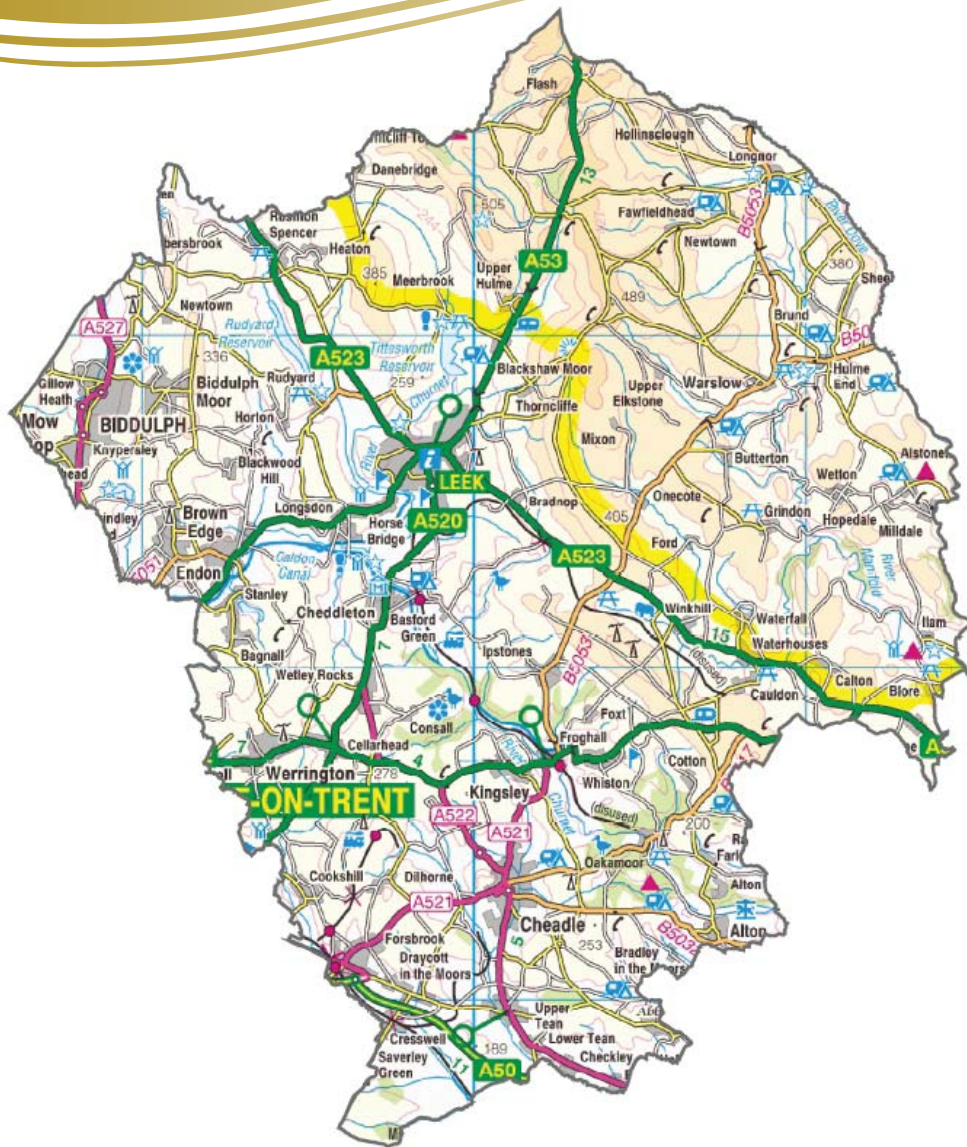


# Staffordshire Moorlands District Integrated Transport Strategy 2013 - 2031



Staffordshire  
County Council

November 2013

# STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2013 - 2031

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Integrated Transport Strategies have been developed for the eight District / Boroughs in Staffordshire to help prioritise the County Council's expenditure on transport improvements and secure potential resources including developer contributions. They are also informing the District / Borough Council local plan process and take into account the new National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.2 The Government has confirmed its commitment to devolving economic power to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) through the creation of a Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) which will be formally allocated to the LEP via Growth Deals. European funds may also become available for transport, through Growth Deals.
- 1.3 A significant level of transport funding has been transferred to the SLGF as transport has been identified as central to local economic development. Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent's allocation of the Single Local Growth Fund and European funds will be determined through the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan for the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. Allocations will be based on the strength of the Strategic Economic Plan in terms of identifying effective and speedy delivery of transport schemes and robust value for money evidence. LEP Growth Deals are expected to be announced by July 2014. LEPs will be required to work with Local Transport Bodies to identify the priorities for transport spending for inclusion in the Economic Plan and this Integrated Transport Strategy will help to inform this work.
- 1.4 The delivery of this Transport Strategy will help to achieve the following County Council Priority Outcomes:

***Staffordshire is a place where people can easily and safely access everyday facilities and activities through the highways and transport networks***

***Staffordshire's economy prospers and grows, together with the jobs, skills, qualifications and aspirations to support it***

***Staffordshire's communities proactively tackle climate change, gaining financial benefit and reducing carbon emissions***

- 1.5 In 2011 we consulted communities and stakeholders on the Integrated Transport Strategies. Many useful comments and ideas were received which have helped to shape this strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands. Our response to these representations is provided in: Report on the Outcome of the Consultation Process 2011/12 at:  
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/districtintegratedtransportstrategies.aspx>
- 1.6 Comments during the consultation process focused on traffic issues relating to the Alton Towers Resort and to partnership working with the Peak District National Park Authority. There was particular concern that any measures proposed within the National Park were in keeping with local villages and the surrounding landscape, and that levels of sustainable transport access are maintained. There were also requests for the Alton Towers Resort Long Term Plan to be made available to the public and this has since been added to the Alton Towers Heritage website.

## 2. District Profile

- 2.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District is bordered by Cheshire, Derbyshire, Stoke-on-Trent and the Boroughs of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and East Staffordshire. The District has three main settlements, Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle which play key roles in providing services, facilities and opportunities for employment.
- 2.2 There are also significant 'cross-border' workforce links with the North Staffordshire conurbation with approximately 15% of daily work journeys into the Moorlands coming from the conurbation and about 27% of the Moorlands resident workforce employed in the conurbation.
- 2.3 Approximately one third of the District is within the Peak District National Park. Tourism plays a key role in the economy, generating in excess of £122 million each year, with visitor numbers to Alton Towers Resort predicted to rise over the next ten years.
- 2.4 In terms of road transport, the A523 provides links to Cheshire and Derbyshire and the A52, A53 and A527 are key routes to the North Staffordshire conurbation and the Peak District. The A520, A521 and A522 also provide access to the A50(T) in the south of the District. Households within the District have a higher rate of car ownership than the national average and there is a high level of car use by commuters. Approximately 74% drive and a low proportion use public transport, with just 4% of commuters travelling by bus or rail.
- 2.5 There is one rail station within the District at Blythe Bridge on the Crewe-Stoke-Derby line. Daily bus services provide links within the main towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle, and inter-urban links to Stoke-on-Trent and neighbouring towns in Cheshire, Derbyshire and East Staffordshire. In addition, Moorlands Connect provides an on-demand, flexible service linking the more rural parts of the District into the main towns.

### **3. A Local Plan for the Future of Staffordshire Moorlands**

- 3.1 In February 2013 the Inspector issued his Interim Conclusions report for the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy. The District Council has proposed and consulted on necessary amendments in a schedule of Proposed Main Modifications. Proposed modifications include provision of 6,000 dwellings during the period 2006 to 2026 compared to 5,500 in the revised submission document (December 2011). The District Council will also undertake an early and comprehensive review of the Core Strategy. This will incorporate work currently underway on the Site Allocations DPD in the form of a single comprehensive Local Plan for an extended plan period to 2031. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy be adopted by the end of 2013.
- 3.2 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Core Strategy December 2011 (as modified) identifies a requirement for 6,000 new dwellings within the District between 2006 and 2026. The document indicates that around two thirds of the housing requirements will be accommodated within the three main settlements of Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle, with the remainder distributed across rural parts of the District in the following numbers:

Biddulph, 1,200 new homes;  
Leek, 1,800 new homes;

Cheadle 1,320 new homes; and  
Rural 1,680 new homes.

- 3.3 In terms of new employment development proposals the Core Strategy indicates that at least 24 hectares of land will be identified to 2026. This need can be met from existing commitments or extensions to existing employment areas. The majority of new employment and retail provisions will be accommodated within the three main settlements, with new retail allocations in Leek and Cheadle guided by Masterplans.
- 3.4 The draft Churnet Valley Masterplan sets out how change will be managed across the Churnet Valley and comprises a set of development principles based around the concept of sustainable tourism. The strategy seeks to increase the economic contribution from sustainable tourism and regenerate key brownfield sites in the area.
- 3.5 To support the emerging Masterplan the Churnet Valley Masterplan Transport Study was produced in July 2013. It identifies a number of essential transport considerations relating to potential development in and adjacent to the Churnet Valley.

#### **Cornhill Link Road**

- 3.6 The key strategic connectivity project proposed in Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Core Strategy is:

Cornhill area, Leek – link from the A520 to A53

- 3.7 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has identified the provision of a link road to enhance the Cornhill regeneration area project by allowing access from key routes into the development site.

#### **4. Recent Transport Achievements**

- 4.1 In 2012/13 there was a considerable reduction in funding for transport schemes throughout the County. Improvements were therefore focused on making the best use of the existing highway network, concentrating on maintaining its condition and ensuring that we continue to reduce road casualties.
- 4.2 In 2012/13, £1.6m was spent on delivering the bridge and highway maintenance programme, £220,000 was spent from the integrated transport programme, and developer funding contributed £2.9m to transportation projects across the District. Improvements have included pedestrian facilities and significant public realm enhancements in Leek and Biddulph, Forsbrook pedestrian facilities, local bus route enhancements and infrastructure upgrades at Blythe Bridge rail station including: Real Time Passenger Information screens, waiting shelters, customer help points, general station information boards and CCTV cameras.
- 4.3 Targets to reduce road casualties are being achieved through education, enforcement and engineering measures. Road safety across the District has been improved through schemes including junction improvements and 20 mph speed limits outside schools and pedestrian and road safety enhancements in Alton and Rudyard.

4.4 In terms of access to public transport, many urban residents now live within 350 metres of a bus stop served by a half hourly or more frequent service. In Leek and Biddulph this applies to 64% of residential addresses, however in Cheadle the figure is closer to 40%. This is achieved through the core commercial network and County Council subsidised services. Many bus stops now comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Staffordshire County Council is also the national leader in discretionary travel allowance. A new travel scheme, adopted in April 2011, allows free 24/7 bus transport to people of pensionable age or with a disability, plus their carer, and under 20's can travel anywhere within Staffordshire for just £1 per journey.

## 5. Transport Strategy

5.1 The Transport Strategy Summary Table in Appendix 1 illustrates how we intend to deliver the following Economic Prosperity and Community priorities of Staffordshire Moorlands District and the Priority Outcomes of the County Council's Strategy Plan. The Transport Strategy will also guide the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.

### ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- Accommodate sustainable development on brownfield and greenfield sites in Biddulph, Cheadle and Leek
- Support vitality and viability of Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle town centres
- Support growth in tourism, particularly within the Churnet Valley and Peak District National Park
- Improve public transport connectivity to key destinations including the North Staffordshire Conurbation

### COMMUNITIES

- Maintain the current condition and safety of the highway network
- Improve public transport connectivity and quality of life for local communities
- Minimise community impact of traffic generated by Alton Towers Resort
- Raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage people to lead more sustainable lifestyles, helping to reduce carbon emissions

5.2 Priorities will be delivered through a combination of countywide initiatives, connectivity proposals, schemes identified in the Divisional Highway Programme and Local Transport Packages for Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph. Delivery of the Local Transport Packages illustrated in Appendix 2 will be linked to delivery of new development, in line with the Core Strategy.

### Divisional Highway Programme

5.3 The Divisional Highway Programme for Staffordshire Moorlands gives County Councillors the opportunity to directly input into delivery programmes. Councillors work closely with Community Highway Managers, parish councils and other stakeholders to ensure local concerns and challenges are identified and priorities are established, taking into account financial constraints. The Divisional Highway

Programme is reviewed twice a year and gives an overview of highway and transport concerns within the local area, such as pedestrian safety, speeding through residential areas, on-street parking and safety at junctions. The main issues in 2013/14 raised by Councillors are summarised in the Summary Table in Appendix 1.

### **Connectivity in the District**

- 5.4 Enhanced connectivity in the District will be achieved through continued partnership working with key stakeholders including the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire LEP, public transport operators and cross boundary working with the Peak District National Park Authority and Stoke City Council amongst the key partners. There will also be the continued operation of Moorlands Connect demand responsive passenger transport service.
- 5.5 The County Council will be producing a Rail Strategy in 2013 to compliment the District Integrated Transport Strategies. A Rail Summit was held in early 2013 to help confirm policy support and priorities for rail investment in Staffordshire.
- 5.6 A contribution to the health and wellbeing agenda will be achieved by improving facilities that encourage walking and cycling. In 2013 £1.75m of funding was secured from the DfT Community Linking Places Fund for the Staffordshire Moorlands Link. This will provide an improved connection from Stoke-on-Trent to the Manifold Trail and the Roaches via a segregated cycle route between Stockton Brook and Cheddleton utilising the Caldon Canal Towpath. Construction will be completed by March 2015.

## **6.0 Local Transport Interventions**

### **Alton Towers and the Churnet Valley**

- 6.1 The Alton Towers Long Term Plan 2010-19 identifies that a package of transportation measures in combination with the increase in multi-day visits would mitigate increases in admissions to the resort. Transport proposals include a route signing review, improvements to sustainable travel information for visitors via websites, minor junction and other highway improvements, and potential access improvement works at the resort. There are also potential improvements identified in the Churnet Valley Masterplan Transport Study including sustainable links from development sites to key destinations such as Alton Towers, improved public transport links between Cheadle and Blythe Bridge and consideration of junction improvements in Whiston and Blythe Bridge.
- 6.2 The A50 to Alton Growth Corridor is located in the Districts of Staffordshire Moorlands and East Staffordshire. It runs from the A50(T), at Uttoxeter to the Alton Towers Resort at Farley. In 2013 the county council was successful in gaining a £2.7m contribution to improvements on this corridor from the DfT Local Pinch Point Fund including junction improvements at Rocester and Denstone in East Staffordshire. The key driver for this bid is economic growth through the expansion of existing business at JCB World Headquarters and Alton Towers Resort. Improved access to JCB and a long term Transport Strategy for Alton Towers Resort will encourage employment growth as well as providing community benefits, increased road safety and improved journey times.

## **Leek Local Transport Package**

- 6.3 The Leek Local Transport Package has been drawn up with reference to the aspirations identified in Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Leek Town Centre Masterplan. The package identifies potential re-development opportunity sites in and around Leek town centre, including a significant regeneration area to the south. The package of transport interventions includes a reconfigured bus station with associated access improvements to key town centre routes, improved pedestrian links into the town centre, public realm enhancements within the retail core, further junction modifications and potential new highway capacity south of the town centre to unlock the Cornhill and Barnfields regeneration area. This regeneration area is located between the A520 Cheddleton Road and the A53 Newcastle Road south of Leek town centre and would provide a focus for tourism, retail and leisure. The county council has recently completed a feasibility study for a potential link road, providing access to this regeneration area.
- 6.4 The county council has undertaken a feasibility study for the Cornhill link road. It is considered to work in principle. It would link the A53 Newcastle Road to A520 Cheddleton Road. The cost of providing the preferred option is estimated to be £6.5m. Further detailed design work would be required with additional journey surveys and assessment to progress the project.

## **Cheadle Local Transport Package**

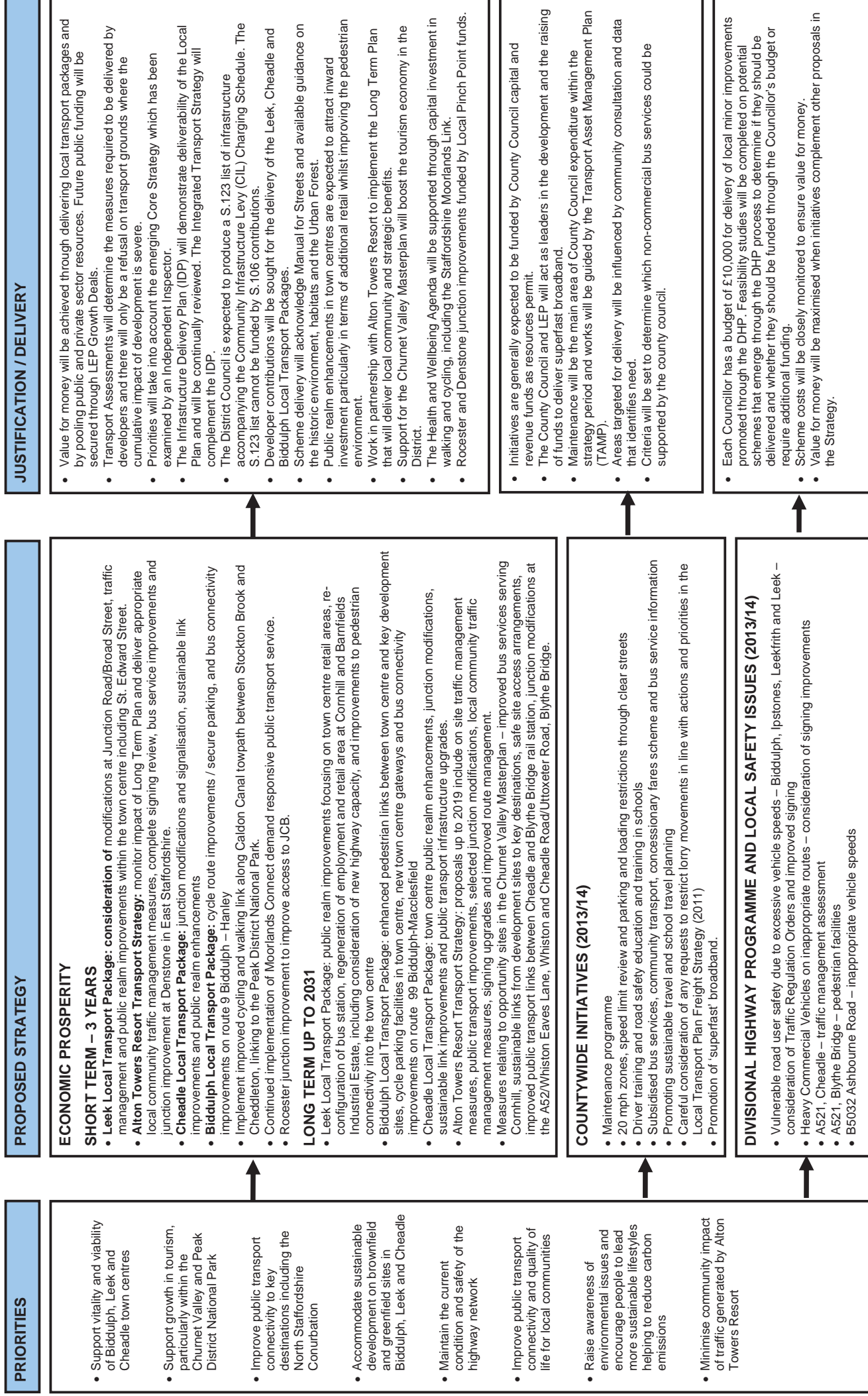
- 6.5 The county council has made an assessment of travelling conditions in Cheadle using the latest Department for Transport Trafficmaster Journey Time Data. The results indicate that there are significant delays along Leek Road and Froghall Road (in bound). This can be related to capacity constraints at the Leek Road/High Street/Tape Street junction between 8am and 9am. However, over the majority of Cheadle's road network journey times are considered to be reliable and delays relatively modest. There are no significant delays recorded on High Street due to the fact that delays tend to be ad hoc and very time specific.
- 6.6 The Cheadle Local Transport Package has been drawn up taking into account the Trafficmaster data analysis and with reference to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Cheadle Town Centre Masterplan. The package identifies re-development sites within the town which could potentially contribute towards transport improvements. The package includes consideration of modifications to key junctions around the town centre including the Tape Street/Queen Street and Tape Street/Ashbourne Road junctions, potential signalisation of Leek Road/Tape Street/High Street/Queen Street junction, public realm enhancements, traffic management and new passenger waiting facilities on High Street, improved pedestrian links into the town centre and improved sustainable access to employment including improvements to bus service 7/7A linking to Blythe Bridge rail station.
- 6.7 A southern link road between A522 Tean Road and A521 Delphouse Road is not considered to be a strategic road proposal and is not expected to be required to deliver development proposed in the emerging Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy. It is unlikely to significantly reduce traffic levels within the town centre where traffic delays are evident. However, the county council accepts that a study could be undertaken to confirm this assumption and whether the longer term aspiration of a bypass can be justified or supported.

## **Biddulph Local Transport Package**

- 6.8 The Biddulph Local Transport Package has been drawn up to support the regeneration of the High Street and town centre area, and accommodate development growth in Biddulph with reference to the Biddulph Town Centre Area Action Plan adopted by the District Council in 2007. Measures include new and improved sustainable links for pedestrians and cyclists, bus access improvements on routes between Biddulph and the North Staffordshire Conurbation, and Biddulph and Macclesfield, public realm enhancements and potential new gateways into the town centre.












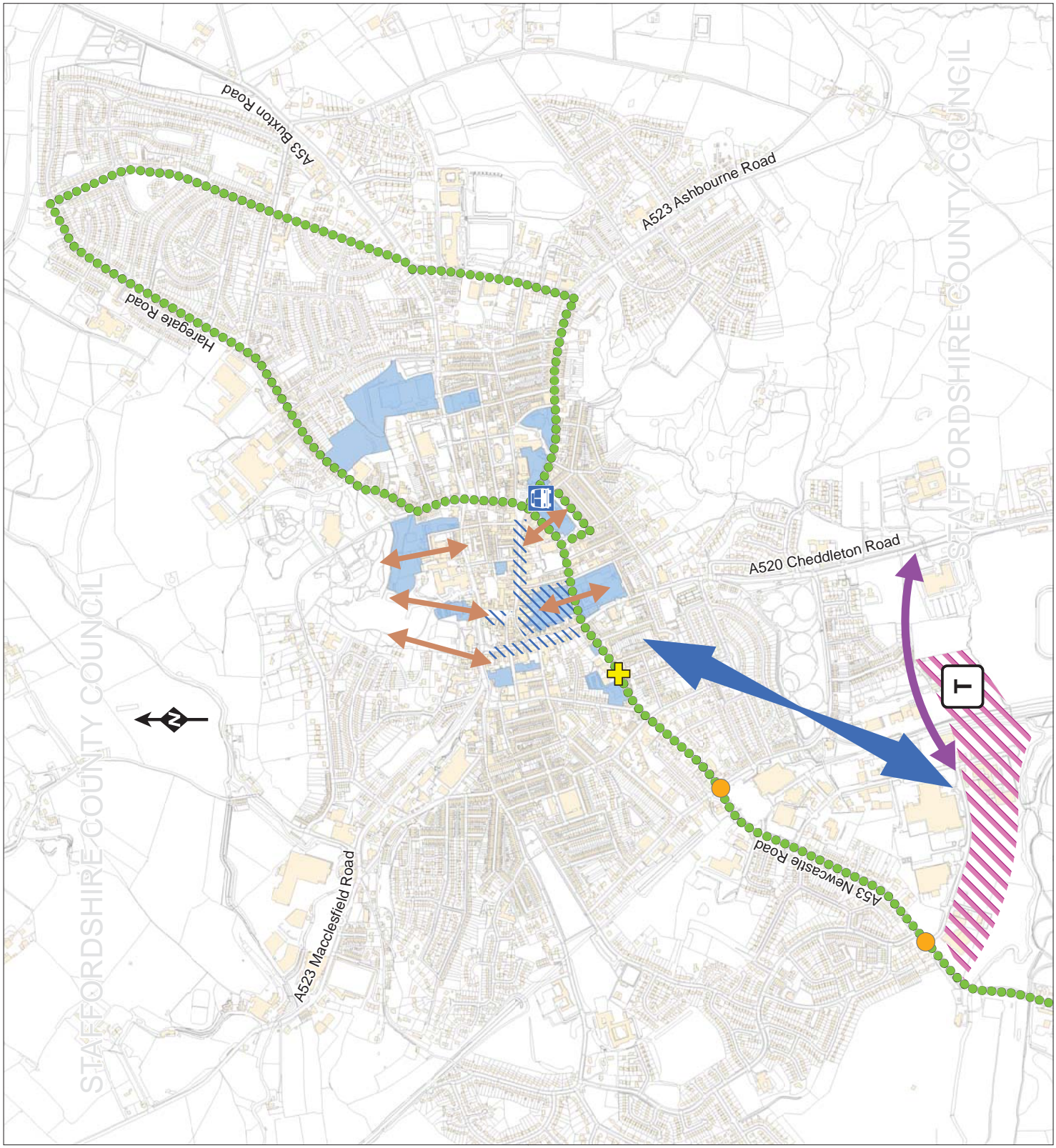
# APPENDIX 1: STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY SUMMARY



# Appendix 2

## Leek Local Transport Package

-  Potential Junction Improvements
-  Reconfigured Bus Station
-  Pedestrian Crossing Facility
-  Potential Tourist Hub with Improved Public Transport Links
-  Potential New Highway Access
-  Improved Connectivity between Cornhill Regeneration Area and Leek Town Centre
-  Improved Pedestrian Links
-  Bus Access Improvements (Leek to Hanley)
-  Cornhill Regeneration Area
-  Potential Development Sites
-  Public Realm Enhancements / Traffic Calming Improvements



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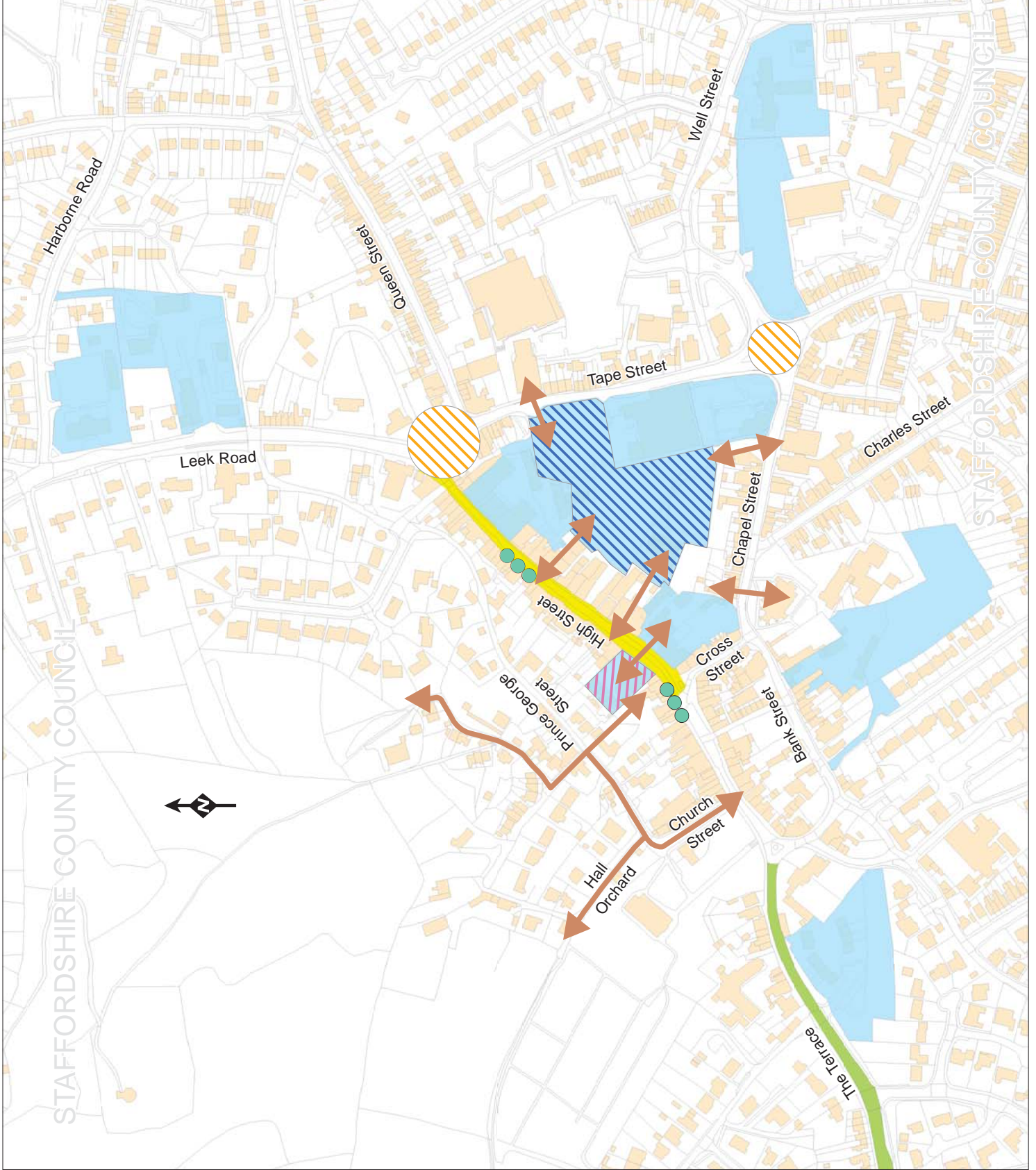
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# Appendix 2

## Cheadle

### Local Transport Package

- Junction Modifications
- Bus Stop Improvements
- Traffic Management and Public Realm Enhancement
- Improved Pedestrian / Cycle Links
- Improved Public Transport Link to Blythe Bridge Rail Station (Service X51)
- Masterplan Development Sites
- Public Realm Enhancements
- Market Place
- Central Regeneration & Car Parking Area



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## Appendix 2

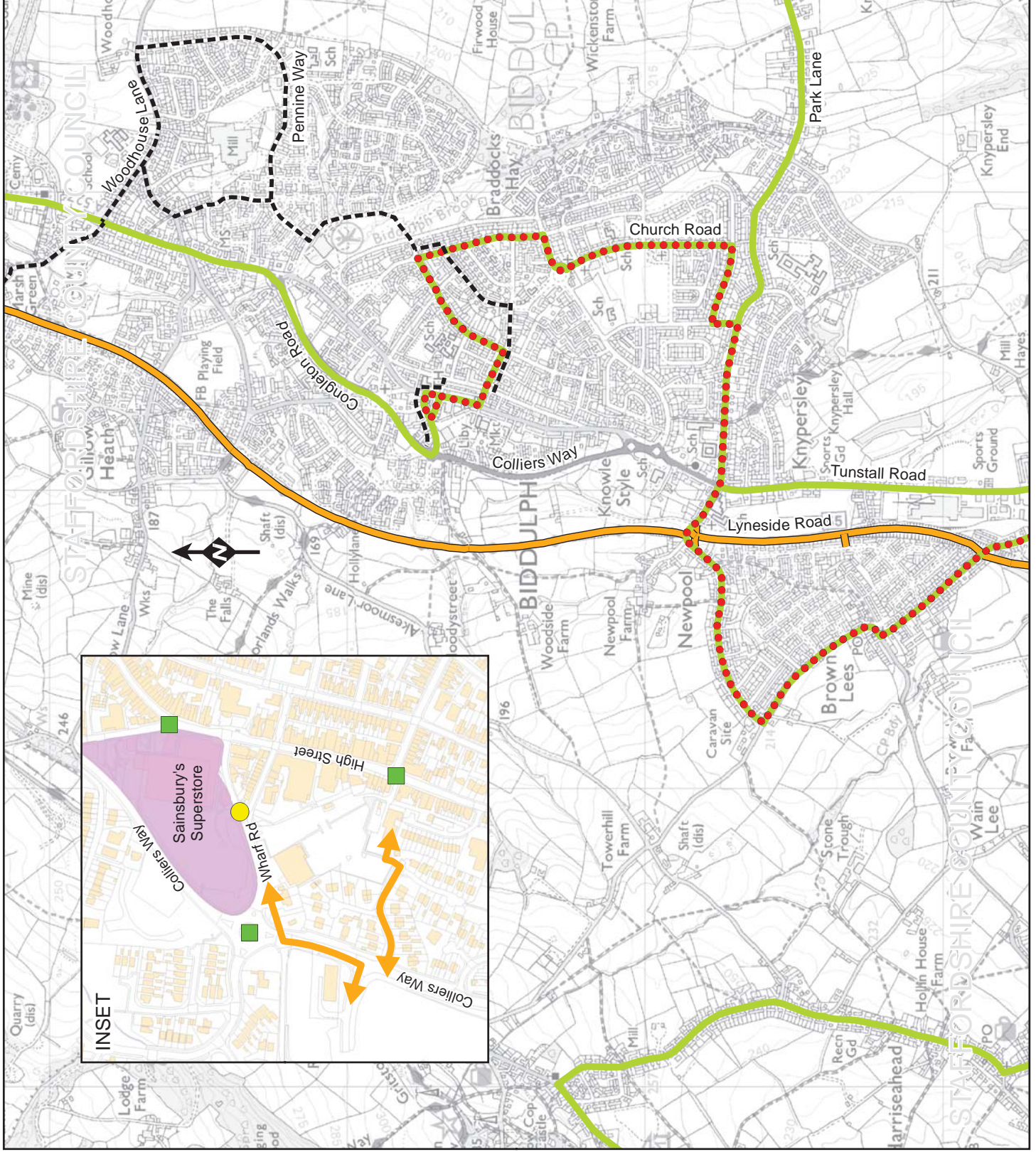
### Biddulph Town Centre Area Action Plan Transport Package

#### Main Plan:

-  NCN55 Cycle Route
-  Proposed Cycle Routes
-  Bus Access Improvements (Biddulph to Hanley)
-  Bus Access Improvements (Biddulph to Macclesfield)

#### Inset:

-  Town Centre Gateway
-  Cycle Parking Facilities
-  Improved Pedestrian Links



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