

# Joining People with Places: A Practical Vision for Travel in Shropshire

**A discussion paper co-authored by Sustainable Transport Shropshire  
and relevant groups around the county.**

Shropshire businesses feel they are held back by transport delays and transport costs. Residents and visitors want access to be easy, inexpensive and free from stress.

We want traffic to move much more freely than now, yet it's clear from our history that building more roads doesn't work. We need our roads to be the free flowing arteries for which they are most suited.

That means journeys that can be undertaken conveniently by other means need to shift off the road. **Win win win solutions**....win for the motorist, win for health, win for the environment. That's what we call sustainable.

This paper attempts to link the realities of our current predicament to visionary but practical steps that we can take to make Shropshire the easy access county we all want it to be.

We hope that the paper will be a useful input to the county's strategic travel plan.

## Let's face facts

- We want to be sustainable but we can't imagine life without the car.
- Business depends on motor vehicles to gain or give access to materials, finished goods, and services, and to bring customers to them.
- We need our roads to be efficient conduits. Yet the experience for drivers in towns is not a good one and the highways between have become ever busier with traffic.
- Shropshire's population is growing, but space is not.

Our priority needs to be on making travel easier and more smooth. That means getting off the road the journeys that could just as easily be made another way in order to provide space for those journeys that don't have an alternative—enabling roads to do what they do best. If we don't do this, our towns will grind to a halt and our businesses, economy and people will suffer.

We also need to acknowledge that the huge growth in vehicle use in the last 60 years has contributed to multiple health impacts, the crisis of global warming, and to 'transport poverty' for people without a car particularly in rural areas where access for many has reduced rather than increased.

### **Travel affects individuals and their families differently.**

#### **We need to find ways of making it easier and more flexible to needs.**

**Jane** lives in Copthorne in Shrewsbury. She used to cycle with her daughter to primary school, with her 2 year old in tow. Now that her youngest is also school age she's only been offered a school place on the other side of town. In order to get everyone delivered in time she now takes the eldest by car, then races around town to get to no.2 child's school. This is their new routine ten times a week. Jane would love to not use her car; now her children no longer get the exercise or confidence boost of going to school under their own steam, and Shrewsbury's school traffic has been added to further.

**Geoff** lives in Oswestry and drives to work at a small industrial site three miles away. He's fit and at weekends jogs, and sometimes walks or cycles for leisure. He's considered cycling to work but ruled it out because the roads are busy with traffic morning and evening, and there's no facilities at work.

**Isabel** used to work in her nearest town but had to give up work because of the withdrawal of all bus services to her village. When she moved there buses ran several times each day to Bridgnorth and to Ludlow. Later they changed to a dial up service twice a week between 9.30am and 3pm on a 'first come first served' basis, and then that was withdrawn. Today the only public transport is from volunteer clubs a couple of hours twice a week. This doesn't meet her needs or of others who want to work. Meanwhile, schools coaches under contract to Shropshire Council and Social Services minibuses continue to operate through her village.

## Key insights

- **Space.** Not every transport mode needs the same space. The pictures below illustrate the space needed for 40 people to travel by car, bus, walking, bicycle/e-bike. Vehicles on the move require additional space to avoid collisions. Car parks will need access and manoeuvring areas too.



- **Europe.** Successful cities of northern and central Europe have something in common: they have tamed their urban landscapes through a planned reduction in the use of cars and the space allocated to them with convenient, cheaper, more attractive alternatives. By enabling people to choose top quality methods for getting around their typical journey share is about a quarter each for walking, cycling, public transport and private car. Our target should be for towns that work well<sup>1</sup>.
- **Bigger roads do not deliver free flowing traffic.** Our own experiences tell us that motorways aren't always quick<sup>2</sup>: the eight lane M25 now averages only 25mph, the M4 30mph. Bypasses have consistently failed to deliver freedom from congestion as roads quickly fill up. Counterintuitively, fewer roads can lead to less traffic.

### What happened in Dogpole?

Road works closed one of Shrewsbury's through routes for 6½ weeks in 2008. Instead of traffic chaos people walked or cycled, or used a different route. It's a common phenomenon ('disappearing or evaporating traffic'). All parts of Shrewsbury saw a reduction in traffic except for St Michael's Street. Many more people walked into town and most shops reported being busier<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Bordeaux and Utrecht <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-south-east-wales-40802955>

<sup>2</sup> [www.satrakvehicltracking.co.uk/blog/uks-slowest-motorways-revealed-satrak/#comment-128](http://www.satrakvehicltracking.co.uk/blog/uks-slowest-motorways-revealed-satrak/#comment-128)

<sup>3</sup> Shropshire Council report on the Dogpole closure of 2008

## Unlearning the past

The number one way to make life better for us when we need to use the car is to get as many people as possible out of theirs.

The number two way is to make traffic flow even and less stressful.

Numerous and rather expensive road building schemes have failed to deliver free flowing traffic<sup>4</sup>; and neither have poor quality and unsafe cycle ways. There are proven alternatives: ones which have made it possible, desirable even, to use walking and cycling for shorter journeys, backed by integrated public transport, freeing precious road space for car journeys where the alternatives are not convenient.

Low cost cycle infrastructure does not make potential users feel safe. Here's an example near the Shirehall.



### Why is active travel important for health?

Obesity is a problem and lack of physical activity is a major health risk. Our heart and cardiovascular system and mental wellbeing depend on regular exercise. Walking and cycling are convenient ways for people to incorporate regular physical exercise into busy daily routines.<sup>5</sup>

### Good for business

Retailers value 'footfall': people who walk or cycle browse and pop in. Shoppers and visitors prefer towns without the noise, fumes and annoyance of traffic. Businesses want efficient deliveries that don't get held up: if many local journeys are made by foot, bike or bus that frees roads for essential business purposes. In a survey<sup>6</sup> of businesses in Shrewsbury town centre the majority were in favour of peak time closure of the High Street so long as essential deliveries could still get through.

<sup>4</sup> [cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england](http://cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england) and [transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Beyond%20Transport-Infrastructure-supplementary-report%20Aug2006.pdf](http://transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Beyond%20Transport-Infrastructure-supplementary-report%20Aug2006.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [gov.uk/government/publications/economic-case-for-active-travel-the-health-benefits](http://gov.uk/government/publications/economic-case-for-active-travel-the-health-benefits)

<sup>6</sup> Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth and Bus Users Shropshire joint survey of businesses in Shrewsbury High Street, Mardol Head and Shoplatch 2015

# The four main travel modes for people

## Walking

Walking<sup>7</sup> is such a ubiquitous activity that it is often not regarded as a transport mode at all. However, even in highly motorised societies, it is an important component of almost all trips and in most places it still remains an important mode in its own right.

Walking 'does not pollute, consumes few natural resources and is highly efficient. Walking is convenient, it needs no special equipment, is self regulating and is inherently safe'.

Walking is also very complex. Anyone who has observed pedestrian movements, interviewed people about their motivations and perceptions as pedestrians and tried to plan according to their needs knows the intricacies associated with walking. Creating good urban spaces requires knowledge of the characteristics of walking and the needs, abilities and wishes of pedestrians.

'Walking is the first thing an infant wants to do and the last thing an old person wants to give up. Walking is the exercise that does not need a gym. It is the prescription without medicine, the weight control without diet. Walking is as natural as breathing.'  
John Butcher, founder of Walk21

## Pedal power: bicycles and e-bikes

Cycling has most of the positive attributes of walking—non polluting, efficient, convenient, low cost— but with greater range and speed. Bikes and e-bikes can provide the fastest end-to-end journeys in towns, and can also be a leisurely and sociable method of travel. They need little space to park and large numbers can navigate junctions in a short period of time. E-bikes are rechargeable from the mains in most domestic situations and make little demand on the national grid. The majority of car journeys are of less than five miles meaning that bikes and e-bikes can have a big impact to reduce traffic in towns and in rural areas freeing up space on roads—if high quality safe-feeling routes are provided.

### Are bikes and walking practical?

In England more than half of car journeys (56%) are of less than five miles<sup>8</sup>—a bike ride of under 25 minutes. With Shropshire's towns being so compact most town journeys are shorter than this. Walking and cycling aren't prone to traffic delays. Buses, taxis and car club cars can provide a backstop alternative. Battery assisted e-bikes help in hilly terrain.

<sup>7</sup> CIVITAS The high potential of walking. [http://civitas.eu/sites/default/files/civitas\\_insight\\_08\\_high\\_potential\\_of\\_walking.pdf](http://civitas.eu/sites/default/files/civitas_insight_08_high_potential_of_walking.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf) page 28

## Public transport: buses and trains

Buses need little specialist infrastructure and are flexible as to route but they have a poor public perception especially among car owners. Where they have comfortable waiting areas, up to date timing information, integrated ticketing, modern equipment and well trained staff a regular, reliable and inexpensive bus service will obtain high satisfaction and usage levels. Buses carry many more people than trains but are the ‘Cinderella’ when it comes to public subsidy.

In Shropshire there is scope for a much more integrated system of buses with trains using regular ‘clock face’ timetables. The inter-town bus services and train lines of Shropshire could provide a backbone to a county network.

### An example of a ‘clock face’ timetable

Monday to Saturday

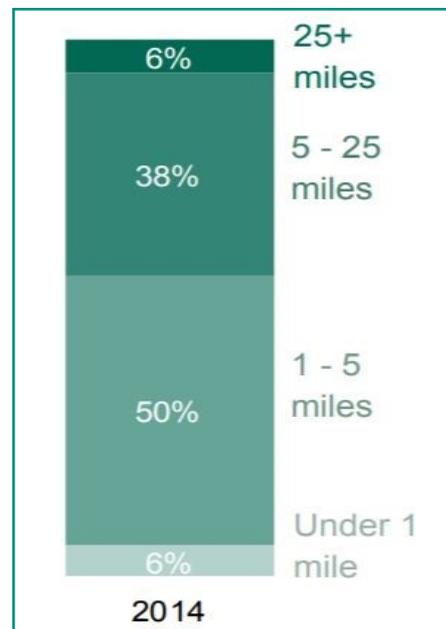
Alphatown Square	dep	0723	0823	23	and at same
(connections from/to Betavillage)					times each
Charlietop Cross	arr	0741	0841	41	hour until

## Cars

In many ways cars are the long distance and all weather equivalent of the private bicycle. They have improved their reliability and comfort levels enormously since the 1950s and ‘60s, and the safety of their occupants. They are flexible and convenient; but when present in large numbers these attributes are lost and their space requirements exceed the capacity of roads. Their speed and weight relative to people walking or cycling makes them potentially dangerous and inhibiting to other prospective road users.

Shared cars through ‘car clubs’ or ‘lift sharing’ schemes have the potential to reduce the space requirements of cars, while edge of town car parks backed by regular ‘park and ride’ bus services help reduce their numbers within town centre areas. Electric cars eliminate engine noise and tailpipe emissions but have the same space requirements as oil fuelled cars. Concerns have been expressed that the national grid may not cope with charging an equivalent number of electric cars.

DfT data<sup>9</sup> from 2014 shows that most car journeys (56%) are of less than five miles: these are the journeys that need to be looked at to free up our roads.



<sup>9</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/514912/road-use-statistics.pdf) page 28

## Setting a target

### What if our target was an equal split between travel modes?

If there are no target dates, agreed plans can be delayed indefinitely, or put on hold while other short-term measures are adopted instead. If there's a target date which isn't achieved, there's a chance to review why not and reassess how to move forward.

An approximately equal split between the four travel modes (car, public transport, walking, cycling) has been achieved in the best European cities. The overall target will need refining recognising the significant differences between our largest towns and rural areas.

## Some **outcomes** for the Shropshire of the future

### 1. More space on existing roads, more people out of their cars

- Car, van and lorry drivers are enabled with clear routes which in towns emphasise use of existing bypasses, distributor and ring roads.
- So far as possible, by careful planning journeys and through traffic in towns have both been reduced.
- There is free parking on the outskirts of towns from where express buses operate frequently and inexpensively to the town centre.
- A network of routes enables people to make the shortest possible journey when using public transport or active travel (on foot, cycle etc).
- Investment spend on different modes has been made more equal.
- Freight deliveries in towns are co-ordinated to minimise disruption and health impacts.<sup>10</sup>
- Shropshire emphasises the importance of moving progressively to equalise transport modes. Shropshire Council as the planning and democratic representative authority leads actively to ensure this is achieved.

### 2. Smoother, easier journeys free from stress

- Shropshire will be an attractive, healthy place to live, work and visit, with a thriving economy.
- Business has benefitted from the pleasant, calm and accessible town environments.
- People move about easily in equal freedom whatever their age, ability, intention or method of travel. The available space is used well to make this movement as safe and pleasant as possible.
- Networks have been integrated so that people may confidently mix and match modes of travel.
- Regular 'clock face'<sup>2</sup> bus services feed into regular 'clock face' trunk routes and rail services at transport interchanges in every town. Villages are connected to these interchanges by local feeder services.

<sup>10</sup> [freightinthecity.com/topics/last-mile-deliveries](https://freightinthecity.com/topics/last-mile-deliveries)

## Some ideas for what we need to achieve these goals

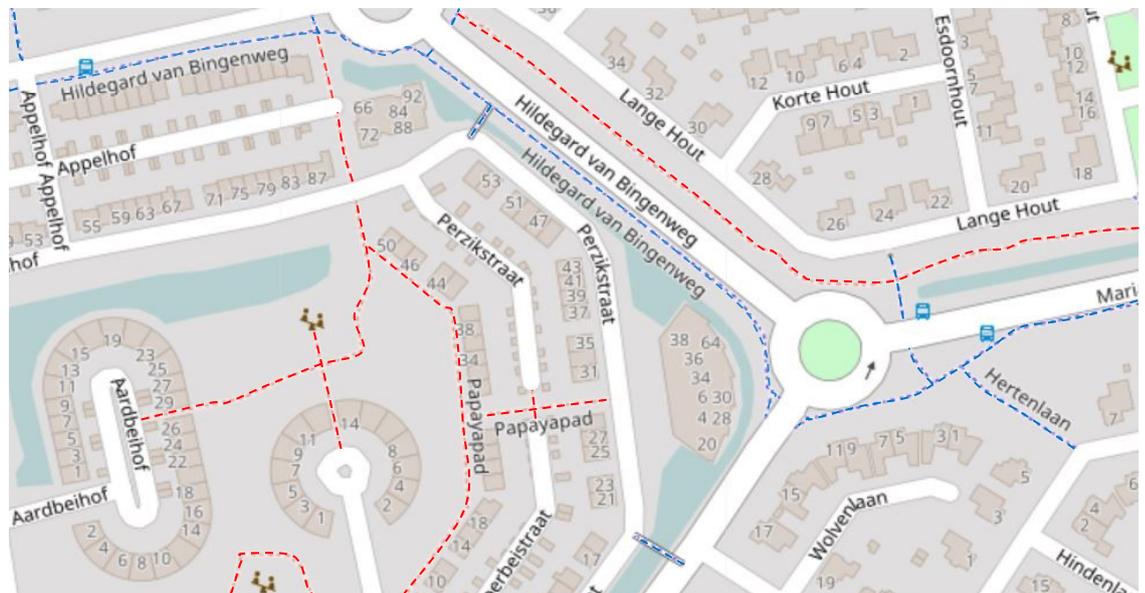
Freeing road space, more people out of their cars

- Priority roads for people in cars, vans and lorries, enable people and freight to make best use of by-passes, distributor and ring roads.
- Residential streets prioritise people on foot and bike over car movement.
- A comprehensive safe network of routes that crisscross towns to give people the confidence to go on foot or on bike using direct, convenient, safe and pleasant routes all the way to where they want to get to. A mix of route types including quiet residential cul-de-sacs and segregated cycle routes make every section feel safe. In towns like Shrewsbury this will involve additional or improved bridges and subways across rivers, railways and roads. Priority should be given to routes that serve schools, colleges, shops and work places.



- Invest further in car club and car share schemes that reduce need for parking space, building on the successful schemes in Shrewsbury and Ludlow. Develop an electric bike scheme. Car share and e-bikes have centrally located locations including at railway stations.
- A lift share scheme that matches car journeys with potential passengers.
- Equalise spending across different travel modes. As fewer vehicle journeys are made so road maintenance spending can reduce.

An example from Assen in the Netherlands. Red and blue routes for walking or cycling, with short cuts between shared use residential cul de sacs. Bridges and subways avoid conflicts with busy roads and keep everyone moving freely, including cars.



## Smooth and easy travel

- 20mph speed limits as the default for towns and on all roads in places where people live. Bypasses and roads between towns will have higher speed limits.
- A bus network with live information and smart, clean shelters at stopping points that offer a 'clock face' service 7 days a week. Integrated ticketing, value fares with contactless payment. Buses are newer and use electric motors in towns.
- A rail network with 'clock face' timetabling to enable integration with bus services. Buses wait at train stations for easy passenger connections. Lifts at stations enable passengers to use pedestrian bridges to access platforms.
- Town centres reserved mainly for people on foot or on public transport.
- Covered and secure bicycle and e-bike parking at railway stations and bus interchanges.
- Build on the present success of improving air quality by reducing the number of polluting vehicles. Provide some electric charging points for residents in the Victorian housing belts that surround town centres.

### What's so good about 20mph?<sup>11</sup>

Smoother less stressful driving

Cuts pedestrian deaths seven fold

Children under 14 cannot cross faster roads safely

Gives people confidence to cycle and walk (active travel)

Less noise and pollution from engines, tyres and dust

## Funding change

Transforming Shropshire's connectivity will take political will, democratic participation and money. Other parts of the UK have bid successfully for additional funds from several sources. In Shrewsbury today we are spending more than £20m on road and signage improvements funded from DfT's Growth Fund and from developer contributions. We need our plans worked out and 'ready to go' in deliverable chunks.

<sup>11</sup> [sustainablecityessustainableworld.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/20-reasons-for-20mph.html](https://sustainablecityessustainableworld.blogspot.co.uk/2016/05/20-reasons-for-20mph.html)

## About us

This document was developed by Sustainable Transport Shropshire working in partnership with others from around the county.

Sustainable Transport Shropshire was formed in June 2016 from people who use all types of transport in Shropshire. We aim to help inform public discourse and decision making to promote a liveable, connected, healthy and successful county. We acknowledge the realities and believe that sustainable travel is key to accommodating current and future growth in population and journeys while ensuring the continued success of our businesses, towns and villages. In this situation we *can* have our cake and eat it. The cake of easy, free-flowing motor traffic through the eating of healthy active travel and great public transport.

To contact Sustainable Transport Shropshire please email [sustainabletransportshropshire@hotmail.com](mailto:sustainabletransportshropshire@hotmail.com)

## Further reading

Economic and financial benefits of active travel:

[urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/reports/case-active-travel](http://urbantransportgroup.org/resources/types/reports/case-active-travel)

2017 DfT strategy:

[gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy](http://gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy)

Electric bikes for cities and towns:

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/aug/04/fewer-cars-not-electric-cars-beat-air-pollution-says-top-uk-adviser-prof-frank-kelly>

A guide to civilising city streets:

[ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/streets\\_people.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/pubs/pdf/streets_people.pdf)

Healthy transport:

[who.int/heli/risks/urban/transportpolicybrief2010.pdf](http://who.int/heli/risks/urban/transportpolicybrief2010.pdf)

Fairness:

[sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/fairness\\_car\\_dependant.pdf](http://sd-commission.org.uk/data/files/publications/fairness_car_dependant.pdf)

Research into road schemes:

[cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england](http://cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/4542-the-impact-of-road-projects-in-england)

[transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Beyond%20Transport-Infrastructure-supplementary-report%20Aug2006.pdf](http://transportforqualityoflife.com/u/files/Beyond%20Transport-Infrastructure-supplementary-report%20Aug2006.pdf)

# Appendix

## Proposals for individual towns

So far, Sustainable Transport Shropshire has received inputs in relation to eight towns. We would also welcome contributions for Cleobury Mortimer, Ellesmere, Market Drayton, Much Wenlock, Oswestry, Shifnal and Whitchurch.

Here are the suggestions for the eight towns for which we have so far received inputs:

### Bishops Castle

- New bus routes to connect Bishop's Castle to Craven Arms and Church Stretton and to make connections with rail services at both those stations.

### Bridgnorth

- Bus shuttle to Telford train station.
- A clear air quality action plan to improve air quality. Shropshire Council has a legal responsibility to improve air quality in Bridgnorth and has not done so. The air quality 'tool kit' includes workplace travel plans, school travel plans, improved walking and cycling infrastructure, car share, e-bikes, lift share and improvements to public transport.
- A big improvement in cycling facilities and cycle lanes.
- Extend park and ride.

### Broseley

Suggestions from Broseley Town Council include

- Buses to go to Telford station, Princess Royal hospital and to Shrewsbury.
- Selective parking restrictions to ease passage of buses.
- 20mph speed limit in town centre.

### Church Stretton

- 20mph speed limit on the B5477 road from All Stretton to Little Stretton.
- A traffic free High Street.
- New bus services to Bishop's Castle, Much Wenlock and Bridgnorth.
- A re-modelling of the access road to the railway station to give much more dedicated space to pedestrians.
- Lifts to be installed at this station.
- Buses to include a stop at this station.

### Cleobury Mortimer

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Cleobury Mortimer.

## Craven Arms

- 20mph speed limit on the A49 from the school to the north of the town centre to the Discovery Centre to the south.
- A remodelling of the main roundabout on the A49 in the centre of Craven Arms following the best practice example of Poynton in Cheshire.
- Much improved segregated pedestrian footpath from A49 to the railway station.
- Much improved lighting at the railway station.
- Lifts to both station platforms.

## Ellesmere

Suggestions from Ellesmere Town Council include

- Buses to Wrexham and Whitchurch, particularly at commuting times.
- Improved connections between buses and trains at Gobowen.
- Additional bus shelters and a coach parking area.

## Ludlow

- Pedestrianisation of mediaeval core of Ludlow starting with King Street.
- Closure of the Market Square car park and its replacement by high quality public realm/space and additional parking at other car parks so no net loss.
- Major public space remodelling of the frontage of the railway station to the main road. This will include a clearly marked, continuous, segregated pedestrian route connecting the frontage with the doctor's surgery (uphill) and the turning to the Brewery (downhill). There will also be clearly marked drop-off parking spaces and dedicated bus lay-by and much improved lighting and seating and tree planting including more seating and shelter space on both platforms.
- Lifts to both platforms.
- A clearly marked and high quality walking route from the station to the newly pedestrianised King Street including a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing across Station Drive.
- Bus shelters at all locations where survey data shows five or more passengers waiting for a bus on a regular basis.
- An improved park and ride service on event days.

Ludlow's bus terminus. Sheltered waiting areas that are clean and bright are needed if a transport network is to achieve its potential.



## Market Drayton

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Market Drayton.

## Much Wenlock

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Much Wenlock.

## Oswestry

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Oswestry.

## Shifnal

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Shifnal.

## Shrewsbury

- Exception to be made to default 20mph speed zone in Robertson Way, Bage Way, Pritchard Way, Hazeldine Way which should be 30mph.
- Maximise use of existing by-passes and ring roads to minimise vehicle traffic close to the town centre. Ensure cycles have shorter, more direct routes to make these competitive on time and convenience with other vehicles.
- Develop a parking strategy that 'rewards' drivers who leave their cars on the outskirts of the town. Re-launch Park and Ride with a more frequent service and competitive costings compared with town centre parking.
- In residential areas introduce simpler residents' parking arrangements to protect space for local residents.
- Programme bus station and shelter cleaning and maintenance to ensure these are always presentable.
- Introduce 'live' bus departure boards at bus stops.
- Simplify bus use with integrated ticketing and contactless payment.
- Open up the railway station to travellers: create a new pedestrian access from the car park in Howard Street; re-open the pedestrian way from Abbey Foregate onto platform 3.
- Rejuvenate the station forecourt area into a place for people with gardens and cycle parking.
- Create a direct walking route from the railway station across the forecourt to the bus station.
- Remove on-street parking from the town centre except for registered disabled users. Retain loading and unloading bays.
- Progressively make the historic town centre 'pedestrian friendly' with vehicle access retained for residents, disabled users, electric buses, electric taxis, and delivery vehicles.

## Wem

Suggestions from Wem Town Council include

- Extend route of 201 bus service to include all housing estates.
- Improve lighting and hedge cutting along Drawwell Walk.
- 20mph speed zone.
- Pedestrian/cycle bridge over railway line to provide routes from east side of the town.
- Relocate station for better access and to shorten level crossing closures.
- Bypass of town centre to east side of railway line.

## Whitchurch

We look forward to receiving suggestions for Whitchurch.