



## 05 | Transport

This chapter summarises the key transport constraints in Solihull Town Centre and discusses the potential opportunities for the implementation of measures that will help to address these and enable the transport network to support the emerging Masterplan. This draws on the work undertaken as part of the Solihull Town Centre Access and Movement Study which has fed into the overarching Masterplan development process.

The overarching requirement of the Solihull Town Centre Access and Movement Study has been to support Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council with its strategy of ‘managed growth’, including through the promotion of UK Central, bringing together the Borough’s economic assets including town centres regional business parks, Jaguar Land Rover, Birmingham International Airport, the National exhibition centre and the High Speed Rail 2.

The study has input to the development of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan Framework to generate a number of concept proposals which will aim to support the emerging Masterplan and meet the objectives set out in the overarching Solihull Connected document, these include delivery of:

- Balanced investment in transport infrastructure that recognises the need to cater for cars and places with appropriate and increasing emphasis on alternatives; such as:
- Options for game changing public transport schemes that will be competitive, fast, reliable and frequent on key corridors across the Borough;
- High quality cycling networks to encourage our residents to cycle to work; and
- Community focused initiatives to encourage healthier transport choices where possible.

The Solihull Town Centre Access and Movement Study has also sought to develop concept proposals aligned to the Solihull Connected objectives.

## 5.1 Identified Constraints and Opportunities

Figure 4.1 illustrates the transport network related constraints identified as part of both the development of the Solihull Connected Green Paper and the emerging Masterplan. These constraints are summarised below. In combination they constitute a challenge to achievement of the Solihull Connected policies and also to the delivery of the emerging Masterplan. There are, however, a number of potential opportunities have been identified to help address these issues and to support the emerging Masterplan and these are also summarised below. These potential opportunities are preliminary at this stage and will be subject to further development and amendment as part of the town centre masterplanning process, which will include taking account of the results of traffic modelling which will be completed during the summer of 2016.

### 5.1.1 Public Transport

#### Key Constraints

Local Bus:

- Local bus services are subject to delay at several locations, including: Lode Lane approach to Warwick Road, between Station Road and the railway station (including Lode Lane gyratory). Unmitigated traffic congestion may lead to a deterioration on public transport performance and discourage use, reducing the ability of the network to support planned growth and the emerging Masterplan, contrary to Solihull Connected policies.

- Limited bus stand and layover capacity at some locations, including Station Road/Poplar Road and (in the longer term) the railway station interchange. This may constrain ability to accommodate proposed Sprint services designed to deliver a step change in the quality of public transport access to/from Solihull town centre, reducing the ability of the network to support planned growth and the emerging Masterplan, contrary to Solihull Connected policies.
- Road widths and alignments between New Road and Homer Road via St Alphege, allied to an environmentally and heritage sensitive public realm. This could constrain ability to operate high frequency Sprint services via this route, particularly if operated using articulated vehicles.

Rail:

- Solihull rail station infrastructure, in particular the capacity of the pedestrian subway imposes constraints on the ability to accommodate growth.
- The quality of the rail station interchange infrastructure could also be improved to improve the operation of the facility and to encourage access to rail services by walk, cycle and local bus modes.

These constraints have been recognised as part of the development of the Solihull Railway Station Masterplan.

#### Potential Opportunities

- Implement the measures identified in the Solihull Railway Station Masterplan to improve the operation and passenger capacity of the station.
- Improve the quality of infrastructure at the railway

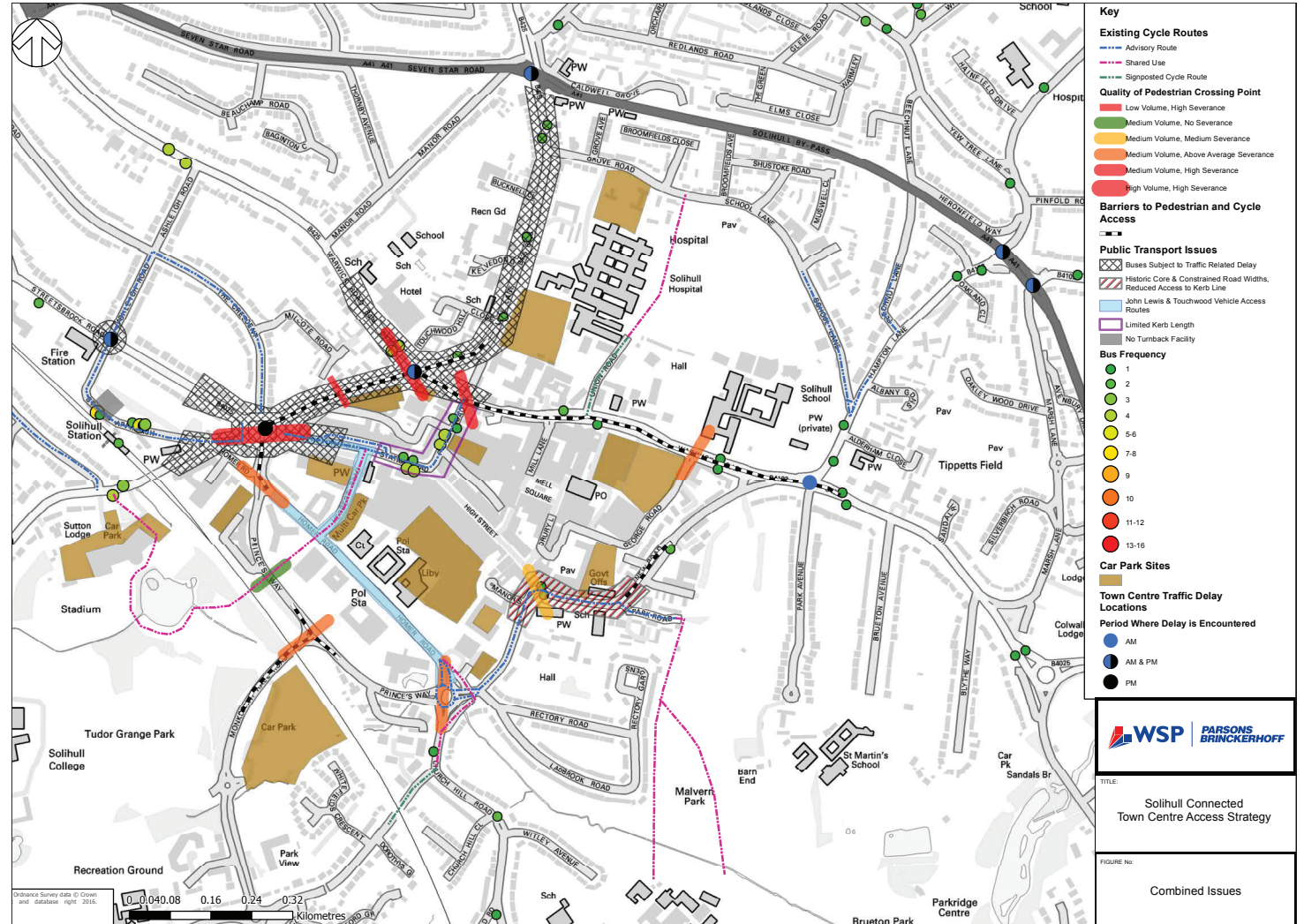


Figure 4.1: Solihull Town Centre Transport Constraints and Opportunities Plan

station interchange to encourage local public transport access to rail services and to accommodate Sprint services.

- Build on the Lode Lane Route Enhancement Scheme and the Gateway Project focus public transport services along the highly accessible (and less trafficked) town centre corridor between Lode Lane, Station Road and the railway station.
- Phased implementation of the high-quality public transport services linking Solihull Town Centre with key areas across the Borough and wider through a network of Sprint (Bus Rapid Transit) and CityLink routes.
- Support public transport (Sprint, City Link and bus) operations through implementation of systematic measures which enhance the journey time, reliability and passenger accessibility and facilities performance of the network.
- Improved quality of infrastructure at the railway station interchange to encourage local public transport access to rail services and to accommodate Sprint services.

This will improve quality and efficiency of public transport access to the town centre, railway station and associated development opportunities, encouraging increased use of public transport in line with policies and supporting the emerging Masterplan

### 5.1.2 Walking and Cycling

#### Key Constraints

- Pedestrian and cycle links between the railway station and town centre are adversely affected by a combination of street pattern (making the route less direct), the infrastructure (e.g. the location and layout of pedestrian crossings and narrow footways) and the

severance effect of busy roads such as Blossomfield Road. In combination with no clear sight-lines through to the town centre, this leads to the perception that the railway station is “remote” from the town centre, provides a barrier to pedestrian and cycle movement and discourages use of public transport (in particular rail) to access the town centre.

- The busy ring-road has a limited number of formal crossing points for pedestrians and cyclists and forms a barrier to movements. In combination with an inactive edge and backs of properties (confused fronts and backs) that discourages through lack of activity and natural surveillance, this discourages use of walk and cycle to access the town centre.
- Town Centre pedestrianised area restrictions on cyclists, in conjunction with the ring road, and limited cycle routes from the south present a significant barrier to cyclists and results in a disjointed network. In addition, limited quality cycle parking and too little provision at the rail station, discourages use of cycle access to/from/across the town centre.

#### Potential Opportunities

- New or improved pedestrian and cycle routes, road crossings, signposting/wayfinding and Advanced Stop Lines at junctions to address identified barriers and provide as continuous route as possible to, from and across the town centre and providing access to existing and future developments.
- Improved route for pedestrians and cyclists between railway station and town centre.
- Additional high quality cycle parking, including a cycle hub at the railway station.

- Cycle use permitted through the town centre, including the pedestrianised area.
- 20mph zones on streets with high place functions.
- Enhanced public realm in areas of high pedestrian activity, including reallocation of road space and side road entry treatment.

In combination, these potential measures could support the emerging Masterplan through improving access to the town centre, railway station and associated development opportunities and encourage increased use of walk, cycle and public transport in line with Solihull Connected’s overarching policies.

### 5.1.3 Roads and Traffic

#### Key Constraints

- Traffic congestion and delays at a number of key locations, including: Lode Lane/Warwick Road junction, Lode Lane Gyratory and New Road/Warwick Road/Hampton Lane Junctions. Increased and unreliable journey times imposes costs on road users and adversely impacts on accessibility to the Town Centre destinations. Traffic congestion can also result in carbon emissions and air quality issues.
- Accident clusters at some locations, including Lode Lane/Warwick Road Junction. The impact of this is that road safety concerns may adversely impact on the perception of the town centre.

#### Potential Opportunities

- Changes to junction designs, to improve operational efficiency, for example through use of intelligent traffic signal control systems.

- New or improved facilities which address accident issues, in particular for vulnerable road users and which could include new or improved pedestrian and cycle routes and road crossings.
- Improved signage and information systems to inform route choice and choice of travel mode.

#### 5.1.4 Off-Street Car Parking

##### Key Constraints

- Car parks perceived as better quality (Touchwood and John Lewis) fill up first. This focuses car park traffic in a constrained area, in particular along Homer Road, close to the town centre. Can lead to peak period congestion.
- Consistent pricing structure across the town centre. This encourages use of central area car parks (Touchwood and John Lewis), focusing car park traffic in a constrained area. Can lead to peak period congestion.
- Council-owned car parks are considered as 'low quality', particularly Mell Square. This encourages use of those perceived as better quality (Touchwood and John Lewis), focusing car park traffic in a constrained area.
- Monkspath Hall car park has spare capacity, but involves perceived lengthy walk to/from town centre, particularly for people with shopping. This encourages use of central area car parks (Touchwood and John Lewis), focusing car park traffic in a constrained area.

##### Potential Opportunities

- Review parking tariffs to facilitate better utilisation of parking capacity and increase overall revenues. Consider performance pricing.
- Explore a general strategy whereby shopper car parks

are the gateway to town, with long stay parking further out, but supported by improved quality pedestrian links.

- Consider consolidating parking capacity at fewer sites, focussing traffic and pedestrian access on higher quality routes.

Improve utilisation and efficiency of car park operations, providing higher quality pedestrian access to the town centre and focussing traffic on higher capacity routes, potentially releasing some road space for use by public transport and active travel modes.



