



SANDBACH TOWN CYCLING PLAN

Version 8

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INTRODUCTION

Sandbach is a prime location for a thorough transformation of cycling strategy and the timing could hardly be bettered. The town is within commuting distance by bike to Crewe, Middlewich, Holmes Chapel and Alsager. All are within 12km. The town itself is compact, in that travel into and across the town is accessible from any location by bicycle, if not on foot.

Significantly, Sandbach is required to increase its housing provision by around 40%. At the time of writing, numerous large residential and commercial developments are in construction or planned, so it is vital that equal provision is made for transport, and any such provision prioritises cycling and walking.

Given the ideal conditions for cycle use, current provision for cycling in and around the town leaves much to be desired, and fails to take advantage of the opportunities in place. It is the primary objective of this plan to point out ways in which this can be improved. Whilst some of the proposals will require capital expenditure, there are others that can be seen as “Quick Wins” in that significant improvement can be achieved at minimal expense. Regard should be had to centrally allocated budget provision and, of course, access to funding by developers, who would no doubt benefit from measures that make their investments more attractive to their residents.

This plan will set out proposals for such improvements. This will be done by examining Primary Routes (Section 1), Secondary Routes, (Section 2), Tertiary Routes and Suggested Improvements are set out in tabular form in Section 3. Appendices 1 to 5 give detail for specific routes. As an indication of some of the issues at large, attention is drawn to the following:

- Within Sandbach, there is patchy and substandard provision for cycling, whereby cycle lanes begin and end in seemingly random fashion. Whilst it is intended that the primary route for cycling will be on existing roads, where appropriate, alternative routes are proposed that take cycles away from main roads. This would be suitable for cyclists who prefer quieter routes away from heavy traffic.
- A large number of Sandbach residents commute to Manchester or Crewe by rail. The railway station is 2km from the town centre, and is not an easy ride. Parking charges have very recently been introduced at the railway station by the Train Operating Company, and this has resulted in car drivers resorting to on-street parking. (This has recently been highlighted at the Town Council Meeting). These issues could be addressed by making cycling to the station an easier and more attractive option
- There are numerous instances where simple signage, road markings or repositioning of bollards would suffice.
- There is no safe cycle route from Sandbach to Congleton. The main A534 is a perilous ride. An alternative route is suggested.
- Cycling from Sandbach to Middlewich along the A533 is dangerous. An alternative route is suggested.

- In terms of recreational cycling, Sandbach is surrounded by a fantastic network of country roads in beautiful rolling countryside, most of which is acceptable
- There is a growing concern that there is a lack of joined-up thinking in relation to promotion of walking and cycling in the planning and implementation of new housing developments, and it bears repetition that there is a risk that we miss the opportunity to shape our town whilst we still can. It is clear that to maintain or improve pedestrian and cycling facilities could entail substantial cost, and so it is imperative that this is embedded into developers' plans where possible. Failing this, the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy published by the Department for Transport allocates funding available to local authorities specifically for provision of walking and cycling facilities in the face of new developments.
- Mindful of the above, the Cycling Working Group have liaised with the Sandbach Woodland and Wildlife Group and the Sandbach Footpath Group and have agreed a proposal that upgrades a footpath (already agreed with the developers) to a cycle path running from the south west corner to the north east corner of the Capricorn development, and linking to Old Mill Road. This will facilitate travel to and from the town centre, joining up all parts of the development, also creating access to the wildlife corridor for walkers, cyclists and wheelchair users alike.

All of these issues are dealt with in more detail throughout this document.

The aim of this report is to promote cycling by establishing safe cycling routes across Sandbach. Walking and cycling should be the chosen modes of transport for journeys within Sandbach to schools, work, shops and social meeting places, and this document aims to encourage people to choose feet and pedals before jumping in their cars.

Cycling should also be fun.

The health benefits of cycling are well known and Sandbach already has thriving cycling groups who arrange cycle trips for leisure and exercise.

Cycling Infrastructure Design Guidance, LTN 2/08 says that *"The road network is the most basic (and important) cycling facility available, and the preferred way of providing for cyclists is to create conditions on the carriageway where cyclists are content to use it, particularly in urban areas. There is seldom the opportunity to provide an off carriageway route within the highway boundary that does not compromise pedestrian facilities or create potential hazards for cyclists, particularly at side roads. Measures that reduce the volume or speed of motor traffic benefit other road users by making the roads safer and more pleasant for them to use."* (1.3.2)

The 2017 Cheshire East Cycling Strategy states at paragraph 5.12

"Acting on concerns regarding the safety of cycling (and particularly sharing highway space with motorised traffic) amongst consultation respondents, primary and secondary routes should aim for segregation from motorised traffic where feasible, with scheme designs

considered on a case by case basis. Where segregation is not feasible other design measures will be considered to address safety concerns.”

Where primary and secondary routes are identified on major roads, there may be opportunities for light segregation at a relatively low cost.

An example is shown below.

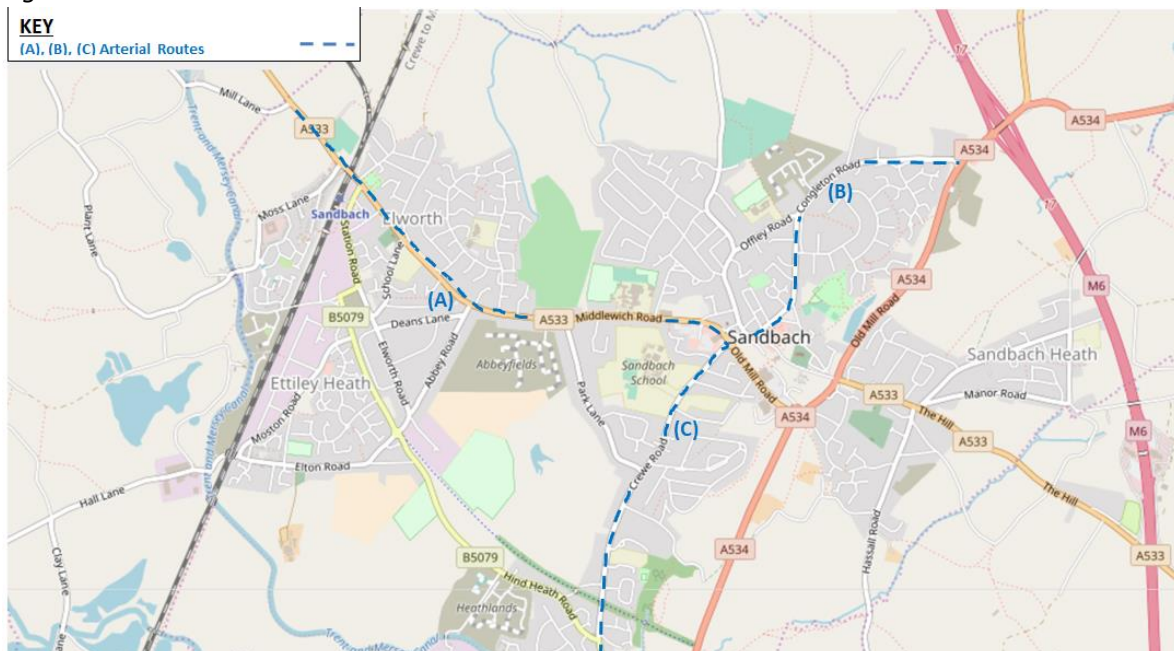


<https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/protected-cycle-lanes-salford-greater-manchester>

SECTION 1 PRIMARY/ARTERIAL ROUTES

Three key arterial routes into Sandbach were identified, and these are indicated in Figure 1. These routes should be made more cycle friendly. Suggested ways in which this may be achieved are described in the following text.

Figure 1 – Arterial Routes



A) MIDDLEWICH ROAD

- a. The preference is for continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction.
- b. The Northbound lane of London Road between Hill Street and Station Road is occupied by parked cars, and presents a severe pinch point because there is only just sufficient width for two cars to pass. At this location it is recommended that the speed limit be reduced to 20mph. This is an issue for all traffic, not only cyclists.
- c. Middlewich Road/Abbey Road: pedestrian traffic lights, possibly Toucan

B) CONGLETON ROAD

- a. continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction
Suggestions: The section from the Car Wash to Offley Road should have priority for southbound traffic. That is because there is parking on the west side, northbound, which again presumably will be retained.
- b. extending 30 mph speed to junction with Old Mill Road

- c. opposite Park House care home open up a cut through the hedge from Congleton Road onto the Congleton Road service road, widen pavement and extend the cycleway from the corner of Old Mill Road/Congleton Road up to this cut through (note: widening of pavement up to cut through limited due to property)

C) CREWE ROAD

Continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction
Suggestions: Fast Fit Tyres to Hind Heath Lane section: the priority should be westbound. That is because there is parking on the north, eastbound, side which presumably would be retained. Alternatively, or additionally, parking could be removed

The reasoning behind all three "pinch point" schemes is that parked vehicles naturally disrupt the flow of traffic on the side where there is parking. Thus there is actually no change to the priority, except that as the road now becomes effectively single track The 'blocked' traffic is required to wait rather than driving on regardless.

The 'Removal of road centre lines' would follow advice in Appendix 2 Photographs of Example Interventions, which is part of Methodology for Creating a Town Cycling Plan Rev0.2

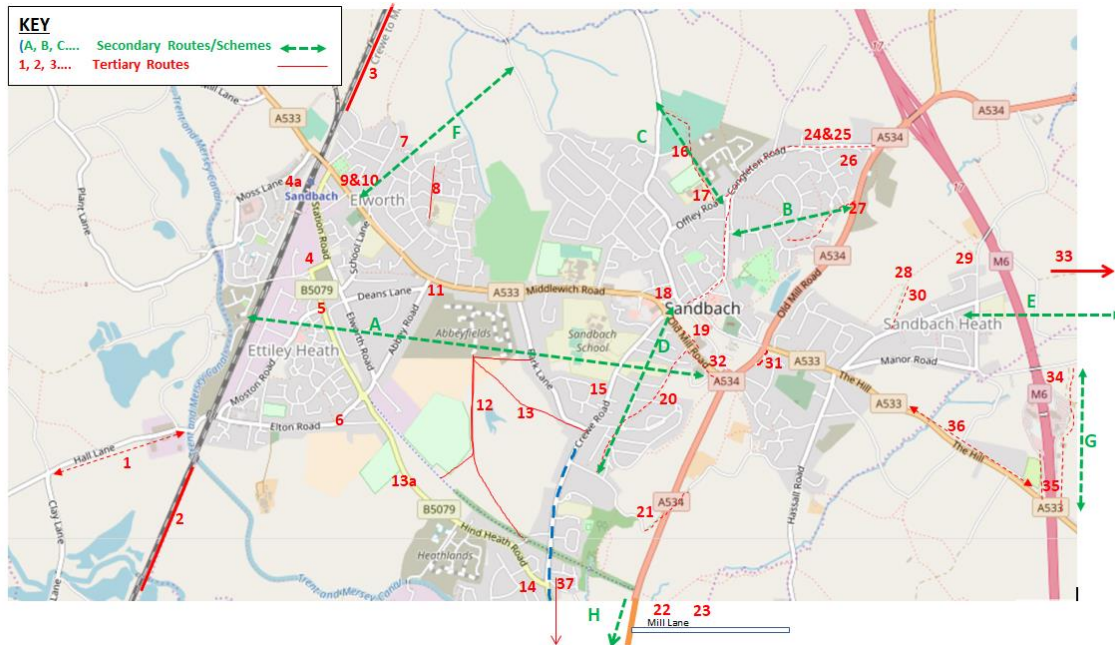
Designing to engineering standards is crucial. The advisory cycle lanes on Crewe Road for example are of substandard width and don't provide the safety expected of a dedicated cycle facility. Should a standard width not be achievable then it would be better to not realise the above mentioned schemes. LTN 2/08 says '*Cycle lanes should be 2 metres wide on busy roads, or where traffic is travelling in excess of 40 mph. A minimum width of 1.5 metres may be generally acceptable on roads with a 30 mph limit.*' (7.4.2)

Further, '*Drivers do not always realise that cyclists need to move away from the kerb to avoid surface hazards and may expect cyclists to stay in lane regardless of its width. A narrow cycle lane may therefore give motorists (misplaced) confidence to provide less clearance while overtaking than they would in the absence of a cycle lane.*' (7.4.3)

SECTION 2: SECONDARY ROUTES

Secondary Routes are indicated as A to G in green on the schematic plan below. This plan is also used to indicate tertiary routes and suggested improvements (Red No's 1 to 37), which are described in more detail in Section 3.

Figure 2 – Secondary and Tertiary Routes



The precise requirements to achieve the objectives are set out below:

- A. Canalfields to Homebase via Abbeyfields
 - a. Footbridge between Heron Drive (Canalfields development) and Redshank Place (Fodens Test Track development):
upgrade for cycle use (access without steps, widening bridge, cycletrack conversion at Redshank Place)
 - b. Moss Lane to (old part of) Moston Road
improving route through concrete blocks; short cycle track across grass verge
 - c. (Old part of) Moston Road to Elton Crossing Road
improve crossing, i.e. dropped kerbs in 'desire line'; removal/realignment of bollards
 - d. Abbeyfields (land bounded by Abbey Road, Middlewich Road, Park Lane, Wheelock Rail Trail) to Park Lane
build path across Abbeyfields, potential routes:
 - i. from Abbey Road phase 2 development to the long drive way of the house 'Abbeyfields' on Park Lane
 - ii. from 'phase 2' for example to 48 Park Lane, side of property
 - iii. from 'phase 2' to farm entrance between 4 and 6 Park Lane
 - iv. from 'phase 2' to eastern part of Hind Heath Lane, near Crewe Road
 - e. Field Drive:
signposting; tidying up access to Park Lane
- B. Old Mill Road, Footpath 11 to Tatton Drive via Alderley Close
 - a. upgrade length of FP for cycle use to reach Alderley Close
 - b. potential for several short sections along FP 11 to be upgraded for cycle use

- C. Offley Road to Bradwall Road, Sandbach FP 6, via Sandbach Rugby Union Club
 - a. upgrade FP for cycle use
 - b. seeking connection through Rugby Club

- D. FP 21 MILL HILL LANE TO HIGH STREET
See Appendix 5

- E. CONNECTION FROM SANDBACH HEATH TO SMALLWOOD VIA ARCLID QUARRIES
See Appendix 2

- F. CONNECTION FROM A533 LONDON ROAD, ELWORTH, TO WOOD LANE/COOKESMERE LANE.
See Appendix 3

- G. UPGRADE FOOTPATH TO CYCLEWAY AT SANDBACH SERVICES.
See Appendix 4

- H. WHEELOCK/WINTERLEY ROUNDABOUT AND ELTON ROAD.
See Appendix 6

SECTION 3 – TERTIARY ROUTES AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Tertiary Routes and Suggested Improvements are indicated on the Schematic Plan at the beginning of Section 2, numbered 1 to 37, in red.

The table provided at the end of this section lists and describes all the proposed improvements, including those that contribute to Primary and Secondary Routes described in Sections 1 and 2. By collecting them together in this way, each and every item is separately identified to allow each to be treated on its individual merits and then to facilitate the costing exercise.

The Table is also provided on CD as an Excel Spreadsheet, so that features such as filters can be applied.

The Table works like this:

Each item is separately numbered and described, along with work required to implement, and a short note on objectives – the reason that the improvement has been suggested. Separate columns are set out to the right hand side of the table for Priority – running from A to C, Each item has been assigned a priority, Status (Primary, Secondary or Tertiary), a Scheme reference – as described in Section 2, and Implementation, graded from A – “easy” to C “substantial.” These last four columns can be filtered and sorted.

A number of the suggestions that could improve cycling in Sandbach are of relatively minor cost impact, and these may be worth exploring in the first instance.

The table consists of six sheets on the following pages and is accompanied by a further small table that describes improvements by way of parking and signage.

Table 1

Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top, 'B'=secondary, 'C'=tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation (rated A ('easy'), B, C)
1 Ettiley Heath/Elton Farm, Hall Lane up to junction Clay Lane/Crabmill Lane	* speed reduction to 30 mph	* safer access to Elton Golf Driving Range. * access to employment sites Newfield Fabrications and United Phosphorus * access to Elton Golf Driving Range * connectivity to Sandbach * avoiding main roads * potential for extended route to Crewe	A	T	A
2 Ettiley Heath, Sandbach FP 39 / Moston FP 21, between Trent&Mersey Canal and Fields Farm/Clay Lane	* upgrade for cycle use * access at the Trent&Mersey Canal end * surfacing * route often flooded at culvert beneath the railway line		C	S	C
3 Elworth, Marsh Green Road to Bradwall, Wood Lane, (Sandbach FP 36/Bradwall FP 3)	* upgrade for cycle use, * surfacing, potentially small bridge in the middle to cross brook	* access from Elworth to the countryside, to Middlewich and Holmes Chapel * alternative to the busy road network to reach: Bradwall Village Hall; Zuluwood Paintball centre, Brereton Green; Brereton Heath Local Nature Reserve	B	S	C
4 (old part of) Moston Road to Moss Lane	* route through concrete blocks * short cycle track across grass verge	* connection on quiet roads between Ettiley Heath estates and new Fodens housing developments and canal	A	S	F
4a Elworth, Foundry Lane/Clifton Rd to Station Rd; FP 46: new bridge as part of HS2	* upgrade FP for cycle use * potential new bridge of adequate width, lit, smooth corners	* access from Canalside and Fodens estates to railway station	A	P	A
5 Elworth, Elton Crossings Road, crossing Salt Line Way to (the old part of) Moston Road	* crossing for cyclists, i.e. roped kerbs in 'desire line'; removal/realignment of bollards	* avoiding main roads and 3 main junctions used also by lorries from the industrial estates * route from Ettiley Heath estate to St Peter's Primary School, St Peter's Church & Hall, and the Scouts' Hall	A	S	F
6 Ettiley Heath, Sandbach, FP 29, from Elton Road to Masefield Way	* upgrade for cycle use * widening where possible	* route leaving the Ettiley Heath estate to the south and connecting to Hind Heath Road cycleway via quiet Proctor's Lane * route to Wheelock Primary School	A	T	B
7 Elworth, Dean Close to Vicarage Lane	* upgrade for cycle use	* connectivity * route to railway station	C	T	A

Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top Primary, Secondary, Tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation (rated A ('easy'),-C)
8 Elworth, Lawton Way/Grange Way	* widening of existing footpath * integrating with 5 cul-de-sacs	* route to Elworth Hall Primary School and co-op supermarket	C	T	B
9 Elworth and Sandbach, A533, Booth Lane, London Road, Middlewich Road,	* continuous cycle lane on both sides of road * at "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction	* access to Elworth and Sandbach * 4 schools on the road or nearby	A	P	A
10 Elworth and Sandbach, A533, London Road/Middlewich Road	* speed reduction to 20 mph	* road safety	A	P	A
11 Middlewich Road/Abbey Road	* pedestrian traffic lights, possibly Toucan	* crossing the road; road safety	A	P	A
Abbeyfields to Wheelock Rail Trail and Sandbach Community Football Centre	* build path from Abbey Road phase 2 potential connection to Sandbach Community Football centre	* north/south connection to Wheelock Rail Trail and Sandbach Community Football Centre	B	S	C
12 Abbeyfields (land bounded by Abbey Road, Middlewich Road, Park Lane, Wheelock Rail Trail)	build path across Abbeyfields; potential routes: * from Abbey Road phase 2 development to the long drive way of the house 'Abbeyfields' on Park Lane * from 'phase 2' to farm entrance between 4 and 6 Park Lane * from 'phase 2' to eastern part of Hind Heath Lane, near Crewe Road * from 'phase 2' to 48 Park Lane, side of property	* east / west Connection Elworth to Sandbach avoiding Middlewich Road * access to the High Schools and Primary Schools * access by bicycle to better frequented bus stops at Crewe Road/Park Lane, avoiding bus journey to Sandbach town centre and changing bus there. * further route to town centre via Fields Drive	A	P	F
13 to Park Lane or Hind Heath Lane		* street lights, not lights purely for footway/cycleway: improvements for road safety and personal safety. * closing the gap in street lights, the only gap in the area	A	P	A
3a Hind Heath Road	* street lights between 'phase 2' development and Cricket Club		A	P	A

Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top primary, Secondary, Tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation (rated A ('easy'),-C)
14 Sandbach and Wheelock, Crewe Road	* continuous cycle lane on both sides of road * at "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction	* access to Wheelock and Sandbach * 3 schools on Crewe Road	A	C	B
15 Field Drive	* signposting through route from Park Lane via Field Drive to Crewe Road	* signposting * upgrade of connection Field Drive/Crewe Road	A	F	A
Sandbach, Offley Road to Bradwall Road, Sandbach FP 6, 16 via Sandbach Rugby Union Club	* upgrade for cycle use, * partly surfacing * seeking connection through Rugby Club	* access to quiet lanes around Bradwall Road, the rugby club, Congleton Rd incl new development	A	E	B
17 Offley Road	* provide cycling provision along Offley Road from the school to a safe place to cross Congleton Road	* road safety ; access to school	A	E	B
18 (Old part of) Middlewich Road	* allow contraflow cycling along Old Middlewich Road	* access to town centre	B	G	A
Old Mill Road, between signalised crossing at Flat Lane and south/western corner of Waitrose/bus shelter	* allow contraflow cycling along Old Middlewich Road	* access to Waitrose	B	P	B
19	* upgrade for cycle use * surfacing between Mill Hill Lane and Coronation Crescent and modification to bollards * surfacing around Price Drive * converting pedestrian crossing at Old Mill Road to Toucan * modification to barrier either side of Old Mill Road (Flat Lane)	* connection from Mill Hill Lane and Wheelock to town centre via quiet roads	B	S	A
20 Mill Hill Lane to High Street, Sandbach FP 21					

	Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation
21	Mill Hill Lane/Houndings Lane, brideway 47 to Hassall Road	* modification to cattle grid, e.g. bypassing	* route from Sandbach Heath to Wheelock Primary School, bus stops on Crewe Road and football and cricket clubs on Hind Heath Road * route into countryside, Hassall Green etc	B S	A	
22	Wheelock Playing Field. Crewe Road to Mill Lane	* surfacing * modification to entry at Mill Lane, Wheelock * currently FP 49 is permitted for cyclists only between the bollards either side of the tunnel. Around 10 metres each side of the bollards are legally missing to connect for cycling to the highway. * further dropping of kerb on east side approach to footpath/cyclepath	* alternative, quiet route to Crewe Road * avoiding sharp r/h turn into Mill Lane in Wheelock * increase footfall to playing field	C T	B	
23	Wheelock, Mill Lane, tunnel under the A534 Haslington bypass to Hassall Green, Alsager, (Sandbach FP 49)	* continuous cycle lane on both sides of road * at "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction * extending 30 mph speed to junction with Old Mill Road * opposite Park House care home open up a cut through the hedge from Congleton Road onto the Congleton Road service road, widen pavement and extend the cycleway from the corner of Old Mill Road/Congleton Road up to this cut through	* tidying up the footpath/cyclepath arrangement. * improved safety. Combination of gully cover (then 'slits', now 'chessboard-style') and upstand at dropped kerb resulted in a crash and subsequent court case against Cheshire East in 2010 with compensation awarded for the cyclist	B T	A	
24	Congleton Road		* road safety * access to town	A P	B B	
25	Congleton Road		* road safety * access to town	A P	B A	
26	Congleton Road		* safer route to service road part of Congleton Road	B P	B B	
27	Old Mill Road, west side, Sandbach FP 11	* upgrade length of FP for cycle use to reach Alderley Close	* connecting Capricorn development to town centre and schools via quiet roads to reach Congleton Road * avoiding the down and uphill route via shared footway along Old Mill Road/High Street	B P	D B	

Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top Primary), (Secondary), (Tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation (rated A (easy)-C)
28 Sandbach Heath, Hawthorne Drive to Capricorn development	* connection between the two developments seems part of planning condition	* connectivity between two estates * avoiding A534 when travelling from Capricorn development to the east of Sandbach	A	T	A
29 Capricorn development, link to Church Lane via FP 14	* extend proposed pedestrian connection to cyclists too	* connection to St John's Primary School and church *access to countryside	A	S	A
30 Capricorn development to Wrights Lane and Willow Drive	* extend proposed pedestrian connections to cyclists too	* connection to St John's Primary School and church *access to countryside	A	S	A
31 Junction Old Mill Road/The Hill and Palmer Road	* upgrade short connection from turning head of Palmer Road to reach traffic light, crossing Old Mill Rd * create connection from turning head of Palmer Road to reach traffic light, crossing The Hill. * upgrade signalised crossings to Toucans	* quiet, direct connection to High Street/town centre and Capricorn site * shared footway/cycleway has been built along east side of Old Mill Road from Capricorn development to High Street. * extension via cycle lane would lead to Waitrose, Homebase and the Haslington bypass	A	P	A
32 Old Mill Road, between High Street and Waitrose roundabout	* cycle lane (on-road) of around 150 metres	* connection to employment sites at Arclid * connection to Smallwood and Congleton via quiet roads	C	P	B
33 Sandbach Heath, Betchton Heath to Arclid/A50	* upgrade for cycle use for part of the route * surfacing	* access to employment site Service Station * access the car park at the Service Station for car sharing	C	S	C
34 Sandbach Service Station (southbound), Betchton FP7	* upgrade for cycle use, * surfacing	* access to employment site Service Station * access the car park at the Service Station for car sharing	C	P	B
35 Sandbach Service Station (north&southbound), service roads	* allow access for cycles by modifying the 'no entry/one way' signs at Newcastle Road	* access to employment site Service Station * access the car park at the Service Station for car sharing	C	P	A

Location	Work required	Objective	Priority ('A'=top, Primary, Secondary, Tertiary)	Scheme (as per map)	Implementation (rated A 'easy', B 'hard')
36 Sandbach Heath, The Hill/Newcastle Road/A533, up to service roads for motorway to service roads for motorway 36 service station	* speed reduction to 30 mph	* safer access to Sandbach Service Station, see also suggestion no 5	A	P	A
37 Sandbach part of cycling map).	* Option 1: extending FP27 through farm driveways and emerging onto A534. Upgrading to cycleway * Option 2: building around 300 metres of cycle way along A534 between Wheelock roundabout and Elton Lane	* a access to Elton Lane and Darlington Stables at Hooter Hall; Fishing Republic on Clay Lane; the indoor roller skating centre at Sir William Stanier School, Crewe, and Community Cycle Recycle shop * connecting to Crewe town centre. * a access for residents from Crewe to Wheelock Hall Farm, supporting this business * route to school from Crewe to Sandbach and vice versa	A	T	B

Table 2 – Parking and Signage

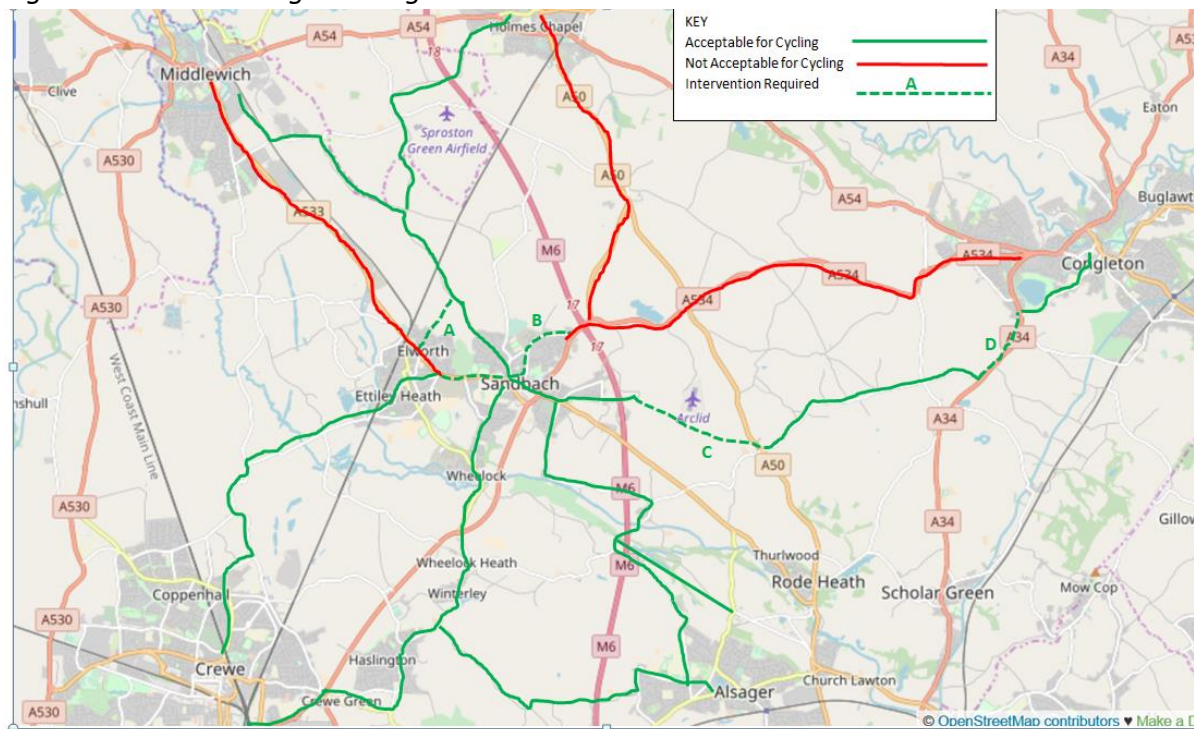
	Location	Work required
1	Ettiley Heath, Proctor's Lane/Elton Road to Hind Heath Road	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
2	Wheelock, Hind Heath Lane/Hind Heath Road/Crewe Road	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
3	Wheelock, Mill Lane/Crewe Road	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
4	Wheelock, Cotton Lane/Mill Lane	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
5	Sandbach, Mill Hill Lane/Houndings Lane/Hassall Road	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
6	Ettiley Heath, Sandy Lane	add 'except cycles' to the cul-de-sac signs
7	Sandbach, Junction 17, car sharer's car park	cycle parking, preferably covered

SECTION 4 – LINKS TO NEIGHBOURING TOWNS

Routes are indicated in Figure 3, below. Favoured routes are signified as solid green lines, those considered unsuitable as red solid lines, and those where intervention is required (e.g. new cyclepath, dedicated cycle lane) in green dashed line.

Attention is drawn at this point to the excellent leaflet “Let’s Go Cycling in South East Cheshire” published by South East Cheshire Cycle Action Group and endorsed by Cheshire East Council, Sandbach Town Council, Congleton Partnership, Middlewich Vision and Alsager Partnership. A copy is included at Appendix XX.

Figure 3 – Links to Neighbouring Towns



A Sandbach to Crewe

Crewe is the largest population centre considered in this document, and is also a major source of employment. It is around 6 miles (10km) from Sandbach, centre to centre. At an average speed of 10mph, one way journey time is around 40 minutes. At peak times, it can easily take as long as this to travel by car, so cycling is a reasonable option. It is possible to cycle all the way to Crewe by using the Wheelock and Haslington by-passes, and some people use the 1 metre space within the channel line marking. The safety of using this is questionable, however, as this route is popular with HGV’s and fast traffic.

The favoured route would be to take the “old” A534 route – Crewe Road – through Wheelock, Winterley, Haslington and Crewe Green. Whilst this is by no means perfect – there are several “pinch points” and locations where cycle lanes appear and disappear without reason, it could be improved without significant cost.

An alternative route from Elworth would be to follow the Warmingham Road, via the Flashes towards Leighton Hospital, turning in towards Crewe at Groby Road, which eventually leads to Hightown via the Cross Keys roundabout. Parts of this are on roads with National speed limit, but on balance it is a reasonably safe and fairly direct route.

Immediate proposals/suggestions to deal with issues within Town Council boundaries are:

- (i) Continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction.
- (ii) Suggestions: Fast Fit Tyres to Hind Heath Lane section: the priority should be westbound. That is because there is parking on the north, eastbound, side which presumably would be retained. Alternatively, or additionally, parking could be removed. A further alternative to the suggestion to use the "old" A534 route – Crewe Road through Haslington, is via Elton Road as described in suggestion 37 on Table 1 (Section 3).

B Sandbach to Congleton

Congleton is another popular employment and shopping centre. At present there is no viable route from Sandbach to Congleton. It is a fast road, with a number of tight bends, and used extensively by HGV's. The stretch between the M6 and Arclid is no better than impassable, a steep sided narrow stretch making it extremely dangerous.

A potential solution to this is proposed in Section XX, this would need a newly commissioned cycleway from Reynolds Lane to the East of Sandbach, skirting Sibelco quarry, to meet the A50 where it is possible to meet the Smallwood road, eventually leading to the A34 near to the Astbury Meadow Garden Centre. This route is already very popular with cyclists.

The A34 itself, heading north into Congleton can be dangerous, it is a fast road, again used extensively by HGV's, but it is currently not possible to avoid it. To achieve a reasonable level of safety would require a dedicated cycle lane for part or all of its length leading into Congleton town centre, at the very least until the T-junction at Astbury Village.

Immediate proposals/suggestions to deal with issues within Town Council boundaries are:

- (i) Continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction
Suggestions: The section from the Car Wash to Offley Road should have priority for southbound traffic. That is because there is parking on the west side, northbound, which again presumably will be retained. Further sections to be treated with that same concept up to the junction with Old Mill Road to be decided later.
- (ii) Extending 30 mph speed to junction with Old Mill Road

- (iii) Opposite Park House care home open up a cut through the hedge from Congleton Road onto the Congleton Road service road, widen pavement and extend the cycleway from the corner of Old Mill Road/Congleton Road up to this cut through (note: widening of pavement up to cut through limited due to property).

C Sandbach to Middlewich

In a similar way to the Congleton route, the main road to Middlewich, A533 Booth Lane is not safe for cyclists, due to vehicle speed and extensive HGV use. Booth Lane is industrialised – chemical factories and the Ansa waste depot are situated along its length. The final mile into Middlewich is particularly unpleasant because of congestion caused by the narrow road width and the density of heavy vehicles.

There is an eminently favourable route from Sandbach to Middlewich that leaves Sandbach at Cookesmere Lane, following Wood Lane to Hollins Green, continuing past Kinderton Park, then turning left at Cross Lane. At this point it becomes difficult, and the “least worst” option is to use the canal towpath to the town centre to avoid the last mile described above, or cross at the traffic light junction with the A534 and cycle by way of the housing estate. There is a problem at this stage of the route, but this is by no means insoluble. Despite this, the Cookesmere/Wood Lane is an excellent route although it is currently well overdue for resurfacing.

An additional opportunity exists at Elworth, where it should be possible to implement pedestrian/cycle access via Vicarage Lane to Wood Lane. This would require provision of a new cycleway, although there are signs of a continuous track past Elworth Hall Farm which has fallen into disuse but may be reinstated. This option should be robustly explored because this gives Elworth residents safe passage to Sandbach, Middlewich and Holmes Chapel avoiding all main roads. This is discussed in more detail in Section xx.

Immediate proposals/suggestions to deal with issues within Town Council boundaries are:

- (i) continuous cycle lane on both sides of road. At "pinch points" remove centre white line, signing indicating traffic priority from one direction and give way for the other direction.
- (ii) Between Elworth Park and St Peter's the priority should be eastbound. That is because there is parking on the south, westbound, side which presumably would be retained. There might be some issues in terms of the total road width there. (Not measured). Alternatively, or additionally, parking could be removed between the junctions with Hill Street and School Lane.
- (iii) Middlewich Road/Abbey Road: pedestrian traffic lights, possibly Toucan

D Sandbach to Holmes Chapel

Vehicular traffic from Sandbach to Holmes Chapel almost exclusively takes the A534 to the A5022 Holmes Chapel Road and then the A50 north into Holmes Chapel. These are not viable options for cyclists.

The favoured route into Holmes Chapel follows the Cookesmere/Wood Lane route described above, but turns right towards Sproston at Hollins Green, crossing the M6 via an overbridge and into Holmes Chapel with relative ease.

E Sandbach to Alsager

This is relatively well served. There are a number of cycle friendly routes, some of which are accessed via Malkins Bank and Hassall Green, and then either via Day Green, which leads to Alsager School, Roughwood Lane or the Salt Line, both of which end at A5078 Chells Hill near the Wilbraham Arms.

An alternative route is via Wheelock, Winterley and Haslington, turning left on to Holmshaw Lane, a quiet rural road which ends at Close Lane/Dunnocksfold Lane.