

Chief Officer (Planning and Environment)
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please reply to:
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For the attention of Andrew Farrow

developmentplans@flintshire.gov.uk

rowland.pittard@railfuturewales.org.uk

29th April 2016

Re: Flintshire CC Local Development Plan Key Messages

Dear Sir,

Railfuture is a national independent voluntary organisation campaigning for a bigger, better railway in Wales, so we welcome the opportunity to provide an informed response to the questions in this consultation.

Railfuture recognises the importance of the provision of improved rail services offering more journey opportunities to a wider range of travellers in contributing to wider economic, employment and skills, social inclusion and environmental issues.

Our response is below. If you require any more detail or clarification please do not hesitate to get in touch. We would also refer you to our Welsh Development Plan which is available on the internet at <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/DL702>.

Yours faithfully,

Rowland Pittard

Rowland Pittard
Secretary
Railfuture Cymru

Flintshire CC LDP Key Messages

1. The Vision of the Plan

Q1 Do you agree with the vision for the LDP?

No comment

2. Enhancing Community Life

Q2 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Community access and health is enhanced by safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities and that should be a consideration in community enhancement.

3. Encourage development of town and district centres

Q3 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Numerous population centres in Flintshire have no railway facilities and those that do have a poor, infrequent and unreliable service. Is it any wonder that towns struggle when the only option to get to and from them is a lengthy bus journey or problematic parking and a walk.

Services to the existing stations in Flintshire (south end of the Borderlands Line plus Shotton and Flint on the North Wales Main Line) clearly underperform their potential as they are not of a sufficient frequency and reliability. Statistics show that the use of rail in Flintshire is well below what should be expected and indicates that the service fails to get people to where they want to go at the time they want to be there with an acceptable level of reliability.

4. Sustainable and Safe Transport less reliance on the car

Q4 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Laudable aim. However how are you going to achieve it without a decent urban rail network linking efficiently to Chester Wrexham and Mold?

Once again we would reiterate the need for linking Mold to the rail network, linking Wrexham Bidston to the North Wales coast to Chester line with suitable curves and providing services in and out of Chester and Wrexham at viable times. Also under this heading better connections between Wrexham Bidston and NW Coast line at Shotton and a more frequent service on the former.

Also a station for the industrial estate at Deeside.

We would also advocate the promulgation of a fast and frequent service into Liverpool via Bidston that can be used by commuter and shoppers – electrified route directly through avoiding the lengthy delay of changing trains?

5. Transport Utility and Community Infrastructure

Q5 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Under the heading of transport, utility and infrastructure, I would expect to see something about rail transport and possibly reconnecting of certain towns to the network such as Mold

and or the use of old railway lines as cycle and walking routes such as Mold-Wrexham and Mold Denbigh. The answer cross-references the previous answer.

6. Sustainable Management of Waste

Q6 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No comment

7. Welsh Language

Q7 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No comment.

8. Safety Access Health Wellbeing and Equality

Q8 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Provision of safe cycling and walking facilities linking to public transport especially rapid transport such as rail and light rail. These would all enhance safety and health and wellbeing. At the same time adequate transport is very much and equality issue in its ability to level the playing field economically to some extent between communities

9. Growth

Q9 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

I would add in this section the need for rail links to Chester (curve link from Wrexham Bidston line onto Chester Holyhead line and circular commuter service around the whole route encompassing Flintshire/Chester and Wrexham and a branch to Mold. Also a Deeside industrial estate to have a suitable station. Cycling opportunities for commuting along the disused railway routes between Wrexham and Mold and Mold and Denbigh.

This answer references previous answers where the points are covered such as Q3 and 4.

10. Economic Development

Q10 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

The wider implication of this question suggests better regional links and that can only be achieved by better connectivity to NW England and London. Electrification of the NW Coast line and linkage to HS2 and HS3 and Manchester and Liverpool airports is essential. Also as previously stated better links to Chester via a curve to the North Wales coast line and better links to Liverpool via Wrexham Bidston by making the line better served with faster more frequent trains and a contiguous link through to Liverpool city centre.

11. Improve Centres

Q11 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Cycling facilities are an integral part of this. Also I would argue more off street parking and pedestrian walkways with off high street delivery facilities for business premises to avoid congestion.

12. Housing Development

Q12 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No housing development should take place without adequate off street parking, cycling facilities and if economically possible adequate public transport preferably rail and light rail.

13. Sustainable Housing Development

Q13 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

As question 12

14. Rural Economy

Q14 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

All comments relating to rail and public transport and cycling apply in this section also as being beneficial to helping to level the economic playing field in rural areas as well as the safety, health and environmental benefits

15. Tourism

Q15 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Again an integral part of tourism is sustainable transport, trains, buses, cycle and walking provision.

16. Climate Change and Pollution

Q16 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

Climate change consideration should direct any responsible governmental body towards investing and supporting sustainable transport over the private car. Thus reinstating former rail provision, provision of light rail and provision of cycling alternatives to the car though costly in the short run are less costly than the consequences of runaway climate change.

17. Landscape, Cultural Heritage, Natural and built environments

Q17 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No comment

18. Green Infrastructure

Q18 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

We would urge maximum effort to convert the Mold-Denbigh and Mold-Wrexham former railway routes into cycle routes.

19. Design

Q19 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No comment

20. Use of Natural Resources

Q20 Do you agree with the identification of issues under this heading?

No comment

21. Plan's Objectives

Q21 Do you agree with the objectives?

On the basis that the objectives are highly "strategic" and therefore do not go into detail their broad aims are worthwhile. However, detailed tasks and objectives need to be identified to provide practical enhancements in terms of infrastructure and in terms of policy rather than simply holding up these laudable aims.

22. Summary

Q22 Do you agree with the summary?

No comment

23. Settlement Survey

Q23 Do you have any comments about the settlement survey?

No