

Case Studies

Chorley (Lancashire)

Town Centre Improvements

Chorley Town Centre Masterplan 2013 is designed to support business by stimulating economic activity, particularly in regards of independent business and the retail sector, which is its main differentiator. For this reason, the plans mainly focus on the Market Street and Chapel Street—two of Chorley’s key streets.

The vision for the town comprises three key components:

1. An alteration to the movement framework of the town including the creation of street typologies.
2. The creation of a public realm framework based on a clear hierarchy of streets and spaces; and clear strategies for planting, lighting and artworks.
3. Suggestions in relation to the urban design principles of key opportunity sites including new buildings, and uses to provide the activity and frontage to enliven public realm.

In September 2016, Chorley Council agreed a £17m package of investment in Chorley town centre in order to carry out a huge amount of work to attract more visitors. The highlights of the scheme include an **extension to Market Walk shopping centre**, which will bring a six-screen cinema, high street retailers and restaurants to the town and a programme to **improve the appearance of the rest of the town centre streets making it more pedestrian-friendly and a great place to enjoy your leisure time**.

The Market Wall extension and the provision of new parking spaces in the town centre is supported by **enhanced pedestrian spaces**, so as to develop a remodelled public realm. The main objective is to make sure that the town centre is a nice place to shop.

The southern end of Market Street has recently been revamped and improvements on the following locations have already been completed:

- Fazakerley Street
- Theatre Walk – between Market Street and Peter Street



- Steeley Lane

Improvements are also going to be made to the area around Chorley Interchange.

Some of the works that are considered in order to improve public realm are the following: an area adjacent to the bus station providing **improved pedestrian movement and visual aesthetic**; a **footpath** linking the main high street with Chorley Little Theatre with enhanced lighting, **improved surfacing and artwork**; a **pedestrianized street** linking the main high street with the covered market with improved paving and space for the provision of temporary market stalls; an **underpass at Chorley railway station** leading to a shopping area providing improved surfacing, lighting and artwork panels depicting local trades past and present.

Paving and street furniture options have been chosen to compliment new schemes that have recently been implemented in the town centre and suggested artwork creates a unique sense of place.

BEFORE - View of Flat Iron Market from Union Street



AFTER - View of Flat Iron Market from Union Street

Case Studies

Stroud (Gloucestershire)

Town Centre Improvements

Shaping the heart of Stroud is a community led process that has created a neighbourhood development plan for the town centre in Stroud (2015-2031).

The plan establishes general planning policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the town centre.

A series of issues and particular themes were analysed so as to understand the challenges the town faces. In addition, a vision and a series of objectives were developed.

The vision for Stroud town centre is that it should be **"a welcoming, healthy, thriving place"**. It should be attractive and make the most of its heritage and its diverse cultural character; it should be accessible to all and have a vibrant feel; and it should be an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable place which reflects its bohemian and 'green' personality.

Some of its objectives are:

1. To make the town centre accessible by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient and well designed routes.
2. To improve the links between the town centre and the canal and Stratford Park.
3. To diversify the economy of the town centre so that it is an active place throughout the week, on weekends and in the evening.
4. To protect and enhance important spaces including green spaces.
5. To improve energy efficiency and encourage the use of renewable sources of energy/ to become carbon neutral.

During public consultation, the main aspects that people did not like about the town were: too narrow range of shops, ugly appearances of key buildings and the appearance of the streets, litter and dirt.



One of the objectives of the Plan is to **prioritise pedestrians in the town centre**, thus encouraging more people to use the town centre and to walk to it. To do this, walking and cycling must be encouraged; ensuring that people are able to move easily into and around the town centre by all modes of transport, using safe, convenient and well-designed routes; and making the town centre a welcoming place where people are encouraged to spend time.

Over the Plan period Stroud Town Council will promote the prioritisation of pedestrian movement over other forms of transport throughout the core zone, whilst ensuring that access is provided for public transport services, cyclists, delivery vehicles, taxis and those who need to access the town centre by car.

Other of the objectives include **improvements to the railway area** by upgrading the station's forecourt, building a new pedestrian railway bridge and a new public square. The new bridge across the railway will provide improved pedestrian, and particularly disabled, access into the heart of the town centre. The aim is to **make the town more welcoming** with other improvements such as: better destination information; maps and signage; real time information displays for buses and trains; and changes to the forecourt car parking availability, layout and design.



Case Studies

Hereford

Town Centre Revitalisation

Hereford is a cathedral city with an important historical character, which is currently undergoing several changes such as: the refurbishment of High Town, Commercial Road and Blueschool Street, better pedestrian and cycle access and a vibrant shopping and leisure offer.

According to Hereford's 2020 vision, there are different elements of the city which will be enhanced.

Transport hub and refurbishment of Commercial Road, Newmarket and Blueschool Streets:

Arriving in Hereford by bus or train, you are likely to walk from the station along Blueschool Street, Commercial Road and Newmarket Street. The refurbishment of these areas will make a walk or cycle into Hereford city centre more pleasurable, helping people lead healthier and more active lives. It will also be easier for visitors and residents to use buses and trains at a new 'transport hub.'

This refurbishment will provide an environment similar to that of the Old Market development. It will create a more attractive area for residents of the urban village, which is the housing project planned for the Merton Meadow site and for all those using Hereford city centre.

The transport hub will be built as part of the 'Hereford city centre transport package' with funding secured from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

High Town refurbishment

The 'High Town Refurbishment' will create a consistent look and feel to help improve the city centre, which will attract shoppers, traders and businesses in to Hereford city. The Old Market development has improved the shopping and leisure experience in Hereford and has

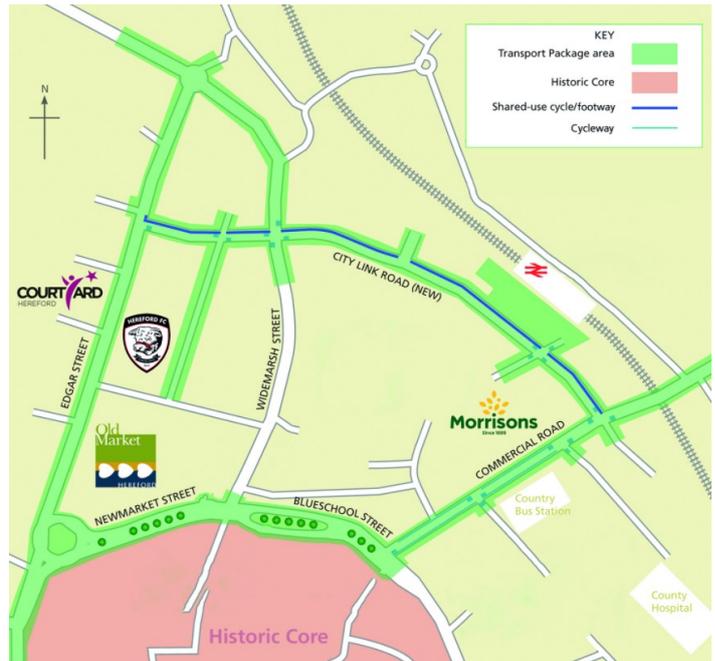


brought more people to Hereford city centre since it opened in May 2014.

The refurbishment of Widemarsh Street in 2010 created a popular and attractive link between the old and new parts of the city and the High Town refurbishment will extend this area.

City Link Road

The City Link Road will help relieve some of the traffic from the centre of Hereford, particularly on Commercial Road and Blueschool Street. It will also make it easier and more enjoyable to walk around Hereford city.



In general, some parts of the town centre are being pedestrianized and re-paved with natural stone, and new street furniture is being installed in order to provide a more pedestrian friendly and attractive area. In addition, old fashioned signposts pointing to places like the cathedral are being placed so as to attract pedestrians and encourage active travel.



Case Studies

Banbury (Oxfordshire)

Bankside developments

Longford Park development comprises the construction of over 1,000 homes, which started end of 2013, and is considered as Banbury's largest outstanding housing development. A significant number of homes are already completed and occupied.

Oxfordshire County Council proposed to make the following changes in response to the development of land adjacent to Bankside in Banbury:

- The **replacement of existing traffic calming chicanes with speed cushions.**
- **A raised zebra crossing.**
- The introduction of **additional waiting restrictions** to help traffic flow more smoothly, but with sections left free where residents need to park:
 - Introduce/extend "No Waiting at Any Time" - Double Yellow Lines in the Bankside junctions.
 - Introduce/extend "No Waiting Mondays to Saturdays 8 am to 6 pm" in various parts of Bankside.
- **Advisory cycle lanes on both sides of the road** along its full length, reflecting that Bankside already forms part of a signed cycle route to the station. This measure encourages cycling in the area in accordance with broader transport, sustainability and health objectives.



Banbury's masterplan recognizes the growth that the city will experience until 2031 and aims to deliver the following proposals (along with many others) in order to make a vibrant and attractive town centre for everyone:

- Regenerating the land around the Oxford Canal
- Improving transport around the town
- Improve public and sustainable transport by auditing and improving pedestrian and cycle routes, as well as relocating the bus station and reviewing existing routes.



Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 2015-2031 also recognizes the importance of managing the increased travel demand that will be generated by development in the town. Its Transport Strategy focuses on delivering infrastructure improvements to increase the overall capacity of the local transport networks, as well as facilitating and promoting sustainable travel (bus, walking and cycling).

A **bus strategy** is being developed (as part of the LTP4) with the aim of improving the bus network and providing direct commercial bus routes from residential areas, via the town centre to employment areas.

The Masterplan also recognises the importance of **increasing pedestrian and cycle activity within the town.**

The Sustainable Transport element of the Strategy plays a key role in reducing the volume of traffic associated with the town's significant growth and mitigating the traffic impacts on local roads serving Banbury.



Case Studies

Summertown (Oxford)

Beech Croft Road

Liveable Neighbourhoods is an initiative run by Sustrans, which aims to support communities in redesigning residential streets in order to create more pedestrian-cyclist and play-friendly neighbourhoods. Beech Croft Road is one of the eleven projects initiated by Sustrans across the UK.

DIY streets aim to achieve a behaviour change. In order to do so, new mechanisms are used to change driver's behaviour, such as "mental speed bumps" (painted roads) and bike rack/ planter combinations. This project provides an example of how behaviours are shaped through the design of architectural and spatial form, instead of by conventional transport infrastructure.

DIY streets are based on some key principles:

1. "Mental speed bumps", which are psychological techniques which de-homogenize and humanize streets, and draw attention to the street as a "self-explaining" place, are more effective than standard traffic engineering techniques.
2. Streets can be retrofitted or replanned at low cost to reinstate a hierarchy of users, from pedestrians down to individual car users, based on the principle of "shared space" for multiple purposes.
3. Communities themselves must lead street redesign projects, setting their own agendas and mobilizing their enthusiasm for public art and a sense of playfulness.

DIY streets are not simply about changing behaviours of citizens but changing the culture of the street: changing the neighbours' perceptions of what the city is for.

Beech Croft Road is used as a cut-through, and hence a group of residents have been concerned for some time with traffic speeds, since it is a long, straight road with clear sight line—encouraging speeding behaviours. The Beech Croft Residents Association (BCRA) approached Sustrans for advice on becoming a DIY Street, since the residents had been lobbying the local council for traffic calming and lower speed limits since 2003.

The BCRA were keen to think about street design far beyond traditional road safety measures, and some were equally motivated by a desire to improve the aesthetic look of the street and to improve their living environment. Many were convinced of mobilizing targeted, psychological techniques to change driver's behaviour. This was achieved by installing:

- Planters
- Bike racks



- Trees
- Painted "welcome mat"
- Victorian-themed paving design on the road surface.

All of these installations were intended to create a sense of ambiguity in the space—to extend the residents' sense of ownership and attachment to the street, and to show to drivers that they were entering a liminal space in between private and public.

One of the most successful design features was a large planter which housed a tree and the plaque. A child on the street suggested that they paint a big Cheshire Cat face on it, in reflective beading paint which glowed in the dark and which made the planter visible at night. This Cat became a success story for the DIY Street.

The sense of extending the home space into the street was something that the BCRA wanted to achieve, for instance by reflecting their front-garden Victorian pathways on the road painting.

Shared space was one of the key principles to underlie the redesign of Beech Croft Road. The following quote from the late Hans Mondermann appears on the plaque celebrating the road's achievements.

"A safe, successful street tells a rich story, about its past, its current circumstances and its aspirations".



Case Studies

Frome (Somerset)

Frome Town Centre: Traffic Management Assessment

Frome Town Centre has undergone a Traffic Management Assessment in order to analyse the effect that traffic calming measures in the Market Place could have on journey times and routing within the town.

Several re-modelling proposals were identified with one of the effects being reducing speeds through the Market Place.

It was proposed that the Market Street section of the town centre would be subject to traffic management measures. The section over which speeds would reduce was assumed to be approximately 200 m long and observed speeds varied between 10 and 20 mph.

It was assumed that speeds along Market Street would reduce to a maximum of 11 mph. It was further assumed that at times when the average speed was already below 11 mph, the additional delay would remain. The worst additional delay was on a Saturday (up to 19 seconds) and at some times there was no additional delay beyond that already experienced.

From the analysis, it can be expected that **traffic unfamiliar with the area is likely to continue using signed routes, and/or those determined using journey planners and sat-nav units, and so are unlikely to divert along minor roads.**

The introduction of the traffic calming measures would be a step change in the physical layout and look of



Frome Town Centre. It is hoped that the proposal will result in vehicle speeds of around 11 mph through the Market Place, brought about by the layout of the highway and the **greater and closer interaction between vehicles and pedestrians and cyclists.** Given the relatively short length of road affected this is not likely to be perceived by many drivers as a significant change in travel time.

The alternative routes assessed are longer and, at most times, slower than the town centre option.

Based on the analysis, it is concluded that **diversion of a significant amount of traffic away from the town centre on most days is unlikely, although a slight effect cannot be ruled out entirely.**

However, this analysis only considers the likely impact on traffic speeds and routing. The detailed design and safety of any scheme will need to be considered in detail.



Case Studies

20mph speed limit

Traffic speeds and volumes are inversely related to walking and cycling levels. As traffic speeds increase, the rates of walking and cycling falls. Reducing traffic speeds and volumes can increase walking and cycling as well as deliver public health gains. As the number of cyclists or walkers increases, there are safety increases too as a result of their increased visibility and popularity, therefore making drivers more aware of vulnerable road users.

The appropriate conditions for sustainable and active travel to flourish is where walking and cycling are more attractive modes of travel than the car. There are many methods that can be deployed which can nudge people towards more active forms of travel and these can include increasing the percentage of local roads where speeds are limited to 20mph.

This can be an affordable solution involving signage, engagement with communities including publicity to emphasise the key messages, and not necessarily involve the implementation of physical measures (vertical deflection) such as road humps and offer forms of traffic calming.

After introducing 20mph speed limits, Bristol City Council determined that traffic speed would help make people feel more confident about travelling along local streets, especially in location where widening footway is not feasible, and can enable children and the elderly to travel more independently and safely. Calmer road speeds also help to make walking and cycling more attractive options, leading to less traffic congestion, better health, less noise, more social interaction and stronger communities.

The '20's Plenty for Us' campaign has reported that in Portsmouth, which implemented 20mph limits on 94% of its roads in 2008, over 40% of respondents said that "there has been a safer environment for walking and cycling; and as a result, around a third of respondents felt that there had been an increase in pedestrian and cyclist activities in local areas".

Oja,P; Vuori,I (2000) PROMOTION OF TRANSPORT WALKING AND CYCLING IN EUROPE: Strategy Directions, European Network for Promotion of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity—
<http://www.panh.ch/hepaeurope/materials/HEPA%20Walking%20and%20Cycling%20Strategy%20.pdf>

<https://www.bristol20mph.co.uk/faq-items/why-are-20mph-speed-limits-such-a-good-thing/>

Cloud-Enabled Mobility

Milton Keynes is developing a diverse range of transport initiatives. Transport and urban mobility is one of the key focus areas of innovation for the city under the "Cloud-Enabled Mobility" concept.

The project aims to connect users with real-time data to allow informed local travel decisions, reducing traffic congestion.

The public can access this information under the new city-wide app known as MotionMap. The next phase of the project will involve analysing the user data, as well as using MotionMap to enable new forms of public transport such as Autonomous Vehicles (AV) and mobility on-demand.



In late 2018, Milton Keynes aims to deploy the first AI-enabled traffic management system in the world that is supported by Innovate UK first-of-a-kind grant. As part of this, 2,500 video sensors will be installed to monitor major junctions and 13,000 surface car parking spaces, all with the aim of reducing traffic congestion. Once these sensors have been deployed the system will be able to dynamically prioritise emergency vehicles, buses and cyclists when appropriate.

Milton Keynes points to the next stage of evolution for an increasingly connected transport network. Variable Message Signs will still have an important role to play within the concept alongside other media platforms such as smart phone apps and connected technologies installed within new vehicles.

<http://www.mksmart.org/transport/>