# Cheshire County Council

# European Garden Heritage Network

# Tatton Park Baseline Review of Access Conditions

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 European Garden Heritage Network

Cheshire County Council is a partner organisation in a European-funded transnational project entitled the European Garden Heritage Network'. The European Garden Heritage Network (EGHN) is a European funded INTERREG III-B project that will be implemented by nine partner organisations including five regions in France, three UK partners and a German partner. The main sub actions of the project are about creating models of best practice with a view to improving access to the gardens.

The aim of the European Heritage Network is to further define and promote the potential and value of the garden for sustainable development, creating models of best practice tested through a series of innovative pilot projects, which can be shared and disseminated with future partners.

The project addresses a transnational theme as parks and gardens share a common history in North West Europe and are an essential part of the joint European cultural heritage, but need transnational co-operation, joint criteria/standards and actions to be promoted in the light of its regional diversity and importance.

The project comprises six key action areas –

1) Spatial Strategy Incorporating Parks and Gardens
2) Inter-Regional Gateways
3) Transnational Themes
4) Access
5) Interpretation
6) Education

While other key actions address broader issues of access to information, data and education, the access area of the project outlined here is principally concerned with physical access, traveling both to and from the garden. Most participating gardens are located in rural areas that are poorly served by public transport network. This not only excludes many non-drivers from visiting gardens, it also negated the demands for environmental credibility and sustainability of spatial development.

Surrey County Council is the leading partner on Access with Cheshire County Council being an advisory partner.

## 1.2 Tatton Park

Tatton Park is Cheshire County Council's anchor garden within the EGHN project.

Tatton Park is owned by the National Trust, and is managed, maintained and financed by Cheshire County Council on their behalf.

Tatton Park is part of Cheshire County Council's Environment Department and is part of its Rural and Recreation Service. This service has responsibility for countryside management, rights of way, tourism, rural recovery, sport, and the Mersey Forest project, as well as Tatton Park.

Tatton Park extends to some 2,000 acres of which 1,000 are open to the public. The main attractions of Tatton Park include the Mansion, Gardens, Farm, Old Hall, and extensive parkland.

Tatton's 1000 acres of open park land offers trails for fishing and horse riding, a play area for the adventurous, the perfect setting for a picnic and the opportunity to see abundant wildlife

The parkland hosts a number of Tatton's events including the award-winning Halle Fireworks and Light Spectacular concert by the side of Tatton Mere, and the RHS Flower Show at Tatton Park, which has already gained a national reputation and the highest of standards. The parkland is open every day except Christmas Day.

When the last Lord Egerton of Tatton died he left behind an estate unrivalled in its historical completeness, with a wish that it be used to educate and delight. Since then it has become one of the most visited properties in the country and its education programme has recently received the prestigious Sandford Award for Heritage Education for the fourth time.

The vision of Tatton Park is to conserve the park for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

Tatton Park aims to:

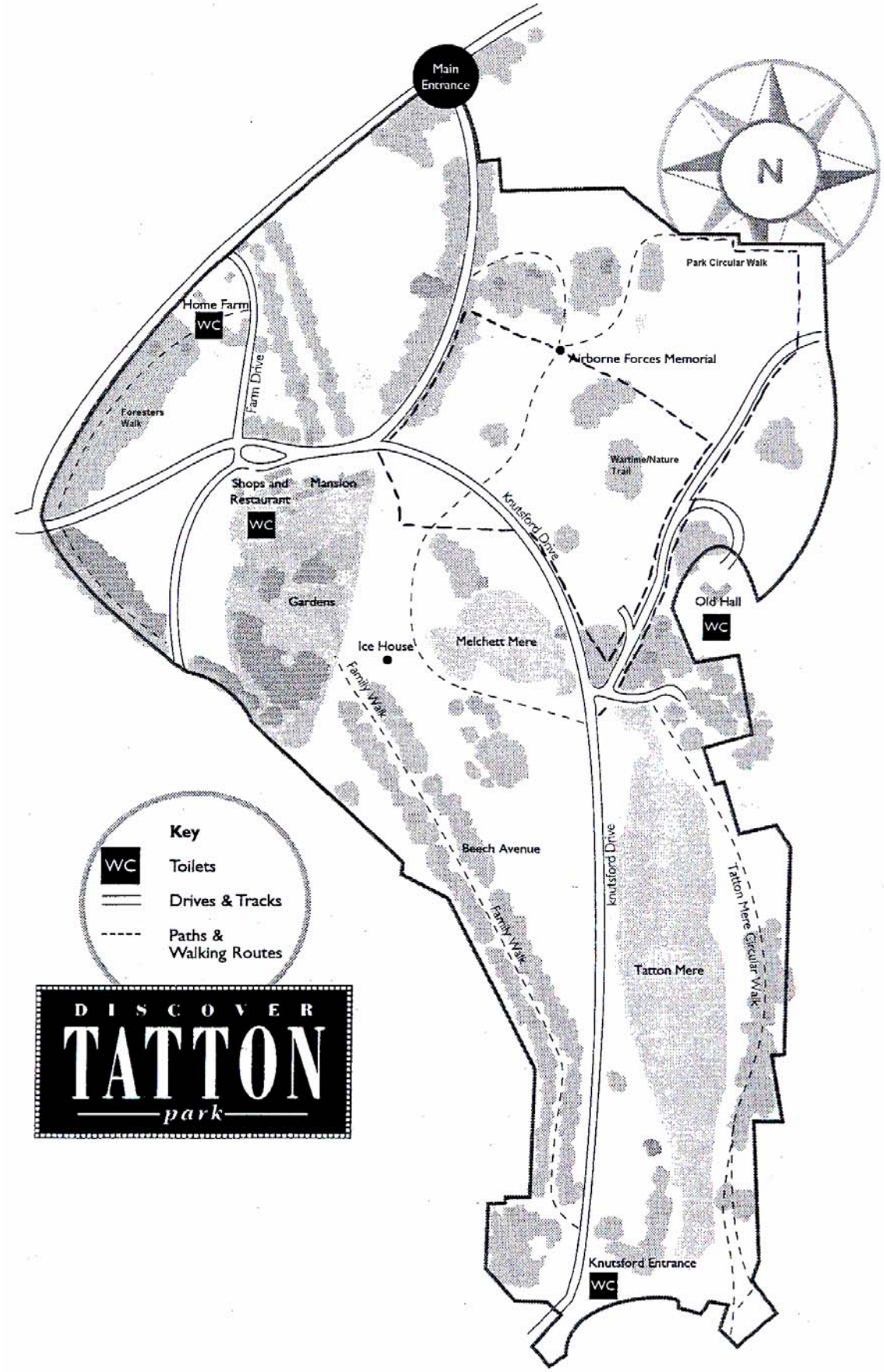
- Provide an enjoyable experience and excellent service;

- Show leadership in rural, heritage, conservation and tourism fields;
- Make an active contribution to the local community;
- Reflect the values and standards of Cheshire County Council and key stakeholders, including the National Trust.

To achieve this Tatton Park will:

1. Maintain and conserve Tatton Park's historic, built and natural features;
2. Facilitate and encourage local, tourism, civic and business communities to access, support and make appropriate use of Tatton Park;
3. Develop and maintain relevant sources of income to help realise the vision for Tatton Park;
4. Provide opportunities for education, the development of young people and lifelong learning through relevant activities and programmes;
5. Implement a varied programme of events and activities;
6. Promote Tatton Park as a flagship tourism venue;
7. Provide quality in service and value;
8. Help create opportunities for local employment and economic benefit;
9. Seek to develop people and to be a well-managed organisation.

## 1.3 Map of Tatton Park



## 1.4 Travel Plans

A travel plan is best defined as a package of measures that effectively manages an organisation's transport needs and impacts, with an emphasis on reducing single occupancy vehicle trips. In essence, they provide employers with an effective tool to enable them to become more proactive in dealing with the impact of increasing traffic congestion or parking problems, which are increasingly seen as a cause for concern in today's business environment. They are most commonly associated with commuter trips but a good travel plan can also include activities relating to business travel, fleet management, deliveries and logistics and commercial travel requirements.

Travel plans typically include a mixture of measures that act to encourage travel by modes other than the car or ways to remove the need to travel at all.

### 1.4.1 Cheshire County Council Travel Plans

The promotion of company Travel Plans is an important part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan Strategy. At a time when many leading Cheshire companies are adopting such strategies it is vital that the County Council is also seen to take the initiative and lead by example.

Since 1996, the County Council has introduced a variety of initiatives and activities to support this process. A formal Travel Plan for employees based in central Chester offices was approved by Cheshire Management Board and Policy Committee in October 2000. This was seen as a site-specific response to parking pressures and traffic congestion found in the city. Activities at other Council offices, where problems are perhaps less extreme, fall within a broader Staff Travel Strategy. This focuses on promoting the messages of the County Council's TravelWise campaign, i.e. it acts to raise awareness about alternatives to the car and, whenever and wherever appropriate, encourages their use.

Work to develop the County Council's travel plan activities is co-ordinated by the Economic Development and Environment Policy Unit.

With the publication of PPG 13 (Transport) in Great Britain, Travel Plans have become a formal requirement of the planning process for many new development proposals. The Department for Transport has subsequently published additional guidance including advice on making more consistent use of the planning process to secure travel plans. This also includes supplementary guidance and software to help assess travel plans.

A full staff travel survey was carried out for staff based at Tatton Park during 2003. A copy of the report is included in appendix B.

## 2. Site Information

### 2.1 Location

Tatton Park is situated 2 miles north east of Knutsford, 12 miles South of Manchester city centre in the village of Rosthern

A map showing the location of Tatton Park is included in appendix A

### 2.2 Opening Times

| | |
|---|---|
| High Season | 29th March 2003 - 28th September 2003 |
| Low Season | 29th September 2003 - 26th March 2004 |

| High Season | Open | Last Admission | Day |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Park** | 10.00am | 6pm, Gates locked 7pm | Mon - Sun |
| **Gardens** | 10.30am | 5.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Mansion** | 1.00pm | 4.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| | Guided Tours at 12 noon and 12.15pm only. (Tickets available on the day, numbers are limited - nominal charge applies for guided tours.) | | |
| **Farm** | 12 Noon | 4.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Housekeeper's Store** | 10.30am | 5.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Restaurant** | 10.00am | 6.00pm | Mon - Sun |
| **Gift Shop** | 10.30am | 5.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Tudor Old Hall** | Guided Tours hourly from 12.00 - 4.00 Sat, Sun & Bank Holidays | | |

| Low Season | Open | Last Admission | Day |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Park** | 11.00am | 4pm, Gates locked 5pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Gardens** | 11.00am | 3.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Mansion** | Re-opens 26th March 2004 | | |
| **Farm** | Open 11.00am, Last Admission 3.00pm, Sat-Sun | | |
| **Housekeeper's Store** | 11.00am | 4.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Restaurant** | 11.00am | 4.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Gift Shop** | 11.00am | 4.00pm | Tues - Sun |
| **Tudor Old Hall** | Re-opens 26th March 2004 | | |

## 3. Access to Tatton Park

### 3.1 Car Access

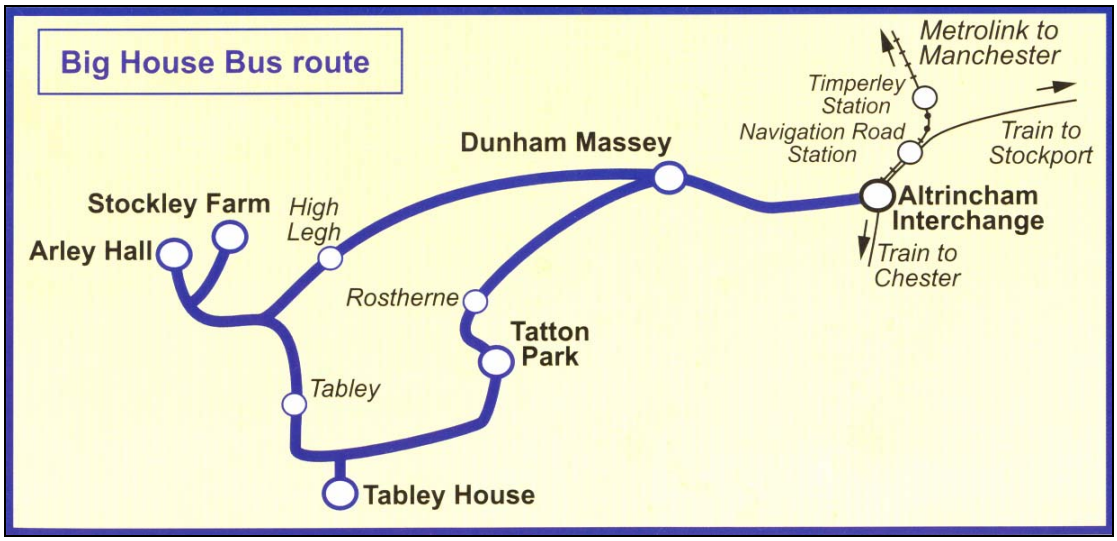
Tatton Park is signposted on and from the M6, Junction 19, and M56, Junction 7. Tatton Park is also signposted on and from the A56 and A50. There is ample parking on arrival at Tatton Park at a charge of £3.90 per car, motorcycle or moped.

Large car parks are available for visitors to Tatton Park. A separate area for coaches is also available.

## 3.2 Public Transport

### 3.2.1 Bus

The 'Big House Bus' visits Tatton Park as one of four of Cheshire's grand houses and a working farm. The service starts at Altrincham Interchange and runs to Dunham Massey, Tatton Park, Tabley House, Stockley Farm and Arley Hall every Sunday and Bank Holiday from Easter until the end of September.




The return fare from Altrincham to Dunham Massey is £4, and £2 to all other attractions. The bus is fully wheel chair accessible and the admission charge to all attractions is reduced for Big House Bus passengers.

The Service 27 from Knutsford to Macclesfield makes three additional stops from Easter until the end of September at Tatton Park at 1058, 1258 and 1503, and picks up from Tatton Park at 1135, 1335 and 1535 Monday to Saturday. The Sunday service makes three stops at 1030, 1330 and 1530, and picks up at 1135, 1335 and 1635.

Bus stops are located near to the Old Hall, near the Stable yard area and at the entrances to the Park.

### 3.2.2 Train

There are a number of railway stations is the area around Tatton Park, but a bus or taxi will usually be required to reach the park from any of these. The best station to reach Tatton Park from is Knutsford (approximately 2 miles from Tatton Park) which is served directly by trains from Chester and Manchester. The Service 27 bus also stops here which makes traveling from the station to the Tatton Park easy. Altrincham, Mobberley and Ashley are three other stations in the area, although transport from these last two stations to Tatton Park is limited.

Temporary helicopter landing facilities can be arranged.

## 3.3 Cycle Routes

Tatton Park has recently been included into the Cheshire Cycleway. Cycle parking racks have been installed on the main Stable yard area and by the children's play area.

Historically GroundWork ran a cycle hire facility from the Stable yard at Tatton Park. This however, was discontinued due to funding pressures.

## 3.4 Pedestrian access

There are no public rights of way in the park although visitors are free to access all areas on the park except where gates or signs specifically prohibit entry. There are a number of suggested walking routes around Tatton Park which are shown on the map in section 1.3.

Access around the park for pedestrians is well signed although the cobbled areas may present problems for the less mobile.

## 4. Disabled Access

Disabled Access to Tatton Park is featured on the 'Cheshire for all' website which provides access information on all tourist attractions in Cheshire.

### 4.1 Parking

A drop off zone for disabled passengers and limited blue badge holder spaces are located in the Stable yard car park which is close to the Mansion and Gardens. Blue Badge holder spaces are available in the main car park with level tarmac access to the Stable yard which is approximately 200m away. Blue Badge parking is also available close to the Farm and Old Hall by prior arrangement For large parkland events or shows provisions are made for disabled users to use the nearest available areas.

### 4.2 Facilities

- **Toilets** – Are available in the Stable yard with tarmac access. Toilets are also available at the Knutsford entrance, the Old Hall and Home Farm – although both the Old Hall and Home Farm have a cobbled approach.

- **Information** - Disabled visitors guide books are available.

- **Facilities for VIP** - Braille and large print guides are available at the Mansion and the Gardens.

- **General** – Wheelchairs and Batricars are available for loan at the Garden entrance and the Farm. They are only to be used at the attraction at which they are hired and a deposit is required.

### 4.3 Gardens

A ramp to the entrance of the gardens follows on to step-free access to most areas, with the exception of the formal and rose gardens. The surfacing is loose and compacted into gravel paths, wheelchair users may need assistance.

## 4.4 Home Farm

Level approach entrance. The surface is cobbled and uneven stone with some steps within. There are some steep ramps, Wheelchair users may need assistance and cannot access all buildings. Sounds and smells of a working farm are available in this case. Some animals can be handled by arrangement.

## 4.5 Mansion

There are steps to reception and to the front entrance. An alternative ramped entrance to the rear of the Mansion is available on request. Level access is available throughout the ground floor. Only access to upper and lower floors is via stairs and there are no lifts. Mansion stewards can provide assistance, information, and photographs on most rooms which cannot be accessed.

## 5. European Garden Heritage Network Project - Access Priorities

As part of the EGHN Project Access Group each partner has set a series of priorities that will be worked upon over the lifetime of the project. The table below sets out the five priorities that Cheshire County Council will work on to improve access to Tatton Park and surrounding gardens.

### 5.1 Priority 1 – Improve public transport access to Tatton Park

**Partners**
Big House Bus Working Group
Cheshire County Council – Transport Co-ordination
Tatton Park

The following is taken from a report from the National Trust.

THE NATIONAL TRUST-NORTH WEST REGION

THE BIG HOUSE BUS PROJECT-Travel Plan for 2004/5/6

**Objectives:**

To provide a service to Dunham Massey, Tatton Park, Tabley House,Stockley Farm and Arley Hall also residents on the route the chance of a bus into Altrincham on Sundays thus reducing dependence on the car.

**Background:**

For a time a bus shuttle ran between Altrincham Interchange and Dunham Massey seven days per week which was sponsored by Manchester Airport plc. When this ceased it was found to be too costly to continue operating by The National Trust for the few people using the service. The service was missed by a lot of people and coupled with the desire to improve link with Tatton Park to these were added Tabley House and Arley Hall along with Stockley Farm. As the main visiting days are Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays when often the car parks are full and overflowing it was decided these would be the best days to run a new service.

Service: This ran from 2 June to 15 September 2002 during which period nearly 300 passengers were carried. The season started quietly but as it progressed a notable feature was that each Sunday the figure increased. Due to the distance, a round trip of 31 miles, the frequency was 3 per day with a fourth collecting returning visitors.

These were timed to opening hours of the various places en route but with a view to making it reasonably attractive to residents along the route also. It was financially supported by the Countryside Agency plus contributions from The National Trust, Dunham Massey, Tatton Park, Tabley House, Stockley Farm and Arley Hall. The partners were encouraged to expand the service for 2003 and following last years successful season with a number of enquiries regarding 2003 timetable during the closed season, it was decided to

commence at Easter and run it on Tuesdays during August. The latter was to capture the school holiday market.

Operating experience revealed that the timetable was tight due to traffic conditions and in an endeavour to address this; a second bus was planned for the first run of the day. This enabled 1130 departure to be brought forward to 1115 and improving rail connection at Altrincham.

Current Situation: Owing to The Countryside Agency being unable to directly fund the service the Tuesday service was placed on hold and the revised service reverted to 2002 timetable- i.e. using one bus. This was done to contain costs though not desirable from customer or operators viewpoint. Results from early season indicated that its popularity had not waned and minimal publicity had gone out prior to Easter. In 2003 over 300 people have been carried but it is felt that this would have been higher had the advertising panels in Metrolink been permitted again this year.

Future Plans: Some secure funding is required in order to plan effectively for 2004, 2005 and 2006 seasons.

The EGHN project can act to further enhance this service and secure its running for the durations of the EGHN project. Additional funding will need to be sought following the end of the project. Work needs to be carried out to promote the service, existing publicity of the ‘Big House Bus’ is minimal due to funding difficulties and lack of resources.

## 5.2 Priority 2 – Investigate the possibility of establishing a cycle hire facility at Tatton

**Partners**
Tatton Park
Ground Work
Local cycle shops

Cycling around Tatton Park is extremely popular, regular cycle events are held on the park and cycling is an excellent way of exploring the extensive park land. Work by Cheshire County Council over the last year has seen the introduction of cycle parking facilities on the main Stable Yard area and adjacent to the children's play area.

As many of the visitors to Tatton Park travel fair distances to visit the park it is not always possible to cycle to the Park. A cycle hire facility would allow people to arrive at the park by car or public transport, hire a bike for a couple of hours to use on site.

Groundwork previously supported a cycle hire facility at Tatton Park which has since been closed due to internal funding issues. The opportunity now exists for the EGHN project to re-establish this facility on a seasonal basis.

Any such facility would need to be staffed, decisions need to made whether this be managed internally by Tatton Park or whether a third party be commissioned to run the facility. Insurance issues need to be researched to clarify any possible implications following any fall from the cycles etc. Work needs to be carried out into the viability of such a scheme.

## 5.3 Priority 3 – Produce a series of themed garden routes in Cheshire that are accessible by public transport and cycling.

**Partners**
Cheshire County Council – Tourism
Tatton Park
Cheshire County Council – Transport Co-ordination
Cheshire County Council – Cycling Officer

A series of themed routes linking the gardens in and around Cheshire would allow visitors on bike or public transport to be able to visit more than one attraction at a time. The journey would then become part of the experience.
Tatton Park in 2003 was included into the Cheshire cycle way and has been signed accordingly.

Work needs to be carried out to identify any suitable cycle routes and rights of way networks that would be suitable for cyclists to use. Ideally these routes would keep away from any busy or dangerous roads.

Themed routes would cater for visitors with a specific interest, i.e. Scented Gardens.

## 5.4 Priority 4 – Carry out a full staff and visitor travel survey at Tatton Park

**Partners**
Cheshire County Council – Economic Development and Environment Policy Service
Tatton Park

As mentioned previously in the report a full staff travel survey has been carried out for Cheshire County Council staff based at Tatton Park. A copy of this report is included in the appendices.

Work has already been progressed to introduce a staff travel plan at Tatton Park and all Cheshire County Council employees benefit from the WiseMoves staff travel scheme which provides incentives to all staff to travel to, from and while at work in a sustainable manner. As previously mentioned in this report, cycle parking facilities were introduced to Tatton Park during 2003 for use by both staff and visitors alike.

Also, during 2003 a visitor travel survey was conducted at Tatton Park the key findings from this survey were as follows –

### 5.4.1 Cheshire County Council Tatton Park Visitor Travel Survey

1. Start of journey

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Home | 38 | 75 |
| Elsewhere | 13 | 25 |

2. Have you been to Tatton Park before?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 33 | 65 |
| No | 18 | 35 |

3. How many times have you visited Tatton Park in the past 12 months?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| None | 34 | 67 |
| 1 | 6 | 12 |
| 2-4 | 6 | 12 |
| 5-9 | 2 | 4 |
| 10+ | 3 | 6 |

4. Do you intend to visit Tatton Park again within the next 12 months?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 26 | 51 |
| No | 9 | 18 |
| Possibly | 16 | 31 |

5. How are you traveling?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| On your own | 3 | 6 |
| In a family group with children | 13 | 25 |
| With a partner or friend | 25 | 49 |
| In a group of friends/relatives | 5 | 10 |
| In an organised tour/educational trip | 5 | 10 |

6. How have you traveled to Tatton Park today?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Walk | 3 | 6 |
| Coach | 5 | 10 |
| Car, on your own | 3 | 6 |
| Car, with others | 40 | 78 |

7. How long was the journey?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| 0-15 minutes | 7 | 14 |
| 16-30 minutes | 5 | 10 |
| 31-60 minutes | 20 | 40 |
| More than 1 hour | 19 | 37 |

8. Are you visiting any other attractions outside Tatton Park as part of your trip today?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 14 | 27 |
| No | 37 | 73 |

9. Are there any other journey purposes connected with today's trip?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 13 | 25 |
| No | 38 | 75 |

10. Which of the following prompted your visit to Tatton Park today?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Previous visit | 19 | 27 |
| Word of mouth | 13 | 18 |
| Tourist Information leaflet | 5 | 7 |
| Travel guide book | 3 | 4 |
| Newspaper article | 1 | 1 |
| Newspaper special offer | 1 | 1 |
| Workplace or leisure club outing | 7 | 10 |
| Other | 1 (visit gardens after RHS)<br>1 (home ground)<br>7 (family/friends visit)<br>2 (Stopping off)<br>2 (Antiques fair)<br>8 (NT membership)<br>1 (Special occasion) | 31 |

11. If you traveled by car what were your main reasons for doing so? (please tick all that apply)

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Convenience | 37 | 45 |
| Health reasons | 2 | 2 |
| Flexibility of time of travel | 6 | 7 |
| Flexibility of journey route | 4 | 5 |
| No practical alternative | 24 | 29 |
| Alternatives disliked | 3 | 4 |
| No public transport information available | 2 | 2 |
| Other | 3 (traveling on holidays)<br>1 (work) | 5 |

12. Did you find the park easy to find? Were the signs clear and apparent to you?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 43 | 88 |
| No | 6 | 12 |

13. Which of the following would encourage you to cycle to Tatton Park?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Convenient/attractive cycle routes | 2 | 4 |
| Inclusion in the Cheshire Cycle Way | 1 | 2 |
| Information about cycling routes | 1 | 2 |
| Further discount on admission price | 1 | 2 |
| Other discounts at Tatton Park | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 3 (safety/security)<br>1 (cycle routes in Knutsford) | 7 |
| None | 44 | 81 |

14. Which of the following would encourage you to motorcycle to Tatton Park?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Nothing | 50 | 100 |

15. Which of the following would encourage you to use public transport to reach Tatton Park? (please tick all that apply)

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Shuttle bus from train station to Tatton Park | 7 | 12 |
| Direct service from home area to Tatton Park | 17 | 29 |
| More frequent/faster service | 2 | 3 |
| Easily obtainable information on public transport to Tatton Park | 6 | 10 |
| Lower public transport costs | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 1 (P&R)<br>1 (reliable & flexible) | 4 |
| Nothing | 24 | 41 |

16. Which of the following would encourage you to walk to Tatton Park?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Attractive walking routes | 2 | 4 |
| Information about walking routes | 2 | 4 |
| Nothing | 47 | 92 |

17. If the suggested improvements were made to alternative travel to Tatton Park which of the following would you be most likely to use?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Public transport | 24 | 43 |
| Cycle | 2 | 4 |
| Walk | 4 | 7 |
| None of the above | 26 | 46 |

18. How often would you be prepared to use any of the alternatives when visiting Tatton Park?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Not applicable, future visits unlikely | 3 | 7 |
| Likely: most or all of the time | 5 | 12 |
| Occasionally | 7 | 17 |
| Never | 27 | 64 |

19. Which attraction at Tatton Park are you visiting?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| The Mansion | 31 | 24 |
| The Gardens | 44 | 34 |
| The Shops | 17 | 13 |
| The Adventure Playground | 5 | 4 |
| The Old Hall | 5 | 4 |
| The Farm | 11 | 8 |
| The Parkland | 16 | 12 |

20. What is your age range?

| | Respondents | % |
|---|---|---|
| Under 16 | 3 | 5 |
| 17-25 | 2 | 3 |
| 26-35 | 3 | 5 |
| 36-45 | 11 | 18 |
| 46-55 | 14 | 23 |
| 56-65 | 17 | 28 |
| Over 65 | 10 | 17 |

21. Additional comments that you may wish to make about travel to Tatton Park?

- Not enough disabled parking near the entrances.
- Last road signs to the park unclear.
- Poor signs in Middlewich area.
- Signs could be brown to stay in keeping with the National Trust style and therefore easy to look out for.
- Not enough spaces for disabled parking.
- Lengthy walk between attractions.
- Signs to the park seemed inaccurate.
- Public transport too lengthy.
- Proper footpaths along side of road.
- Not enough signs within the park.
- Not happy about closures on different days e.g. hall closed one day, café another etc.
- Signs difficult to read approaching the park.
- Would consider using a coach service direct from home.
- Unhappy about paying parking charges.
- Brown signs should be in keeping throughout journey.
- A link between attractions rather than walking/driving.
- Reduce/abolish parking charges.
- Would use public transport if traveling on own.

- Clearer signs from car park.

## Appendices

**Appendix A – Tatton Park**
**Appendix B – Tatton Park Staff Travel Survey**
**Appendix C – Home Postcode Distribution Maps**