

Report To:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	23 rd January 2019
Executive Member/Reporting Officer:	Councillor Warren Bray – Executive Member (Strategic Development and Transport) Jayne Traverse – Director of growth
Subject:	Wider Pedestrian Considerations around Vision Tameside. Traffic Management (Including Bus Routing) Within Vision Tameside Wider Area
Report Summary:	The report examines the Public Realm and pedestrian permeability in the local and wider Vision Tameside area. With an enhanced Ashton Town Centre public realm, the report also examines how bus travel to and from the east of the borough can be best accommodated to serve the local town centre, whilst avoiding conflict with areas of high pedestrian movement.
Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the pedestrian connectivity proposals for Ashton town centre and its wider environs including enhanced public realm links from Clarendon Sixth Form College through to the wider Shared Service Centre and Town Hall area, linking through to the Market Square be approved. • Once the temporary hoardings to the new Shared Service Centre have been removed, to approve the short term continuation of outbound bus movement utilising Wellington Road only between Turner Lane and Penny Meadow. • That of the Bus Routing Options outlined in Section 4 of the report, Option 2 (all buses to utilise Albion Way, Henrietta Street and Penny Meadow in both directions) be approved as the most appropriate way forward. • To note ongoing discussions and consultation with 3rd parties in bringing forward Option 2 (all buses to utilise Albion Way, Henrietta Street and Penny Meadow in both directions) as the most appropriate way forward. • That following approval of Option 2 as described above, the statutory powers are obtained to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The stopping of all vehicular traffic along

Wellington Road between the Camp Street and Harley Street in both directions

- To relocate existing bus stop provision from Wellington Rd (outside Engine Room/ Ash Tree pub area) to Henrietta Street: (Adjacent Car Park and area of Pizza Hut) and Relocating Penny Meadow alighting only (from higher end of Penny Meadow to as close as possible to junction with Wellington Rd)
- Note the potential three month implementation period for any revised bus routing agreements once Executive Cabinet approval and all relevant statutory powers have been secured

Links to Community Strategy:

The new Vision Tameside initiative will underpin a number of the Community Strategy elements including:

- A Prosperous Tameside: More and better jobs
- A Learning Tameside: Where expectations and achievements are raised in education
- An Attractive Tameside: An attractive place to live

Policy Implications:

The Vision Tameside initiative underpins a number policies both at a local and wider Greater Manchester level in investing in the regeneration of a major Greater Manchester District Centre

**Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough Treasurer)**

Any financial implications as a result of the recommendations will be financed from the Public Realm budget held within the Vision Tameside project.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)**

Any Traffic Regulation Orders will need to be made in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996

Risk Management:

Addressed at Section 6 of report

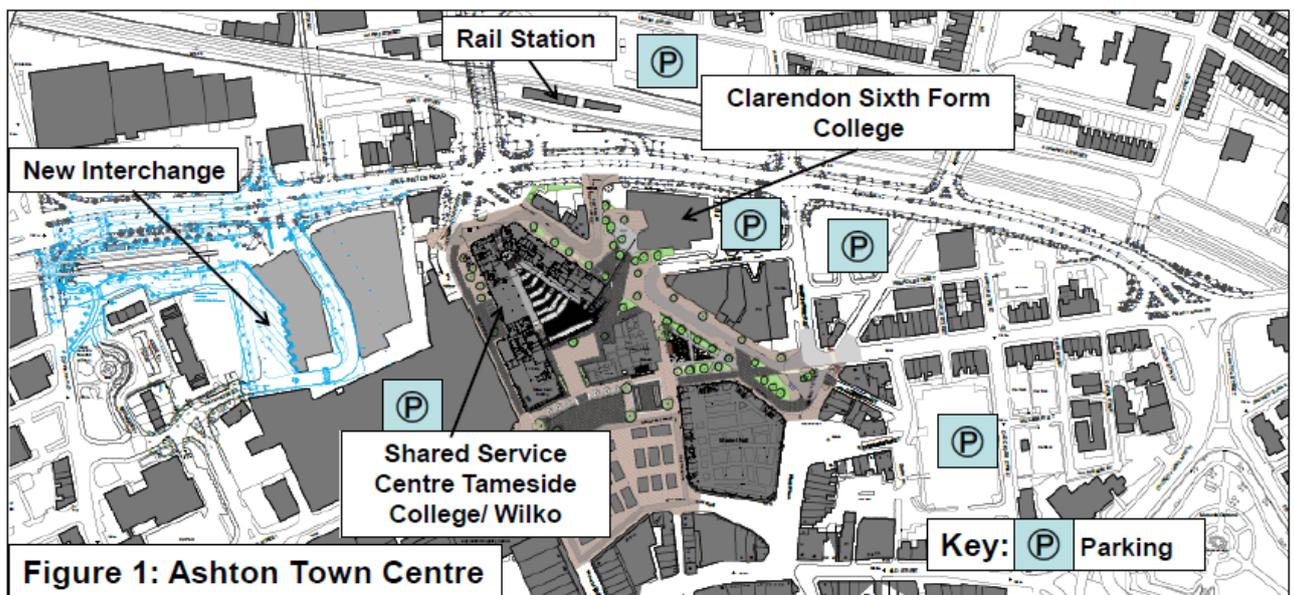
1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1** Vision Tameside is a flagship development for Tameside aiming to provide much needed economic growth and investment especially for the Borough's young people. The project comprises a new 7,000m² Advanced Skills Centre for Tameside College, a new Joint Public Service Centre for Tameside Council and its partners and retail space for Wilko.
- 1.2** Located on Wellington Road, on the site of the former Tameside Council administration building the new Joint Public Shared Service Centre will also provide residents with more cost effective and customer friendly facilities under one roof. The Centre will consolidate a number of community services including the Council's customer services centre, Job Centre Plus, the public library, and the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- 1.3** Replacing the ageing Council administrative building, which was too large, no longer fit for purpose and too expensive to run, with a smaller building incorporating the latest energy-saving technology and shared with partners, is expected to save taxpayers substantial costs over many years.
- 1.4** The report examines two main areas of the Vision Tameside initiative and associated options for consideration. These are:
- Ashton Town Centre Pedestrian Connectivity and
 - Bus Routing Considerations in light of an expanded pedestrianised town centre public realm

2.0 ASHTON TOWN CENTRE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY

- 2.1** The Shared Service Centre's college frontage onto Wellington Road creates a public space framed by the adjacent Clarendon Sixth Form College. Frontage accommodation, including facilities such as commercial hair and beauty salons will provide much needed activity in this area.
- 2.2** To the south west of the initiative lie the Arcades and LadySmith Shopping Centres, and the town's bus and the Metrolink stations. The bus station is currently being rebuilt and "wrapped around" the existing Metrolink terminus to provide a fully integrated Interchange for the two modes and is due to open in spring 2020.
- 2.3** To the north lie the A6043 Ashton Northern Bypass (Wellington Road and Albion Way), Ashton Retail Park and Ashton railway station.
- 2.4** Whilst less than two hundred metres from the town and new transport interchange, the railway station is not easily accessible by foot as a result of poorly defined pedestrian links and the high volumes of traffic on Albion Way.
- 2.5** The historic market attracts 2m visitors per year. The Arcades shopping centre includes a pedestrian link between the existing bus and Metrolink termini to the main town area. Enjoying 7.5m visitors per year this is likely to increase once the new Interchange combining the two public transport modes opens and brings with it greater passenger numbers into the town.
- 2.6** Warrington Street, running between the Arcades Shopping Centre and the new Shared Service Centre, is little used during the opening hours of the Arcades shopping centre, although it provides an alternative route when the facility is closed.

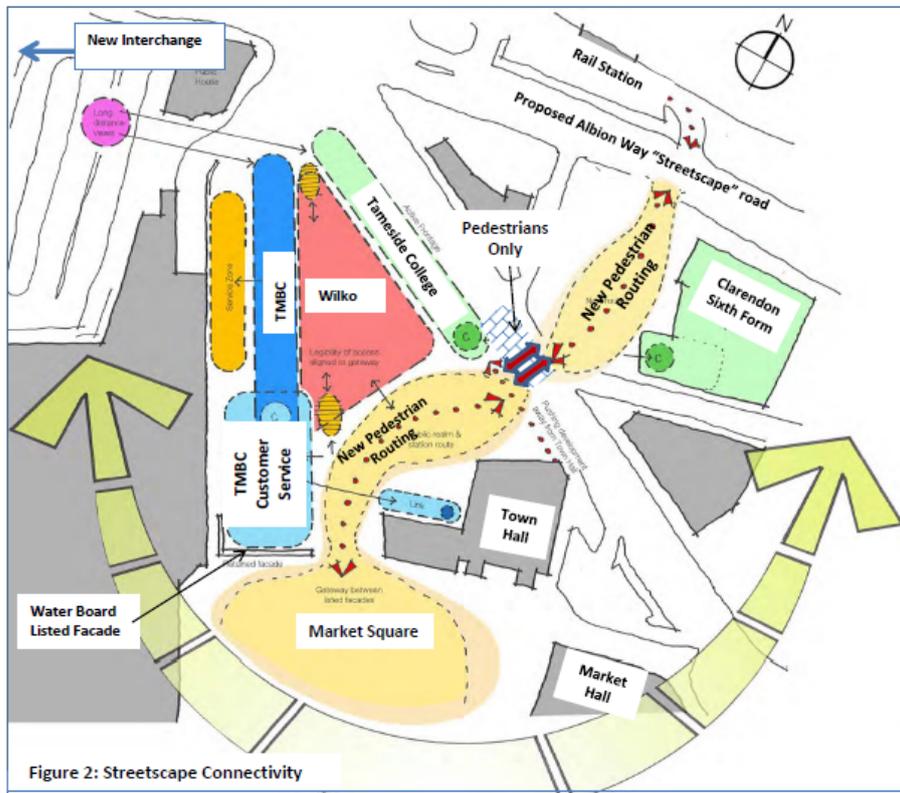
- 2.7 Footfall, at Ashton rail and Metrolink stations, is 325,000 and 740,000 passengers per year respectively¹. 78 bus services per hour operate from the station and the towns' public and private car parks offer over 2,500 spaces for commuters, shoppers and other users.
- 2.8 Clarendon Sixth Form College opened in 2016. With the opening of Tameside College in 2019 hundreds of students and staff will visit the Town Centre on a daily basis
- 2.9 The new Shared Service Centre and Wilko will be occupied in phases during 2019. Once fully operational it is estimated that, annually, a further 200,000 people will use the Shared Service Centre facilities.
- 2.10 In an age of internet shopping, with falling high street demand, the draw for any town centre has to be something special. Given its position to the east of Greater Manchester and lying on the edge of the Peak District, Ashton enjoys a dominant position in the local and wider catchment area.
- 2.11 With a wide range of arrival points, both for public transport and the private car users, the majority of commuters, workers and visitors will link through the new public realm areas in accessing the town's facilities.
- 2.12 Many of the town's arrival points are indicated in Figure 1 below.



- 2.13 From the west, pedestrians will typically route via Wellington Road from the new interchange, outlying retail units and associated car parks and residential areas. To the east lie large areas of both short and long stay parking and further residential areas. Bus movement along Penny Meadow results in high passenger numbers providing direct access to local retail frontages, the indoor market and into the Town Centre via the wider Market Square area.
- 2.14 The new interchange will also continue to link to the Market Square and beyond via the Arcades Shopping centre onto a rejuvenated Market Square.

¹ Metrolink at Ashton served 740,000 passengers (July 2017- June 2018 - TfGM data), Ashton rail station 325,000 passengers 2017/18 figures (<http://orr.gov.uk/statistics/published-stats/station-usage-estimates>)

- 2.15 Integral to the success of the Wellington Road public realm is the adjacent Clarendon Sixth Form College directly linked to the Shared Service Centre. Specifically this will be dominated by high levels of pedestrian activity between the two, not only for staff and students but from activity beyond to the heavy rail station, long stay car parks and residential areas. It is important that to ensure the success of the public realm initiative in this locality, pedestrians are allowed to move freely without conflict with vehicle movement.
- 2.16 Localised pedestrian routing scenarios are indicated in Figure 2 below.



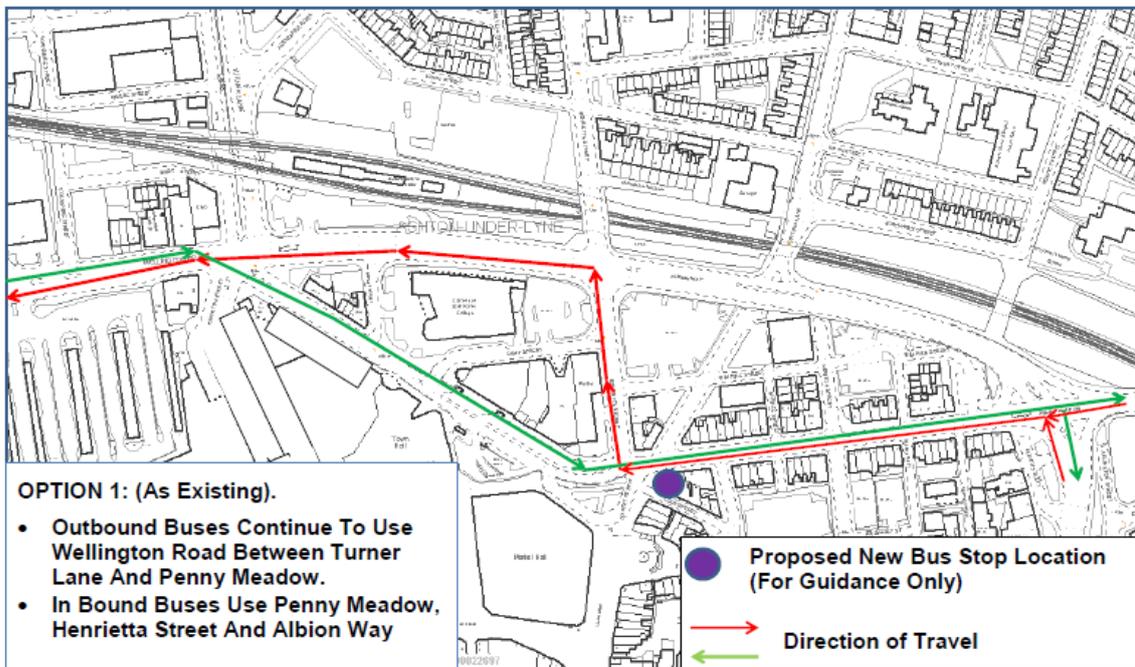
- 2.17 It is important not only to retain existing town centre users but in the longer term, encourage greater visitor numbers. Increasing its attractiveness, encourages greater dwell time and incentivises greater spend, a lynch pin of the Vision Tameside initiative.
- 2.18 In order to successfully achieve the above it has to be recognised that the redevelopment of any urban town inevitably calls for a rebalance between vehicle and pedestrian priorities. In the case of Ashton's expanded public realm a review of bus movement to minimise conflict with pedestrians is required. This will involve a two stage process. In the short term buses will continue running outbound only along Wellington Road once the temporary hoardings are removed. In addition two-way vehicular running will be retained or reinstated at either end of Wellington Road. The Wellington Road/ Penny Meadow area will continue as present with taxi and service vehicle activities in both directions as far as Camp Street. The Wellington Road/ Turner Lane area will see the reinstatement of one way traffic movement along Harley Street, Wellington Road and out via the Turner Lane junction, in order to serve the new facilities.
- 2.19 Longer term and with Executive Cabinet approval, a number of alternative bus routing options in and around Wellington Road are set out below for consideration. These are to ensure the local area is served as close as possible for bus passengers and at the same prevent potential conflict between bus and pedestrian movement. These options are considered in Section 3 below:

- 2.20 Following an assumed option choice, a number of follow on issues including the securing and revocation of new and existing traffic regulation orders, working with Transport for Greater (TfGM) to secure the relocation of bus stops, associated minor civil works and the procuring of any relevant associated equipment and its installation is required.
- 2.21 The time line for the successful introduction of any final option is likely to be some 3 months from the approval of this report.as set out at paragraph 5.11 below.

3.0 PROPOSED OPTIONS

3.1 In order to ensure that buses from the east of the borough continue to serve the existing retail and other core facilities and at the same time are not seen to conflict with pedestrian and sustainable movement in the public realm area, a number of permanent bus routing options have been developed and are presented for consideration and comment. These are set out below.

- 3.2 **Option 1:** (See Option 1 Plan Below) (As existing)
Inbound: Buses use Penny Meadow, Henrietta Street and left along Albion Way into new interchange.
Outbound: Buses only use full length of Wellington Road. All other through traffic banned.



Strengths:

- Existing bus route
- Existing pick up points, on outbound journeys, are located directly opposite market square area.

Weaknesses:

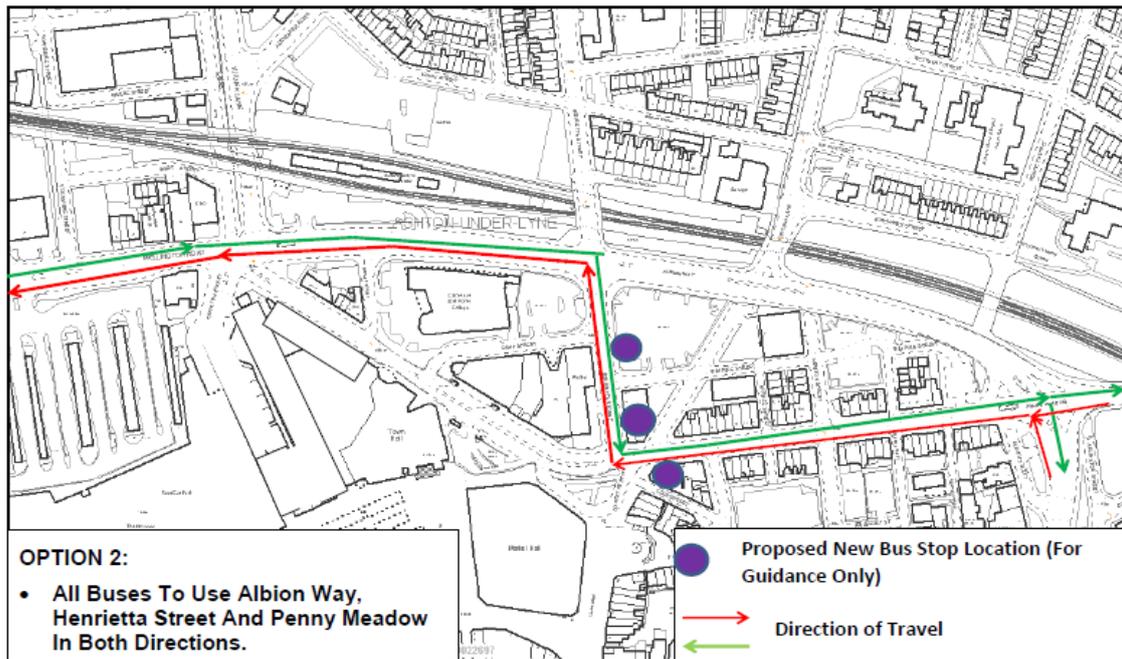
- With over 30 bus services per hour using Wellington Road, the current routing takes no account of the current and future high pedestrian flows anticipated between Clarendon Sixth Form College, the new Shared Service Centre and links to the Market Square and the wider town centre retail offer.
- Road safety issues with pedestrians in a potential conflict zone
- Major issues associated with noise and pollution from bus activity.

Potential Scheme costs:

	£k
Traffic Regulation Order Costs	2
Minor civil works associated with single flow bus travel along Wellington Road	40
Total	42

3.3 Option 2: (See Option 2 Plan Below)

Inbound and outbound: All buses use Penny Meadow, Henrietta Street and Albion Way in both directions.



Notes:

- Requires relocated right turn signal filter for outbound vehicles turning right from Albion Way into Henrietta Street.
- Removes current right turn manoeuvre into Wellington Road at Turner Lane Junction
- Minor works to carriageway required (mainly lines and signs)
- Inbound buses: requires relocation of existing alighting stop to lower end of Penny Meadow near Henrietta Street (subject to traffic considerations) allowing easier pedestrian access to the nearby market square area
- Outbound buses: Required new bus stop provision on Henrietta Street for outbound vehicles.

Strengths:

- Removes all vehicular traffic including buses away from public realm area linking Clarendon Sixth Form College and the new Shared Service Centre
- The minimal cost of a right turn filter to the traffic signals on Albion Way can be readily integrated with any potential future environmental works proposed for the full length of Wellington Road and Albion Way.
- Proposed bus stops provide easy access to and from town centre facilities
- Easily understand by all users
- Reduction in noise and pollution in town centre public realm area

Weaknesses:

- Potential two way vehicle flow issues if signals removed at the junction of Henrietta Street and Penny Meadow – currently under consideration and may stay as existing.

Potential Scheme costs:

	£k
Traffic Regulation Order Costs	2
New traffic signal filter at Henrietta Street and removal of exiting filter at Turner Lane junction	15
New Bus Stops/ Relocated Bus stops	60
Minor civil works associated with initiative	18
Total	95

3.4 **Option 3:** (See Option 3 Plan Below)

Inbound and outbound All buses use Wellington Road and Albion Way (Turner Lane to Penny Meadow).

Strengths:

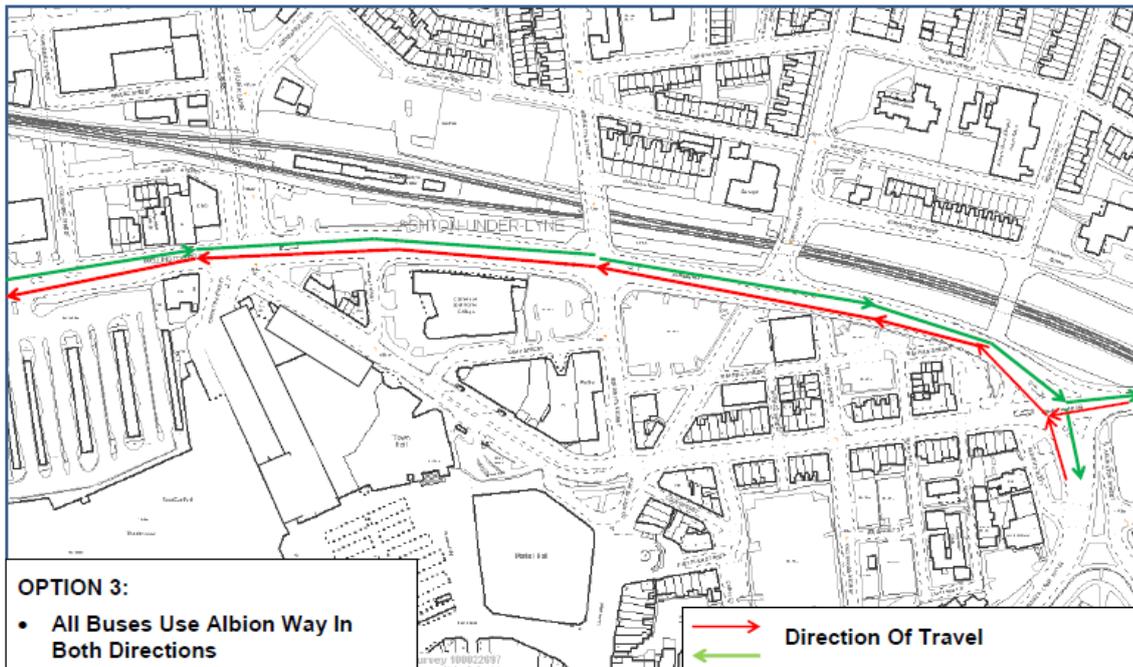
- Underpins the provision of vehicular free, permeable and accessible public space linking Clarendon College and the Shared Service Centre to Ashton Market and other civic space within the market and wider retail area.
- Enables the removal of poorly located and sub-standard bus stops on Penny Meadow.
- Reduces vehicular flows along Penny Meadow - reducing issues of noise and pollution.

Weaknesses:

- Unlikely to be favoured by bus operators
- Buses and potential pick up and drop off points likely to be remote from area of retail and other town centre activity.
- Potential reduction in retail activity along Penny Meadow once bus movement in area is moved away.
- May compromise any potential future environmental improvement considerations along Albion Way
- High relative cost of implementation

Potential Scheme costs:

	£k
Traffic Regulation Order Costs	2
Removal of exiting filter at Turner Lane junction	10
New Bus Stops/ Relocated Bus stops resulting in major retaining wall structures along Albion Way	200
Minor civil works associated with initiative	18
Total	230



4.0 OPTION CONSIDERATIONS AND PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

- 4.1 **Option 1:** Of the three alternatives set out above, Option 1 promotes the status quo. Whilst this has the advantage of being an established local route, buses will travel through the proposed public realm, creating unnecessary noise and pollution, undermining the whole ethos of the wider pedestrian connectivity for the area.
- 4.2 In addition the proposal is in a potential conflict zone, more particularly with increasing pedestrian numbers as the new build facilities are fully occupied.
- 4.3 **It is suggested that at this stage Option 1 is rejected**
- 4.4 **Option 2:** This option would appear to be the most practicable solution. Only the outbound bus routing is changed from the current situation. Buses do not conflict with the proposed pedestrian public space and they are routed as near as possible to the serve the town centre area.
- 4.5 The existing right turn signal filter, for bus movement onto Wellington Road at the Turner Lane junction is moved under 200m further along Albion Way to Henrietta Street where a new right signal filter would be introduced. In addition, new and relocated bus stops will be introduced near the Henrietta Street and Wellington Road junction to serve the market area.
- 4.6 **It is suggested that Option 2 is considered as being the appropriate way forward**
- 4.7 **Option 3:** In practice buses could use Wellington Road and Albion Way between the new Interchange and Penny Meadow in each direction. Although this may actually speed up bus journeys, there are a number of other issues to consider. These include the introduction of relatively expensive and remote bus stop provision between Penny Meadow and the interchange in both directions and the lack of passenger activity in the Penny Meadow retail area.
- 4.8 In addition Transport for Greater Manchester and the bus operators have objected to this proposal.

4.9 **It is suggested that at this stage Option 3 is rejected.**

4.10 A number of other routing options have been considered but currently discounted. These are summarised below for information.

Rejected Option	Suggested Rejected Reason
Inbound buses use Penny Meadow, Camp Street and onto Albion Way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Issues associated with noise and pollution from bus activity especially around Clarendon Sixth Form College • Road safety issues with bus movement running close to pedestrianised area of Wellington Road. • Longer bus journey times into town centre – unlikely to be favoured by bus operators • Difficult bus turning manoeuvres
Inbound buses use Stamford Street and Booth Street to access new interchange. Introduction of new bus stops along route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routing along Stamford Street likely limited to a small number of existing services • Potential loss of trade to Penny Meadow area • May potentially add to bus journey times • Potential issues with vehicular manoeuvrability around Stamford Street, Booth Street and other roads to Interchange
Outward Bound buses To Use Old Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part pedestrianised existing route • Additional bus journey times which may result in less frequent bus services or the introduction of another vehicle increasing overall cost. • A number of one way issues to be addressed to enable Old Street to run in a west to east direction. • Routing issues need to be considered around Old Street and Bow Street/ Warrington Street one way loop
Buses from the east of the borough utilising Park Parade to access and egress the Town centre via Cavendish Street or Oldham Road respectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buses being unable to penetrate the town centre area as part of their journeys in and out of the Town centre. • Lack of bus stop provision for last mile of route for both inward and outward bound journeys.

5.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 **Transport for Greater Manchester and Local Bus Operators:** Transport for Greater Manchester and the relevant local bus operators have been consulted on the above proposals.

5.2 In presenting the above options both TfGM and the operators would have preferred to see buses reinstated both ways along Wellington Road between Turner Lane and Penny Meadow. Generally, however, they accept the principal of a wider public realm extending towards the Clarendon Sixth Form College and beyond with linked increases in pedestrian flows across Wellington Road.

5.3 Of the options presented there was general agreement that Option 2, with buses using Penny Meadow, Henrietta Street and Albion Way, was the most practical solution with relocated bus stops on Henrietta Street for outbound buses and a new bus stop towards the lower end of Penny Meadow for inbound travel.

- 5.4 **Traffic Regulation Order Considerations:** In order to permanently implement any of the above options, which involves the removal of vehicular traffic from a road, or specific type of vehicle, the making of appropriate traffic regulation orders are required.
- 5.5 Generally this can be done via an experimental or permanent traffic regulation order. The former can be introduced with a minimum seven day notice but is subject to future amendments should any objections be upheld during the first six months of its implementation.
- 5.6 For a permanent order a minimum 21 day notice is advertised and any objections are dealt with either during or post the notice period. Given that we have consulted with the two parties most affected by the proposed order, TfGM and the bus operators as noted above, it is proposed that a permanent traffic regulation order is secured from the outset for the Prohibition of Driving Order between Camp St and Harley St.
- 5.7 **Passenger Surveys:** In April 2016 a two day bus passenger survey was undertaken to ascertain shopping habits. These were at off-peak times on a Friday and Saturday thus reflecting an older age profile of respondents. Those surveyed were mainly aged above 45 with a majority aged between 65-74 years old. Whilst the sample was relatively small those tending to alight at Penny Meadow suggested that they tended to start their shopping at the market area making their way through the Ladysmith and Arcades shopping centres to catch the bus at the interchange.
- 5.8 Regular bus passenger numbers, however, have been observed catching the bus on Wellington Road opposite the market when leaving Ashton.
- 5.9 **Bus Reform:** In the longer term Bus Reform may provide an opportunity to examine more fundamental routing options for buses accessing Ashton and indeed other town centres within the borough.
- 5.10 **Shuttle Bus Provision:** With the removal of vehicular traffic along Wellington Road, opportunities presented as a result of the wider Vision Tameside Initiative and the new Transport Interchange, costs have been obtained to provide a single shuttle bus linking the shopping centre with various heavily used linkages both within the town centre and areas such as the hospital, college and other locations. For the provision of a single bus complete with driver, Monday to Saturday, costs are estimated to be over £100k per annum.
- 5.11 **Programme Implementation:** Assuming approval of Option 2 within the report, where both inbound and outbound buses use Penny Meadow, Henrietta Street and Albion Way in both directions, a number of statutory and other linked processes have to be followed. These are summarised below, and assume that no objections are received during the advertisement period:

Action		Lead	Start	Finish
Executive Cabinet	Approval			23/01/19
Making of Permanent order	Advertise (Four Week Period)	TMBC	31/01/19	28/02/19
Sealing of Order	Implementation	TMBC	28/02/19	08/03/19
Notification of bus stop relocation	TfGM bus stop relocation consultation period	TfGM	28/02/19	08/03/19
Implementation		TfGM	28/02/19	08/03/19

Action		Lead	Start	Finish
Relocation of outbound bus stop provision	From Wellington Rd (outside Engine Room/ Ash Tree pub area) to Henrietta Street: (Adjacent Car Park and area of Pizza Hut) Includes moving/ renewal of shelters plus electrical connections	TfGM	11/03/19	03/05/19
Relocation of bus stop provision	Relocating Penny Meadow alighting only (from higher end of Penny Meadow to as close as possible to junction with Wellington Rd)	TfGM	11/03/19	03/05/19
Traffic signals: Procure and fix new Right Hand Turn Filter Signal	Albion Way eastbound - right turn into Henrietta Street. Eight week order and implementation plus switch over from Turner Lane Signals. Dates to tie in with other works (Initial Four Week Implementation once order is received by TfGM)	TfGM	11/03/19	03/05/19
Switch off and removal of Redundant Traffic signals at Turner lane junction	Switch off/ remove redundant right turn traffic signal into Turner lane from Wellington Road. Eight week order and implementation plus set up. Dates to tie in with other works (Initial Four Week Implementation once order is received by TfGM)	TfGM	11/03/19	03/05/19
Other minor civil works	Modification of Henrietta Street and other area "signs and lines" plus other minor works	TMBC	11/03/19	03/05/19
Complete removal of all bus traffic from Wellington Road between Clarendon Sixth Form College and Shared Service Centre		Monday 6 th May 2019		

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 A risk analysis shows there are a number of issues associated with the routing of buses away from traditional town centre areas. These are highlighted below.

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Loss of trade for existing retail frontages along Penny Meadow should buses be diverted away from area	Potential for additional shop voids	To ensure the provision of buses to serve such frontages where possible as part of rerouting considerations. Potential Shuttle Bus provision: although prohibitively expensive solution
Traffic congestion issues on revised bus routing options	Wider traffic congestion in immediate locality Increased noise and pollution	The revised bus routing is unlikely to cause further congestion or increased noise pollution in the immediate area.
Increased air pollution issues along Wellington Rd and Albion Way as a result of revised bus routing.	Increased air pollution	The revised bus routing is unlikely to cause further air pollution in the immediate area.

Risk	Effects	Mitigation
Objections received as a result of statutory advertising of orders	Potential scheme delay	<p>The main organisations affected by the initiative, Transport for Greater Manchester and the Bus Operators, have already been consulted and whilst they would prefer the previous “status quo” appear to have accepted the alternative option 2 scenario.</p> <p>Any specific objections submitted by the bus operators and not addressed by the local authority will be subject to a “public inquiry ... held by an inspector appointed by the order making authority and selected from a panel of persons chosen by the Secretary of State to hold such inquiries”².</p> <p><i>Any objections received from parties other than bus operators will need to be considered by officers and reported to the Council’s Speakers Panel or Strategic Capital Panel for determination.</i></p>
Increased bus routing costs as a result of revised routes	Potential for reduced service, increased fares or both	Work with TfGM and bus operators to minimise effect
Lack of awareness of revised bus routing by potential bus passengers	Negative publicity issues, passenger confusion and increase of car borne traffic	Extensive user communication of route change initiative to minimise potential problems

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The need to promote Ashton as the major retail and administrative centre for Tameside and for users to experience a welcoming, friendly environment in support of this aim is critical to the town’s future.
- 7.2 The proposed initiatives highlighted within this report will help make a major contribution to this aim.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The recommendations are set out at the front of the report.

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/2489/regulation/9/made>