

## Conclusions

The Huntingdon and Godmanchester Transport Strategy will provide a number of benefits for Huntingdon and Godmanchester, it will:

- provide a clear programme of transport enhancements for the town to 2011
- significantly increase walking and cycling in the town
- improve public transport within the town
- improve access to the town and reduce undesirable through movements
- provide safety measures that will reduce the numbers of accidents.

The strategy gives a clear indication of the transport measures that should be introduced in Huntingdon and Godmanchester up to 2011 and will reflect the responses from the strategy consultation process. The measures in the strategy will ensure Huntingdon and Godmanchester continue to be a pleasant place to live, work and visit.

## DRAFT Wisbech Transport Strategy

### Introduction

This is the Wisbech Transport Strategy. It forms part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan and has been formulated, through consultation, by Wisbech residents, stakeholders and interest groups as well as those who work in and visit the town.

The consultation has been used to both identify that the schemes contained within the strategy are appropriate and to produce a priority order for their implementation. The aim of the strategy is to provide a programme of integrated transport initiatives up until the year 2011 that support the Local Transport Plan objectives and contribute towards the prosperity and well being of the town.

### Background

Situated in the north eastern quadrant of Cambridgeshire in the district of Fenland, Wisbech is one of the larger of the county's Market Towns with a population of around 20,000, the majority of these living within 4 km of the town centre. The strategy area extends beyond the immediate confines of the town, to Tydd St. Giles in the north, Parson Drove and Guyhirn to the west and Upwell to the south with a total strategy area population of some 40,000. The area also encompasses villages and parts of Wisbech to the east, located in the adjacent county of Norfolk.

Wisbech is the third largest shopping centre in the County after Peterborough and Cambridge. The shopping catchment area of the town is quite extensive, serving an area south from the Wash to March and a rural hinterland, which includes parts of Lincolnshire and Norfolk. There are a large proportion of discount chains and charity shops represented in the traditional retail core and prime retail rents in the town have remained static. Health checks suggest that Wisbech is experiencing difficulties as market towns in general come under threat from a concentration of retailing in larger towns. There is still a town centre market that runs weekly on a Thursday and a Saturday, along with a farmers market that has recently commenced operation on a Friday.

To maintain and enhance the economic vitality and environment of Wisbech, it is important that transport and access to and within the town are improved. There are a number of key transport issues that the strategy will address by providing specific schemes and measures for implementation.

## Transport Issues

The town is bypassed by the A47 Trunk Road, the subject of a recent multi-modal study that links Wisbech to Peterborough and Kings Lynn. The A1101, linking Sleaford, Lincolnshire and the north and west with the A47, bisects the town north to south, crossing the River Nene at Freedom bridge in the middle of Wisbech. Whilst there is no railway station in use in Wisbech, Peterborough on the East Coast Mainline, is a major rail link with trains going to and from London (King's Cross), Glasgow/Edinburgh, Leeds and Birmingham at regular intervals. There is also a local train network from Peterborough catering for the nearby towns and cities of Cambridge, March and Kings Lynn. The bus links from Wisbech are good, with regular services between Peterborough and Norwich, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft that pass through the town. Wisbech is also connected to Peterborough by the First Eastern Counties bus service, and local services connect Wisbech to Cambridge, Huntingdon, Ely and Whittlesey. The rural hinterland is served by a number of bus services, although frequency ranges from hourly to daily services. Provision for cycling in the town is poor although the town is relatively flat. The maximum cycling distance in any direction is about 4 km, or about 25 minutes at a steady 10 kph. On this basis, a higher level of cycling than the 3% currently observed in the central area could be expected.

When looking at the travel patterns, 72% of people in Wisbech travel by car or taxi. This is much higher than Cambridge (54%) and in fact larger than all the market towns except St Ives (81%). In terms of the average (based on all Market towns and excluding Cambridge), Wisbech is comparable for cyclists, motorcyclists and buses, but below average for pedestrians. Wisbech is above average for both light and heavy good vehicles, which could in part be explained by the existence of the port and, more significantly, by the A1101 which bisects the town and acts as the A17/A47 link road for westbound traffic.

There is significant potential to improve transport in Wisbech through this strategy. The elements of the strategy set out in this document will achieve this by addressing the key transport problems affecting the town, including:

- the rural nature of the surrounding area, which means that there is a significant reliance on the private car for transport;
- the significant levels of commuting within the town and the close surrounding area, with 75% of people travelling no further than 9 km and 51% travelling up to just 2 km
- 65% of journeys to work are by car
- most of the major employers are in locations central to the urban hub of Wisbech although are poorly served by public transport and cycle facilities
- many roads in Wisbech are busy and there are very few off-street cycle routes
- the town centre has two road bridges crossing the River Nene, Town Bridge and Freedom Bridge. Town Bridge has a weight restriction preventing HCV use, whilst the main A1101 utilises Freedom Bridge that sits at the centre of the town's road network. The five arms Freedom Bridge roundabout is the cause of significant levels of congestion and the scene of a large number of personal injury accidents
- the Market Place, although currently pedestrianised, includes a large number of exemptions within the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) meaning there are often upwards of 30 vehicles in the Market Place. Not surprisingly this level of vehicular mix with pedestrians and cyclists within a confined space leads to significant conflicts.

## Strategy Development

Development of the strategy has been progressed in partnership by the County, District and Town Councils through workshop sessions with key stakeholders, district and county councillors and town council members. These identified a number of key issues, listed below in table A8.40, around traffic, safety, public transport and walking and cycling along with possible solutions and were used to shape the draft strategy.

Following the workshops, the County, District and Town Council worked closely together to identify how the key strategy aims could be addressed and the extent to which the schemes proposed through the workshops can be developed. To complement this work, sessions were held with Norfolk County Council, bus operators in the area, the Isle College, the Wisbech Cycle Forum and the Wisbech Regeneration Partnership to ensure that the main issues had been identified and that proposed solutions were workable. The result of this, in the form of a draft strategy, was subject to extensive stakeholder, member and public consultation to arrive at the Wisbech Market Town Transport Strategy.

## Aims of the Strategy

**“This is a first step in the right direction”**

*Questionnaire response*

The Wisbech Transport Strategy aims to be a comprehensive and integrated transport strategy to address the issues noted above. It has at its core, three fundamental objectives drawn from the Local Transport Plan, namely to:

- make travel safer
- promote integrated and sustainable transport
- manage effective transport networks.

The three objectives encapsulate the aspirations for travel within Wisbech and are shown in Table A8.41.

In addressing these, the strategy aims to contribute towards the economic vitality and viability of the town. It will also contribute towards achieving the Local Transport Plan targets for reducing the number of accidents and stabilising traffic levels, and will assist in addressing wider objectives such as reducing social exclusion, community development, promoting health and enhancing economic vitality. The role of the Local Strategic

**Table A8.40** Issues and suggested solutions

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Suggested Solutions</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict between pedestrians and traffic in the market place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total pedestrianisation with either restricted or unrestricted delivery access only</li> <li>• Allow parking back on Sundays and in the evenings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Public transport information and poor waiting facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of a comprehensive travel leaflet detailing public transport and community transport in the area</li> <li>• Improved information at Wisbech bus stops and bus station</li> <li>• Infrastructure and information improvements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor Public Transport penetration of residential and employment areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension and enhancement of Service 66, Town Circular to include Weasenham Lane and additional residential areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor accessibility to town centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localised traffic removal</li> <li>• enhanced pedestrian routes</li> <li>• improved car park management</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major traffic routes act as a barrier to walking and cycling in the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of additional pedestrian/cycle bridges</li> <li>• Additional crossing facilities at key points on the main routes into the town</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road safety for all modes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road safety measures in problem areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rat-running and speeding on Ramnoth Road, Moneybank and in North Ward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed reducing measures on residential streets</li> <li>• Road safety measures in problem areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traffic speeds on Churchill Road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New access to Isle College on Churchill Road</li> <li>• Additional crossing facilities and traffic control junctions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom Bridge – capacity and accidents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• traffic lights and junction converted to staggered crossroads</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCV Traffic through rural villages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signing and lorry bans</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum Cycle and Pedestrian provision in the town</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of cycle routes including the introduction of two new cycle/pedestrian bridges in the town</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A47 congestion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dualling of the A47 to Peterborough</li> <li>• Provision of a Western Bypass as part of any urban expansion to the west of Wisbech</li> </ul>

Partnership (LSP), along with other stakeholders such as the Regeneration Partnership, will be key in delivering multi-agency solutions to these wider objectives.

In line with this, the strategy links in with a number of schemes and initiatives currently being proposed or introduced in the area. Primary amongst these are the:

- Market Towns Initiative through which £400,000 has been secured from East of England Development Agency (EEDA) to assist regeneration. Transport and related issues identified in the Market Town Initiative health check have been addressed within this draft transport strategy
- Wisbech North Neighbourhood Management Action Plan 2003-2006
- Wisbech Townscape Heritage Initiative Action Plan 2002-2006
- Nene Waterfront Regeneration Initiative that will improve accessibility between the port area and the town centre
- introduction of a quality bus partnership on the Wisbech to March service 68
- County Council's Safer Routes to School programme.

The following sections outline the schemes that form the Wisbech Transport Strategy under the areas of travel that make up the three key Local Transport Plan objectives. In each case, these are prioritised and indicative costs (as at 2002) are given. Detailed scheme costings will be prepared as each scheme within the strategy is developed.

## 1 Making Travel Safer

### Road Safety (including Safer Routes to Schools)

**"We should be serious about speed restrictions"**

**"I live in Moneybank. The traffic and speed is a danger and has to be stopped. It is hard to even cross the road and children walk to school in this and surrounding roads."**

**"I personally cannot wait to see implementation of safety ideas on the key routes and junctions."**

*Questionnaire responses*

Road safety goes beyond just reducing the number of casualties, important though this is. Safer roads encourage people to use other more sustainable forms of transport than the car and contribute towards making the town more attractive to all users.

To achieve the Local Transport Plan targets for casualty reduction, there is a need to implement a comprehensive range of road safety measures. To this end a number of schemes are included within the strategy. These have been chosen because, taken together, they will have the greatest impact in reducing accidents and will also complement other initiatives that promote sustainable transport.

The schemes within the strategy have been drawn up using a combination of the County Council's ranking system (which looks at the worst accident spots in the County and grades them accordingly) and a system which examines the costs of the schemes, how quickly they can be delivered and, following consultation, their relative importance to the local community.

The schemes in the strategy with safety as their primary aim are shown on Map A8.42 and detailed in Table A8.43 below. Schemes aimed principally at improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists are included within the cycling and walking section.

Freedom Bridge roundabout was the subject of a comprehensive feasibility study in 2000/01 that examined the scope for, and potential impacts of, significant safety improvements. This work concluded that any scheme to improve safety would result in a significant increase in vehicular delays and decisions would need to be taken on the acceptability of this impact. Notwithstanding this previous work, given the ongoing safety issues at this location the strategy includes plans for a re-examination and extension of this earlier work to look at the problem in a more strategic manner to identify possible solutions. As the scope of these solutions are not known, no cost allowance has been included in the strategy for implementation of these at this stage. Should achievable solutions be identified they can then be added to the strategy as part of its ongoing review.

As the schemes within the strategy are implemented, and improvements to walking and cycling facilities are seen on the ground, the County Council's Safer Routes to School team will continue to work in partnership with the schools in Wisbech to improve awareness of transport issues and encourage non-car travel for journeys to and from schools. This work may well identify further safety measures that could be implemented. Additionally, residents, parish and town councils, councillors and other parties may also identify further measures that are needed and these can be investigated, and if appropriate, added to the strategy as part of its ongoing review and evolution.

**Table A8.41 Local Transport Plan Objectives**

Local Transport Plan Objective	Theme	Strategy Measures
<b>Make travel safer</b>	Reduce road accidents and improve personal safety for all people using transport in Wisbech, including Safer Routes to Schools	Implement environmental and safety improvements to benefit all travel modes
<b>Promote integrated and sustainable transport</b>	Reduce the impact of traffic in the town Support the economy of the town Maximise accessibility to jobs and services Help improve the health and well-being of people across the whole community	Cycling and walking improvements Market Place Improvements New pedestrian and cycle river crossings Public Transport improvements Improved Car park management Better freight integration road/rail/port
<b>Manage effective transport networks</b>	To maintain and optimise the use of road, public transport, cycling and walking facilities	Market place improvements Car park management and Lorry management

## 2 Developing Integrated and Sustainable Transport

### Cycling and Walking

#### “I would like to see more pedestrian crossings in Wisbech”

#### “Welcome the proposals to develop a network as shown in the consultation” – Sustrans

##### Questionnaire responses

Cycling and walking represent a key part of the Local Transport Plan’s strategy for sustainable travel and consequently form a major part of the strategy for the Market Towns. Cycling and walking also link to the health agenda because of their contribution to reducing the risk of coronary heart disease.

Cycling and walking have common themes. They:

- are modes of travel that can increase the health of the individual
- are non-income dependant modes
- are susceptible to considerations of personal safety
- contribute to, and benefit from, traffic reductions.

In order to promote cycling and walking in Wisbech, there is a need to develop the existing provision and create a comprehensive cycling and walking network. To this end a number of schemes, detailed in Table A8.44 and shown on Map A8.45, have been developed. These have been chosen because they will have the greatest impact in encouraging cycling and walking and promoting sustainable transport.

**Table A8.43** Priorities for Safety Improvements

Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	Freedom Bridge Roundabouts – improvements to approach signing and lining to improve lane discipline and reduce circulatory conflicts and accidents. Extension and re-examination of earlier feasibility study work including improving safety for pedestrians	£50,000
1	Cherry Road – speed-reducing measures and improvements near school entrance	£5,000
2	Churchill Road Safety Scheme – safety improvements to existing junctions, pedestrian phasing and new signalised main access to Isle College	£500,000
3	Lynn Road Safety Scheme – safety improvements to route	£200,000
3	Rural Road Safety Improvements – safety improvements on the A1101, B1166, B1165, C13 & C312 including speed management, lighting and signing as appropriate	£100,000
4	B1101 Friday Bridge/Elm Safety Improvements – safety improvements to route	£200,000
4	Elm Road to A47 – lighting, lining and signing improvements to Norfolk stretch	Norfolk CC Funded
5	St. Augustines Road & Park Avenue – speed-reducing measures and measures to discourage rat-running and HCV use	£100,000
5	Ramnoth Road & Moneybank – speed-reducing measures and measures to discourage rat-running and HCV use	£100,000
5	Elm Road (urban) – speed-reducing features and measures to discourage rat-running between Weasenham Lane and the Flower Pot public house	£50,000
6	Weasenham Lane – safety improvements to address accident black site	£50,000
7	Weasenham Lane/Cromwell Road Junction Improvements – conversion to signalised junction	Developer Funded
8	Bath Road/St. Michaels Avenue and Ollard Avenue Area – introduction of Home Zone to reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian and cycling environment	£170,000
8	Bowthorpe Road – introduction of speed-reducing measures to discourage rat-running	£40,000
8	Lerowe Road – speed-reducing measures and improvements to pedestrian environment	£30,000
8	Barton Road – speed-reducing measures	£50,000
9	Queens Road/Victoria Road Junction Improvement – visibility improvements at junction	£10,000
10	South Brink/Cromwell Road Junction – visibility improvements at junction	£20,000
11	North Ward Home Zone – to reduce vehicle speeds and improve pedestrian environment	£100,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,775,000</b>

**Map A8.42 Proposed Road Safety Schemes**



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**Figure 1 Proposed Road Safety Schemes**

The schemes have been prioritised to reflect deliverability and concentrate on introducing and enhancing key routes that provide the most important links between the main attractions in the town, namely linking residential areas with schools, the town centre and employment areas, including the port. The chosen routes will actively encourage cycling and walking within the town and meet the objectives of reducing the impact of traffic in the town, maximising accessibility by non-car modes and help improve health. They will link into and complement the National Cycle Network and will also benefit from the other measures in the strategy, particularly those that promote safety.

Improving the walking environment will serve to encourage walking as a primary means of transport. However, an improved walking environment will also benefit those that use walking as a secondary means of transport, making it easier for car, public transport users and cyclists to get around the town.

### Pedestrian and Cycle Bridges

**“The proposed pedestrian river crossings are a fantastic idea and can’t happen quickly enough”**

#### *Questionnaire responses*

The severance caused by the River Nene to cross-town movements by all modes is significant. However, cyclists and pedestrians are particularly affected, both by the poor walking and cycling environment at the existing road river crossings and by the diversion length necessary to access these crossing points.

Wisbech’s main employment areas, the port area, Weasenham Lane industrial area and the central retail area are all located on the eastern side of the river as is the bus station, hospital and Isle College. Similarly, destinations such as the old market area, a food superstore, the leisure centre and the West Parade industrial area are located on the western side. Given the current poor environment for walking and cycling, including the poor accident record of the Freedom Bridge area, not surprisingly the car is currently the most convenient, and some would argue, safest option for crossing the river.

To address this, two pedestrian/cycle bridges are proposed as part of the strategy and a third bridge is recognised as offering benefits in the longer term. These would form an integral part of the cycle and pedestrian network and offer a realistic alternative to the private car for people to access employment, shopping and leisure facilities; providing some level of relief to the current congestion in the Freedom Bridge area. The precise locations of these bridges will need to be the subject of more detailed study work although indicative locations, one between Town Bridge and Freedom Bridge as proposed within the Nene Waterfront Regeneration Initiative, and one south of Town Bridge landing in the vicinity of Coalwharf Road, are shown on Map A8.44 and detailed in Table A8.46. In the longer term, an additional pedestrian/cycle bridge to the north of Freedom Bridge should be investigated.

The two proposed bridges are considered a crucial element of the cycle and walking network as they remove the significant barrier of the river and allow direct movement between residential, employment and retail locations on either side of the river. The bridges will maximise accessibility by sustainable modes, providing opportunities for all sections of the community, including schoolchildren, to walk and cycle more. The scale of funding required to deliver these bridges is such, however, that funding solely from the Local Transport Plan is unlikely to be sufficient. Accordingly, the bridges have not been placed within the main priority ordering for the strategy. Sources of funding, whether they be from the Local Transport Plan, District Council, commercial development, regeneration initiatives or European

programmes, will need to be identified before these schemes can go ahead.

### Public Transport

**“Many people do not have a car and have serious mobility problems. There are whole areas of the town which are nowhere near a bus route”**

**“Fully support improvements, long overdue”**

**“The need for better information of the public transport services available is a longstanding problem. At last the problem is recognised”**

#### *Questionnaire responses*

#### Public Transport – Bus Services

Increasing bus travel is a key aim of the Local Transport Plan and the Bus Strategy for Cambridgeshire to reduce the amount of private car traffic and contribute towards improving the environment. In addition, for many people, public transport is already a vitally important method of transport that ensures access to essential services such as health and education. Improvements to public transport can therefore assist in ensuring a more inclusive society.

The Local Transport Plan has three objectives relating to bus services in the Market Towns, which are reflected and further developed in the County Council’s Bus Strategy. These are:

- enhancing links with main cities and towns
- improving bus provision within and between towns
- providing bus connections with railheads.

The strategy contains targets for increasing the level of public transport services and usage in Wisbech. These will be achieved through a combination of service improvements, enhanced infrastructure and enhanced information provision. The proposed improvements to bus services, shown in Table A8.47 and on Map A8.48, comprise an extension of the Wisbech town circular service to provide greater penetration of the residential areas in the North Ward and in the Walsoken area and also to serve the southern residential and employment areas of the town. Such a service could be operated by two buses to provide a half-hourly frequency. Delivery of this significant service enhancement is aspirational at this stage and will depend on sources of funding being identified, either through innovative mechanisms using capital funding that would be sufficient to fund the enhancements for a three-year period or developer or other external funding.

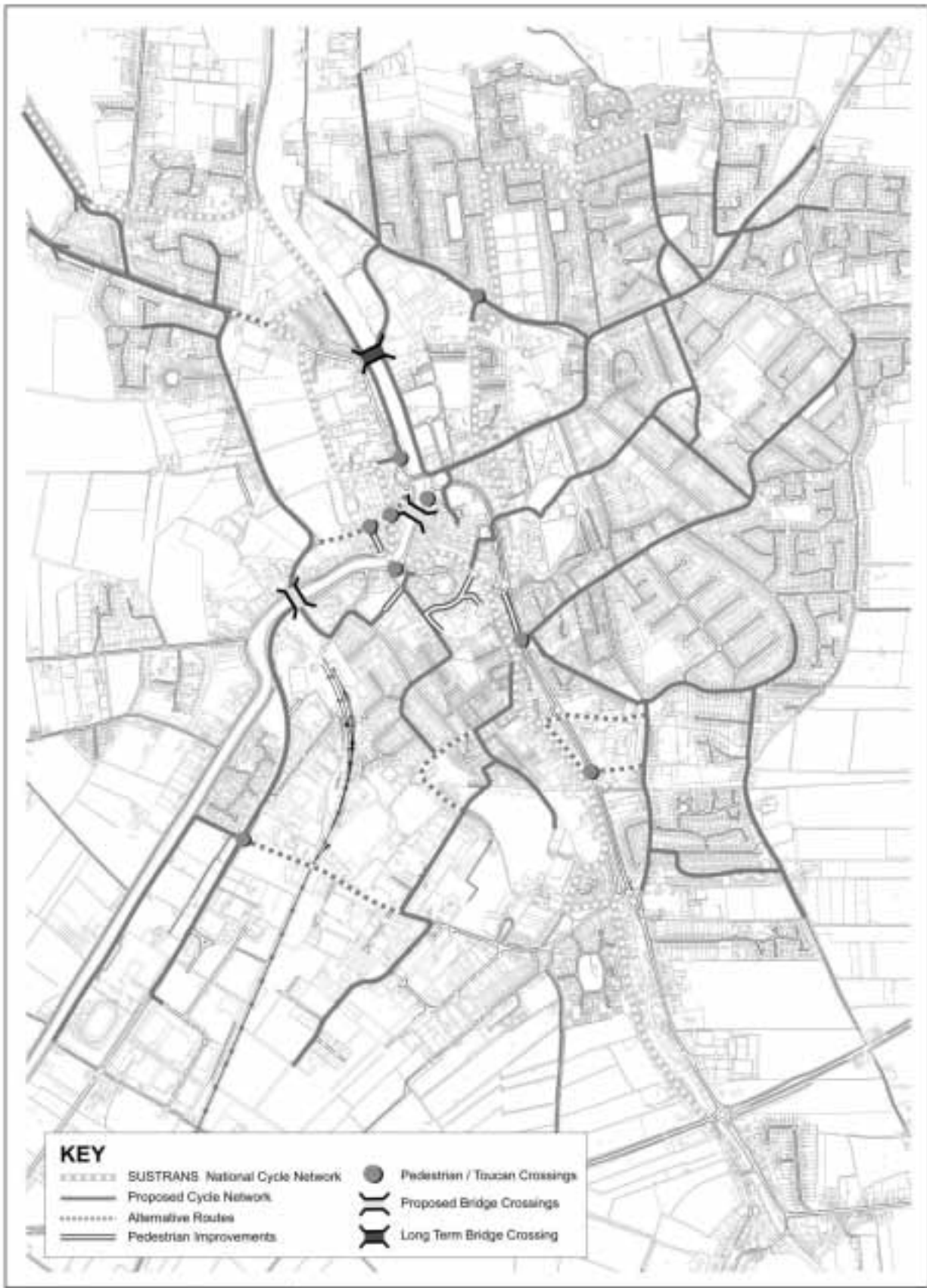
**Table A8.46 Proposed river bridges**

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Pedestrian/Cycle bridge between Town Bridge and Freedom Bridge – linking Hill Street/Market Place shopping area with the Old Market and North End commercial area	£500,000
Pedestrian/Cycle bridge south of Town Bridge – linking the western side of the town with the Cromwell Road and Weasenham Lane industrial areas	£500,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,000,000</b>

**Table A8.44 Proposed cycling and walking measures**

Priority	Scheme – Routes	Cost
1	<b>Route 1– Agricultural College/Sandy Lane to Town Centre.</b> This route connects up the southeast residential areas with the Town Centre using part of the existing Sustrans route. This route will be signed on-road and its precise alignment will need to take into account plans to alter the Isle College access point	£50,000
1	<b>Pedestrianisation of Exchange Square</b> – prevention of vehicles to facilitate safe pedestrian/cycle access	£10,000
1	<b>Pedestrianisation of Post Office Lane</b> – prevention of vehicles to improve pedestrian access between town centre and Somers Rd car park	£10,000
2	<b>Route 2 – Port Area and North Ward to Town Centre.</b> This route provides links between residential areas in North Ward and the Industrial Port area and the Town Centre. It aims to integrate with the Port Redevelopment plans that propose that sections of Nene Parade are turned into a boardwalk. The remainder of the route will be signed on-road. The route will require the Lynn Road crossing to be upgraded and a new crossing put in place on Mount Pleasant road. This route has the potential to connect up with route 6 if a new bridge crossing is constructed	£75,000
2	<b>Route 3 – Walsoken to Weasenham Lane Industrial Estate.</b> This route provides an important link between a large residential area and a large employment area. The route would be signed on-road along Norwich Road, leading to a Toucan crossing over Churchill Road and then signed on-road again through to Weasenham Lane. An additional route that links in the town centre has also been considered. This route would also see improvements made to Weasenham Lane for cyclists	£40,000
3	<b>Route 4 – Lynn Road.</b> This route connects the northeast residential areas with the town centre. It accesses the town centre at two points, firstly via Lynn Road and Freedom Bridge and secondly via Wisbech Park, Blackfriars Crossing and Falcon Road. The main route along Lynn Road would be a 3 m-segregated path. The feeder routes would be signed on-road and a dual-use path in operation throughout Wisbech Park. This route requires both additional crossing facilities and improvements to be made to those that already exist. A Toucan crossing over Churchill Road at Blackfriars Crossing is needed	£250,000
4	<b>Route 5 – A47 to Town Centre Via River Nene.</b> This route aids pedestrians and cyclists getting from the A47 into the Town Centre. It also connects to Weasenham Lane (Route 3) and the Tesco/McDonalds development. It requires a new crossing at Weasenham Lane/Cromwell Road which already has some funding. The route from this junction to the Town Centre will be on a 3m wide segregated path	£150,000
5	<b>Route 6 – Leverington to Town Centre.</b> This route connects Leverington with the Town Centre, with the option of also connecting to Weasenham Lane if a new river crossing was constructed between Coalwharf Road and Chapel Road. Two alternative routes from Leverington are recommended, one via Sea Bank and one beside the B1169 between Little Dowgate and Church Rd, Leverington	£150,000
5	<b>National Cycle Route 1 – Walton Road</b> – measures to reduce traffic speeds and improve cycling environment	£50,000
Priority	Scheme – Support Infrastructure	Cost
1	Town Bridge – replacement of railings with bollards to improve cycle safety or provision of on-carriageway cycle lane	£20,000
1	Advanced cycle stop lines – implementation of advanced stop lines at various signalised junctions	£20,000
2	Toucan Crossing on Mount Pleasant Road – to assist pedestrian and cycle movements	Developer provided
2	Town Bridge Pedestrian phasing – incorporate pedestrian crossing into existing signalised junction	£75,000
2	Cycle Parking – covered provision at bus station, Market Place, educational establishments and other key destinations	£40,000
3	Blackfriars crossing improvement – to assist pedestrian and cycle crossing movements on Churchill Rd	£100,000
3	Pedestrian crossing on Nene Quay – linking into School Lane/Scrimshaws Passage (£15,000 developer funded)	Developer funded
3	Pedestrian crossing on Chapel Road – linking into Exchange Square area	£20,000
4	Pedestrian crossing on North Street – linking Oil Mill Lane and Old Market areas	£20,000
4	Toucan crossing on Churchill Road – to assist pedestrian and cycle crossing movements and as secondary function to reduce vehicle speeds on Churchill Road	£50,000
5	Church Terrace Car Park link to Town Centre – improvement of this important link	£20,000
6	Norfolk Street Pedestrian improvements – build-outs to assist pedestrian movements	£25,000
7	Freedom Bridge (north) Pedestrian crossing – pedestrian and cycle provision across A1101 (development related)	Developer provided
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,175,000</b>

**Map A8.45 Proposed Cycling and Walking Network**



KEY			
	Sustrans National Cycle Network		Pedestrian / Tricaran Crossings
	Proposed Cycle Network		Proposed Bridge Crossings
	Alternative Routes		Long Term Bridge Crossing
	Pedestrian Improvements		

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Figure

Close working with bus operators will be integral to achieving service improvements for Wisbech. The bus industry has recognised the benefits of fully accessible vehicles and are taking the opportunity when renewing stock to purchase low-floor, accessible vehicles. Indeed, the major operator in Wisbech has made significant investment in such vehicles to a level where 50% of the typical twelve buses an hour arriving at the bus station are low-floor easy access vehicles, a figure well ahead of the normal position for a small market town in the UK. Over time, therefore, it is anticipated that the majority of the bus fleet will meet this specification. Notwithstanding this, as part of any discussions with bus companies over provision of service, the opportunity to bring forward use of low-floor, fully accessible vehicles will be explored along with opportunities for development of Quality Bus Partnerships, and taken forward where appropriate.

Although the majority of settlements in the rural hinterland around Wisbech are served by at least one service per day, the size of these settlements means that they are unlikely to ever see significantly enhanced commercial bus services. Community transport schemes, such as FACT, will therefore continue to play a key role in ensuring that transport needs are catered for. The strategy, in acknowledging this key role, will seek to support these services through promotion of their existence and the services they offer.

**Public Transport – Improvements to Facilities**

The provision of additional bus services on their own is unlikely to lead to significant increases in patronage. Public perception of the services, the provision of accurate and easily comprehensible timetable information and provision of good quality waiting facilities have a major role to play. At the most basic level, it is vitally important that potential bus passengers know that services are available which will cater for their needs.

The quality of bus stop facilities in Wisbech is generally poor, with significant numbers of stops being without even a basic bus stop flag. Many stops do not have any timetable information, or even destination information, and other facilities such as litterbins are often lacking. The County Council will be replacing bus stop flags and providing timetable information at all stops as an integral part of this strategy. Bus shelters are being provided at many stops as part of the Market Towns Initiative. As part of ongoing work on timetabling, it is planned that each stop will also have timetable information tailored to its individual services.

The County Council have aspirations to introduce real time bus information provision within Cambridgeshire. Work is currently underway on bringing this forward with a view to having on-street operation within the County in 2004/05. As part of the roll-out of the system opportunities for its use in and around Wisbech will be fully explored, and, where considered beneficial, implemented.

The bus station in Wisbech is well used and acts as a local hub for bus services. However, surveys have shown that 54% of buses using the facility do not use the correct bays and that bus service information boards are poor. In addition, conflict between buses, taxis and pedestrians has been an ongoing problem. This conflict

needs to be resolved. The strategy, therefore, includes a commitment to work with the bus operators and the owners of Horsefair to improve the working of the bus station, including its layout and access and egress arrangements onto Freedom Bridge roundabout, improve passenger information provision and identify the safest and most appropriate manner in which taxi and bus service access can be accommodated, including exploring options for relocation of the taxi rank facilities, possibly to the Empire area. Any such changes would be subject to consultation with the parties involved and some would require complementary signing improvements. Details of improvements proposed to date as part of the strategy are shown in Table A8.49.

**Market Place**

**“Vehicles and pedestrians do not mix. Under the present system pedestrians take their lives into their hands when visiting the area”**

**“I am fed up with shopping in the ‘pedestrianised precinct’ and being hooted by car drivers as if I should not be there.”**

**“Re-introduce short term parking in the evenings”**

**“If parking allowed in the evenings we would use towns restaurants and pubs”**

*Questionnaire responses*

Effective operation of the Market Place is essential to the economic well-being of Wisbech. The current pedestrianised area includes a large number of exceptions within the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This contributes to confusion around what constitutes legitimate use and results in significant vehicular usage leading to conflict between vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. In its current guise no mode enjoys priority and hence the benefits offered by the current scheme are limited.

Discussions with elected members at town, district and county level, and with stakeholders, demonstrated a universal view that this current confusion needed to be addressed although there was disagreement about a preferred way forward. Three options for the Market Place were therefore the subject of public consultation and these revealed an overwhelming support for pedestrianisation with the favoured option being:-

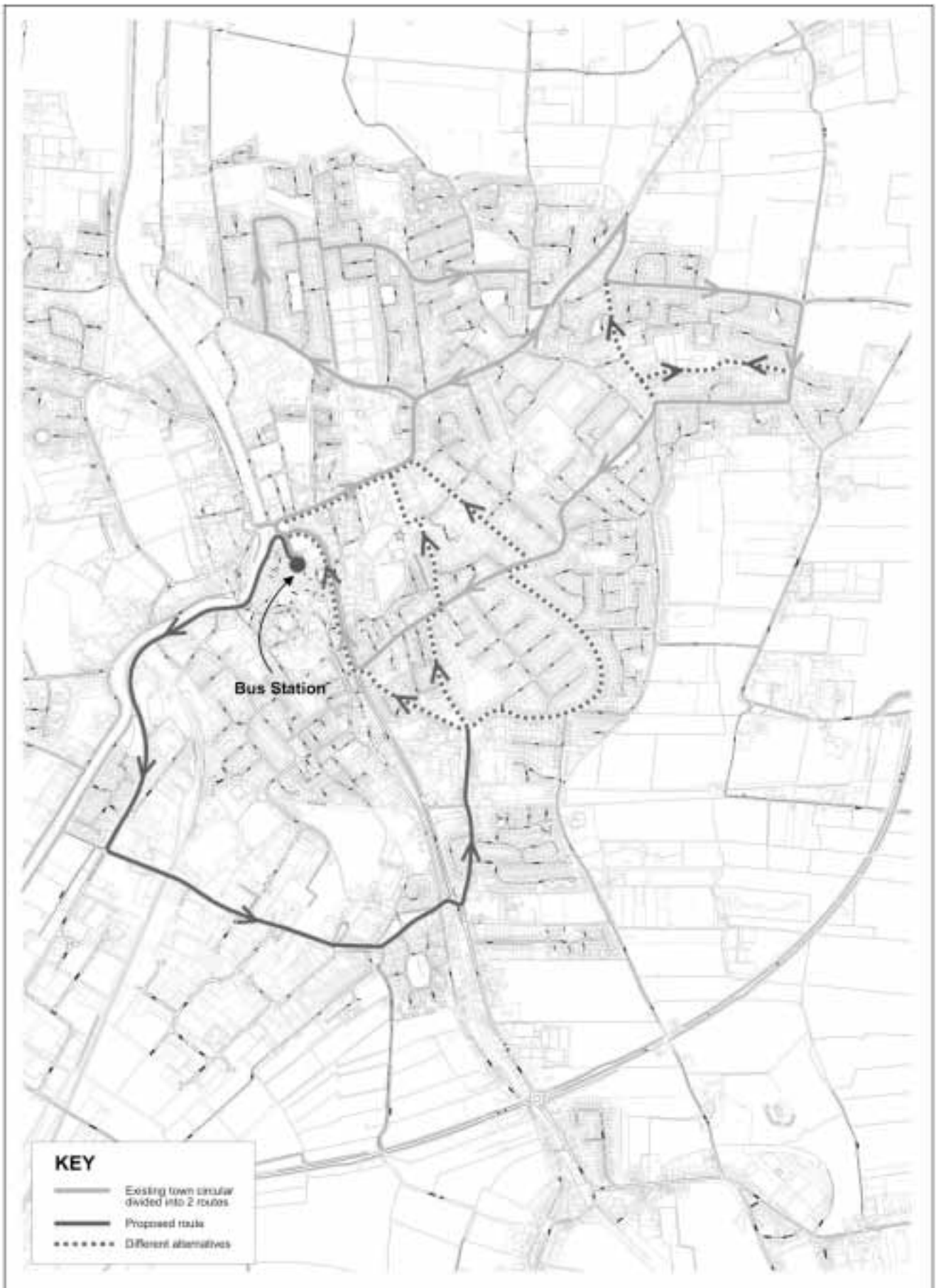
Pedestrianisation with delivery access restricted to certain times, for example before 10am and after 4pm or other such similar combination coupled with improved pedestrian links to car parks, including pedestrianisation of Post Office Lane detailed earlier. The 6 existing disabled parking spaces will be relocated to The Crescent, with additional disabled parking spaces also provided at Castle Square, adjacent to The Crescent. This option would result in complete pedestrianisation of the shopping area for a proportion of the trading day and enable, for example, eateries to provide continental style on pavement eating facilities.

The exact details of the scheme will be subject to detail design but it is strongly recommended, given past enforcement problems, that the solution is self-enforcing, utilising for example, barriers or bollards. In bringing this scheme forward,

**Table A8.47 Proposed bus service improvements**

Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	Extension and enhancement of Service No. 66, Town Circular to better penetrate North Ward, Walsoken, Weasenham Lane and additional residential areas	£375,000

**Map A8.48 Proposed Bus Service Improvement**



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**Table A8.49 Proposed improvements to bus facilities**

Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	<b>Integrated Information</b> – A clear, concise leaflet detailing bus service provision, community transport provision and service provider contact details will be produced for the area including details of local taxi companies	£15,000
1	<b>Information improvement at Bus station</b> – clear signing and timetable information – linked to bus operators code of conduct regarding bus bay usage	£25,000
2	<b>Rolling programme of improvements to bus stops in Wisbech.</b> Improvements at individual stops will include flag provision and timetable information	£30,000
2	<b>Implementation of Real-time Bus Information</b> – implementation within urban area (timing dependent on County roll-out)	£150,000
3	<b>Bus station management</b> – exploration of scope for, and implementation of, multi-agency funded post	Costs incl. within market place
3	<b>Bus Station Improvements</b> – including improvements to access, egress onto Freedom Bridge Roundabout, bus/taxi conflict and waiting facilities	£160,000
		<b>£380,000</b>

**Table A8.50 Market Place Improvements**

Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	<b>Pedestrianisation with restricted delivery use</b> – environmental enhancements, disabled parking relocation and enhancement, physical enforcement of time restriction, contribution towards town centre ranger, evening parking arrangements	£75,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>£75,000</b>

Careful attention will need to be given to ensuring that the delivery timing restrictions do not adversely affect the economic vitality of the town. Accordingly, any scheme will need to be developed working closely with local traders. Similarly, revised parking arrangements on the Crescent will need to be developed in consultation with residents and disabled groups.

Daily management of the town centre area and the car parks through appointment of a town centre ranger with responsibilities for the pedestrian area, bus station area, market and the town's car parks is considered to offer benefits to the town. This role could also include responsibility for operation of any bollards or barriers introduced as part of the scheme. It is envisaged that such a post could be funded through a multi-agency approach providing funding for, say, 3 years to enable the benefits to be fully assessed. Alternatively, should Fenland District Council decide to implement car park charging within the town the town centre ranger role could be linked to these enforcement/management functions.

Public consultation also demonstrated considerable support for allowing evening parking in the Market Place. Again, such a scheme will need careful design with particular consideration given to ensuring that the introduction of vehicles to the area does not interfere with the setting up of market stalls in the early morning and that the opportunities for criminal acts/anti-social behaviour or acts of vandalism in the town centre are minimised.

### 3 Managing and Operating Efficient Transport Networks

#### Car Parks

##### “Fine words which need to be followed by actions”

##### Questionnaire responses

There are some 1405 formal parking spaces serving Wisbech of which only 37 are for disabled users. Surveys show that at most times there is more than sufficient car parking capacity within the town and that most users find a space within three minutes. However, the lack of formal designation of car parks means that those car parking spaces closest to the town centre tend to be full first, principally with long-stay users who work in the town. This means that those on who the towns' traders rely most, shoppers, have to park furthest away from the retail centre.

It is important for the economic vitality of the town that shoppers are not discouraged from shopping in Wisbech. It is therefore essential that they are afforded maximum accessibility to the retail centre, and not forced to use those car parks furthest away. Complementary to this is the provision of measures that enable those who might use alternative forms of travel to the car to do so. To this end, the strategy has two strands:

- to enable a more efficient use of car parking provision close to the retail centres to ensure that disabled users and shoppers can easily access the retail centre and are afforded priority over long-stay users

**Table A8.51 Car Parking Management Proposals: Designation & Disabled Space Provision**

Car Park	Designation	Disabled Spaces
Chapel Road	Long-Stay	5
Church Terrace	Short & Long-Stay	40
Coalwharf Road	Coach Parking	N/A
North Street	Long-Stay	0
Onyx Court	Long-Stay	2
Park Street	Long-Stay	2
Somers Road	Short & Long-Stay	26
West Street	Long-Stay	0
Stermyn Street	Short-Stay	2
Old Market	Short-Stay	5
Multi-Story	Short & Long-Stay	9
The Crescent	Disabled & Short-Stay	12
Castle Square	Disabled only	6
<b>Cost</b>		<b>£20,000</b>

- to introduce measures to improve the environment for pedestrians and cyclists, allowing car park users to move easily between the car parks and the attractions in the town. These are discussed elsewhere in this strategy.

It is essential to consider the split of short-stay/long-stay parking that would best cater for the town centres requirements, mindful of the need to avoid prejudicing the success of other measures contained within the strategy. Proposals for additional disabled parking and the designation of specific car parks for short and long-stay parking are detailed in Table A8.51 below and shown on Map A8.52. In addition, it is proposed that the area of land currently used for car parking on Coalwharf Road is considered for designation for coach parking/dual use, providing a much needed facility on the southern side of the town to complement the provision to the north of the town on Harecroft Road.

Fenland District Council are in the process of commissioning a study to understand the likely impacts and potential benefits of charging for car parking within the Fenland district. The outcome of this study is expected in autumn 2003, following which the

District Council will discuss its findings and decide whether further consideration of this issue is warranted. Charges, should they be introduced, could complement this strategy by providing revenue to enforce car parking regulation as well as providing funding for car park improvements such as surfacing, lighting and CCTV enhancements, leading to adoption of secured car park status for the towns car parks.

### Urban Traffic Control System

An Urban Traffic Control (UTC) System for Wisbech may bring benefits for the town by coordinating and linking all traffic signals and optimising green times based on vehicular flows. This can help to minimise the impact of providing pedestrian and cycle green time on vehicular traffic and could help, to an extent, in mitigating the impacts of providing additional pedestrian and cycle signalised crossing facilities in Wisbech, thereby aiding accessibility by all modes of transport. As additional crossings are introduced in the town, a full investigation of the likely benefits of a UTC system will be needed prior to any such system being introduced.

### Lorry Management

#### “Better signing of lorry routes and weight limits as suggested are an urgent requirement”

##### Questionnaire response

The proximity of Wisbech and the surrounding settlements to the strategic road network means that effective HCV management is essential to ensure this traffic is routed in the most appropriate manner and that the use of inappropriate routes is minimised. There are currently problems with HCV traffic bypassing the A47 and A1101, passing through rural settlements on a regular basis to avoid congested points on the network. This, understandably, raises both safety and environmental concerns. Similarly, within the urban area HCV traffic continues to use inappropriate routes such as South Brink and residential streets such as Ramnoth Road.

To address this the strategy includes provision for an HCV signing review and implementation of revised signing as appropriate, weight limits and where necessary physical restrictions to ensure compliance. Weight limit locations and any necessary physical measures will be subject to individual investigation and consultation prior to implementation.

**Table A8.53 Network Efficiency Management Proposals**

Scheme	Cost
<b>UTC System</b> – Urban Traffic Control system to link and co-ordinate traffic signals in the town and optimise performance.	
	<b>£150,000</b>

**Table A8.54 HCV Management Proposals**

Priority	Scheme	Cost
<b>1</b>	<b>Signing Review</b> – review of current HCV signing and implementation of new signage to ensure use of most appropriate routes.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Restrictions</b> – imposition of weight limits and physical measures where necessary.	
		<b>£30,000</b>



The potential role of Wisbech's port and currently disused freight line in achieving a switch from the road movement of freight to rail and shipping movements is recognised. However, the ability of this strategy to affect such a switch is negligible given that freight movement modes are determined by the commercial sector on the grounds of cost and convenience. That said, it is important that the choice option remains so that if rail and shipping movements become more economically viable distributors can take advantage of this. The strategy therefore strongly advocates that the existing private disused rail lines should be protected from removal where possible and supports the continued economic development of Wisbech Port.

### Western Bypass

A Wisbech Western Bypass has been suggested as a way of addressing road traffic issues in the town, including congestion and road safety. The scope for major on-line improvements to the route through Wisbech is impractical given that it passes through the urban centre of the town.

Notwithstanding that delivery times for such a major piece of infrastructure are typically in the order of ten to twelve years, and hence falls outside the timescale of this strategy, the potential for this bypass scheme to offer benefits in the longer term for the town of Wisbech has been investigated.

The volume of existing traffic expected to transfer to such a bypass has been estimated by consultants at approximately 2000 vehicles per 12-hour day, based on roadside interview survey data collected on the A47 as part of the multi-modal study. However, the degree of relief that a Western Bypass might afford the town centre depends on whether A1101 through traffic could be encouraged, by traffic management measures on the urban stretches of the A1101, to route via the A47 and then via the western bypass.

The transfer of traffic to a Western Bypass could be expected to bring environmental benefits to the urban corridors relieved, in terms of safety, accessibility, integration, air quality, noise and visual intrusion. Indeed, much of the relieved route between the A1101 and A47 along the bank of the River Nene forms part of the conservation area of the town. A Western Bypass would also remove vehicles passing through a number of accident blackspots and improve accessibility to the wider road network for the communities located to the west of Wisbech, such as Leverington and Gorefield.

There are, however, a number of disadvantages to a Western Bypass including:

- a significant increase in route length of some 2 km for traffic transferring to the Western Bypass from the current A1101 route through the town centre
- the modest number of existing vehicle trips likely to transfer, coupled with a construction cost in excess of £10-12 million is unlikely to make for a strong economic case and hence would not attract funding from central government
- some 5 hectares of high-grade agricultural land would be lost to the bypass, and the bypass alignment would have a significant visual impact on the flat rural landscape.

That said, Regional Planning Guidance and the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan recognise the importance of focusing development in the main market towns, such as Wisbech. In the longer term, this may lead to urban expansion on the western side of Wisbech. Such development may, in the longer term and post 2016, substantially increase the number of vehicles likely to use a western bypass and would also be able to contribute significantly to its construction cost. Accordingly, subject to such development

coming forward, it is considered that the potential benefits offered by a western bypass maybe deliverable in the longer term, funded from specific LTP sources and the private sector.

### Delivering Social Inclusion

A number of measures in the strategy will assist in delivering a more inclusive transport system for Wisbech and the surrounding area. These include:

- the careful introduction of road safety measures to make it easier and safer for all sectors of the community to get around Wisbech
- additional disabled parking conveniently located
- pedestrian and cycle enhancements in the form of new and improved routes
- support for public transport and community transport schemes through infrastructure improvements, service enhancements and improvements to information provision
- the introduction of taxis with wheelchair access – now a legal requirement for new taxi licences
- recognition that, given the rural hinterland served by Wisbech, for some visitors to the town the car remains the most viable mode. Improved pedestrian links to car parks and designations to afford priority to short-stay shoppers are therefore included to ensure accessibility is maximised.

As individual schemes from this strategy are brought forward, the needs of all sectors of the community will be considered.

## Implementing the Strategy

### Programme

The programme of schemes within the strategy will reflect, where practicable, the priorities arising through public consultation combined with a realistic timescale for the implementation of such schemes. The overall programme, based on the previous sections, is shown in Table A8.55 and illustrates how the measures will be delivered to provide an integrated package addressing the needs of Wisbech. It is important to note that it may be appropriate to deliver some schemes, or parts of schemes, earlier than prioritised in order to take advantage of external funding opportunities.

### Funding

Funding for the strategy will need to come from a variety of sources. These include the Local Transport Plan, developer contributions, District Council contributions, EEDA Market Towns Initiative funding, European Objective 2b funding and other sources as appropriate. The pace at which the strategy can be delivered will depend upon the availability of this funding. By providing a clear statement of the schemes for which there is public support in the town, this strategy aims to provide a clear platform for securing a wide range of funding sources.

### Targets

The measures within this strategy are consistent with the Local Transport Plan objectives of achieving stability in peak hour traffic flow and a positive change in modal split in the Market Towns. To measure the performance of this strategy, a series of targets, in line with those in the LTP and the Governments Ten Year plan, are included. These are:

- a 10% increase in public transport use by 2011
- doubling the number of cyclists by 2011

- a 10% increase in walking by 2011
- reduce the countywide annual road casualty target total to 3000 by 2010.

If met, these targets will contribute significantly to the success of the Local Transport Plan.

## Conclusions

**“Do it and do it now. This is a great initiative”**

**“To happen as soon as possible all this”**

**“Can this programme happen soon? If not why not?”**

*Questionnaire responses*

The Transport Strategy will provide a number of benefits for Wisbech, it will:

- provide a clear programme of transport enhancements for the town and surrounding hinterland to 2011
- improve accessibility to Wisbech from the surrounding areas
- significantly increase walking and cycling in the town
- improve public transport within the town
- improve access to Wisbech town centre and links to car parks within the town
- provide safety measures that will reduce the numbers of accidents.

The strategy will give a clear indication of the transport measures that should be introduced in Wisbech up to 2011 and will reflect the responses from the strategy consultation process. The measures in the strategy will contribute to the economic and environmental regeneration of Wisbech, ensuring that it continues to be a pleasant place to live, work and visit.

**Table A8.55 Strategy Programme**

<b>1</b>	Public Transport	Comprehensive “all in one” public transport information leaflet Bus Stop Improvements, Bus Station Improvements (part)
	Walking & Cycling	Advanced cycle stop lines at junctions, Pedestrianisation of Exchange Square and Post Office Lane, Chapel Road Pedestrian Crossing Route 1, Cycle Parking, Removal of railings on Town Bridge Studies: Route 2, Route 4 & Route 3
	Making Travel Safer	Freedom Bridge roundabout, Cherry Road Studies: Freedom Bridge, Churchill Rd, Lynn Rd & Friday Bridge/Elm safety schemes
	Managing Effective Networks	Market Place Improvements, Car Park Management
<b>Total Phase 1</b>		<b>£490,000</b>
<b>2</b>	Public Transport	Bus Stop Improvements, Extension to Service 66 Real-time Bus Information provision
	Walking & Cycling	Route 2 & Route 4 (part), Blackfriars crossing improvement, Town Bridge pedestrian phasing, Church Terrace Link Improvements, North Street Pedestrian Crossing, Nene Quay Pedestrian Crossing, Cycle Parking Studies: Route 5 & Route 6
	Making Travel Safer	Lynn Rd safety scheme, Friday Bridge/Elm safety scheme Studies: Rural road safety scheme, St. Augustines Road & Park Avenue scheme, Ramnoth Road/Moneybank scheme and Elm Road (urban)
	Managing Effective Networks	HCV Signing review HCV restriction review
<b>Total Phase 2</b>		<b>£1,150,000</b>
<b>3</b>	Public Transport	Bus Stop Improvements, Bus station Improvements Extension to Service 66, Real-time Bus Information provision
	Walking/Cycling	Route 4 (remainder) & Route 3, Toucan crossing on Churchill Rd, Norfolk Street Imps, Cycle Parking
	Making Travel Safer	Churchill Road Safety scheme (part), Rural road safety Improvements, St. Augustines Road & Park Avenue scheme, Ramnoth Road/Moneybank scheme & Elm Road (urban) scheme Studies: Weasenham Lane & Bath Road/St. Michaels Avenue and Ollard Avenue, Bowthorpe Road, Leroy Road & Barton Road
	Managing Effective Networks UTC feasibility	HCV signing scheme HCV restrictions scheme
<b>Total Phase 3</b>		<b>£1,190,000</b>
<b>4+</b>	Public Transport	Bus Stop Improvements Extension to Service 66
	Walking & Cycling	Route 5 & Route 6 & National Cycle Route 1 (Walton Road)
	Making Travel Safer	Churchill Road Safety Scheme, Weasenham Lane Safety Scheme & Bath Road/St. Michaels Avenue and Ollard Avenue scheme, Bowthorpe Road and Lerowe Road schemes, Barton Road, Queens Rd/Victoria Road junction Improvement, South Brink/Cromwell Road Junction improvement, North Ward Home Zone
	Managing Effective Networks	UTC Implementation
<b>Total Phase 4+</b>		<b>£1,150,000</b>
<b>Strategy Total</b>		<b>£3,980,000</b>
Pedestrian/Cycle bridges across the Nene	Feasibility work has been undertaken on the proposed bridge located south of Freedom Bridge by Fenland District Council. Additional work on this, along with similar feasibility work for the proposed bridge south of Town Bridge, will be needed during the strategy period to quantify the benefits each scheme would deliver and ensure full costs are known so that if sources of funding for either (or both) of the bridge becomes available they can be delivered as quickly as possible.	
<b>Total Pedestrian/Cycle Bridges</b>		<b>£1,000,000</b>