

# Town Centre Movement Strategy - Draft for Consultation

Cabinet

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2019

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Author: Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment  
Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development & Street Works Management

Wards: Central, Eastcott, Gorse Hill and Pinehurst, Mannington & Western, and Rodbourne Cheney

Parishes Affected: Central Swindon South, Central Swindon North

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## 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The Swindon Central Area Action Plan (CAAP) forms part of the Local Development Plan for Swindon Borough and provides the planning framework to facilitate the delivery of the regeneration of Central Swindon. The Plan was adopted in February 2009 and is a key planning document against which planning applications in the Central Area are considered.
- 1.2 Chapter 6 of CAAP sets out a strategy for Transport & Movement. The strategy comprises a number of high level objectives for movement by all modes of transport and policies that seek to influence the form of new development.
- 1.3 The CAAP is proposed to be reviewed as part of the review of the Local Transport Plan and the Local Plan. A more focused review of the strategy for transport and movement is required in parallel to inform and support those statutory documents. Formulating an up-to-date and evidence-based strategy for movement will also support planning and funding decisions specific to transport schemes. The Town Centre Movement Strategy (TCMS) has emerged as a free-standing and independent strategy document that will inform and link to the Local Transport Plan and the Local Plan reviews.
- 1.4 This report seeks Cabinet authorisation to take a draft of the TCMS document to public consultation. The response to that consultation exercise will be collated and the outcome reported to Cabinet, when formal adoption of the final TCMS document will be requested.

## 2. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree to an 8 week public consultation exercise, seeking the opinions of a range of stakeholders on the draft Movement Strategy. The document proposed to be the subject of consultation is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Authorise the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development & Street Works Management to make any minor or typographical and/or graphical changes as may be necessary prior to publication.

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## 3. Policy Context

### Council Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The Council Plan 2019–2020 has four main priorities, of relevance to movement being:
- Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy;
  - Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture;
- 3.2 More specifically, Pledge 3 is to ‘Refresh and implement the Masterplan for Swindon Town Centre, supporting our vision that Swindon is a vibrant, modern place.’ The TCMS will provide the framework for delivering improvements to the strategic town centre transport network under pledge 3c. The TCMS forms an element of the Town Centre Masterplan and is therefore a central element in delivering that Pledge.

### Movement Strategy Derivation

- 3.3 It has been necessary from the outset to set a boundary to the ‘Town Centre’, specifically for the purpose of the Movement Strategy. The defined area is shown in Figure 1 and is effectively bounded by the Great Western Way to the north and the Kings Hill/Bath Road corridor to the south.

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- 3.4 The key stages in developing the Draft TCMS can be summarised as (a) mapping the existing transport system, its form, operation and associated issues, (b) identifying objectives for a future transport system and (c) selecting a package of measures that will facilitate progress from the existing to the future system.
- 3.5 Mapping the existing transport system, its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, has involved both data based analysis and opinion and experience and was informed by a workshop with Members in February 2018. The evolving draft document has been presented to Cabinet Member Advisory Groups during January 2019.
- 3.6 The TCMS as currently drafted presents indicative interventions, which allow themselves to be refined and reshaped in response to evolving circumstances. In this way, the TCMS defines objectives and potential schemes that will deliver those objectives but without limiting the form of any particular intervention.
- 3.7 A comprehensive traffic model of the town centre is currently being developed in parallel with the TCMS. Once completed, the model will enable testing of highway improvement options, taking account of traffic impacts associated with

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planned developments. The modelling works is anticipated to take 6 to 8 months and will inform the detailed implementation of the TCMS.

## Strategy Content

- 3.8 The assessment of town centre movement issues has developed five overarching objectives for TCMS:
- Simplify movement within the Town Centre, including access to parking;
  - Increase the choice in travel options, with priority for pedestrians and cyclists;
  - Safe and convenient movement into and through the central area;
  - Improve the quality of the town centre experience;
  - Improve air quality;
- 3.9 These five overarching objectives for the town centre have been refined into six 'Priority Themes':
- Simplify movement by car into and within the town centre;
  - Improve the integration of buses into the Town Centre;
  - Better connected cycle networks and walkable streets;
  - Accommodate and manage key vehicle movements to protect the central area;
  - Maximise the car parking offer;
  - Complementary measures, such as Park & Ride and the strategic cycle route, which extend beyond the Town Centre;
- 3.10 In responding to the six Priority Themes, 13 indicative interventions have been identified. Covering all of the themes, these interventions have been chosen for the benefits they bring to all elements of movement into, through and within the Town Centre. Whilst equal weight is attributed to all modes of transport as part of a balanced movement system, priority will be given to those interventions that yield the most significant tangible benefit, in this case the management of potentially unnecessary traffic within the central area through initiatives to strengthen the role of the Great Western Way corridor as a town centre bypass. Those priority initiatives include improvements to key junctions on the corridor, the traffic management system (UTMS) to maximise the overall capacity of the corridor and the event management plans that will minimise impacts associated with events at the Outlet Centre and as STEAM.

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- 3.11 The individual interventions are necessarily flexible in their detail, so that they can respond to changes in local circumstances and changes in the technological environment. This has meant that detailed costing the interventions has not been possible, though they have been highlighted as part of the ongoing capital bidding process.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The alternative to the adoption of a new Movement Strategy for the Town Centre would be to 'refresh' the existing Transport & Movement element of the CAAP.
- 4.2 A simple refresh of the existing Transport & Movement Strategy of 2009 would not give adequate consideration to the updated strategy objectives as identified through the evidence gathering and Member consultation process.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Movement Strategy defines ambitions for town centre mobility and indicative interventions that would achieve those ambitions. There are no defined schemes and at this stage, no budget allocated for scheme delivery. Any future requirements would form part of the agreement of the capital programme by Cabinet and Full Council.
- 5.2 The cost of the consultation will be met from existing service budgets.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 At this stage, authority is sought to go to consultation. Legal and Human Rights implications have been taken into account in preparing this report. The contents of this report are compatible with Human Rights.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 The adoption of a more up-to-date movement strategy for the Town Centre will support more informed decision making by Officers and by Members. Impacts of individual schemes on Crime and Disorder will be assessed as part of their planning and design.

### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken and has been reviewed by Officers within the Learning & Development team. The DIA has assessed the implications of the Movement Strategy for all those who might be affected and concluded that the policy document supports diversity by making mobility provisions for all sectors of the community.

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## Risk Management

- 5.6 The Movement Strategy document is a vision/ambition document with indicative interventions that would achieve the ambition. As and when specific schemes materialise, their planning and design will include appropriate provision for the assessment of associated risks.
- 5.7 There is currently no budget assigned to the Strategy and a risk therefore that in the absence of other funding sources, the initiatives defined within the strategy will not be delivered.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Town Centre Movement Strategy (Draft June 2019) (The appendix is available online at the Council's website or on request from Committee and Member Services committeeservices@swindon.gov.uk)