

## **5.0 Scheme Development**

### **5.1 Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1.1 Although the line of a Hucknall Inner Relief Road has been safeguarded for at least 50 years, the process of determining suitable town centre improvements in Hucknall was considered afresh in 2000 with a programme of Mobility Management Action Area (MMAA) studies. Each MMAA study sought to identify a package of measures based on four components of action to establish sustainable communities; integration of land-use and transport planning, travel demand management, new infrastructure and improved services, and finally travel education and awareness.
- 5.1.2 The Hucknall MMAA consultation on strategic transport issues in the town revealed wide ranging support (over 90% of the respondents in favour) for the general strategy to improve walking, cycling and public transport in the town centre. The principle of pedestrianisation of the High Street including redirecting traffic onto a new relief road was supported by over 80% of respondents.
- 5.1.3 Consideration has been given to a great number of scheme options which fulfil the core objective of providing a traffic free environment in the High Street of Hucknall. This includes both solutions which involve road building (as a way of catering for the traffic currently using the town centre) and non- road building solutions.
- 5.1.4 A do nothing option has also been considered. This would not involve either construction of a new relief road or the pedestrianisation of the High Street but rather active traffic management and selective environmental treatments. However only very limited safety, environmental and pedestrian improvements would be possible in the High Street if traffic were also retained. No improvement with respect to integration with the rail station or tram line would be achieved and it is doubtful that this would achieve any lasting or meaningful benefits for inward investment in the town. Accordingly it was concluded that do nothing was not an option.
- 5.1.5 Following preliminary consultation eight alternative options for a town centre improvement scheme were considered, including four options with an inner relief road and four without, see Drawing Number PlanA/RevA/Oct/2000. These four options considered a range of possibilities with different areas of the town being considered for potential pedestrianisation and/or traffic restrictions.
- 5.1.6 In choosing these options a number of other potential solutions were previously considered and dismissed, most notably the possibility of creating a relief road to the south of the town centre, either by adapting the existing road layout or constructing a new purpose built road. It was concluded that routes to the south of the town could not be readily adapted in view of the grid pattern layout of narrow streets and the cost of acquiring and demolishing large areas of residential property which would be prohibitively expensive and politically unacceptable. Accordingly the choice of the line of any new link road has reaffirmed the historic route to the north of the town.
- 5.1.7 Pedestrianisation of the High Street without the construction of a relief road would naturally save on the costs of building a new road, however following analysis of the

levels of likely redistributed traffic and subsequent discussion amongst officers from both Nottinghamshire County Council and Ashfield District Council, it was decided that the traffic displaced by the pedestrianisation would cause a significant and unacceptable adverse impact on surrounding residential streets. The streets surrounding the town centre typically comprise terraces of older Victorian and Edwardian properties with little or no off-street parking, consequently it would not be appropriate to redistribute large volumes of traffic into this traffic sensitive part of the highway network.

- 5.1.8 The remaining four options all incorporated the construction of a new link road between Station Road and Annesley Road (to the north of the town centre). These options were assessed in line with the Government's New Approach to Transport Appraisal and a preferred scheme chosen for further public consultation. Of the options considered, the option to pedestrianise the High Street and Baker Street between Ogle Street and Watnall Road and the introduction of one way traffic on High Street between Watnall Road and Station Road was judged to give the widest benefits for pedestrianisation and was selected as the preferred scheme (see Option 4 on Drawing Number PlanA/RevA/Oct2000). Options considered inferior to this chosen scheme were dismissed.
- 5.1.9 Consideration was also given to extending the pedestrianised area to include the full length of High Street i.e. the length between Watnall Road and Station Road. However this would not be practical because of the level of vehicular access required, at all times to Vine Terrace, Titchfield Terrace and Woollaton Street, which can only be accessed from High Street.
- 5.1.10 Following public consultation on the chosen scheme, see drawing ES/00974/28 Plan A, steps were taken to progress the initial design particularly with respect to establishing details of suitable bus access to the town centre and giving further consideration to local access needs and possible problems arising from high levels of displaced traffic. From this work a refined option was developed see drawing EN/00974/44 Plan B.
- 5.1.11 This more thorough and detailed engineering examination concluded, however, that this option would not deliver a safe and convenient public transport solution and would create unacceptable traffic impacts. Additionally, the need to provide adequate access to the residential area severed by the line of the relief road would introduce traffic into quiet cul-de-sacs which was unlikely to be acceptable. Under these circumstances a fundamental review of objectives was undertaken and although full pedestrianisation of part the High Street is desirable it was decided that this should not be to the detriment of public transport or have significant adverse impact on nearby residential streets.
- 5.1.12 As a result a further option was developed with a shorter relief road which connected Annesley Road to the High Street / Watnall Road junction rather than continuing through to Station Road, see Drawing Number EN/00974/45 Plan C. In addition it was proposed that buses would be permitted through the High Street pedestrian area between Baker Street and Watnall Road (at least in a southbound direction) and High Street between Watnall Road and Station Road would remain open to two way traffic.

This would overcome some of the limitations of the earlier scheme proposals, although in turn it would generate other issues to be resolved.

- 5.1.13 Further public consultation in respect of the shortened relief road option was undertaken in 2003, including detailed discussions with Ashfield District Council, bus operators and local organisations. The elected Members of the District Council did not support the shortened relief road scheme and reaffirmed that they were seeking the removal of all traffic from High Street, including the removal of buses. Direct integration with the rail/tram station was further re-iterated by the local council as a fundamental requirement of any transport improvements for the town. Similar opposition was voiced from a number of other key stakeholders and members of the public. After careful consideration of the consultation responses it became clear that political support for the shortened relief road option would not be forthcoming and this scheme was summarily dismissed.
- 5.1.14 As a consequence three further scheme options were developed in close partnership with Ashfield District Council. All three options included the construction of a proposed new link road between Annesley Road and Station Road and each option included the 'full' pedestrianisation along the High Street between Baker Street / South Street junction and Watnall Road. Signal controlled junctions featured at either end of the new link road, resulting in three linked signal controlled junctions on Station Road. Following detailed hydrological assessment it has also now proved possible to form a junction of the relief road with Perlethorpe Drive and this has resolved earlier issues concerning provision of suitable local access to adjoining residential areas.
- 5.1.15 Each option contained the core elements as described in paragraph 5.1.14 with the following variations;
- Option 1, see drawing number B/1982500/100 Rev. B, included the introduction of one way traffic along High Street between Watnall Road and station Road to facilitate widening of the pavements.
  - Option 2, see drawing number B/1982500/101 Rev. B, included the addition of a one way bus link between the new relief road and High Street and
  - Option 3, see drawing number B/1982500/102 Rev. C, included the introduction of a two way bus link between the new relief road and High Street and retention of two way vehicular traffic on High Street between Watnall Road and Station Road.

These options were considered by a joint County Council/Ashfield Members' meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2006.

- 5.1.16 Option 1 (as described in paragraph 5.1.15) was rejected principally because of the lack of positive provision for public transport. This option would not have received the support of the main bus operators and could have marginalised the public transport operations in the town leading to a worsening of conditions for operators and

passengers alike. A worsening of conditions for public transport runs contrary to the core objectives of this project.

- 5.1.17 Option 2 (as described in paragraph 5.1.15) was rejected because the traffic model indicated significant and adverse traffic impacts on residential streets to the south of the town and would have lead to awkward public transport operations (from a users perspective) in that services in one direction would pass through the heart of the town while in a northbound direction passengers would be directed to use the relief road and be remote from the town centre.
- 5.1.18 It was agreed during the Joint Members' Meeting that Option 3 was to be selected to take forward for consultation as the preferred option. This scheme now forms the preferred scheme as submitted to Government in this major scheme business case and is described in further detail in Chapter 7.