

# Cheltenham Urban Design Framework

Transport Strategy Report - Draft For Comment

Cheltenham B.C./Gloucestershire C.C./SWRDA

October 2006

# Cheltenham Urban Design Framework

## Transport Strategy Report - Draft For Comment

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Newminster House  
27-29 Baldwin Street,  
Bristol, BS1 1LT  
Telephone: 0117 917 0800  
Fax: 0117 925 1609  
Email : Bristol@cbuchanan.co.uk

Prepared by:

Approved by:

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David Knight/Francois Chate/Vicki Mason/Tom Rimmer

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David Knight

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Contents	Page
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 The Transport Strategy Brief	3
1.3 Baseline Report	3
1.4 Structure of Report	3
<b>2. BASELINE ANALYSIS</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Introduction	4
2.2 Latham Architects Studies	4
2.3 Policy context set out in key documents	7
2.4 Baseline information on networks, routes and behaviour	8
2.5 Summary of Issues	12
<b>3. THE TOWN CENTRE TRANSPORT STRATEGY APPROACH</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 Introduction	13
3.2 Overarching Philosophy	13
3.3 Accessibility	15
3.4 Parking	15
3.5 Buses	15
3.6 Cycling	16
3.7 Walking	17
3.8 Road Safety	18
3.9 Taxis	18
3.10 Signage and legibility	18
<b>4. TOWN CENTRE TRAFFIC OPTIONS</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 Introduction	20
4.2 The Town Centre Road Network	20
4.3 Traffic strategy options	21
4.4 Assessment of traffic strategy options against objectives	27
4.5 Conceptual Traffic Management Scheme	29
4.6 Chapter Summary	35
<b>5. STREETScape DESIGN</b>	<b>36</b>
5.1 Design Philosophy	36
5.2 The Boulevard streetscape	36
5.3 Walking and cycling	41
5.4 Accident assessment	42
<b>6. BUS STRATEGY</b>	<b>45</b>
6.1 Introduction	45
6.2 Town centre route operation	46
6.3 Options	47
6.4 Accessibility to the town centre	49
6.5 Impact on current service operation	50
6.6 National coach and rural bus station	51
6.7 Conclusions: Delivering the town centre UDF objectives	53

<b>7.</b>	<b>PARKING STRATEGY</b>	<b>55</b>
7.1	Introduction	55
7.2	Physical, behavioural, policy and commercial context	55
7.3	Parking strategy principles	59
7.4	Implications and justifications	61
7.5	Conclusions: meeting the objectives of the UDF	66
7.6	Recommendations	66
<b>8.</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>68</b>
8.1	Overarching approach	68
8.2	Traffic strategy and conceptual traffic management scheme	68
8.3	Streetscape design and accident analysis	69
8.4	Bus Strategy	69
8.5	Parking Strategy	70
8.6	Overall conclusion	70

Tables	<i>Page</i>
Table 2.1: Comments on key transport and movement element's of Latham's Draft Urban Design Strategy (2001)	5
Table 4.1: Assessment against objectives	28
Table 6.1: Impact on current bus services – Option 2 – Hourly Impact	50
Table 6.2: Impact on current bus services – Option 2 – Annual Impact	51
Table 6.3: Coach and rural bus station – scoring of potential sites	53
Table 7.1: Estimated level of car parking available for town centre users	57
Table 7.3: Comparison of 'acceptable walking distance for car borne shoppers' guidance with current availability of charged public parking within Cheltenham town centre	65

Figures	Page
Figure 1.1: Strategic Context	2
Figure 1.2: Local Context	2
Figure 4.1 : Existing town centre road network	21
Figure 4.2 : “Do minimum” traffic strategy option	23
Figure 4.3 : traffic strategy option 1	24
Figure 4.4 : traffic strategy option 2	26
Figure 4.5 : traffic strategy option 3	27
Figure 4.6 : landsdown road / parabola road indicative junction design	30
Figure 4.7 : Bath road / montpellier terrace indicative junction design	31
Figure 5.1: Hennef – Germany	37
Figure 5.2: Example of shared space treatment – Kijkstraatwg,40	
Figure 5.3: Cycling Strategy	41
Figure 6.1: Existing town centre bus routes	46
Figure 6.2: Bus routes in traffic strategy 2	48
Figure 6.3: Bus routes in traffic strategy 3	49
Figure 7.1: Town centre car parks	56

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

1.1.1 Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC), Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) and the South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA) have established a partnership to bring together and update a number of existing studies to form an Urban Design Framework (UDF) for Cheltenham. As part of this work Colin Buchanan has been commissioned to prepare a comprehensive Transport Strategy to deliver Civic Pride and the UDF.

1.1.2 The UDF is to update and expand the principles and aims of the Latham Architects vision outlined in their 2001 report. The overarching aim was to *'Create the future most beautiful town in England'* and the following six themes were broadly covered:

- A place that attracts;
- An historic town that looks to the future;
- Distinguished buildings and civilised streets;
- An accessible and walkable town;
- A place for working, learning, living and leisure; and
- A community at ease with itself.

1.1.3 In developing these themes, the Partnership has agreed five key objectives for the project which relate to Environment, Economy, Transport, Sustainability and Property Management. The transport objectives are as follows:

- To set the context for reducing traffic impact, improving accessibility for walkers, cyclists, disabled people, public transport users, businesses and their service requirements; and
- To provide the context for the provision of accessible and safe off-street public car parking and for integrating local, regional and national bus and coach nodes.

1.1.4 On Environment a high quality and imaginative public realm is desired and compliance with regional strategies which attempt to conserve energy and reduce Carbon Dioxide production to the minimum. In respect of sustainability a safe, innovative, leading edge or 'beacon' sustainable solution is desired to provide benefits for people living, visiting and working in Cheltenham.

1.1.5 Cheltenham's context within the strategic road network is shown on figure 1.1. The study area as part of Cheltenham as a whole is shown on figure 1.2.



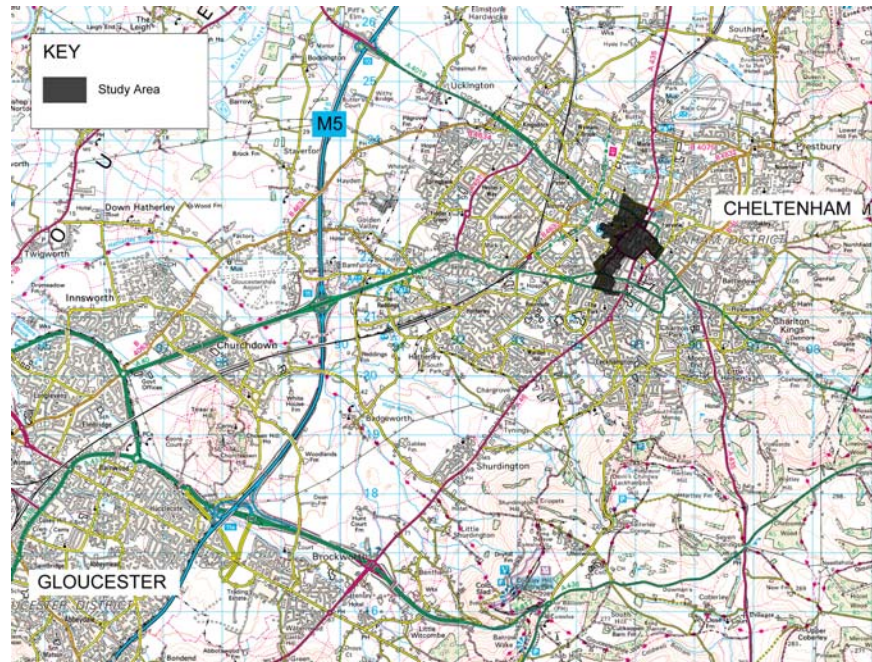


Figure 1.1: Strategic Context

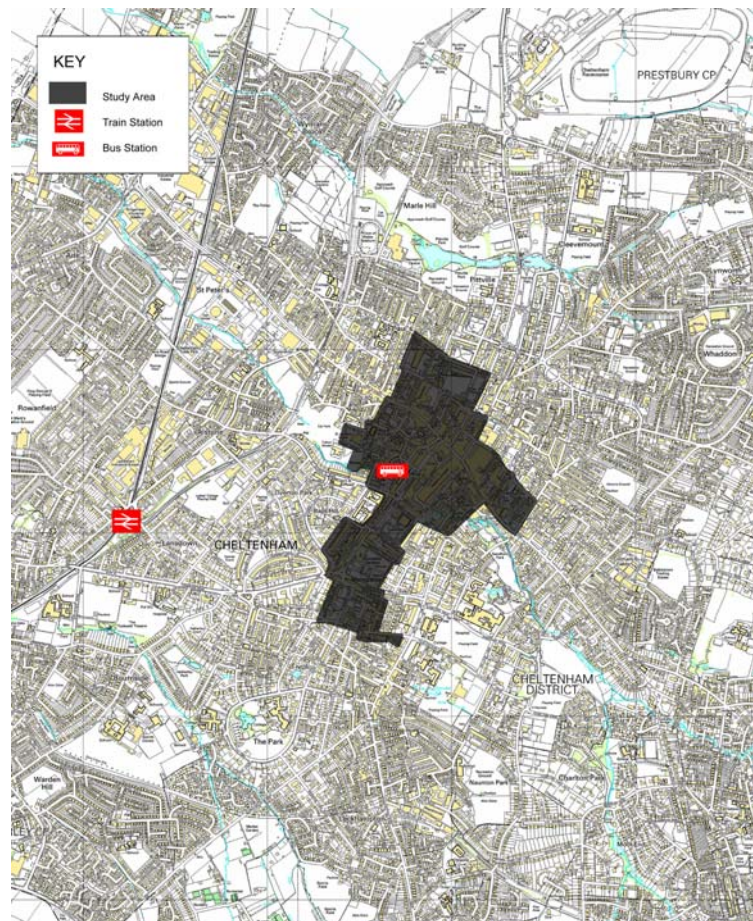


Figure 1.2: Local Context

## 1.2 The Transport Strategy Brief

1.2.1 The transport strategy is expected to be comprehensive and capable of delivering Civic Pride and the UDF. It will also support the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan and offer the following:

- Road safety improvements, reduced congestion, minimised traffic impact in key areas of the town centre through traffic management changes and restrictions to vehicular access;
- Rerouting of through traffic away from Boots Corner/Royal Well on the Inner Ring Road and onto an outer orbital route;
- Improved accessibility and priority to pedestrians, cyclist and public transport delivered through a combination of traffic management changes, improvements to built environment and creation of routes that are convenient, attractive and safe;
- Improved servicing arrangements to meet current and future business requirements;
- Bus routes and bus stop locations that maximise public transport accessibility across a wider area of the town centre and recognise the importance of service viability and high quality streetscapes. Future requirements are to be allowed for;
- A high quality and alternative accessible location for national coach services and rural services which presently use the bus station in Royal Well. This to include options for integrating this facility into the redevelopment of a town centre site or other locations on the strategic town centre network;
- Review current on-street bus arrangements and their effectiveness assessing nodal interchange points and integration with other transport types;
- High quality, secure and well-located off-street public parking of a quantity and type that supports the parking strategy and accommodates dependency on parking income;
- An approach to the delivery and maintenance of transport infrastructure which sympathises with urban design, planning, heritage and contextual issues; and
- Other transport linked infrastructure measures required, including signing for all transport modes to improve visitor orientation and accessibility.

## 1.3 Baseline Report

1.3.1 Colin Buchanan has contributed to the Baseline Report for the Cheltenham UDF project. It is not the intention, in this report, to repeat the baseline work already undertaken, but reference and build on the findings to develop the proposed transport strategy. Hence, it is recommended that this report is read in conjunction with the Baseline report; particularly the transport section.

## 1.4 Structure of Report

1.4.1 The structure of this report is as follows:

- Chapter 2 summarises the key contextual considerations in respect of the baseline report and policy;
- Chapter 3 outlines the recommended Town Centre Transport Strategy;
- Chapter 4 identifies Town Centre Traffic Options;
- Chapter 5 discusses the benefits in transport terms of adopting the Streetscape Design philosophy outlined by Halcrow;
- Chapter 6 describes the suggested bus strategy;
- Chapter 7 considers parking strategy; and
- A summary and conclusions are set out in Chapter 8.



## 2. Baseline Analysis

### 2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The Baseline analysis reviewed relevant background documentation and local policy reports. This set the context for identification of transport issues. This review was supported by site appraisal and meetings with CBC Officers.

2.1.2 This chapter provides an overview of the key issues established through the baseline work. Where appropriate, issues and findings are referred back to in more detail in later sections, where this is beneficial in justifying the proposed UDF Transport Strategy.

### 2.2 Latham Architects Studies

2.2.1 The various studies undertaken by Latham Architects inform the current exercise. The Latham Architect's studies included a series of three approach studies for key corridors into the town centre, a Cheltenham Spa Urban Design Study (2001) and a Pre-consultation Working Draft Civic Pride Initiative Document (2002).

2.2.2 Although Colin Buchanan do not agree with all of the proposals/solutions put forward by Latham's, we are in agreement with many of the underlying objectives and principles of the work, as follows:

- To 'regain' town centre streets for people;
- Remove non-essential traffic from the town centre;
- Improvement in key pedestrian routes into the town centre and final linkages from these and into the heart of the town centre;
- Review of the current layout and operation of the outer ring road;
- Reduce severance of the inner and the outer ring roads;
- Improvements to town centre bus provisions and operations (these should now build upon successes since the Latham Reports);
- Enhance pedestrian leisure routes;
- Deter through traffic;
- Improve legibility for all mode users whilst simultaneously reducing unnecessary signage clutter;
- Ensure that needs for servicing and disabled town centre users are accommodated within the town centre.

2.2.3 Key principles and proposals for the town centre that were put forward by Latham Architects in the UDS are summarised in Table 2.1. Initial comments and views of the general principles and proposals are incorporated into the table. As can be seen from later chapters of this report, the proposed UDF Transport Strategy does not support all of the previously promoted principles and proposals.

2.2.4 The 2002 Latham document relating to the Civic pride initiative went into greater detail as to how the principles discussed above could be delivered in specific locations within the town centre. The document related to several specific sites, many of which were put forward for full pedestrianisation. Unfortunately, the document was potentially too site specific and did not appear to demonstrate how proposals would be integrated throughout the town centre into a co-ordinated strategy, particularly in transport and accessibility terms.

**Table 2.1: Comments on key transport and movement element's of Latham's Draft Urban Design Strategy (2001)**

Proposal Principle /	Specific Locations Mentioned	Further details /considerations	Key comments / views
Fill 'missing' links in the town centre pedestrian route network	Between Albion Street and the Rose and Crown Passage Between the High Street and the Brewery Site		Agree with the principle of filling in any missing gaps. However, main benefit occurs in the role of linkages within wider routes.
Use a street block system to extend the central area	None specifically mentioned. Potentially applicable to Individual Sites	Increase density and diversity.	Unclear what this would entail. Notion appears over-simplistic.
'Regain the streets for people'.	Including, but not limited to, extending pedestrian priority areas, particularly in the narrow, medieval high street.	Can be considered as one measure to accompany downgrading of the central portion of the inner ring road.	Further pedestrianisation and/or road space re design and/or reallocation are likely to be important in meeting objectives of the transport strategy.
Remove non-essential traffic	Heart of the town centre	To encourage a more attractive, safer environment and access for all. Could allow road space reallocation and Public Transport priority.	To be a central part of any future strategy, subject to detailed modelling and testing. Inner ring road encourages unnecessary through traffic in addition to providing access (reflected in capacity of the inner ring greatly exceeding that needed to purely provide for access). The unnecessary through traffic creates severance of the town centre.
To ensure parking is hidden from view	None, but particularly new developments.		May be beneficial in certain locations, where parking is causing particular conflicts or blight. Extent of on-street parking and in places on-curtilage parking to the front of buildings is noticeable, detracts from urban quality and can cause severance of pedestrian routes along pavements. However, on-street parking and surface parking can also have benefits, in terms of natural surveillance and (perceptions of) personal security. It is possible to reduce severance and safety implications of on-street parking to pedestrians with appropriate design features (e.g. parking bays and build outs). Issue of parking needs to be considered on a location by location basis as part of overall proposals.
Encourage mixed use and evening/cultural economy.	None.	Mixed use and evening economy, broadly beneficial to accessibility, reducing the need to travel and efficient sustainable transport provision (e.g. spreading demand throughout the day).	Broadly beneficial to transport strategy. Implications of evening economy upon public transport provisions and requirements as well as taxi facilities requires consideration. Transport strategy also needs to take into account requirements of evening economy in terms of security.
Attractive routes for pedestrians along direct routes into the town centre			Key principle to any future transport strategy. To be supported by signage and public realm improvements to promote legibility.
Traffic calming of minor roads that could be used by cyclists to enter town centre.			Could be useful on carefully selected routes. Must take account roles within route network and requires careful design.
Enhance pedestrian leisure routes	South West: To Royal Well and Montpellier; North East to Pump Room at Pittville		To be taken up in future phases, with consideration in the transport, public realm and urban design strategies as well as in site development.
Deter through traffic from town		Remove signage on approaches that directs traffic to locations through/beyond it.	Routes/signage require comprehensive attention as integral part of chosen strategy.
Restrict access south of inner ring road		Via one way route creation/ restriction of turning movements for access/egress	To be explored further as one option for reducing traffic dominance on the town centre and discouraging unnecessary through traffic.

Proposal / Principle	Specific Locations Mentioned	Further details /considerations	Key comments / views
Relocation of western end of inner ring road	To Hewlett Road	Route dominates town centre and is a barrier to safe and convenient pedestrian/cycle movements.	Potentially beneficial to urban realm of downgrading inner ring road. Also necessary for redevelopment of key sites. Requires further exploration and feasibility testing
One-way system	For access to A435 Evesham Road (via North Place, Clarence Road, Winchcombe Street).		Permitted traffic movements onto and out of the ring road (either via one-way operation of otherwise, should be considered as integral part of overall strategy, in view of potential capacity and operational benefits to the operation of the northern section of ring road. However, must be balanced against potential issues/dis-benefits.
Revise bus routes in town centre	Suggests a one way loop anticlockwise around town centre. Suggests via Albion Street, St James Street, Bath Road, Oriel Road, Royal Well, Clarence Street.	Suggests single carriageway and one way through pedestrian areas and dedicated one	Could have some merits in terms of ease of route operation. However, there could be implications in terms of efficiency, feasibility, interchange and legibility of service, as well as patronage if route is circuitous. Removal of bus routes from the core of the town centre most likely inappropriate on the basis of accessibility and in terms of sustainability objectives and need to promote, encourage and support non car means of travel, building upon strong baseline situation in these areas.
Pedestrian priority crossings over distributor roads			Signalised crossings are important to key locations (e.g. where access routes cross the main town boulevards/ ring road), in order to reduce severance, increase coherence and directness of pedestrian access. Approach within town centre likely to be less dependent upon formal signalised crossings, where the strategy would be likely to seek to increase overall conditions, space and priority for pedestrians through design.
Improve legibility for motorcyclists and other road users		Via a clear hierarchy of signs, including to car parks and to specific places. A mental framework of the town to assist direction signage.	Signage and legibility will be important parts of any strategy.
Explore Opportunities for the development of 'Green Routes' into the town centre.	E.g. through parks and gardens from various directions		Ensuring adequate routes in all directions of approach is key, but these do not necessarily have to be 'Green Routes'. Green walking and cycling routes should be explored in tandem with the public realm strategy development. Greening of approaches to the town to be considered.
Provide for interchange between public and private transport at a wide variety of locations			Agree to the extent that Park and Ride is an important part of the Parking Strategy. Interchange between public transport and parking, where possible, can also be beneficial. However, unlikely to be a key aim unless possible within context of established CBC strategies, because operational considerations and viability need to be taken into account, as does overall effect of any such proposals within wider strategy (e.g. upon modal choice).
Provide a comfortable walking route between town centre and railway station			Honeybourne cycle link has now been delivered. However, might benefit from further improvements (e.g. issues of security/ seclusion/limited access/ lack of escape routes, and access to the town centre). Alternative after dark Town/Railway links could be beneficial.
Implement frequent park and ride		Latham suggest it should serve not only A and Z, but also intermediate locations.	Well selected intermediate stops can be beneficial. However, additional stops have journey time implications and can affect the reliability and attractiveness of routes. As a result, such provisions require careful analysis in order to be justifiable.
In any proposals, retain adequate/ good access for servicing and emergency vehicles, as well as disabled.	Universal.		Key principle to be applied to all proposals and to be a consideration in proposed paving materials. However, ease of servicing (cf. retaining servicing) must be balanced with other scheme objectives.

2.2.5 Our most significant points of disagreement with the Latham proposals, in terms of traffic and movement, can be summarised as follows:

- Firstly, we do not necessarily consider that extensive pedestrianisation of the whole heart of the town centre as likely to be the best solution for Cheltenham. Carefully selected pedestrianisation, traffic calming and use of shared space is considered likely to be preferable.
- Secondly, we would also disagree with the principle of relegating bus services to the outer orbital. It is considered essential that bus services should penetrate the town centre, right to its heart and to the areas which town centre users, including existing and potential bus patrons, most want to reach. Any departure from this basic principle would be likely to undermine the positive patronage growth and improvements which have been achieved in Cheltenham within recent years.

2.2.6 It is noted that some of the Latham principles/proposals have already been implemented, at least to some degree and regardless of the extent to which this was a result of their recommendations. For example, services D and A now operate as through routes serving two directions from the town centre. As a result, the current baseline differs in some ways from that portrayed by the earlier studies.

## 2.3 Policy context set out in key documents

2.3.1 A brief resume is given below.

### ***Cheltenham Borough Council Local Plan (adopted June 2006)***

2.3.2 Key principles for transport, accessibility and movement were as follows:

- Ensuring the accessibility of all development sites for vehicles (including public transport), pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities/mobility impairment is a key consideration, to reduce the need to travel and encourage sustainable behaviour, particularly via the use of alternatives to non car modes.
- All proposals should ensure highway safety and safe access.
- Where possible, shops should be serviced from the rear, with shared access to adjacent buildings, where possible.
- New long-stay parking spaces will not be permitted, unless fully justified as an integral part of an overall parking and demand management strategy.

### ***Cheltenham Transport Plan 2000/01 To 2005/06***

2.3.3 This document provided details as to how the First Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan was relevant to and would be applied in the context of Cheltenham Town Centre.

2.3.4 In respect of transport challenges, the document stated that:

*“Traffic volumes and speeds are now ranked highest out of all the things people most dislike about Cheltenham. Most people would like to see an absolute decrease in traffic levels.”*

2.3.5 In order to reduce traffic volumes and meet other transport objectives, Cheltenham Transport Plan looked to:

- Improve perceptions of safety and security for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- Address any information gap between knowledge of public transport services and those which are on offer.

- Address negative perceptions about the cost, reliability and cleanliness of public transport.
- Make better use of available capacity and infrastructure and encourage alternatives to arrival by car.
- Introduce several improvements to bus services and interchanges in the town (see Chapter 4 for further detail).
- Implement a Cheltenham Cycle Network.
- Enhance the pedestrian environment, to improve amenity and reduce confusion.
- Reduce the level of cycle accidents. At the time the transport plan was prepared, the borough recorded the highest level of cycling accidents of all districts in England. This is partly a reflection of high levels of usage (7% cycling to work), although the situation could be improved with appropriate measures). The Council's preferred approach is to seek alternatives to segregating cyclists, instead favouring provisions to assist them in cycling safely with other traffic.
- Reduce the provision and attractiveness of long-stay parking (e.g. to discourage commuting by car), and prioritisation of provision for shorter stay.
- Encourage positive HGV routing, to minimise their disproportionate impact.
- Reduce signage clutter.
- Introduce Urban Traffic Management and Variable Message Signing.
- Provide improved cycle parking and other facilities.
- Provide better quality, attractive, secure and accessible car parking.
- Reduce congestion and pollution in the town centre, including the impact of vehicles on public spaces.

### ***Gloucestershire Second Local Transport Plan***

2.3.6 This document sets out a funding and implementation strategy and bid for transport and accessibility improvements in the County from 2006 – 2011. Key issues in the County were reported to be as follows:

- HGV Movements;
- Congestion;
- Scope for further increasing bus patronage; and
- Addressing a highway maintenance budget.

2.3.7 The document sets out core principles for encouraging the use of non-car means of travel and specific measures for achieving this. In addition, it contains several fairly detailed appendices, such as the bus strategy and the parking and demand management strategy. These are discussed further in the relevant chapters of this report. The LTP also indicates the need to consider transport and movement in its social and behavioural context and thereby to address non-infrastructure matters such as information and the role of smarter measures.

2.4 Baseline information on networks, routes and behaviour

### ***Road Network Review***

2.4.2 At the baseline stage, Colin Buchanan referred to AADT (average 24 hour traffic flow) data for general vehicles and HGV's which was provided by CBC. This clearly showed the three key vehicular approach routes to the town centre, in order of dominance, to be as follows:

- From the M5, via the A40 Gloucester Road;

- From the M5 to the North West, via the Tewkesbury Road;
  - From the South East, via the Shurdington/London Roads.
- 2.4.3 A similar pattern pertains to HGV traffic, with the routes from the M5 being dominant.

### ***Rail Accessibility***

- 2.4.4 Cheltenham Rail Station is located 1.5 to 2km from the centre of the town. It can be reached comfortably by cycle, via the Honeybourne Line. However, it falls beyond the maximum desired walking threshold (800m, IHT).
- 2.4.5 Overall, integration between bus and rail in Cheltenham is reasonable. Bus services D and P/Q. serve Cheltenham Railway Station and the town centre. The former of these runs at a high frequency of every 10 minutes from Monday to Friday daytimes. The latter is only an hourly service.

### ***Bus Accessibility***

- 2.4.6 Overall, levels of bus accessibility are good in the town and patronage on town routes and park and ride have increased considerably over the past 5 years. CBC report that 67% of the population benefit from living within 400m proximity to a bus service of at least a 15 minute frequency, 93% to a service of at least a 30 minute frequency and 99% to any service.
- 2.4.7 Bus quality partnerships on key routes have assisted in enhancing bus service provision and practically all vehicles run by the leading commercial operator Stagecoach are now of the low floor accessible variety. Stagecoach have a desire to further expand and enhance operations in Cheltenham and the UDF should support and assist in this aspiration.
- 2.4.8 The main bus stop locations in the town are at present:
- High Street;
  - Pittville Street;
  - The Promenade; and
  - Royal Well.
- 2.4.9 Royal Well currently acts as the main focus for rural and interurban services. There is a general consensus that the design of the interchange is inefficient and could be improved, perhaps in situ.
- 2.4.10 Further details on current bus service provision are given in the relevant chapter of this report.

### ***Cycle Access***

- 2.4.11 Cheltenham benefits from the National Cycle Network Route which runs past the town centre along the Honeybourne Line. This also connects to the railway station.
- 2.4.12 Overall, cycle lane provision within the town centre is not particularly extensive. The most comprehensive sections are:
- Along Princess Elizabeth Way, where modern development has enabled comprehensive provision, including crossing facilities, lanes and advanced cycle stop lines.
  - Through Montpellier Street, Trafalgar Street and Imperial Street, which comprises a signed route, with signalised crossings at key junctions from the south of Montpellier Terrace onwards towards the town centre. The



route ends at the Civic Offices, where several banks of cycle rack are available.

- From the South East, including Charlton Kings, there is a signed route into the town centre through Sanford Park. This meets the town centre at Bath Street and then continues to Cambray Place where cycles are exempt from pedestrianisation of the high street just to the north and where several cycle racks are located. There is no signalised crossing over Bath Road.
- A signed route is located towards the north west of the town centre, running via St Georges Place, over the high street, along Henrietta Street and onwards over Swindon Road (outer ring road) towards St Paul's. There is a controlled crossing at the Henrietta Street/Swindon Road/Dunalley Street junction to assist cyclists to cross the inner ring road.

- 2.4.13 Success have been achieved in encouraging on-street cycling in Cheltenham. Streetscape and design improvements could assist in reducing on-street cycle accident rates. Routes through the core of the town centre could be more convenient and legible for cyclists.

### ***Pedestrian Access***

- 2.4.14 Pedestrian facilities are provided alongside most roads and subject to adequate footway widths, surfacing, lighting, security and connections (e.g. signalled or uncontrolled crossings) are available to the physically able. Nevertheless, in some locations improvements would be beneficial and in some areas of the town centre insufficient priority is given to pedestrians.

- 2.4.15 The Promenade and High Street, are well suited to pedestrians, particularly as these routes include large pedestrianised sections. However, crossing of the inner ring road causes a certain segregation between different sections of the high street. Although a signalised crossing point is available, the crossing point is unattractive given the scale of observed flows and pedestrians sometimes need to wait for some time before the lights change in their favour. The inner ring road can be intimidating to pedestrians due to fast moving (one way) traffic, with rapid accelerating after the lights change. This junction at Boots Corner is a focal point in the heart of the town centre. The combination of heavy traffic, safety barriers and a hostile pedestrian environment does little for permeability and sense of arrival in this location.

- 2.4.16 Several other locations within the town centre would benefit from improvements to increase pedestrian priority/reduce the dominance of traffic. In particular, these include Portland Street (particularly if this area is to be redeveloped), Albion Street, Bath Road, Oriel Road, at several locations along Montpellier Walk, on North Street and on St George's Place. Improvements should not be limited to these locations, although they are identified priority points.

### ***Shared use space for pedestrians and cyclists***

- 2.4.17 A report on the issue of shared use of space by cyclists and pedestrians was prepared by one of CBC's Transport Officers and presented to CBC's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 6 April 2006. The report presented findings from a survey of residents and visitors to Cheltenham Town Centre through which views were sought on proposals for more consistent rules regarding cycling to be applied within the town centre, allowing shared cycling in pedestrianised areas, including High Street and The Promenade.
- 2.4.18 The report concluded that the Civic Pride initiative should look at alternative options for providing direct routes through the town centre, but that these should

circumvent key areas of pedestrian prioritisation. Nevertheless, in the shorter term, lifting of the existing bans was recommended to the committee as the most appropriate interim action. It was argued that this would help to complement other town centre initiatives (e.g. reducing sign clutter, removing ambiguity about the varying regulations at different locations within the town centre etc). The principle of ensuring simple to understand and direct routes for cyclists should be carried forward through the UDF.

### ***Safety***

- 2.4.19 Accidents through Cheltenham Town Centre are fairly spread out and intensive, despite some concentration along roads particularly dominated by traffic. Key locations where some clustering (especially of serious incidents) appears to be discernable are as follows:
- St Margaret's Road (ring road, 3 serious collisions),
  - Montpelier Walk (2 serious collisions),
  - St George's Road (4 serious collisions)
  - At key junctions on the ring road or approaches: Gordon Lamp junctions, College Road/London Road, Fairview Road/Winchcombe Street.
- 2.4.20 Issues of safety are discussed further in later chapters, in relation to the strategy.

### ***Parking***

- 2.4.21 There is a substantial amount of over-capacity of parking at present in the town, with many car parks being underutilised and therefore representing poor value for money to CBC. There would be scope to reduce the provision of town centre spaces, particularly in view of recent and proposed Park and Ride expansion, which, as yet, has not been allied with any reduction in town centre spaces..
- 2.4.22 A more detailed analysis of existing and possible car parking arrangements is given in Chapter 7.

### ***Travel Behaviour***

- 2.4.23 Levels of self containment within Cheltenham for travel to work are reasonably high, with 70% of residents also working within the Borough. Key links for in-flows and out-flows are Tewkesbury Borough and Gloucester. On net, travel to work flows into the town exceed those out of it. These demands for flows between Cheltenham and Tewkesbury/Gloucester are likely to correspond to the particularly high daily traffic flows observed on routes between Cheltenham and these settlements.
- 2.4.24 In terms of travel to work mode share, car driver travel dominates commuting flows within the County (84% of trips from and 81% of trips to the district). A key aim here is to encourage car sharing and park and ride uses. More encouraging is travel to work mode share for those who both live and work within the District, which showed that at least 42% of residents who also work in the town travelled to work by sustainable modes (36% by walking and cycling and 6% by public transport), as compared to 49% as a car driver and 7% as a car passenger. Indeed, it is encouraging that amongst those who work and live in the town, the percentage of people who travel to work by foot or cycle has increased more than the percentage who drive to work.
- 2.4.25 Council data on levels and patterns of travel to work by cycle within Cheltenham (covering all residents and not only those who also work there) indicate high levels of Travel to Work by Cycle mode share (6.9%). However, levels vary

between wards. Levels of cycling are particularly high from the Oakley Ward, Hesters Way, Leckhampton, St Peter's, Swindon Village, Springbank and Charlton Park. Over 7% of residents travelled to work by Cycle from each of these wards in 2001, up to a maximum of 11.09% from Oakley. Indeed, the ward for which the lowest proportion of commuting by cycle was recorded was Lansdown (4.22%). It is important to note that levels in even this ward were significantly higher than the national average, which is in the region of 3%.

## 2.5 Summary of Issues

2.5.1 The Baseline Transport Analysis identified a number issues that would need to be addressed in the transport strategy for Cheltenham town centre. These are summarised as follows:

- The inner ring road creates severance and is a barrier to Civic Pride improvements especially at Boots Corner;
- The outer ring performs an essential function, but its northern section is congested;
- Arrival points in the town centre do not relate well to the five identifiable arrival corridors;
- The Bus network in the town centre is complex and inefficient and integration and interchange could be better, although it is encouraging that improvements have been achieved over recent years;
- Service routes conflict with pedestrian and cycle movements;
- There are gaps in the cycle network. In particular, better and more legible cycle links are required through the town centre; and
- The ring roads sever pedestrian routes and these are not fully joined up with adjacent areas.

### 3. The Town Centre Transport Strategy approach

#### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 This chapter sets out the transport strategy approach for Cheltenham Town Centre to meet the aims and objectives of the Cheltenham UDF project. The strategy endeavours to be innovative and forward thinking yet practical and deliverable.

3.1.2 It is evident that a long term strategy will be required in order to deliver the extensive improvements that will be needed to deliver the vision for the town. Hence, it is recommended that the strategy is established for a 20 year period and that it achieves cross party political support.

#### 3.2 Overarching Philosophy

3.2.1 It is recommended that the Transport Strategy is developed under the 'umbrella' of a Sustainable Travel Town philosophy, for it is this approach that will allow project objectives to be delivered, particularly:

- Reduction in congestion;
- Minimising traffic impact of development proposals;
- Support rationalisation of ring road system;
- Provide a leading edge sustainable solution; and
- Complement street design principles.

3.2.2 A Sustainable Travel Town approach will require a comprehensive set of co-ordinated actions in transport combining the use of both 'soft' and 'harder' measures to achieve travel behaviour change. It involves the use of the 'smarter choices' which include travel plans, personalised journey planning, car sharing and car clubs to reduce car use.

3.2.3 Overall, this approach recognises that travel behaviour is about more than just physical provisions, routes, networks and the quality of place, albeit that these are of significant importance. Travel is also related to lifestyles, understanding of options, motivations and values. Work commissioned by Transport for London has demonstrated that different people respond to different messages and balances of motivations. Their travel behaviour is influenced more strongly by different concerns (status, environmental awareness, health, convenience, security etc). Adopting the STT umbrella recognises this interaction and would seek to provide measures which are complementary to the UDF and therefore solicit maximum value from capital expenditure.

3.2.4 The STT approach is not based upon coercion, but an equitable balance of provision and convenience for trips by different modes, recognising that 'predict and provide' for private vehicles and a situation where these are consistently afforded greatest priority and yet impose the greatest negative impacts is unsustainable. The key is to ensure and maintain accessibility for people, taking account of the benefits for different people of using different modes for different trips and for different parts of their journeys, as well as the impacts which their choices have on others. It is necessary to balance priority and various needs in a manner which overall leads to the greatest benefit, quality and future for the centre of Cheltenham and its people from a commercial, social, and environmental point of view.

**TABLE 3.1 : 'Smarter Choices' Programmes**

Initiative	Summary
'Smarter Choices'	<p>The 'Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel' report was published by the Department for Transport in July 2004. This research document suggested that a major programme of soft factors including workplace and school travel plans, personalised travel planning and travel awareness campaigns could result in a major reduction in traffic in urban areas across the UK. The study suggested reductions in the order of 21% during peak periods and 13% during off-peak periods could be achieved if intensively implemented.</p> <p>Similar studies conducted by Transport for London (TfL), have indicated that soft factors could reduce peak period traffic in London by between 8 and 17%, depending on the extent of the intervention.</p>
DfT Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns	<p>In 2004 the DfT initiated three Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town projects. The five year, £10 million programme, includes implementation of a sustained package of 'Smarter Choice' measures in combination with infrastructure improvements. Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester were selected from more than 50 local authorities in England who bid to become involved.</p>
TfL Sustainable Travel Town Pilot	<p>TfL is funding its own Sustainable Travel Town in London. In 2006 Sutton was selected from the ten metropolitan town centres and the project commenced in September. The project is being conducted over a three year period.</p>

3.2.5 As indicated by Table 3.1, a series of reports have been published in recent years which have concluded that value for money can be obtained through 'smarter choices' interventions. 'Smarter choices' are likely to offer cheaper solutions to transport problems, representing excellent value for money when compared to the cost of hard engineering measures. Indeed, *Smarter Choices: Changing the Way We Travel* (DfT, 2004) indicated that:

*"Every £1 spent on well-designed soft measures could bring about £10 of benefit in reduced congestion alone, more in the most congested conditions".*

3.2.6 As a result, the DfT dedicate notable resources to a focused intervention of primarily 'soft' measures in three English towns over a five year period from 2004 to 2009. The towns were selected on the basis of a competitive bidding process, whereby they submitted a breakdown of what they would deliver for the available resources. Most highlighted how their package would complement measures already being put into place through the Local Transport Plan process. The three towns successful in winning the available DfT funding were Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester.

3.2.7 A similar and more comprehensive approach is now being piloted in the London Borough of Sutton by TfL. This will go further than any of the Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns and will seek to test the notion of additionality, with a package of concentrated measures of a scope not previously seen focussed on a single location.

3.2.8 It is considered that this innovative approach is an essential feature of the transport strategy to ensure Cheltenham can become more sustainable and avoid becoming more congested and car dependent in the future. Track record in Cheltenham suggests that it is ideally situated for taking such an approach forward, with notable success in generating travel by cycle and increased public transport patronage, a comparable achievement compared to many towns and cities outside of London. Proposed improvements to the town centre also offer the opportunity to integrate workstreams and proposals for both 'soft' and 'hard'

measures. It is suggested that targets for modal share in trips to the town centre are set and monitored as a means of assessing the success of the project.

### 3.3 Accessibility

3.3.1 Improving accessibility in the town centre and reducing severance by the ring road will be key aims of the UDF. By reducing the dominance of traffic and flows within the Town Boulevard, It is hoped that greater priority can be afforded to sustainable mode users, in an aim to improve accessibility to the town centre by all modes of transport and make non-car modes real and attractive alternatives to private vehicular travel. The overarching aim will also be to enhance the quality of Cheltenham as a town within which to live, work and visit, as set out within Cheltenham's 20:20 vision for the future.

### 3.4 Parking

3.4.1 The overall strategy for parking will be to remove and reduce superfluous capacity, which has arisen as:

- The number of park and ride spaces has and continues to be expanded;
- The number of public spaces controlled by private operators has increased; and
- Changes in the charging regime in the town, allied with public transport and cycle network improvements, have led to modal shift to more sustainable modes.

3.4.2 Our parking strategy supports LTP proposals for Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) and suggests means by which the benefits could be broadened, through more transparent and equitable treatment of on and off-street parking spaces. CBC stand to benefit financially through the introduction of DPE, which can offer more streamlined means of undertaking enforcement than through the traditional (criminal) legal process. In view of statutory requirements that any profit from parking activity must be re-invested into transport and accessibility proposals, it is expected that parking activity can provide one stream of income able to part fund the UDF transport strategy.

3.4.3 The UDF transport strategy should also support the overall LTP policy of discouraging long and medium stay parking within the town centre, via the expansion of park and ride services on key corridors. Enhancements to facilitate bus and park and ride movements will equally support this strategy.

3.4.4 Chapter 7 justifies the loss of three CBC operated car parks for redevelopment, namely Cheltenham Walk, North Place and Portland Street. It highlights the measures which will be necessary in order to ensure that the car parks which are able to act as alternatives are fit and appropriate for this purpose.

### 3.5 Buses

3.5.1 Bus travel is growing in Cheltenham, with significant enhancements to routes and service frequencies. Several routes now operate at a 10 minute frequency, which is good for an area outside London. Particular successes include:

- Park and Ride usage increased 50% during the first Local Transport Plan period.
- Patronage on the 94 route increased by 18% in 6 months, this route was subject to significant priority measures and a Bus Quality Partnership between the bus operator and GCC.



- The Stagecoach depot in Cheltenham has already reported a 6.5% increase in patronage between 2003 and 2004 and Stagecoach report that increases since then have also been significant.
- 3.5.2 It is proposed to enhance the role and profile for buses within the town centre of Cheltenham. The strategy focuses on a key two way bus spine north-south through the town centre to simplify service provisions and enable a central point for interchange. Ease of comprehension of the location of stops for different services along this spine will be important (perhaps using colour coding or similar) and could be beneficial in improving legibility further than is possible through simple consolidation of stop locations.
- 3.5.3 The central spine, along which it is envisaged all town services could stop at a minimum of one point, would be supported by priority routes into and out of the town centre from both directions. Bus bollards and shared space would be used in very carefully selected locations, where necessary to enable this, as would the use of contra-flow lane provisions.
- 3.5.4 Longer distance rural to town, interurban and coach services would be centred around the location of the current Royal Well Bus Station and at The Promenade and would primarily make use of on-street stops on space reclaimed by the reduction in general traffic from this location. Layover spaces might be provided elsewhere and interchange facilities could be provided as part of the site's redevelopment (e.g. through frontage development onto Royal Well, to the rear of the Municipal offices).
- 3.5.5 It is proposed that a Bus Quality Partnership should be introduced for the town centre, in order to recognise the benefits which the strategies will offer to commercial operators. Another idea is that the Stagecoach Travel Information Shop be re-located to Royal Well, for maximum accessibility by bus and coach users and to increase opportunities for those using the interchange to make productive use of their time.
- 3.5.6 The bus strategy is described and justified in more detail in Chapter 6.
- 3.6 **Cycling**
- 3.6.1 Cycling is a well established mode of travel in Cheltenham with the travel to work mode share being 6.9%, well in excess of the national average of 3%. The Baseline Report identifies that Cheltenham currently has a developing cycle network with good facilities. However, facilities within the town centre are not particularly extensive. It is recommended that in the Town a 'mesh' of cycle routes are established at approximately 300m centres. This was the philosophy adopted for the town of Delft in Holland which is widely seen as an exemplar in Europe.
- 3.6.2 The cycle network for the town centre will need to meet the five best practice requirements:
  - Coherence – linking of trip origins and destinations, continuous and consistent standard of routes;
  - Directness – following desire lines, minimising delays and detours;
  - Attractiveness – well lit, good level of personal safety, well integrated and aesthetically pleasing;
  - Safety – minimise casualties and perceived dangers to cyclists and other road users; and
  - Comfort – convenient routes, gentle gradients and well maintained.
- 3.6.3 The following hierarchy of measures is important in developing the routes in the town centre:

- Traffic reduction – reduce traffic volumes;
- Traffic Calming – reducing speed and modifying driver behaviour;
- Junction treatment and traffic management – including specific measures such as contra-flow cycles lanes;
- Redistribution of the carriageway – provision of more spaces for cyclists;
- Cycle lanes and cycle tracks – following on from above, identification of lanes and tracks required to complete gaps in the network.

### 3.7 Walking

3.7.1 Nationally, walking accounts for 25% of all journeys and 80% of those less than one mile. It is the most sustainable methods of travel, has a number of proven health benefits and is an important source of personal freedom. Walking is important for the vast majority of people, especially children, the elderly, those using public transport, those without access to a car and in general practically all town centre users. Once visitors, employees and other users reach Cheltenham town centre, it is important that they are able to walk safely, easily and comfortably through it, regardless of whether they have arrived on foot, by cycle, by park and ride, by powered two wheeler or by car. Linkages from car parks, bus stops, bus and coach interchanges and throughout the town centre are of importance.

3.7.2 Barriers to people walking may be identified as follows:

- Land use patterns unsuited to walking;
- Unpleasant walking environment;
- Danger from vehicular traffic;
- Personal security fears; and
- Inconvenient pedestrian facilities.

3.7.3 The walking strategy highlights key linkages to town centre destinations, such as the municipal offices, town hall, car parks, leisure facilities (e.g. the Brewery) and main shopping streets, as well as beyond the town boulevard to the hinterlands and the proposed redevelopment sites.

3.7.4 Two key flows of pedestrian demand are currently thought to dominate within the town centre, namely a north-south spine, encompassing North Street, Pittville Street, the Promenade and Montpellier Walk and East-West, along the high street. It will be important to enhance these routes through the proposals of the UDF and this is a key aim in our traffic management proposals, to reduce conflicts and give priority at the key points of conflict along these routes (e.g. boots corner).

3.7.5 However, the UDF seeks to achieve more than this and to achieve improved permeability and a broadening of pedestrian activity. The UDF will seek to provide circulation routes such that pedestrians (including shoppers and leisure visitors) can pass through the centre via circuits connecting key destinations and quarters of the town centre. It will be sought to reduce traffic dominance throughout the heart of the town centre, to offer improved attractiveness of streets, including via comprehensive treatments on selected links such as Albion Street and Bath Road.

3.7.6 For the Town Boulevard, the main aim will be to ensure that priority crossings are available wherever possible and in the most convenient locations for pedestrian routes from residential areas and to/from key destinations outside the ring (e.g. Holtz Birthplace Museum, Pump House, Pittville and Montpellier). Crossing will not be precluded via heavy engineering, as discussed in Chapter 5, although dedicated provisions will remain important in view of the strategic nature of the Town Boulevard for traffic.

### 3.8 Road Safety

3.8.1 The transport strategy for the town centre offers a comprehensive way to address the accident situation identified through the baseline, which is considered to partially arise from traffic dominance of the ring road and elsewhere within the central area.

3.8.2 By adopting a holistic streetscape improvement approach at key locations and by reducing the dominance which is given to traffic movements, particularly in the central area within the Town Boulevard, it is expected that significant accident savings can be accrued through the UDF. These will assist towards county wide LTP2 targets for the reduction in accidents which lead to people being killed or seriously injured.

### 3.9 Taxis

3.9.1 Taxis perform an important function in the town, particularly in providing for access to longer distance coach services, for arrival by the mobility impaired and for journeys at times when public transport services are less frequent. GCC's Second LTP highlights the important role which taxis can play as part of and to complement demand responsive transport services, increasing accessibility for those in sparsely populated rural areas and those where there are limited public transport services (either overall, or in terms of operation).

3.9.2 At present, the key location for taxis is the southern part of the Promenade. It is envisaged, at least in the short term, that this will continue to be the foci for the town's main taxi rank. This will allow interchange with the buses on Royal Well Road, supported by enhanced signing.

3.9.3 Nevertheless, it will also be important for taxis to be made more easily accessible at other times of the day and from other locations within the Town Boulevard. It is proposed that space is found for permanent or evening ranks in key locations which constitute the foci for the evening economy. This will enable taxis to play an enhanced role in supporting these activities within the town centre. At present, existing and expected locations for a concentration of evening activities include Montpellier, Albion Street, the Brewery and the Suffolks. For example, there may be opportunities to provide taxi ranks on or close to Albion Street, as part of shared space/bus proposals for that area. Additional ranks with time restrictions might be accommodated at the site of bus stops, provided that this is compatible with and does not impinge upon the hours of operation of the bus services which call there. It might also be possible to provide for unrestricted ranks for daylong use. It will be important to ensure that taxi operators are consulted.

### 3.10 Signage and legibility

3.10.1 Information and town centre legibility are important in ensuring that Cheltenham is a convenient and pleasant place to live, work and visit. Being able to find your way around, whether in a vehicle or on foot plays an important role in your perception of a location and perhaps in your willingness to go there again. Legibility is about more than just signage, since urban design treatments and features (use of different materials, colours and surfaces), as well as layouts can be used to make it easier for people to understand the most direct routes available to them and to move about with ease. Supporting information materials, such as free town centre maps distributed by the tourist information centre and other key outlets can also make it easier for people to find their way around, provided that they are clear, easy to use and make good use of landmarks.

- 3.10.2 A certain amount of conventional signage is necessary and beneficial, both in order to meet statutory requirements (Traffic Regulation Orders) and to provide destination signage in a manner to which people are perhaps most accustomed. Within the heart of the town centre (e.g. within the area bounded by the Town Boulevard) the main aim will be to provide route signage and other assistance for pedestrians and cyclists trying to make their way through and about the town centre. Signs or other forms of directional assistance should ideally be placed at each point where pedestrians and cyclists face a potentially relevant route decision. Examples would include pedestrian signage from car parks to key quarters and/or destinations.
- 3.10.3 It is simultaneously proposed to remove extraneous traffic signage within the area bounded by the Town Boulevard. The aim will be to address the negative impact which this has upon the attractiveness and usability of the streetscape and to reflect the reduced dominance of vehicular traffic within this core area. Aside from this general principle, it will be important to retain clear information and vehicular signage to car parks which must be reached via access routes within the heart of the town centre. This will encourage traffic to take the most direct route from the approach route, perhaps via the Town Boulevard, to their destination. As far as possible, signage should encourage those arriving by vehicle to make use of the closest car park to their route of approach, in order to minimise unnecessary traffic on the Town Boulevard and within it.
- 3.10.4 On approaches to the town and on the Town Boulevard traffic signing will be important, to ensure that people are able to navigate their way based on its revised layout (e.g. two way operation throughout). Where possible, longer distance strategic routes should be signed to avoid the centre of Cheltenham, as a means of helping to discourage traffic from travelling through or past the heart of the town when this is unnecessary. For example, the detrunking of the A40 may have presented opportunities for a reduction in the strategic signage required in relation to this route. This matter should be explored further with GCC and CBC.

## 4. Town Centre Traffic Options

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 It was noted in the baseline report that the existing road network serving Cheltenham consists of strategic radial routes that converge on a system of two ring roads which in turn carry local strategic traffic visiting Cheltenham or passing through the centre.

4.1.2 The existing ring road system does not necessarily provide the best solution for dealing with movement patterns in the town centre, especially for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, and represents a hindrance to the town achieving the objectives of the brief. The quality of street environment in the town centre is adversely affected by the current ring road system.

### 4.2 The Town Centre Road Network

4.2.1 The town centre road network, including the ring roads, is shown in Figure 4.1 in diagrammatical style. The existing ring road system is made up of a two way outer ring road around the outside of the town centre on its western and northern sides and a one-way, clockwise circulating inner ring road that skirts the east side of the town centre but effectively cuts through the town centre in a westerly, northerly and easterly direction. It is the inner ring road in particular that presents a barrier to accessibility between different parts of the town centre, particularly for sustainable transport users. The development of a quality streetscape would be more appropriate along its axis, for a town which is largely of such an impressive built form. The outer ring road also causes a number of problems including severance for pedestrians and cyclists wishing to access the town centre.

4.2.2 The outer ring road is made up of St George's Road, Gloucester Road, Tewksbury Road, Swindon Road, St Margaret's Road, Fair View Road and St John's Avenue. The outer ring road can experience a degree of traffic congestion during peak times particularly the northern section, St Margaret's Road. A number of key traffic routes converge onto the outer ring road. These are the A4019 Tewksbury Road, the A435 Portland Street and the B4362 Prestbury Road.

4.2.3 The inner ring road is formed by Bath Road, Oriel Road, Royal Well Road, North Street, Albion Street, and Berkley Street. The inner ring road is one-way in a clockwise direction.

## EXISTING ARRANGEMENT

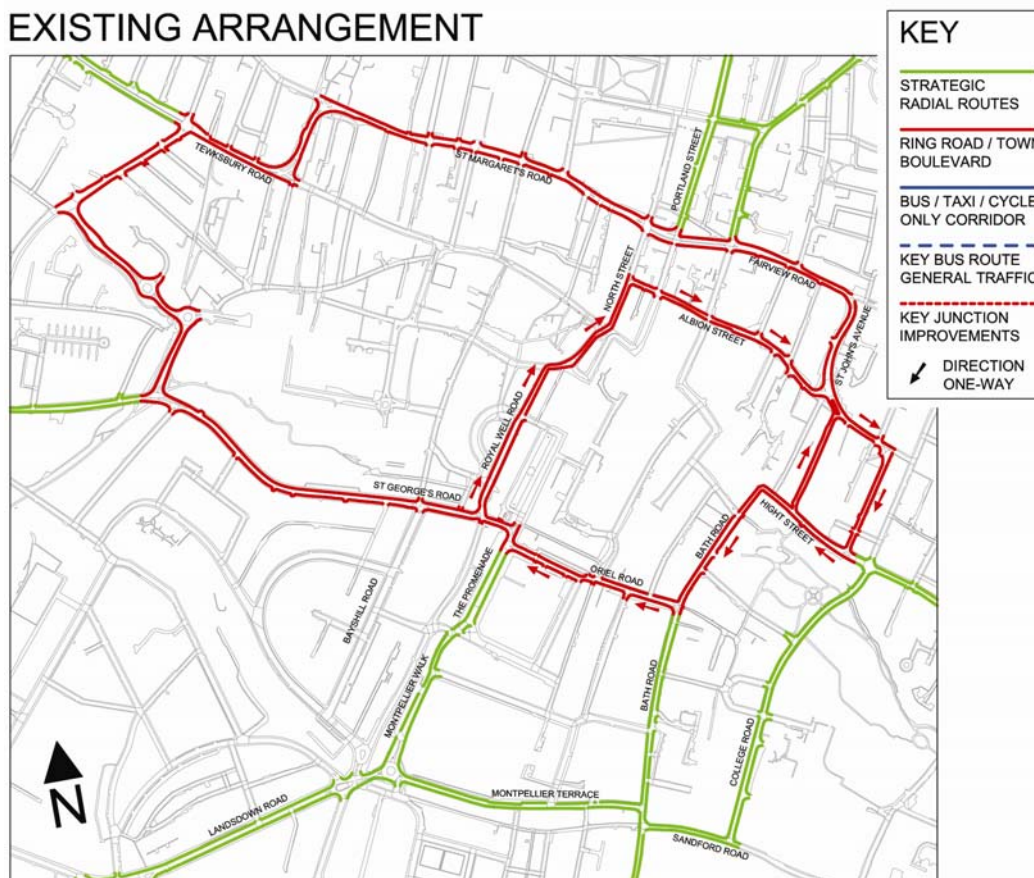


FIGURE 4.1 : EXISTING TOWN CENTRE ROAD NETWORK

### 4.3 Traffic strategy options

4.3.1 The primary incentive to modify the existing ring road system in Cheltenham is to realise a significant improvement in street quality throughout the town centre. Key locations in the town centre are adversely affected by traffic which prevents them from fulfilling their potential as places. These priority locations are listed below:

- Boots Corner – Traffic forms a barrier to pedestrian movement dividing the east side of High Street from the less successful west side of High Street and effectively splitting the town centre in two.
- Albion Street – Traffic domination prevents the street from becoming anything more than a traffic corridor.
- Royal Well Road – The large public space framed by Royal Crescent and the back of the municipal offices is dominated by the inner ring road traffic.
- The Promenade – Historic street totally dominated by traffic and parking, particularly at its junctions with St Georges Road and Oriel Road, at the large roundabout where it meet the A40 and at its narrow section near the junction with Fauconberg Road.



- High Street – The corner with the junction of Bath Road is adversely affected by large vehicles struggling to negotiate the right-angle. The western part of High Street which has not been closed to vehicular traffic suffers as a shopping location relative to the non-trafficked eastern section.
- Oriel Road – The wide street on which the town hall is situated carries a significant volume of traffic preventing its development as an inviting location and forms a barrier to pedestrian movement through the town centre.
- Bath Road – The section of Bath Road north of Montpellier Drive is potentially a pleasant street environment with a large number of businesses and other uses based there. The strategic traffic routed through Bath Road results in the inevitable outcome of a street that is dominated by traffic.

4.3.2 The town centre in general can be improved for the people of Cheltenham and visitors to the town through re-examination of the ring-road system. To endeavour to achieve a comprehensive improvement and to address key locations in particular, Colin Buchanan have devised a number of traffic strategy options. The principles on which these are based are as follows:

- To provide a single, complete, two-way ring road (Town Boulevards) around the centre of Cheltenham, permeable to pedestrians and cyclists and with adequate capacity for existing and reassigned traffic.
- To remove strategic traffic from the centre of Cheltenham. Traffic within the new Town Boulevards will predominately cater for vehicles accessing the town centre and town centre car parks.
- To mitigate the impact of the remaining traffic within the Town Boulevards, through traffic calming and street design, to ensure that pedestrians and cyclists are able to move freely and safely throughout the town centre.
- To provide an efficient and convenient network of bus priority streets that support a more rapid set of bus routes and better positioning of bus stops that, in particular, promote more convenient and legible opportunities for effective interchange.
- To minimise the impact of traffic on key locations and throughout the town centre in general.

#### ***“Do Minimum” Option***

4.3.3 The “Do Minimum” option addresses key issues as set out in the project brief with the minimum of alteration to the town’s traffic network. A diagrammatical representation of the “Do minimum” Option is shown in figure 4.2 below.

4.3.4 The overarching objective of the “Do Minimum” option is to reduce the impact of traffic on Boots Corner. At Boots Corner there are two roads which form a barrier to pedestrians. These roads are Clarence Parade ( part of the inner ring road) and Pitville Street / The Promenade. The section of the Promenade in question serves as part of a loop for buses stopping in Pitville Street.

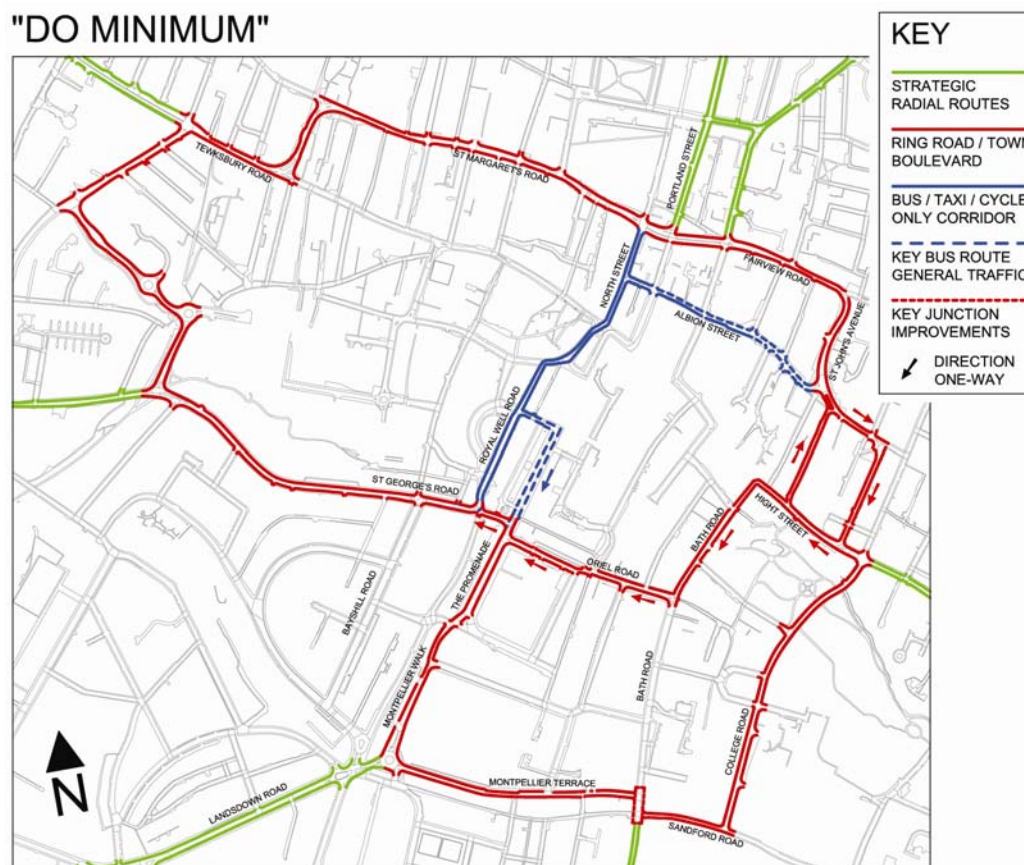


FIGURE 4.2 : "DO MINIMUM" TRAFFIC STRATEGY OPTION

- 4.3.5 This option proposes the closure of Pitville Street and the top end of the Promenade to traffic including buses. This will enable a significant improvement to the pedestrian environment at Boots Corner. Reprovision of bus facilities can then be achieved by closing Royal Well Road, Clarence Parade and North Street to general traffic and instead providing a two way bus, taxi and cycle only shared space corridor.
- 4.3.6 The outer ring road is improved to form the complete two-way Town Boulevards by utilising The Promenade, Montpellier Walk, Montpellier Terrace, Sandford Road, College Road and Terrace Road. These roads already carry significant traffic volumes, consequently junction improvement schemes will be required to ensure sufficient traffic capacity.
- 4.3.7 The result of these modifications will be that the volume of traffic passing through Boots Corner will be reduced dramatically and the environment at Boots Corner for pedestrians can be significantly improved. Buses will have a dedicated two-way route through the town centre on which a large quantity of stops can be provided. Existing strategic traffic currently using the inner ring road northbound will be re-distributed to the new complete two-way Town Boulevards.
- 4.3.8 The "Do Minimum" option addresses the need to reduce traffic through Boots Corner and through the town centre in general although it does not address some of the other key areas which are unlikely to see any significant improvement. The "Do Minimum" option could be viewed as the first phase

towards one of the more comprehensive options provided later in this report but in Colin Buchanan's opinion falls short of realising the full potential.

### Option 1

4.3.9 Option 1 is based on the "Do Minimum" option but it takes the key objective of reducing traffic in the town centre further by removing the remaining section of the inner ring road for southbound and westbound traffic formed by Bath Road and Oriel Road. The strategic traffic currently using this route will be accommodated on the new Town Boulevards. Only some traffic will continue to use the top end of Bath Road and Oriel Road for access to town centre car parks and local access. This will be ensured by physically preventing through movements to cross the town centre utilising a system of clearly signed access loops. Option 1 is shown in diagrammatical form in figure 4.3.

## OPTION 1

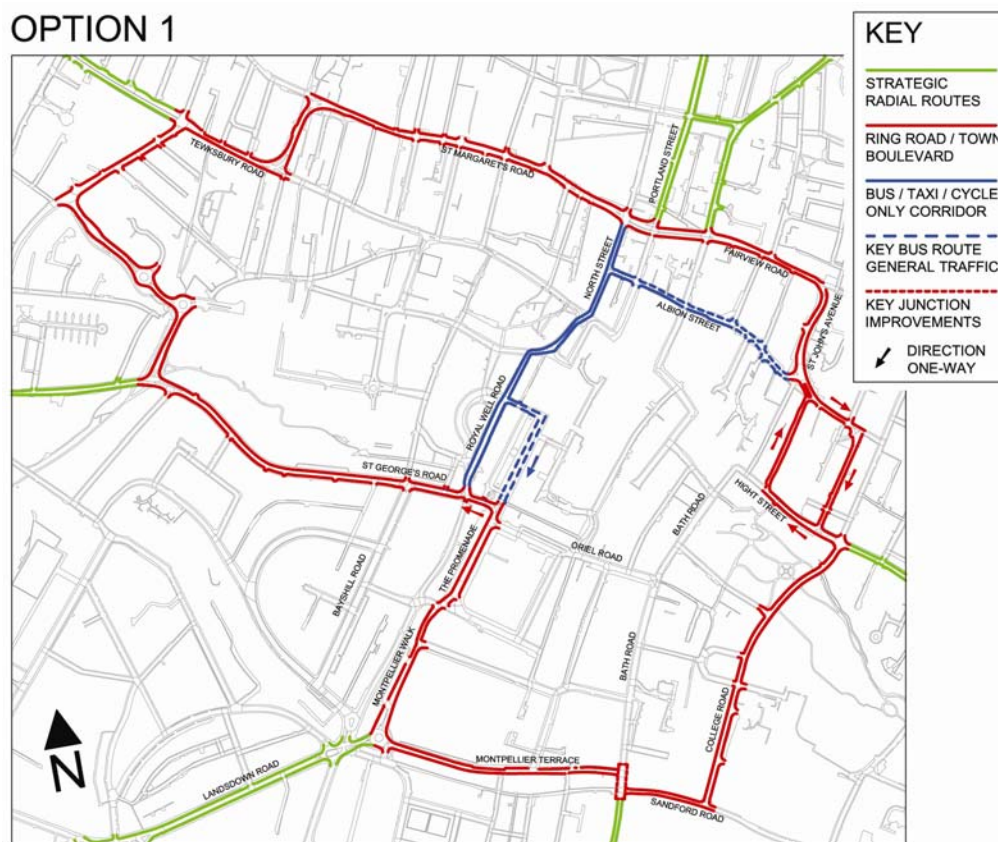


FIGURE 4.3 : TRAFFIC STRATEGY OPTION 1

4.3.10 As well as providing a general improvement to the centre by reducing traffic flow through the town centre, Option 1 allows the redevelopment of a number of key locations due to reduced traffic dominance. Streetscape schemes for Imperial Square, Oriel Road and Bath Road (including the corner at the junction with High Street) in particular will be able to take advantage of reduced traffic volumes and in the case of Imperial Square and Oriel Road a significant amount of carriageway space could be reclaimed to provide increased pedestrian space and a better setting for the town hall.

- 4.3.11 The re-routing of westbound inner ring road traffic to the new Town Boulevards will impact on the capacity requirements of the town boulevards. An increased level of junction capacity improvement will be required to accommodate the new Town Boulevards traffic.

### ***Option 2***

- 4.3.12 Option 2 is a further evolution of Option 1 which delivers all of Option 1's opportunities for streetscape improvement and offers a further benefit to the busy and historic pedestrian streets of Montpellier Walk and The Promenade. This benefit is achieved by downgrading Montpellier Walk and The Promenade from strategic traffic routes by shifting the new Town Boulevards to the parallel Bayshill Road. This would allow a comprehensive streetscape improvement scheme to be implemented on Montpellier Walk and The Promenade with the reclamation of large areas of carriageway space for pedestrians, better organisation of on-street parking, lower vehicle speeds, and an enhanced relationship with the two large parks as key features. Option 2 is shown in figure 4.4.
- 4.3.13 Montpellier Walk and The Promenade both experience a high degree of pedestrian activity due to the shops, cafes and restaurants that line the western side of both streets at various locations. The Promenade is quite narrow at the point near Fauconberg Road and here it is particularly dangerous and claustrophobic for pedestrians due to the domination of traffic and low visibility. The Promenade takes its heavy traffic load down to its junctions with Oriel Road and St Georges Road which is one of the most important pedestrian locations in Cheltenham and therefore not suitable for high volumes of traffic.
- 4.3.14 The impact on Bayshill Road is likely be significant but manageable. A significant increase in traffic flow would be expected. However, Bayshill Road is in a number of ways more suitable to carry this major traffic load than Montpellier Walk or The Promenade. Bayshill Road is over 11.5m in width for its entire length compared to the Promenade that reduces to 7.1m at one point. The footway is separated by the carriageway by a 2m verge for its entire length. The buildings on Bayshill Road are set back at least 8m from the road and over 14m from the carriageway in the majority of cases. The majority of properties on Bayshill Road are used by businesses and the residential properties are protected from the main road by a parallel service road. Mitigation measures would be included to address any adverse traffic impact.



## OPTION 2

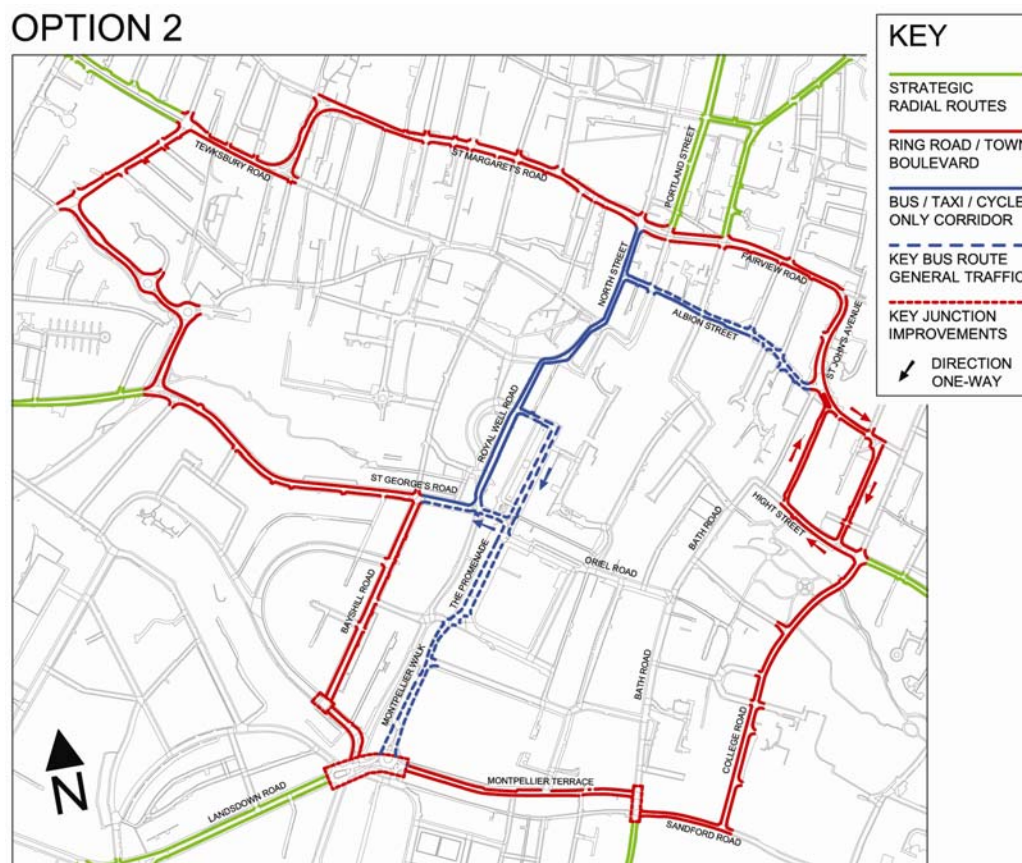


FIGURE 4.4 : TRAFFIC STRATEGY OPTION 2

- 4.3.15 Option 2 would require the redesign of the junctions of Landsdown Road / Parabola Road / Bayshill Road and the Landsdown Road / Montpellier Walk Roundabout. These junctions would be redesigned to give priority to the Town Boulevards traffic, allowing the Landsdown Road / Montpellier Walk Roundabout to be done away with and be replaced by a priority junction. This would be a huge improvement for pedestrians and cyclists in particular and would release a large area of carriageway to form a new pedestrian space and gateway feature.

### **Option 3**

- 4.3.16 Option 3 is again a further evolution of previous options. It further develops Option 2 with additional improvements to Montpellier Walk and The Promenade with particular enhancement of the area around the junctions with Oriel Road and St Georges Road. The main objective of Option 3 is to realise the potential of the area around the fountain at the junction of the Promenade and St Georges Road as an important public space linking the Royal Well and the Municipal Offices with the Promenade and the Imperial Gardens. Option 3 is shown in figure 4.5.

## OPTION 3

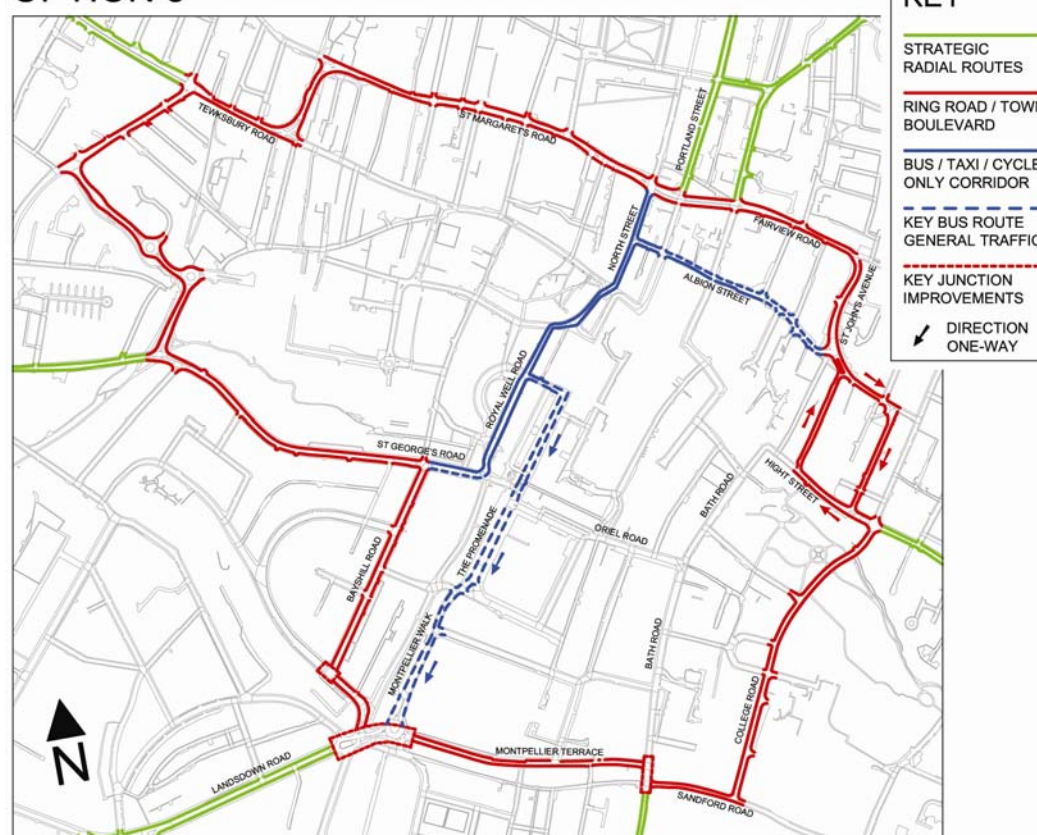


FIGURE 4.5 : TRAFFIC STRATEGY OPTION 3

- 4.3.17 It is proposed to close the section of St Georges Road east of Montpellier Street to vehicular traffic. This section would form a shared surface for pedestrians and cyclists and would allow unobstructed pedestrian movement along the full length of The Promenade on the west side of the street.
- 4.3.18 In support of the closure of the section of St Georges Road east of Montpellier Street, The Promenade and Montpellier Walk would become one-way southbound. This would provide further benefit to a Promenade and Montpellier Walk streetscape scheme by reducing the area of carriageway required. This would be particularly important at the existing narrow section of The Promenade as a significant improvement to the streetscape could be achieved if more space were available for pedestrians. Existing access requirements can still be met through other roads.
- 4.4 Assessment of traffic strategy options against objectives
- 4.4.1 Table 4.1 below summarises the extent to which each of the traffic strategy options set out in the previous section supports the key objectives of the transport strategy set out in the Cheltenham Urban Design Framework project brief.



**Table 4.1: Assessment against objectives**

Object-ives	Do Minimum	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Improve Road Safety, reduce congestion and minimise impact of traffic in key areas of the town centre.	Traffic reduced in town centre through closure of part of the inner-ring road to general traffic. Congestion on the inner-ring road reduced on Royal Well Road, North Street and Albion Street through closure to general traffic. Road Safety supported through reduced traffic and improved pedestrian environment.	Same as "Do Minimum" but with additional traffic reduction on High Street (east end of), Bath Road, Oriol Street and Imperial Place. Increased road safety through reduced traffic, congestion and the implementation of streetscape schemes on these roads.	Same as Option 1 but with additional traffic reduction on The Promenade and Montpelier Walk. Major traffic flow now no longer passes through these busy pedestrian streets and can be better accommodated on Bayshill Road. Reduced congestion and better pedestrian safety are the result.	Same as Option 2 but with the removal of northbound bus and taxi traffic on the Promenade and Montpelier Walk allowing further streetscape enhancement and reduction of carriageway width, providing enhanced pedestrian safety and reduced traffic impact.
Rerouting of through traffic from Boots Corner / Royal Well onto outer orbital route.	Do Minimum option directly addresses this issue through the closure of Royal Well Road / North Street to general traffic except buses, taxis and cycles and closure of Pitville Street and the top end of the promenade to vehicular traffic. Inner ring-road traffic is diverted on to the Town Boulevard.	As with "Do Minimum"	As with "Do Minimum"	As with "Do Minimum"
Improved accessibility and priority for pedestrian, cyclists and public transport.	Accessibility of and to public transport is improved through the provision of new public transport corridors replacing parts of the inner-ring road. The public transport corridors provide safe on street cycling environments through the town centre away from congestion and heavy traffic. Pedestrians will enjoy an enhanced street environment particularly in the Boots Corner area. Accessibility to the town centre for pedestrians and cyclists improved through implementation of Town Boulevards replacing the existing outer-ring with a more permeable solution.	Same as "Do Minimum" but with additional enhancement for pedestrians and cyclists on High Street (east end of), Bath Road, Oriol Street and Imperial Place through reduced traffic and better streetscape. Contra-flow cycle facilities provided to maintain cycle accessibility through one-way streets etc.	Same as Option 1 accept for improvement to the pedestrian and street environment on The Promenade and Montpelier Walk. The northbound bus facilities on the promenade and Montpelier Walk provide an accessibility improvement to cyclists	Same as Option 2 but with northbound buses stopping Bayshill Road and not Montpelier Walk and with better pedestrian access across The Promenade and Montpelier Walk.
Improved servicing arrangements to meet current and future business	Existing servicing facilities maintained, provision for future requirements met through reduced town-centre congestion.	As with "Do Minimum"	As with "Do Minimum"	As with "Do Minimum"
Bus routes and bus stops which maximise public transport accessibility, recognising the importance of service viability and high quality streetscapes.	Provides for existing bus services to be accommodated with better spread of stops around Albion Street and Royal Well Road instead of concentration at Pitville Street. Better bus connectivity can be provided through potential extension of all services to stop at Royal Well using slack generated through dedicated bus lanes. In addition provides the benefit of the two way bus corridor which will enable the rationalisation of bus routes avoiding some of the more complex looping arrangements enforced by the current road system.	As with "Do Minimum"	As with "Do Minimum" except for additional benefit to services on Promenade and Montpelier Walk which will experience less traffic congestion due to reduced traffic flows and better facilities provided with excess carriageway space.	As with Option 2 except that northbound buses will use a bus lane on Bayshill Road instead of Montpelier Walk and The Promenade requiring additional distance for the buses to travel and a less accessible stopping location.

- 4.4.2 The table above illustrates how each the traffic strategy options respectively addresses the objectives of the project. Running through the four options, each offers an improvement over the next in terms of how it fulfils the key objectives although this is likely to be associated with an equivalent increase in costs. The only difference to this pattern occurs between Option 3 and Option 2. Option 3 offers an improvement over Option 2 in terms of streetscape opportunities on The Promenade and Montpellier Walk but at the cost of bus accessibility to those same roads. Therefore it is considered by Colin Buchanan that Option 2 is possibly the more preferable of the two depending on how important the additional streetscape improvements offered by Option 3 are considered to be.
- 4.4.3 The conceptual traffic management scheme detailed in the following section of this chapter will be base on the Option 2 traffic strategy. The traffic management scheme is intended to be indicative and will show how Option 2 can support a traffic management scheme that will more fully apply the key objectives across the whole town centre.

## 4.5 Conceptual Traffic Management Scheme

- 4.5.1 Colin Buchanan have prepared a conceptual traffic management scheme that effectively represents a potential development of one of the traffic strategy options described above. The conceptual traffic management scheme presented shows how Traffic Strategy Option 2 could be progressed on a more detailed level addressing the impact of the strategy on smaller local streets and highlighting where major streetscape improvements can be realised. A 1:2500 scale plan of Cheltenham illustrating the conceptual traffic management scheme is included at the rear of this report.
- 4.5.2 Traffic Strategy Option 2 proposes to modify Cheltenham's existing road network to remove strategic through traffic from the town centre. This is achieved firstly by providing a complete two-way ring-road –or Town Boulevard– around Cheltenham town centre with sufficient capacity to carry the strategic traffic. Secondly by downgrading the existing inner ring road that currently leads high volumes of traffic through sensitive parts of the town centre and limiting the traffic that uses it.
- 4.5.3 In Option 2 the new Town Boulevard avoids the most sensitive areas of Cheltenham Town Centre allowing improvement schemes to be provided at a comprehensive number of key locations throughout the town centre. These will include Boots Corner, Royal Well Road, Albion Street, Bath Road, Oriel Road, The Promenade and Montpellier Walk. In addition to these locations a number of other areas can be improved through local streetscape and traffic management schemes and these are included within the preferred traffic management option; High Street west of Boots Corner, Clarence Street and Crescent Place, etc.
- 4.5.4 Each of these areas and the proposals that effect them are discussed in detail in the following section.

### ***The Town Boulevard***

- 4.5.5 The Town Boulevard as shown on the conceptual traffic management scheme plan will in effect be a continuous two-way ring road around Cheltenham utilising the existing outer ring road and Bayshill Road, Parabola Road, Montpellier Terrace, Sandford Road and College Road. The new Town Boulevard will be required to carry a significant volume of traffic and to enable this to occur it is likely that some junction re-designs will be required. See figures 4.6 and 4.7 overleaf for indicative junction layouts for the most likely bottle-neck points on the new Town Boulevard; the junction of Landsdown

Road, Parabola Road and Montpellier Terrace and the junction of Bath Road with Sandford Road and Montpellier Terrace.

- 4.5.6 Other key junctions on the Town Boulevard are likely to require capacity improvement schemes. It is very important that the needs of pedestrians and cyclists are not neglected and it will be ensured that high standard pedestrian facilities are provided at all junctions on the Town Boulevard.

### ***The Town Centre Public Transport Corridor***

- 4.5.7 A public transport corridor will be created on the western and northern sides of the old inner ring-road, Royal Well Road, North Street and Albion Street. This public transport corridor will be made up of a bus, taxi and cycle only street running north to south along Royal Well Road and North Street. Vehicles accessing off highway sites along this route will also be permitted to allow for servicing requirements, particularly on the west side of High Street.
- 4.5.8 The public transport corridor formed by Albion Street will not be entirely bus, taxi and cycle only as traffic must be allowed to access the various car parks on Albion Street. Therefore the eastern end of Albion Street near St John's Avenue will allow general traffic.

### **LANDSDOWN ROAD / TOWN BOULEVARD INDICATIVE JUNCTION LAYOUT**



FIGURE 4.6 : LANDSDOWN ROAD / PARABOLA ROAD INDICATIVE JUNCTION DESIGN

## BATH ROAD / TOWN BOULEVARD INDICATIVE JUNCTION LAYOUT



FIGURE 4.7 : BATH ROAD / MONTPELLIER TERRACE INDICATIVE JUNCTION DESIGN

### ***Boots Corner And Pitville Street***

- 4.5.9 The loop formed by Pitville Street and the northern most end of the Promenade will be closed to vehicles and will become a pedestrian and cycle shared surface. Combined with the reduction in traffic movements on North Street (Likely maximum somewhat less than 50 buses in an hour), Boots corner will become a much more pleasant and pedestrian friendly area with scope for a greatly enhanced streetscape environment.

### ***Royal Well, Crescent Terrace, Clarence Street And Crescent Place***

- 4.5.10 Royal Well Road as shown on the conceptual traffic management scheme, with the new public transport corridor passing along its entire length, would experience a dramatic reduction in traffic flows. The bus corridor could be routed around the west side of the existing open space to realise maximum opportunity for redevelopment of the rear of the municipal offices. Ideally, the bus corridor could make use of the land currently forming a parking area in front of Royal Crescent. However land ownership issues are liable to complicate this option and undermine its feasibility, as a result of purchase costs and delays associated with the potential need to make use of compulsory purchase orders. Nevertheless, the bus corridor could still be accommodated between the parking area and the large tree which exists in the centre of the open space at Royal Well. As presently, low level shrubbery could be used for delineation of the two spaces (parking and interchange) and to reduce vehicular dominance.
- 4.5.11 Under the option shown on the conceptual traffic management scheme, Crescent Terrace will be accessed by Buses and Taxis from Royal Well Road and by local access traffic from Crescent Place. It is envisaged that bus operations in the section of the Promenade in front of the Municipal Offices could be scaled down, in favour of the new bus corridor on Royal Well Road. This section of the Promenade will also continue to be home to the town's main taxi rank, enabling interchange with the buses on Royal Well Road, supported

by enhanced signing. However, the provision of additional taxi ranks elsewhere within the town centre should reduce dependence on this location and thereby the level of taxi traffic here. This should assist in reducing operational pressures in this location at peak times. A reduced bus presence opposite the Municipal Offices will similarly assist in allowing the streetscape to be improved, with a reduction in carriageway width and traffic volume and enhancement of the pedestrian environment.

- 4.5.12 There are several possible solutions to dealing with the area around Crescent Place and Clarence Street. The conceptual traffic management scheme proposes that Clarence Street and Crescent Place become new shared surfaces with vehicular operation limited to access for Royal Crescent and the Municipal Offices and bus movements eastbound to Royal Well Road. Crescent Place would only require a narrow one-way strip of vehicular shared surface (southbound) with the rest of the existing carriageway available as dedicated pedestrian space. The shared surface would ensure that vehicle speeds were kept low and the impact of traffic minimised in order to provide an enhanced setting for the Public Library, Museum and St Matthews Church.
- 4.5.13 The benefit of providing access to the Royal Crescent and Promenade only via a shared surface route through Crescent Place, is that it discourages vehicles from accessing Crescent Terrace and The Promenade unless they have a specific requirement to do so. Effectively traffic on The Promenade opposite the Municipal Offices ( a sensitive pedestrian area) will be limited to taxis, buses and vehicles immediately accessing local facilities.
- 4.5.14 An alternative arrangement which is not shown on the conceptual traffic management scheme would involve the removal of traffic completely from Crescent Place, in order to establish a benefit in streetscape quality. This arrangement would require that traffic accessing Royal Crescent and The Municipal Offices does so via an alternative route. Alternative access arrangements could be provided by allowing access traffic to use the proposed bus, taxi and cycle only corridor running north to south on Royal Well Road, this will present regulatory difficulties and compromise the proposed public transport interchange at Royal Well. It is also likely to lead to increased vehicular traffic on The Promenade opposite the Municipal Offices as access to this area will become easier.
- 4.5.15 Another alternative access solution is to allow northbound access on The Promenade to the Municipal Offices. This will result in a more complex traffic arrangement at the junction of The Promenade and St George's Road and would provide the opportunity for more general traffic to circulate on The Promenade opposite the Municipal Offices which would not be desirable. Vehicles accessing Royal Crescent could do so via a link from Royal Well Place but this would create a parallel link to the proposed public transport corridor reducing the space available for development at Royal Well.

### ***The Promenade, Imperial Square And St Georges Road***

- 4.5.16 The Traffic Strategy Option 2 allows a certain quantity of street enhancement to be provided at the key public area formed by the junction of The Promenade, Imperial Square / Oriel Road and St Georges Road. Due to the significant traffic reduction on the Promenade and Imperial Square the carriageways can be narrowed to allow freer and safer pedestrian movement.
- 4.5.17 Imperial Square and the Promenade will both be carrying significantly reduced traffic volumes and this will allow greater footway areas and dedicated parking facilities to be provided on both streets. The relationship between the two



streets and the Imperial Gardens and Town Hall which they surround will be significantly enhanced.

***Montpellier Walk, Landsdown Road And Montpellier Terrace***

- 4.5.18 Montpellier Walk will be narrowed to one lane of general traffic in a north bound direction and a contra-flow bus lane in a south bound direction. This will allow the freeing of existing carriageway space for bus facilities, better organised parking, pedestrian space and a more attractive street environment. Pedestrian accessibility to Montpellier Gardens will benefit from reduced carriageway widths and the potential junction improvements at Montpellier Terrace to replace the existing roundabout will provide safer movement for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 4.5.19 Local traffic accessing the parking and facilities at the northern end of Montpellier Terrace will be able to do so via Fauconberg Road. This will ensure that traffic on Montpellier Walk is kept to a minimum and that its usefulness for local through traffic is minimised.
- 4.5.20 The existing junction of Landsdown Road with Parabola Road is particularly difficult and dangerous to negotiate on foot. The necessary junction improvement scheme to support the new Town Boulevard will provide controlled crossing facilities and release large amounts of carriageway space that will provide for much better pedestrian movement and an appropriate town centre gateway feature.

***Bath Road, Montpellier Parade And Montpellier Drive***

- 4.5.21 Bath Road north of Montpellier Road will become down-graded in terms of its strategic role under the proposed scheme. In order to enforce this and to facilitate the successful operation of the awkward staggered signal junction with Montpellier Terrace and Sandford Road, Bath Road would become one-way southbound south of Montpellier Drive.
- 4.5.22 Local access traffic wishing to access the town centre car parks on Oriel Road from the direction of Bath Road would use Montpellier Parade and Montpellier Drive to loop back onto Bath Road. In effect an access loop will be formed that ensures that only local traffic accessing the town centre would find any benefit in travelling along Bath Road north of Montpellier Terrace.

***Fauconberg Road, Imperial Square And Oriel Road***

- 4.5.23 For traffic arriving to the Town Boulevard from the west and south west (Landsdown Road, St George's Road) and wishing to access town centre car parks, an access loop will be provided in the form of Fauconberg Road and Imperial Square. Fauconberg Road will allow traffic in both directions and access to Oriel Road and its connection to the two car parks will be obtained via an anti-clockwise loop on Imperial Square.
- 4.5.24 Through movements across the town centre from Fauconberg Road to College Road for instance will be prevented through design where possible but at the very least will be made quite tortuous due to the layout of one-way access loops and the intended slow speed traffic environment within the Town Boulevard.

***Bath Road, Bath Parade And High Street***

- 4.5.25 Bath Road north of Oriel Road will form an anti-clockwise access loop with High Street and Bath Parade. Traffic will be able to move within the Town Boulevard



along High Street before turning south along Bath Road as it does as part of the existing inner-ring road. Where the current traffic system permits traffic to then turn right into Oriel Road the proposed system will not allow south bound movement beyond Bath Parade. This will ensure that the northern end of Bath Road is only travelled by vehicles accessing the adjacent parts of the town centre, moving northwards to service High Street or accessing the Bath Parade Car park.

- 4.5.26 Strategic traffic from London Road will be signed to use the Town Boulevard and the majority of vehicles wishing to park within the town centre will be signed to the Albion Street Car Parks.

### ***Albion Street And Adjoining Roads***

- 4.5.27 Albion street itself will have a new role as public transport corridor but will still provide access to the large car parks situated at it's eastern end. Traffic will be able to travel south from the Town Boulevard to access Albion Street using Pitville Street and Winchcombe Street. Access will also be provided via the junction of Albion Street and St John's Avenue. To enable an improvement to the capacity of the junctions on the Town Boulevard east of North Street, traffic from Albion Street will only be allowed to rejoin the Town Boulevard via Gloucester Place and St John's Avenue. This will facilitate a maximum of 3 stages at each of the signal junctions on the Town Boulevard east of North Street.
- 4.5.28 To enable Albion Street to function as a public transport corridor and provide access to the existing car parks two way general traffic will be allowed to operate east of Gloucester Place. West of Gloucester Place general traffic will be restricted to eastbound movements only and a contra-flow bus lane will allow westbound bus, taxi and cycle movements. The section of Albion Street west of Pitville Street will allow two-way bus, taxi and cycle movements only.
- 4.5.29 A small section of shared surface is proposed across the west arm of the junction of Albion Street and Pitville Street. This shared surface will connect the two parts of Pitville Street, north and south, for pedestrians and will ensure that buses and taxis travel slowly through this part of Albion Street where pedestrian movements are likely to be high.

### ***High Street West Of North Street***

- 4.5.30 The current arrangement of traffic on High Street Varies along it's length. West of North Street a one-way shared surface has been implemented which allows buses and service vehicles to turn from North Street onto High Street but prevents general traffic through use of a rising bollard. This shared surface runs as far as Bennington Street where it ends and general traffic is allowed to progress along High Street in a westerly direction. High street then becomes two way west of the junction with St Georges Street.
- 4.5.31 Colin Buchanan propose to extend the shared surface section as far as Ambrose Street to help revitalise this part of High Street as a location of high pedestrian activity by keeping vehicle speeds and volumes to a minimum. The existing mini-roundabout and area around it would be redesigned as a more pleasant public space and the impact of traffic on High Street would be better managed through streetscape design and a reduction in traffic flow.
- 4.5.32 The reduced traffic flow would be achieved through the implementation of one-way movement for general traffic, eastbound west of Ambrose Street and a contra-flow bus lane allowing buses, taxis and cycles only in a westbound direction. This allows for the existing bus movements on High Street to be

accommodated but will prevent some of the potential through movements for general traffic.

***Ambrose Street, St James Square And St Georges Place***

- 4.5.33 To complement the scheme on High Street the connecting routes for through traffic formed by Ambrose Street, St James' Square St George's Place and St George's Terrace will be rendered more tortuous for general traffic. This area currently provides a rat run for vehicles travelling north to south between both sides of the outer ring road. With the removal of the inner-ring road this rat running is likely to increase if not dissuaded. Therefore a system of one-way roads, bus contra-flows and traffic calming is proposed to prevent serious rat-running from occurring.

## 4.6 Chapter Summary

- 4.6.1 The conceptual traffic management scheme draws together the benefits of the Option 2 Traffic Strategy and combines them with more localised scheme concepts to provide an over-arching scheme that supports the delivery of the objectives of the Transport Strategy as set out in the Cheltenham UDF project brief.
- 4.6.2 Traffic Strategy Options 1 and 3 both have benefits in terms of reduced financial cost and further streetscape opportunities respectively. Therefore Options 1 and 3 should also be considered and these could inform variations on the conceptual traffic management scheme.
- 4.6.3 The conceptual traffic management scheme has not been tested using traffic modelling capacity analysis software. It is therefore to be treated purely as indicative and not as a proposed highway scheme. The design of junctions and streets within the scheme including the proposed Town Boulevard will require robust assessment using traffic modelling software to determine the requirements of and provide for existing and future traffic. However, the scheme has been designed using Colin Buchanan's significant experience and it would be expected that the principals of the proposed scheme can realistically be delivered with sufficiently robust and innovative design.
- 4.6.4 More detailed aspects of the proposed scheme relating to Streetscape, Buses and Parking issues are now discussed in the following chapters.

## 5. Streetscape Design

### 5.1 Design Philosophy

5.1.1 The proposed traffic strategy options are based on the simple principle of accommodating key traffic volumes to, from and around the town centre on a two-way town centre boulevard delineating an “inner boulevard” area providing only for vehicular access to the town in a traffic calmed streetscape.

5.1.2 The Urban Design Strategy proposed for Cheltenham town centre is detailed in the [insert report title from Halcrow]. The overall philosophy is summarised as follows:

- The central principle of the strategy is to award priority to people rather than to vehicular traffic.
- This would be achieved by creating an environment where road space is reallocated between different users.

5.1.3 This overall strategy would be applied differently between the Town Boulevard and the town centre area with the Town Boulevard:

- The Town Boulevard would retain a strategic role within the town road network and a high level of capacity would need to be maintained. The streetscape strategy would aim at:
  - Creating a specific identity for the Boulevard,
  - Addressing potential issues of severance by identifying key pedestrian and cycle gateway points into the town centre area and across the Boulevard. These gateway points would be marked by the provision of wide controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing points. This would deliver safe crossings and permeability across the Boulevard.
  - Permeability across the Town Boulevard would also be achieved by the provision of a central strip separating the two lanes of traffic, where possible. This central strip would strengthen the identity of the boulevard. It would also contribute to generally lower speed as it would visually narrow the lanes provided to traffic and provide some refuge for pedestrians crossing the Town Boulevard..
- Streetscape treatment of the central area within the Town Boulevard would offer the opportunity to shift priority to pedestrians and cyclists and public transport vehicles at the expense of the car, by building on the shared space concept as described in Halcrow's report. Different degrees of intervention would be required at different locations, but all treatment would work towards a traffic calmed, traffic reduced environment.

5.1.4 The design philosophy also needs to recognise the needs of mobility impaired road users and in particular of the blind. The streetscape strategy would incorporate key elements (such as different surfacing) to make the environment more legible to all users.

### 5.2 The Boulevard streetscape

5.2.1 The Boulevard would have to maintain relative high capacity to accommodate town centre traffic. As a strategic route, the streetscape strategy would aim at giving this route its own typology and identity to deliver a clearly identifiable and fully legible route around the town centre.

5.2.2 Therefore, the streetscape strategy for the Boulevard would consider the following:

- The Boulevard would provide a two way route around the town centre. It would therefore require a minimum of one lane for traffic in each direction.
- Where possible, the two lanes of traffic would be delineated by a central reservation. This would benefit the permeability of the boulevard. Its design would borrow from recent examples such as Kensington High Street and should incorporate single level surface crossing points at the town centre key pedestrian and cycle gateway points.
- Parking on the boulevard should be implemented where possible in order to reduce speed of traffic. This would encourage the provision of an active environment for the boulevard.
- The use of variable message signs and dynamic signage would be recommended, to assign traffic around the system in a balanced fashion. These signs could indicate the nearest car park with available spaces, the most convenient route around the town centre, or any particular incident on the boulevard.

5.2.3

Figure 5.1 illustrates what the boulevard could look like after streetscape intervention. This example is taken from the town of Hennef in Germany.



Figure 5.1: Hennef – Germany

### ***The Town Centre Area***

- 5.2.4 The Town Boulevard delineates a central area of the town centre within which the opportunity for greater intervention arises. The key principle for this central area is to develop “access cells” accommodating only traffic accessing a local area or a town centre car park.
- 5.2.5 The streetscape strategy for this inner boulevard area would shape these “access cells” by delivering an environment developed on the basis of the shared space principles. This would include, where appropriate:
- Single level surfacing,
  - Reduced traffic lane widths,
  - Reduced road marking,
  - Reduced signage,
  - Use of different paving to delineate lanes, parking, junctions.
- 5.2.6 Different levels of intervention would however be required in order to recognise the different functions of the different streets within the inner boulevard area. Therefore, the strategy suggests the development of a streetscape hierarchy. The following paragraphs detail the different typologies identified.

### ***Gateway areas***

- 5.2.7 These areas would form a key part of the streetscape strategy for the town centre. These would be used to mark the transition between the Boulevard and the inner boulevard area. The streetscape should send a strong signal to motorists that they are entering an environment where priority is more balanced between street users. The treatment of gateway areas would include: raised table, single level surfacing, use of bollards to delineate lanes of traffic, specific signage to indicate the entrance to the central area, use of “rough” surfacing such as cobbles to slow down speeds.
- 5.2.8 Such treatment would be applied to key locations such as: Montpellier Walk, Montpellier Parade, Bath Road, the eastern end of the High Street, St George’s Road, St George Place and the western end of the High Street.
- 5.2.9 The gateway treatment could be combined with other streetscape improvements such as shared surface treatment.

### ***Key Public Transport Corridors***

- 5.2.10 A number of key public transport corridors have been highlighted as part of the Traffic Strategy Options discussed in chapter 4, these consist of bus, taxi and cycle only corridors as proposed for Royal Well Road and North Street and streets that carry general traffic but form an important bus route like The Promenade and Montpellier Walk. Most of these corridors are streets and places with high pedestrian activity. To minimise the impact of buses on the streetscape environment but ensure pedestrian safety and smooth bus operation, it is proposed that the streets should be designed using some shared space principals but retaining a clear delineation between carriageway and footway.
- 5.2.11 The delineation of carriageway should probably take the form of a shallow kerb and / or patterned block paving in a form acceptable to demarcate the carriageway for the visually impaired. It is important that pedestrians feel they can cross the public transport corridors freely and safely but they should not feel encouraged to dawdle within the carriageway. Vehicle speeds within the public transport corridors form a big part of this and although delineated from the footway drivers should be made to drive at low speeds with special care to the

vulnerable pedestrian presence. This can be supported through use of narrow carriageways that are designed to look even narrower through use of block paving strips and areas of true shared surface at key pedestrian and cycle crossing locations and some junctions. Vehicles will be slowed on approach to these shared space areas using shallow ramping up to the footway level at which point vehicle paths will remain delineated through patterned / coloured paving only and pedestrians will receive equal priority to traffic.

### ***Montpellier Walk / The Promenade***

- 5.2.12 One of the key objectives to the UDF strategy is to deliver a strong link between the Promenade and Montpellier Walk, creating a north-south axis for the town centre. The proposed diversion of strategic and through traffic away from this corridor provides the opportunity for radical treatment of the streetscape delivering a stronger pedestrian and cycle link.
- 5.2.13 Montpellier Walk and The Promenade form a key public transport corridor carrying a high number of existing bus services. The principles of shared space would be applied to this corridor as described above to allow an enhanced pedestrian environment to be created but still provide sufficient priority for buses. The reduced level of traffic resulting from the diversion of the Town Boulevard proposed in Traffic Strategy Options 2 and 3 would allow for a dramatic reduction in the road width provided to vehicular traffic, road width which would therefore be redistributed to pedestrian and cyclists.
- 5.2.14 Despite the reallocation of strategic traffic to Bayshill Road, the corridor would still have to accommodate some key access traffic for the town. Depending on the traffic option considered, this route would have to accommodate access and/or egress movements for bus and coach services as well as access and/or egress for local car traffic. This route is also likely to form an egress route for traffic from the two town centre car parks located to the south of the High Street i.e. Regent Arcade and Cambray Place.

### ***Shared Space***

- 5.2.15 The full extent of a true shared space concept would be implementable on a number of streets within the Town Boulevard. The following streets are identified as key intervention areas: the section of the High Street between Street and Cambray Place, a section of Clarence Street and Crescent Place, at the corner of High Street and Bath Road combined with a gateway feature, and St Lukes Road although this is not essential to the town's transport strategy.
- 5.2.16 In these areas, it is suggested that the full shared space concept is developed with minimum traffic delineation and the delivery of a fully open environment clearly providing priority to pedestrians and cyclists.





**Figure 5.2: Example of shared space treatment – Kijkstraatwg,**

### ***Pedestrian areas***

- 5.2.17 A number of areas within the town centre could be reverted entirely to pedestrians and/or cyclists only. This would include, the northern section of the promenade and southern section of Pittville Street, and in the case of Traffic Option 3 a short section of St George's Road between Royal Well Road and The promenade. This latest section would deliver a uninterrupted pedestrian and cycle link from the Municipal offices to Montpellier.

### ***Town centre access roads***

- 5.2.18 In order to deliver the key objectives of the UDF strategy, only a low level of intervention would be required on all other streets within the inner boulevard area. Overall, these streets would be treated so as to limit the impact of traffic:
- The network of roads within the inner boulevard would accommodate lower volumes of traffic limited to local access traffic and traffic accessing town centre car parks as strategic traffic would be routed to the Boulevard. This would be reinforced by the use of short sections of one way operation, combined with the proposed gateway treatments which should deter rat running and ensure that only access traffic uses these roads.
  - Speed would also be reduced by removing all but essential road marking, and signage, and by promoting on street parking as a tool to reduce road widths.
- 5.2.19 This network would include key access corridors to the town centre car parks, where conflict with other road users is likely to be greater. These corridor would therefore require a higher level of signage to function efficiently and safely.

### 5.3 Walking and cycling

5.3.1 The proposed transport strategy would deliver great improvements to walking and cycling to, from and across the town centre. The proposed strategy is based on the following principles:

- The identification of key pedestrian and cycle gateways to the town centre. These gateway would typically be located where key pedestrians and cycle routes into the town meet the Boulevard. These gateway points would benefit from the provision of controlled single level crossing facilities.
- The streetscape improvements proposed for the inner boulevard area would deliver a permeable grid of traffic calmed streets, providing an attractive environment for cyclists and pedestrians.

5.3.2 It is recommended that key routes across the inner boulevard areas are identified to increase the legibility of the environment for cyclists and pedestrians. This would require the use of appropriate signage. Where these key routes intersect car park access routes or bus corridors, it is suggested that clearly identified crossing points are delineated, by the use of specific surfacing for example. This will allow the channelling of cyclists and pedestrians and therefore give them a stronger presence. As a result, car users will be able to adapt their behaviour and allow for safe crossing of pedestrians and cyclists.

5.3.3 Figure 5.3 illustrates the proposed cycling strategy.

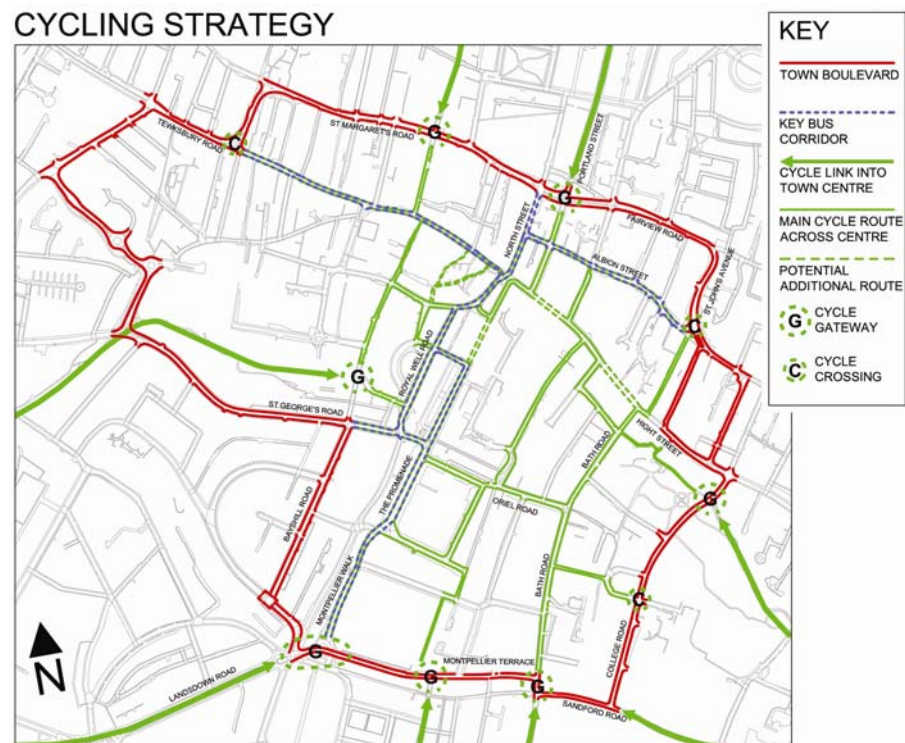


Figure 5.3: Cycling Strategy

## 5.4 Accident assessment

### ***Montpellier Walk/The Promenade/Royal Well Road***

5.4.2 A review of recorded injury accidents on the Montpellier Walk/Promenade/Royal Well Road/Clarence Street corridor has been undertaken. It shows that between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2005, 55 accidents were recorded of which 12 resulted in serious injury. 22 accidents involved pedestrians (7 serious) and 7 accidents involved cyclists (2 serious). Accidents recorded for the Promenade are split between traffic accidents involving only cars, most on them occurring at the junction with Imperial Square, and accidents involving pedestrians on the northern section of The Promenade by the Municipal offices. The combination of high pedestrian activity, bus stops and traffic has led to 9 accidents involving pedestrians on this section of road.

5.4.3 The proposed Traffic Strategy Options 2 and 3 would address accidents along this corridor by limiting traffic along this corridor and focusing bus activity to the Royal Well site. In addition, the streetscape improvements possible as a result of this reduction in traffic would lead to narrower traffic lanes and a safer traffic calmed environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

5.4.4 Accident records in this area also show 6 accidents occurring at the two roundabouts at the bottom of Montpellier Walk. 4 of these accidents involved cyclists, which highlights the difficulty for cyclists to negotiate junctions such as these. The proposed traffic routing strategy would turn the two roundabout junctions into priority and traffic signal controlled junction. The scheme would incorporate safe controlled pedestrian and cycle crossing and gateway treatment addressing the cycle safety issues.

### ***Bath Road***

5.4.5 A review of recorded injury accidents on Bath Road between Sandford Road and High Street has been undertaken. It shows that between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2005, 36 accidents were recorded of which 1 resulted in serious injury. 10 accidents involved pedestrians (1 serious) and 5 accidents involved cyclists (0 serious).

5.4.6 Accident clusters occur on Bath road at the junctions with Sandford Road (4), Montpellier Drive (8), Oriel Drive (6), Bath Street (4) and High Street (4). Nearly all of the remaining accidents occur on the stretch of Bath Road between Bath Street and Oriel Road. All ten of the pedestrian accidents occurred at the junctions of Bath Road with Oriel Road, Bath Road with Bath Street or on the Stretch of Bath Road between these two junctions.

5.4.7 These accident records highlight the need for improved pedestrian safety on Bath road particularly on the section between Bath Street and Oriel Road. The conceptual traffic management scheme and the Traffic Strategy Options which inform it would reduce traffic flow on Bath Road and provide the opportunity to create a safer place for pedestrians by providing narrower crossing points and a lower speed traffic environment.

5.4.8 Most of the traffic only accidents are the result of excessive speed, rear end shunts, loss of control etc. A lower speed traffic environment supported by physical traffic calming and psychological traffic calming measures would help lead to a reduction in traffic accidents and accident severity.

### ***High Street***

- 5.4.9 A review of recorded injury accidents on High Street west of North Street has been undertaken. It shows that between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2005, 27 accidents were recorded of which 3 resulted in serious injury. 14 accidents involved pedestrians (2 serious) and 1 accident involved a cyclist (0 serious).
- 5.4.10 The biggest clusters of accidents occur between Ambrose Street and King Street (9 accidents including 4 involving pedestrians) and between Bennington Street and Henrietta Street (7 including 5 pedestrians). Only one accident was recorded on the section of High Street Between Boots Corner and Bennington Street which was the result of a pedestrian falling out of a bus.
- 5.4.11 The accident records show that a particularly high proportion of accidents involving pedestrians have occurred, just over half of those recorded. This is undoubtedly due to the nature of the street which mixes busy shopping activity with uncalmed general traffic throughout the majority of its length. The scheme proposed for High Street west of North Street involves the extension of the existing section of shared surface between North Street and Bennington Street up to Ambrose Street. This will help to improve pedestrian priority and dramatically reduce vehicle speeds as well as deterring through traffic leading to an improved and safer environment for pedestrians.

### ***College Road***

- 5.4.12 A review of recorded injury accidents on College Road has been undertaken. It shows that between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2005, 16 accidents were recorded of which 1 resulted in serious injury. 0 accidents involved pedestrians and 3 accidents involved cyclists (0 serious).
- 5.4.13 6 of the recorded accidents occurred at the junction with Sandford Road, 3 of the recorded accidents (including 1 serious) occurred at the junction with London Road. The remaining accidents were spread along College Road between Orrisdale Terrace and Sandford Road.
- 5.4.14 The accident records show that College Road has experienced a relatively low level of accidents over the five year period examined. No pedestrian accidents have been recorded which is probably a product of low pedestrian activity and the presence of good quality crossing facilities. Most of the accidents involving vehicles are of the kind generally expected at junctions and are not of sufficient frequency to indicate a particular accident problem.

### ***Bayshill Road***

- 5.4.15 A review of accidents on Bayshill Road has been undertaken. It shows that between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2005, 16 accidents were recorded of which none resulted in serious injury. 2 accidents involved pedestrians and 5 accidents involved cyclists.
- 5.4.16 The biggest accident cluster concerning Bayshill Road occurs at the junction with St Georges Road. 8 Accidents were recorded here 1 involving a pedestrian. 4 more of the accidents recorded were at the junction with Parabola Road near the northern end of Bayshill Road, 1 of which involved a pedestrian. The remaining accidents were spread out, 1 at each of the other three junctions on Bayshill Road and one between the St Georges Road junction and northern Parabola Road junction.

- 
- 5.4.17 The accidents recorded for Bayshill Road are relatively few in number for the five year period examined with half of the accidents occurring at the junction with St George's Road. The junction of Bayshill Road with St George's Road carries a significant volume of traffic and so a total of 8 accidents over five years would not be considered as excessive. The proportion of accidents recorded involving cyclists is quite high at approximately 1/3 of all accidents. Most of the cycle accidents involve vehicles turning into undertaking or overtaking cycles which can be attributed in some part to the significant carriageway width available on Bayshill Road.
- 5.4.18 The conceptual traffic management scheme and Traffic Strategy Options 1 and 2 propose to remove strategic traffic from Montpellier Walk and the Promenade in favour of Bayshill Road which will form part of the new Town Boulevard. With the volume of traffic on Bayshill likely to increase under the proposed arrangement it could be expected that there could be a similar increase in accidents at this location. However, the Town Boulevard will provide a better environment for traffic, pedestrians and cyclists than the existing ring-road through streetscape design aimed at limiting vehicle speeds and encouraging a more careful driving approach. As a result it would be hoped that any rise in accidents relating to an increase in traffic volume could be restrained.



## 6. Bus Strategy

### 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The brief for the transport strategy identifies key objectives in terms of the town's accessibility by public transport and in particular buses. It separates the development of a more efficient town centre network for buses and the identification of new station facility for national, long distance and more rural coach services, while recognising the need to integrate these two tiers of public transport.

6.1.2 The key objectives as set out in the brief for the UDF transport strategy are:

- Improve accessibility and priority for public transport delivered through a combination of traffic management, improvements to the built environment and creation of routes which are convenient, attractive and safe,
- Identify bus routes and bus stops locations which maximises public transport accessibility across a wider area of the town centre,
- Deliver a network sufficiently flexible to enable future introduction of new services including Park and Ride and the enhancement of existing service frequencies,
- Identify an alternative location for the national coach and rural bus station,
- Consider options for integrating this facility into the redevelopment of a town centre site or other locations on the strategic town centre network,
- Address the effectiveness of existing on-street bus stops, current nodal points,
- Address the issue of integration with other services and in particular national and rural services.

6.1.3 The baseline transport review considered the existing bus network in line with the objectives stated above. The following key shortcomings of the current network can be highlighted:

- The current bus network in the town centre lacks legibility. Overall the network is structured on the principle of hubs and spokes, with most services linking the town centre to one particular area of the town.
- There continue to be only a few "cross town centre services", although some new services of this form have been implemented over recent years, representing a significant improvement on the previous situation. Exploration of other opportunities for this form of operation should be encouraged, although it is recognised that key possibilities might arise in association with urban expansion, particularly to the North West of the town.
- Cross town centre travel for bus services is not direct because the town centre road network is dominated by the one way northbound section of the ring road running along Royal Well Road, Clarence Street and Albion Street. Therefore, services tend to arrive in the town and find a way of turning around in order to travel back out of the town centre again. This leads to separate stop locations on The Promenade, Pittville Street, North Place, Clarence Street and the High Street, having a detrimental impact on the legibility of the network, as well as on ease of interchange.
- The current system relies on a number of "bus loops" within the centre, impacting on the streetscape of the town, in particular on the Pittville Street/Promenade loop.



## EXISTING BUS ROUTES



## 6.2 Town centre route operation

6.2.2 All traffic options detailed in this report propose the removal of all general traffic from Boots Corner and as a result from Royal Well Road, Clarence Street and North Street. This creates the opportunity to deliver a north-south two-way bus corridor across this section of the town centre. This bus spine forms the core of the bus strategy detailed in these paragraph.

## *The Bus Spine*

46

route would include Royal Well Road, Clarence Street, North Street, a section of North Place south of St Margaret's Road, and the western section of Albion Street up to Pittville Street. Figure 6.2 and 6.3 illustrate the proposed bus spine.

### ***The Interchange***

- 6.2.5 The strategy proposes that all bus services in the town are routed along this central spine for all or at least portions of it. This central spine would therefore provide the opportunity for all services to stop at one unique location in the town centre, simplifying the town's bus network and making it easy to comprehend and use.
- 6.2.6 Royal Well Road in particular could accommodate up to 6 bus stops in each direction. This location would lend itself as a key gateway to the town. The regeneration proposals for this site would therefore have to be sympathetic to the proposed strategy and deliver active, overlooked and safe ground level frontage, in order to deliver an attractive bus arrival point in the town.
- 6.2.7 It is considered that the rest of the corridor could accommodate up to an additional 4 stops in each direction, the entire corridor would therefore have the ability to cater for all town centre bus services.

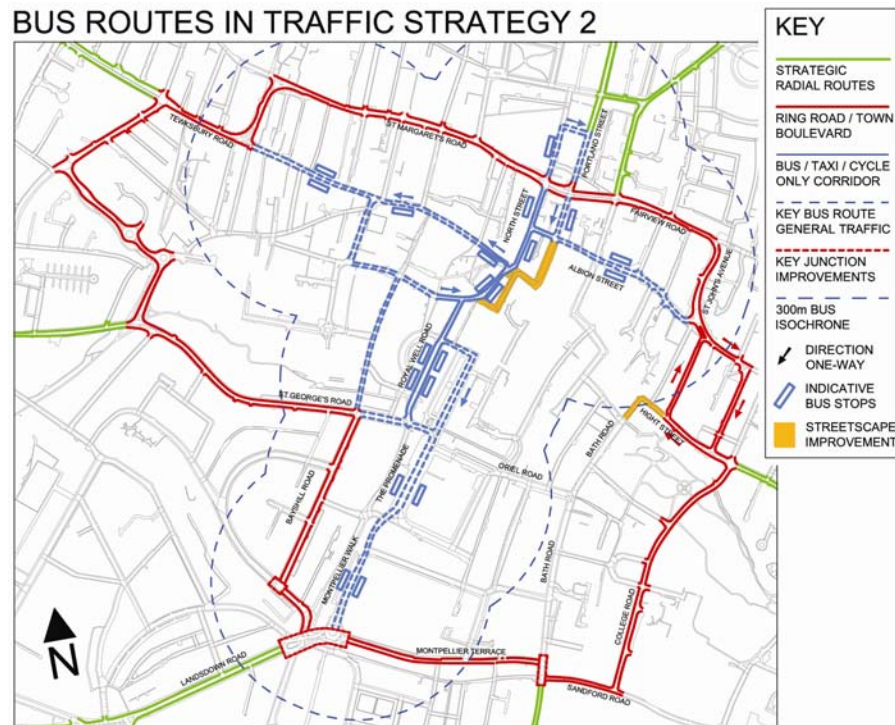
### ***Gateways and access routes***

- 6.2.8 The town centre bus routing identified in Figure 6.2 and 6.3 shows how the bus spine could be connected to all services coming from the north, south, east and west. The proposed bus network would not only allow for all existing services to operate in a similar fashion to how they operate at the moment, but would also provide the opportunity for some services to be connected to potentially create more cross town centre routes, if considered beneficial. The proposed bus route network, therefore provides enough flexibility to accommodate future service improvements.
- 6.2.9 The network proposed would deliver improved penetration into the town centre by routing buses away from the town's boulevards as soon as possible. This is to avoid potential delays to buses and deliver better service reliability. A series of key bus gateways into the inner boulevards areas are identified, coupled with internal routes, passing through traffic calmed environments, which are less likely to be congested and which all connect with the bus spine.

### ***Albion Street***

- 6.2.10 The proposed closure of Boots Corner to general traffic would have an impact on the level of traffic and character of Albion Street, providing the opportunity for future regeneration of this area to the north of the High Street. Although, Albion Street would still retain its role as the access route to key town centre car parks, the reduced level of traffic on this route resulting from the closure of Boots Corner would provide the opportunity to make of Albion Street a key bus route from the east connecting with the bus spine.
- 6.2.11 Bus stops could be provided along Albion Street serving this potential regeneration area.
- 6.3 Options
- 6.3.1 The proposed bus route operation would vary depending on the which traffic option is considered:

- 6.3.2 Figure 6.2 illustrates the proposed bus route network on the basis of traffic option 2. It provides bus access two-way on Montpellier Walk and the southern section of the Promenade. In this situation, the section of St George's Road between The Promenade and Royal Well Road would remain open to traffic, and in particular bus traffic. This would allow for buses routed to and from the south to operate as currently. This would however, have an impact on the degree of streetscape and environmental improvement that can be delivered along the Promenade and Montpellier Walk.

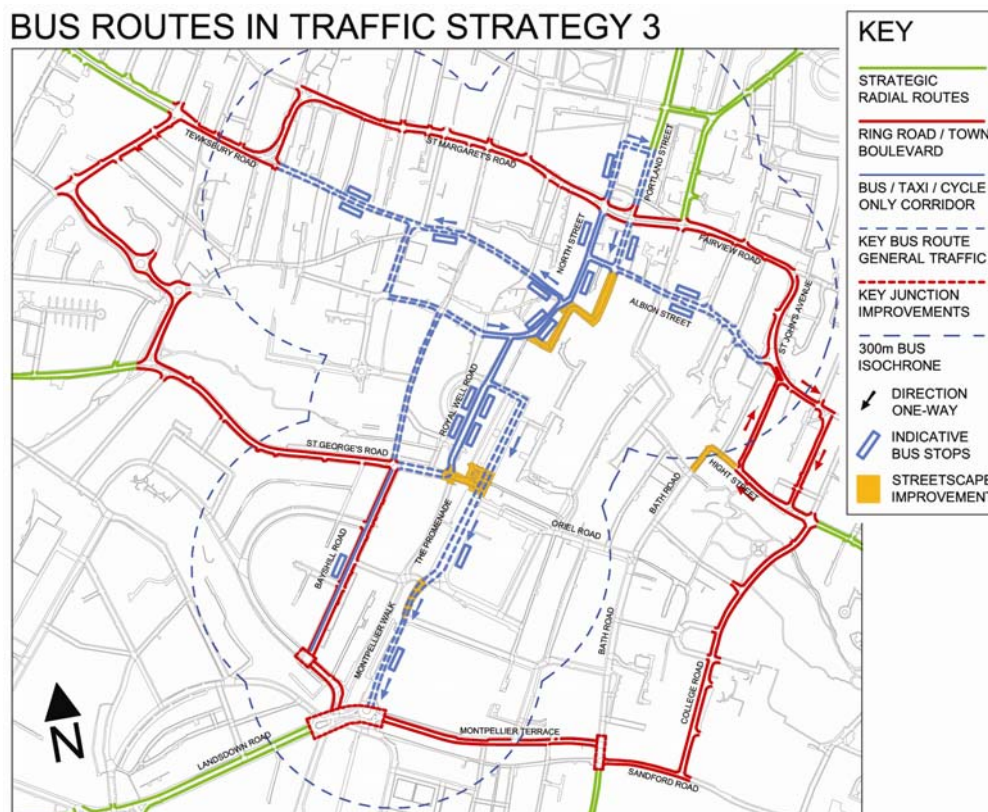


**Figure 6.2: Bus routes in traffic strategy 2**

- 6.3.3 Figure 6.3 illustrates the proposed bus route network on the basis of traffic option 3. It limits bus access along Montpellier Walk and The Promenade to one-way southbound. This has an impact on bus routing from the south as buses would now have to be routed along Bayshill Road, part of the proposed new town's boulevards. The following pros and cons would have to be considered in this case:

- Routing buses along sections of the town's boulevard would potential create delays on the bus route and have a detrimental impact on the reliability of the route. This could be addressed by the provision of a northbound bus lane on Bayshill Road. However, this would then limit the degree of streetscape treatment for this road.
- Limiting bus movements along the Promenade and Montpellier Walk would allow for better environmental improvements along this roads. In addition, in this case, the section of St George's Road between the Promenade and Royal Well Road could be closed to all traffic removing a key barrier to north-south pedestrian movements along the Promenade.

### BUS ROUTES IN TRAFFIC STRATEGY 3



**Figure 6.3: Bus routes in traffic strategy 3**

#### 6.4 Accessibility to the town centre

6.4.1 Figures 6.2 and 6.3 shows the area of the town centre which would be located within 300m (as the crow flies) of the proposed bus routes. It shows that most of the Montpellier area as well as the retail core of the town centre (High Street, Regent's Arcade) would be included within this distance of a town centre bus route.

6.4.2 The provision of a interchange point concentrating all bus services would in effect create a hub for bus services within the town centre. This would make interchange between services easy and would benefit accessibility to/from and across the town by bus. It would also increase the attractiveness of the bus interchange area (Royal Well Road and Clarence St) with high number of services and destination on offer at one unique point. Therefore, it is expected that users would be likely to walk longer distances to access this bus hub. It can therefore be expected that the catchment of the proposed bus interchange would be higher than the usual 400m walking distance. The 300m "as the crow flies" would therefore underestimate the potential catchment of the proposed hub.

6.4.3 Therefore, the bus strategy guarantee a high level of accessibility to and from the town. The creation of an interchange point is likely to make bus services more attractive and more convenient to travel to, from and through the town on cross town centre journeys.



## 6.5 Impact on current service operation

6.5.1 The impact of the proposed route network on the current bus routes operated in the town centre has been tested in terms of changes in distance travelled by each service. The table below summarises the analysis undertaken in the case of Option 2.

**Table 6.1: Impact on current bus services – Option 2 – Hourly Impact**

Services	Current distance travelled (km)	Proposed distance travelled (km)	Frequency (service/h)	Impact (km saved per h)
10	1.6	1.74	3	0.42
46	2.53	2.64	1	0.11
94, 97/98, 511, X94	1.52	1.52	16	0
A, D	4.45	3.44	12	-12.12
B	2.38	2.39	3	0.03
C, 41	1.71	1.71	8	0
F	3.98	3.99	2	0.02
G	3.07	1.98	2	-2.18
H	2	1.61	3	-1.17
J	1.73	1.97	1	0.24
K	2.93	3.04	1	0.11
N, W	0.65	0.25	2.5	-1
P/Q	4.79	4.11	2	-1.36
U	4.5	4.5	1	0
Total				-16.9

6.5.2 This analysis shows that overall the proposed route network would allow a more efficient operation of the town centre bus network and could generate up to a saving of 16.9 km travelled an hour during daytime.

6.5.3 This analysis has been extended to deriving the number of km potentially saved in the case of Option 2. The number of bus journey per year for each route considered has been derived on the basis of current timetable. The following table summarises the analysis undertaken.

**Table 6.2: Impact on current bus services – Option 2 – Annual Impact**

Services	Current distance travelled (km)	Proposed distance travelled (km)	Services per year	Impact (km saved per annum)
10	1.6	1.74	14,736	2,063
46	2.53	2.64	4,850	534
94, 97/98, 511, X94	1.52	1.52	56,918	0
A, D	4.45	3.44	49,104	-49,595
B	2.38	2.39	12,066	121
C, 41	1.71	1.71	34,550	0
F	3.98	3.99	8,286	83
G	3.07	1.98	7,744	-8,441
H	2	1.61	11,462	-4,470
J	1.73	1.97	2,416	580
K	2.93	3.04	2,916	321
N, W	0.65	0.25	6,644	-2,658
P/Q	4.79	4.11	4,228	-2,875
U	4.5	4.5	3,400	0
Total				-64,337

- 6.5.4 On the basis of Option 2, it is estimated that the bus operators within the town centre would potentially save in the region of 64,300 km travelled per annum. This would translate into a saving of about £36,600 per annum (based on COBA VOC).
- 6.5.5 If the same analysis is undertaken for option 3, distance travelled by services 94, 97/98, 511 and X94 would increase as buses would be diverted onto Bayshill Road. The net saving in km travelled would in this case be 11.94 km per h (on the basis of a week day). If converted to an annual value the saving would be in the region of 46,700 km per annum. This would equate to a saving of about £26,600 per annum (same checks apply).
- 6.6 National coach and rural bus station
- 6.6.1 The transport strategy promotes the provision of an alternative station facility for national coach and rural bus services to the existing facility in Royal Well. The provision of an alternative facility would allow the development of a more convenient, comfortable and modern bus station for the town. It would also free up a key site within the town centre for regeneration.
- 6.6.2 Best practice guidance identifies a number of criteria when considering bus stations and interchanges. Some of these criteria are directly related to the design of the facility considered. These include: legibility of the environment (signage, information display), layout of the interchange, quality of the facility including comfort of stops, potential for provision of facilities such as toilets, refreshments or ATM, and ease of access by mobility impaired users. To a large extent, it would be expected that all these criteria would be met by the design of a new bus station for the town.
- 6.6.3 Therefore, the analysis undertaken as part of this strategy focuses on the identification of a suitable site for such a facility. Although the size and configuration of the sites considered would have an impact on their ability to deliver the criteria detailed above ( a site constrained in size would lead to a constrained bus terminal layout), three sites have been identified as most suitable:



- the Cheltenham Walk car park, at Royal Well,
  - the Sherbourne Place car park to the north of Albion Street, and,
  - the North Place regeneration site.
- 6.6.4 Although the Cheltenham Walk site is smaller than the other two sites considered here, it is believed that it would be possible to accommodate about 5 layover stops, sufficient to accommodate the level of services currently observed at the existing bus station. The three sites identified here have therefore been compared on the basis of locational criteria only.
- 6.6.5 The analysis undertaken can be summarised as follows:
  - **Proximity to existing services:** In terms of proximity to existing services, the Cheltenham Walk site has a great advantage over the other two sites as it is adjacent to the existing facility. Therefore, relocating the bus station to this site would not impact on current coach and long distance bus routes. The Sherbourne Place site would be located the further away from existing services whereas the North Place site would be accessible by services from the north.
  - **Opportunity to interchange:** The Cheltenham Walk site would be located at the southern end of the proposed bus spine and therefore would provide the greatest opportunity for connection between long distance and local services. The Sherbourne Place site would be located close to Albion Street and would therefore offer some connectivity with local services stopping on this route. The North Place site would be located on only a limited number of town centre routes.
  - **Ambiance/Safety:** A new bus station on the three sites identified could be part of an attractive redevelopment scheme delivering active frontage and high level of surveillance and safety for users of the bus station. For example, the current ambiance at the Royal Well station is poor as the station is located at the back of the Municipal offices and only overlooked by residences on the Crescent and passing traffic. A successful bus station on the Cheltenham Walk site would require a high quality redevelopment of the Royal Well site.
  - **Accessibility by walking/cycling:** general accessibility to these sites has been considered in relation to the overall transport strategy for the town. The Cheltenham Walk site is located close to the town centre and within close proximity of the Honeybourne link, at a node on the town's cycle and pedestrian network (see Chapter 5. the Sherbourne Place site is more remotely located but would still be within walking distance of the centre and would be accessible by cycle being located within the town's boulevards. However, the North Place site would lie outside the town's boulevards. Although the boulevards would be design to increase pedestrian permeability, traffic would still have an impact on accessibility to this site from the town centre core.
  - **Accessibility by car/taxi:** the Sherbourne Place and North Place sites would be best located in terms of accessibility by car, being located directly onto the town's boulevards. Access by car to the Cheltenham Walk site would be less direct from the boulevards and is likely to require the creation of an access loop via St George's Road, Cheltenham Walk and Royal Well Place.
  - **Potential for interchange with rail services:** All sites are located far away from the rail station to provide good interchange. However, the Cheltenham Walk and North Place sites would be served by service D linking directly to the station.
- 6.6.6 The following table summarises this assessment. The scoring system simply allocate 3 to 1 marks depending on how they meet each of the criteria considered when compared to each other (3 best, 1 worst).

**Table 6.3: Coach and rural bus station – scoring of potential sites**

Criteria	Cheltenham Walk	Sherbourne Place	North Place
Proximity to existing services	3	2	1
Opportunity to interchange	3	2	1
Ambiance/Safety	3	2	2
Accessibility by walking and cycling	3	2	1
Accessibility by car/taxi	1	3	3
Potential for interchange with rail services	3	1	2
Total	16	11	10

6.6.7 Overall, the Cheltenham Walk site would prove the best site for delivering a new bus station for the town. Although constrained in size, it is believed that this site could accommodate the number of services serving the town. It could be operated as a drop off/pick up point only if required with coaches and buses parking on another site somewhere else in the town (North Place, Sherbourne Place). Cheltenham Walk would provide the best location overall being highly accessible by walking, cycling and being located at the southern end of the proposed town's bus spine, delivering great interchange opportunity with local bus services.

6.6.8 The success of a new bus station on the Cheltenham Walk site would however depend on a sympathetic redevelopment of the Royal Well site recognising the key role of the site as the town's gateway by public transport. This would involve an attractive redevelopment of the western aspect of the Municipal offices, to include active ground floor frontage. The potential for the site to accommodate a tourist information office as well as public toilets, cafes and other potential small retail units would guarantee the delivery of a highly attractive location for a coach and long distance bus station coupled with the local bus service interchange.

## 6.7 Conclusions: Delivering the town centre UDF objectives

6.7.1 The proposed bus strategy would deliver the stated objectives of the town centre UDF:

- **Improve accessibility and priority for public transport:** The proposed town centre routes with its spine, access routes and gateways would deliver direct, convenient and lightly trafficked routes to bus services delivering reliable and quick journey through the town centre area.
- **Identify bus routes and bus stops location which maximises public transport accessibility:** The entire town centre would be located within easy walking distance of a stop and most of it would be within 300m of bus spine delivering access to all town centre services. The provision of a unique interchange along the spine would also benefit increase interchange making cross town centre journeys more convenient and therefore more attractive

- **Deliver a network sufficiently flexible to enable future introduction of new services:** The proposed network would not only accommodate all existing services, it would simplify existing bus routing through the town centre generating journey time saving (see section 6.4 above). It would also deliver the flexibility to introduce future services and in particular, it would provide the opportunity for more cross town centre services to be introduced, in a similar fashion to service D. For example an east-west route could be created by joining services H and B.
- **Identify an alternative location for the national coach and rural bus station:** The proposed strategy considered three sites in the town centre and identified the Cheltenham Walk car park site as the preferred location for a new bus station for the town. This site forms part of the Royal Well redevelopment site in the town centre as identified by the UDF.
- **Address the effectiveness of existing on-street bus stops, current nodal points:** The current system of dispersed bus stops would be replaced by an identified interchange area where all services would focus delivering effective interchange and ease of use.
- **Address the issue of integration with other services and in particular national and rural services:** The choice of the Cheltenham Walk site for the town's bus station coupled with the delivery of a unique interchange location for local bus services on Royal Well Road would allow for a high level of integration between all services local or long distance.

6.7.2 Overall, the proposed bus strategy for the town centre:

- delivers a simplified route network centred around a strong bus spine and interchange on Royal Well Road.
- Traffic calming within the inner boulevards would improve accessibility of this core bus spine/interchange by all services and would benefit reliability on the approach to the centre.
- The proposed simplification of the network allows for a number of streets to be freed from bus traffic and therefore open up opportunities for streetscape and environmental improvements (Pittville Street, Northern section of the Promenade) as well as for better connectivity between the Promenade and the Montpellier area.
- The proposed strategy provides distance travelled savings to the current bus services operated in the town and allow for future improvements to these services (cross town centre services)

6.7.3 It is believed that the proposed strategy would create a more attractive easier to use and more convenient bus network for the whole of Cheltenham, generating benefits in increased patronage and reduction in car congestion.

## 7. Parking Strategy

### 7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 This chapter summarises the key findings of our baseline review of parking policies, provision, usage and proposals in Cheltenham. It then summarises a proposed parking strategy for the town centre, to form a part of and to complement the rest of the Transport Strategy.

7.1.2 A key point to note is that car based accessibility should not be seen as discrete from accessibility by all other modes. The attractiveness and accessibility of a town centre applies to the ease, opportunity and convenience of meeting it by whatever mode, not only by car. As a result, this chapter of the strategy should be read in conjunction with all others. Principles for a town centre parking strategy are discussed further in Section 7.4.

### 7.2 Physical, behavioural, policy and commercial context

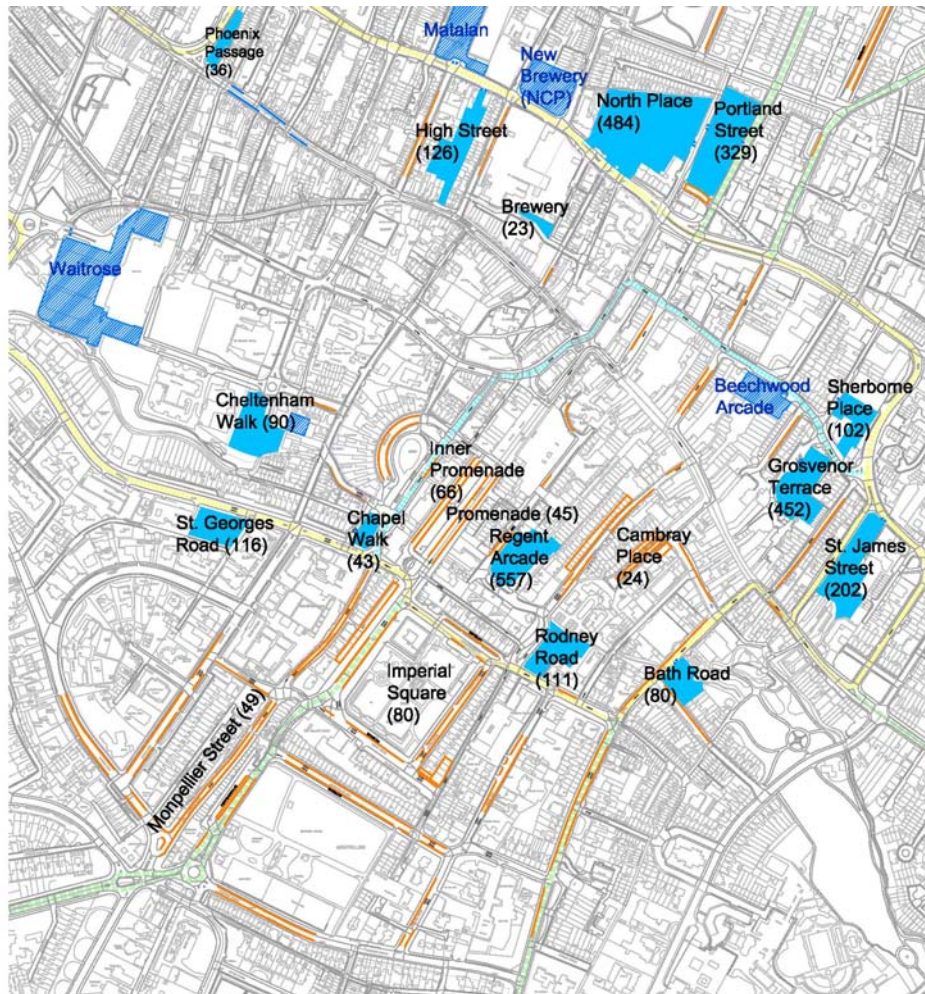
7.2.1 Baseline work to inform the Cheltenham UDF explored the availability, use and location of car parking provision of various kinds within the centre of Cheltenham, based upon monitoring information available. It also summarised the parking and demand management policy context within which the Cheltenham UDF is to be developed and implemented (in particular in relation to the Second Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan). Figure 7.1 shows the locations and capacities of the main town centre car parks.

7.2.2 Our analysis identified the estimated availability of non-residential car parking spaces for town centre users of all kinds (Table 7.1), as compiled from various CBC surveys and other sources. The table includes available park and ride spaces. Over 40% of capacity within the town centre is of a private non-residential nature. The remainder is available to the general public either on-street (subject to or free from charges and/or waiting limits) or off-street (operated by either Cheltenham Borough Council or private car park operators).

7.2.3 CBC ticket sales data suggests that business, personal business, shopping and leisure visitors generate the majority of off-street parking demand within Cheltenham, with less than 5% of ticket sales being for a duration of over 4 hours. It is therefore likely that many longer stay commuters either arrive by non-car modes, park in unlimited wait, free on-street parking spaces or private employer car parks.

7.2.4 CBC car parking survey data for off-street car parks (including park and ride) collected in September 2005 indicates that usage of the available public car parking spaces varies geographically. There is higher demand for off-street spaces within certain car parks, particularly those within the very centre of the town and to the south and west of it. This is likely to reflect overall origins of demand for car trips to the town centre (primarily from the south west and north west of the town). St James' street car park is also very popular, particularly at the weekend. It is easily accessible from the ring road and is a high quality, secure, surface car park adjacent to the east of the town centre next to the ring road.





**Figure 7.1: Town centre car parks**

It can be seen from

**Table 7.1: Estimated level of car parking available for town centre users**

- 7.2.5 that our analysis took account of recent changes to the parking stock within the town centre (since the 2005 parking surveys). Whilst a minimum of around 1,800 spaces were observed as being free at the time of the September 2005 survey (including at park and ride sites), around 550 spaces have since been provided for the use by public town centre users (186 spaces at the Arle Court Park and Ride site and just over 350 spaces at the new brewery site).
- 7.2.6 It must be stressed that additional car parking spaces provided both at Park and Ride and public car parks since and prior to 2005 have substantially added to the available 'Town Centre' stock. Furthermore, the introduction in of the park and ride spaces has not yet been coupled, as one might have expected, with any increase in the available stock within the town centre. This is likely to have increased the operational and maintenance burdens upon CBC and their desire to redevelop several car park sites through the UDF is certainly likely to reflect a desire to redress this balance.

**Table 7.1: Estimated level of car parking available for town centre users**

Duration of stay (hours)	Acceptable walking distance (m)*	Proportion of ticket sales / proportion of parking capacity ideally within this distance *	Car parks within relevant threshold	Approx existing capacity within distance (number and % spaces)	Potential future proportion
1 hour	200	37%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St James' Street (200m to Beechwood SC);</li> <li>2. Rodney Road (100m to Regent's A);</li> <li>3. Regent's Arcade (0m);</li> <li>4. Promenade (0m);</li> <li>5. Inner Promenade (&lt;100m to Promenade)</li> <li>6. Cambray Place (&lt;200m High Street and Beechwood A);</li> <li>7. Grosvenor Terrace (&lt;200m to Beechwood SC and High Street)</li> <li>8. Sherbourne Place (&lt;200m to Beechwood SC and High Street);</li> <li>9. Chapel Walk (100m to Promenade);</li> <li>10. North Place (approx 200m to Boots Corner/High Street); and</li> <li>11. Brewery (200m to Boots Corner);</li> </ol>	2109 (70%)	1514 (50% of previous total, 76% of future total)
2 hours	400	32%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bath Road (300m to Beechwood SC, 400m to Regent's A);</li> <li>2. Imperial Square (mostly &lt; 200m to Promenade and Regent's A, but some further);</li> <li>3. Cheltenham Walk (400m to Promenade)</li> <li>4. Portland Street (less than 400m to High Street, Beechwood A and Regent's A);</li> <li>5. High Street (300m to Boots Corner);</li> <li>6. Montpellier Street (various distances along street etc. Overall approx 400m to town centre); and</li> <li>7. St George's Street (&lt; 300m to the Promenade).</li> </ol>	870 (29%)	451 (15% of previous total, 23% of future total)
4 hours	800	34.8%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phoenix Passage (within 800m of town centre);</li> </ol>	36 (1%)	36 (1% of previous, 2% new)
				Lost spaces:	1014 (34% lost)

Note: IHT Guidance is attributed to Carley and Donaldsons (1997).

\*Firstly, it is noted that this is an estimate only, since short stay shoppers will require less spaces due to higher turnover and ticket sales cannot be easily related to occupancy levels due to difference in length of stay, turnover and times of arrival/departure. Nevertheless, the estimate should be robust on this basis. Secondly, the central area of Cheltenham town centre exceeds 400m by 400m, making it difficult to determine precisely how to judge whether the criteria have been met. We have measured distances along actual routes to the main shopping streets/arcades.

### Commercial context

7.2.7 The Commission for Integrated Transport's *Sustainable Transport Choices and the Retail Sector Report (2006)* highlights that retail viability and attractiveness relates to a range of factors, including the quality of the town centre environment and retail offer, as well as accessibility by all modes of transport. Indeed, recent reductions in demand for parking in CBC car parks have occurred simultaneously to improvements in accessibility to the town centre



(particularly by bus and park and ride) and with an increase in Cheltenham's fortunes.

- 7.2.8 Cheltenham is in a strong position for maintaining its commercial attractiveness and viability, since it is sufficient distance from competing centres. In 2006 Cheltenham climbed one place in the Great Britain retail footprint table produced by market analysts CACI (from 31<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>). It is now the second most significant retail centre within the South West (after Bristol) and generates more retail spend than Bath, Bournemouth and Cribbs Causeway Regional Shopping Centre (Bristol). It is expected that this trend can be continued through implementation of the UDF and transport strategy, including parking strategy. As noted below, any increase in profit from parking activities would have to be re-invested into transport and accessibility.

### ***Policy Context***

- 7.2.9 Our baseline analysis highlighted that an effective demand management strategy, based upon car park charges and provision, is already being implemented in Cheltenham as reported and is set for continuation through the Second Local Transport Plan's adopted parking and demand management strategy. Key elements of the strategy are summarised below.
- 7.2.10 Park and Ride expansion has occurred and continues in Cheltenham. Park and Ride offers the opportunity to discourage unnecessary movements into and through the town centre, particularly by commuters and long-stay visitors/shoppers. Geographically, Park and Ride has and continues to be prioritised on the most important corridors for car based demand to the town centre, namely on routes from the M5 and the west. High frequency services operate on the available park and ride routes and consequently patronage has grown substantially through the first LTP period. At the same time, the level of general vehicular traffic crossing the inner cordon in the town has actually decreased and bus use has increased.
- 7.2.11 In contrast, Council town centre parking spaces (both on and off street) are now subject to increased charges for longer duration stays, as a means of maintaining the availability of central spaces for shorter stay shoppers for whom Park and Ride is less attractive and thereby for whom spaces close to the town centre offer the greatest benefit. Increased charges were implemented through the period of the first LTP and have been mirrored by private operators who have also set their own charges accordingly.
- 7.2.12 For the LTP2 period Gloucestershire County Council are currently prioritising car park expansion on the Tewkesbury Road Corridor, as well as the implementation of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) within Cheltenham. DPE is understood to be viable in the town and would deliver fairer and more consistent parking charges, controls and enforcements. Additional revenue is expected to be available to the Council through the following means:
- Reduction in infringements which occur without penalty;
  - Removal of the need for infringements to be processed through the courts (with associated financial savings); and
  - Increased number of infringements in terms of both non-payment and excess stay.
- 7.2.13 Other benefits are likely to include:
- Improved traffic flow through a reduction in hold ups caused by inappropriate stopping and parking; and
  - Statutory frameworks mean that any increase in profit from parking activities should be of benefit to the long term accessibility of Cheltenham

town centre, since all profit from such activities must be re-invested into transport and accessibility provisions.

### **Conclusion**

- 7.2.14 Overall, our analysis has shown that there is a significant amount of underutilised parking capacity, within car parks being operated by Cheltenham Borough Council. This is inefficient and costs the Council in terms of operation and maintenance. An increase in car parking stock operated by private interests, alongside continued park and ride expansion, coupled with no commensurate reduction in town centre spaces (to date) offers opportunities for redevelopment of some of the CBC operated town centre car park sites.
- 7.2.15 It is possible to comfortably conclude that existing surplus car parking capacity, recent capacity increases and potential modal shift mean that there would be ample spare capacity in appropriate locations within and around the town centre to accommodate displaced demand currently met by the following car parks:
- North Place;
  - Portland Street;
  - Cheltenham Walk.
- Thereby allowing these to be given over to redevelopment.
- 7.2.16 This conclusion takes into account the following considerations:
- Variable demand for car arrival to the town from different directions;
  - The location, type and availability of parking within the town centre;
  - The requirement to allow sufficient spaces for effective turnover and car park operation;
  - Increased demand at seasonal peaks;
  - New public car parking capacity recently added within or for the town centre;
  - Proposed park and ride expansion (initially on the Tewkesbury Road Corridor); and
  - IHT guidance on desirable walking distances to the town centre from car parks for stays of different durations.
- 7.2.17 Some car parks are presently less popular than others and thereby either offer scope for their own redevelopment, or spare capacity to offset the loss of parking in those locations. For example, Grosvenor Terrace and Sherbourne Place were not observed to exceed 50% capacity at the time of 2005 surveys. There appear to be no clear geographical reasons why these car parks should not become more popular. However, it is considered important that the UDF addresses accessibility to/from these car parks both for arriving vehicles and for pedestrians travelling to/from the car park to the town centre. Signage and other measures to improve legibility, possibly alongside broader urban design improvements to the car parks themselves and pedestrian routes to/from the town centre will be important aspects of the parking strategy (see Section 7.3).
- 7.2.18 The following sections summarise a parking strategy to form part of the UDF Transport Strategy, taking into account the above comments.
- 7.3 Parking strategy principles
- 7.3.1 The following key principals can be identified for the town centre parking strategy:
- **Use streetscape improvements in selected locations to reduce conflicts between parking cars and other street users:** Improve the streetscape in certain locations to reduce conflicts between parked

vehicles and other street users, whilst retaining on-street parking where this enables mutual beneficial surveillance and street activity;

- **Providing for the parking needs of disabled town centre users:** Ensure that an ample number of spaces are available on-street and in the most central car parks which are designated and accessible for disabled people, where possible delivering these as an integral part of the proposed streetscape improvements. To ensure that these spaces are always conveniently available for those who most need them, the penalisation of unauthorised parking within them should be one priority through the DPE process. As a result, their location might be best selected in relation to pay and display spaces and/or the locations of other on-street spaces which are subject to restrictions, in order to facilitate and streamline enforcement activities;
- **Legibility:** Improve the legibility of car park availability, in order that it is easy for all motorists arriving at the town centre to access the closest car park to their point of arrival with available capacity;
- **Direct access and reduction in vehicle mileage:** Encourage access to car parks to be obtained as directly as possible from the town boulevards, making use of clear town centre access links where necessary and minimising superfluous traffic circulating within the town centre. In addition, use signage (perhaps including widening of available VMS), in order to reduce trips that will be abortive because the destination car park is full (of particular relevance where the access roads must be used to reach the car park in question). Introducing an efficient and economical system might entail changes in the mode of operation of some car parks (e.g. to pay on foot), but could assist in future monitoring of car parking usage and occupancy;
- **Demand management and Decriminalised Parking Enforcement:** Continuation of LTP demand management and Park and Ride Expansion Strategy, including decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) and new Park and Ride Sites (the first of which is to be developed for the Tewkesbury Road Corridor);
- **Prioritisation of town centre parking for short stay usage and encouragement of Park and Ride usage for long and medium stay usage:** Continuation of a charging policy which seeks to discourage long stay and medium stay parking within the town centre and which favours shorter stay shopper parking, with the intention of encouraging additional inter-peak use of park and ride services (LTP2 strategy);
- **Awareness raising:** Awareness raising, including about:
  - Alternatives to arrival at the town centre by car;
  - The location of available car parking spaces (including park and ride spaces), as well as which car parks are most easy and appropriate to access from which arrival routes; and
  - The element of business rate charges which relates to parking provision, which is rarely transparent to businesses and which might encourage more efficient parking management by businesses (as brought forward by the County Council and proposed through its 2<sup>nd</sup> LTP).
- **Improved equity and transparency:** Including via:
  - Further exploration of measures which might be complimentary to DPE (e.g. greater equity in charges and enforcement for on and off-street spaces);
  - Greater clarity in where profits generated by DPE will be spent, thereby ensuring that necessary ring fencing of funds occurs and offering transparency in which transport projects the funds will be spent on (e.g. to ensure that the majority of income is directed towards town centre accessibility improvements, including streetscape works and particularly for the benefit of sustainable

mode users and pedestrians and cyclists within the town centre). Another key use for the revenue would be improving the quality of some town centre car parks (where necessary) and enhancing linkages between town centre car parks and uses. In phasing terms, this should ideally occur prior to the closure and redevelopment of town centre car parks;

- **Releasing superfluous car parking land for redevelopment and thereby reducing maintenance and operational costs for CBC and simplifying provision:** Redevelopment of North Place, Portland Street and Cheltenham Walk Car Parks (903 spaces), reducing parking maintenance and operation costs and freeing land for development opportunities able to part fund the transport strategy;
- **Sympathetic redevelopment of the three individual sites:** Redevelop the three individual car park sites in a manner which complements the overall transport strategy (e.g. as a minimum to conform to the LTP2 maximum parking standards, but preferably with at least some elements of low or no-car provision where appropriate and viable); and
- **Selected car park 'gateway' enhancements (quality, security, legibility and routes to/from the town centre):** Improvement of currently under-utilised car parks (where necessary) to enhance legibility of vehicular routes to/from them, their attractiveness in-situ and routes between them and the town centre (e.g. Sherbourne Place/ Grosvenor Terrace/Bath Road in particular); and
- **Catering for Car Clubs:** Exploring the potential for car club operations/spaces within the town centre and, where appropriate, designating spaces as an integral part of the parking review process. This would be particularly, but not solely, appropriate in relation to town centre residential sites, especially in incidence where these uses are proposed as part of the redevelopment strategy.

7.3.2 These principles represent a logical continuation and conformity to the LTP2 policy context and particularly the Parking and Demand Management Strategy. They also support and integrate with the wider Transport Strategy aimed at ensuring that Cheltenham is an exemplary sustainable town centre, yet do not undermine car accessibility where this is most appropriate.

## 7.4 Implications and justifications

### ***Loss of parking spaces***

7.4.2 Based upon the CBC 2005 car parking survey, it appears that there is currently a significant over provision of available off street spaces serving the centre of Cheltenham, particularly at the following car parks:

- Bath Road (all time periods);
- Portland Street (highest occupancy recorded was 52% at 14.00 on the surveyed Saturday in 2005);
- Sherborne Place (did not exceed 50%);
- Grosvenor Terrace (did not exceed 50%);
- Racecourse park and ride (did not exceed 30% on the Friday, or 40% on the Saturday);
- North Place (did not exceed 50% on the Friday. Occupancy reached 66% maximum on the Saturday and exceeded 50% from 11.00 to 15.00); and
- Cheltenham Walk (occupancy did not exceed 50% on the Saturday, occupancy reached 71% maximum on the Friday, remaining above 50% from 10.00 to 15.00).

7.4.3 The above information suggests that Bath Road, Sherbourne Place and Grosvenor Terrace car park sites should be prioritised for their ability to

accommodate displaced parking demand from the three development sites. Streetscape improvements and regeneration in the Bath Road and the Albion Street areas to the north east of the town centre should improve the attractiveness of these as parking locations, provided that it is ensured that the car parks themselves provide a good quality, attractive and secure environment.

7.4.4 North Place and Portland Street car parks are used more at the weekend than during the week. Some of the demand for parking in this area may now be met by the new Brewery Car Park, opened since the 2005 surveys.

7.4.5 Nevertheless, these car parks are the best located sites for intercepting car based trips from the north, before vehicles join the town centre boulevard. As a result, there might therefore be an argument for retaining a small element of public parking in this location. An alternative is to encourage use of the Grosvenor Road and Sherbourne Place sites and promote routes from these to key leisure uses and tourist locations (e.g. the Holtz Birthplace museum), as well as to the town centre.

7.4.6 For the purposes of illustration, maximum occupancy at the two proposed redevelopment sites to the north of the town centre was at 14.00 on the surveyed Saturday, when it reached 355 vehicles across the two locations. Simultaneously, there was spare capacity (empty spaces) available in Grovesnor Terrace and Sherbourne Place of 462 spaces. Even if we allow for operational capacity of 15% (67 extra spaces required, based on 447 vehicles in total using these four northern car parks at that peak time), it is clear that Grosvenor Terrace and Sherbourne Place could easily meet the displaced demand from the proposed northern redevelopment sites on a typical Saturday, without any need to take into account the availability of surplus capacity at Bath Road.

7.4.7 Maximum occupancy at the Cheltenham Walk Car Park was at 14.00 on the surveyed Friday when occupancy reached 64 vehicles. There was ample spare capacity in the following nearby locations to absorb this displaced demand: 260 spaces in total free in the nearby St Georges Road Car Park, Inner Promenade (on-street) and Regent's Arcade.

### ***Accommodating Seasonal Parking Demand***

7.4.8 The above analysis takes the 2005 survey to represent a typical weekday and Saturday. However, it does not account for additional demand at seasonal peaks. Available car parking data is not ideal for determining what the additional demand will be at seasonal times. Seasonal peak shopping times have broadened over recent years, as a result of incentives such as late night shopping to make it easier and more comfortable for people to shop (and perhaps spend more) during the run up to Christmas. Nevertheless, weekends and Fridays in late November and throughout December are expected to be the peak times for shopper parking overall.

7.4.9 Some indication of the seasonal change in demand can be obtained from ticket sales data for Cheltenham Quarter 2 (the survey period), as compared to Quarter 3 (covering the Christmas peak). CBC data shows that 30% of all parking ticket sales occurred within quarter 3 (October, November, December). This is compared to 27% of sales occurring in quarter 2 (when the parking surveys were undertaken) and equates to an extra 63991 ticket sales compared to the previous three months, representing a 13% increase in total ticket sales (of all durations) in Q3 as compared to Q2.

7.4.10 Ticket sales cannot be related to occupancy levels with any certainty because the latter is affected by length of stay and the overall distribution of trips in time

(through the day/week/month). Indeed, the ticket sales data shows that length of stay at council charged parking locations in Cheltenham was higher in Q3 of the 2005/06 financial year than in other time periods (as an indication, 16% of sales were for 4+ hours in Q3, as compared to 11% of sales in Q2, representing an additional 10637 sales of the longer stay tickets in Q3 than Q2). Thus, 16% of the additional tickets sold fell within the 4+ hours stay band. Of course, the additional short stay sales might also have been concentrated at the peaks.

- 7.4.11 Overall, the data suggests that it is possible to crudely estimate that parking demand at any one time might reasonably be expected to increase by approximately 20%.
- 7.4.12 For comparison, similar data is also available to Colin Buchanan for another historical town (Salisbury) with sales summarised on a monthly basis. This gives some indication of the likely concentration of any increase in ticket sales within Q3.
- 7.4.13 The Salisbury data shows that the average proportion of ticket sales in any one month varied from 7.7% of annual sales in January, to 9.2% of annual sales in December (over the 3 years for which data is available). For comparison, average September sales were 8.3% of annual. It is worth noting that, overall, annual ticket sales were remarkably similar in level for the two towns and that in Salisbury there was an average increase in sales of 18,000 in December compared to September. This represented a typical increase of around 12-15% between the two months. Since it is considered that peak times are likely to be broadly similar in both months, with the exception of some spreading of demand away from the weekends that may occur in December (as people take leave, schools are out and people may be participating in late night shopping), then we can again see that an expected 20% increase in demand appears to be robust, allowing a certain margin for error. It should thereby be appropriate for the sake of the current analysis.
- 7.4.14 For the 'typical' Saturday in September in Cheltenham, the minimum number of parking spaces available was 1,884. We can then work with this number to justify the loss of the 903 spaces at the three locations, as follows:
- If we exclude free spaces at the Racecourse Park and Ride, for the sake of argument, (in view of its questionable appropriateness as a location for absorbing additional demand except from areas such as the Cotswolds and Tewkesbury), then this leaves 1471 spare spaces.
  - Subtracting the 903 spaces proposed for redevelopment leaves 568 spaces spare.
  - Subtracting for the additional seasonal demand of approximately 419 spaces (20% increase on the maximum survey occupancy in September 2005) leaves 149 spaces to allow for operational needs.
- 7.4.15 If we take the above argument one step further and consider the above in the context of the additional 550 spaces developed since 2005, as well as the proposed new park and ride spaces to be delivered on the Tewkesbury Road Corridor, it becomes clear that CBC and other operators will be offering a comfortable operational margin to allow for seasonal requirements and that it would seem safe to assume that the Council car parks can be redeveloped with minimal impact to the convenience of parking at Cheltenham, including for Christmas shoppers.
- 7.4.16 A positive site effect of encouraging more people to use Park and Ride for medium length visits to the town centre (including for Christmas shopping) could be that having travelled to the town centre, people might stay longer and spend more money there.



### ***Traffic Flows***

- 7.4.17 Impacts on traffic flows will be modelled in more detail through the testing of a preferred option. Nevertheless, it is possible at an early stage to make some preliminary observations about the proposals above.
- 7.4.18 Total closure of North Place and Portland Street Car Parks could marginally increase flows on the north eastern portion of the inner ring road, due to vehicles arriving from the north and north west continuing to other car parks such as Sherbourne Place and Grosvenor Terrace. In addition, traffic arriving from the north would now need to join the town boulevard to reach this alternative parking. As a result, there could be an argument for retaining a modest amount of public car parking on one of these sites, to 'intercept' traffic arriving from the north. Nevertheless, closure of the car parks is unlikely to increase flows on the ring to the west of North Place (where there is particular stress at present).
- 7.4.19 As incorporated in the strategy principles, one important means of minimizing the impact of car park closures would be an information strategy and signage (including widespread awareness raising about parking locations and perhaps VMS). There could be a benefit in facilitating access to Sherbourne Place and Grosvenor Terrace from the ring road to the east, as well as in making the entire orbital route around the town centre two way. Removal of general traffic on the inner ring road that is trying to reach the North Place and Portland Street Car parks from the South might in fact ease operation of this section of the road by simplifying flows (e.g. spreading demand to other junctions and other parts of the ring road).

### ***Convenience for shoppers***

- 7.4.20 In terms of the location of the car parks in relation to the shopping core of Cheltenham, guidance is available on acceptable walking distance for car-borne shoppers, depending upon their length of stay. This guidance relates the length of stay of shoppers to acceptable walking distances, based upon the presumption that the longer you wish to spend shopping somewhere, the more acceptable a longer walk from the car park to final destination will be.
- 7.4.21 Data on length of stay is available from CBC car parking ticket sales and thereby offers a crude guide as the percentage of parking which should ideally fall within different isochrones. The car park guidance (Source: Table 3.3, Page 49 of *Guidelines for Providing for Journeys on Foot*, IHT, 2000) has thereby been compared with the CBC duration of stay information, in order to illustrate the percentage of car parking capacity which would fall within various threshold distances of the town centre (see Table 7.2).
- 7.4.22 It is noted that the car park guidance is based upon an average walking speed of 1.4m/s and is recognized that this speed (and therefore acceptable walking distance) will vary between different groups, with the elderly and disabled (and perhaps those with young children) likely to require more centrally located car parking spaces to be available. Of course, it is also recognized that the attractiveness of the town centre itself as a retail destination might also play a role (depending upon whether length of stay is reflective of this or is related to the structure of parking charges).
- 7.4.23 The percentages given in the table show the future availability of spaces at different distances from the town centre, if the identified car parks are redeveloped. It is clear that closure of these specific car parks should not lead to an undue increase in inconvenience to town centre users. More generally, the comparison table clearly shows that overall spaces in Cheltenham are well

located for ease of access to the town centre and that this will continue to be the case, even with redevelopment of some sites.

**Table 7.2: Comparison of 'acceptable walking distance for car borne shoppers' guidance with current availability of charged public parking within Cheltenham town centre**

Duration of stay (hours)	Acceptable walking distance (m)*	Proportion of ticket sales / proportion of parking capacity ideally within this distance *	Car parks within relevant threshold	Approx existing capacity within distance (number and % spaces)	Potential future proportion
1 hour	200	37%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. St James' Street (200m to Beechwood SC);</li> <li>2. Rodney Road (100m to Regent's A);</li> <li>3. Regent's Arcade (0m);</li> <li>4. Promenade (0m);</li> <li>5. Inner Promenade (&lt;100m to Promenade)</li> <li>6. Cambray Place (&lt;200m High Street and Beechwood A);</li> <li>7. Grosvenor Terrace (&lt;200m to Beechwood SC and High Street)</li> <li>8. Sherbourne Place (&lt;200m to Beechwood SC and High Street);</li> <li>9. Chapel Walk (100m to Promenade);</li> <li>10. North Place (approx 200m to Boots Corner/High Street); and</li> <li>11. Brewery (200m to Boots Corner);</li> </ol>	2109 (70%)	1514 (50%)
2 hours	400	32%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bath Road (300m to Beechwood SC, 400m to Regent's A);</li> <li>2. Imperial Square (mostly &lt; 200m to Promenade and Regent's A, but some further);</li> <li>3. Cheltenham Walk (400m to Promenade)</li> <li>4. Portland Street (less than 400m to High Street, Beechwood A and Regent's A);</li> <li>5. High Street (300m to Boots Corner);</li> <li>6. Montpellier Street (various distances along street etc. Overall approx 400m to town centre); and</li> <li>7. St George's Street (&lt; 300m to the Promenade).</li> </ol>	870 (29%)	451 (15%)
4 hours	800	34.8%	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phoenix Passage (within 800m of town centre);</li> </ol>	36 (1%)	36 (1%)
				Lost spaces:	1014 (34%)

**Note:** IHT Guidance is attributed to Carley and Donaldsons (1997).

\*Firstly, it is noted that this is an estimate only, since short stay shoppers will require less spaces due to higher turnover and ticket sales cannot be easily related to occupancy levels due to difference in length of stay, turnover and times of arrival/departure. Nevertheless, the estimate should be robust on this basis. Secondly, the central area of Cheltenham town centre exceeds 400m by 400m, making it difficult to determine precisely how to judge whether the criteria have been met. We have measured distances along actual routes to the main shopping streets/arcades.

## 7.5 Conclusions: meeting the objectives of the UDF

7.5.1 The parking strategy principles and proposals summarised above would meet the objectives of Civic Pride and the UDF in Cheltenham in the following manners:

- Streetscape improvements incorporating parking would reduce potential accidents and conflicts between different street users;
- Improved access from the Town Boulevard and enhancements to parking on Albion Street will complement the removal of through traffic from the inner ring road and reduce the need for unnecessary vehicular movements;
- Improved signage and legibility, along with simplified traffic movements to reach car parks will reduce the need for aborted trips to specific car parks and thereby reduce town centre vehicular mileage;
- Quality improvements to key car parks which currently suffer from relatively low popularity and underutilisation (and routes between them and the town centre) can be centred around ensuring that Cheltenham offers consistently high quality, secure, accessible and attractive parking facilities, appropriate to its role as a key retail centre within the South West.
- Reduction in the overall level of town centre operated car parking within the town centre will offset recent and proposed expansion in privately operated car parking stock and park and ride capacity.
- The availability of significant quantities of spare car parking capacity suggest that redevelopment of three Council operated car parking sites can occur without loss of revenue to CBC.
- Improved operational efficiency, via the reduction of superfluous car parking capacity and thereby maintenance and operational costs and burdens, will offer financial savings to CBC.
- The Council will also benefit from cost savings and traffic management operational improvements within the town centre as a result of DPE, for the various reasons discussed within this Chapter.
- Signage for visitors seeking to park within the town centre will improve visitor orientation and thereby accessibility of the town centre car parks. Similarly, it is recommended that GCC and CBC work together to ensure that existing and proposed park and ride sites are clearly signed well in advance and on the key strategic routes on which they are intended to reduce traffic volumes.
- Improved legibility and accessibility of car parking in the centre of Cheltenham will not undermine other strands of the Transport Strategy, since the continuation of existing charging structures and mechanisms will work alongside priority proposals put forward for the more sustainable modes of travel, as well as those which will reduce the dominance of cars within the town centre core, in order to enhance the attractiveness of arrival by those modes, as compared to by private vehicle. Nevertheless, Civic Pride should be for all town centre users, whether they arrive by private vehicle or not and the parking strategy recognises this.

## 7.6 Recommendations

7.6.1 It is recommended that once the principles of the Transport Strategy are agreed, the following actions are taken in determining detailed implementation proposals for the Parking Strategy elements:

- It is recommended that more detailed assessment is made of the needs of the Bath Road, Grosvenor Terrace and Sherbourne Place Car Parks and pedestrian routes to/from them, so that necessary improvements can be identified in detail.

- It is recommended that the detailed financial implications of the strategy proposals upon the financial case put forward for DPE in Gloucestershire are re-visited for Cheltenham Borough. Ideally, the analysis should be extended in order to quantify exact financial savings within and outside of DPE (e.g. reduced enforcement and operational costs, such as through the economies of scale available through the reduction in off-site parking locations);
- It is also recommended that complementary means of improving the equality and ease of comprehension of parking regulations and charges are explored in greater detail, taking into account the potential for charging for the use of free on-street spaces in the most convenient locations, reflecting their attractiveness and benefit to town centre users and the potential for an additional revenue stream towards the implementation of the Transport Strategy.

## 8. Summary And Conclusions

### 8.1 Overarching approach

8.1.1 It is proposed that the opportunities and benefits afforded by the UDF are complemented and maximised by the adoption of a Sustainable Travel Town approach for Cheltenham. Cheltenham is well placed for deriving the greatest possible benefit from streetscape and other town centre enhancements, in view of its impressive track record in supporting and encouraging sustainable travel choices (including cycling, walking, bus and park and ride), as well as an extremely important retail destination within the South West. The Sustainable Travel Town approach would assist in achieving maximum value from the UDF proposals by complementing 'hard' enhancements with 'softer' measures and recognising the interaction between the two.

8.1.2 The transport strategy seeks a rationalisation of transport and accessibility provisions, with minimal detriment to arrival by any specific mode, but enhancements to reinforce the town centre as a quality place within which to work, live or visit.

8.1.3 In particular, movement within and through the town centre should be facilitated, with a reduction in vehicular traffic severance and other associated negative impacts within its core. The approach will build upon the town's track record to further support, promote and enable increased arrival by bus and cycle. Integration between different modes will be improved, including linkages between key gateways (e.g. car parks, cycle parking, bus/coach station, foci for town bus services, taxi ranks and so forth) and the heart of the town centre, key destinations and attractions.

8.1.4 Similarly, the strategy will seek to provide and promote pedestrian circuits within the town centre, to increase internal movement and integration. Improved legibility will underpin and support the strategy.

### 8.2 Traffic strategy and conceptual traffic management scheme

8.2.1 Colin Buchanan have proposed a number of traffic strategy options for improving Cheltenham's traffic network as part of the town centre urban design framework. These overarching plans all follow the same guiding principals, to provide a high quality Town Boulevard (ring-road) for strategic traffic, to remove such traffic from the heart of the town centre, to mitigate the impact of the remaining traffic in the town centre, to provide a high quality network of primary public transport corridors and to address the impact of traffic on streetscape in key areas of the town centre.

8.2.2 Each of the strategy options ranging from "Do Minimum" to Option 3 are designed to meet the objectives of the UDF transport strategy as set out in the project brief to an increasingly robust degree with a relative increase in financial outlay required for each. Option 2 and Option 3 are the only Traffic Strategy Options to break away from this pattern, offering a different balance of benefits without one necessarily being better overall than the other. Option 3 is a definite step beyond Option 2 in the degree of streetscape advancement it provides but at a detriment to bus accessibility. Therefore, Colin Buchanan have selected to base the conceptual traffic management scheme drawing included with this report on Option 2. All options take into account the need for effective servicing

and can be implemented in a way in which accommodates the requirements for disabled and other specific types of town centre users.

- 8.2.3 The conceptual traffic management scheme (a plan of which at 1:2500 scale is included with this report) shows indicatively how the Option 2 Traffic Strategy could be progressed further as the core of a town-wide traffic management scheme. The plan illustrates some of the benefits provided by the traffic strategy and also indicates potential schemes that may not be directly related to modification in the strategic traffic system. The plan is intended to form a basis for traffic modelling analysis which is required to develop the scheme as a workable traffic solution.

### 8.3 Streetscape design and accident analysis

- 8.3.1 The streetscape design section of this report forms a companion to the proposals set out in the Urban Design Strategy prepared by Halcrow. This chapter establishes streetscape design principals in terms of traffic management, operation of buses, pedestrian and cycling strategies and the way in which the needs of accessibility will be integrated with streetscape improvements. It discusses the proposed Town Boulevard, Key Public Transport Corridor, proposed shared surface and general town centre environments and how they can be treated to balance traffic function with streetscape quality.

- 8.3.2 The accident analysis takes a detailed look at the injury accidents recorded over the last five years (up to the end of 2005) for Montpellier Walk, The Promenade, Royal Well Road, Bath Road, College Road, Bayshill Road and the High Street west of North Street. Accident trends are highlighted and discussed in relation to the benefits of the proposed conceptual traffic management scheme.

### 8.4 Bus Strategy

- 8.4.1 The section of this report which discusses bus strategy proposes operational solutions that build on and advance the existing town centre bus services taking advantage of the benefits provided by the key public transport corridors and enhanced bus facilities proposed as part of the traffic strategy options and conceptual traffic management scheme. Overall, the proposed bus strategy for the town centre:

- Delivers a simplified route network centred around a strong bus spine and interchange on Royal Well Road.
- Traffic calming within the Town Boulevard would improve accessibility of this core bus spine/interchange by all services and would benefit reliability on the approach to the centre.
- The proposed simplification of the network allows for a number of streets to be freed from bus traffic and therefore opens up opportunities for streetscape and environmental improvements (Pittville Street, Northern section of the Promenade) as well as for better connectivity between the Promenade and the Montpellier area.
- The proposed strategy provides distance travelled savings to the current bus services operated in the town and allows for future improvements to these services (cross town centre services and/or additional routes/frequency). This will be important in view of the overall objectives of the project, particularly in view of future urban expansion proposed by the Regional Spatial Strategy.

- 8.4.2 It is believed that the proposed strategy would create a more attractive, easier to use and more convenient bus network for the whole of Cheltenham, generating benefits in increased patronage and a reduction in car congestion.



Equally, it is important that buses are operated responsibly, in a manner which makes their presence compatible with the wider objectives within the heart of the town centre itself.

## 8.5 Parking Strategy

8.5.1 There is currently an overcapacity of car parking spaces to serve the town centre. As a result, CBC is likely to be paying unnecessary maintenance and operational costs, which could be reduced through a rationalisation of the current provision. The addition of new privately operated town centre spaces, as well as of park and ride spaces on the periphery of Cheltenham in recent years have exacerbated this situation because Council operated town centre spaces have not been reduced in response to these changes. It is therefore considered appropriate for the UDF to promote redevelopment of selected CBC car parks.

8.5.2 A detailed review of the quality, security and attractiveness of presently underutilised car parks is recommended, to ensure that they are well connected with the town centre and of an appropriate standard to be promoted as alternatives. Where necessary, improvements should be incorporated into the parking strategy. Such a review will be of especial importance for the Grosvenor Road, Sherbourne Place and Bath Road car parks, recognising that proposals for Bath Road and Albion Street should assist in improving their integration with the town centre.

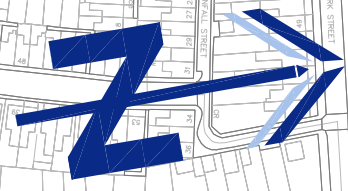
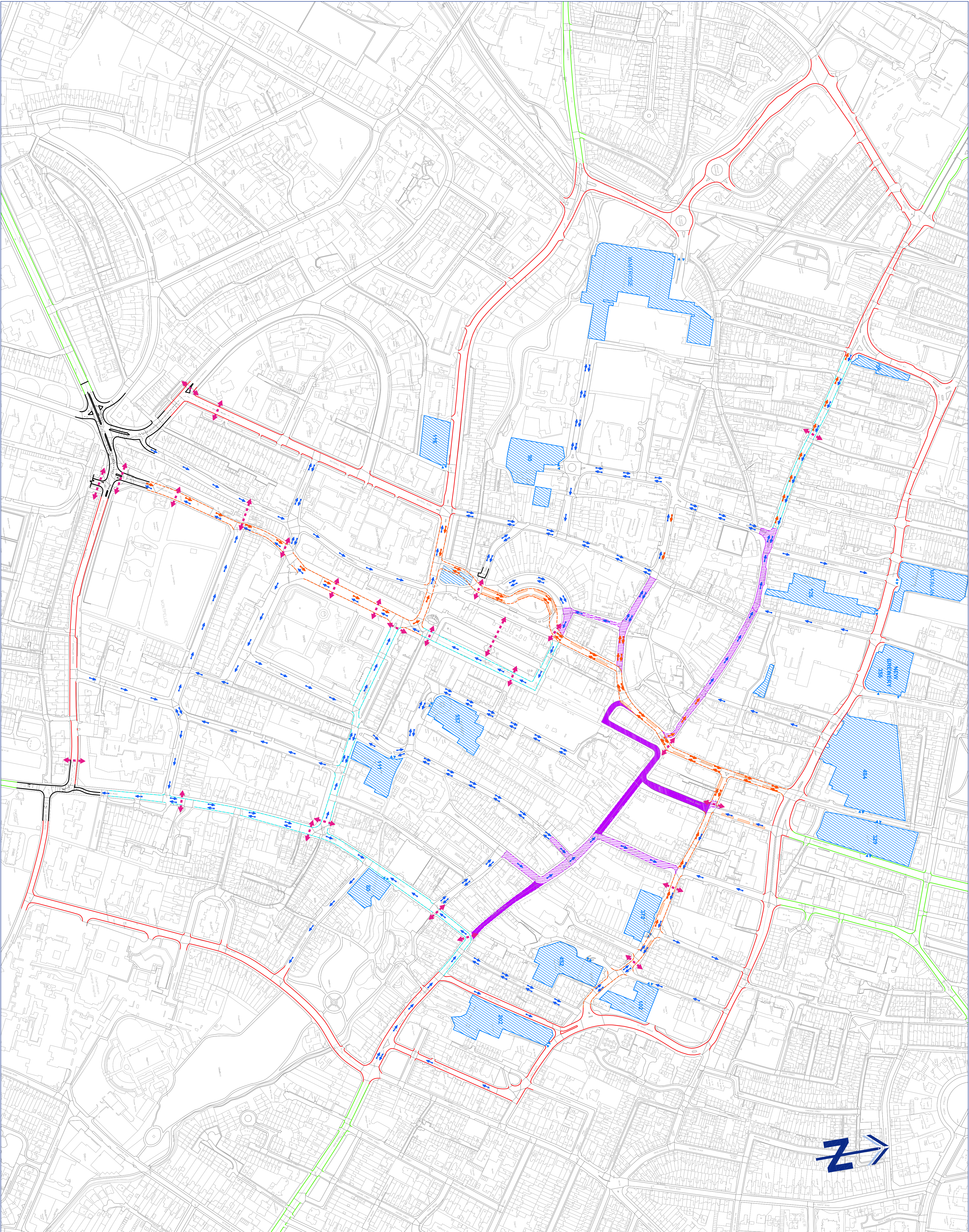
8.5.3 The town centre parking strategy approach is therefore to rationalise parking provision and associated traffic movements, recognising that opportunities for arrival by non-vehicular means have been enhanced over recent years and will continue to be so, both through implementation of the UDF and work by transport operators. It is considered important to recognise that accessibility to the centre of Cheltenham is not only dictated by provisions for the private vehicle. Similarly, overall retail vitality is related to accessibility by all modes, as well as factors relating to the town centre itself (quality of place, choice and so forth).

## 8.6 Overall conclusion

8.6.1 Transport and accessibility needs are central to the success and quality of the town centre. As a result, the transport strategy will form a central part of the UDF. This document sets out key principles and measures which we consider should underpin the transport strategy approach. With support and agreement on these principles, more detailed proposals can be worked up and robustly tested to further justify the merits of the approach. Colin Buchanan have included a conceptual traffic management diagram to indicatively demonstrate how the physical elements of the strategy could be brought together, balancing different movement and accessibility needs.







KEY

- Town Boulevard
- Key approaches
- Key public transport corridors
- Enhanced streets
- General traffic (direction)
- Bus, taxi and cycle traffic only (direction)
- Potential revised bus stop location
- Indicative highway improvements
- Priority pedestrian improvements
- Pedestrian / cycle / limited access
- Traffic free surface

DRAFT

Project Name  
22-23 Salford Street  
891 117

Client  
CHELTENHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Job Title  
CHELTENHAM URBAN  
DESIGN FRAMEWORK  
TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Drawing Title  
CONCEPTUAL TRAFFIC  
MANAGEMENT SCHEME

Drawn  
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