

# South Staffordshire

## District Integrated Transport Strategy



October 2017



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Integrated Transport Strategies have been developed for the eight District / Boroughs in Staffordshire to help prioritise the County Council's expenditure on transport improvements in the short term and during the period of the planning authority's Local Plan. The objectives of the South Staffordshire Integrated Transport Strategy are as follows:

## Objectives of the Transport Strategies

- Summarise the key highway and transport issues
- Integrate transport and planning policy
- Identify transport solutions that will help to:
  - Achieve Staffordshire County Council vision and outcomes
  - Deliver the Local Plan
  - Support Local Enterprise Partnership objectives
  - Reflect communities concerns
- Outline funding options and delivery mechanisms

- 1.2 Delivery of this Transport Strategy will help achieve Staffordshire County Council's vision for 2014 to 2018 and three interconnected priority outcomes that are identified in the County Council's Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2018.

## Vision

**'A Connected Staffordshire, where everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be healthy and happy'.**

The people of Staffordshire will:

- Be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefit of economic growth
- Be healthier and more independent
- Feel safer, happier and more supported in and by their community

- 1.3 It will also help to achieve the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) objectives of creating Competitive Urban Centres and a Connected County. A priority for the LEP during the period up to 2021 is to develop our local transport networks to provide sustainable connections and unlock housing, town centre and employment growth.
- 1.4 There is strong policy support for the delivery of this Strategy in the South Staffordshire Local Plan for the period up to 2028. In particular, it reflects the need to deliver housing and employment growth in the District. Scheme proposals take into consideration local concerns highlighted through consultations with local councillors. Local research recognises that traffic issues and improving the conditions of roads and pavements is considered important for South Staffordshire residents.

## 2. District Profile

### Introduction

- 2.1 South Staffordshire is a rural District on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation and approximately 80% lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. There is no single dominant settlement within the District. Brewood, Codsall, Bilbrook, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton and Wombourne are the largest villages and act as service centres for the surrounding rural areas. The number of residents in South Staffordshire driving to work is significantly higher than the national average, at 86% (2011 Census), which is also the highest level in Staffordshire.
- 2.2 The north of the District is crossed by the M6 and M54 motorways and is the location of the terminus of the M6 Toll motorway. The A449 provides a north-south corridor through the District linking into Stafford and the West Midlands and is designated as trunk road between the A5 and M54. The A5, A41, A454 and A458 provide east-west links into the West Midlands and the A5 is designated as trunk road to the east of the A449.
- 2.3 From December 2017, all rail stations and local services in South Staffordshire will be managed and provided by West Midlands Railway. Codsall and Bilbrook rail stations are on the Shrewsbury to Birmingham line; Landywood rail station is on the Chase Line and Penkridge station is on the Birmingham to Stafford line. Residents in the South of the District are also likely to access rail stations within the West Midlands conurbation such as Stourbridge Junction or Wolverhampton.
- 2.4 Around 3.5% (2011 Census) of employed residents in South Staffordshire travel to work by bus which is around the average for Staffordshire as a whole. Over 90% of the bus network is provided on a commercial basis by private bus operators. The main operators in the District are National Express West Midlands, Arriva, Select Bus and Diamond Bus.
- 2.5 There is an extensive network of canals including Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, Shropshire Union Canal and Stourbridge Canal and there is a campaign to reinstate the Lichfield to Hatherton Branch. These canals also provide important pedestrian and cycling links.

### Highway Issues

#### Condition of Local Roads

- 2.6 The County Council is responsible for maintaining the condition of the local highway network through the Infrastructure+ Partnership with Amey. The maintenance of street lighting is the responsibility of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract to secure increased capital investment to remedy a rapidly deteriorating lighting stock.

- 2.7 The majority of road works are carried out by utility companies such as gas, water, phone and electric companies, and by developers. County Council maintenance activity is planned ahead to enable co-ordination with utility works and any other third party activities to minimise the frequency and duration of disruptive road works.
- 2.8 Preventative and structural highway maintenance schemes are predominantly identified through condition surveys. All 'A' and 'B' classification roads within the District are surveyed annually and lower class roads, less frequently. The condition of bridge structures is assessed using standardised national guidelines to enable comparisons to be made between local authorities. Any bridge assessed as being in a critical condition requires priority investment.
- 2.9 Table 2.1 identifies the proportion of Staffordshire's roads that are in South Staffordshire by classification and Table 2.2 identifies the proportion of roads where essential structural maintenance is required as a percentage of the total roads in Staffordshire, based on the latest Road Condition Indicator data. South Staffordshire has a low proportion of the 'A', 'B' and 'C' roads in the County that are a priority for maintenance, but has a higher proportion of the unclassified / D roads requiring priority maintenance.

**Table 2.1 Length of Road by Classifications (metres)**

Location	A Roads	B and C Roads	Unclassified / D Roads
<b>Staffordshire</b>	1,264,410	1,972,753	2,636,265
<b>South Staffordshire</b>	171,571 14%	302,285 15%	362,180 14%

**Table 2.2: Roads Requiring Essential Structural Maintenance (as % of roads in Staffordshire)**

Location	A Roads	B and C Roads	Unclassified / D Roads
<b>Staffordshire</b>	2.61%	7.2%	11.2%
<b>South Staffordshire</b>	0.15%	0.8%	2.2%

- 2.10 To further prioritise potential structural maintenance schemes, beyond defects alone, a value management approach is adopted through priority scoring matrices which take into consideration other attributes including level of traffic, drainage issues, whether it is a winter-maintenance or bus route, the quality of the ride and the accident rate.

### Traffic Delays

- 2.11 Traffic delays within South Staffordshire are concentrated in the north of the District on motorways and the A5, A460 and A449. Local peak hour delays are also evident at junctions within settlements such as Perton, Codsall and Bilbrook.
- 2.12 The A460 currently carries about 26,500 vehicles each day with heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) making up about 10% of this figure. Congestion on the

A460, in particular, is exacerbated as it currently carries high levels of traffic travelling between the M6 north, M54 and M6 Toll. The A449 and A5 are also congested routes suffering from journey time delays.

## **Car Parking**

- 2.13 Off-street parking is provided for free by South Staffordshire Council, with public car parks available in Brewood, Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Pattingham, Penkridge and Wombourne. On-street parking enforcement is the responsibility of the County Council and the police deal with illegal obstructions and dangerous parking.
- 2.14 The District has a number of historic attractions such as Weston Park, Kinver Edge and Baggeridge Country Park, and issues with parking at some of these sites can occur. There are also parking issues within villages such as Brewood and in Codsall there is the lack of availability of long stay parking to serve the rail station.

## **Road Safety**

- 2.15 Department for Transport (DfT) data confirms that Staffordshire has one of the safest road networks in the country. This has been achieved in partnership with the police through a combination of targeted education, training, engineering and local enforcement activity. Road injury accident data is continually monitored and locations are identified where consistent accident patterns occur that might be prevented through remedial engineering works. These locations are investigated to identify the underlying causes of the problems and measures are implemented if appropriate and justifiable. The following locations in South Staffordshire are being investigated in 2017:
- Ounsdale Road / Station Road junction, Wombourne
  - A460 Cannock Road / New Road / Dark Lane junction, Featherstone

## **Local Transport Issues**

- 2.16 Staffordshire County Council logs all customer enquiries received relating to highways, traffic, waste, lighting and safety. County Councillors also work closely with the County Council's Neighbourhood Highway Team to ensure that local traffic concerns are identified and priorities are established. The team visits each community a minimum of twice per year. The main issues raised in South Staffordshire in 2016/17 include:
- Wheaton Aston and Wedges Mills Lane - Village Signage issues including gateway signage
  - Saredon Road, Shareshill and Great Chatwell Junction – Maintenance Issues – ongoing works
  - Dunston Heath / Coppenhall and Bungham Lane / A449 – Maintenance and improved passing bays
  - Codsall railway station on-street car parking issues
  - Brewood village car parking issues



## Walking and Cycling Issues

- 2.17 Staffordshire County Council is responsible for the maintenance of public rights of way. A Parish Council has the power to maintain footpaths or bridleways in its area, but this does not remove responsibility from the County Council. General issues on the network include poor surfacing, overgrown vegetation and a lack of signing.
- 2.18 Network Rail's proposals to close level crossings can cause accessibility issues for walkers and cyclists. One proposal is the potential closure of the level crossing in Landywood which has a high number of users with a large proportion of them being unaccompanied children, and pushchair and wheelchair users. It is also on a strong desire line for residents west of the rail line walking to school.

## Social Issues

### Health

- 2.19 Regular physical activity through walking and cycling has been shown to tackle physical and mental health issues, reduce preventable deaths, improve educational attainment and increase independence in older people.
- 2.20 Levels of excess weight in children in South Staffordshire are similar to the England average. Around seven in ten adults have excess weight which is higher than the England average.
- 2.21 Just over half of South Staffordshire adults meet the recommended levels of physical activity and more than one in four adults are physically inactive, equating to around 23,300 people. These levels of physical activity are similar to the England average.

### Air Quality

- 2.22 The air quality within South Staffordshire can be of a good standard on the whole, although it is acknowledged that traffic does contribute to elevated levels of NO<sup>2</sup>. Monitoring of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) by the District Council in 2017 has indicated that NO<sup>2</sup> is below the objective level and there are no proposed developments that are likely to have an effect on air quality. Therefore the AQMAs in Penkrige and Saredon are expected to be revoked leaving one remaining AQMA at Oak Farm, Hatherton, located along the A5(T) between junction 12 of the M6 and Cannock.

### Accessibility

- 2.23 In order to create an inclusive society which promotes equality of access and opportunity, destinations need to be as accessible to as many people as possible. Reasonable steps must be taken to remove barriers to access, making the transport system easier to use and places easier to get to. Until barriers are removed, a proportion of people will be disadvantaged; unable to access the jobs, services and activities they want; and limited in the extent to

which they can participate in society. Individuals most likely to be affected include the elderly, the young, those with a temporary or permanent disability and those without access to a private motor vehicle.

- 2.24 With an ageing population, access to hospital for South Staffordshire’s population is of great importance. There are no hospitals located within the district and so residents without access to private vehicles will be reliant on cross-boundary public transport links. Access to higher education facilities is also important given that younger people are more reliant on public transport.

## Public Transport Issues

### Rail

- 2.25 Train operating companies (TOCs) are private companies, paid to run an area’s services by Central government. Network Rail owns and maintains the rail network, and the ORR (Office of Rail and Road) regulate Network Rail and TOCs. Going forwards in South Staffordshire, local rail services will be managed locally by West Midlands Rail Ltd (WMR) of which the County Council is a member.
- 2.26 Stations are classified into six categories (A-F) based on passenger footfall and income. All stations in South Staffordshire are ‘F’ class small unstaffed stations. This class of station tends not to be a priority for investment and traditionally has been dependent upon funding opportunities such as the National Stations Improvement Programme and Access for All funding.
- 2.27 Car parking supply at stations is a significant issue in South Staffordshire which is exacerbated by the high demand for commuting into the West Midlands. The problem is likely to grow due to improved rail connectivity planned through the new West Midlands Railway franchise and proposed housing growth. All rail stations are unmanned; facilities are very limited and access to platforms is unsatisfactory. The existing service frequencies shown in Table 2.3 will be improved through the next franchise period.

**Table 2.3: Existing Rail Service Frequencies**

Station	Service Frequency (Minutes)			
	Weekday Peak	Weekday off-peak	Sat	Sun
<b>Bilbrook</b>	30	60	60	120
<b>Codsall</b>	30	60	60	120
<b>Landywood</b>	30	60	60	60
<b>Penkridge</b>	30	30(south) 60(north)	30(south) 60(north)	60

### Bus

- 2.28 The County Council has a statutory duty under the Transport Act 1985 to secure public transport that is considered to be socially necessary. Statutory supported services include:
- Mainstream home to school transport for qualifying children

- Older persons and disabled concessionary fares
- Home to school for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

2.29 Discretionary Services include:

- Supported services (largely evening and Sunday services) where a commercial service is not currently available
- Community Transport schemes: South Staffordshire Connect and Voluntary Car Schemes
- Pre-09:30 hours older/disabled persons concession
- SEN Home to College

2.30 South Staffordshire Connect is a demand responsive bus service offering residents of the District the opportunity to make local journeys for a fee with a reduced rate for concessions. The service is door-to-door and covers the whole District. South Staffordshire Connect also links to several regular bus services to enable longer journeys out of the District. The service is available to anyone who cannot use a regular bus service because of a disability or mobility difficulty.

2.31 Where possible, pupils on a bespoke contracted service are encouraged to use commercial services, taking advantage of the 'Your Staffordshire Card'. The use of this card has continued to rise since its introduction. It allows children aged 15 and under to travel anywhere within Staffordshire for just £1.20 per single journey, rising to £1.30 per journey for 16-19 year olds. The County Council also supplies Traveline with bus timetable information and journey planning information.

2.32 Access to frequent bus services varies across the main service villages within the District. Access in terms of the number of addresses within 350 metres of a half hourly or more frequent weekday is summarised in Table 2.4. Brewood and Kinver do not have all day higher frequency bus services. There are two main bus services through Penkridge but the timetables are not co-ordinated to provide a half hourly service.

**Table 2.4: Access to Frequent Bus Services**

Main Service Village	Addresses within 350m of frequent service
Perton	94.3 %
Cheslyn Hay/Great Wyrley	82.8%
Codsall and Bilbrook	81.6%
Wombourne	79%

2.33 During August / September 2017 the County Council carried out a bus consultation to seek opinion on what services should continue to be provided for the budget available, taking into account:

- The actual cost of the subsidy per passenger journey to taxpayers
- The numbers of passengers and locations
- Alternative transport options

- The need to prioritise employment, education and health journeys where possible
- 2.34 The outcome of the consultation will be reported in November 2017 with changes to subsidised bus journeys expected to be implemented from April 2018.
- 2.35 A 'Total Transport' Pilot has also been completed that recommends how bus service provision can be better integrated between providers of commercial services, demand responsive transport, voluntary car schemes and Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT). Currently there is a lack of clarity from users as to where and how they access these services and who is eligible to use which service.
- 2.36 The pilot has enabled closer ways of working between providers and has developed the concept of delivering a user access system. This is designed to help manage resources; help mitigate the impact of reduced bus subsidies and where appropriate direct users to the most appropriate mode of transport.

## 3. South Staffordshire Local Plan

### Introduction

- 3.1 The South Staffordshire Council's Core Strategy (Local Plan) was formally adopted in December 2012 and sets out the planning framework for the District. South Staffordshire Council is now at the final draft stage of the Site Allocations document (Publication Plan) which will identify the detailed development requirements for delivering the Core Strategy. The Site Allocations Document is also required to identify additional land to meet longer term development needs known as 'Safeguarded Land'. These areas will be considered for release in the subsequent plan period.
- 3.2 This Transport Strategy aims to support the priorities in the Core Strategy, specifically Strategic Objective 12, Core Policy 11: Sustainable Transport and Policy EV11: Sustainable Travel. It will also guide the transport elements of the South Staffordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan which lists the infrastructure required to deliver the plan, and when that infrastructure will be needed.
- 3.3 Another opportunity for community transport issues to be raised is through Neighbourhood Plans that sit alongside the Local Plan. Decisions on planning applications are made using both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans, and any other material considerations. Neighbourhood Plans must be in general conformity with the Local Plan and should not promote less development. Currently no Neighbourhood Plan areas have been designated in South Staffordshire.

### Housing

- 3.4 The Core Strategy proposes the delivery of a minimum of 3,850 new dwellings between 2006 and 2028. The majority of these will be delivered in the Main Service Villages of Codsall, Bilbrook, Brewood, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton and Wombourne. This approach offers the best range of essential facilities and services to support new development.
- 3.5 Limited development will be supported in the Local Service Villages of Coven, Essington, Featherstone, Huntington, Pattingham, Swindon and Wheaton Aston to meet local need. Other villages and hamlets are not identified for growth and development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances for the provision of rural affordable housing.

### Economic Vibrancy

- 3.6 The Core Strategy states that employment growth will be focused around the four freestanding Strategic Employment Sites (i54, Hilton Cross, ROF Featherstone / Brinsford and Four Ashes) with modest extensions to these sites permitted where robust evidence and a reasoned justification supports their expansion. Following the publication of this evidence, the emerging Site Allocations document proposes to extend to the west of i54 and ROF

Featherstone. There is also policy support for economic growth and investment in the Districts Main Service Villages, potentially through mixed use developments.

- 3.7 A study produced in June 2012 concluded that the wider West Midlands region, as a whole, has the need for a Regional Logistics Site. In response, a 260 hectare strategic rail freight interchange is now in the early stages of being promoted at Four Ashes near to junction 12 of the M6, known as West Midlands Interchange (WMI). However, it is recognised that it would require a scale of development beyond the requirements of the current South Staffordshire Local Plan period. The planning application being prepared for Four Ashes Limited will be submitted directly to the Planning Inspectorate and determined by the Secretary of State.

## 4. Recent Transport Achievements

### County Council Investment

4.1 In 2016 /17, £0.519 million was spent on delivering the bridge and highway maintenance programme throughout the District. The County Council continues to invest in making further improvements in highway, transport and communication provision with ongoing delivery of other routine services including road safety enforcement and training, on-street parking enforcement and supported bus services. £0.498 million was also spent on delivering integrated transport schemes including:

- I54 to Bilbrook Rail Station cycle route
- Completion of National Cycle Network 81 Codsall Wood to Bilbrook
- Traffic signal asset replacement

### Sustainable Transport

4.2 Bikeability National Standard Training continues to be delivered in the District through additional funding secured from the Department for Transport (confirmed until 2020). Around 2,000 school students receive Bikeability cycle training each year through a variety of levels with additional Bikeability Plus modules developed to complement on-road training. Between 2015 and 2017, South Staffordshire has received additional funding to provide training opportunities for children during school holiday periods. Schools are also encouraged to take part in the Modeshift Stars Programme, enabling them to create, develop, implement, monitor and maintain their own travel plan to promote active travel to school.

4.3 The Superfast Staffordshire project is a partnership between Staffordshire County Council, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) and BT. Throughout Staffordshire, the County Council is investing £8.06 million, which is being match-funded with £9.12 million from BDUK and a further £14.77 million from BT. The project has delivered access to superfast broadband services to an additional 15,100 business and residential premises across South Staffordshire district. Public funds are focusing on bringing faster broadband services to areas of the County that are not expected to receive private investment. Many of these areas are rural in nature and are outside the commercial roll-out area.

4.4 With regard to rail, re-signalling works have been delivered on the Chase Line and electrification and line speed increases are currently being completed. Penkridge rail station has been adopted by the local community which has resulted in the delivery of environmental projects such as artwork and planting.

### Strategic Highway

4.5 In 2015-2016 Highways England delivered a Managed Motorway scheme on the M6 through Staffordshire between J10A and J13 to improve traffic flow

and safety. Churchbridge junction on the northern edge of South Staffordshire was improved by Highways England in 2014/15 to reduce congestion and improve pedestrian and cycle safety and permeability.

## **Economic Growth**

- 4.6 I54 South Staffordshire is a 91 hectare strategic employment site with Enterprise Zone Status adjacent to the M54 motorway and A449 trunk road. A local Transport Package was delivered including local junction improvements; a new grade-separated junction providing direct access to the M54 and a suite of sustainable transport measures including enhanced bus infrastructure and services and pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 4.7 Highways infrastructure improvements were completed in June 2016 at Bericote Four Ashes employment site using Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (SSLEP) Local Growth Funds. The improvements have had an almost immediate impact on the attractiveness of the site with Gestamp Ltd relocating to the site creating and safeguarding some 800 jobs.
- 4.8 Due to this success, SSLEP announced a further investment in 2016/17 to deliver a signal controlled junction and additional highway works to the A449(T) / Gravelly Way junction. The safety and operation of the junction is being improved for existing and future users to help maximise the full potential of the development site.



## 5 Transport Strategy

### Introduction

- 5.1 The Transport Strategy explains what transport schemes and initiatives we intend to deliver in South Staffordshire to help achieve the County Council's vision and priority outcomes delivered through the following key activity areas identified to support the County Council's Strategic Plan for 2014 to 2018.

Staffordshire County Council's Key Activity Areas		
<b>Right for Business</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create the right conditions for increased employment in more and better jobs</li><li>• Encourage businesses to embrace their wider role in contributing to wellbeing and prosperity</li></ul>	<b>Great Place to Live</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support the improvement and development of shared resources such as utilities, highways and technology</li><li>• Utilise and maintain our built and natural environment to improve health and wellbeing and strengthen community assets</li></ul>	<b>Resilient Communities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengthen community capacity to create stronger and safer communities</li></ul>

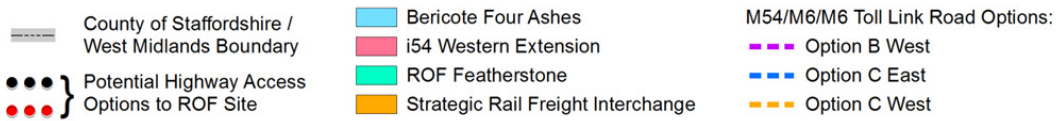
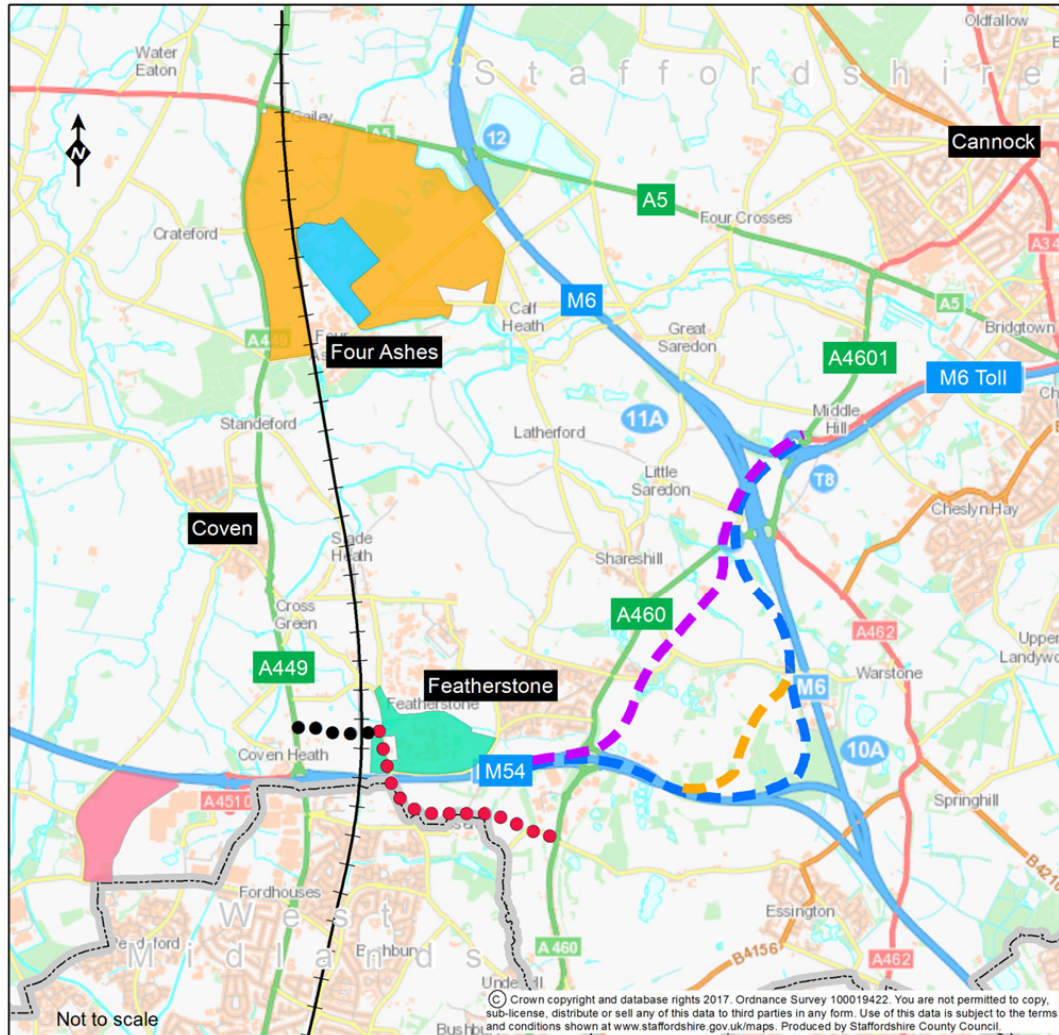
### Right for Business

- 5.2 Delivery of transport infrastructure and reducing traffic delays on the wider strategic network and the local networks within settlements is fundamental to creating the right conditions for growth in jobs and new homes. Working with major employment and housing developers is essential to ensure that their access requirements do not have a detrimental impact on the operation of the local transport network.
- 5.3 Staffordshire County Council is a partner of Midlands Connect which is an initiative driven by Local Enterprise Partnerships and local authorities to ensure that the Midlands is fully positioned to influence future strategic transport funding programmes. South Staffordshire is situated between the two main 'hubs' of 'Birmingham / Solihull / Black Country' and 'Stoke-on-Trent / Newcastle-under-Lyme', along the Birmingham – the Black Country – Staffordshire and the North corridor, including connections to Telford, Shrewsbury and North Wales. In November 2016, the Emerging Strategy was released which provides the path for the Midlands Connect Strategy. The priority is:
- Making the most of HS2

- Linking to international gateways
- Improving East-West connectivity across the Midlands
- Strengthening freight corridors
- Making the strategic transport network more resilient
- Opening up land for commercial and residential development
- Connecting our urban centres providing capacity for growth

5.4 The key existing and proposed strategic transport connections and employment sites in South Staffordshire are shown on Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Strategic Transport Connections and Employment Sites**



## **ROF Featherstone**

- 5.5 This site extension is proposed in South Staffordshire Council's emerging site allocations document to serve the needs of the Black Country in providing quality employment opportunities in the plan period to 2028. Staffordshire County Council has taken the lead in exploring the site access options for the proposed ROF Featherstone employment site. It is expected that the two access options shown in Figure 5.1 will be taken forward for further investigation. These have been identified through assessment and consultation on the benefits and feasibility of nine initial options. Ultimately, the evidence supporting the final recommended option will be presented to Staffordshire County Council's Cabinet in 2018 for a decision regarding whether to fund the preferred or reserve scheme.

## **i54 South Staffordshire - Western Extension**

- 5.6 Staffordshire County Council is looking to bring forward a Western Extension to i54 in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, South Staffordshire Council and Midlands Land Portfolio Ltd. The site is proposed in the emerging Site Allocations Document of the South Staffordshire Local Plan. Further studies will commence to determine the access requirements that are likely to include a link road to the existing highway network through the existing i54 business park.

## **West Midlands Freight Interchange**

- 5.7 The West Midlands Interchange is a proposed Strategic Rail Freight Interchange with warehousing and other associated development that would be built on land west of Junction 12 of the M6 in South Staffordshire. It would be linked directly to the West Coast Main Line and both the A5 and A449 trunk roads with a link road through the site between these two roads.
- 5.8 Agreement has been reached with the County Council over the likely trip generation for the site and this will be used to inform future decisions on the appropriate mitigation needed to ensure that the local highway network can adequately accommodate the development. The final package of agreed mitigation needs to take into account the following:
- The capacity of the local highway network, in particular the A5, A449 and Gailey junction
  - The need for suitable HGV parking facilities
  - Impact of HGV traffic on local roads and through local settlements

## **Trunk Road Network**

- 5.9 The Government has published its Road Investment Strategy which identifies Highways England's national road programme for the period 2015 / 16 to 2020 / 21.
- 5.10 The County Council will continue to work directly with Highways England and through the Midlands Connect initiative to influence proposals for the next

funding period beyond 2020 / 21. Proposals will also be developed through the A5(T) Transport Liaison Group that has been established between local partners and Highways England to ensure that the A5(T) plays its role in facilitating economic growth through maximising capacity and improving safety.

- 5.11 The key proposal in the Road Investment Strategy within South Staffordshire is the M54/M6/M6 Toll Link Road. The objective of the proposal is to provide a direct motorway link from the M54 to the M6 north and M6 Toll. The current direct link is the A460 which is currently carrying high volumes of both long distance and local traffic. A preferred route will be announced later this year and it is expected that construction will commence in 2021 with scheme opening in 2024.
- 5.12 The County Council recognises the importance of the scheme in terms of supporting economic growth and relieving congestion on the local highway network, in particular the A460 and A449 corridors. Future large-scale employment developments will significantly benefit from the completion of the scheme, including i54 Western Extension, West Midlands Interchange and ROF Featherstone.
- 5.13 The 2017 public consultation is seeking views on the three alternative alignments for the Link Road as shown in Figure 5.1. All three proposed routes will remove long distance traffic from the existing A460 and A449 corridors which the County Council strongly supports. From a transport perspective, Option B West appears to provide the shortest route between the three key strategic routes and will therefore provide the greatest improvement in journey time savings whilst having the greatest impact on reducing traffic flows along the existing A460. The County Council will continue to engage with Highways England to ensure appropriate mitigation and potential legacy schemes are delivered in relation to any community concerns and increases in traffic on the local road network caused by the new Link Road.

## **Rail Network**

- 5.14 Staffordshire's Rail Strategy 2016 sets out the County Council's priorities for rail, providing a sound basis to respond to national rail consultations and help shape the rail industry's future investment plans. Within South Staffordshire rail connections to the West Midlands are particularly important as 48% of residents work in the conurbation.
- 5.15 Within South Staffordshire, the County Council supports the following:
- Earlier and later trains and half-hourly off-peak services for Landywood, and direct services south of Birmingham
  - A regular all-day half-hourly service and hourly Sunday service for Codsall, extended to Bilbrook in the longer term
  - Car parking improvements at Penkridge, Codsall and Landywood
  - Additional passenger facilities at all stations, including ticketing, waiting facilities, CCTV and secure cycle parking
  - Improved wayfinding and signage from Codsall and Bilbrook rail stations, including to i54

- Establishment of Community Rail Partnerships at all stations
  - In the longer term, direct services on the Chase Line to Stafford and beyond
  - In the longer term, Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury Line electrification, re-signalling and an increase in line speed
- 5.16 West Midlands Rail Ltd and Network Rail are developing an Alliance that supports the long term vision that rail stations should become gateways to the community. As a result, there is a pilot masterplanning project for Landywood that could be rolled out to other stations in the District. Proposals over the next ten years for Landywood rail station include:
- Review the level of car parking provision
  - Undertake renewal of platform and approach path surfaces
  - Better signage to the station
  - Consider potential for a more frequent service
  - Enhanced community input into the station, e.g. landscaping around platforms

## Great Place to Live

- 5.17 Maintaining the condition of highways and street lighting, together with improving access to services including broadband, local bus services and car parking is considered to be important to residents within South Staffordshire District. The health and wellbeing of local communities will benefit from improved walking and cycling facilities that encourage increased physical activity. A Staffordshire County Council survey reveals that 92% of South Staffordshire respondents were generally satisfied with the area as a place to live.

## Accessibility

- 5.18 Where resources permit, reasonable steps will be taken to improve access for South Staffordshire residents to jobs, services and local facilities by making the transport system easier to use and places easier to get to. With available resources through developer contributions and limited public funding, the vision is for sustainable settlements that have:
- A bus service within 350m in an urban area, with at least a 30 minute frequency service to the town centre
  - A bus service within 800m in a rural area
  - Some local facilities and a primary school within walking distance
  - Superfast broadband to enable homeworking
  - Improved information on where and how to access all available transport services

## Improving the Condition of the Local Highway Network

- 5.19 Essential maintenance schemes are prioritised for funding through road condition assessments with local need identified by local Councillors.

Priorities vary from large 'A' road schemes to patching potholes in residential areas and on lower class rural roads. The type of maintenance activities that continue to be delivered by Staffordshire County Council include:

- Annual cyclical road maintenance
- Routine road maintenance
- Structural and preventative road maintenance
- Reactive road maintenance
- Bridge maintenance (revenue) and renewals (capital)
- Winter service
- Traffic signal and management systems
- Street lighting and illuminated signs

## **Parking**

5.20 The appropriate level of provision and management of on and off-street parking can contribute to the vitality and viability of an area. It requires partnership working between the County Council, District Council and private car park operators. The priorities for parking in South Staffordshire include the following:

- Continued on-street parking enforcement and the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders as necessary to manage obstructive on-street parking
- Monitor parking issues associated with local visitor attractions such as Weston Park, Kinver Edge and Baggeridge Country Park
- Monitor parking issues within villages
- Provision of adequate long term parking to serve rail stations

## **Access to Superfast Broadband**

5.21 By the end of 2018 approximately 92% of premises in the District will have access to superfast broadband, providing speeds over 24Mbps. For the remaining 8% of premises (3,700), access will be provided as additional funding becomes available, and in some cases technological developments will need to be developed and adopted to fully connect the District.

5.22 New housing and employment developments are not included within the project therefore developers need to be strongly encouraged to make the necessary arrangements with the commercial providers for the provision of the best possible broadband services (superfast at least). If designed in from the outset, along with the other services, there will be no requirement for publicly funded intervention.

## **Provision of an Adequate Bus Services**

5.23 Throughout the District, the County Council will continue to work in partnership with bus operators with the aim of increasing passengers on commercial services. The County Council will aim to provide suitable roadside stops and, where necessary, deliver traffic management measures to help improve the operation of bus services. In return, bus operators will be encouraged to invest in modern vehicles, staff training and an acceptable

standard of service. Close working with bus operators will help to make sure that available technology is used to deliver the most appropriate ticketing and real time information systems.

- 5.24 Improvements to bus facilities and services are expected to be delivered as part of larger housing and employment sites, including high quality and convenient stops within and adjacent to their sites and improved bus services where possible.
- 5.25 Developer funding is expected to be secured for roadside stop improvements serving service 54 from Stafford to Penkridge. The stops that require improvement are along the A449 south of Penkridge adjacent to proposed strategic employment sites. A priority for public funding is expected to be the enhancement of roadside stops on other routes that also connect to high quality routes provided across the border in the West Midlands. This includes:
- Wombourne to Stourbridge (Service 256)
  - Wolverhampton-Wombourne-Merry Hill centre (Service 255)
  - Codsall to Wolverhampton (Service 5)
  - Stops within Huntington as required to complete the route to Walsall (Service 1)
- 5.26 The County Council will continue to support services as required under the Transport Act 1985. Discretionary supported services will be kept under constant review to ensure that the cost of subsidies per passenger and total contract costs are sustainable. Where possible, pupils on bespoke contracted services will be encouraged to use commercial services, taking advantage of the 'Your Staffordshire Card'.
- 5.27 The Total Transport project referred to under 'Public Transport Issues' will be delivered, including:
- A single point of contact for booking services across multiple service providers
  - A user access system that promotes the appropriate service / provider for the user needs, delivering efficiencies for local authorities and the providers
  - Establish a multi-organisation 'Total Transport Steering Group' to manage the delivery of procurement of services
  - Better mechanisms of sharing and pooling funding based on shared objectives for delivery

## Physical Activity

- 5.28 The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, published on 21 April 2017, sets out the Government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. As requested by Government, the County Council aims to produce a Local Cycle and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) in 2018 which will identify and objectively prioritise cycling and walking investment. In terms of cycling, a priority will be to remove barriers to cycling, including:
- Increasing protection for cyclists at junctions

- Maintaining the condition of roads and cyclepaths
  - Provision of more off-road routes that are well lit
  - Enhancing signing and route legibility
  - Adequate cycle parking
- 5.29 Prior to completion of the LCWIP, the following two priorities for funding have already been identified through partnership working with Highways England and Network Rail:
- Improve permeability across the M54 for local residents by providing a direct off-road walking and cycling connection, preferably along the canal, between the A449 and i54
  - Mitigation for the potential loss of Landywood rail level crossing through the enhancement of the alternative route via an existing underpass. This includes improved lighting, CCTV and surfacing, with a potentially relaxed gradient and widening of the approach to the underpass
- 5.30 It is essential that developers of larger housing and employment sites provide high quality and convenient networks within and adjacent to their sites. For example, off-road pedestrian routes may be converted to shared cycle / walking routes to improve connectivity to local facilities and schools in Penkridge, where feasible and as resources permit.
- 5.31 Encouraging more walking and cycling will rely on enhancing the local network at the same time as promoting behavioural change. Current revenue resources enable the County Council to produce cycle information maps, deliver Bikeability cycle training, Modeshift Starts School Travel programmes and limited promotion of physical activity.
- 5.32 Increased physical activity will also be encouraged by maintaining and improving the Rights of Way network. It is expected that the County Council will:
- Keep the surface of the public path network in good repair and control vegetation (other than crops) growing from it
  - Maintain bridges over natural water courses, including farm ditches
  - Signpost rights of way from metalled roads and provide additional signs and waymarks as necessary along the route
  - Protect the public's right to use and enjoy rights of way
  - Secure the removal of obstructions, including ensuring that paths over cultivated land are reinstated and marked out after they have been disturbed;
  - Ensure that there are no intimidating notices that would deter the public from any paths
  - Provide a minimum 25% contribution towards any costs incurred by a landowner in maintaining stiles or gates on public rights of way

## Air Quality

- 5.33 The designated Air Quality Management Area at Oak Farm on the A5 trunk road between the M6 and A460 will continue to be monitored by the District



Council and the following measures will be delivered to help improve air quality:

- Take on more companies into the Eco Stars scheme to help clean up and reduce emissions from HGVs along the A5(T)
- Integration with the planning system

5.34 Central Government supports the growth in the use of electric vehicles. When possible, the County Council will take advantage of grants and bidding opportunities for the provision of electric charging points on-street and on public car parks.

## **Resilient Communities**

5.35 The County Council aims to ensure that the role of communities is strengthened in terms of identifying local transport issues and influencing scheme proposals. This includes engagement with local councillors on their local concerns and Parish Councils if they develop Neighbourhood Plans.

## **Divisional Highway Programme**

5.36 The Divisional Highway Programme for South Staffordshire gives County Councillors the opportunity to directly input into delivery programmes and low cost measures will continue to be delivered at their request, such as pedestrian crossing improvements and 20mph zones. The local issues that are currently being investigated are listed in paragraph 2.16. Where possible, solutions will be delivered, although certain concerns such as parking issues and lorry routing can be complex and more difficult to resolve.

## **Local Plan Emerging Site Allocations**

5.37 Specific transport concerns were raised by local communities during consultation on South Staffordshire Council's emerging Site Allocations document. Local junction improvements at Perton, Codsall, Bilbrook and KInver have been identified through junction analysis that are considered necessary to help relieve local traffic delays that are currently experienced or are expected to be exacerbated by development proposals.

5.38 It is considered that forecast traffic from planned new housing can be accommodated at the A41 Holyhead Rd / Heath House Lane / Wrottesley Park Rd traffic signals in Perton shown in Figure 5.2 by changing the signal stage sequence and geometric modifications.

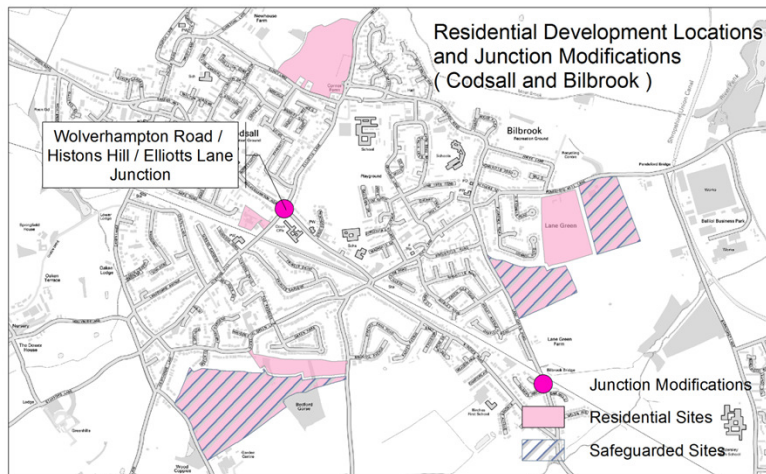
**Figure 5.2: A41 Holyhead Rd / Heath House Lane / Wrottesley Park Rd Traffic Signals, Perton**



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5.37 Traffic from new housing is not expected to significantly impact on the Hists Hill traffic signal junction, as shown in Figure 5.3. However a junction improvement could be delivered that helps to mitigate existing capacity issues.

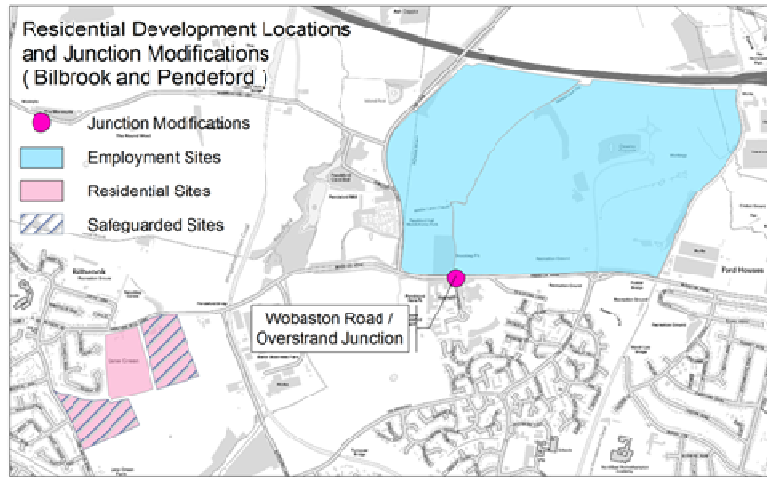
**Figure 5.3: Hists Hill Traffic Signals, Codsall and Bilbrook**



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5.38 New housing in Codsall and Bilbrook is expected to have an impact on the Wobaston Road / Overstrand Road traffic signal junction in Wolverhampton (see Figure 5.4), exacerbating congestion along Wobaston Road, Pendeford Mill Lane and Lawn Lane in Staffordshire. A proposal will be developed for this junction in partnership with City of Wolverhampton Council and there are potential amendments required to the internal layout within Pendeford Business Park.

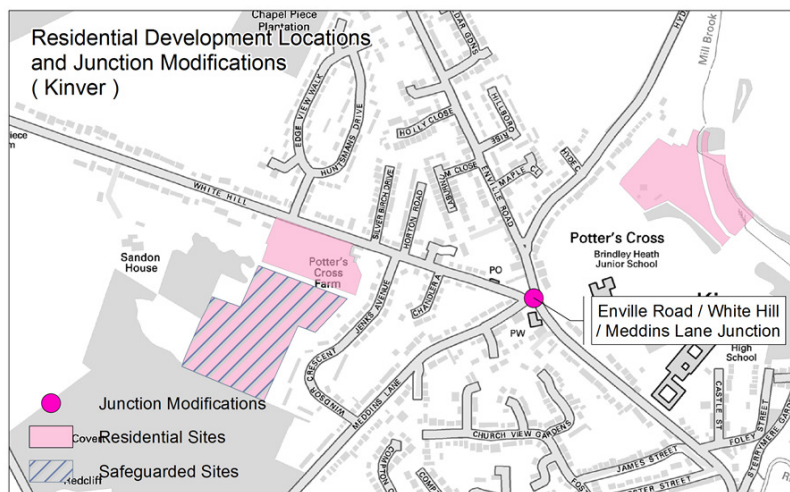
**Figure 5.4: Wobaston Road / Overstrand Road Traffic Signals, Pendeford**



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5.39 The junction indicated in Figure 5.5 is formed by the intersection of two priority junctions White Hill/Meddins Lane and Meddins Lane/Enville Road and capacity is affected by parking issues at school times. Potential improvements should be considered by the developers of identified housing sites alongside the promotion of sustainable travel to school.

**Figure 5.5: White Hill / Meddins Lane and Meddins Lane / Enville Road, Kinver**



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## Road Safety

- 5.40 The County Council's ongoing programmes of driver training, road safety education and training in schools will continue as resources permit. Local safety schemes are expected to be delivered as a consequence of assessments of road injury accident data and consultations with local communities. In 2017 / 18 Vehicle Activated Signs will be implemented on A463 Wodehouse Lane and potential future schemes include Ounsdale Road / Station Road junction in Wombourne and Cannock Rd / New Road junction, Featherstone.




## 6. Making it Happen

### Decision Process

- 6.1 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is responsible, through the delegated member decision process, to approve this Transport Strategy and delivery programmes are currently approved by Cabinet.
- 6.2 Schemes to be included in the Integrated Transport annual programme are assessed by various disciplines within the County Council as part of a virtual team, including Senior Amey Engineers and officers representing Community Infrastructure Liaison, Connectivity Strategy and Infrastructure Development and Improvements. The assessment is based on a combination of need identified by local councillors, value for money and a contribution towards the objectives of the County Council Strategic Plan, South Staffordshire Council's Local plan and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan.
- 6.3 With regard to highway maintenance activities a value management approach is adopted through a priority scoring matrix, giving a high priority to schemes that deliver safety benefits.

### Delivery Programme

- 6.4 The proposals identified in this Transport Strategy are at various states of readiness. Table 6.1 indicates which schemes are already programmed for delivery; undergoing feasibility work or are longer term proposals that have not been fully justified and approved.

State of Readiness	
	Programmed with funding available
	Feasibility complete but no delivery decision made
	No preferred design, funding or business case approved

**Table 6.1: State of Readiness**

<b>Right for Business</b>	<b>State of Readiness</b>		
<b>ROF Featherstone</b>			
Highway access to Strategic Employment Site			Red
<b>I54 Western Extension</b>			
Highway mitigation for Strategic Employment Site			Red
<b>West Midlands Freight Interchange</b>			
A5 and A449 highway mitigation			Red
HGV parking and routing			Red
<b>Trunk Road Network</b>			
M54 / M6 / M6 Toll link road			Red
<b>Rail Network</b>			
Earlier and later trains and a half hourly off-peak service for Landywood	Green		
Direct services from Landywood to south of Birmingham		Yellow	
Direct services on the Chase Line to Stafford and beyond			Red
All-day half-hourly Codsall service / hourly Sunday service for Codsall / Bilbrook	Green		
All-day half-hourly service for Bilbrook			Red
Shrewsbury Line electrification, re-signalling and increased line speed			Red
Car park improvements at Penkridge, Codsall and Landywood			Red
Improved facilities at all stations			Red
Community Rail Partnerships at rail stations		Yellow	
Landywood rail station gateway project		Yellow	
Improved wayfinding from Codsall and Bilbrook stations			Red
<b>Great Place to Live</b>	<b>State of Readiness</b>		
<b>Road Maintenance</b>			
Structural / preventative maintenance	Green		
Long list of maintenance schemes identified through data assessment		Yellow	
Critical bridge renewals	Green		
Street lighting replacement works	Green		
<b>Parking</b>			
TROs to manage on-street parking		Yellow	
Long term parking to serve Codsall and Landywood rail stations			Red
<b>Superfast Broadband</b>			
Access to superfast broadband (92% coverage)	Green		
Full coverage of superfast broadband		Yellow	
<b>Bus Services</b>			
54 Stafford-Wolverhampton (A449 south of Penkridge)		Yellow	
256 Wombourne to Stourbridge		Yellow	
255 Wolverhampton-Wombourne-Merry Hill centre		Yellow	
5 Codsall to Wolverhampton		Yellow	
1 Huntington-Walsall (in Huntington)		Yellow	
Your Staffordshire Card	Green		
Statutory Supported Services	Green		
Review of Discretionary Services		Yellow	
Total Transport		Yellow	
<b>Physical Activity</b>			
Promoting behavioural change	Green		
Canal towpath upgrade between A449 and I54		Yellow	
Enhancements to the wider local cycle network			Red
Mitigation of proposed Landywood rail level crossing proposal		Yellow	
Maintaining and improving Rights of Way network	Green		
<b>Air Quality</b>			
Eco Stars Scheme	Green		
Electric Charging Points			Red
<b>Resilient Communities</b>	<b>State of Readiness</b>		
<b>Divisional Highway Programme</b>			
Divisional Highway Programme schemes	Green		
<b>Local Plan Proposals</b>			
Perton: A41 Holyhead Rd / Heath House Lane / Wrottesley Park Rd traffic signals		Yellow	
Codsall: Histon Hill traffic signals			Red
Pendeford: Wobaston Road / Overstrand Road traffic signals (in Wolverhampton)			Red
Kinver; White Hill / Meddins Lane / Enville Road / Hyde Lane junctions			Red
<b>Road Safety</b>			
VAS A463 Wodehouse Lane	Green		
Ounsdale Road / Station Road, Wombourne		Yellow	
Cannock Road / New Road, Featherstone		Yellow	

## Funding Opportunities

### Local Growth Fund

- 6.5 Staffordshire and Stoke-Trent Local Enterprise Partnership have secured local growth funding for the period 2015 / 16 to 2020 / 21. The Government has confirmed that LEPs will continue to receive additional local growth funding up to 2021. The County Council is engaged in the scheme prioritisation process that will identify which schemes are put forward.

### Midlands Connect

- 6.6 The Government has awarded funding directly to Midlands Connect to develop a rolling 25-year programme of strategic road and rail improvements, split into five year 'blocks' consistent with expected road and rail investment periods and the implementation of HS2. The priority is to ensure delivery of schemes already the programmes of Highways England and Network Rail, and developing business cases for interventions that can start to be delivered in the period 2020-2025.

### County Council revenue budget

- 6.7 Staffordshire County Council's revenue budget, which is currently under pressure, is used to deliver statutory and discretionary supported bus services. The revenue budget also supports driver training, Your Staffordshire Card and road safety education and training in schools.

### Local Transport Funding

- 6.8 The Department for Transport provides a significant contribution towards the Government's local growth funds, in addition to the following local transport funding:
- **Integrated Transport Block**  
Integrated Transport Block funding is provided as capital grant and the allocation for Staffordshire is £3.423m per year up to 2020 / 21.
  - **Maintenance Funding**  
The local highways 'needs-based' maintenance capital block funding 2015 / 16 to 2020 / 21 for Staffordshire is as follows:

Year	Staffordshire's Allocation (£000s)
2015/16	20,076
2016/17	18,405
2017/18	17,848
2018/19	16,154
2019/20	16,154
2020/21	16,154

Authorities will have the opportunity to secure additional funding on an 'incentive basis', dependent on its pursuit of efficiencies and use of asset management; and from a competitive challenge fund for major maintenance projects. A new potholes action fund is helping to reduce the backlog of potholes on local roads and to promote innovation in highway maintenance.

- **Bus Service Operators Grant**

The DfT provides financial support for bus services through the Bus Service Operators Grant which allows operators of local bus services and community transport schemes to reclaim some of their fuel costs for operating local bus services.

- **Bikeability**

Funding for Bikeability training continues to be made available, giving training to older primary school pupils on cycling safely on short journeys such as to school.

## Highways England

6.9 The Department for Transport invests in Highway England and funding up to 2019 / 20 is committed to schemes identified in the current Road Investment Strategy (RIS1). A new Strategy will be produced to cover the period from 2020 / 21 onwards (RIS2). A proportion of the existing funding commitment has been ring-fenced for the following:

- **Environment:** noise mitigation, low-carbon road transport, improve local water quality and resilience to flooding, maintain an attractive landscape, and work to halt the loss of biodiversity and a specific air quality fund.
- **Cycle:** more segregated cycleways alongside trunk roads and safer junctions and crossings.
- **Safety:** additional measures to boost safety.
- **Integration:** connections to international gateways and schemes that reduce community severance and provide access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Innovation Fund:** development of driverless, co-operative vehicles technologies and journey planning information and data.
- **Growth and Housing Fund:** match funding infrastructure to enable new developments to come forward that have stalled due to viability issues.

## Network Rail

6.10 The following funding sources are available from Network Rail:

- National Stations Improvement Programme
- Level Crossings Initiative
- Access for All
- Strategic Freight Network Programme
- New Stations Fund
- Station Commercial Project Facility Funding



6.11 The Station Alliance is a new approach to the management of rail stations involving Network Rail and the TOCs. The Alliance will identify and secure funding to enable an agreed programme of station enhancements to be developed and delivered.

## **Developer Funds**

6.12 As identified in South Staffordshire Core Strategy Core Policy 5: Infrastructure Delivery, new development will be required to provide the necessary infrastructure at a timely stage to meet the community needs arising from the proposal. Policy EQ13: Developer contributions states that, contributions will be sought from developers where necessary, including:

- highway and infrastructure improvements
- car parking provision including improvements to public car parks
- extension and improvement of the public transport system including the provision of community bus services and supporting infrastructure, such as new shelters
- improvements to the existing and proposed footpath and cycle route network and links to or the creation of new public rights of way and links to green infrastructure
- preparation, implementation and monitoring of Travel Plans

For more information please contact:

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Stafford  
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