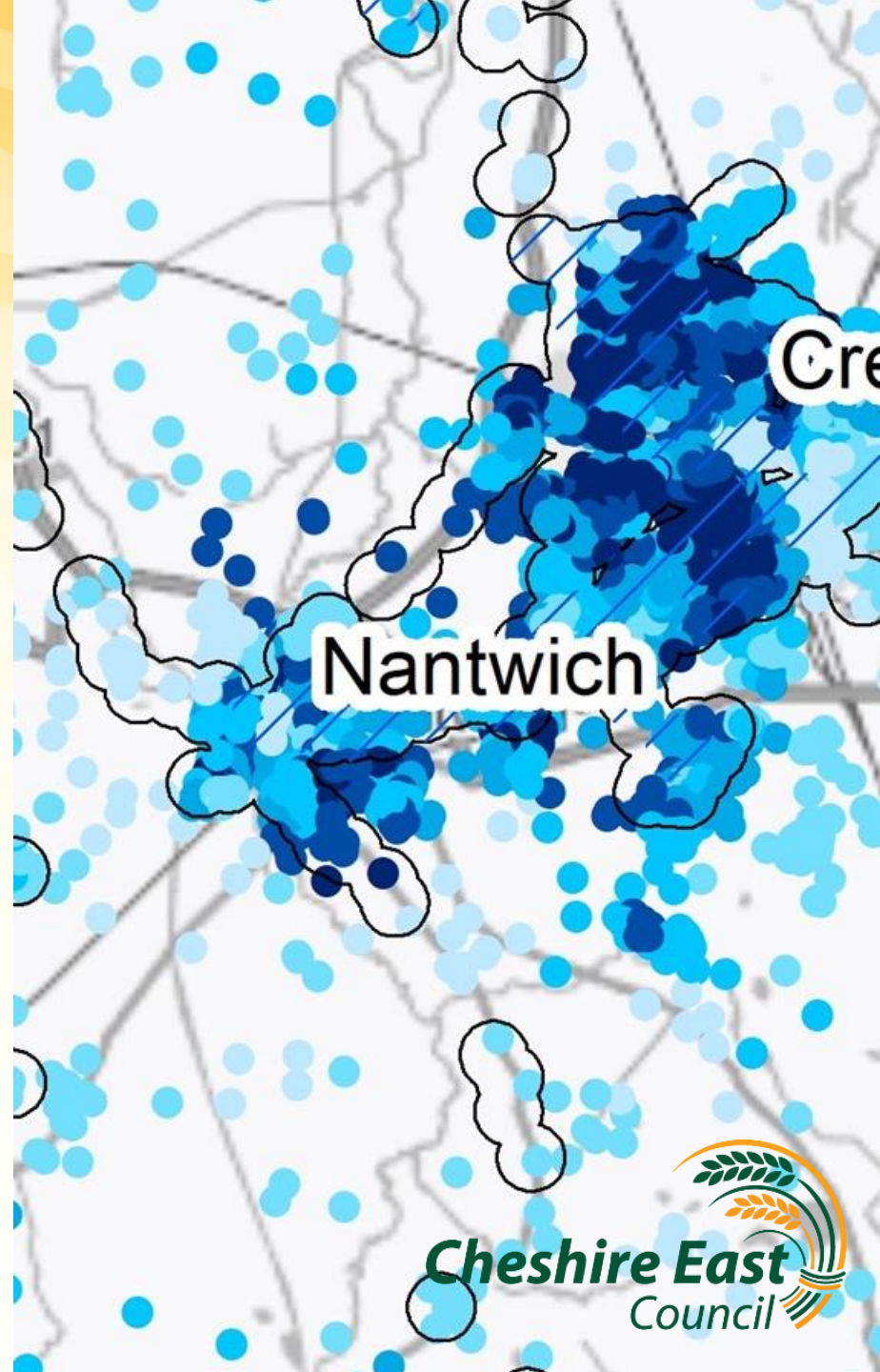
Bus Accessibility Mapping

- Demonstrates better coverage across the borough on weekdays, ensuring a high proportion of Cheshire East residents have access to key service centres by bus.
- There is a need for improvements especially during weekday evenings and Sundays to provide greater service coverage.

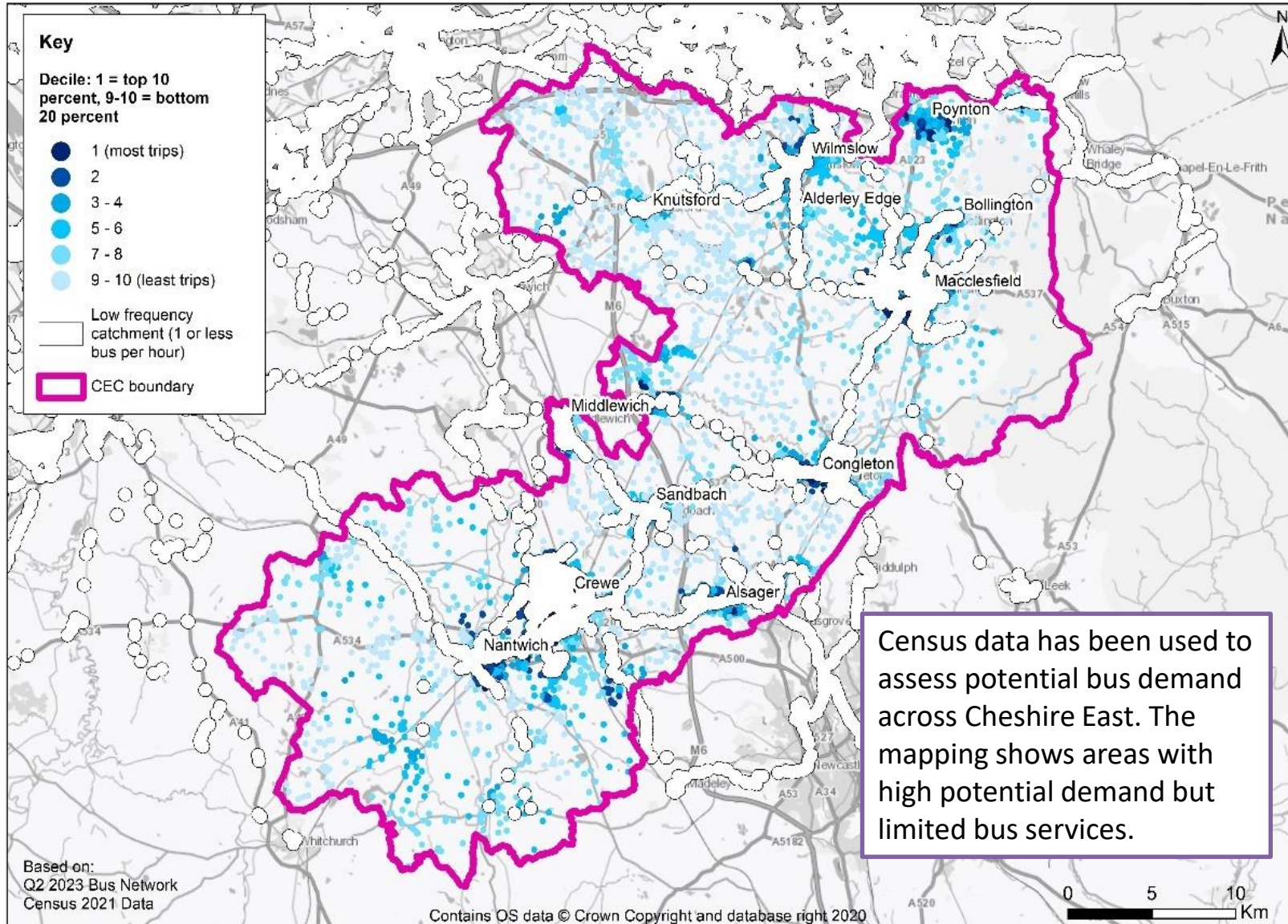
Day and time period	Percentage of population with access to towns and key service centres (within 40 minutes)
Weekday AM Peak period (07:30-09:30)	85%
Weekday Inter Peak period (09:30-16:00)	88%
Weekday PM Peak period (16:00-18:00)	84%
Weekday Evening period (18:00-23:59)	72%
Saturday (09:30-16:00)	84%
Sunday (09:30-16;00)	25%

Mapping the potential demand for buses

- This mapping has been used to identify any parts of the borough where there is likely to be a demand for more bus services.



Potential Bus Demand Mapping



Most areas of highest potential demand are covered by a service of some description.

Areas of most potential for trips, are Alsager, Congleton, Crewe, Macclesfield and Poynton.

Mapping shows limited service provision within Poynton.

Census data has been used to assess potential bus demand across Cheshire East. The mapping shows areas with high potential demand but limited bus services.

Additionally smaller clusters of potential demand are around Middlewich, Nantwich and Wilmslow.

Summary conclusions from data analysis

- Nantwich rural services (70,72,73) and the Macclesfield-Poynton-Stockport (391/392) service are the lower ranking supported services.
- Parts of Poynton and Nantwich are identified as having limited accessibility to key service centres.
- Low levels of bus service during evenings and Sundays across the borough.
- Poynton is identified as an area with the potential for more people to use bus services if a better level of service was provided.
- Potential bus demand is also evident in locations at the edge of towns/villages e.g. around Nantwich, Alsager, Middlewich, Congleton and Wilmslow.

Proposals

Nantwich
Rural Service
Modification

391/392
Service
Upgrade

Flexible
Transport in
Cheshire East

Working for a *brighter future*  together




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Proposal 1: Nantwich Rural Services

Service No.	Description	Current Timetable	Proposed Timetable	Justification	Mitigation
70	Nantwich-Tiverton	2 journeys in each direction per day.	Fixed route service to be withdrawn and replaced with flexible transport.	Low levels of use and associated poor value for money.	Propose flexible transport as an alternative (see proposal 3) for affected communities in Bulkeley and Bunbury.
71	Nantwich-Wrenbury	1 journey in each direction per day.	1 journey in each direction per day.	No change.	None.
72	Nantwich-Wrenbury-Audlem-Nantwich	6 journeys Nantwich-Wrenbury-Audlem-Nantwich per day.	7 journeys Nantwich-Wrenbury per day. Lightwood Green and Burleydam no longer served.	Retained on busiest section with 4 journeys extended via Middlewich Rd to Leighton Hospital.	Propose flexible transport as an alternative (see proposal 3) for affected communities in Lightwood Green and Burleydam.
73	Nantwich-Audlem-Wrenbury-Nantwich	4 journeys Nantwich-Audlem-Wrenbury-Nantwich per day.	6 journeys Nantwich-Audlem per day. Lightwood Green and Burleydam no longer served.	Retained on busiest section with 4 journeys extended via Middlewich Rd to Leighton Hospital.	Propose flexible transport as an alternative (see proposal 3) for affected communities in Lightwood Green and Burleydam

Nantwich Rural Bus Routes

-  Existing Service (to stop operating)
-  Proposed Service
-  Cheshire East Boundary

OSM Standard

The existing bus services within the Nantwich area include the 70, 71, 72, and 73. These services cover the following routes:

Monday to Saturday

70 Nantwich - Faddiley - Tiverton - Bunbury - Bulkeley - Faddiley - Nantwich

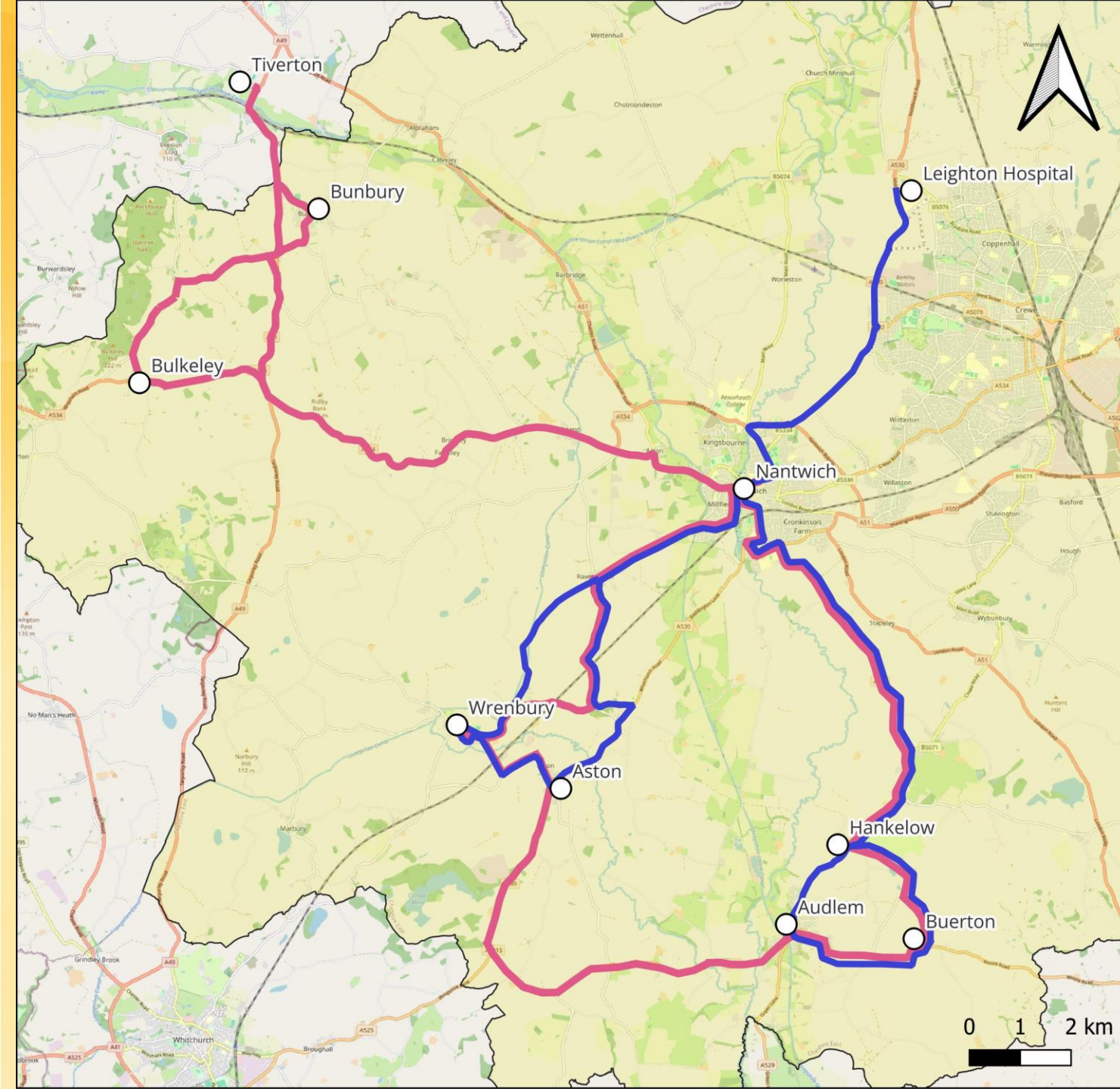
71 Nantwich - Swanley - Wrenbury - Aston - Audlem - Nantwich

72 Nantwich - Wrenbury - Audlem - Nantwich

73 Nantwich - Audlem - Wrenbury - Nantwich

This proposal introduces a direct connection to Leighton Hospital north of Nantwich whilst maintaining connections to Audlem and Wrenbury.

This map has been produced for illustrative purposes only.



Proposal 2 – 391/392

Macclesfield-Poynton-Stockport Service

Service No.	Description	Current Timetable	Proposed Timetable	Justification	Mitigation
391/392	Macclesfield - Poynton - Stockport	Every 2 hours on the whole route.	Increased to hourly between Middlewood-Poynton-Stockport using an additional vehicle.	Appears to be the busiest section of route and indications that Poynton has greater need of links into the Hazel Grove, Stepping Hill and Stockport area.	No communities are adversely affected by the proposal compared to the existing service provision.

391/392 Macclesfield-Poynton-Stockport Service

- Existing Service (to continue operating)
- Proposed section of higher frequency
- Cheshire East Boundary

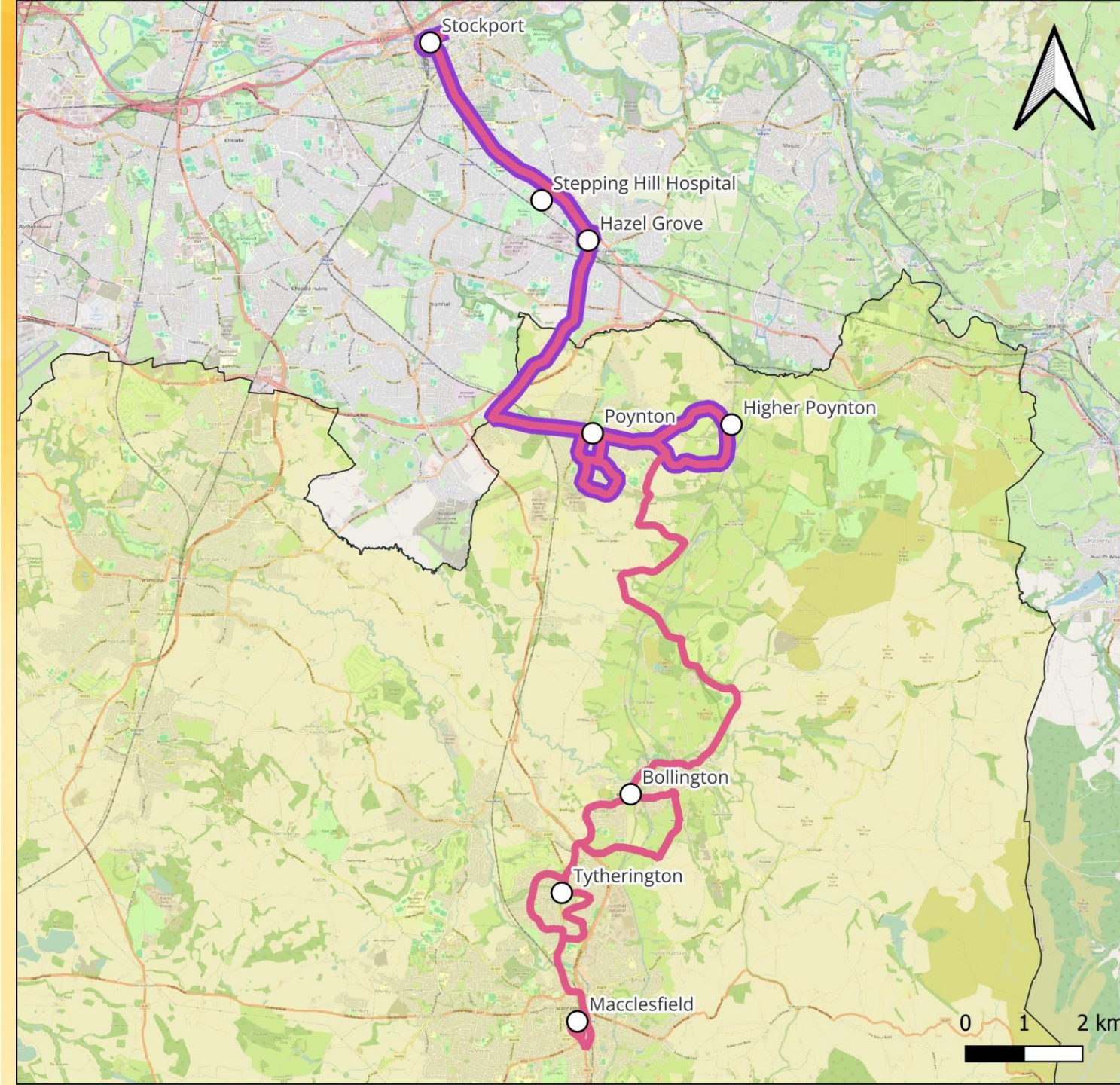
OSM Standard

The existing bus service 391/392 operates Monday to Saturday and covers the following route:

Macclesfield - Tytherington - Bollington - (Kerridge 391) - Poynton - Hazel Grove - Stockport

This proposal enhances the frequency of the 391/392 service from two-hourly to hourly between Middlewood-Poynton-Stockport (via Stepping Hill Hospital), whilst maintaining a two-hourly service between Poynton and Macclesfield to the south.

This map has been produced for illustrative purposes only.



Flexible Transport

Flexible transport is a bookable bus service available where no scheduled bus services are operating.

Two flexible transport services operate within Cheshire East:

FlexiLink provides travel for residents within Cheshire East who are either over 80 years of age, have a disability or are located beyond the reach of traditional bus services. Users of FlexiLink must register their journey 48 hours in advance of travel. The service is currently free to concessionary pass holders.

Go-Too operates in the rural area south and west of Nantwich. This service is funded by the Department for Transport's Rural Mobility Fund and operates from 7am to 9pm, Monday to Saturday. Go-Too is available to all residents in the operating area until the **end of March 2025**.



Proposal 3 – Flexible Transport

The proposal is to combine the FlexiLink and Go-Too services into a single, bookable service from the end of March 2025. The service will collect passengers from pick up points or offer a door-to-door service based on need (e.g. to those with limited mobility) and will be:

Available to all age groups (where no alternative and/or suitable public transport is available)

Available Monday - Friday during the day (9.30 am – 2.30 pm) and in the evenings (4.30pm – 9.00pm)

Available Saturdays (9.00am – 6.00pm)

Chargeable (£4 full fare and £2 concessions)



Booked using an online app, or by telephone

Bus Service Improvement Funding

- Government is providing funding for the Council to improve local bus services and encourage more use of buses. In 2023/24 Cheshire East Council was awarded £1.187m. In 2024/25 Cheshire East Council has been awarded a further £3.455m. This funding is above and beyond the Council's own bus service budget.
- We are seeking your views on what type of improvement to local bus services you would prefer to see. These could include:

Increased
frequency of
existing bus
services

Alterations or
extensions to
existing service
routes

Additional evening
services

Additional
weekend services

Consultation

- Consultation will take place for 8 weeks between **Tuesday 7th May** and **Wednesday 3rd July 2024**.
- Everyone can take part in the consultation including bus companies, service users, passenger groups, Town and Parish Councils, community groups, businesses, and residents.
- The consultation can be found here:
- <https://surveys.cheshireeast.gov.uk/s/BusServiceReview2024/>

