

Draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - Church Stretton

- 1.** Stretton Climate Care is an environmental charity based in Church Stretton with a mission to reduce carbon emissions in our area. As a high proportion of carbon emissions in our area arise from transport, principally car travel we welcome initiatives which will encourage a modal shift from cars to Active Travel.
- 2.** Stretton Climate Care welcomes the inclusion of Church Stretton in Shropshire Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and hopes that it will lead to significant improvements in the infrastructure for cycling and walking in and around the town over the next decade.
- 3. Page 1 - Population density**
Figure 1-2 depicts population density and Paragraph 1.1.2 comments that population density is higher in the north-west corner of the town. The southern area shown in the figure extends to Minton and Marshbrook which are well outside the town itself and perhaps the population density assessment is based on rather unrepresentative boundaries.
- 4. Page 4 - Topography**
Paragraph 1.1.5 states erroneously that Church Stretton is relatively flat.
- 5. Page 8 - Existing Cycle Network**
Paragraph 3.1 states that there is a small area in the town centre and to the west of the town which has good network coverage. It is not known where this refers to.
- 6. Page 10 - Cycling Catchment Map Figure 3-3**
It can be seen that the catchments of Shrewsbury and Church Stretton almost intersect. This would suggest that a cycle track all along the A49 from Shrewsbury to Church Stretton could be advocated. With an electric bike longer commutes could be undertaken than 10Km.
- 7. Page 12 - Trip Destinations Figure 3-4**
Carding Mill Valley should be added as Trip Destination. At weekends and Bank Holidays Carding Mill Valley is a destination for a large proportion of travel in the town. Large numbers of pedestrians and cars and currently some cycles share the narrow approach to Carding Mill Valley.

8. Page 15 Figure 3-6

If Carding Mill Valley were to be included as a destination, this would produce another secondary desire line.

Cycling Schemes

9. Pages 16 & 17 Figure 3-7 and Table 3-2

Schemes following a Primary Desire Line

Scheme CS09 Grade separated crossing of the railway with access to both platforms

We recommend that a grade separated crossing of the A49, and the railway line should be combined as a proposed crossing in the vicinity of Crossways, which would create good safe access to both platforms of the railway station and to the town centre using the station approach road. This would cater for a good proportion of the residential areas to the east of the town.

10. Scheme CS.12 Proposed crossing of A49 and railway towards Coffin Lane

This scheme would be desirable, and a Feasibility Study should investigate the options for defining the scheme in more detail.

11. Scheme CS.CROSS1

This is supported and will help cyclists safely access the proposed grade separated crossing of the railway and A49 described in paragraph 9 above which relies upon the Station Approach.

12. Scheme CS.02 - Sandford Avenue east of A49

As there is no footway on the north side of Sandford Avenue (except over the railway line), it cannot be removed as is proposed in the Plan. As the lime trees along Sandford Avenue are a distinctive feature of this part of Church Stretton's Conservation Area dating back over 100 years, there is no scope for creating a cycle track. It is therefore recommended that the speed limit be reduced to 20 mph and that this should extend eastwards to the 40mph limit as currently people have to walk in the carriageway in this area. Westwards it should extend to the start of the current 20mph limit on the west side of the railway bridge approach. Stretton Climate Care supports the introduction of a 20mph limit throughout the town which would avoid the cost and visual impact of conventional traffic calming measures associated with 20mph limits. On the railway bridge, the narrow footway on the north side helps to protect the bridge's parapets from damage and it is likely that bridge engineers would wish to retain it.

13. Pages 18 &19 Figure 3-8 and Table 3-3
Schemes following a Secondary Desire Line
CS.01 B5477 Town Centre and vicinity

It is not entirely clear what is the extent of CS01. It is assumed it includes High Street and Shrewsbury Road as far as Lutwyche Road. The majority of this stretch is subject to a town centre 20mph limit already. However, the footways on High Street are totally inadequate. The choices are to introduce a one-way system as suggested, removing on street parking where necessary and provide adequate footways and provide cycle tracks, or to create a pedestrian priority area and potentially including The Square and in effect Church Row, allowing residents and business access as well as cyclists continued access to the area. This would need to be the subject of a feasibility study and a further consultation on the options. The Square should not be pedestrianised without the installation of a high quality public realm improvement. We consider that the current footway arrangements on High Street are totally inadequate as they cannot be accessed by large children's buggies nor motorised wheelchairs. There is not room for two people to walk past each other and many people walk in the road which with two-way traffic is a serious collision risk. Cyclists and pedestrians are currently impacted by opening car doors and reversing vehicles in this area.

Those areas outside of the current 20mph limit should be subject to a new 20mph limit also ideally as part of a town wide scheme. As it is part of the current Conservation Area, we would be opposed to visually intrusive traffic calming schemes or road humps but public realm improvements could signify the commencement of this area.

14. Scheme CS.05

The northern unmetalled part of Watling Street North does not lead to a crossing point over the A49 and therefore improvements to that section would not produce significant local benefit in accessing the town centre or schools. Designation of Watling Street North as a low traffic neighbourhood would be unlikely to achieve any practical effect. Concerns have been expressed about cyclists currently using this route harassing pedestrians with races and similar events taking place. Most low traffic neighbourhoods are intended to deter through traffic from entering an area or rat-running through inappropriate streets. That does not occur in this area as traffic is most unlikely to enter Watling Street North and the roads leading from it unless needing to access a property in the area. It is recommended that this Scheme be deleted.

15. Scheme CS.06 - Connecting Battlefield Estate to the Town Centre and the Schools

The Battlefield Estate, the eastern portion of residential area O6 north of the properties in Sandford Avenue, only has vehicular access through the single track section of Watling Street North which has no intervisibility on the single track carriageway because of its vertical alignment and this is hazardous for vehicles, cyclists and walkers. It is therefore recommended that **CS.06** be upgraded to a

Primary Desire Line as it can also be used to access the town centre using Essex Road and the proposed Crossing **CS.CROSS1**, which is supported. The grade separated crossing of the railway is CS.06 but in addition, a grade separated crossing of the A49 is also required as this is a 60mph road at this point. Many school children already use this route daily. A feasibility study will be needed to assess whether cyclists would need to dismount west of the railway crossing as a result of constraints on land availability.

As far as the proposed Cycle Hub is concerned, we welcome the principle, but the playing fields are held in Trust for that purpose, and it may not be possible to develop a Cycle Hub in this location. We therefore recommend that a Feasibility Study investigate options for the location of a cycle hub and how it would be managed and maintained.

16. Scheme CS.10 Connecting Sandford Avenue and Watling Street South

We welcome this proposal.

17. Scheme CS.15 Connecting All Stretton to Church Stretton along the B5477

We do not think that pedestrians, particularly school children will comply with proposal to only walk on the west side. We support creating cycle tracks along the B5477 but in the meantime recommend that a 20mph speed limit is introduced along the B5477 and within All Stretton preferably as part of a town wide scheme.

18. Scheme CS.16 Connecting All Stretton to Church Stretton using Farm Lane to cross the railway and a public right of way to then go along the A49

We do not think this tortuous route leading users to use a narrow road with poor forward visibility and then onto a PROW with a level crossing of the railway is an attractive proposition.

19. Scheme CS.17 Cycleway along the A49 connecting All Stretton to Church Stretton

We would support the principle of constructing a cycleway alongside the A49 and would like to see this extend from Church Stretton Dorrington and then onto Shrewsbury. We believe that commuters using electric bikes would cycle from Church Stretton to Shrewsbury.

20. Scheme CS.19 Cycleway from Little Stretton via Crown Lane along the A49

We welcome the construction of a cycleway along the A49 from the southern end of Watling Street South to Crown Lane, Little Stretton. There is a narrowing where a house is retained as part of the construction of the Church Stretton bypass in the 1930's which will need to be addressed as part of the design and consideration will need to be given to a safe crossing of the A49 at Crown Lane, possibly partly involving reducing the speed limit of the A49 at this junction.

21. Scheme CS.20 Improving cycle access along the B5477 between Little Stretton and Church Stretton.

We would welcome a full study of the potential for creating Cycle tracks and footways where none exist currently. We agree that a 20mph limit is appropriate, but we do not think that a B road used by buses, delivery vehicles can be designated as a Quiet Lane. Statutory guidance issued in 2006 indicates that Quiet Lanes are intended to be designated on minor Rural roads where the space can be shared by pedestrians and vehicles. At times it is also used as a diversionary route when there are accidents causing closure of the A49. Some cyclists are concerned about the lack of lighting on this route and in Little Stretton, while others favour the dark skies currently present.

22. Pages 20 & 21

Proposed Schemes following a Local Desire Line

CS.03 Connecting the Northern residential area (O3) to the town centre

The proposal to review speed limits in Madeira Walk does not recognise that Madeira Walk is not maintained by Shropshire Council. It is narrow road without a footway with occasional parked cars and speed bumps. Traffic speeds appear to be low and walking and cycling do not appear to present a significant risk. The use of the narrow footway between Carding Mill Valley and Longhills Road as a Cycle path would probably not be practical given its restricted width and challenging gradients.

23. CS.04 Review Speed limits, Crossings and signage on Watling Street South and the blind corner on the north end

We agree the speed limit on Watling Street South to be reduced to 20mph and would prefer this to be part of a 20's Plenty area wide reduction in speed limit throughout the town. We want to avoid the plethora of signs and required by individual 20mph limits. We have already proposed that Sandford Avenue should be reduced to 20mph as well. (Maximum benefit in road safety would also be achieved by reducing the speed limit on the A49 where road traffic fatalities have occurred.) We doubt that formal crossings are necessary on Watling Street South. The blind corner at the northern end of Watling Street South would be made safer by restricting parking in this vicinity.

24. CS.07 Review speed limits, signage and a 20mph limit on Stretton Farm Road & upgrade the public right of way linking it to the northeast to CS.12

We agree that Stretton Farm Road should have a speed limit of 20mph and we would recommend that this is part of a town wide scheme. In view of the low levels of traffic on Stretton Farm Road we doubt that there is any need for further signage or traffic calming. We agree that the Public Right of Way connection to CS.12 should be upgraded.

25. CS.08 Improve the Public Right of Way connection between Shrewsbury Road and Madeira Walk

We do not consider that it is practical to achieve a significant improvement of this

route which is restricted by its narrow width and vertical alignment.

26. CS.11 Implement signage and introduce 20mph limit on Clive Avenue, Ragleth Road, Poplar Drive and Chelmick Avenue

Clive Avenue is a private road not maintained by Shropshire Council. It already has non statutory signs indicating a 20mph speed limit. The other roads are generally short and steep and it unlikely that cars exceed 20mph. We believe that this area should be part of a town wide 20mph scheme but a standalone 20mph scheme is not justifiable.

27. CS.13 Improve the existing bridleway from Snatchfields Lane/ The Bridleways to Chelmick Close

This would be useful upgrade in particular for residents of Chelmick Close and the northern end of Chelmick Drive wishing to access the town centre and the schools.

28. CS.14 Connecting Cardington to Church Stretton along Cwms Lane & Cwms Road

This is currently in part a sunken green lane which is a County Road. It is currently impassable by vehicles and is often in effect partly a stream. It does give access to Willstone a small hamlet, and Cardington which has a population recorded as 429 at the 2021 Census. Improving this green lane without restricting it's use by motor vehicles would not be appropriate because its narrow width would make it unsafe as a cycle route. Such an improvement would also have an environmental impact. A study would be needed to assess whether the benefits would exceed the disbenefits.

29. CS.18 Create a Cycle track from All Stretton to Dorrington along the A49

We support this proposal and note that the Appendix for Shrewsbury schemes includes a similar proposal for a cycle track from Shrewsbury to Dorrington. This is categorised a local scheme, but we consider it should have a status and importance much higher than this as it will help to create a new national network and encourage electric bike users in particular to undertake longer commutes and leisure travel, reducing car use. We understand that in the context of this particular Plan it may be difficult to advocate this, but it is necessary to step back and consider the wider context to understand the importance of the creation of such a cycle track if we are to change our travel habits and create a nation of cyclists.

30. CS.22 Connecting Wall under Heywood and Hope Bowdler to Church Stretton along the B4371 and introduce 20mph limits in these villages with cycle tracks and shared use cycleway.

We support this proposal which would also serve Rushbury. Where there is no room for a cycle track, we also recommend that the speed limit is reduced to 20mph.

31. CS.23 Improve Burway Road for cycling and improve the crossing facilities at the junction with High Street and Shrewsbury Road, removing non-residential parking as necessary and introduce a 20mph speed limit on Burway Road

We support this proposal. We would like the speed limit on Burway road reduced as part of a town wide speed limit of 20mph as we do not support a plethora signs and traffic calming on Burway Road. The crossing of High Street and Shrewsbury Road should be carried out with public realm improvements to the remainder of High Street. The footways on Shrewsbury Road are very narrow. They could be widened if traffic signals were introduced so that this short stretch of Shrewsbury Road was narrowed to a single carriageway. This is similar to the traffic signal junction at Corve Street, Old Street and King Street in Ludlow.

Walking Schemes

32. Core Walking Zone

The Core Walking Zones are based on town centres but the defined area in Church Stretton also includes the Schools on Shrewsbury Road. Church Stretton has another key destination for walking in Carding Mill Valley which on weekend and Bank Holidays is a key destination for many visitors. Carding Mill Valley is also important in that provides access to an important green space-The Long Mynd-the western part of the Stretton Hills with its visitor facilities. Therefore, the analysis is incomplete. Carding Mill Valley is a narrow, metalled road without footways. It should become part of the 20mph zone to improve pedestrians' and cyclists' safety.

33. We agree that most of the cycling schemes should also provide for pedestrians. However, there are width limitations on some of the schemes that may make this difficult given the standards required as a result of Gear Change.

34. Strategic Walking Improvements

The Re-introduction the Sandford Avenue/ High Street/Lion Meadow/Easthope Road Gyratory

During Covid, only Sandford Avenue and High Street were made one way. This improved conditions for pedestrians in High Street and Sandford Avenue but parked cars infringed the temporary barriers in High Street reducing the actual benefit of the scheme. We support improving conditions for pedestrians in High Street and Sandford Avenue as well as providing additional cycle parking. As discussed in paragraph 12 above there will need to be public consultation over the options which range from a limited improvement using a one-way system, widening footways and introducing good crossings and cycle tracks to creating a pedestrian priority area around the Square with vehicular access retained for residents and businesses and cyclists. The current provision for pedestrians on High Street is totally inadequate and potentially very dangerous.

The footways on Shrewsbury Road are very narrow. They could be widened if traffic signals were introduced so that this short stretch of Shrewsbury Road was

narrowed to a single carriageway. This is similar to the traffic signal junction at Corve Street, Old Street and King Street in Ludlow.

35. Crossing of the A49 and Railway

As far as crossing from the eastern residential areas is concerned, we recommend a new grade separated crossing in the vicinity of Crossways giving access to the railway station platforms and to the town centre using the Station approach. This is described further in Paragraph 9 above.

36. Another grade separated crossing should be provided to the north described as CS.06 in the cycling section. A grade separated crossing of the A49 is also required. More details are in Paragraph 15 above.

37. We also support a further grade separated crossing of the A49 and railway as CS.12.

38. Crossing at Station Approach, Sandford Avenue and Central Avenue

We support improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclist at the junction of the Station approach with Sandford Avenue and Central Avenue.

39. Additional crossings

we would like to see a crossing of Easthope Road between the car park and Mayfair/the Medical Practice.

40. We also support improved signposting.

41. Prioritisation

While we realise that the three grade separated crossings of the A49 and railway cannot be short term measures, we consider that Schemes which provide for safer walking and cycling across these major barriers to safe movement should be given priority in terms of feasibility studies as soon as possible. These will be complex schemes requiring coordination between National Highways, Network Rail and Shropshire Council and will take some time to progress and having agreed schemes would be a good step forward.

42. We also consider that improvement to conditions for pedestrians in High Street, in particular, should be treated as a priority by taking forward a feasibility study to identify options and consult about them.