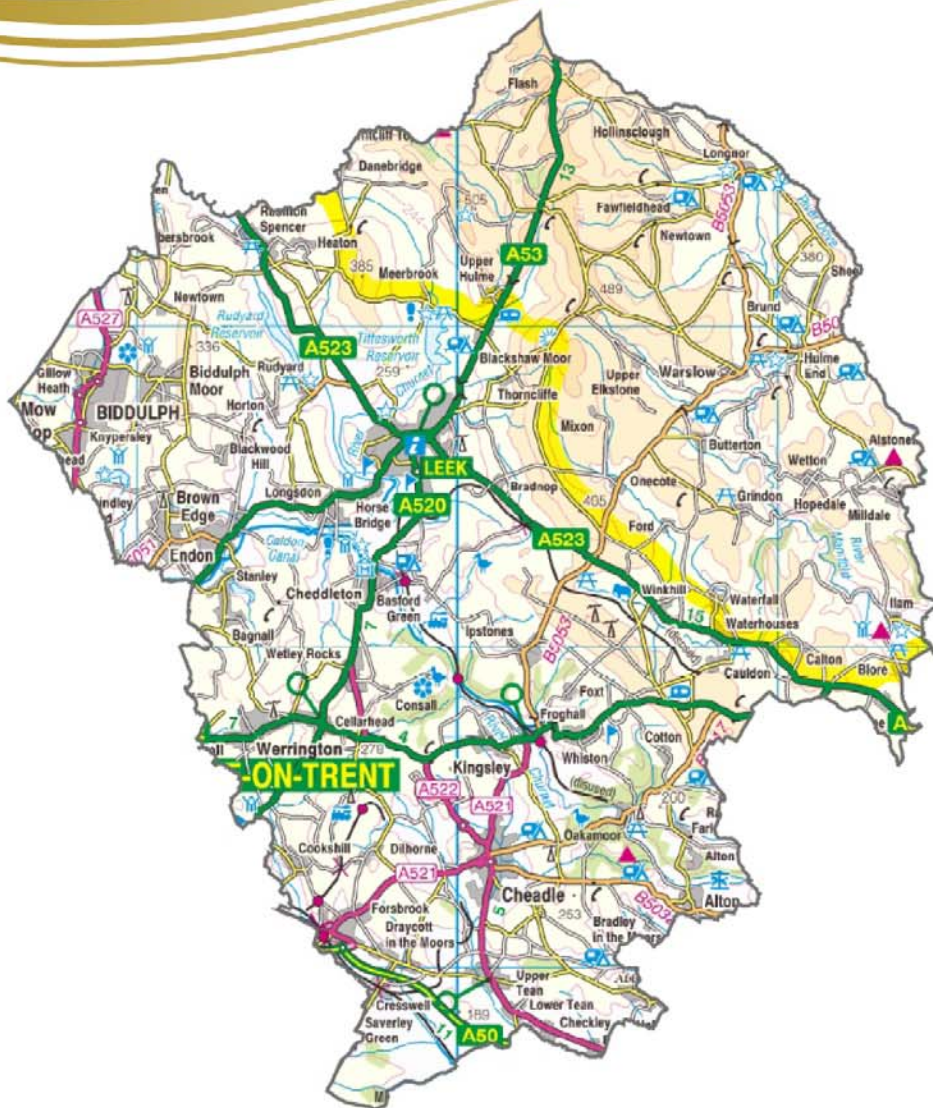


Draft Staffordshire Moorlands District Integrated Transport Strategy 2011 - 2026



DRAFT STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2011 - 2026

District Profile:

Staffordshire Moorlands District is bordered by Cheshire, Derbyshire, Stoke-on-Trent, and the Boroughs of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford and East Staffordshire. It has a population of approximately 95,000 with many communities experiencing an increase in the older age groups. The District is largely rural and eight wards feature in the top 20% most deprived in the UK in terms of access to services. Around 53% of people live in the three main towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle. Tourism also plays an important role in the economy, generating in excess of £122 million each year. About one third of the District lies inside the Peak District National Park and visitor numbers at Alton Towers Resort, at Farley, are predicted to grow over the next ten years.

The A523 provides links to Cheshire and Derbyshire and the A52, A53 and A527 are key routes to the North Staffordshire conurbation and the Peak District. The A520, A521 and A522 also provide access to the A50(T) in the south of the District. Daily bus services provide links within and between the main towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle and inter-urban links to Stoke-on-Trent and neighbouring towns in Cheshire, Derbyshire and East Staffordshire. In addition, Moorlands Connect provides an on demand, flexible service linking the more rural parts of the District into the main towns.

There are 'cross-border' workforce links with the North Staffordshire conurbation with approximately 15% of daily work journeys into the Moorlands coming from the conurbation and about 27% of the Moorlands resident workforce employed in the conurbation. District households have a higher rate of car ownership than the national average and there is a high level of car use by commuters. Approximately 74% drive and a low proportion use public transport, with just 4% of commuters travelling by bus or rail. There is one rail station at Blythe Bridge on the Crewe-Stoke-Derby line.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Draft Core Strategy (May 2009) indicates that 6,000 new homes will be delivered between 2006 and 2026. It is proposed that development will focus on the market towns of Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle and the larger villages, but will allow for limited development of other settlements to meet local needs. The Core Strategy indicates a net requirement for 812 new homes in Leek, 720 in Biddulph and 1,037 in Cheadle, with 850 in the remaining rural areas. Alongside housing, additional employment land of around 24 hectares will be distributed in very similar proportions across the towns and larger villages of the District; and there will be additional retail provision across the town centres. This Spatial Strategy approach is considered the most sustainable option enabling development to be focused on regenerating areas with greatest accessibility and where it can be supported by existing infrastructure or could best facilitate infrastructure improvements.

Transport Achievements:

Biddulph Bypass was opened in October 2003 and forms part of the A527 between Newcastle-under-Lyme and Congleton, superseding the existing road through Biddulph town centre. Its construction has enabled inaccessible brownfield sites to be opened up for re-development and removed through traffic and congestion from the town centre, reducing vehicle/pedestrian conflicts and accidents. This has facilitated further regeneration of the town centre via the adopted Biddulph Town Centre Area Action Plan.

Moorlands Connect was launched in September 2010 by the Moorlands Together partnership. This partnership consists of Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, North Staffordshire Primary Care Trust, Staffordshire Police, Fire and Rescue, Peak District National Park, Staffordshire Moorlands Community and Voluntary Services and other local groups. It is a flexible on demand rural bus service with same day booking and connections to other bus services across the District, improving social inclusion and access to services.

Bus facilities have been improved on Public Transport Partnership routes linking Hanley with Leek and Cheadle and at Leek bus station. Blythe Bridge rail station has been enhanced including improved information, upgraded shelters, cycle parking facilities, CCTV, lighting and Real Time Passenger Information. Facilities have also been brought forward through the North Staffordshire Community Rail Partnership. In addition, Staffordshire County Council is the national leader in discretionary travel allowance. A new travel scheme, adopted in April 2011, allows free 24/7 bus transport to people of pensionable age or with a disability, plus their carer, and under 20s can travel anywhere within Staffordshire for just £1 per journey.

Targets to reduce all categories of road casualties have been achieved in the District through education, enforcement and engineering measures. Safer Routes to School schemes have been introduced at Leek High School, Blythe Bridge High School, Moorside School, Werrington and Biddulph High School with the aim of improving safety for vulnerable road users, reducing social exclusion and increasing accessibility to local schools. A number of local safety and traffic management schemes have been delivered as part of the A53 Route Strategy including new pedestrian facilities and speed reduction measures. Schemes have also been implemented on local roads to Alton Towers, including Vehicle Activated Signing and pedestrian improvement schemes. The Leek West Community Strategy has improved safety for vulnerable road users and reduced vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.

Transport Challenges and Opportunities:

It is expected that there will be a significant reduction in the amount of public money available for transport schemes in the future. With this in mind, a key priority going forward in the next three years, and in the longer term up to 2026, is to make the best use of the existing highway network by focusing on maintaining its condition and ensuring that we continue to reduce road casualties. Accommodating sustainable retail, employment and housing growth will also be required, particularly in Biddulph, Leek and Cheadle, and public transport links to the North Staffordshire conurbation and across the District will be promoted to help to reduce peak hour travel by car.

Town Centre Masterplans for Leek and Cheadle were commissioned by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council with support from Advantage West Midlands and Staffordshire County Council. They identify commercial and employment opportunities on vacant and underutilised land and property, and opportunities to strengthen the role of these towns as service and retail hubs. The Masterplans identify existing transport issues and suggest remedial action including sustainable transport provision. Where feasible and appropriate, the measures identified will be implemented using both private and public funding.

A Masterplan has also been commissioned by Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council for the Cornhill and Barnfields area of Leek to consider options for re-developing the site, including the possibility of a tourist hub. The

Masterplan identifies a number of remediation schemes that would be reliant on private investment, including junction improvements and a new access road.

The District Council's Area Action Plan for Biddulph is focused on the delivery of initiatives that will regenerate the town centre. The plan incorporates a package of public realm and local transport improvements, including footway upgrades, cycling provision and bus facilities to be delivered using a combination of private and public sector funding.

Tourism in the District will be further strengthened by supporting development and growth in the Churnet Valley tourism corridor (including Alton Towers), as outlined in the Churnet Valley Masterplan. The Alton Towers Resort Long Term Plan identifies how the attraction is predicted to grow over the next ten years. The plan proposes a transport strategy that aims to help mitigate the impact of a predicted increase in visitors. Both Staffordshire County Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council have been consulted on this strategy and an Alton Towers Resort Transport Liaison Group has been established to guide its delivery. It is expected that Alton Towers will fund the strategy.

Road injury accident data will be continually monitored and analysed across the highway network. Locations will be identified where consistent accident patterns occur that might be prevented through remedial engineering works. These locations will be investigated to identify the underlying causes of the problems and measures will be implemented if appropriate and justifiable. Local safety schemes such as junction modifications and signing improvements tend to represent good value for money, offering high first year rates of return.

The Divisional Highway Programme for Staffordshire Moorlands gives County Councillors the opportunity to directly input into delivery programmes. Councillors work closely with Community Highway Managers, Parish Councils and other stakeholders to ensure local concerns and challenges are identified and priorities are established, taking into account financial constraints. The Divisional Highway Programme is reviewed twice a year and gives an overview of highway and transport concerns within the local area, such as vehicle speeds, road safety issues and issues concerning heavy commercial vehicles. They are incorporated within the Integrated Transport Strategy if they require capital funding and are proven to meet strategic objectives. Other lower cost road safety and traffic management measures in the Divisional Highway Programme, delivered using revenue resources, will not be specified in this Strategy.

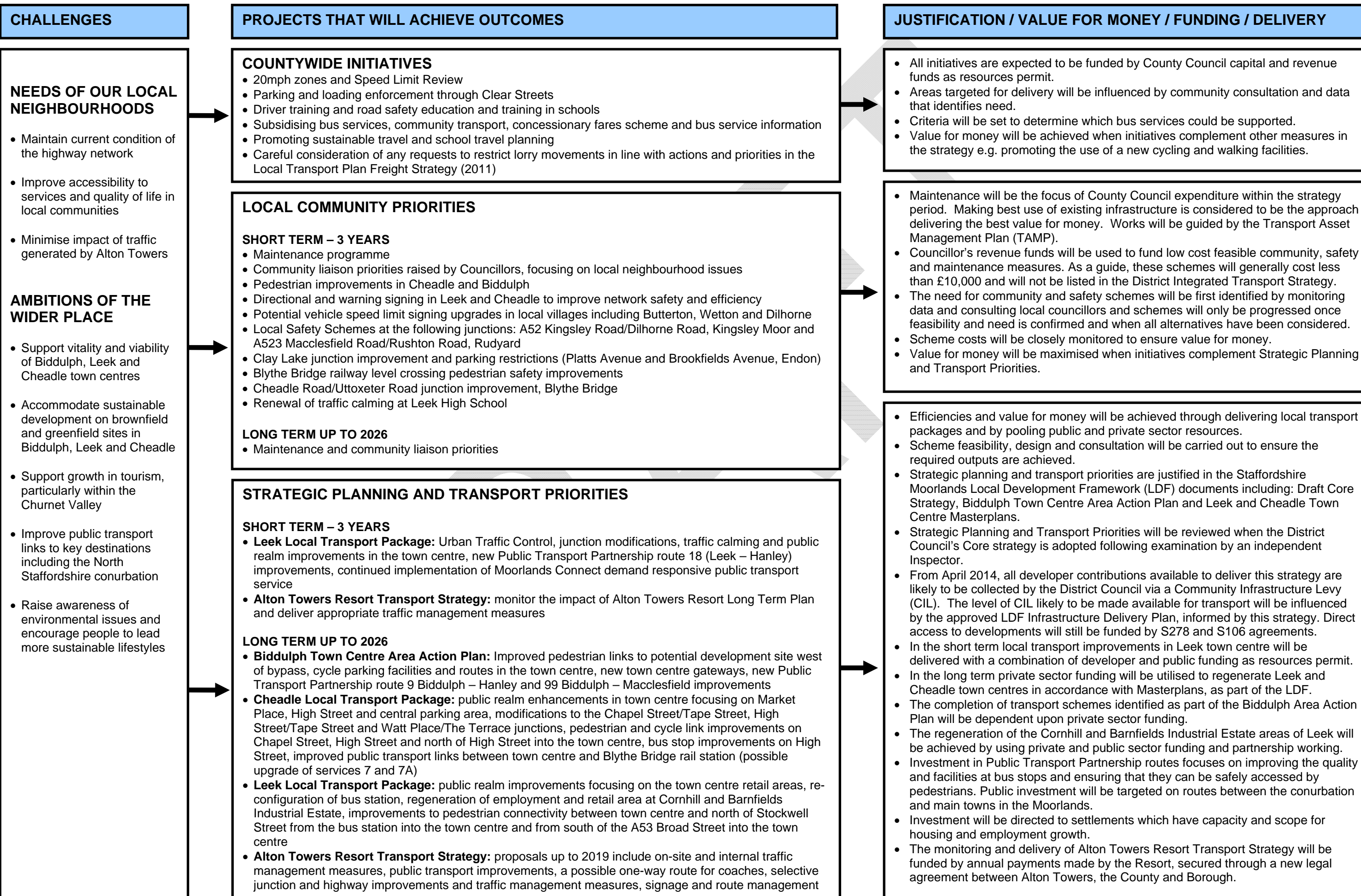
KEY COMMUNITY ISSUES

- **Vehicle speeds and road safety**
- **Safety outside schools**
- **Frequency of bus services**
- **Pedestrian safety**
- **Heavy lorry routing**
- **Upgraded road signs and markings**

KEY STRATEGIC ISSUES

- **Growth and investment in Leek, Cheadle and Biddulph**
- **Support tourism growth in the Churnet Valley**
- **Improve bus links to the North Staffordshire conurbation**
- **Traffic impact of Alton Towers Resort Long Term Plan**
- **Rural accessibility**
- **Encourage sustainable travel**

DRAFT STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2011 TO 2026



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Biddulph Town Centre Area Action Plan Transport Package

Main Plan:

- NCN55 Cycle Route
- Proposed Cycle Routes
- Bus Access Improvements (Biddulph to Hanley)
- Bus Access Improvements (Biddulph to Macclesfield)

Inset A:

- Town Centre Gateway
- Cycle Parking Facilities
- Improved Pedestrian Links
- Highway & Public Realm Improvements

Inset B:

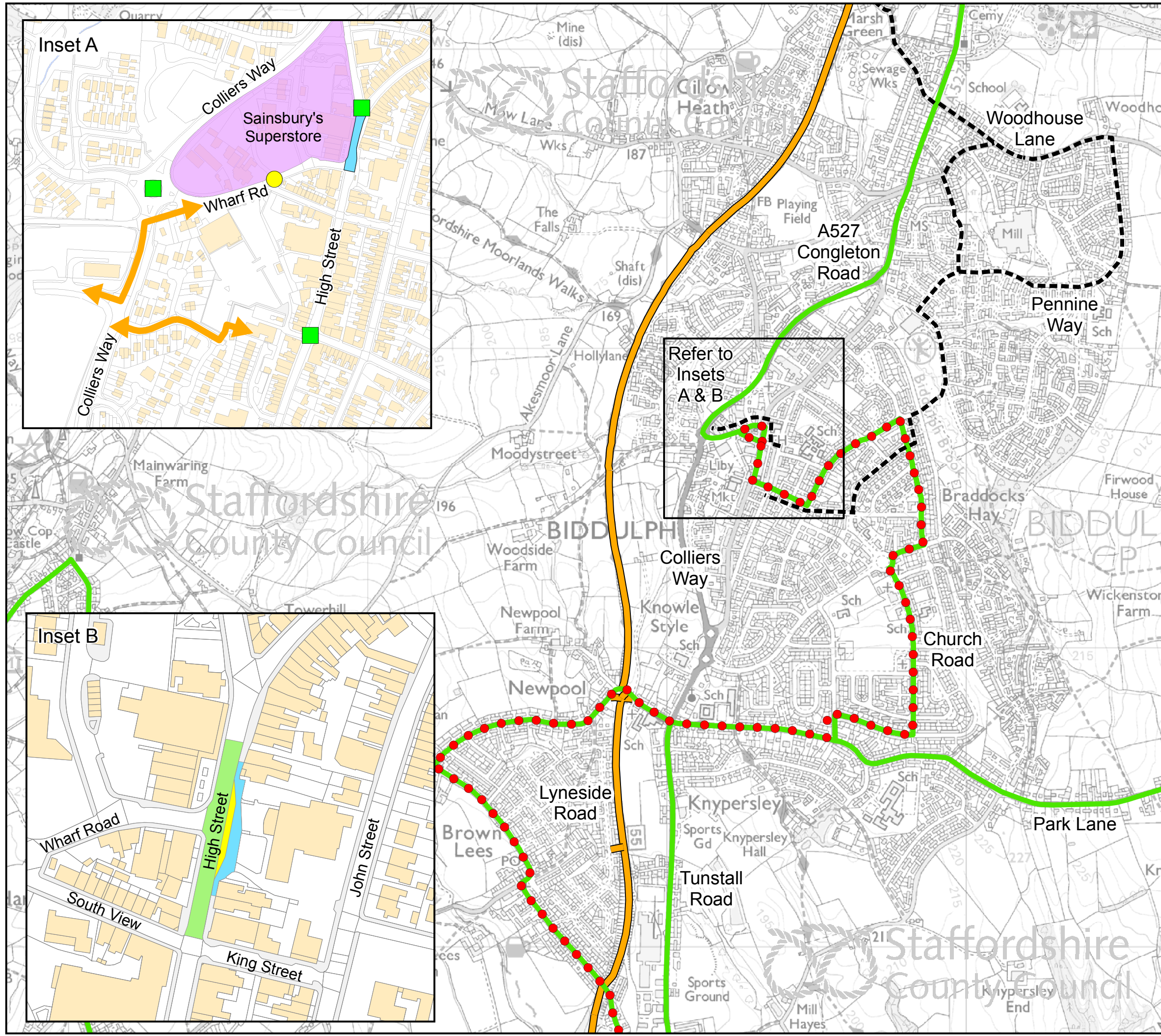
- Carriageway Resurfacing
- Taxi Rank Reconfiguration
- Public Realm Improvements Outside Town Hall

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Cheadle Local Transport Package

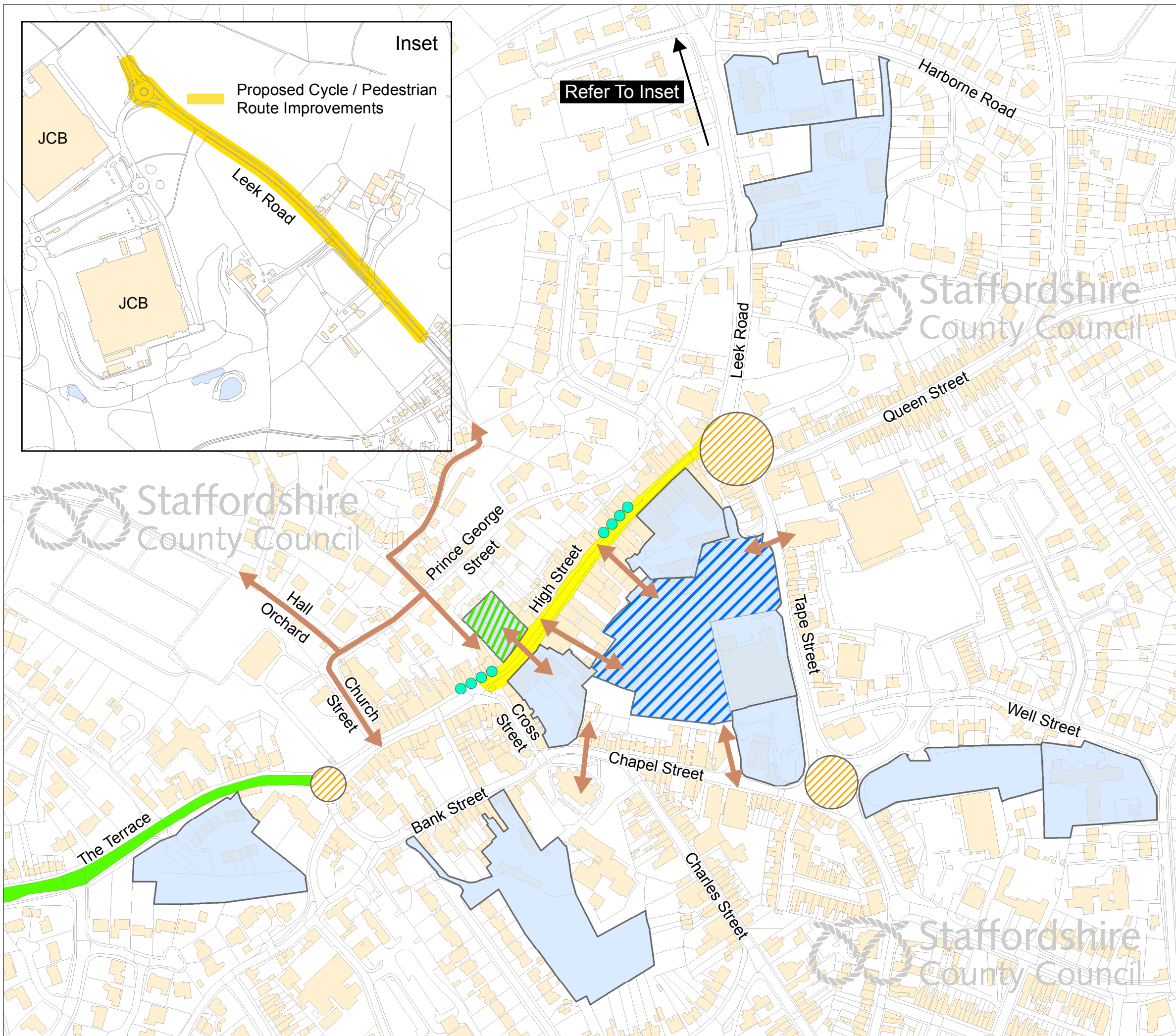
-  Junction Improvements
 -  Bus Stop Improvements
 -  Traffic Calming / Shared Use
 -  Improved Pedestrian / Cycle Links
 -  Improved Public Transport Link to Blythe Bridge Rail Station (Service 7/7A)
 -  Masterplan Development Sites
- Public Realm Enhancements
-  Market Place
 -  Central Regeneration & Car Parking Area

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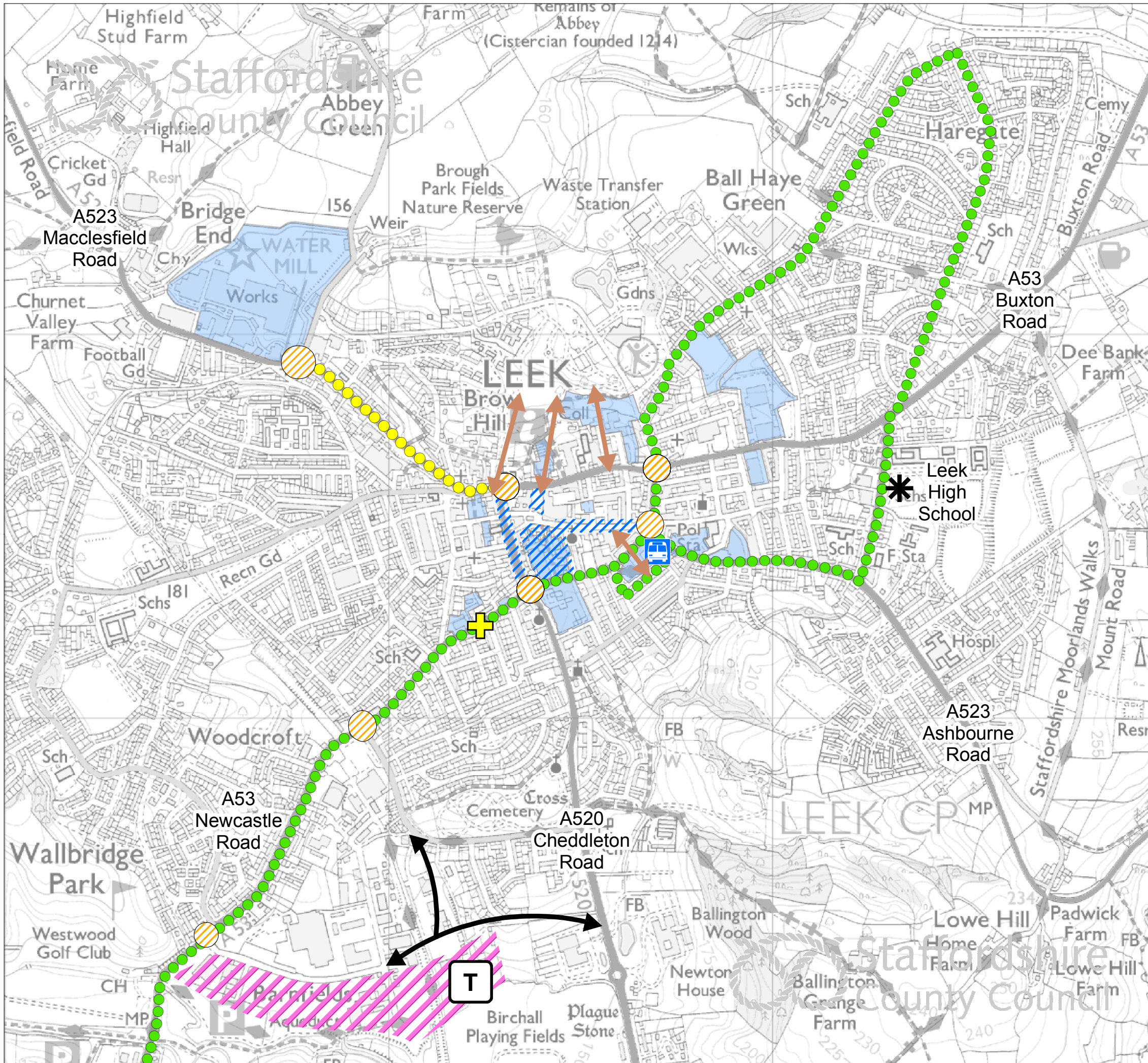
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Leek Local Transport Package



- Junction Improvements
- Reconfigured Bus Station
- Pedestrian Crossing Facility
- Potential Tourist Hub with Improved Public Transport Links
- School Time 20mph Zone
- Potential Options for New Highway Access
- Bus Access Improvements (Leek to Hanley)
- Bus Access Improvements Linked to Proposed Development Site
- Improved Pedestrian Links
- Cornhill & Barnfields Regeneration Areas
- Potential Development Sites
- Public Realm Enhancements / Traffic Calming Improvements

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