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Lorraine O'Donnell
Chief Executive
Cheshire East Council
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Middlewich Road
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Wednesday 8th June 2022

Dear Ms O'Donnell,

NORTH WEST CREWE PACKAGE

We write as very concerned Councillors and members of the Audit and Governance Committee regarding the 80-week road closures of roads in the north-west of Crewe. These closures block important ambulance routes, add delays to residents' commutes, and cause disruption throughout Crewe and Nantwich.

The Labour-Independent run Council have said:

Between May 2022 and March 2023, various full and partial closures will be needed on A530 Middlewich Road between junctions at Pym's Lane and Flowers Lane.

These will be sequenced to ensure residential, business, and hospital access is maintained.

Access to the household waste recycling centre will be maintained throughout the works. For the initial closure period, access can only be gained from the south Coppenhall Roundabout.

We are pleased that the Council have made commitments to monitoring the flow of traffic during the roadworks, but these commitments do not go far enough, and we are not convinced by the initial plans set out.

We have severe concerns about the closure of this road and the negative impacts it will have on local taxpayers' lives. I am sure you will have seen the local ([Cheshire Live](#), Sunday 29th May 2022) and national coverage ([The Sun](#), Sunday 6th June 2022) and the attention this story is attracting from concerned members of the public.

As a local group of Councillors, we drove the diversion route to Leighton Hospital from the Alvaston Roundabout and are concerned that:

- The diversion signs assume that all road users are familiar with the area, so members of the public visiting Leighton Hospital may get lost and miss their critical medical appointments.
- The diversion signs are contradictory and confusing, which could cause traffic accidents and danger on the roads.

- The diversion signs take little or no account of a family member trying to access Accident and Emergency with a poorly loved one; it is essential to note that not all emergencies access our hospital via ambulance.

At the Audit & Governance Committee held on 29th May 2022, the Interim Head of Highways was unable to respond to questions as to the impact of the related A530 closure, especially when asked who was responsible for this pointlessly extended road closure.

We want to ask you:

- Who is responsible for the project?
- Who decided that 80 weeks would be in the interest of local residents?
- How was the decision made?
- Where does the buck stop?

As a matter of urgency, we would like you to address the lack of response from Cheshire East Council to both local and national coverage relating to the impact on journey times for Leighton Hospital Staff and patients, Cheshire East Waste Operatives, Road Users and Residents.

The interim Head of Highways was absolutely clear on how he was working to change the 'recent culture of his team' and how work was underway 'to better communicate' via a welcome package of engagement with both Cheshire East and Town and Parish Councillors to collate, 'Lessons Learnt on the back of the disastrous winter gritting cuts and highway top up payment pilot'.

Finally, as local Councillors – elected by the public – we take our responsibility to uphold '*The Reputation of the Council*' with our questioning and ensuing good governance is in place, most seriously, despite the Labour and Independent Parties being in charge.

Mrs O'Donnell, please do not allow this, now familiar, 'Wall of Silence' to add the current uncaring Crewe North Package Road Closures to the be added to your Highways Team Workload.

We would be pleased if you would meet with us and drive the 10.6-mile diversion route, which all users, whether their journey commences in Crewe or Nantwich, are currently expected to undertake.

We very much look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Rachel Bailey
Councillor for Audlem

Cllr Patrick Redstone
Councillor for Odd Rode

Cllr Margaret Simon
Councillor for Wisaston

CC: Cllr Sam Corcoran, Leader of Cheshire East Council
Cllr Craig Browne, Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Council
Belinda Ryan, Freelance Journalist
Cheshire East Residents