

SHEPTON MALLET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SHEPTON MALLET TRANSPORT ISSUES REPORT



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
2.	Pedestrians.....	5
3.	Cycling.....	12
4.	Public transport & rail access	15
5.	Traffic flows and Town Centre traffic management.....	17
6.	Town Centre Car Parking.....	20
7.	COVID-19 transport changes	22
8.	Highway safety	24
9.	Ways to encourage visitors to the town centre.....	26
10.	Congestion & access around schools	27
11.	New developments and transport access	29
12.	Reducing Carbon emissions	31
13.	Key Transport Issues	32

List of Figures

Figure 1: Commercial Rd looking west: narrow footway.....	5
Figure 2: Paul Street looking west near to St Pauls School: narrow footway	5
Figure 3a: Garston St housing looking east	6
Figure 3b: Garston St mixed land use looking east	6
Figure 4: Person Injury Accidents from the 5-year period: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019: Centre of Town.....	7
Figure 5: Townsend Road Main Crossing	7
Figure 6: Townsend Road East Roundabout	8
Figure 7: Townsend Road: West Roundabout.....	8
Figure 8: A361 / High Street Intersection	9
Figure 9: A361 / A371 roundabout	9
Figure 10: Wayfinding Signage	10
Figure 11: Fingerpost Directional Signage.....	10
Figure 12: Map of Shepton Mallet and surrounding footpaths and routes.....	11
Figure 13: Map of dismantled railway line between Shepton Mallet and Wells, part of the “Strawberry Line” (Route B).....	14
Figure 14: Public Transport Routes: Sub Regional.....	15
Figure 15: Map of daily flows around Shepton Mallet	18
Figure 16: Existing southbound one-way system and alternative northbound	19
Figure 17: Map Showing Main Off-street parking sites	21
Figure 18 Use of Transport Modes Across Great Britain since 10th March 2020	23
Figure 19: Person Injury Accidents from the 5-year period: 2015-2019: Neighbourhood Plan Area.....	24
Figure 20: Shepton Mallet Schools.....	27
Figure 21: Shepton Mallet Community Infant School Pedestrian Access	28
Figure 22: Bowlsh Infant School Pedestrian Access.....	28
Figure 23: Cannards Grave Road Development	29
Figure 24: Development West of Cannards Grave Road Development.....	30
Figure 25: Compton Road south of Middleton Lane	30
Figure 26: Compton Road north of development	30
Figure 27: EV Charging Locations	31

List of Tables

Table 1: Shepton Mallet Buses	16
Table 2: A361 Classified Traffic Count	17
Table 3: Off-street Parking Sites Summary Table	20
Table 4: Accident Site Summary of Crash-map Figure.....	25

1. Introduction

1.1 This report reviews the transport situation in Shepton Mallet. It forms the main evidence base for the transport section of the Neighbourhood Plan.

1.2 Transport is an important consideration for the town. This was recently demonstrated in Shepton Mallet town plan where it features strongly. In the surveys of residents who were asked if you were given £10,000 how you would spend it? Free parking was top and clean the streets and paint the eyesores was third. When asked what one thing you would like to see, better signage was second and enforcement of parking third. Of the 22 categories almost half were transport related and included improved parking, cleaner streets, better signage, street lighting, cycling, public transport, better pathways. A town centre facelift was a popular item and the street public realm is highways dominated by transport.

1.3 In this report, we will summarise the following key issues:

- 1) Pedestrians
- 2) Cycles
- 3) Public transport
- 4) Traffic flows and one system
- 5) Car parking
- 6) Covid19 transport changes
- 7) Highway safety
- 8) Way to encourage visitors
- 9) Congestions and access around schools
- 10) New developments and transport access
- 11) Reducing carbon emissions
- 12) Key transport issues for the town

2. Pedestrians

2.1 Pedestrians should have the highest priority as transport users and encouraged. However, the existing facilities do not always provide this and there are many sub-standard footway widths.

Footpaths in the town

2.2 Most pedestrian routes in the town are adjacent to trafficked highway. It is important that footways are an appropriate standard in terms of width and gradients and visibilities at junctions. Substandard width tends to be the main problem as this can be uncomfortable for walkers and cause accidents. Some of the main problem locations are at:

- a) Commercial Rd, the A361 east of the High Street. About a 200m section of the northern footway about 50w west of the High Street. Figure 1 shows this and while a 20mph zone with a 7.5ton lorry ban, there are fairly high volumes of traffic and in places it is difficult for pedestrians to walk and it is unusable for wheel chairs and buggies. Being is close to the town centre and with shops and facilities along the frontage, this is significant problem.

Figure 1: Commercial Rd looking west: narrow footway



- b) Paul Street east of the High Street (A361). Mainly the southern side has a substandard footway width in places. Although a 20mph limit, this is a particular problem as St Pauls Junior school is located near to this constraint. Figure 2 shows some of this with the school frontage on the background.

Figure 2: Paul Street looking west near to St Pauls School: narrow footway



- c) Charlton Road (A361). Long sections with no footway on the northern side of the road. This is near to Whitestone Secondary school and the Leisure Centre.
- d) Peter Street and Town Lane. Local lanes around the old prison, which have only a single substandard footway on one side of the road.

- e) Garston Street. A narrow lane with mainly housing, but also some employment uses towards the east requiring goods vehicle access. Very narrow in places and difficult for pedestrians.

Figure 3a: Garston St housing looking east



Figure 3b: Garston St mixed land use looking east



- f) Frithfield Lane and Goal Lane. Local narrow lanes around the old prison with a footway on one side of the road;
- g) Park Road. Footway on one side of the road only that is no more than 1m wide in places. This is an important access route to the District Council Offices and Park;
- h) Castle Road. No footways at all on some sections;
- i) Cats Ash Street, Graycott Rd, Longbridge, Lower Lane and other nearby historic streets. Substandard footways on just one side, narrow highway.

2.3 Pedestrian routes that are segregated from traffic within the town are mainly through the parks and there are a few narrow lanes such as the northern section of Gaol Lane. Probably the most notable route follows the disused railway from the Council offices eastwards.

Pedestrian safety in the town centre

2.4 Highway safety is a major issue for pedestrians in the Town Centre. Section 7 later reviews the entire Plan area, but below is a specific analysis of accidents in the Town Centre as accidents are such a common problem for these vulnerable users. Figure 4 shows a plan of the town centre with accidents indicated. The main locations are:

- Townsend Road;
- A361 / High Street traffic signals;
- A161 / A371 roundabout junction.

2.5 Townsend Road, between Haskins retail park and Tesco Superstore, there have been three slight accidents between pedestrians and cars in the last five years. The three images below show the main crossing halfway up the road and then two images of one end of the road. The accidents here are mostly from inappropriate crossing, and measures could be considered to reduce this in the future.

Figure 4: Person Injury Accidents from the 5-year period: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2019: Centre of Town. Accident severity is coded by yellow – slight, red – severe, black - fatal

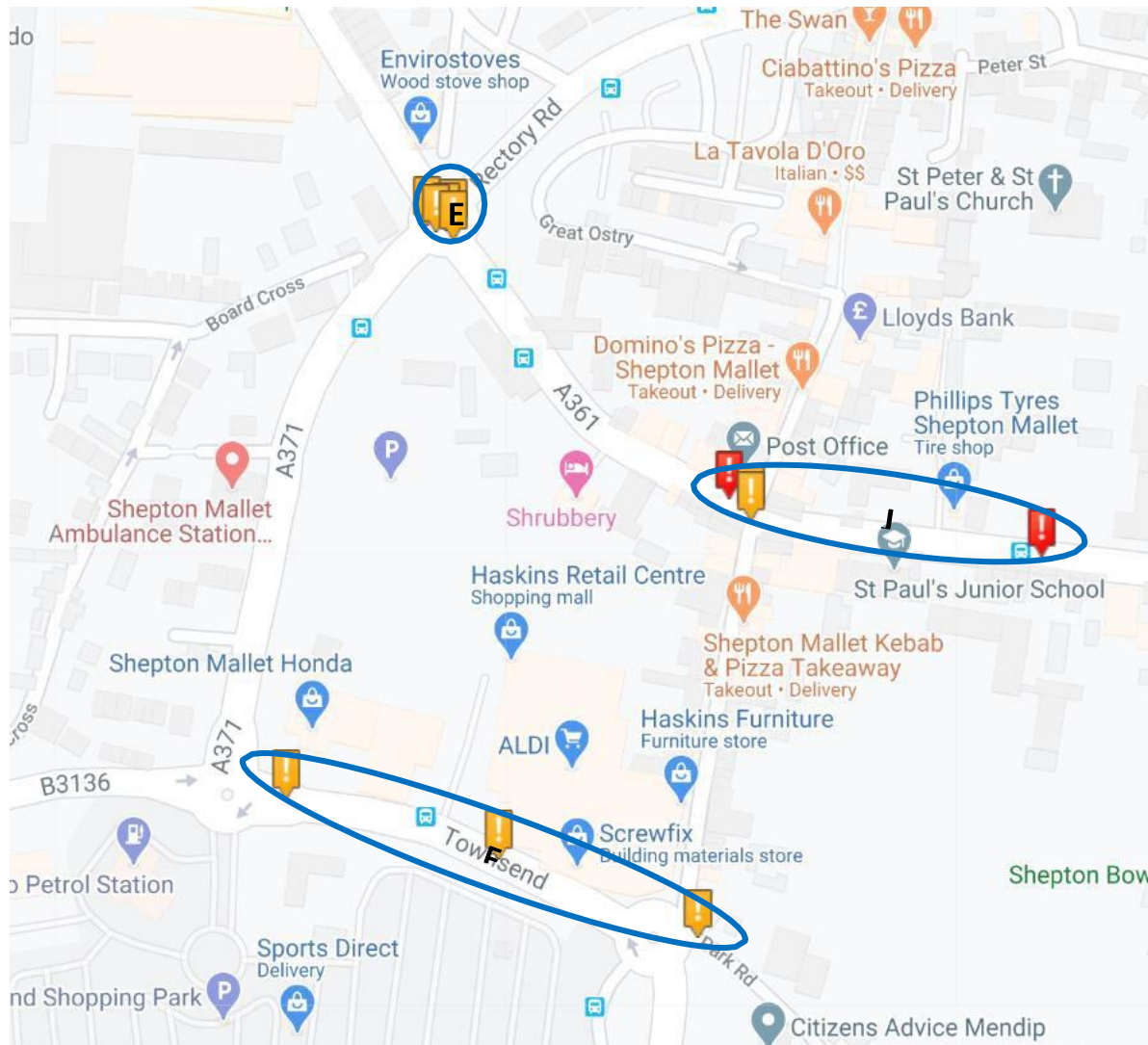


Figure 5: Townsend Road Main Crossing



2.6 There is a considerable flow of pedestrians and a few cyclists between these two retail areas on Townsend Road. Figure 5 shows the Toucan crossing and that safety measures have been undertaken here with steel barriers and pedestrian crossings. Segregation is not always the best approach and it is important to keep traffic at slow speeds.

2.7 Either end of Townsend Rd are roundabouts (Figures 5 and 6). At these the crossings are located further than the desire lines of where people would most like to walk. We can see the two pedestrian car accidents in this area that are not on the designated crossing section, but along the direct path to walk. Fencing or relocation of crossings could be considered.

2.8 Furthermore, there are no zebra or signalised pedestrian crossings, which gives priority for vehicles and reduction of awareness of pedestrians crossing. Additional signage or road markings to alert drivers and pedestrians could help here. Cars may be preoccupied by the roundabouts and turning to see in all directions which could be dangerous paired with erratic crossing of pedestrians.

Figure 6: Townsend Road East Roundabout



2.9 At the Townsend Road West Roundabout, as shown on Figure 7 there has been 4 slight accidents. There is adequate footpath space but with metal railing separates the footpath outside the Honda garage from the road.

Figure 7: Townsend Road: West Roundabout



2.10 The A361 / High Street intersection area as shown on Figure 8 is probably the worst for pedestrian accidents. There are also young pedestrians involved in accidents here (1 x aged 6-10, 2 x aged 11-15, 1 x aged 16-20, 1 x aged 21-25), 3 serious, 2 slights. All were crossing the carriageway during the accidents. Something clearly needs to be done to improve highway safety in this area.

The likely cause is the A361 shuttle traffic signals which have long gaps between flows (inter-green), which allows pedestrians usually to cross within this gap. But the driver when having a green signal will feel they have priority and may go faster will be reluctant to stop. Compounding this are the one-way streets and that pedestrians walking the High Street are in a shared space area, so expect drivers to respect them.

Figure 8: A361 / High Street Intersection



2.11 Roundabout at A361/B3136/A371 shown on Figure 9 seems to consistently have one slight crash per year with cars, cyclists and motorcyclists. This is one of the towns higher volume junctions. It is a wide single lane roundabout with a faded roundabout centre marking. There are careful safety measures put in place to help protect pedestrians from traffic with steel railings and clear crossings with islands on the east (Rectory Rd A371) and west (A371 Old Market Rd) exits. It is harder for pedestrians to cross on the north (A371 Commercial Rd) and south (Commercial Rd A361) exits.

Figure 9: A361 / A371 roundabout



Pedestrian Signage

2.12 There is lack of high-quality signage for people visiting the town. It is recommended that a wayfinding series of signs are introduced, such as these below:

Figure 10: Wayfinding Signage



2.13 In addition or instead of there could be more finger posts such as these in Figure 11.

Figure 11: Fingerpost Directional Signage



2.14 Care needs to be taken to develop a signage strategy of key destinations to route and locations of signs. Also, especially with the Wayfinder signage caution is required regards their locations as they can appear to be large black monolith pieces of street furniture. They tend to be introduced in larger towns, but perhaps just a few at the main car parks would be appropriate.

Connections to new developments

2.15 Section 10 refers to the main developments and the need to connect them to the town centre. The main ones are:

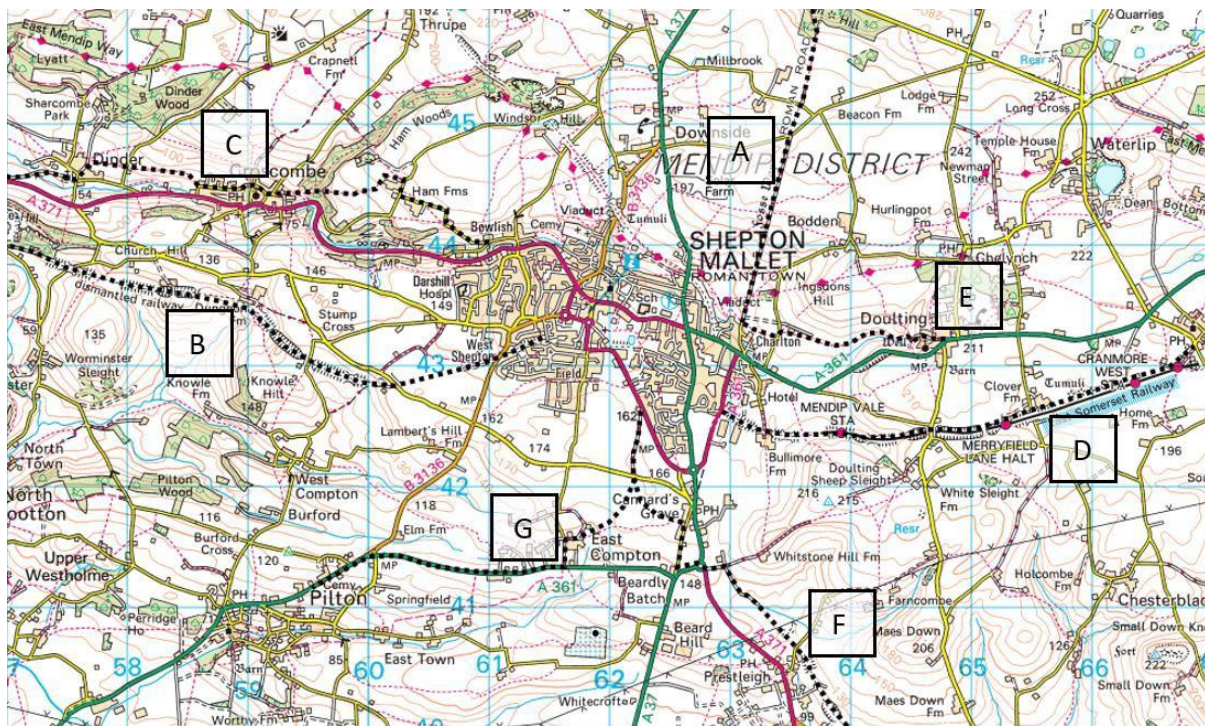
- Cannards Grave (Duchy Development) to the south west of the town;
- Old prison;
- Possible site to the west of Cannards Grave.

Walking outside town

2.16 Shepton Mallet is surrounded by many countryside footpaths and bridleways. A number of these paths utilise disused railway lines or roman roads. These provide scenic routes that attract tourism to the town and surrounding area. A notable footpath that runs through the town is the East Mendip Way. The Mendip way runs from Uphill near Weston-super-Mare through to Frome. Another notable path is a section of the Fosse Way that runs from Exeter to Leicester.

2.17 Chapter 3 on cycling looks at a series of pedestrian and cycle routes which are shown on Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Map of Shepton Mallet and surrounding footpaths and routes



Source: OS Maps, Extracted on 2020/10/06, All routes are approximate

3. Cycling

3.1 There is little evidence of widespread cycling in and around Shepton Mallet. There are several causes for this that include:

- Poor on route facilities. As is the case in many historic English towns, the streets tend to be narrow, making it difficult for cars to overtake cycles safely;
- Hilliness of the area;
- Lack of tradition of cycling;
- Lack of good cycle parking facilities;
- Feels dangerous to cycle;
- External to the town the roads are narrow, bendy and fast.

3.2 Currently, only 1% of people commute to work by bicycle in the UK and flows for cycles are low around Shepton Mallet. For example, the A371 west of the town has just 0.2% cycles. Data from the most recent census found that 16.4% of households not owning a car (or van)¹, suggesting that many households in Shepton Mallet will be reliant on other forms of transport which would include cycling.

3.3 Cycling and facilities for cyclists are best considered in three categories:

- Routes to school, which must be segregated from traffic and suitable for children;
- Commuter cyclists who want direct routes and can mix with traffic;
- Recreational cycling which is best segregated and mostly in rural areas.

3.3 There are businesses that cater for cyclists in Mendip. Shepton Mallet specialised shops are Rapha selling cycling clothing, the Somerset bicycle workshop, and Mendip cycle servicing and focusing on maintenance of bikes.

3.4 Recent DfT Cycle Infrastructure guidance (LTN1/20) places great emphasis on encouraging cycling. It says that all routes should be segregated between both traffic and pedestrians. This places great challenges to retrofit facilities, but it is something that all highway authorities are grappling with.

3.5 Essentially, it is now a requirement that we all plan for more cycling as it makes us healthier, reducing reliance on private vehicles, reduces carbon and can be just as fast for trips less than 5kms. In order to encourage a shift towards cycling, Shepton Mallet will need to adopt a range of policies that promote cycling. Broadly, these fall into the following categories:

- Distance: enhancing provision of longer distance cycling routes between nearby towns and villages;
- Local: ensuring that roads include provisions to protect cyclists. This should include protected cycling boxes at junctions and signals and, where possible, segregated routes. Around schools identify routes to and from local housing areas;
- Cycle parking facilities: providing bike parking racks ensures that cyclists have a safe place to store bicycles when they reach their destination and minimises the chance for bicycles to clutter pavements and footpaths. Covered and secure is also good.

¹ Source: ONS - 2011 Census (KS404EW)

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008585>

3.6 In terms of longer routes for cycles there are several being progressed. These aim to provide routes to work, school and for recreational use. There is quite a bit of work going on, and they are in different stages of development. The main ones being looked at are shown on Figure 12 and are as follows:

- A. Shepton Mallet to Midsomer Norton, via Oakhill, Nettlebridge and Stratton. This is about 13kms and is being progressed as part of the around Somerset cycle route;
- B. The Shepton Mallet to Wells route, approx. 8kms as shown on Figure 13, has been planned for some time and provides a great opportunity for routes to Wells. The Strawberry Line Society and Association have been campaigning to make use of the disused railway line and have the cycle route extended from Shepton Mallet to Wells, forming part of a longer cycle route that runs from Shepton Mallet (and a few smaller settlements to the south) through to Clevedon;
- C. Shepton Mallet to Wells via the villages of Croscombe, Dinder and Dulcote. Again, about 8kms long and aims to connect these villages between the two towns;
- D. Shepton Mallet to Cranmore via the old rail line. This is about 6kms and would connect to the heritage railway at Mendip Vale and Cranmore West stations;
- E. Shepton to Doultling, approx. 3kms and the route is currently in its infancy. The key issue being that the A361 is a serious barrier to walking and cycling and an alternative is necessary;
- F. Shepton Mallet to Evercreech, via the Duchy development, Cannards Grave, Prestleigh, the Showground. Overall, about 5kms in length and to be part delivered by the proposed Duchy development;
- G. Shepton Mallet to Pilton, via the Duchy development. Approx 4kms and also to be partially delivered by the development.

3.7 Within the town, the current main routes being progressed and or planned are:

- to extend the path through the council car park and into the deep railway cutting under Cannards Grave Road to Station Road and Tesco shopping area. Sustrans are currently investigating the feasibility of ramping down the cutting and constructing a suitable path to Station Road. It is currently shared with pedestrians and it should be converted to being segregated;
- Town centre to Mendip Station, or to the potential new station;
- Town centre to the new development proposals to the Duchy development.

3.7 For the town, there is a good case to produce a cycle routes strategy based on key destinations, auditing of what exists and linking to the external connections routes listed in para 3.6 above.

3.8 The growth of electric bikes should be encouraged into the area, especially due to the gradients and hills. One way to do this is to have a cycle rental schemes for electric bikes in the town which is helpful for people to try them and for tourism. A scheme is being introduced in Yeovil and there is a good case to have this set up in Shepton Mallet.

Figure 13: Map of dismantled railway line between Shepton Mallet and Wells, part of the “Strawberry Line” (Route B)

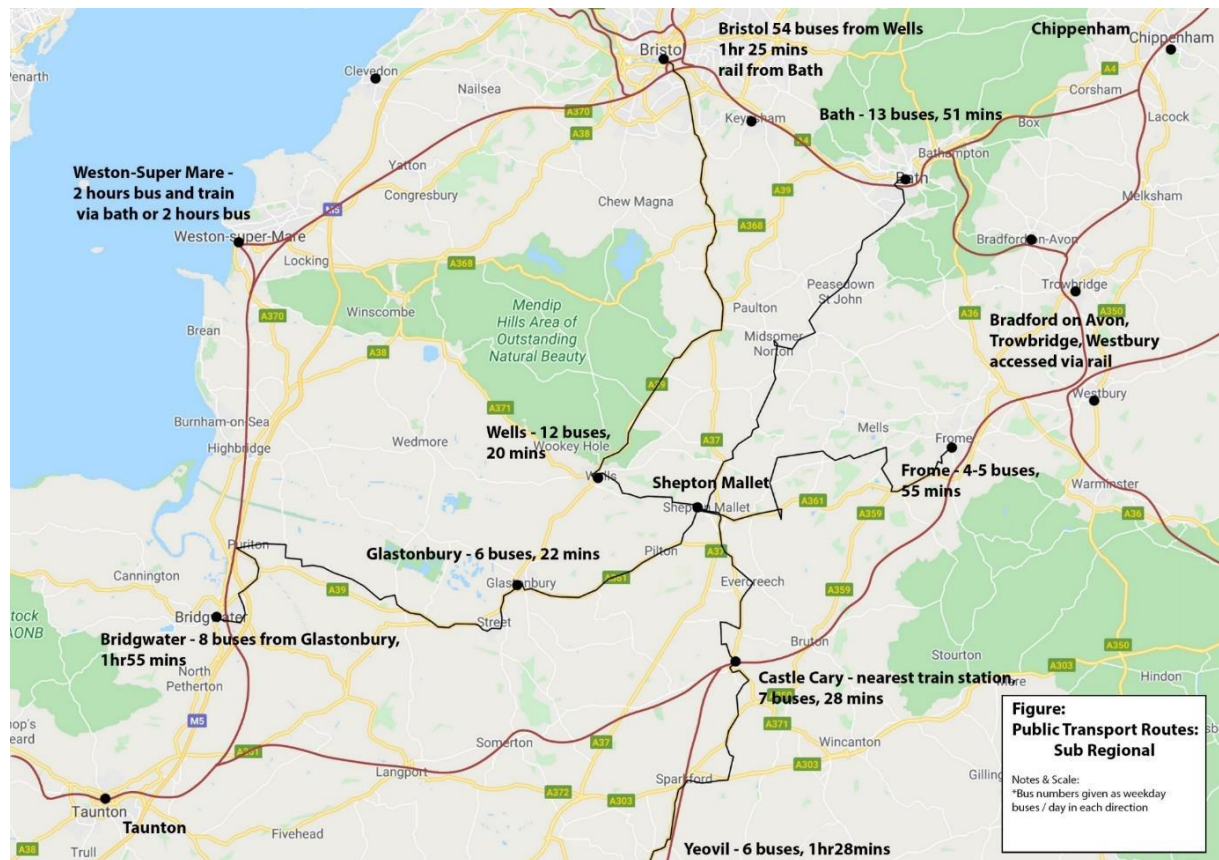


4. Public transport & rail access

4.1 Shepton Mallet bus services are covered by three main bus operators First Group, South West Coaches and Frome Bus. There are some services that travel further afield such as National Express, Berry Coaches and Superfast 3.

4.2 Use of public transport provides access to larger towns and cities such as Bath, Bristol and Weston-Super Mare. Some routes are indirect and require changes to a second service along the route. A key issue is the lack of direct rail connections as it used to be well connected until the Beeching cuts in the 1960s.

Figure 14: Public Transport Routes: Sub Regional



Rail

4.3 Travelling to Bath via public transport currently takes about 65 minutes via bus. Then there is a brief 11 minute train ride into Bristol.

4.4 Castle Cary is the closest rail station, (7 miles) which can be reached by a 25 minute bus ride, 15 minute drive or 40 minute cycle.

4.5 Shepton Mallet is located only 2km away from a railway and a long-felt belief has been to connect the town by rail. Below is a summary of the situation.

- Mendip district council allocated £320,000 towards developing a business case to reinstate the Shepton Mallet Railway line;

- The old route remains mostly intact except for four buildings have been built over the old route and back gardens of seven houses extended over it. Policy DP18 of the Mendip Local Plan protects this and all rail routes in the District from being built on;
- One of the main challenges with the route is that it would be the terminus of the line, so making viability challenging. Ideally, it should extend onward to Wells and connect to the Taunton to Bristol line, but this would be a huge scheme financially. The current proposals, while attractive, raise economic viability issues;
- It is recommended that it remains a supported proposal as a rail station for the town would make a huge difference not just in transport access terms, but has broader social and economic benefits, such as encouraging tourism;
- In the meantime, alternative options are being given higher priority. In particular, a high-quality bus route that links Shepton Mallet to Castle Cary railway station (including the ability to carry bicycles) should be provided. This would be a valuable scheme given the lack of car parking capacity at Castle Cary. Additional car parking should also be provided at Castle Carey.

Bus

4.6 The table below shows a summary of the bus services to and from Shepton Mallet. It shows a mixed picture with frequent bus services to Wells, Frome, Castle Carey and Glastonbury. There is a direct route to Bath, but its slow, taking almost an hour. Routes to Bristol and Bridgwater are indirect and slow. For Taunton the route is indirect, changing at Castle Carey for the train.

4.7 These are important services for the town and need to be retained for access to school, services and employment. They are also important for tourism.

Table 1: Shepton Mallet Buses

Buses from Shepton Mallet to:					
Destination	Route Number (with Hyperlink)	Journey Time	Frequency per day	Operator	notes
Wells	161	20 mins	12	First Group	
Castle Cary	1, 1A, 1B, 1C	28 mins	7	South West Coaches	
Glastonbury	669	22 mins	6	FromeBus	
Frome	162	20 mins	4/5	FromeBus	
Bath	174	51 mins	13	First Group	
Bristol (buses from Wells)	376	1 hour 25 mins	54	First Group	Can be reached via train from bath or bus via Wells
Bridgwater (buses from Glastonbury)	75	1hr55 mins	5	First group	Can be reached via buses from Glastonbury or by train from Bath
Yeovil	1, 1A, 1B, 1C	1 hour 28 mins	6	South West Coaches	

5. Traffic flows and Town Centre traffic management

Traffic Flows

5.1 There most recent census data (2011) for Shepton Mallet found that 83.6% of households had at least one car (or van) – with the remaining 16.4% of households not owning a car (or van)².

5.2 The A371 traffic flows are summarised in the table below which shows a typical growth in traffic from 6,100 vehicles per day to 7,000 vpd between 2002 and 2017. This represents a growth of 15% over 15 years.

Table 2: A361 Classified Traffic Count

Traffic statistics by year: All traffic

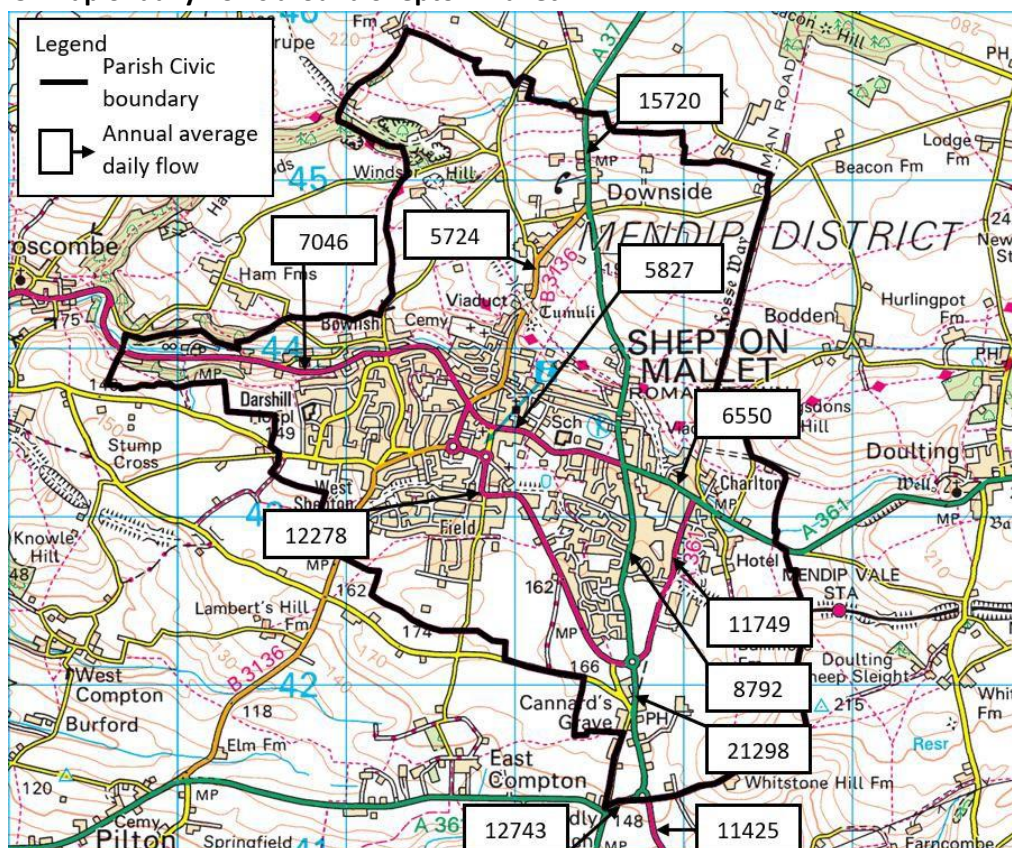
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pedal Cycles	9	11	10	19	20	21	21	24	28	28	24	22	22	18	18	18	15
Motorcycles and Mopeds	56	147	154	152	168	101	108	78	82	76	81	76	79	88	86	86	48
Cars	128	5,047	5,214	4,857	4,877	4,806	4,778	4,567	4,663	4,551	4,587	4,586	4,585	4,644	4,794	4,854	5,877
Buses and Coaches	71	66	128	70	72	74	77	47	57	61	55	58	62	66	71	70	48
Light Goods Vehicles	37	547	572	653	655	726	801	554	556	569	618	647	673	709	775	837	819
Two-axle Rigid HGVs	86	135	128	152	150	155	157	94	88	90	90	89	87	85	89	93	78
Three-axle Rigid HGVs	35	39	39	32	30	19	20	24	24	24	26	28	29	31	35	33	21
Four-axle Rigid HGVs	31	28	28	29	31	10	12	17	17	14	15	17	18	19	20	23	71
Three-axle Articulated HGVs	25	14	14	18	16	8	8	43	41	48	37	29	22	23	29	30	14
Five-axle Articulated HGVs	53	42	36	47	42	24	24	18	16	16	16	16	16	15	15	14	18
Six-axle Articulated HGVs	50	16	18	57	60	33	36	23	23	23	24	26	27	30	30	31	23
All HGVs	180	274	263	335	329	249	257	219	209	215	208	203	200	203	217	224	225
All motor vehicles	172	6,081	6,331	6,067	6,101	5,956	6,021	5,465	5,567	5,472	5,549	5,570	5,600	5,710	5,944	6,072	7,017

5.3 The mix of traffic shows a very low proportion of cycling, just 0.2% of flows. Cars dominate at 84%, then LGVs at 12% and HGVs 3%.

5.4 Daily Annual Average Traffic (AADT) flows on the main roads in and around the town are shown on Figure 15 below. The busiest local road is the A37 to the east south of the A371 junction with flows of a 21,300 vpd. The A371 in the town has flows of about 12,300 vpd just south of the memorial junction. The A361 near the High Street has a flow of about 5,800 vpd.

² Source: ONS - 2011 Census (KS404EW)
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008585>

Figure 15: Map of daily flows around Shepton Mallet



Traffic Management

5.5 Traffic routes are generally two-way single carriageway roads. Management of traffic takes place in three main ways:

- The one way system as shown on Figure 16. Currently this is southbound only between Rectory Road, the High Street and Townsend Road;
- Restricted vehicle types, notably a 7.5t ban on the A361 between the A371 and A37;
- Restrictions to traffic speeds, with much of the town at 30mph and parts of the town centre as 20mph.

5.6 It has been suggested that there would be advantages in reversing the direction of the one-way system as shown on the right hand diagram. The advantages suggested are:

- More drivers and users of the town centre would drive through on their way to park and so help to increase trade for the town. However, it is unclear how this would assist and high volumes of through traffic in the town centre is not desirable;
- Visitors / tourists can more easily find the High Street and especially the upper High Street area. Nearly all visitors will travel through the Memorial junction, so if a sign from here directs to the town centre then it would be a much simpler and a more pleasant access route than the existing off Rectory Road and its car parks. The northbound route also allows divers to pass some free 30 min maximum stay parking spaces which would encourage them to stop and browse.

This latter suggestion does seem to offer some significant benefit, although the extent of the effect of this is difficult to quantify and some sort of survey to try and quantify this is recommended.

5.7 In terms of the technical ease of being able to make the change of direction from southbound to northbound will depend mainly on how the junction of High Street and A361 is reconfigured. There are two main options to address this junction:

- Option A: revise the traffic signal layout so the High Street south approach would have traffic signals. The A361 signals from east and west direction may have the turn to the High Street north banned, subject to tracking as it is a tight radius. The existing traffic signals on the High Street north would be removed, which currently are a tight fit and would be an environmental improvement;
- Option B: remove all traffic signals and create a shared space solution. Components would include a roundel type roundabout, raised platforms, options to address the narrowing at Paul Street so the traffic signals can be removed (suggest widening to north by 1m), shared space areas with reduced sign clutter. This would offer considerable potential in environmental enhancement of the area around the junction. HTP have worked with a Bristol based consultant called Ben Hamilton Bailey (sadly deceased recently), who is excellent at these types of schemes.

At the Memorial junction the road layout would need reconfiguring (Photo on Figure 8) so an exit from the roundabout instead of an entry.

5.8 Overall, it is likely that one of the above options is possible. The A361/High St junction requires redesigning anyway, due to the accident record and this could provide an opportunity to do so. Costs to carry out the works are broadly likely to be in the range of £200-£300k and would be affected by the quality of materials.

Figure 16: Existing southbound one-way system and alternative northbound



6. Town Centre Car Parking

6.1 The town centre is well served with about 1140 off street parking spaces. These are distributed in six main car parks as summarised in Table 3 below and the locations in Figure 17. They are all operated by the Council except for the two large retail parks, which have an estimated 870 spaces, which clearly dominates the parking supply.

Table 3: Off-street Parking Sites Summary Table

Car Park	Council / Private management	Number of spaces	Payment
A. Great Ostry	Council	100	P&D – Great Ostry Up to 1 hour £1.10 Up to 2 hours £1.50 Up to 3 hours £2.00 Up to 4 hours £3.60 Up to 9 hours £5.90 Sunday parking £2 all day https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7226/Car-Parks-in-Shepton-Mallet
B. Commercial Road	Council	135	P&D - Commercial Road Tariffs: Up to 1 hour £1.10 Up to 2 hours £1.50 Up to 3 hours £2.00 Up to 4 hours £2.70 Up to 9 hours £3.80 HGV overnight parking £10.00 Sunday parking £2 all day https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7226/Car-Parks-in-Shepton-Mallet
C. Petticoat Lane	Council	8	Free
D. Regal Road East	Council	18	P&D - Regal Road East Tariffs Up to 30 minutes 70p Up to 1 hour £1.30 Up to 2 hours £2.60 Up to 3 hours £3.10 Up to 9 hours £5.90 Sunday parking £2 all day https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7226/Car-Parks-in-Shepton-Mallet
D. Regal Road West		9 Total: 27	Free
E. Haskins Retail park	Private	Approx 210	First 90 minutes free. £1 / hour thereafter http://www.haskinsretailpark.co.uk/parking
F. Townsend Shopping Park	Private	Approx 660	Free – Maximum stay 3 hours

Figure 172: Map Showing Main Off-street parking sites



6.2 Parking charges vary, with free parking for up to 3 hours at the retail park, but £1.10/hour 1, £2 for 2 hours and £2.70 3 hours pay and display at the Council run car parks which serve the northern High Street. These charges are a major concern for many in the town and making parking free was the most popular item to change in the town in a recent survey. The key point being that short stay visitors who are mainly shoppers will be encouraged to park at the retail park, which will reduce visitors to the High Street north area due to the charge differential. To assist with regeneration of the High Street it is recommended that these charges are reviewed. Parking charges are a complex issue, but for example they could include the following options:

- Free first hour;
- Voucher for a refund on spend for the first hours;
- Reduction of charges, with perhaps a simple £1 / hour, with hour 1 being free.

6.3 On street parking is available along the High Street, which allows some free short stay parking (30 mins). These help to attract shoppers passing by, but the supply of these is limited.

7. COVID-19 transport changes

7.1 COVID-19 has been creating huge changes in terms of transport. But in the longer term, when it is over, it is important for the NP to recognise that there will be some longer-term effects as well. For transport purposes, these will have a mixture of effects on the town which can be grouped into three:

- Increased working from home;
- Increased private transport use;
- Reduced public transport use.

Increased working from home

7.2 The past months have shown that many office workers can do much of their job from home, it is therefore likely that many will continue to use this to some extent. There are signs that businesses are reducing the sizes of their city and town centre offices (cite).

7.3 For Shepton Mallet this will have two main effects:

- Residents who work in offices will be travelling less often into work, reducing peak period travel demand;
- Offices in the town will be used less and this could lead to changes of use, such as conversion to residential;
- More local residents who work elsewhere will want to shop and carry out other activities in the town.

Increased private transport

7.4 Private transport offers reduced contact with other people compared to public transport. This change is felt in two main modes: cycling and car use, as shown graphically on Figure 18. Cycling has seen a rapid growth nationally, with retailers such as Halfords reporting a 500% increase in cycling equipment sold³. Car usage has recovered to nearly pre-COVID-19 levels (reaching a high of 95% in mid-September). The increased use of both these modes of transport may lead to increased incidents between cars and cycles.

7.5 For Shepton Mallet this means that there will be increased car and cycle traffic on the roads, although in peak periods the effects are compensated for the with less trips to offices.

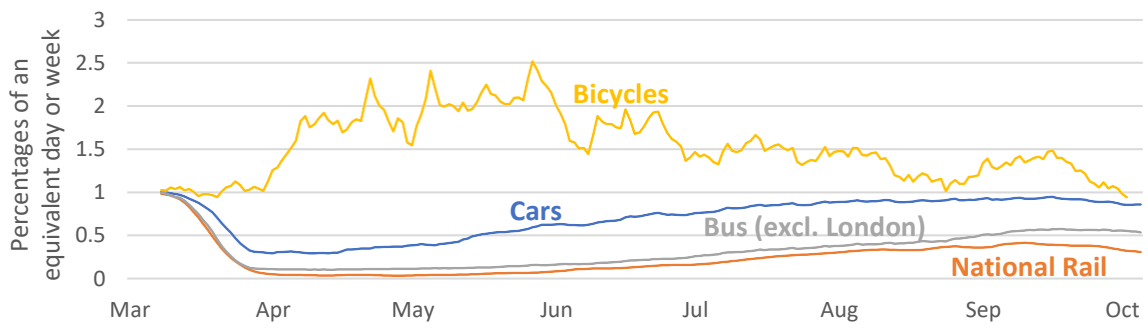
Reduced public transport

7.6 Public transport has remained far less popular since the start of COVID-19 started. It is challenging for people to effectively socially distance, with greatly reducing capacity. For example, the Route 67 Mendip Community Transport buses have had capacity reduced to seven passengers. These levels of capacity reduction are common across all modes of public transport.

7.7 For Shepton Mallet this means that all forms of public transport will face short term challenges to their finances due to depressed customer demand. In the longer term it is expected that much of the pre public transport demand will return, except for the effects of reduced travel to work office trips.

³ BBC News, May 2020, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-52689372> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-52564351>

Figure 18 Use of Transport Modes Across Great Britain since 10th March 2020 (rolling 8-day averages)



8. Highway safety

8.1 Shepton Mallet's transport is dominated by the car so most of highway safety concerns will be around the interaction between vehicles and their impacts with vulnerable users (mostly pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists). Above, in chapter 2 on pedestrians it has been examined in the town centre as it is such an important issue in that area.

8.2 Figure 19 and Table 4 summarise the accidents over the last five years (2015-2019). There have been three motorcycle crashes and two agricultural vehicle crashes recorded on crashmaps.

Figure 19: Person Injury Accidents from the 5-year period: 2015-2019: Neighbourhood Plan Area. Accident severity is coded by yellow – slight, red – severe, black – fatal

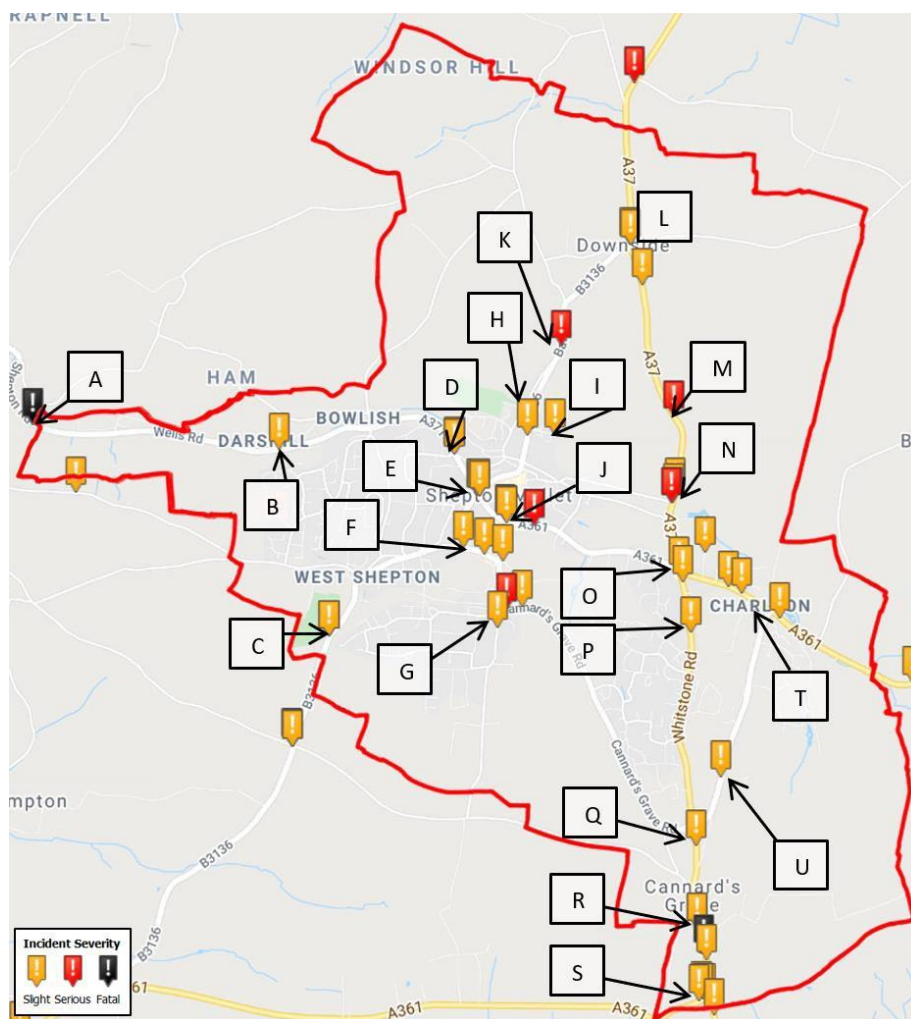


Table 4: Accident Site Summary of Crash-map Figure

Accident Site Summary of figure 7.1		
*accident sites involving vulnerable users (pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists) highlighted in blue and with an asterisk by the letter		
#	Road names	Details
A	Wells rd, A371, 250m from ham lane junction	Fatal crash. Border between 20 and 30 zone
B*	A371, 100m east of back Lane junction	Motorcycle slight crash
C*	B3136	No pavement for pedestrians, built up bricks from a bridge and high hedges meant that there is nowhere for a pedestrian to move in the event of two cars passing. Road is unsafe for pedestrians.
D	A371 joined by Shaftgate Ave and Pike Lane	Typically crashes every three years vehicle-vehicle
E*	Roundabout at A361-B3136-A371	Consistently one slight crash per year vehicle-vehicle mostly 5 crashes: 1 cyclist-vehicle, 1 motorcyclist-vehicle and 3 car crashes
F*	Townsend road between Haskin Retail park and Tescos Superstore	Slight accidents between vehicles and pedestrians 3/3 slight crashes were pedestrian-vehicle crashes
G*	Cannards Grave joined by Compton road	Slight-severe crash every 2-3 years. T junction joins a bend on flat long road with a zebra crossing
H	Waterloo rd (B3136) joined by prince's road	School nearby, parking of vehicles on one side of the road makes the road single laned
I	Prince's rd	Residential area – vehicle-vehicle slight crash
J*	A361-High Street	Slight and serious accidents between vehicles and pedestrians
K	Bath Road, a little north of Cowl Street	Car hit telegraph pole 40mph zone
L	A37, Bolter's lane and B3136	Long, fast, downhill A37 with crossroad for two smaller roads. Poor visibility 2 minor crashes at junction and one minor a little south
M	A37 - North	Steep hill, 40 section. High hard embankments around the road, serious
N*	Kilver street, where Garston street joins	Long downhill, poor visibility for traffic joining (cycle crash)
O	A361-A37 crossroad	Slight crashes every 2 years A361-A37 intersection, difficult for pedestrians to cross. Could be looked at.
P	A37 – south of A361-A37 of junction	Vehicle-vehicle
Q	A37-A361-A371- Cannard's Grave, Fosse lane, Whitstone road roundabout	Vehicle-vehicle
R	A37 between church lane and A371-A37 roundabout	1 slight crash per year, 1 fatality in the last five years 3 car crashes, 1 motorcycle crash in the last 5 years
S	A371-A37 roundabout	1 slight crash per year 4 car-car crashes, 1car-agricultural vehicle crash
T*	A361 joined by brewery lane And east of A361-A37 Junction	Slight crashes every 3 years 4 crashes: cycle, agricultural vehicle and then two car vehicle crashes
U*	A361-Frampton Lane T-junction	Slight crash – motorcycle and 7.5tn goods vehicle

9. Ways to encourage visitors to the town centre

9.1 Transport related proposals can have an impact on encouraging visitors to the town centre. The following items have been identified:

- 1) Encourage more visitors to route through the High Street. As referred in section 5 above, the reversal of the one-way system is expected to make it easier for access to the High Street;
- 2) Create a pleasant public realm environment for pedestrians, especially where there are shops, cafes, pubs, bars restaurants and leisure activities in the centre for people to meet up and enjoy. The High Street is already a high-quality environment and much has already been done. A shared space solution for the A361/High Street junction would improve that key junction visually and in terms of highway safety;
- 3) Keep all public highways well maintained clean and tidy. A street audit, walking key tourist routes identifying excess or poorly maintained signage and street furniture can be effective in identifying things for improvement. This can be widened to suggest other 'eyesores' along the route;
- 4) Ensure there is attractive, safe and well-maintained short stay parking conveniently located near to shops and facilities;
- 5) Change parking charges at the High Street car parks to reduce the differential between the free parking at the Tescos and retail park;
- 6) Provide rail access to the town. It would place Shepton Mallet on the rail map and would become a destination for more visitors;
- 7) Provide a network of Greenways between Shepton Mallet and the surrounding villages;
- 8) Provide connections to longer distance pedestrian and cycle routes, such as the Strawberry line.
- 9) Enhance bus services to the town;
- 10) Introduce an E-bike share scheme;
- 11) Improve signage within the town and develop a signage strategy. To potentially include a series of Wayfinder and / or more finger post signs at key locations as referred in paras 2.12-14.

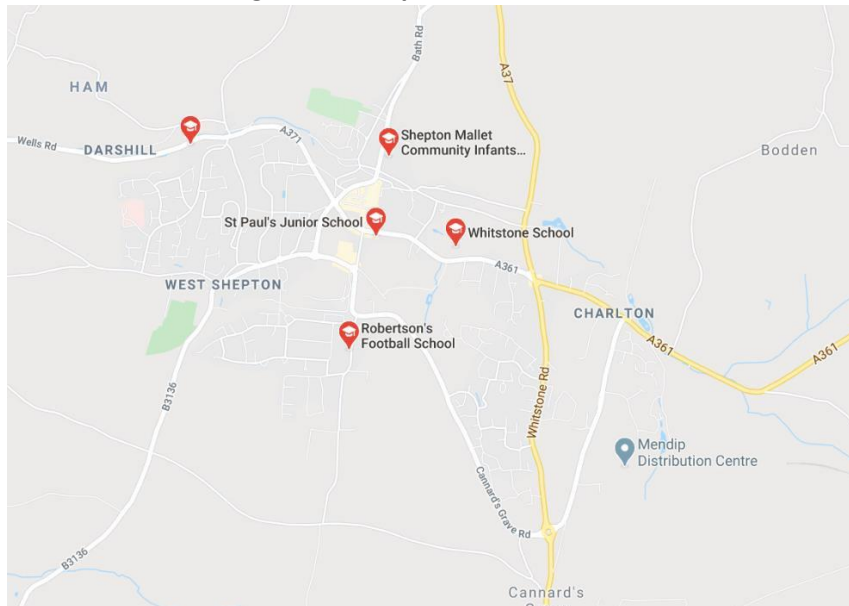
9.2 It is difficult to quantify the effects of each of these and an integrated improvement strategy should increase the overall benefits more than separated items.

10. Congestion & access around schools

10.1 There are four main schools in Shepton Mallet, and all have access difficulties. The schools are:

- Whitstone School (ages 11-16, 602 pupils);
- St Pauls C of E Jnr School (ages 7-11, 301 pupils);
- Shepton Mallet Community Infants School and Nursery (Ages 2-7, 169 pupils);
- Bowlsh Infants School (ages 5-7, 111 pupils).

Figure 20: Shepton Mallet Schools



10.2 Whitestone school the secondary is located off Charlton Road. This was referred to in Section 2 as one the places that only had a footway on one side of the road. With secondary school children age (11-16), it has the most potential for cycling and this is not easy from most directions and should be improved. More could also be done to slow traffic on Charlton Road.

10.3 St Pauls Junior School, also on the A361, is located just east of the town centre. It was identified as a problem location in section 2 para 2.2 (b) and is shown on Figure 2. There are a number of features to slow traffic, it is 20mph zone and there is a pedestrian crossing, linked in with the traffic signals. Also, just to the west is the traffic signal controls for the narrow section of highway with footways both sides. Modifications to this are considered in paras 5.7-8 in the discussion about traffic management. One option is to remove all traffic signals and convert to shared space.

10.4 Community Infants School is located off Waterloo Road to the north of the town centre. It is a busy road with a pedestrian access directly of the highway as shown on Figure 21. Footways are available on both sides of the road, but are not the recommended 2.0m minimum and with heavy traffic is an uncomfortable walk for children with parents. Cycling is not easy along this road and entirely unsuitable for pupils. Yellow markings have been added around the school entrance, but more could be done, such as a 20mph zone.

Figure 21: Shepton Mallet Community Infant School Pedestrian Access



10.5 Bowlish Infants school is on the western edge of the town off the A371, a busy road. While, within the 30mph limit traffic can tend to exceed the speed limit especially westbound where there is a down gradient. Figure 22 below shows the approach to the school westbound and the signs and lines to try and slow traffic. The footway shown is set back from the road in parts which makes for a better walking experience. Cycling on the road is not easy and unsuitable for pupils. There is a good case for more measures to slow traffic including a 20mph zone.

Figure 22: Bowlish Infant School Pedestrian Access

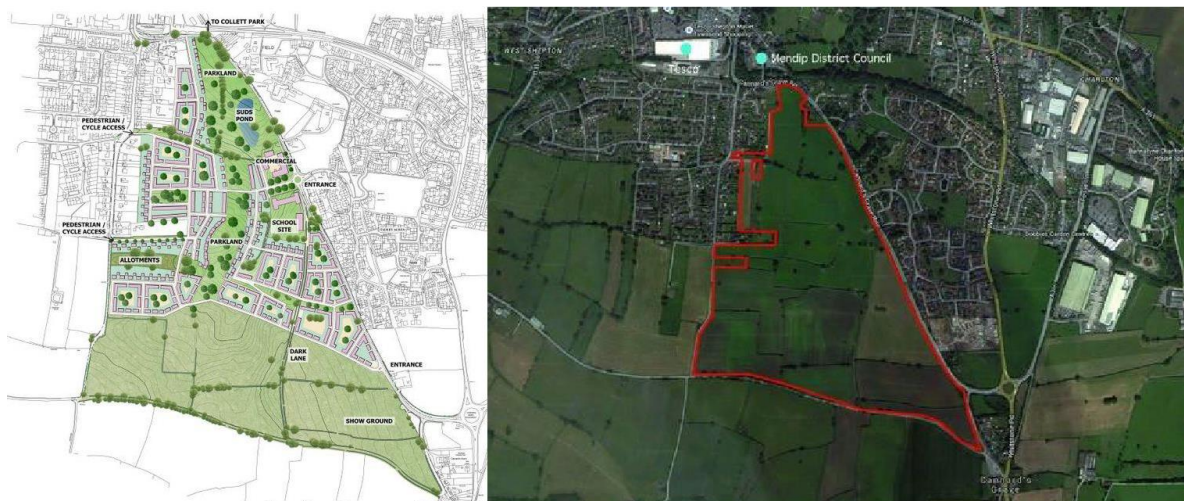


11. New developments and transport access

11.1 Shepton has 10,369 residents and 4,572 households⁴. There is an ambition for an additional 1,300 houses to be delivered in Shepton Mallet between 2006 and 2029⁵, forming 14% of Mendip's total target of 9,635. Each year this means Shepton Mallet plans to deliver 60 new houses per year. There are two major developments being proposed in Shepton Mallet⁶:

- Shepton Mallet Prison – being re-developed to provide 146 houses, with the bulk being completed in 24/25 and 25/26;
- Cannards Grave Road (see23) – a greenfield site to the south of town, expecting to deliver approximately 60 houses per year between 2021/22 and 2031/32, totalling 600 houses.

Figure 23: Cannards Grave Road Development



11.3 In terms of transport it is important that the following is included:

- High quality pedestrian and cycle facilities internally and linking externally;
- Delivery to key destinations that should include the town centre, schools and employment destinations;
- Access within 400m of a bus service to key destinations;
- Additional car traffic generated should be accommodated onto the local highway network and not cause delays.

11.4 A further development area is being considered to west of the Cannards Grave development, west of the allotments. The proposed location is shown on Figure 24, with the main vehicular access onto Compton Road. Middleton Lane is the northern boundary and Compton Lane forms the eastern boundary, where both of these are narrow single-track lanes.

11.5 With the vehicular access proposed onto Compton Rd this is expected to cause difficulties. South of Middleton Lane, Compton Lane is a narrow largely single-track road, as shown on Figure 25 and any development traffic would need to avoid this section of Compton Road. North of Middleton

⁴ ONS – 2011 Census, <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E04008585>

⁵ Mendip District Council, Jan 2020, *Local Plan Part 2 (Sites & Policies), 505 Dwellings – Background Paper*, https://www.mendip.gov.uk/media/23733/505-Dwellings-Background-paper/pdf/Mendip_District_Council_-_505_Dwellings_-_Background_Paper.pdf

⁶ Progress outlined in: Mendip Housing Trajectory – December 2019, p.13, <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/7733/Development-Monitoring>

Lane, Compton Road is fairly wide and should be able to accommodate some traffic, but is fronted by residential development on both sides of the road as shown on Figure 26. Adding significant generated traffic routing along this Road will impact on many existing dwellings. It is therefore recommended that an alternative highway access is identified, such as via the Cannards Grave development and any impacts on Compton Road are carefully investigated with a view to provide mitigations as appropriate.

Figure 24: Development West of Cannards Grave Road Development



Figure 25: Compton Road south of Middleton Lane



Figure 26: Compton Road north of development

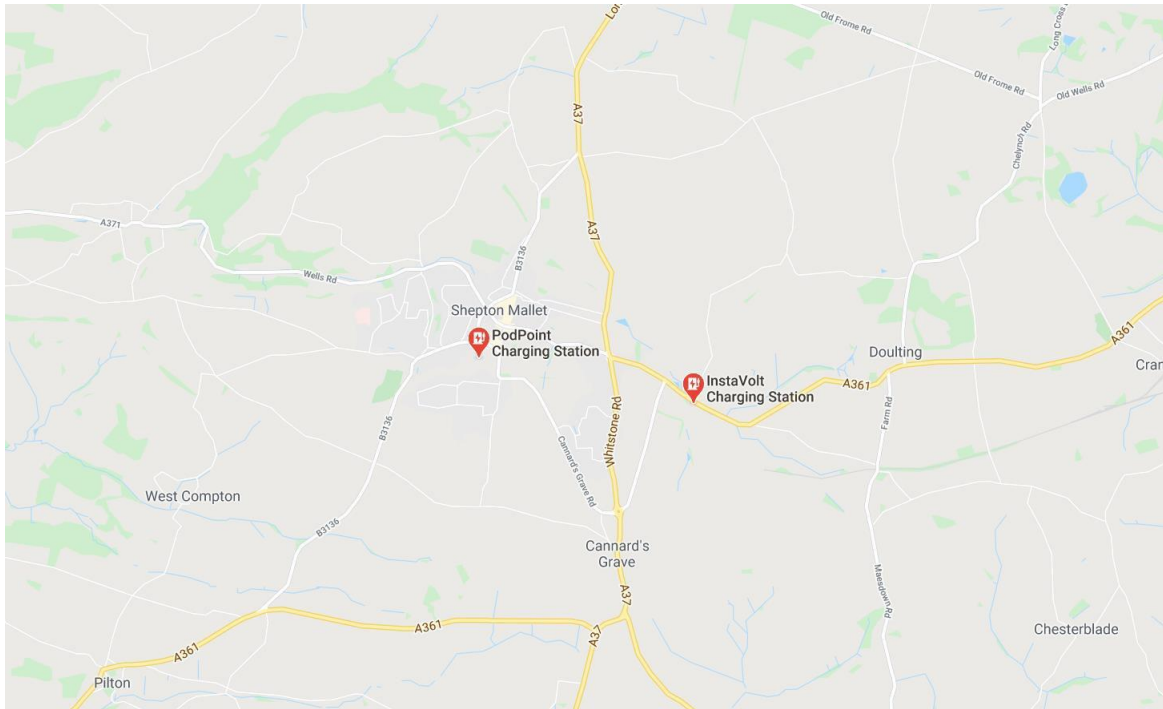


12. Reducing Carbon emissions

12.1 Carbon (Co2) emissions from transport are estimated to make up 34% of Mendip's total carbon footprint. In 2018, 65,600 cars were registered in Mendip and only 0.3% of those were Ultra Low Emission Vehicles <https://www.mendip.gov.uk/article/8655/Transport> .

12.2 EV charging stations are important to encourage EV vehicles. There are currently two charging stations in Shepton Mallet as shown on Figure 27 below.

Figure 27: EV Charging Locations



12.3 To assist with the take up of more EVs more EV charging stations should be provided in the town.

12.4 Many of the emerging transport policies and proposals would contribute towards reducing carbon. Notably these are:

- Encourage more walking;
- Encourage more cycling;
- Improve public transport;
- Less car dependency;
- More EV and E-bike charging.

13. Key Transport Issues

13.1 Transport is an important consideration for Shepton Mallet and its NP. This report has identified a series of transport issues which aim to provide the evidence base to enable policies and proposals to be specified as part of the plan. The key issues by chapter are summarised below.

Pedestrians

13.2 Highway safety and a need to address some locations to reduce the risk of accidents. There are many substandard footways which is largely the nature of an historic street pattern. Where possible we need to improve the pedestrian footways. External long-distance routes have potential, combined with cycle routes as greenways.

Cycles

13.3 There is not much cycling currently due to poor facilities, narrow roads and hilliness. This is something that needs to change as all transport policy now points towards more cycling. Within the town provide more cycle facilities to include more cycle lanes and routes and covered secure cycle parking. Produce a cycle route strategy based on key demands and audit existing facilities. External to the town, develop greenways to local villages and longer distances to Wells and other locations. The Wells route along the disused rail line is known as the Strawberry line and has much potential. E-bikes to be encouraged and a rental system could be introduced.

Public transport

13.4 Support the introduction of a rail station for the town. Encourage improved bus services and a better bus to the rail service at Castle Carey.

Traffic flows and one system

13.5 The one-way system could be reversed to help with visitors gaining access to the north High Street area. The most challenging aspect of this is the need to change the A361/High Street junction. Options have been identified and potential exists for a shared space improvement which would have wider environmental benefits.

Car parking

13.6 Generally adequate provision of short car parking, but a view that charges are too high. To assist with TC regeneration it is recommended to review charging at the north end of town, to provide a competitive cost to the retail parks, with for example a free first hour.

Covid19 transport changes

13.7 This year has seen huge changes to travel patterns. In the longer term it is expected to reduce commuting travel, so more will continue to work from home and reduce office space demand.

Highway safety

13.8 Mostly addressed under pedestrians where it is a significant concern. Accident records have been reviewed and several junctions have an accident record.

Way to encourage visitors

13.9 A list of ten transport related proposals have been identified to encourage more visitors to the town. The main ones were parking charge reductions, reversing the one-way system, creating a pleasant urban realm, pedestrian signage, developing the greenway routes and a rail station.

Congestions and access around schools

13.10 The four schools all have problems of access around the school gate. There needs to be more done to reduce speeds and create improved walking environments on the approaches to the schools. For example, to include introducing 20 mph zones on the A361 at Bowlish School and on Waterloo Road at Shepton Mallet Community School.

New developments and transport access

13.11 Cannards Grave development to the south of the town is a major urban extension and high-quality pedestrian and cycle links to the town are essential.

A potential development to the west of Cannards Grave is being considered. It proposes the main access onto Compton Road and an alternative access for vehicles is recommended.

Reducing Carbon emissions

13.12 Transport contributes to about a third of Mendip's carbon emissions. Many of the emerging policies and proposals will be consistent with reducing transport carbon emissions. Notably encouraging the use of walking, cycling and public transport. Cars will increasingly transfer away from petrol and diesel and something the NP can help to encourage EV take-up is to provide more EV charging points in the town.

13.13 To progress the emerging proposals from this transport issues report it will be important to engage with and have the support of the District Council and especially the Highways Authority. Any changes to the public highway can only be carried out with agreement from Somerset County Council, the highway authority.

13.14 The next steps are to set out the transport policies and proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan and to ensure they are coordinated and consistent with other components of the Plan.