

Mersey Dee Alliance

MDA Transport and Accessibility Improvement Study

Stage 1 Baseline Report

FINAL



*In Association with Simpson
Carpenter and Regeneris
Consulting*

Mersey Dee Alliance

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Simpson Carpenter & Regeneris Consulting

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1 Introduction

Introduction

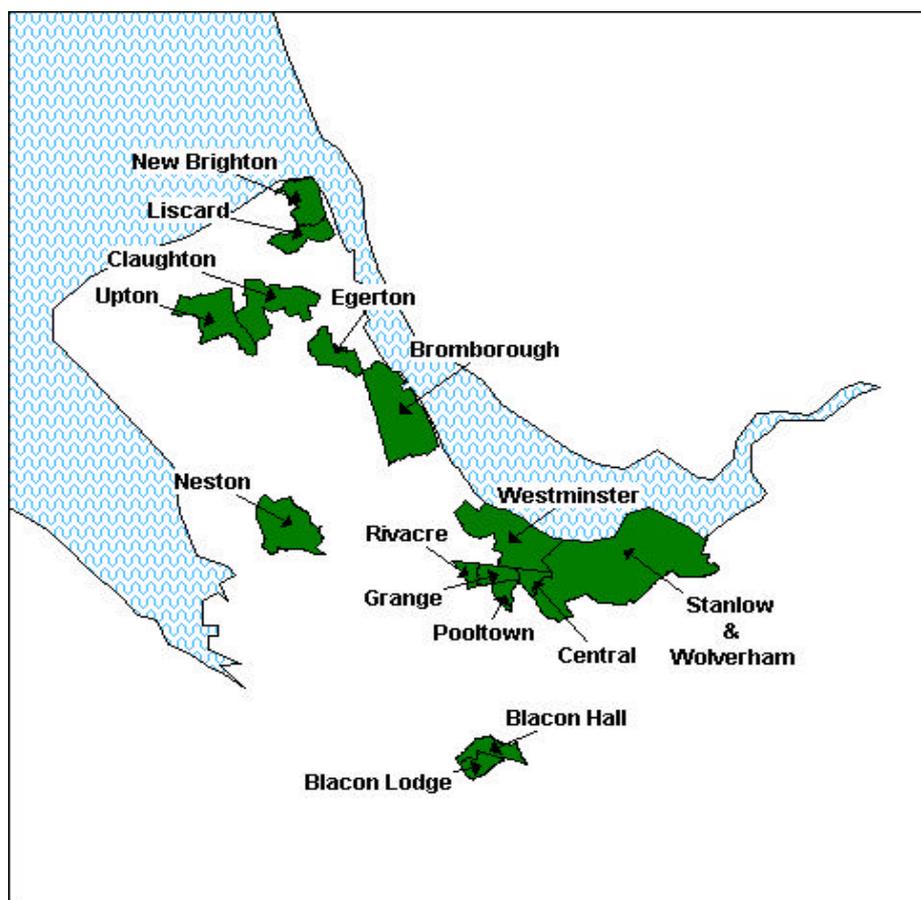
- 1.1 JMP Consultants Ltd. (JMP) and sub-consultants Regeneris and Simpson Carpenter have been commissioned by the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) to undertake a Transport and Accessibility Improvement Study. The MDA is a partnership of 29 public, private and voluntary sector organisations from across the Wirral, Ellesmere Port & Neston, Chester and parts of Cheshire.
- 1.2 The overall purpose of this study is to develop a strategy and proposals to reduce problems of social exclusion relating to accessibility and provision of passenger transport services in 15 target wards in the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) area.
- 1.3 Particular attention has been paid to travel opportunities to employment generators and training establishments, and to matching the job skills needed by employers with those offered by people living in the targeted communities. Consideration has also been given to access opportunities for residents of the targeted wards to education, health services, leisure facilities and shopping centres.
- 1.4 The main aims/tasks to be undertaken in the study are as follows –
- Assess existing passenger transport provision in the 15 targeted wards.
 - Assess future travel needs.
 - Identify existing and future gaps in transport provision.
 - Establish a database of employment and training opportunities in the sub region (i.e. the MDA area and adjoining areas) and a process for updating that database.
 - Develop strategies to address gaps in provision of passenger transport and in the matching of skills needed by employers and skills available in targeted wards.
 - Develop specific proposals in the form of a Transport and Accessibility Plan.
 - Identify funding opportunities additional to Local Transport Plan (LTP) programmes.
- 1.5 The MDA area is a travel to work and travel to learn area covering four Local Authority areas – Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Neston, Chester and parts of Cheshire. The area is not entirely self-contained – there is considerable movement across the Mersey to and from Liverpool, and there are connections to sources of employment outside the MDA area such as the Deeside Development Zone in Flintshire.
- 1.6 The 15 target wards are spread over a wide area extending from the two Blacon Wards to the west of Chester northwards to New Brighton on the north coast of the Wirral peninsula. They have a combined population in excess of

130,000 and are all included in the 20% most deprived wards in the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2000). None of the target wards have access to Objective 1, SRB or Neighbourhood Renewal funding.

1.7 The target wards are:

- Chester: Blacon Hall, Blacon Lodge.
- Ellesmere Port and Neston: Central, Grange, Neston, Pooltown, Rivacre, Westminster and Stanlow & Wolverham.
- Wirral: Bromborough, Cloughton, Egerton, Liscard, New Brighton and Upton.

1.8 The location of these wards is shown on the map below:



Earlier this year the Social Exclusion Unit published *Making the Connections: Final Report on Transport and Social Exclusion* examining the relationship between social exclusion, transport and the location of services. The key theme of this report is accessibility – *can people get to key places at reasonable cost, in reasonable time and with reasonable ease?* These themes have been considered in this study. Transport barriers can be summarised as affordability, accessibility, inclusivity, knowledge, fear and confidence. In considering the themes, it is important to appreciate that transport is a derived demand and that the real need is to connect people with jobs, services and facilities.

1.9 This is the report for Phase 1 of the MDA Transport and Accessibility Study. Phase 1 concerns the assessment of transport provision and future travel needs, identification of gaps in transport and the establishment of a database of employment and training opportunities. Phase 2 of the study will then focus upon the development of strategies and specific proposals, and identify funding opportunities additional to the LTP. The report is organised as follows: this section introduction and aims/tasks, section 2: consultation, section 3: network analysis, section 4: key issues and finally section 5: conclusions.

2 Consultation

Overview

2.1 Consultation has formed a major part of this study and various consultation exercises were undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of the issues affecting the local communities and stakeholders in the study area:

- Simpson Carpenter carried out a number of in-home surveys with local residents in the study area.
- Regeneris Consultants worked with various employers throughout the area to establish a database of employment and training opportunities in the sub-region and to match the skills needed by employers with the skills available in targeted wards.
- JMP held three stakeholder workshops in different locations across the MDA area. JMP have also spoken to major employers that are implementing their own travel-to-work initiatives; to healthcare providers to identify any proposals for new or relocated health facilities; and to bus operators for fare and journey time information for routes within the study area.

Simpson Carpenter Surveys

2.2 In order to ensure community involvement so that strategies and proposals reflect local need in the target wards, Simpson Carpenter Ltd undertook 544 in-home surveys with residents aged 14 years and over, from across the MDA area. The data collected was balanced to reflect the 2001 Census age/gender distribution at Ward level. A draft report highlighting the results of their surveys has been produced by Simpson Carpenter. The main findings of the surveys are discussed below.

2.3 Local residents tend to be committed to their area, with a large proportion stating they would be very likely or fairly likely to be still living at the same address in five years time. Of those expecting to move more than half expected to remain within 5 miles of their current address.

2.4 15% of respondents claim to be mobility impaired (33% in 65+ age groups), with 12% being registered disabled.

2.5 Average car ownership is 0.93 per household. Almost one third of households have no car (46% in the 60+ age groups). Lowest car ownership is in Wirral (35%), followed by Chester (30%) and Ellesmere Port (21%). A much larger proportion of public transport users (52%) have no household car compared to non-users (15%). Two thirds of respondents have direct access to a household car. Car accessibility is lowest for those in the lowest income bracket.

2.6 60% of children living within households surveyed walk to school, with 27% taken by car and 26% using the bus (the highest car use and lowest incidence of walking in the Wirral). Very few children use dedicated school transport (3%) – and those that do all live in the Chester area.

- 2.7 Unemployment is at a similar level across the three areas (8% Wirral, 6% Chester and 6% Ellesmere Port and Neston). However, a higher proportion of those unemployed in the Wirral and Ellesmere Port and Neston are actively looking for work, than in Chester. Almost half of the sample have no formal qualifications – this varied significantly according to age, mobility levels, employment status, income, commitment to area and number of people in the household. Chester had a higher proportion of respondents with no qualifications (52%) than Wirral (46%) and Ellesmere Port and Neston (40%).
- 2.8 The majority of commuters travel to the conurbations/towns nearest their home area. However, there was more evidence of cross-boundary travel from Ellesmere Port and Neston. Most commuters (96%) travel during Monday – Friday weekdays, but a substantial number commute on a Saturday (35%) and a Sunday (26%). Two-fifths commute outside the 9 to 5 norm. Public transport usage is highest on the Wirral (31%, compared to 9% in Ellesmere Port and Neston and 3% in Chester). Commuters in Chester are most likely to walk (40%, compared to 18% in Wirral and 14% in Ellesmere Port and Neston). The majority of people travel for less than half an hour to get to work (81%). But average journey times are significantly higher for public transport users than for car drivers. Travel to work journey times are longest in the Wirral.
- 2.9 Other issues raised in relation to travel to employment included:
- Very few respondents had experienced specific transport difficulties in accessing employment in the previous two years.
 - One fifth of respondents aged 16+ are looking for a new job.
 - The maximum time most would consider commuting to a new job is 40 minutes.
 - Respondents considered £15 to be a reasonable weekly spend for travel to work.
 - Specific problems that would prevent respondents from taking up a job outside their local area include: would cost too much (25%), unreliability of buses (14%), no or too few buses (13%) and buses run at the wrong times (11%).
 - Other issues included lack of qualifications, the need to take children to school and lack of suitable jobs.
- 2.10 With regard to trips for purposes other than employment the majority of respondents (95%) reported no difficulty in getting to the shops. The majority of respondents travel by foot or by car to visit their GP, and most experience little difficulty with the journey. Most respondents experience little difficulty accessing their local hospital – but the commonly cited problem was journey time.
- 2.11 The majority of trips being made by respondents are made by car (although walking trips are excluded from the survey). Those with access to a car make more trips than those without. Men make more journeys than women, those of age 65+ make fewer trips than younger respondents and those in higher

income brackets make more trips than poorer households. Average weekly expenditure on public transport by public transport users is £5.46. Most respondents do not use season tickets (Arriva Best was the most used ticket – 9% of public transport users), but 24% use concession tickets.

- 2.12 Only half of the survey respondents were satisfied with bus services, and a third with rail services. Satisfaction with both bus and rail service provision is higher amongst public transport users, as is that with information provision. Levels of satisfaction varied significantly by area.
- 2.13 It is clear that both similarities and differences exist across the three areas of the MDA. Some similarities between the three areas include the fact that a high number of people are committed to their local area, unemployment is at a similar level and the majority of commuters travel to a conurbation/town near to their home. Differences that exist between the three areas include the level of car ownership, the number of people with no qualifications, the amount of cross boundary travel to employment, public transport usage, the number of people willing to walk to work and levels of satisfaction regarding bus and rail services.

Regeneris Employer Surveys

- 2.14 Regeneris Consulting were commissioned to identify patterns of existing and future employment availability both within and beyond the MDA area. They also assessed the extent to which there will be gaps or mismatches between the demand for labour (in terms of both nature and volume) and the available supply of labour and have considered potential gaps in training provision. Existing and future gaps in passenger transport provision have also been identified. A stand alone report detailing the study has been produced by Regeneris, however, a summary of the methodology and conclusions is provided below.
- 2.15 In assessing future employment demand, the methodology was quite distinctive in that a 'bottom-up' approach was used. This set out to identify the specific locations of future employment growth through an examination of recent and future development trends and proposals. This approach which is more 'sites and premises-driven' gave the geographical specificity that is needed in order to fully assess site accessibility. A number of key steps were completed in undertaking the study:
- Examination of recent employment trends within the MDA area.
 - A detailed assessment of the labour market within the MDA area.
 - Reviewing of previous studies to draw upon forecasted demands for labour within key sectors (by district) etc.
 - Reviewing economic development strategies in the MDA area.
 - Identification of major development projects and proposals that may impact on labour demand.

- Consideration of employment barriers (existing and potential).
- Identification of required skills in terms of the likely future pattern of employment creation and the existing pattern of skills availability.

2.16 A range of approaches were used to carry out these steps, such as desk based analysis of published statistics, surveys and reports; analysis of primary research among the inhabitants of the target wards; and consultations with employers, planning officials, senior economic development officers and labour market intermediates.

2.17 The main conclusions identified by the Regeneris study are outlined in the table below.

	KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED FOR THE MDA AREA
THE LABOUR MARKET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour markets have tightened considerably in recent years. • Ellesmere Port and Neston and particularly Chester are appearing to approach 'full employment'. Unemployed people here are most likely moving between jobs or have been for some time and so have 'employability' difficulties. • Wirral appears to have a larger pool of 'job-ready' residents. • Employability difficulties are likely to be particularly severe in target wards as unemployment and inactivity are high. • Significant pools of economically inactive people exist – a proportion may be encouraged to return to the labour market if suitable vacancies are available. In Chester, a high proportion of inactivity is due to caring responsibilities – as a cohort it is these people who are most likely to move back into the labour market and seek employment. For carers, affordable childcare or suitably flexible employment are likely factors which may prevent or delay return to work - such issues need addressing. Some employers in the MDA area actively seek to encourage this group to apply for employment. • Those that are inactive due to illness or disability are more difficult to help get back into employment. • Long term unemployment/inactivity are both symptoms and can be causes of employability difficulties. • Participation in learning is closely associated with employment – those out of work are less likely to participate. • A high proportion of residents in target wards hold no formal qualifications and are less likely to hold higher level qualifications – so have a labour market disadvantage

EMPLOYMENT GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent growth has been service sector driven and has been particularly focused on Chester. • Manufacturing and light industrial employment has noticeably declined. • Ability and willingness of residents to move between sectors is a major problem. • In Wirral there is a shortage of employment opportunities – travel outside of the local area is therefore important. • The growth pattern looks likely to continue, with strong service sector growth mainly in the southern MDA area. • The success of a number of proposals may lead to the creation of employment opportunities which are qualitatively more similar to employment that has been lost, and which are geographically closer to residents. • In Chester there is scope for development that could create between 8,000 and 11,000 jobs). • In the long term developments in Flintshire could provide an increase in the pool of job vacancies available (particularly manufacturing/light industrial sectors).
SKILLS MATCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the employment likely to be created includes a proportion of 'entry-level' vacancies. This may offer opportunities for residents in target wards with few or no qualifications. • Such residents are more likely to lack some of the 'softer' employability assets such as confidence/social skills. • Other key barriers include the lower rates of pay offered in many service sector roles, cultural beliefs regarding employment, financial uncertainties associated with the move to a new job and location of employment. • Provision of training across the MDA provides good coverage of the skills likely to be necessary to access employment.
ACCESSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is high certainty that significant, primarily service sector, employment growth will occur in Chester. It also appears that growth is likely in Flintshire. Some employment will be city centre based, whilst a significant amount will be in more peripheral locations. This raises access problems, as journeys for people from outside the local district will require several changes. • Public transport accessibility is one of a number of factors which may influence the decision to take up job opportunities across the area. Where pay is low and journeys lengthy/unpredictable, transport difficulties can push people against taking a job opportunity.

Stakeholder Workshops

2.18

In order to ensure community involvement so that strategies and proposals reflect local need in the target wards, three stakeholder workshops were held during September 2003. One was held in Chester, one in Ellesmere Port and one on the Wirral. The purpose of these workshops was to identify the current or perceived gaps in transport and accessibility to key facilities, predominantly employment and training/education, but also to health, leisure and shopping. Those invited to attend included key stakeholders and community representatives from the study areas. The following table shows the key issues identified at each of the workshops:

Workshop	Key Issues
<p>Workshop 1: Chester Town Hall, 23 September 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of through routes to Chester Business Park (especially from Blacon). • Chester Business Park, and individual site occupiers are implementing Travel Plans to try to make the site more accessible by modes other than the car (an additional 5000 jobs in next 2 years). • Having to get more than one bus to work is a major disincentive, particularly if travelling early in the morning or late at night. • Joblink services from north Wirral available to Chester but not to the Business Park. Need better advertising. • Better links to Deeside Industrial Estate from Chester and to Chester Business Park. • Deeside has recruitment problems due to skills required. • At Chester College, the most common reason for people leaving courses is lack of suitable transport and childcare problems. Evening courses are a particular problem. • West Cheshire College – direct bus service exists from Blacon. • Poor marketing of public transport. • Should target children to encourage public transport use – provide all under 18s in full-time education with free buses? • Perception that access to healthcare is an issue – poor access to Primary Care in Blacon. • A cross-city bus service to the Countess of Chester hospital was tried, but no demand. • Little unemployment in Chester – but trying to tackle economically inactive (e.g. those with disability, women with children, single parents) – transport an issue. • Limited river crossings lead to congestion and therefore restrict bus priority and cross-city bus opportunities. • Net influx of 23,000 people coming into district each day (92% by car). • Public transport reliability a major issue. • Need better cycle routes and cycle parking at work place. • People should be encouraged to use park and ride for employment as well as shopping. • School run contributes to congestion • Personal security concerns in evenings (high levels of crime in town centre)

<p>Workshop 2: Wirral Museum, 24 September 2003.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of major employment sites are difficult to get to by public transport from the Wirral e.g. Chester Business Park, Cheshire Oaks, Hooton and Deeside Industrial Park. • Transport a particular issue for shift workers – public transport often not available or infrequent (Deeside Shuttle Bus has helped address this problem) • Fares an issue if travelling beyond Merseyside boundaries. • Bus de-regulation has led to a loss of services on routes which have lower patronage. • The loss of the 23 service affects access to employment on the Wirral. • Should encourage people to cycle to work by providing better facilities on routes and at workplaces. • Lack of information to young people about transport to employment opportunities – need to show that locations outside of the immediate local area may be accessible – need to provide service and fares information. • New Wirral Metropolitan College site (12 Quays) is not very accessible by bus. • Access to hospitals an issue (e.g. Clatterbridge, Arrowe Park) – many buses drop-off outside sites – need to take people closer to buildings. • People with mental health problems can no longer apply for concessionary passes if being treated only by a GP – higher proportions of mentally ill people in deprived wards. • Access to leisure – cost, time, safety and reliability of public transport all important issues. Need more Sunday morning services. • All railway stations should be accessible to disabled people. • Employers could help address transport problems by allowing teleworking, flexi-time or providing dedicated bus services. • Potential to provide new rail stations on Bidston-Wrexham line. • Integration between different modes of transport a big issue.
<p>Workshop 3: Ellesmere Port Civic Centre, 29 September 2003</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems for shift workers using public transport as most bus services start at 7am and finish around 8pm. • Difficulties travelling on public transport from Neston to any of the major employment areas on the Wirral. • Links required between Ellesmere Port train station and Town Centre or industrial area (south Ellesmere Port). • Problems with frequency and reliability of train services on the Bidston – Wrexham line. • Overall cost of public transport – people prefer to use their car. • Poor safety, appearance and staffing at bus/train stations. • Accessibility poor for disabled/single parents/elderly at some stations and buses/trains. • Poor links to hospitals/health centres and colleges especially night school or evening classes and leisure facilities including cinema/bowling and leisure centres. • Neston was highlighted as having the most access problems, in terms of poor public transport links and limited local facilities.

- 2.19 For the Chester area, it is access to Chester Business Park which is one of the major issues. The Park is implementing a Travel Plan to try to make the site more accessible by modes other than the car. An additional 5000 staff are expected at the Park in the next two years. Joblink services are available from North Wirral to Chester – but not to the Business Park. Better advertising of such services is required. Recruitment issues exist at Deeside Industrial Park and better links to the park are needed. A major issue in Chester is the limited number of river crossings as this leads to congestion and restricts bus priority and cross-city bus opportunities. A very high proportion of people travel into the district each day by car (92%). There may be opportunities to encourage people to use park and ride for employment as well as shopping. Transport issues are preventing economically inactive people (e.g. single mothers) from seeking employment, and also preventing people from attending college to receive the education they need. Chester is viewed as a violent city in the evenings which discourages people from using public transport due to personal security concerns.
- 2.20 With regards to the Wirral, it is difficult to get to various employment sites using public transport. It is particularly difficult for shift workers as public transport is often not available or infrequent. Initiatives such as the Deeside Shuttle Bus are essential in addressing such problems. Fares can be a problem when travelling across the Merseyside boundary - two buses are often required which can make daily travel very expensive. Access to hospitals, leisure facilities and the new Wirral Metropolitan College site are all major issues. There are issues with concessionary passes that need addressing. For example, people with mental health problems are no longer eligible for concessionary passes if they are only being treated by their GP. This is causing them to become more withdrawn and adds to the social exclusion factor.
- 2.21 Within Ellesmere Port and Neston, a major issue is that it seems to be difficult travelling on public transport to get from Neston to any of the major employment areas on the Wirral. Within Ellesmere Port, there are poor linkages between the train station and town centre or industrial area (south Ellesmere Port). There are also poor links to hospitals/health centres, colleges and leisure facilities – especially of an evening. Overall however, it is Neston that suffers most in terms of poor transport links and access to facilities. As above, shift workers have major problems if wanting to use public transport.
- 2.22 Common problems exist in all three areas, and these need to be tackled in order to promote social inclusion. Many people would require two buses to get to their destination which is a major disincentive, especially when travelling early in the morning or late at night. Reliability of public transport is a major issue and many people feel they cannot rely on public transport to get them to work on time. To increase the uptake of transport modes other than the car, for example cycling, measures such as improved cycle routes and better parking and changing facilities in the workplace are required. A major issue is the cost of public transport which is viewed as expensive. It is cheaper, more comfortable and more convenient to travel by car, then people are unlikely to use public transport. Another issue is the fact that the appearance of railway stations and bus stations/stops can be so poor that they deter people. A lack

of staffing at stations can also make people fearful for their own safety. Not all stations, buses and trains are accessible to disabled people, women with small children or the elderly.

- 2.23 There is a lack of information given to young people regarding transport to employment opportunities. Many young people may perceive that employment opportunities are out of reach. Service and fare Information should be provided to indicate to them that locations outside of their immediate local area may be accessible.
- 2.24 The school run contributes to congestion in all areas. Many children nowadays are taxied around by their parents. People felt that children should be encouraged to use public transport while they are young. It was suggested that it might be beneficial to provide all under 18 year olds with free bus travel. This way they will not be in the habit of solely using car travel when they reach working age.
- 2.25 Poor access to colleges and training has complications in that many people can not achieve the career they desire because they can not accomplish the training/qualifications they require. This puts many people at a disadvantage as it holds them back.
- 2.26 The importance of marketing public transport was emphasised by people within the workshops. Services may be available that people are not aware of. New services and initiatives should be advertised to all types of people who use all modes of transport (including the car). New services are often tried and are unsuccessful due to a lack of demand. But it's not necessarily a lack of demand; it's more likely a lack of awareness of such services due to poor marketing.
- 2.27 People agreed that integration between different modes of transport is essential in order to make linkages efficient. Other suggestions for how transport problems could be addressed included the option of employers allowing teleworking, flexi-work or providing dedicated bus services. Especially in hard to reach places.
- 2.28 The above issues raised at the workshops will be used as a major focus when determining strategies and proposals.

Deeside Shuttle Bus Surveys

- 2.29 In order to develop proposals for improving access to employment for residents of the Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA) area, it is necessary to have an understanding of employment and travel opportunities in adjoining areas. The Deeside Shuttle is an innovative demand-responsive service catering for travel to and from work at five participating companies in Deeside Industrial Park (Iceland, Convatec, Hazlewood Foods, Mainetti and Dailycer). It is a flexible service designed to get people living in Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry to and from work in the Deeside Industrial Park. The service commenced in March 2003 using three new accessible minibuses and provides a door-to-door service. The objectives of the scheme are to attract

and retain employers and to provide an alternative to use of the car. There is a flat fare of £1 for any single journey and £5 for unlimited weekly travel. Each minibus has a maximum capacity of 19 passengers and a service is available 24 hours a day for 7 days a week.

- 2.30 A survey was undertaken on Thursday 31st July 2003 in order to develop a better understanding of the needs, views and travel behaviour of Shuttle users. Two data collectors carried out on-bus interviews of Shuttle passengers in the periods 05.00-08.00, 13.00-15.00 and 16.00-18.00. A total of 44 passengers were interviewed. The schedule of passenger pick-ups and drops for that day indicated that 82 people used the shuttle that day (some single journeys, some return). The sample rate for the day was therefore 54%. Two-thirds of the interviewees were female and two-thirds in the 18-44 age group.
- 2.31 Survey findings indicate a substantial growth in demand. When users asked how they had heard about the Shuttle service the largest number of responses was through employers. Convatec and Iceland are the main users of the service. Not all passengers are using the service for their outward and return journeys and the majority of journeys are relatively short.
- 2.32 All interviewees were using the Shuttle for work journeys. The introduction of the Shuttle has impacted upon travel behaviour. One third of the interviewees did not make the journey before the shuttle was launched and more than half previously used car as either driver or passenger to access Deeside Industrial Park. Only one respondent transferred to the Shuttle from another bus service.
- 2.33 One third of the interviewees started work at Deeside Industrial Park after the introduction of the Deeside Shuttle. However, the survey showed that the majority would have taken the job even if the Shuttle did not exist and would therefore have found some alternative means of travel.
- 2.34 The majority of people use the Shuttle 5-6 times a week (32 people). Only 4 of the respondents indicated that they held part-time jobs, but 11 respondents make use of the service on 4 days or less each week. This suggests that some users have other means of getting to or from work on some days of the week.
- 2.35 It seems that users consider the service easy to book and reliable. However two particular comments were made by some users – that the phone is not always answered on first attempt when trying to book and that availability at weekends is less than satisfactory. There is a good level of user satisfaction in terms of reliability, journey length, convenience, vehicle quality and cost.
- 2.36 Most respondents felt that a journey time of between 10 and 20 minutes would be ideal. This was being achieved in most cases, but some interviewees reported actual journey times of up to 30 minutes.
- 2.37 Of the 44 interviewees, 13 indicated that lack of transport prevented them from taking up employment opportunities prior to the start of the Deeside Shuttle.

- 2.38 The majority of respondents did not identify any desired work journeys that are not possible. One person identified a need for better access to Chester and another referred to difficulty in arranging Shuttle journeys around 07.30. Most respondents felt that the Shuttle made their journey to work easier, several referred to the greater convenience of not relying on lifts and the removal of time restraints on providing those lifts. Four people stated that their jobs at Deeside Industrial Park are dependent upon the Shuttle.
- 2.39 27 of the 44 people interviewed said that they would take a job in Cheshire or The Wirral if a similar service existed. Reasons for not included satisfaction with their present job, company loyalty, length/duration of journey and impeding retirement.

Other Stakeholder Consultation

Employer Travel Plans

- 2.40 Various major employers within the MDA area have been contacted directly and a series of questions asked regarding transport issues and details of their travel plan. A meeting with the travel plan co-ordinators at Cheshire County Council and Merseytravel also provided information on how various companies are dealing with transport issues.
- 2.41 *Wirral International Business Park* contains companies who operate in shifts. As the business park is quite isolated it is not well served in terms of public transport. Job link buses help but they are not available for all shifts of work. Most people travel by car to the site – the main problem with this is not really congestion but the environmental effect. The plan is trying to get people more active – through cycling to work – providing efficient cycle storage etc. *Serial Partners* have an initiative to encourage people to cycle. They hold presentations in which available bikes are shown and information on the best cycle routes is given.
- 2.42 *Wirral Hospital Trust* has adopted a travel plan. Initiatives include taking part in the *European Car Free Day* in conjunction with Arriva who provided free bus passes to employees for a week. A park and ride scheme is in place that takes people from Sainsbury's to Arrowe Park Hospital between 1pm and 4pm. This has been set up to help ease parking problems at the site. There is a travel centre within Arrowe Park Hospital – this includes SMART display real time information.
- 2.43 *Chester Business Park* has a park-wide travel plan. They have started an extension to the First service 3 which runs from Ellesmere Port to Chester City Centre. The extension is three services in the morning and afternoon from the city centre to the park. This is at a cost of £38,000 per annum. Cycle initiatives in place include a one mile dedicated off road cycle path from the park towards town and plans for further cycle lane provision. Walking initiatives include the recent completion of two pedestrian refuges in the main Park carriageway which help ease crossing. A park wide car sharing scheme has recently been launched. Parking is a problem at the site and it is therefore essential to encourage staff to travel by other modes or to car share etc. Congestion is a problem at the site but infrastructure works in place should

ease this. The relatively rural land to the west, south and east of the park mean that limited public transport exists and the only real way to get there is by car. However, there are now five scheduled bus services to the park compared to just one five years ago.

- 2.44 *Marks and Spencer* within the business park has its own travel plan. Results of travel to work surveys have indicated that the best option is car share, as the majority of people are just not interested in buses. The company currently provide a lunchtime bus service into Chester City Centre. In terms of cyclist provision, they have sheltered cycle sheds, lockers, changing rooms and showers. Some cycle routes have already been developed and there are plans for more to be developed in and around the Chester area. The company plans to work closely with the Local Authorities to develop new safe cycle routes. The company feel that the biggest impact will be felt through the car sharing scheme. Other issues under consideration include: changes to working times to reduce congestion, compressed working, emergency ride home for staff and a review of business travel practices. The company feel that marketing of initiatives is essential.
- 2.45 *MBNA* are also located on the business park and have a travel plan in place. They, too, operate a lunchtime bus service into Chester. A travel to work survey has shown that the obstacles against using public transport are: bus journey times, infrequent services, shift work, having to change buses and restricted as have to drop off children. As a result of the travel survey, *MBNA* have introduced bus services from the local areas not served by direct routes from the local operator. Additional services have been budgeted for in 2003. In terms of cycle initiatives, cycle parking, staff showers and lockers are provided; cycles can be supplied as non-taxable benefits and there are also pool cycles that can be borrowed. Improvements proposed by the council to the Southern Access roundabout include the provision of pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities which will improve safety.
- 2.46 Measures are currently in place to encourage car sharing, both through the 'clearways' programme and the park wide 'Smartways' programme. Except for those people who are assigned a company vehicle, all company travel is authorised through senior management. This ensures that all travel is reasonably justified, providing reductions in unnecessary travel. The company aim to use a minimal amount of business-use-vehicles. All staff have telephone equipment at their desk to enable them to teleconference with third parties. Numerous facilities are provided on site which reduces the dependence on the private vehicle. Encouragement is given for managers to allow flexi time in order to reduce congestion at peak times. *MBNA* are taking part in a trial of the Smartcard programme with bus companies and the council that will make bus journeys more convenient and may enable subsidies to be offered to business park employees.
- 2.47 *Chester City Council* offices are to be demolished and built on a different site for which a travel plan will be required. A travel to work survey has indicated that the main reason for travel by car is to save time. In terms of bus services, negotiations with local bus operators to maximise the level of fare discounts

are to be pursued and the provision of readily available timetable information at the various office locations is recommended. In terms of cycle provision, it is recommended that all existing and new council offices have secure lockers, showers and changing facilities. Discount arrangements with local cycle shops and motorcycle courses shall also be considered. It is also recommended that 'walking groups' and car sharing schemes should be set up and serious consideration be given to further promoting the use of existing P&R sites to council employees. Other recommendations include cutting the provision of free employee parking in public car parks and the possibility of a home working scheme for appropriate employees.

- 2.48 The *Countess of Chester NHS Hospital Trust* has a travel plan in place. A travel to work survey indicated that the strongest influence upon employee's choice of mode was inadequate and expensive public transport, followed by essential use of their vehicle, concerns over personal safety and distance travelled to and from work. The aim of the travel plan is to increase the number of employees travelling to work by public transport, cycle and on foot. For those travelling by car the aim is to increase car sharing and thus decrease the number of single occupancy vehicles. Park and ride schemes will be explored for staff where this is practical. The organisation is aware that marketing and promotion are key to the success of the travel plan. This will be achieved through raising employee, patient and visitor awareness and actively encouraging the use of alternatives to single occupancy car trips. The travel co-ordinator will facilitate regular poster and leaflet campaigns, team briefs, newsletters, travel days, events, exhibitions, training and the issue of staff, patient and visitor information guides. This will be supported by information at strategic points.

Primary Care Trusts

- 2.49 Healthcare providers in the MDA area were consulted to identify proposals for new or relocated facilities, which might have travel implications.
- 2.50 *Bebington & West Wirral PCT* has two firm proposals for new/relocated Primary Care Facilities in the area. They are redeveloping an existing 7 partner GP practice site in the centre of Heswall (Telegraph Road). This will provide for about 16,000 patients and will incorporate a Community Services Centre with clinic services etc. This location is well served by public transport, but bus stops are not very well located. It is opposite a local Tesco store, so it is a busy area.
- 2.51 The PCT are also looking at relocating an existing GP surgery (Sunnymead) on the main Birkenhead Road to a new site in Meols, close to the Meols railway station. It is currently a vacant site, but will provide a surgery for 2 GPs, with between 3,000-4,000 patients. It therefore has good accessibility by rail, but access by bus needs to be considered.
- 2.52 The PCT are also considering two other proposals, but these are still in the early stages. The first is the potential provision of a single large surgery for three existing GPs (Rocky Lane, Thingwall Road and Pensby Road) – currently looking at three sites, but are finding it difficult to identify suitable available land (Wirral

MBC are assisting with this). They are also considering bringing 3 GPs together into one practice at West Kirby Concourse to provide for 20,000 patients. They are looking to develop in close proximity to the existing bus terminal.

- 2.53 *Birkenhead & Wallasey PCT* have proposals for 3 GPs to be moved onto Victoria Central Hospital Site (Community Hospital) from the local Wallasey area. This will probably take place within the next 18 months. However, the GP's are unwilling to move until they can be sure that the site is accessible by public transport. Proposals to redirect small buses through the site are being looked into.
- 2.54 *Ellesmere Port & Neston PCT* currently has no significant proposals for new or relocated healthcare facilities.

3 Network Analysis

Accessibility Mapping

3.1 JMP have undertaken an extensive accessibility mapping exercise, using GIS (Geographical Information System), in order to identify levels of public transport service provision to and from the target wards and certain key employment sites across the study area. The maps are provided in a separate document.

3.2 In addition to the 15 target wards, 8 key employment destinations from across the study area, were also chosen for analysis (Map 3.1):

- Birkenhead Town Centre
- Cheshire Oaks
- Chester Business Park
- Chester City Centre
- Deeside Industrial Estate
- Liverpool City Centre
- Wirral International Business Park
- Vauxhall Motors (Ellesmere Port)

Map 3.1: Key employment destinations



Data Sources

- 3.3 Merseytravel supplied the ATCO CIF files of bus stops and routes in Merseyside dated June 2003. In addition Merseytravel supplied the bus stops, and bus routes and frequencies in MapInfo format.
- 3.4 Cheshire County Council supplied the ATCO CIF files of bus stops and routes in Cheshire dated July 2003, together with the OSCAR road network.
- 3.5 FirstGroup supplied ATCO CIF files for three key routes in Flintshire.
- 3.6 BaseMap supplied JMP with a database of the UK rail network dated May 2003.
- 3.7 Merseytravel supplied the location of interchanges, rail stations and routes in MapInfo table format. In addition Merseytravel supplied information such as hospitals, banks, post offices.
- 3.8 Liverpool Chamber of Commerce supplied details of major employers, and the Mersey Dee Alliance supplied a map showing the location of key employment sites. The geographical reference for each site was noted and transferred into the GIS to be used as a layer within the accessibility map.

Travel time isochrones

- 3.9 The public transport networks were combined in ACCMAP, and clipped around the area of interest.
- 3.10 A grid of origin points was created to cover the entire area, at 300m spacing. This was then clipped to remove origins in the sea. One or more destinations were located in each target ward.
- 3.11 ACCMAP was run for each destination in turn, for each of three time periods:
- Monday – Friday evening peak (16:00 – 18:00)
 - Monday – Friday off peak (18:00 – 24:00)
 - Sunday between peak (10:00 – 16:00)
- 3.12 Default settings for walk distance etc, were used throughout, and 0 – 1 interchange were specified.
- 3.13 The resulting travel time values were contoured by ACCMAP at intervals of 30 minutes, and then transferred to MapInfo for printing. The OS base at 1:250,000 scale was used as background.
- 3.14 The maps show distance that can be reached by the public transport network (bus and rail) in each travel time band.

Bus frequencies

- 3.15 A Cheshire bus network was created by the PathFinder function in ACCMAP, to allow the Cheshire bus routes to be mapped in MapInfo (the Mersey routes had been supplied by Merseytravel). The three Flintshire routes were mapped manually.
- 3.16 During the generation of the PT network, ACCMAP had calculated the buses per hour (bph) in each of twelve time periods for each route. The data were then associated with the geocoded routes in MapInfo, using the identifier.
- 3.17 For each rural area a thematic layer was created using line thickness to demonstrate the frequency of each route that passed directly through the rural area boundary. These routes were referred to as 'Direct Routes'. Merseytravel also supplied a list of key interchange points throughout the area. The interchange points are locations that passengers can use to transfer from their direct service onto a route that transports them further within the region. Once the interchange points that could be reached were identified, MapInfo highlighted all the routes that could be accessed from the interchange. These routes are referred to as 'Routes via Interchange' and are displayed on each map.
- 3.18 All the maps display the complete bus and rail network for the region underneath the direct and interchange routes. The maps also show the location of hospitals and sites of employment. Rather than base mapping, the location of key settlements are identified, and the coast.

Issues

- 3.19 The ATCO CIF data supplied was at timing point rather than bus stop level. In order to generate travel time isochrones that do not have 'holes' in, each route had to be edited and intervening bus stops added. This was a labour-intensive task, so only routes that passed through the target wards could be updated.
- 3.20 In future, the ATCO CIF data should be available at bus stop level, as this will be required for PTI2000.
- 3.21 The boundary between Wirral (Merseyside) and Cheshire caused problems where the same bus service is known by a different identifier. This would not matter if multiple interchanges were allowed, but because the Client had specified a maximum of one interchange, the Wirral cross-boundary routes had to be manually extended into Cheshire.
- 3.22 Data from neighbouring authorities were not available (Lancashire, Halton, Warrington) so the travel time contours stop at the boundaries.

Fare Information

- 3.23 Fares were highlighted as a key issue by stakeholders and local residents, particularly for cross-boundary journeys. JMP has therefore also undertaken an analysis of fares, together with journey times for travel to several key

employment sites located across the study area from the target wards. This is intended to give a feel for cross-boundary fare issues to particular employment locations. Local operators were contacted in order to derive fare and journey time information for various routes. The assumptions made for these calculations are provided below:

Buses

- 3.24 Bus journey costs are based on daily costs (Monday – Friday) in the peak hours and thus weekly/monthly tickets are not taken into account. The price per day would therefore be substantially reduced through the use of weekly/monthly tickets (where available). The costs of some of the journeys will also vary depending on the bus operator used (e.g. for travel to Chester Business Park).
- 3.25 It is clear that some journey times are quite extensive, especially to the business park. Fares are expensive when based on a daily fee as above. The main problem with fares would be if two different bus operators are required, as this rules out the use of a First/Arriva daily/weekly/monthly tickets. Fares to Deeside Industrial Park from the Wirral are very expensive when using commercial services, compared to the 50p flat fare of the Joblink service. However, the Joblink service tends to take longer than commercial services and only run at certain times, but they are direct whereas changes would otherwise be required.
- 3.26 Substantial savings can be made if a weekly/monthly ticket is bought. However, this is only beneficial so long as they can be used on all bus services required to get to a destination.
- 3.27 An Arriva adult day ticket costs £3.20 and is valid for the North West area including Cheshire and Deeside. An Arriva weekly ticket costs £11.99 and is valid for the North West and Wales area.
- 3.28 A First adult day ticket costs £2.80 (if bought after 9am, £3 before) a weekly ticket costs £11 and a monthly ticket £40. All of these can be used on the Wirral, within the Chester and Ellesmere Port zone, Liverpool and Flintshire. A First Year ticket can also be bought – with this you can get 12 months travel for the price of 10.
- 3.29 Tickets bought from each operator are similar in price but can only be used on the one operator and so the type bought will depend on the bus services required.

Trains

- 3.30 When travelling by train on the Wirral to Chester line at peak times the fares are quite expensive. From Hamilton Square (Birkenhead) to Chester the journey time is 36 minutes and the trains have a 30 minute frequency. The cost of a standard day return is £4.70, a weekly ticket is £19.70 and a monthly ticket £75.70. If travelling to the business park, a further bus journey will cost at least £1.30 return per day (£1.90 maximum). Further analysis of journey times and costs is provided in the ward level analysis below.

Ward Level Analysis

3.31 On the basis of the accessibility mapping exercise JMP has undertaken an analysis of accessibility levels from each of the 15 target wards. The results of this analysis are set out below.

Blacon Hall, Chester

3.32 Blacon Hall is located to the north-west of Chester town centre. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Blacon Hall	Chester
Population	7977	118210
No. of Households	3120	50130
% of households with no car	35.7	22.1
% of economically active – employed	56.9	31.1
% of economically active – unemployed	4.0	2.4
% aged Under 16	26.0	18.5
% aged 16-19	5.0	4.7
% aged over 60	17.3	22.7

Source: Census 2001

Accessibility Mapping

3.33 The accessibility mapping exercise for Blacon Hall was undertaken from two different starting points: the Arts Centre and the Post Office. The journey starting point appears to have a significant effect on the range of locations that are accessible from the ward. Thus, there is a wider range of destinations accessible for people starting their journey at the Arts Centre (within walking distance of bus services on the A540) than for those starting at the Post Office. Accessibility also varies significantly by time of day and day of week.

3.34 From analysis of the mapping, the following key conclusions can be drawn:

- From the Arts Centre, most of Chester and Ellesmere Port and Neston are accessible within an hour's journey time of Blacon during the weekday pm peak (16:00-18:00).
- Most of the Wirral can also be reached, but with journey times of more than an hour.
- During the evenings, a much more limited range of destinations are accessible, and most of the Wirral and Neston cannot be reached by public transport.
- Similarly, on Sundays during the day, public transport accessibility is very poor, with even more restricted travel opportunities – there are no bus services from Chester to Neston and central and western areas of the Wirral.

- Access from the Post Office to public transport services is slightly better than from the Arts Centre, with destinations in Ellesmere Port and along the east coast of the Wirral being served.
- Access to areas to the West of Chester, and into Flintshire is also difficult at all times from Blacon, and requires interchange in Chester city centre, but access to these locations is particularly difficult on Sundays when a number of services do not operate.
- Therefore, it is likely that anyone from Blacon Hall working evening or weekend shifts would be limited to employment opportunities in and around Chester, and possibly in Ellesmere Port.
- Sunday services are particularly lacking, with no travel opportunities from Blacon Hall to Neston, most of the Wirral or Flintshire.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus or Bus/train	Bus/Walk	Bus or Bus/train	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	1	1	1	1
Services required weekday peak	1 or 2 <u>CCI</u> then 447 <u>A</u> or train <u>M</u>	1 <u>CCI</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	1/2 <u>CCI</u> then 401 <u>A</u> OR 15 <u>CCI</u> then train <u>M</u>	1 <u>CCI</u> then 1 <u>F</u>
Changes required Sunday	1	1	1	1
Services required Sunday	1 or 2 <u>CCI</u> then 411 <u>A</u> or train <u>M</u>	1 <u>CCI</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	2 <u>CCI</u> , walk, then train <u>M</u> Return 1 <u>F</u> then 1 <u>CCI</u>	2 <u>CCI</u> then 411/412 <u>A</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	1 hour 10 min by bus 50 min by bus/train (substantial walk from bus to rail station - 15 min)	37 min	1 hour 30 min on bus 1 hour 20 min on bus/train	47 min
Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving 10am) before	1 hour 10 min by bus (1 st bus arrives 10.19am) 50 min by bus/train (substantial walk from bus to rail station - 15 min)	49 min (1 st bus arrives 10.17am)	1 hour 46 min outbound 1 hour 20 min return	1 hour 20 min

Return Cost weekday (approx)	£4.60 by bus	£2.80	£4.70 on bus	£4.50
	£5.50 by bus/train		£6.20 on bus/train	
Return cost Sunday (approx)	£4.60 by bus	£2.80	£4.50 outbound	£4.30
	£4.10 by bus/train		£4.30 return	

CCT – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M - Merseyrail

- In terms of journey time, Chester Business Park is the most accessible of the three employment sites we have looked at. However, there is no direct service to any of the employment sites, one change being required in all cases. The fact that Birkenhead Town Centre and Wirral International Business Park (WIBP) are over an hour away (except for WIBP – 50 minutes on train) and changes are necessary will act as a disincentive for people to work there.
- On a Sunday, the first bus does not arrive to Chester Business Park until 10.17am; this may be too late for some people starting work and so may cause problems for people.
- Train is the quickest mode when travelling to Wirral International Business Park. However, a 15 minute walk is required during the changeover and a substantial walk may be required once Bromborough is reached (depending on the desired location within the Business Park). The train is significantly more expensive than the bus. Bus may therefore be the more attractive option as it drops off closer to the site, it is cheaper and the changeover is simpler.
- When travelling to Birkenhead centre, train is slightly quicker but is more expensive (£1.50 more in the week) and so people may prefer to use the bus.
- Generally, fares when travelling cross-border to the Wirral are rather high and this will act as a disincentive for seeking employment in the Wirral area.

Blacon Lodge, Chester

3.35 Blacon Lodge is located to the north-west of Chester town centre, adjacent to Blacon Hall. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Blacon Lodge	Chester
Population	5518	118210
No. of Households	2454	50130
% of households with no car	42.7	22.1
% of economically active – employed	53.0	31.1
% of economically active – unemployed	5.1	2.4
% aged Under 16	20.7	18.5
% aged 16-19	5.3	4.7
% aged over 60	22.6	22.7

Accessibility Mapping

3.36 The accessibility mapping reveals similar accessibility patterns to that of Blacon Hall. Key issues are:

- Direct bus routes from the ward are focused on Chester City Centre, links to Connah's Quay and Flintshire and links to the north-west of Chester. During the weekday peak periods, these bus routes are very frequent. However, in the evenings, frequencies reduce significantly, and a number of routes do not operate at all on Sundays (e.g. services towards Flintshire).
- There are a number of services that can be accessed via interchange in Chester City Centre. These services offer links to North Wales, locations on the eastern and western edges of the Wirral, Neston, Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Northwich, Nantwich and Wrexham. However, on Sundays a number of these services do not operate (i.e. those toward Neston, Heswall and other locations in west Wirral, Northwich, Nantwich, Connah's Quay and Wrexham)
- A range of destinations are accessible by public transport on weekdays, but many services require interchange in Chester town centre. On Sundays, transport options are much more limited, with particular gaps in linkages to the Wirral and to Flintshire.
- Thus, from Blacon Lodge, access to employment that involves shift work or working weekends is likely to be very difficult, except for locations in Chester and Ellesmere Port.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.37 See above – Blacon Lodge will be the same as Blacon Hall in terms of fares and journey times to the major employment sites.

Bromborough, Wirral

3.38 Bromborough is located on the eastern edge of the Wirral, equidistant from Birkenhead to the north and Ellesmere Port to the south. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Bromborough	Wirral
Population	13963	312293
No. of Households	6189	133345
% of households with no car	34.0	30.3
% of economically active – employed	56.5	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	4.2	4.3
% aged Under 16	20.4	20.7
% aged 16-19	4.4	5.1
% aged over 60	22.6	23.4

Source: Census 2001

Accessibility Mapping

3.39 The accessibility mapping reveals that a much wider range of destinations are accessible by public transport from Bromborough than from the two Blacon wards. Key patterns are:

- Most of the Wirral is accessible by public transport from Bromborough, with frequent direct bus services to a range of destinations. Access to Chester and Ellesmere Port is also possible using direct bus services or Merseyrail services. Most of these services continue to operate fairly frequently into the evenings on weekdays.
- Other destinations are also accessible via interchange. These include Neston, Frodsham, locations in Flintshire, and across the Mersey into Liverpool.
- Public transport services from Bromborough on Sundays are less extensive and frequent. However, a number of locations on the Wirral can still be accessed, including Birkenhead, Wallasey, Hoylake and Heswall. Ellesmere Port and Chester City Centre are also accessible. However, links to Neston, Frodsham and Flintshire are much more limited on Sundays.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Rail	Rail/bus	Bus	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	0	1	0	0
Services required weekday peak	Train <u>M</u>	Train <u>M</u> then bus number 1 <u>A</u>	1 F OR 447 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0
Services required Sunday	Train <u>M</u>	Train <u>M</u> then bus number 1 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u>	1 <u>E</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	2-6 min (depending on which stop)	40 min	1 <u>E</u> – 17 min 447 <u>A</u> – 31 min	30 min
Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving before 10am)	2-6 min (depending on which stop)	1 hour (as less frequent connection) 1 st bus arrives 10.17am	17 min (1 st bus arrives 10.12am)	30 min
Return Cost weekday (approx)	Between £1.05 & £1.35	£5.10	1 <u>E</u> £3 447 <u>A</u> £2.80	£3
Return cost Sunday (approx)	Between £0.85 and £1.05	£3.70	£2.80	£2.80

CCI – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M - Merseyrail

- From Bromborough, all four employment areas can be reached within 40 minutes on a weekday.
- Access to Wirral International Business Park requires no changes and is only several minutes away on the train. A substantial walk may be required to/from the stations depending both on where people live and the location required in the business park, but this is balanced out by such a short train journey time. Bus is also an option when travelling to Wirral International Business Park as several buses pass along the site, but journey times are slightly longer.
- Access to Cheshire Oaks requires no changes and is only 30 minutes away by bus.
- Birkenhead Town Centre is within easy reach with no changes being required and a choice of buses being available and train also being an option.
- Fares to Wirral International Business Park, Cheshire Oaks and Birkenhead Town Centre are reasonable (especially to Wirral International Business Park).
- Access to Chester Business Park is more difficult in that one change is required and journey times are longer. On a Sunday, the first bus does not arrive to the Business Park until 10.17am; this may be too late for some people starting work.

Central, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.40 Central ward is located in Ellesmere Port. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Central	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	3790	81672
No. of Households	1683	33167
% of households with no car	39.8	22.2
% of economically active – employed	59.9	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	5.1	3.2
% aged Under 16	23.0	20.9
% aged 16-19	5.0	4.6
% aged over 60	18.1	21.9

Source: Census 2001

Accessibility Mapping

3.41 The accessibility mapping shows that, from Central ward, the most accessible locations are other parts of Ellesmere Port, locations on the eastern coast of the Wirral, and parts of Chester. Specific issues are:

- During weekday evening peak periods, there are frequent, direct bus services to a range of locations within Ellesmere Port, there are also a number of services to Chester City Centre and up into the Wirral, to destinations on the east coast, such as Bebington and Birkenhead. There are also some direct services to Neston, Frodsham and Flintshire.
- Most of the rest of the Wirral and Liverpool is accessible via one interchange, as are locations around Chester and into North Wales.
- On weekday nights, the range of accessible destinations reduces, but there are still frequent, direct bus services to Birkenhead, Frodsham, Chester, Neston and to other locations around Ellesmere Port.
- On Sundays, services do not contract to the same extent as in other wards, and there are still core, frequent services along the eastern coast of the Wirral and down to Chester. However, the range of destinations accessible via interchange is much more restricted, with many of the central and western parts of Wirral being difficult to reach.
- Hence, it is likely that, for evening and shift work, potential employees without access to a car would be restricted to employment locations within Ellesmere Port, in central Chester or along the eastern coast of the Wirral.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus or train (may require substantial walk from train)	Bus	Bus or train	Short Walk then Bus
Changes required weekday peak	0	0	0	0
Services required weekday peak	Bus - 447 <u>A</u> OR train <u>M</u>	3 <u>E</u>	447 <u>A</u>	1F
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0
Services required Sunday	411 <u>A</u> OR train <u>M</u>	411/412 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u> (but requires walk to bus station) OR train <u>M</u>	1F
Journey time Weekday (approx)	Bus - 30 min Train – 20 min	44 min	52 min	5 min

Journey Sunday (arriving 10am)	time (approx) before	Bus - 30 min (1 st bus arrives 10.19am) Train - 20 min	1 hour 36 min (due to long interval between services) (1 st bus arrives 10.17am)	38 min on bus (1 st bus arrives 10.12am) 32 min on train	5 min
Return weekday (approx)	Cost	Bus - £3.10 Train - £2.70	£3	£3.20	£2
Return cost Sunday (approx)		Bus - £2.60 Train - £2	£3.20	£2.80 on bus or train	£2

CCI – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M - Merseyrail

- All four employment areas are accessible on a weekday in that they can all be reached in under an hour with no changes being necessary. On a Sunday, there are no problems reaching Cheshire Oaks, Wirral International Business Park and Birkenhead Town Centre, but the journey time to Chester Business Park is rather extensive (1 hour 36 min). This is due to poor service connections leading to long waiting times in the changeover. However, the first bus does not arrive to Chester Business Park until 10.17am, this may be too late for some people starting work.
- Cheshire Oaks is the most accessible of the four employment sites (in terms of both journey time and fares).
- Fares to all four employment sites are quite reasonable and so should not act as a major deterrent to most potential employees.

Cloughton, Wirral

3.42 Cloughton is located on the Wirral, to the west of Birkenhead. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Cloughton	Wirral
Population	13,723	312,293
No. of Households	5,821	133,345
% of households with no car	26.2	30.3
% of economically active – employed	57.6	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	4.2	4.3
% aged Under 16	19.6	20.7
% aged 16-19	5.4	5.1
% aged over 60	21.2	23.4

Source: Census 2001

Accessibility Mapping

3.43 The accessibility mapping reveals that most of the Wirral is quite accessible by public transport from Claughton, but other parts of the MDA area are less easy to reach. As Claughton is a fairly large ward, two different starting points were used to generate isochrone maps: Birkenhead College and Noctorum. In general, a wider range of destinations can be reached more easily from Birkenhead College than from Noctorum. Specific issues include:

- During the weekday evening peak, most of the northern and eastern areas of the Wirral are accessible by direct, frequent bus services, as are parts of Ellesmere Port and Chester City Centre.
- Access to Merseyrail links, via interchange, also opens up most of Liverpool, and locations on the lines to Chester and Ellesmere Port.
- Other indirect bus services also provide limited access to Neston, areas around Chester and Ellesmere Port and into Flintshire.
- The pattern of services does not appear to change significantly at night on weekdays, but Sunday services are somewhat more limited, with major gaps in central and western parts of the Wirral and into Neston. Services to Flintshire are also much more patchy.
- In terms of journey times during the week, most of the Wirral and central Liverpool can be reached within an hour. However, bus journeys to Ellesmere Port and Chester take well over an hour, which is likely to be a significant disincentive to travelling to jobs outside of the Wirral or Liverpool.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	1	2	0	1
Services required weekday peak	437 <u>A</u> then 1/41/42 <u>F</u> Return - 447 <u>A</u>	119 <u>A</u> then 447 <u>A</u> then 1/x44/x55 <u>A</u> Return - 437 <u>A</u> instead of 119 <u>A</u>	437 <u>A</u>	447 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>F</u>
Changes required Sunday	2	2	1	1
Services required Sunday	137 <u>A</u> then 412 <u>A</u> Return - 412 <u>A</u> then 437 <u>A</u>	137 <u>A</u> then 412 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	137 <u>A</u> then 412 <u>A</u> outbound Return - 411 <u>A</u> then 437 <u>A</u>	137 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>F</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	42 min	1 hour 55 min	10 min outbound 20 min return	1 hour 11 min

Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving before 10am)	Outward 37 min Return 47 min	2 hours 7 min (1 st bus arrives 10.17am)	21 min outbound 31 min return	1 hour 28 min
Return Cost weekday (approx)	£4.30	£3.20	£2.40	£5.10
Return cost Sunday (approx)	£3.20	£3.20	£3.20	£4.90 estimate

CCI – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M – Merseyrail

- From Cloughton/Upton, bus is the transport mode used to access all four employment sites.
- In order to reach Wirral International Business Park, one change is required on a weekday and two on a Sunday. Journey time is reasonable, generally being 42 minutes but extending to 47 minutes on a Sunday. The return cost on a weekday is fairly high as two different bus operators are required, this may cause problems for some people.
- Birkenhead Town Centre is the most accessible of the three sites in that it has the shortest journey time and no changes are required on a weekday (one on a Sunday). Daily fares are reasonable and should not be a problem for most people.
- Chester Business Park is rather inaccessible in that two changes are required on weekdays and Sundays, with a journey time on a weekday of 1 hour 55 minutes and on a Sunday of 2 hours 7 minutes. It is unlikely that people would not be prepared to do such a journey to work every day.
- In order to reach Cheshire Oaks, one change is required on a weekday and a Sunday. Journey time is quite extensive, generally 1 hour 11 minutes on a weekday and nearly an hour and a half on a Sunday. Fares are very expensive on a daily basis as two operators are required, this could act as a disincentive for people considering employment at the site.

Egerton, Wirral

3.44 Egerton is located to the south-west of Birkenhead. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Egerton	Wirral
Population	13,392	312,293
No. of Households	5,716	133,345
% of households with no car	37.2	30.3
% of economically active – employed	52.8	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	5.3	4.3
% aged Under 16	20.6	20.7

% aged 16-19	5.4	5.1
% aged over 60	22.2	23.4

Source: Census 2001

Accessibility Mapping

3.45 The accessibility mapping exercise for Egerton was also carried out for two different starting points: Devonshire Park and Rock Ferry. Overall, it appears that a wider range of destinations are accessible within a shorter journey time from Rock Ferry than from Devonshire Park. Accessibility patterns are similar to those identified for Cloughton, although there is better access to Chester and Ellesmere Port from this ward. Key issues include:

- Service provision during the weekday evening peak period and late-evening off-peak period do not differ significantly. There is a core network of frequent, direct services providing access to northern and eastern areas of the Wirral, with some less frequent services to areas in west Wirral. There are also good bus and rail links to Ellesmere Port and Chester city centre.
- On weekdays, most of the Wirral and Liverpool City Centre is accessible within an hour's journey time. Ellesmere Port and Chester can also be reached in under ninety minutes, with central locations in both settlements taking half an hour or less to reach. From Rock Ferry, destinations on the north coast of the Wirral are also accessible in half an hour or less.
- Again, a wider range of destinations can be reached through interchange onto other services, providing links to Liverpool city centre, areas around Chester and Ellesmere Port, and parts of Flintshire.
- Sunday services are more limited, with a focus on the core network across the north and east of the Wirral and down to Ellesmere Port and Chester. Again, there are major gaps in the network on Sundays for links to south-west parts of the Wirral and areas to the south of Neston.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus or train (train may require a substantial walk)	Bus	Bus	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	0	1	0	0
Services required weekday peak	Train <u>M</u> Bus 447 <u>A</u> or 1/41/42 <u>F</u>	401 <u>A</u> then 1/x44/x55 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u> OR 447 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0

Services required Sunday	Train <u>M</u> Bus 41/42/118/240/411/412 <u>A</u>	411/412 <u>A</u> then the 1 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u>	1 <u>E</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	Train 2-4 min (depending on which stop) Bus – 5/6 min	1 hour 15 min	1 <u>F</u> – 8 min 447 <u>A</u> – 22 min	37 min
Journey time Sunday (arriving 10am) (approx) before	Train 2-4 min (depending on which stop) Bus – 5/6 min	1 hour 35 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.17am)	8 min (1 st bus arrives 10.12am)	37 min
Return Cost weekday (approx)	Train - between £1.05 & £1.35 Bus £2.40 <u>A</u> / £2.60 <u>F</u>	£3.20	1 <u>E</u> £2.60 447 <u>A</u> £2.80	£3
Return cost Sunday (approx)	Train - between £0.85 & £1.05 Bus £2.40 <u>A</u>	£3.20	£2.60	£2.80

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- Wirral International Business Park and Birkenhead Town Centre are very accessible from Egerton in that no changes are required and journey times are very short. The only problem being that the first bus to Birkenhead Town Centre does not arrive until 10.12am on a Sunday, which may cause problems for people trying to get to employment. Daily fares are generally acceptable, being under £3 at all times.
- Cheshire Oaks is accessible, with no changes required and a journey time of approximately 37 minutes. The daily fare is also fairly reasonable.
- Chester Business Park is less accessible as one change is required and journey times are around 1 hour 15 minutes on a weekday and one hour and 35 minutes on a Sunday. With such journey times, people may be prepared to travel for employment on a weekday, however on a Sunday the extra travel time may discourage some potential employees. On a Sunday the first bus does not arrive until 10.17am, this may cause problems for some people wanting to access employment. The daily fare is not too expensive and so journey times are the most likely factor when people are considering accessing employment at Chester Business Park.

Grange, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.46 Grange is located in Ellesmere Port, immediately to the west of Central ward. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Grange	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	5920	81672
No. of Households	2408	33167
% of households with no car	41.0	22.2
% of economically active – employed	50.7	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	5.8	3.2
% aged Under 16	25.1	20.9
% aged 16-19	4.9	4.6
% aged over 60	23.1	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.47 The accessibility mapping exercise for Grange was also carried out for two different starting points: the College and Princes Road. Key issues include:

- Public transport links from Grange are focused on a north-west corridor from Birkenhead and Liverpool through to Chester. In addition, there is a more dense network of services providing links within Ellesmere Port. There is also a frequent bus service to Neston.
- Access to a wider network is available via interchange, with this providing links across Liverpool, the Wirral, locations around Chester and into North Wales.
- The main difference between weekday evening peak period services and late-evening services is the frequency, with most services continuing to operate into the evening.
- However, on Sundays, there is a significant contraction of the network, with fewer services on the corridor from Birkenhead to Chester, and with a lack of services to western parts of the Wirral and areas between Chester and Neston.
- In terms of journey times, the most accessible locations are those on the Birkenhead-Chester corridor, and destinations along this corridor between New Ferry and Chester can be reached in 30 minutes or less from Princes Road during the evening peak period. From the College, only locations in Ellesmere Port are accessible within half an hour. These journey times do not change significantly on Sundays, although service frequencies are lower.
- Hence, in terms of access to employment opportunities, it is likely that residents in Grange would be most attracted to employment in Ellesmere Port and on the corridor between Liverpool and Chester. Employment sites to the west and east of this corridor are less accessible by public transport and therefore likely to be less attractive to potential employees.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.48 See above – Grange can be classed the same as Central in terms of fares and journey times to the major employers.

Liscard, Wirral

3.49 Liscard is located on the Wirral, to the north of Birkenhead. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Liscard	Wirral
Population	14,301	312,293
No. of Households	6,201	133,345
% of households with no car	37.4	30.3
% of economically active – employed	54.2	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	5.4	4.3
% aged Under 16	21.4	20.7
% aged 16-19	5.5	5.1
% aged over 60	21.4	25.4

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.50 The accessibility mapping exercise for Liscard was undertaken for three different starting points: Egremont Post Office, the Hospital and Liscard Central. Key issues include:

- During weekday evening peak periods, there are a range of direct bus services to locations in the north-east corner of the Wirral (e.g. Wallasey Hoylake and Birkenhead). In addition, there are direct services to Chester, serving destinations along the eastern edge of Wirral.
- By interchanging in key locations, a wider a network of services is accessible, including links to destinations across the Wirral, to Ellesmere Port, to locations around Chester and the wider Cheshire area, and towards North Wales. The wider public transport network across the Mersey into Liverpool is also accessible via interchange in Birkenhead or Liverpool City Centre.
- Services in the late evening are based on a similar network, with similar service frequencies.
- Again, services are much more limited on Sundays, particularly in western Wirral and between Neston and Chester. The core network along the eastern edge of the Wirral to Ellesmere Port and Chester continues to provide frequent Sunday services, however.
- In terms of journey times, these vary depending on the precise starting point within the Ward, and time of day and week. However, similar broad patterns can be seen, with destinations in the north-east corner of the Wirral

being accessible within a half-hour journey time. Within an hour, a wider range of locations can be reached, including most northern and eastern parts of the Wirral and large areas of central Liverpool. With journeys times of over an hour, destinations such as central Chester, Neston and Ellesmere Port can be reached by public transport.

- Therefore, it is likely that residents of Liscard without access to a car would be most likely to search for employment on the Wirral and in Liverpool, with employment sites in Chester, Ellesmere Port and further afield less likely to be attractive due to longer journey times.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	1	1	0	1
Services required weekday peak	410 <u>A</u> then 1/41/42 <u>E</u>	401 <u>A</u> then 1/x44/x55 <u>A</u>	401 <u>A</u>	410 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0
Services required Sunday	411 or 412 <u>A</u>	411/412 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	411/412 <u>A</u>	411/412 <u>A</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	59 min	2 hours	35 min	1 hr 23 min
Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving before 10am)	40 min	2 hours 5 min (1 st bus arrives 10.17am)	25 min	1 hr 25 min
Return weekday (approx) Cost	£5.40	£3.20	£2.80	£5.80
Return Sunday (approx) cost	£3.20	£3.20	£2.80	£2.60

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- From New Brighton/Liscard, Birkenhead Town Centre is the most accessible of the three employment sites due to the fact that no changes are required, journey times are shortest and fares are lowest.
- Wirral International Business Park can be reached within an hour and only one change is required on a weekday (none on a Sunday). The daily cost however, is very expensive on a weekday (£5.40) due to the fact that services operated by two different bus operators are required. This may cause problems for people.
- Cheshire Oaks can be reached, but it takes approximately 1 hour and 25 minutes and one change is required on a weekday (none on a Sunday).

The daily cost is very expensive on a weekday (£5.80) as two bus operators are required. This may be a problem for some people.

- To access Chester Business Park, one change is required and journey costs are fairly reasonable (£3.20) considering the distance. However, journey times are very long (2 hours) and so very few people are likely to be prepared to seek employment at the Business Park.

Neston, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.51 Neston is located immediately to the south-west of the Wirral, to the west of Ellesmere Port and to the north of the Welsh border. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Neston	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	3521	81672
No. of Households	1555	33167
% of households with no car	32.0	22.2
% of economically active – employed	54.7	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	3.8	3.2
% aged Under 16	19.1	20.9
% aged 16-19	4.9	4.6
% aged over 60	26.9	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.52 The isochrone mapping exercise for Neston was carried out from two different starting points: the Industrial Park and the Post Office. Key issues include:

- Public transport links from Neston are focused on services to the Wirral (and Birkenhead and Liverpool, in particular) and Ellesmere Port, with some limited services to Chester during the week. There are also rail links from Neston, which is on the Bidston to Wrexham line, and direct bus services to Arroe Park Hospital.
- By interchanging, it is possible to gain access to a wider range of services, providing links to other locations on the Wirral, across Liverpool, around Ellesmere Port and Chester, into Cheshire and towards North Wales.
- Service provision does not vary greatly from the evening peak period to the later evening off-peak period, but there is a significant contraction of services on Sundays, with only limited direct access to Birkenhead and Arroe Park Hospital. Access to areas to the south and east of Neston is extremely difficult on Sundays, particularly to Ellesmere Port, Chester and North Wales.
- In terms of journey times, the isochrone maps for the Industrial Park clearly highlights public transport access problems from parts of Neston, with no public transport services serving this employment site. Accessibility is better

from Neston Post Office, but in a half hour journey time, even during peak periods, it is only possible access a relatively limited area around Neston itself. Coverage of the rest of the study area is patchy, with access to parts of the Wirral and Ellesmere Port possible in journeys of an hour or less. Journeys to Chester and Birkenhead, however, take over an hour, which is likely to be a significant disincentive to travel to these locations for employment. On Sundays, journeys from the post office in Neston are also limited, with patchy services to areas within the Wirral, and some very limited access via rail links to Chester and Connah's quay.

- It therefore appears that, for those without access to a car living in Neston, the most accessible employment locations will be based in the Wirral or in Ellesmere Port. Access to weekend shift work for those in Neston will be particularly difficult, thereby further limiting employment opportunities.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	1	1	0	1
Services required weekday peak	487 and 419 <u>A</u> Return - 84 <u>AC</u> and 487 <u>A</u>	22A <u>E</u> then 1/x44/x55 <u>A</u>	Outbound-488 <u>A</u> Return- 487 <u>A</u>	59 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	1 (including a 700m walk)	-	0	-
Services required Sunday	486 and 118 <u>A</u>	No service - would have to go to Birkenhead first - impractical - would take over 2 hours	Outbound-486 <u>A</u> Return - 489 <u>A</u>	No services available on a Sunday
Journey time Weekday (approx)	27 min return is 31min	50 min	39 min	55 min
Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving before 10am)	39 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.10am)	-	36 min	-
Return Cost weekday (approx)	£3.20	£4.30	£3.20	£5.20
Return cost Sunday (approx)	£3.20	-	£3.20	-

CCI - Chester City Transport A - Arriva E - First M - Merseyrail AC - Avon Coaches

- From Neston, bus is the transport mode used to access all four employment sites.
- Birkenhead Town Centre is the most accessible of the three sites in that no changes are required and journey times and travel costs are fairly reasonable. Wirral International Business Park is quite easily accessed in that one change is required, fares are reasonable and journey times are fairly short. However, the changeover on a Sunday requires a 700metre walk – this may be discouraging to some people.
- On a weekday, Chester Business Park is accessible. One change is required and a journey time of 50 minutes can be classed as acceptable. However, due to the fact that two bus operators are required the fares are rather expensive which some people may find a problem.
- On a weekday, Cheshire Oaks is accessible; it can be reached in just under an hour with one changeover being required. However, daily costs are expensive (£5.20) as two bus operators are required. This, along with a fairly extensive journey time and a changeover required may act as a disincentive for people to work there.
- There is no service from Neston to Chester or Cheshire Oaks on a Sunday. People would have to travel to Birkenhead first, this would be very impractical and would take over two hours.

New Brighton, Wirral

3.53 New Brighton is located on the north-east tip of the Wirral. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	New Brighton	Wirral
Population	14,450	312,293
No. of Households	6,379	133,345
% of households with no car	31.6	30.3
% of economically active – employed	57.0	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	5.0	4.3
% aged Under 16	18.9	20.7
% aged 16-19	4.8	5.1
% aged over 60	22.9	23.4

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.54 The accessibility mapping exercise for New Brighton was undertaken from the bus station. Key issues include:

- As in Liscard, direct services from New Brighton are concentrated in the north-east corner of the Wirral, with direct links also available to Liverpool and down to Chester, via Ellesmere Port.

- Access to the wider network is possible by interchanging. This allows journeys to be made to areas across Liverpool, the Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester, into North Wales and into areas in Cheshire to the east of Chester.
- Service provision from the evening weekday peak periods to late evenings improves slightly, but again, services are much more limited on Sundays, with poor access to western parts of the Wirral and fewer services to Flintshire.
- The journey time isochrone maps are fairly similar for all three time periods. These show good access to areas immediately surrounding New Brighton and into Liverpool, with journey times of half an hour or less. Within an hour or less, most of north-east Wirral and central Liverpool can be reached. With journey times of over an hour, most of Merseyside, Ellesmere Port and Chester are accessible.
- Thus, for residents of New Brighton, it is likely that employment areas within Merseyside will be most attractive due to reasonable levels of public transport accessibility.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.55 See above - New Brighton can be classed as the same as Liscard in terms of fares and journey times to the major employers.

Pooltown, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.56 Pooltown is located to the south of Grange ward in Ellesmere Port. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Pooltown	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	4023	81672
No. of Households	1591	33167
% of households with no car	28.9	22.2
% of economically active – employed	57.1	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	4.0	3.2
% aged Under 16	21.8	20.9
% aged 16-19	5.6	4.6
% aged over 60	22.8	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.57 The accessibility mapping exercise for Pooltown was carried out for two different starting points: Whitby Hospital and Whitby Post Office. Key accessibility characteristics include:

- Direct and frequent public transport links are focused on the Birkenhead to Chester north-south corridor, with additional links also available to locations within Ellesmere Port and to Neston.
- Again, access to the wider network is available through interchange.
- The network does not change significantly from the pm peak period to the later evening period during the week.
- On Sundays, the main difference is the lack of services to west Wirral, Neston and parts of Flintshire.
- In terms of journey times, a fairly large area around Ellesmere Port can be reached within 30 minutes. The wider isochrones highlight the fact that accessibility is limited to key corridors, with a focus on links up the eastern coast of the Wirral, to Neston, to Chester and towards Helsby in the east. Thus, most of Chester and Neston can be reached with journey times of 31 to 60 minutes, whilst wider links to Birkenhead and Liverpool take over an hour.
- Thus, job seekers reliant on public transport are likely to focus on employment opportunities within Ellesmere Port and into south-east Wirral, Chester and Neston (although the latter is difficult to reach on Sundays).

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.58 See above – Pooltown can be classed the same as Central in terms of fares and journey times to the major employers.

Rivacre, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.59 Rivacre is located in Ellesmere Port, immediately to the east of Grange and Pooltown. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Rivacre	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	4109	81672
No. of Households	1713	33167
% of households with no car	33.0	22.2
% of economically active – employed	56.6	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	4.3	3.2
% aged Under 16	25.0	20.9
% aged 16-19	3.8	4.6
% aged over 60	24.4	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.60 The accessibility mapping exercise for Rivacre was carried out from Little Sutton. Key issues include:

- Rivacre enjoys direct services to Birkenhead, Liverpool, Chester, Neston and Flintshire during the early evening peak, with interchanges available at Birkenhead and Chester.
- Services remain the same in the late evening peak, apart from the direct service to Flintshire, which stops running.
- Sunday services predominantly serve the eastern side of the Wirral.
- Within a 30-minute journey time, most of Ellesmere Port can be reached, as can locations in southeast Wirral, up to Bebington. It is also possible to travel into Liverpool and Chester on the Merseyrail services within half an hour.
- Other locations accessible from Rivacre, include northern and eastern parts of the Wirral, Neston and areas in and around Chester. Access to destinations towards Frodsham is also possible, with journey times of over an hour. It is also possible to link into public transport services from Liverpool City Centre, giving access to a wider range of destinations in Merseyside.
- Journey time isochrones are similar for all three time periods, although on Sundays, links to western areas of the Wirral, Neston and Flintshire are extremely poor or non-existent.
- In terms of the accessibility of potential employment locations, it is likely that job seekers without access to a car would favour opportunities in and around Ellesmere Port, in south-east Wirral, in Chester town centre and in Liverpool City Centre.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.61 See above – Rivacre can be classed the same as Central in terms of fares and journey times to the major employers.

Stanlow & Wolverham, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.62 Stanlow & Wolverham is located immediately to the east of Ellesmere Port, and includes the oil refineries on the River Mersey. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Stanlow & Wolverham	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	5475	81672
No. of Households	2374	33167
% of households with no car	39.3	22.2
% of economically active – employed	53.1	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	5.5	3.2
% aged Under 16	24.1	20.9
% aged 16-19	4.5	4.6
% aged over 60	21.2	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.63 The isochrone mapping exercise for Stanlow & Wolverham was carried out from the Oil Refinery. Key issues include:

- There is a lack of public transport from this ward, although some direct routes pass through the southwest and southeast of the ward for a short time. These routes serve locations such as Birkenhead, Chester and Frodsham, although the Frodsham service does not run on Sundays. Chester and Birkenhead also act as interchanges for other destinations.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus or train (train may require substantial walk)	Bus	Bus or train	Short walk then Bus
Changes required weekday peak	0	1	0	0
Services required weekday peak	1 <u>E</u> OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	1 <u>E</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	447 <u>A</u> (but have to walk to bus station) OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port (bit of a walk)	1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0
Services required Sunday	1 <u>E</u> OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	412 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u> (but have to walk to bus station) OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port (bit of a walk)	1 <u>E</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	Bus - 35 min Train – 20 min	40 min	Bus - 52 min Train – 32 min	3-4 min
Journey time Sunday (approx) (arriving before 10am)	Bus - 35 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.04am)	58 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.17am)	Bus – 38 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.12am)	3-4 min

£Return Cost weekday (approx)	Bus - £3 Train - £2.70	£4.30	Bus - £3.20 Train - £3.30	£2
Return cost Sunday (approx)	Bus - £3 Train - £2	£3.20	£2.80 on train or bus	£2

CCI – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M – Merseyrail AC – Avon Coaches

- All four employment sites can be accessed within an hour.
- Cheshire Oaks is the most accessible of all four employment sites on both a weekday and a Sunday as it can be reached within a matter of minutes by bus with no changeover necessary. However, a short walk may be required initially to reach the bus stop. Fares are very reasonable (£2 return).
- There are direct public transport links available to Wirral International Business Park. Access by train is quicker and cheaper than by bus but a substantial walk may be required depending on the location within the Business Park. As the bus passes the site more directly, although it is more expensive this may be the preferred mode of travel for some people.
- Birkenhead Town Centre is very accessible as no changes are required. People have the option of travelling by bus or train. Travelling by bus requires a walk to the bus station. The bus station is closer than the rail station, the train journey is quicker but both train and bus are similar in daily cost. Therefore it will depend on people's personal preference as to what mode they use.
- Access to Chester Business Park requires one change. The journey time is reasonable on a weekday (40 minutes) but quite long on a Sunday (58 minutes). The daily journey cost on a weekday is quite expensive as two bus operators are required – this may cause difficulty for some people. The first bus does not arrive until 10.17am on a Sunday which may be a problem for people wanting to access employment.

Upton, Wirral

3.64 Upton is located in the north of the Wirral, to the west of Claughton. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Upton	Wirral
Population	15,731	312,293
No. of Households	6,741	133,345
% of households with no car	32.2	30.3
% of economically active – employed	53.8	55.4
% of economically active – unemployed	4.4	4.3
% aged Under 16	20.5	20.7

% aged 16-19	4.8	5.1
% aged over 60	24.5	22.4

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.65 The accessibility mapping exercise for Upton was undertaken from the leisure centre, the superstore and from the Wirral Business Park.

- There are many direct services operating through Upton, connecting with many parts of the Wirral, Liverpool and Chester; which can then act as interchanges themselves.
- Sunday services serve all the same areas except Heswall and Chester.
- Upton's central location makes it ideal for accessing most of the Wirral, with large areas of central Wirral being within a 30-minute journey time of the Ward, and most of the rest of the Borough and Neston can be reached within an hour. A slightly wider area can be easily accessed from the business park than from the superstore, with the leisure centre having the fewest public transport services, but all are reasonably well served.
- Journeys times of over an hour are necessary to reach destinations outside of the Wirral, but it is possible to access parts of Ellesmere Port, Chester and Liverpool from Upton.
- Again, there are no Sunday services between Neston and Chester, thereby reducing accessibility to areas to the south and west of Wirral.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

3.66 See above – Upton can be classed the same as Claughton in terms of fares and journey times to the major employers.

Westminster, Ellesmere Port & Neston

3.67 Westminster is located in Ellesmere Port, immediately to the north of Grange and Central. Its demographic characteristics are as follows:

Characteristic	Westminster	Ellesmere Port & Neston
Population	3465	81672
No. of Households	1623	33167
% of households with no car	43.3	22.2
% of economically active – employed	52.4	60.7
% of economically active – unemployed	6.3	3.2
% aged Under 16	22.4	20.9
% aged 16-19	4.5	4.6
% aged over 60	21.8	21.9

Source: Census 2001, ONS

Accessibility Mapping

3.68 The accessibility mapping exercise for Westminster was carried out from the Industrial Estate. Key issues include:

- Public transport links to this ward are very limited, with direct links only in place to Chester and towards Connah's Quay and Flintshire. The wider network can be accessed via interchange in Ellesmere Port or Chester, but this only provides access to a limited range of services.
- In the late evenings and on Sundays, services are particularly poor, with no direct services towards Connah's Quay. However, on Sundays it is possible to get a direct bus service along the east coast of the Wirral toward Birkenhead.
- From the Industrial Estate, there are no public transport services within a reasonable walk distance and therefore the journey time isochrones are limited to destinations that can be reached on foot.

Fares & Journey Times to Major Employment Sites

	Wirral Business Park	Chester Business Park	Birkenhead Town Centre	Cheshire Oaks
Transport Mode	Bus or train (may require a bit of a walk from train)	Bus	Bus or train	Bus
Changes required weekday peak	0	0	0	1
Services required weekday peak	447 <u>A</u> OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	3 <u>E</u>	447 <u>A</u> OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	447 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>E</u>
Changes required Sunday	0	1	0	0
Services required Sunday	412 <u>A</u> OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	411/412 <u>A</u> then 1 <u>A</u>	1 <u>E</u> (but have to walk to bus station) OR Train <u>M</u> from Ellesmere Port	412 <u>A</u>
Journey time Weekday (approx)	Bus - 30 min Train - 20 min	48 min	Bus - 52 min Train - 32 min	20 min
Journey time Sunday (arriving 10am) (approx) before	Bus - 30 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.19am)	1 hour 6 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.17am)	Bus - 38 min (1 st bus arrives at 10.12am)	5 min

£Return weekday (approx)	Bus - £3.10 Train - £2.70	£3	Bus - £3.20 Train - £3.30	£3.20 estimate
Return cost Sunday (approx)	Bus -£2.60 Train - £2	£3.20	£2.80 on train or bus	£1.90 estimate

CCI – Chester City Transport A – Arriva E – First M – Merseyrail AC – Avon Coaches

- All four employment sites can be accessed at a reasonable daily cost (£3.30 or less). Wirral International Business Park and Birkenhead Town Centre are more accessible in that no changes are required, but Cheshire Oaks is most accessible in terms of journey time.
- When travelling to Wirral International Business Park, bus and train are both an option. The train is quicker and cheaper but a significant walk may be required depending on the desired location within the Business Park. The bus passes the site more directly. It will therefore depend on people’s personal preference as to which mode they use. On a Sunday, the first bus does not arrive until 10.19am and so the train would be the preferred option if accessing employment that commenced before 10am.
- When travelling to Birkenhead Town Centre, again train and bus are both an option. The train is quicker and of similar daily cost to the bus and so is likely to be the preferred option. On a Sunday the first bus does not arrive until 10.12am, and a walk to the bus station is required, thus making the train a more attractive option (especially if need to access employment before 10am).
- When travelling to Chester Business Park by bus no changes are required on a weekday and one on a Sunday. The journey time is acceptable throughout the week (48 minutes), but takes over an hour on a Sunday which may be a disincentive to people seeking employment. Also, the fact that the first bus does not arrive until 10.17am on a Sunday may be problematic for people.
- When travelling to Cheshire Oaks one change is required on a weekday and none on a Sunday. Journey times are very short (20 minutes on a weekday and 5 minutes on a Sunday) and fares are reasonable.

Employment Site Analysis

3.69 In addition to the ward level analysis of accessibility carried out above, an assessment of links to several employment centres was also undertaken. This was based on the same three time periods as the ward analysis, and generated both route frequency mapping and isochrone mapping. An analysis is provided below:

Birkenhead Town Centre

- Birkenhead town centre is served by direct, frequent bus routes from across the Wirral. Direct links are also available from parts of Ellesmere Port, Neston and Chester. In addition, access to Birkenhead is possible from a wider range of locations, via interchange. These include most of Liverpool, Sefton and Formby, areas around Chester and parts of Flintshire.

- Similar levels of service provision and network coverage are available in the evening peak period and into the later evenings on weekdays. On Sundays, the network of direct services to Birkenhead remains similar to weekday provision, but the wider network of services requiring interchange is more limited (particularly in south-west Wirral, between Neston and Chester and into Flintshire).
- Thus, the main gaps in the network are on Sundays from the wider sub-region outside of Merseyside.

Cheshire Oaks

- The number of direct services to Cheshire Oaks is far more limited. The main links are via the north-south corridor from Liverpool and Birkenhead through to Ellesmere Port and Chester via the A41 along the eastern edge of the Wirral. There are also a few direct services from Frodsham to Cheshire Oaks.
- It is also possible to access the wider network through interchange. This allows access from most of Merseyside, from areas around Chester and from parts of Flintshire.
- On weekday evenings (18:00-24:00) the frequency of direct services from Liverpool, Chester and Frodsham increases, with 8 to 13 services an hour.
- On Sundays, however, public transport access to Cheshire Oaks is much more limited. There are still frequent direct services from Liverpool, Chester and Ellesmere Port but there are no east-west direct services, and the wider network is much more restricted. Particular gaps in the network include links to the east towards Frodsham and links to the west, towards Neston, Heswall and Flintshire.
- Thus, travelling to Cheshire Oaks by public transport on a Sunday is only possible from certain locations. This potentially limits it as a place of employment or as a shopping destination for people living within the MDA area.

Chester

- Chester town centre is accessible by public transport from a wide range of destinations on weekdays. There are a large number of direct bus and rail services into the city centre from locations such as Ellesmere Port, Birkenhead, Heswall, Neston, Flint, Wrexham, Nantwich, Northwich and Frodsham.
- In addition to these direct links, access is also possible from across most of Merseyside, via interchange.
- The network does not change significantly from the evening peak period into the late evening period up to 24:00, although service frequency reduces slightly on certain routes.
- On Sundays, there is still a core network of frequent direct services into Chester City Centre, from key centres such as Liverpool, Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Nantwich, Buckley and Flint. However, a number of the weekday services do not operate on Sundays e.g. there are no direct bus links from Neston, Heswall, Wrexham and from many of the smaller Cheshire villages around Chester. Thus, for those living away for the core

networks, travel by public transport into Chester on Sundays is likely to be very difficult.

Chester Business Park

- There are very few direct bus routes serving Chester Business Park. Services operate from Chester city centre on a regular basis on weekdays and on Sundays. During the weekday evening peak period, there are also some direct services from Ellesmere Port. It is also known that some site occupiers provide their own bus services for employees travelling to work from areas not served by public transport.
- From Chester city centre, however, a wide range of public transport services can be accessed, as outlined above.
- In the late evenings, there are not direct services to Ellesmere Port, but services from Chester city centre extend to Wrexham in the south.
- On Sundays, there are only direct links from Chester city centre, and the wider network is much more limited (see above). Thus, for those required to work on a Sunday, access to Chester Business Park by public transport is likely to be more difficult.

Deeside Industrial Park

- Deeside Industrial Park is particularly difficult to reach by public transport on any day of the week. In the weekday evening peak period, there are direct bus links only to Ellesmere Port and Mold. These provide links into a very limited wider network of services, allowing access to the public transport corridor between Liverpool/Birkenhead, Ellesmere Port and Chester. Access to services to Neston is also possible via interchange.
- However, these mainstream public transport services are supplemented by the Deeside Shuttle Bus service, which offers more flexible travel opportunities for employees living in the Connah's Quay, Shotton and Queensferry area.
- In the late evenings, service provision is slightly different, with direct services only operating towards Bebington and Birkenhead to the north-east of the site.
- On Sundays, there are no direct public transport services from Deeside Industrial Park although, again, the Deeside Shuttle Bus does provide flexible travel opportunities from certain locations.
- Thus, it can be seen that weekend public transport access to Deeside Industrial Park is a particular problem, although access is not much better during the week. The Deeside Shuttle Bus is already helping to address these problems, however, and further analysis of the effectiveness of this service is provided elsewhere within this report.

Liverpool City Centre

- Liverpool City Centre is extremely well served by public transport. There is a dense network of frequent and direct bus and rail services from across Merseyside and beyond, throughout the week.
- In terms of access from the MDA study area, there are some direct links (e.g. from Chester, Ellesmere Port, Bebington, Birkenhead, Neston, Heswall,

Hoylake and Wallasey), and a wider a range of locations can access Liverpool City Centre via interchange.

- On Sundays, access from the MDA study area is slightly more restricted, with gaps in the network from south-west Wirral, from areas to the south of Neston and areas toward Flintshire.
- However, on the whole, access to Liverpool city centre by public transport is very good throughout the week, and therefore offers good employment, shopping, education and leisure opportunities to those without access to a car.

Vauxhall Motors, Ellesmere Port

- Public transport access to the Vauxhall Motors site in Ellesmere Port is very limited. During the week, there is only one direct bus route that comes within walking distance of the site. This is a local service which links other parts of Ellesmere Port.
- There are other services which can be reached through interchange. These provide links to Chester, east Wirral (Bebington and Birkenhead), Liverpool and Neston.
- On Sundays, there are no public transport services operating within a reasonable walking distance of the site.
- Such poor public transport access to the Vauxhall Motors site is likely to deter potential employees that do not have access to a car, particularly those that are required to work on Sundays. There are a number of other employment sites in the vicinity of Vauxhall Motors that are likely to experience similar problems.

Wirral International Business Park, Bromborough

- Wirral International Business Park is reasonably well-served by public transport. It is close to the Bromborough Merseyrail station, which allows access to regular rail services to Ellesmere Port, Chester, Birkenhead and Liverpool. It is also close to a number of bus routes, providing direct links to a range of locations across the Wirral. Links from settlements to the south and west are somewhat more limited, and tend to require interchange onto other services.
- Service provision does not alter greatly between the weekday pm peak period and later evening services and, in fact, service frequencies appear to be higher on the core network at night.
- On Sundays, however, there is a significant contraction of the network, particularly in terms of interchange opportunities. Thus, direct access to locations across the Wirral does not alter significantly, but there are more limited travel opportunities to areas to the south of Neston.
- Thus, Wirral International Business Park is likely to attract employees without access to a car from across the Wirral, and perhaps from Ellesmere Port and Chester. However, access from other areas to the south and west of the Park is less easy, particularly on Sundays, which may deter potential employees.

3.70 Thus, as expected, public transport access is best to employment opportunities within town and city centres (e.g. Liverpool City Centre, Birkenhead and Chester City Centre), but is much more difficult to out-of-town employment locations. These locations tend to be particularly poorly served on Sundays. The most difficult to reach employment sites were Deeside Industrial Park and Vauxhall Motors in Ellesmere Port, both of which are in relatively isolated locations away from major centres of population. They are therefore particularly difficult to serve efficiently by conventional, commercial bus services.

4 Key Issues for Consideration in Stage 2

Introduction

- 4.1 Prior to developing recommendations, it is important to summarise the key issues identified within this first stage. This pulls together the work undertaken by Simpson Carpenter, Regeneris and JMP and will help to inform the development of recommendations in Stage 2.

Socio-Economic Characteristics

- Chester is a net importer of labour and Wirral is a net exporter of labour. Also significant flows of labour from MDA area into Flintshire.
- High economic activity rate across the MDA (79.4%, which is higher than regional and national rates), but c. 70,000 economically inactive people.
- Marked increase in the number of residents in employment in the MDA area (increased by 15,000 to 240,000 from 2001 to 2003).
- Unemployment rates much higher in Wirral (3.5%) than Ellesmere Port & Neston (1.8%) and Chester (1.6%).
- May be potential to draw some economically inactive people (e.g. those with caring responsibilities or health/mobility problems) into the labour market if appropriate employment opportunities in suitable locations were provided.
- Proportion of working age population holding higher-level qualifications is high in MDA area compared to national and regional averages.
- An overall decrease in total employment in MDA area between 1998 and 2001 (1.1% decline). But variation between districts, with Wirral experiencing a decline in employment of 6.3% but Chester had an increase of 7.3%. (employment in Ellesmere Port & Neston declined marginally by 0.7%). Employment also grew in Flintshire by 5.7%.
- Employment loss in Wirral has been across a range of sectors and locations; employment growth in Chester has been mainly in the service sector; and growth in Flintshire has primarily been in Manufacturing and Retail/Wholesale.

Public Transport Network Analysis

- 4.2 Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the key public transport issues in each of the target wards:

Table 4.1 Public Transport Accessibility Issues, By Ward

District	Target Ward	Key Issues
Chester	Blacon Hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services only available to locations in Chester, Neston and west Wirral – have to interchange to access rest of network • More limited network and frequency in evenings, and extremely limited network on Sundays. • Access to employment opportunities on the Wirral and in Flintshire difficult, particularly in evenings and on Sundays. • Cross-boundary travel relatively expensive
Chester	Blacon Lodge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services only to locations in Chester and Flintshire – have to interchange to access the rest of the network. • More limited network and frequency in evenings, and extremely limited on Sundays. • Access to employment opportunities on the Wirral is difficult, with long journey times. On Sundays, most locations outside Chester are very difficult, with no access to Neston and western and central parts of Wirral. • Cross-boundary travel relatively expensive.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Central	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services to locations in Ellesmere Port, Birkenhead, Chester city centre, east Wirral with less frequent services to Neston, Flintshire and Frodsham – have to interchange to access rest of network. • More limited service network in the evenings and on Sundays – services concentrated along east coast of the Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester City Centre. • Access to out of town employment sites, such as Chester Business Park very difficult on Sundays.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Grange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services to locations in Ellesmere Port, Birkenhead, Chester city centre, east Wirral and Neston – have to interchange to access rest of network. • Less frequent services in evenings and significant contraction of network on Sundays – services concentrated along east coast of Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester City Centre. • Access to out of town employment sites, such as Chester Business Park very difficult on Sundays.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Neston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport links focused on services the Wirral and Ellesmere Port – some limited direct services to Chester during weekday peak hours. Have to interchange to access rest of network. • Significant contraction of services on Sundays – only Arrowe Park Hospital and Birkenhead are directly accessible by bus. • Some employment locations are impossible to reach by public transport on Sundays (e.g. Chester Business Park)
Ellesmere Port &	Pooltown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct links to locations in Ellesmere Port, east Wirral, Liverpool and Chester. Have to interchange to access rest

Neston		<p>of network.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These services operate on Sundays, but connecting services to west Wirral, Neston and Flintshire are limited or non-existent. • Access to out of town employment sites, such as Chester Business Park very difficult on Sundays.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Rivacre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct links to locations in Ellesmere Port, east Wirral, Liverpool, Chester, Neston and Flintshire. Have to interchange to access rest of network. • Sunday services are much more limited, particularly to western areas of Wirral, Neston and Flintshire. • Access to out of town employment sites, such as Chester Business Park very difficult on Sundays.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Stanlow & Wolverham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of this ward is extremely poorly served by public transport – there are only bus services from the south-west corner of the ward and rail services from Ellesmere Port station. • Direct public transport links are available along the east coast of the Wirral to Birkenhead and Liverpool, to other parts of Ellesmere Port and to Chester and Frodsham. Have to interchange to access rest of network. • The wider network is much more limited on Sundays, although there are still frequent services on the Liverpool-east Wirral-Chester corridor. • Public transport access to the oil refinery is non-existent.
Ellesmere Port & Neston	Westminster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport links very limited – direct services only to Chester and North Wales on weekdays. • On Sundays, access is possible up the east coast of Wirral, but the wider network accessible via interchange is very limited. • From the Industrial Estate in Westminster, no public transport services are available within a reasonable walk distance.
Wirral	Bromborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct public transport services provide links across the Wirral, to Liverpool, to Ellesmere Port and to Chester City Centre. • On Sundays, the wider network contracts, and travel is difficult to areas such as Neston, Frodsham and Flintshire.
Wirral	Claughton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct public transport services provide links across most of the Wirral, into Liverpool and down the east coast of the Wirral to Ellesmere Port and Chester. • Access to the wider network is possible via interchange. • Evening services are similar to the weekday pm peak, but Sunday services are more limited (particularly in central and western Wirral and towards Neston). • Journey times to some MDA employment sites (such as Chester Business Park) are extremely long.
Wirral	Egerton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services to locations across the Wirral, to Ellesmere Port and to Chester. • Access to the wider network is possible via interchange.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday services are more limited – focus on north and eastern Wirral, Ellesmere Port and Chester. • Journey times to some MDA employment sites (such as Chester Business Park) are long.
Wirral	Liscard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services across north-east and east Wirral, and to Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and Chester. The rest of the network is accessible via interchange. • On Sundays, the wider network contracts significantly, with limited access to central and western Wirral and Neston. • Access to some MDA employment sites (such as Chester Business Park) is very difficult.
Wirral	New Brighton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services across north-east and east Wirral, and to Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and Chester. The rest of the network is accessible via interchange. • More limited network on Sundays. • Access to some MDA employment sites (such as Chester Business Park) is very difficult.
Wirral	Upton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct services across most of the Wirral and to Liverpool, Ellesmere Port and Chester. • Sunday services are much more limited, with access limited mainly to locations within the Wirral.

4.3 In terms of access to key employment sites, the town/city centre locations (e.g. Birkenhead, Liverpool, Chester City Centre) were by far the easiest to reach by public transport from across the MDA study area.

4.4 A number of the out-of-town employment sites were extremely difficult, or impossible to reach by public transport, including Deeside Industrial Estate and Vauxhall Motors. At other out-of-town locations, efforts have been made to improve accessibility (e.g. Chester Business Park, Cheshire Oaks and Wirral International Business Park) but at certain times of day and week, they can still be difficult to reach, often requiring long journey times or interchange. Accessibility tends to be particularly poor on Sundays, when there is a significant contraction of much of the public transport network.

The Labour Market

- Recent tightening of labour market across MDA area, with employment increasing significantly.
- Ellesmere Port & Neston and Chester reaching full employment. More “job-ready” residents in Wirral.
- More employability difficulties in target wards.
- Large pools of economically inactive people (e.g. people with caring responsibilities) – may be encouraged to return to work.
- Long-term unemployment and inactivity may be more difficult to address.
- Those that are out of work are also less likely to participate in learning.
- High proportion of residents in target wards hold no formal qualifications.

Employment Growth

- Recent employment growth focused on service sector – primarily in Chester. Decline in manufacturing and industrial employment. Unwillingness of residents to move between sectors.
- Shortage of employment opportunities in the Wirral.
- Some opportunities to create new employment of similar type to lost employment and geographically closer to unemployed residents.
- A number of potential employment sites across MDA area that could lead to significant employment creation.
- Significant future employment opportunities in Flintshire.

Skills Match

- Potential employment opportunities likely to include a proportion of “entry-level” vacancies. However, poor qualifications of target ward residents likely to disadvantage them.
- Unemployed/inactive residents may lack “softer” employability assets and recent employment track records.
- Many other barriers to employment in addition to location of employment opportunities.
- Good training provision across MDA area.

Accessibility of Employment Opportunities

- Significant proportion of future employment growth likely to be in peripheral locations – poor accessibility, particularly by public transport.
- Public transport accessibility likely to be one of a number of factors that may deter potential employees.