

**Traffic Advisory Leaflet 8/98**  
**December 1998**



# The High Street Route, Shrewsbury

## *Introduction*

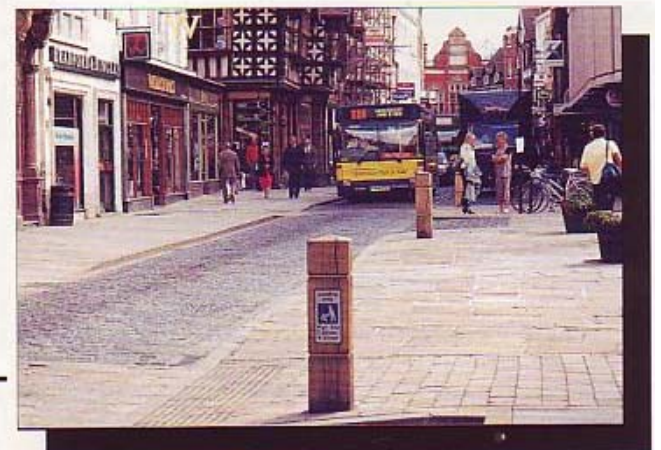
The Historic Core Zones project was initiated by the English Historic Towns Forum. It is investigating how traffic management schemes can be designed to suit areas that have a special historic character. The project is supported by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR), English Heritage, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Civic Trust

English Historic Towns Forum members were invited to submit applications for schemes to be taken forward as part of the project. Schemes in Bury St Edmunds, Halifax, Lincoln and Shrewsbury were selected. The DETR commissioned the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) to monitor the schemes.

This leaflet is based on the results of the TRL research, which is described fully in TRL Report 374. It reports on Phases 1 and 2 of the "High Street Route" in Shrewsbury. Phase 3 of the scheme, which will include Wyle Cop, Bellstone and Barker Street, is to be carried out at a later date.

## *Scheme description*

The medieval core of Shrewsbury lies within a loop of the River Severn. It is a commercial and business centre, as well as containing over 1000 households. Traffic increases in the town, with attendant problems of air pollution,



noise and accidents, has led to concern about the viability of the town centre. As a result, an Integrated Transport Plan was produced in 1994. The aim of the plan is to reduce reliance on the private car; encourage alternative forms of transport such as cycling, walking, and public transport, including park and ride; and maintain and improve access to the town centre.

A major element of the plan is the improvement of the "High Street Route". Phases 1 and 2 of this improvement relate to High Street, Mardol Head and Shoplatch. They form a one-way route for all traffic in the westerly direction between Wyle Cop and Bellstone. Prior to implementing the scheme, daily traffic flows were in the order of 7000 vehicles.

24 hour waiting restrictions existed in a large part of High Street and Mardol Head. In Shoplatch one hour voucher parking predominated.

The scheme involves narrowing the one way carriageway to 3.5m; widening the footways; creating 2.3m wide loading bays, parking bays for "orange badge" holders, and bus stopping bays.

The whole route was made a restricted waiting and loading zone, dispensing with yellow lines. On-street waiting is restricted to the "orange badge" parking bays. The loading bays may be used for waiting after 18.30 hours and all day on Sundays.

Informal pedestrian crossing places (eleven in all) with dropped kerbs and a contrasting surface across the carriageway, are provided at regular intervals along the route.

### ***Carriageway and footway details***

The carriageway and bus bays were surfaced with basalt (Whinstone) setts. The channels were formed in the same material, but with longer blocks.

The loading bays, pedestrian crossing places and bays for "orange badge" parking were

constructed in York stone setts. This provides a contrast in colour and texture with the carriageway surface. A darker coloured sett was used to delineate bays.

Footways were surfaced with fine sawn York stone flags. These same flags with the studs machined from the stone were used as tactile surfaces at the edges of the pedestrian crossings.

Smaller signs to indicate waiting restrictions and parking for "orange badge" holders were specially authorised by the DETR.

### ***Monitoring***

Video filming was carried out to record activities along the route in both the "before" and "after" situations. Vehicle speed and flow data were obtained from automatic traffic counters. 200 interviews with people using the route were carried out to obtain their views on the changes, both after the installation of phase 1 and after the installation of phase 2.

### ***Traffic flows and speeds***

A 29% decrease in the 16 hour daily flow (i.e. from 7,273 vehicles to 5,164 vehicles) occurred following the completion of the scheme. Most of this change followed the completion of Phase 2. During the construction of Phases 1 and 2, traffic was re-routed away from the High Street. It is likely that some traffic has not returned, having found the alternative route more convenient. Apart from the narrowing of the carriageway, there are no other restrictions on traffic entering the High Street. However, because waiting is now restricted during the working day, there is less incentive for those looking for parking places to enter this area.

As a result of the scheme, mean speeds have been reduced from around 17 mph to 10 mph. Similarly, 85th percentile speeds have reduced from around 21 mph to around 14 mph. These reductions relate to the period 1000 hours to 1700 hours on a weekday.



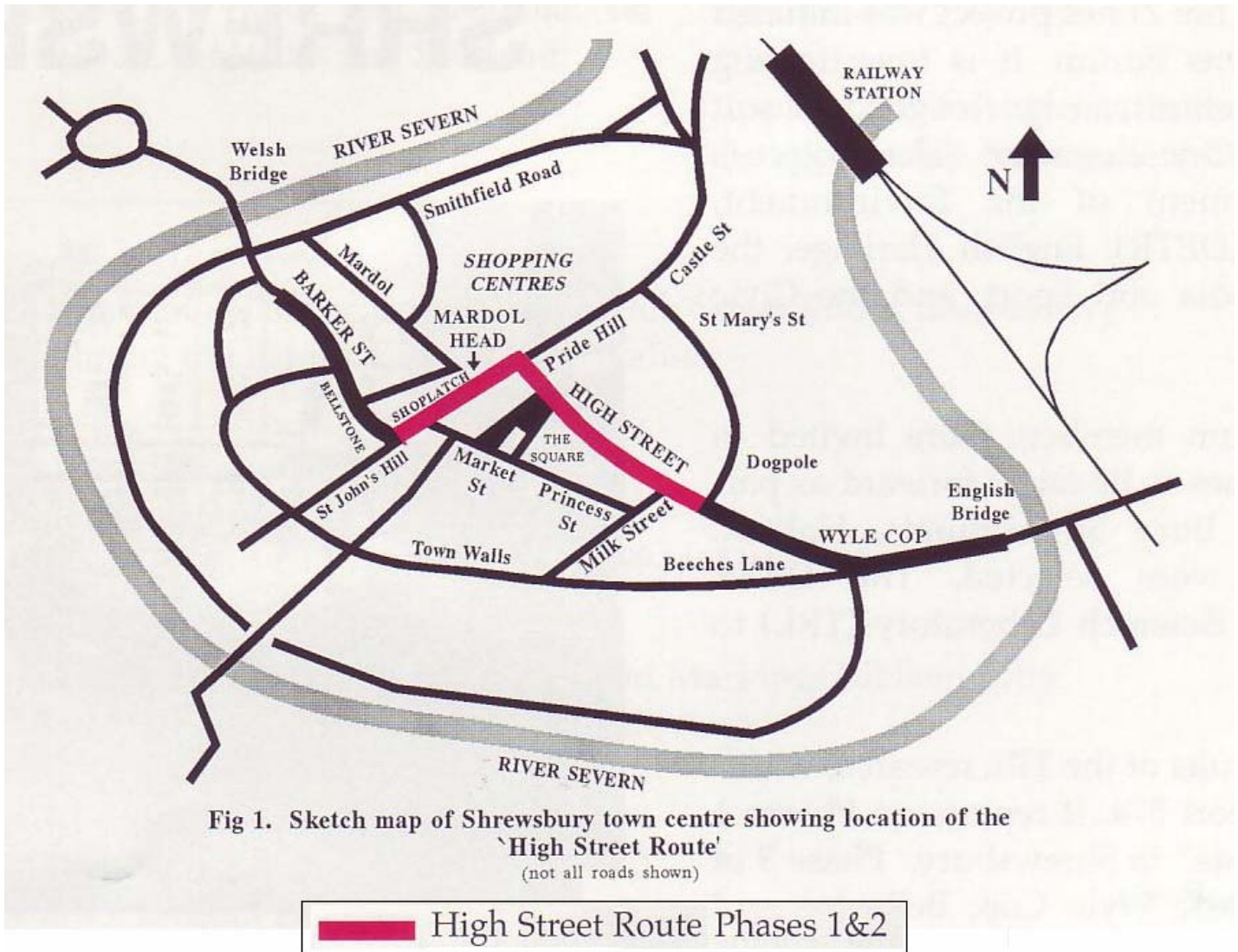


Fig 1. Sketch map of Shrewsbury town centre showing location of the 'High Street Route' (not all roads shown)

### ***Pedestrian activity***

After implementation, the number of pedestrians crossing the road in the area of phases 1 and 2 of the scheme was very similar to the number before.

However, crossing flows in Shoplatch increased by 25%. Some 52% of pedestrians crossing used the informal pedestrian crossing places provided. Wheel chair users were more likely to use the crossings.

### ***Parking activity***

On average, the level of illegal waiting was below that in the "before" situation. Because of the narrow carriageway it is now not possible to wait on the carriageway. However, some unauthorised waiting occurred in the loading and bus stopping bays. The duration of any

illegal parking was short, with only a small percentage exceeding 30 minutes.

### ***Cycling activity***

Only 65 cyclists were observed using the route during the day before implementation of the scheme. This was reduced to 20 after implementation. The reduction seems to be attributable in part to the uneven carriageway surface created by the setts used. Additionally, the narrowness of the carriageway and the proximity of cyclists to other vehicles could also be inhibiting. This is reflected in the attitude surveys where 19 of the 22 respondents who had experience of cycling in Shrewsbury considered conditions had worsened along the High Street Route.





## **Accidents**

Too little time has elapsed since the completion of the scheme for meaningful analysis of any changes. In the 5 year period before implementation 13 injury accidents, of which 9 involved pedestrians, occurred in the area of phases 1 and 2. In the period from completion of Phase 1 (May 1996) until 9 months after the completion of Phase 2 (February 1998), 6 injury accidents, 4 involving pedestrians, have been reported.

## ***General views from the public***

70% of those interviewed thought the scheme had improved the appearance of the town centre, and two-thirds thought it had benefited shoppers. However, only 28% of those interviewed were satisfied overall with the scheme, although half of the rest had no feelings either way. Less than half of regular visitors thought the scheme had benefited pedestrians crossing the road. Three-quarters of respondents thought the scheme adversely affected cyclists, and two-thirds thought it adversely affected drivers. Well under half of the respondents thought the scheme had improved the environmental impact of traffic.

Although disabled people were not asked about specific measures, their responses on overall satisfaction with the scheme were similar to others interviewed.

### **Advice and enquiries**

Advice on conservation aspects can be obtained from local authority Conservation Officers. The regional Historic Areas Advisers at English Heritage are able to comment upon specific proposals, while local history societies and public libraries are useful sources of historical information.

Advice from English Heritage can be obtained from:

English Heritage,  
23 Savile Row,  
LONDON, W1X 1AB.

Tel. 0171-973 3434

In Wales, comments on specific proposals may be sought from Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments, an executive agency of the Welsh Office. In Scotland, comments on proposals may be sought from Historic Scotland, an executive agency of the Scottish Office. These organisations carry out duties in respect of ancient monuments and buildings of historic interest in Wales and Scotland, on behalf of the Secretaries of State for Wales and Scotland.

Enquiries on the details of the "High Street Route", Shrewsbury, can be obtained from:

Rob Surl  
Transport, Policy and Planning,  
Environment Department,  
Shropshire County Council,  
The Shirehall,  
Abbey Foregate,  
SHREWSBURY, SY2 6ND.

Tel: 01743 253132

Professional and technical enquiries on traffic management issues, including traffic calming, should be addressed to:

Department for Transport  
Traffic Management Division  
2/06 Great Minster House  
76 Marsham Street  
LONDON, SW1P 4DR.

Tel. 020 79442974

Applications for signs authorisations should be addressed to the appropriate Government Office for each region.

### **References**

TRL Report 374: Traffic Calming in Historic Core Zones - High Street Route, Shrewsbury  
TRL Report 288: Traffic Calming in Historic Core Zones - Halifax

Highways Act 1980  
Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996/1483)  
Highways (Traffic Calming) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993/1849)  
Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 (SI 1994/1519)

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/93: Voucher Parking  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/94: Traffic Signs, Signals and Road Markings Bibliography  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/96: Traffic Management in Historic Areas  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 8/97: Cycling Bibliography  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 3/98: Traffic Calming Bibliography  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 10/97: Halifax Historic Core Zone  
Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/98: Lincoln Historic Core Zone, Newport Arch

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment - 1994  
English Heritage: Street Improvements in Historic Areas - 1993  
English Heritage: Conservation Area Practice - 1995  
Civic Trust/ English Historic Towns Forum: Traffic Measures in Historic Towns - 1993  
English Historic Towns Forum: Traffic in Historic Town Centres - 1994  
Traffic in Townscape: Ideas from Europe (Civic Trust/ English Historic Towns Forum, 1994)

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Within England, enquiries should be made to: Traffic Management Division, Department for Transport, 2/07 Great Minster House, 76 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 4DR. Telephone 020 7944 2478. E-mail: [tal@dft.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:tal@dft.gsi.gov.uk)