

# Cheltenham Transport Plan

## Economic & Environmental Case

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The funding for what has become known as the Cheltenham Transport Plan was secured from the Department for Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2011 and is an agreed objective for CBC and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) as reflected in the GCC Local Transport Plan (LTP) – specifically the 2015-2031 Implementation Report 2017. Specific objectives are set out at 2.1.CPS1 - Central Severn Vale Connecting Places Strategy – 2.1.5 Cheltenham Transport Plan. The Cheltenham plan also contributes to other targets e.g. LTP PI – 9 Increase use of bus and more recent initiatives such as the Department for Transport Cycle & Walking Investment Strategy 2017, which aims to make cycling & walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. GCC is identified as a pioneer authority and will be in the first wave to produce a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- 1.2 Additionally the implementation of phase 4 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan is listed in the CBC interim corporate strategy 2018-2019, adopted unanimously by CBC on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2018. More recently (January 2019) the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence says roads should be "safe, attractive and designed" to help people use their cars less. Transport systems and the wider built environment can influence people's ability to be active and NICE deputy chief executive Gillian Leng added: "Getting people to be more physically active by increasing the amount they walk or cycle has the potential to benefit both the individual and the health system whilst the Department for Transport said its own guidance "is crystal clear that street design should explicitly consider pedestrians and cyclists first".
- 1.3 To date the implemented phases of the transport plan have been judged by their impact on the performance of the town road network, as measured by the 27 traffic movement monitoring points and supported by *blue tooth* enabled journey time analysis. To respond to emerging policy guidance, additional measures have also been included, such as improved bus punctuality impacts and access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.4 As we are now in the trial of the last phase, it is possible to start assessing the economic impact of delivery of the wider transport plan. Like the traffic impacts, it is necessary to consider evidence from a range of sources.
- 1.5 A starting point has been the original Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bid submitted in 2011, which was supported by an economic impact assessment prepared on Treasury 'Green Book' guidance principles. This assessment considered both Boots' corner in Cheltenham and also King's Quarter in Gloucester, but the focus of this note will be limited to Cheltenham.
- 1.6 A significant premise of the LSTF proposals was to benefit retail turnover. It reflected earlier retail studies, which highlighted that poor pedestrian linkages between key town centre sites were a cause of high retail vacancies and an inhibitor to investment.
- 1.7 At the time of the bid to the Department for Transport, the proposed changes to the Cheltenham road layout were supported by local business and economic development stakeholders, following consultation undertaken by CBC as part of an earlier programme entitled Civic Pride.
- 1.8 The proposal to reduce the negative impacts of the ring road and ultimately limit vehicular access at Boots' Corner, whilst improving access for pedestrians, cyclists and buses, was seen as a tool to stimulate business investment generally in the town centre.

## 2. Update

- 2.1 Clearly, the world has changed significantly since 2011, in particular the world of retail, with significant closures in town centres, driven by the impact of on-line retail, the recession, aggressive 'company voluntary agreements' etc. The landscape has changed, irrespective of the Cheltenham Transport Plan and this is reflected in the MHCLG Future High Streets Fund initiative.
- 2.2 The strategy for the town centre/High Street post-recession has been similar to that contained in the Portas Review. 'They (High Streets/Town Centres) should become places where we go to engage with other people in our communities, where shopping is just one small part of a rich mix of activities.'
- 2.3 This recognition, that retail is a component of the wider mix necessary to achieve a vibrant town centre, has already been fully embraced in Cheltenham. The elements, other than retail, successfully supported in this period include town centre living (residential) at the Brewery and Regency Place, leisure notably at the Brewery Quarter, food & beverage across the whole town centre and employment uses with some major successes such as the conversion at Formal House, new build at Honeybourne Place and the planned refurbishment at the Quadrangle. Cheltenham also has a buoyant night time economy and has secured Purple Flag recognition of an evening and night-time economy which is appealing, welcoming and safe between the hours of 5pm and 5am.
- 2.4 The Treasury Green Book analysis predicted that the Brewery scheme would generate a mix of A1 (retail) and C1 (hotel) employment, based on the intervention scenario and in line with English Partnership's additionality guidance, took account of a range of effects for the project, including.
- 2.5 Deadweight (output that would have occurred without the intervention);
- Displacement (the proportion of intervention outputs accounted for by reduced outputs elsewhere in the target area);
  - Leakage (the proportion of outputs that benefit those outside of the intervention target area); and
  - Multiplier (further economic activity - jobs, expenditure or income) associated with additional local income, local supplier purchases and longer term effects.
- 2.6 The total number of additional direct jobs was estimated to be 420 and indirect 174, the latter being based upon a formulaic approach within Treasury guidance. Total anticipated jobs generated was therefore 594.
- 2.7 In addition, the construction programme itself initially estimated at £25m for the shell and core was expected to generate 154 temporary person years' worth of construction employment. In reality a further £10m of expenditure was incurred on the shop/office fit outs generating another 62 temporary person years' worth of construction employment.
- 2.8 The actual outputs for this individual scheme are noted below, recognising that the scheme contained a 30,000ft<sup>2</sup> office component, not originally envisaged.
- 2.9 Actual outputs are: retail 155 direct jobs; hotel, leisure, food & beverage 76 direct jobs; office 300 direct jobs. Total direct jobs 531 against a target of 420, with a consequent uplift in indirect jobs of 46, plus 216 temporary person years' worth of construction employment (with a focus upon local contractors, Kier and Barnwood). So clearly exceeding the 2011 estimates with 26% more jobs created.

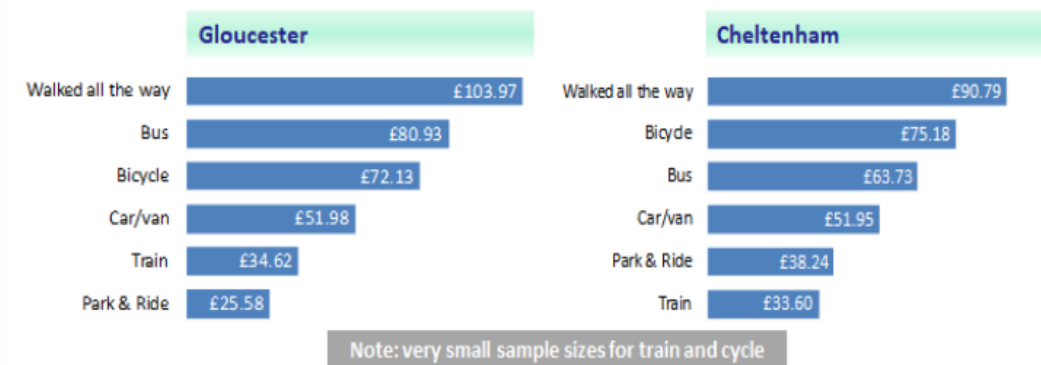
### 3. Additional Factors

- 3.1 In addition to the direct jobs associated with the Brewery, we know that the LSTF has delivered wider benefits. The new John Lewis store (115,000ft<sup>2</sup>), at the other end of the High Street to the Brewery was predicated upon delivery of the first phase of the Cheltenham Transport Plan, and this has generated circa 200 new direct jobs, as well as 143 temporary years' worth of construction roles, based upon a construction value of c£23m.
- 3.2 There have been ancillary benefits from the LSTF too, such as town centre living. The Brewery delivered 34 new residential units and Regency Place, 164 units, located on the first phase of the Cheltenham Transport Plan (Albion Street), which has benefited from traffic calming, improved cycling and public service access.
- 3.3 Whilst the initial scheme was predicated upon a complete delivery scenario, it was decided to phase the scheme in order that each phase could be tested prior to further phases being delivered. Whilst this has elongated the programme and the current phase is a trial, it has not seemingly dented external assessments of the potential of the town, with Knight Frank citing Cheltenham High Street as #9 out of 200 places to invest in 2017 and Colliers International Midsummer retail report 2018 noting:
- 3.4 'Polarisation between the 'best and the rest' retail locations is becoming increasingly apparent throughout the UK and this is no different for the South West. The dominant centres in the region, such as Bristol, Bath, Cheltenham, Exeter and Plymouth, continue to benefit from good levels of demand and relatively low levels of vacancy. An example is Cheltenham, where rents remain unchanged from 2017 and the town will welcome a new 115,000 sq. ft. John Lewis department store in October of this year.'
- 3.5 Coupled with this has been a resurgence in office demand and whilst other factors have been at play, the ambitions of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, as a government backed programme are clearly visible. LSTF aimed to encourage modal shift and this can be evidenced by schemes such as the Formal House conversion from storage to office space, which commands some of the highest rents in town, but has zero car parking. A situation that any commercial agent would have said was impossible a decade before, but which reflects a growing trend for employees to consider other modes of transport beyond private motor vehicle ownership. For this to be effective requires a commitment to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, as demonstrated by the Cheltenham Transport Plan.
- 3.6 Another measure often quoted is that of footfall, which has often been regarded as a proxy for spend; however, more recent research has demonstrated a causal link. Research released by Transport for London in November 2018 claims that people walking, cycling and using public transport spend more than motorists in local shops. TfL's "Healthy Streets Approach" designs streets for people that are easy to access by foot or bike; in these improved areas the number of people walking has increased by 93%, whilst time in the street (shops, cafes etc.) increased by 216% with a consequent knock-on for rental values by 7.5% and a 17% decline in retail vacancies.
- 3.7 This corresponded with a study undertaken independently by Accent in 2014 jointly funded by GCC and Stagecoach The Economic Impact of Public Transport in Gloucestershire exploring the travel patterns and spend of consumers in Cheltenham and Gloucester. This covered pedestrians, cyclists, bus patrons, car users and train passengers. This identified:
- Walk was most frequently used access mode followed by bus;
  - That those who access a centre by bus, visit the centre about twice as often as those who access by car;

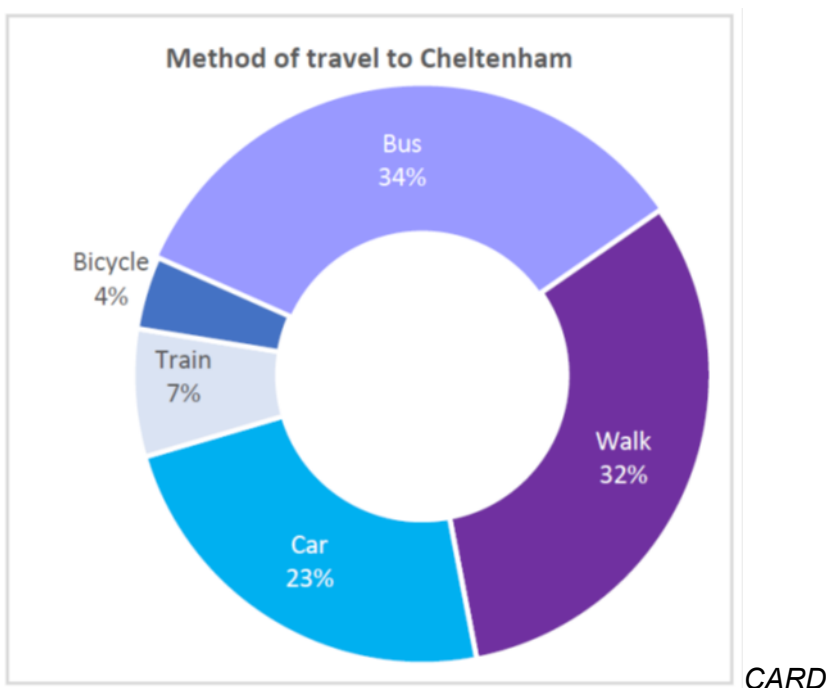
- Bus users spend more time in the centre than non-bus users and eat/drink out more;
- The most frequent activities in each centre were;

	Glos	Chel
– Shopping	62%	61%
– Eating/drinking out	18%	18%
– Using service	16%	14%
– Work there	15%	15%
– Window shopping	8%	12%

- Weekly spend by mode;



3.8 Before considering the data for Boots’ Corner specifically, it is worth noting a Cheltenham BID survey undertaken in September-November 2016, identifying the modes of travel that the public deployed for their journeys to the town centre. This independent survey by CARD (Client Analysis and Relationship Development) identified that less than one in four town centre users came to Cheltenham by car, the majority arriving by bus, or on foot. The majority of drivers were residents living within or near Cheltenham. This conclusion is very similar to research carried out by GCC prior to the Cheltenham Transport Plan, that estimated that the majority of vehicles passing through Boots’ corner were registered within 3 miles, suggesting that it was not necessarily a lifeline for the High Street / town centre, but simply a connecting route, that did not necessarily contribute to the vibrancy of the High Street; in fact, given the severance at Boots’ Corner it was potentially detrimental to the performance of the High Street.



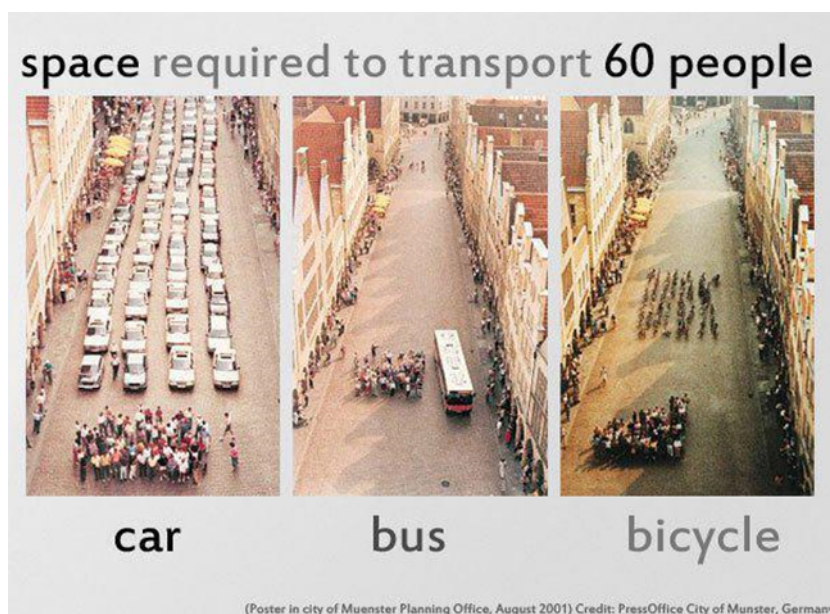
- 3.9 Specific data for Boots' Corner, as measured by an independent data collecting company, equally shows impressive pedestrian growth. Also, where works have completed, as at the Brewery, strong quarterly performance has been recorded since the start of phase 4 (the Boots' Corner trial) with significant footfall growth, reflecting both the wider High Street adjustment to include leisure and food & beverage and the greater connectivity associated with the trial. 15% year on year growth since the start of the trial contrasts strongly with the national position.
- 3.10 The data for Boots' Corner recorded across 4 weeks commencing 11th June 2018 (prior to the trial); 2nd July 2018; 8th October 2018 and 12th November 2018. This recorded pedestrian movements, cycle movements, individuals sitting down, wheelchair users and bicycles parked.

<b>Week commencing</b>	<b>11/06/18</b>	<b>02/07/18</b>	<b>08/10/18</b>
<b>Pedestrian numbers</b>	14,657	27,008	31,695
<b>Cycle movements</b>	220	674	694
<b>Sitting down</b>	1223	1455	2025
<b>Wheelchair users</b>	48	74	82
<b>Bicycles parked</b>	269	168	263

- 3.11 This data collected independently by G.John Surveys Ltd demonstrates an increase in excess of 100% pedestrian movement at Boots' corner since Cheltenham Transport Plan Phase 4 was implemented, which equates to 700 more pedestrian movements across Boots' Corner per hour. Equally, cyclist movement has increased by 215%, equating to 22 more cyclist movements across Boots' Corner per hour. This aligns with GCC LTP PI – 8 to increase the use of cycling within the County by 50% from 2015-2031. The number of people sitting in the space has also increased despite the later counts moving into less favourable weather for outdoor seating. Wheelchair use in the vicinity has risen by 70% which contradicts concerns raised by blue badge holders and noted in 4.2 below. Cycle parking fell when the railings were removed and before the new temporary racks were installed, but positively cycle parking occupancy at Boots' Corner has almost been restored to pre-trial level even though cycling and hence cycle parking tends to reduce over the winter months.
- 3.12 The wider footfall data sets for the Cheltenham town centre are not fully conclusive as a result of the disruption along the High Street and interference with the recording cameras; notably, as a result of the John Lewis development and public realm works. Whilst the records suggest a year on year slowdown which aligns with national trends, there has been no discernible change associated with Boots' Corner.
- 3.13 Maintaining bus patronage is a target for the GCC Local Transport Plan. Data produced by Stagecoach shows that Cheltenham's bus patronage has increased by 5,000 person journeys per week since the start of the trial; this excludes the Park & Ride contract recently taken over by Stagecoach – so is purely on a 'like-for-like' basis. Equating this to 'potential vehicle movements avoided' can be undertaken by utilising the Department for Transport vehicle occupancy data. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/nts09-vehicle-mileage-and-occupancy#history> The data for "all purposes" for 2017 (most recent data) gave a national occupancy of 1.55 persons per vehicle, although for commuting this fell to 1.16 persons per vehicle. On this basis, an additional 5,000 person journeys per week has probably resulted in between 3,225 to 4,310 fewer private vehicle movements per week on the network. This aligns with the GCC LTP 'Thinktravel' initiative that promotes sustainable travel, notably a reduction in

single occupancy car journeys with the principle of the 4 R's – Reduce, Retime, Reroute, Remode – in order to avoid the most congested times and locations on Gloucestershire's transport network. An example of this in action has been the Cheltenham BID arrangement with Stagecoach to provide discounted tickets for BID staff employees to encourage staff who have the option to consider more sustainable travel options.

- 3.14 Whilst difficult to visualise, an exercise in Munster Germany in 2001 encapsulates the scale of road space that can be released through traffic mode re-assignment – see images below. This increase in bus patronage in Cheltenham is neither mirrored across Gloucestershire, or nationally, where a general 2% decline has been recorded. So to achieve growth of 4% in a declining market is an impressive result and reflects a mixture of investment in the fleet, service improvements, marketing and the impact of the Cheltenham Transport Plan. Whilst the GCC LTP Performance Indicator 9 aims to maintain the number of bus passenger journeys, Cheltenham is leading the field with tangible growth.

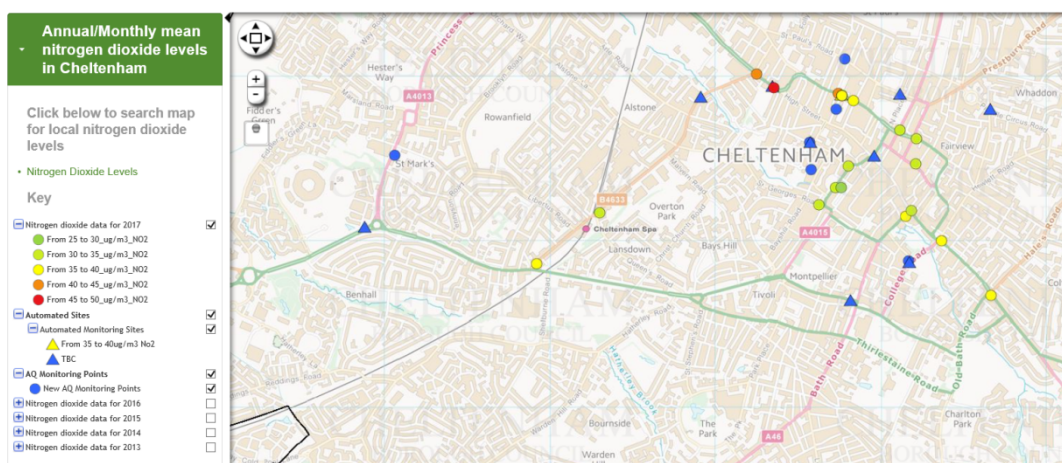


- 3.15 Equally important as bus patronage is bus punctuality, as this is a key determinant for many passengers. Stagecoach punctuality data in Cheltenham, as measured by GPS bus monitoring, has improved since the trial began, with 93.1% of buses on time since the trial began compared to a previous figure of 91.5% i.e. buses late running has dropped from 8.5% to 6.9%. This may appear a small improvement, but has to be considered against the 50,000 miles per week that Stagecoach buses drive in Cheltenham every week.
- 3.16 A further example of improved punctuality due to the trial was seen in November with the race meeting at Prestbury. Buses that had historically taken an hour to travel from the racecourse through town to the station and then return, were achieving the same journey with a 15% time saving.
- 3.17 Modal shift also has wider benefits, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, consuming fewer non-renewable resources, saving on fuel costs, as well as significant health and well-being benefits, notably impacts upon childhood obesity and life expectancy. The stage 1 phase of the Cheltenham Transport Plan on Albion Street illustrated this with route B being the main beneficiary of the changes with its 7,000 passengers per week. Use of the new bus lane saves about 1,500 miles per annum, equating to a fuel saving of 190 gallons of diesel. The shorter route allows everyone travelling on the B from the London Road and Charlton Kings area to arrive in the town centre about 2 minutes quicker than they did before the bus lane was completed.
- 3.18 Additionally, in the case of Cheltenham with its large conservation area, modal shift will contribute to the protection and enhancement of the distinctive character of Cheltenham. For further



evidence of how space can be reclaimed by vehicle movement reduction, consider Queens Square, Bristol and the 1992 trial closure of the central dual carriageway that used to bisect the Square. The trial was deemed a success and Queens Square was restored to its former glory.

- 3.19 The Cheltenham Transport Plan should be viewed as part of a wider and longer term sustainable development programme and is reflected in emerging policies both nationally and locally to deal with new developments. It is already accepted that developments at west and north-west Cheltenham need to be connected to the rest of the town via sustainable corridors – cycle routes, bus routes etc.
- 3.20 Whilst modal shift may be positive at a macro level by reducing the overall generation of pollution, CBC has been monitoring pollution at a more localised level to reflect the existing challenges within a town centre environment. Current monitoring suggests that the picture has improved from when CBC first declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Whilst background circumstances have assisted, such as the availability of more hybrid vehicles, local actions have also had impacts. These include the Stagecoach upgrades to Euro6 compliant buses and Local Sustainable Transport Fund engagement measures to help individuals, families and employers consider their travel patterns and openly encourage alternatives to private vehicle transport. The council is currently undertaking air quality monitoring beyond the statutory requirements of the Act, in order to provide better data in relation to the Cheltenham Transport Plan, and has responded to concerns raised by installing additional monitoring points, as shown on the diagram below.



- 3.21 CBC has started to publish monthly reports of data from gas mesh pods, alongside the annual nitrogen dioxide data. Additionally, CBC has commissioned a 'Detailed Assessment' of local air quality and anticipates that the results will be received in Spring 2019. The intention is to review the existing AQMA based on this study and the legislative process will be followed accordingly. This might result in the existing AQMA being amended and a new local Air Quality Action Plan being produced to accompany this, setting out how the Council and partners intend to reduce current levels of air pollution within that area.
- 3.22 CBC is also part of a countywide Air Quality & Health Partnership facilitated by the County Council, which aims to deliver a consistent monitoring approach and behavioural change interventions across Gloucestershire.
- 3.23 GCC LTP Performance Indicator 13 aims to reduce levels of traffic derived Nitrogen Dioxide. For Cheltenham they cite 4 monitoring points of concern; 81 London Road (since removed as an area of concern) and 2 Gloucester Road, 422 High Street and New Rutland Court/Swindon Road (3 monitoring points in one area of concern), however more additional monitoring has been implemented to respond to concerns associated with phase 4 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan.

- 3.24 In terms of access to the town centre by car, there have also been numerous changes, as the Council pursues its parking and town centre access strategy, which was adopted in June 2017.
- 3.25 The authority realigned its parking pricing arrangements in March 2018, to facilitate a more level playing field when considering the cost of car use against other more sustainable transport modes, particularly bus use. Not all prices have been increased, but the policy does seek to discourage commuters from occupying town centre public parking spaces all day, whilst allowing improved access for shorter stay customers of the retail and service economy. In December 2018, GCC cabinet amended its on-street charges to better align with the CBC parking policy.
- 3.26 Pricing policy has also sought to encourage a better distribution of parking occupancy across the Council's own parking estate, whilst also setting a benchmark against which private providers can set their own tariffs.
- 3.27 Given the range of local authority parking changes and the evolving town centre offer, it is too early to draw firm conclusions from parking data, but for the April to September period in 2018, gross parking income to the authority increased by 7.6% compared to the same period in 2017. This certainly does not support a view that the Cheltenham Transport Plan is having a negative impact on town centre visits.

#### **4. Potential Disbenefits**

- 4.1 The initial phases of the Cheltenham Transport Plan were generally received positively, and for example, phase one demonstrated improved bus access times, greater cycling and reduced vehicle speeds. Any concerns raised through the early phases were mitigated through traffic management measures.
- 4.2 The Phase 4 trial has identified issues not previously raised. These are noted below.
- 4.3 Restricted access for blue badge holders, although prior to the trial more bays were introduced in the town centre. Options of shopmobility, lowering floor buses (n.b. all registered local bus services are low floor) and wheelchair accessible taxis do allow direct access to specific shops if required. Whilst these options exist, there is a need for better signposting for vulnerable users to ensure that the full range of options can be considered. Whilst some shoppers have suggested taking their spend to other centres, it is recognised that many other centres have restrictions at least as onerous and in some cases more restrictive than the Cheltenham Transport Plan phase 4 trial circumstances, e.g. Worcester, Bath, Oxford and Gloucester. GCC are actively seeking additional dedicated blue badge bays to allay concerns.
- 4.4 Loading and unloading issues, specifically in Clarence Street and Clarence Parade. It is understood from engagement with traders and GCC that a solution to meet their needs will be implemented in early 2019.
- 4.5 Traffic displacement impacts. The economic impact is difficult to gauge as there were existing and frequent hold-ups at peak times prior to the trial. Full details will be contained in the GCC traffic analysis when published. What the trial has done is to identify the pinch points and some potential remedies. However, as most prosperous towns and cities accept, an element of congestion is the price of high performance and should not be a justification for simply prioritising private cars over other users. The folly of building bigger and wider roads in towns simply to accommodate more one car/one passenger traffic is above and beyond the purpose of the LSTF funding, which was to encourage modal shift.
- 4.6 Pollution monitoring data identifies that the hotspot centred on Poole Way, which existed prior to the trial remains and further mitigating actions will be required. Initial results from additional monitoring in other locations identifies that some areas have increased pollution, levels but they remain below the EU and national trigger levels where interventions are required (with the possible exception of the northern section of Princess Elizabeth Way). Further data will be available in the Spring of 2019.



## 5. Summary

- 5.1 Whilst significant time has lapsed between the original bid and the implementation of the trial, it would appear that the outputs anticipated as a result of planned investment aligned with network changes has resulted in economic growth. These can broadly be summarised as follows.
- 5.2 **Retail impact** – notwithstanding the ‘draw effect’ of the new John Lewis store and the cachet for the town, other significant retailers have been drawn to the town. Retailers are very sensitive to changes that could impact upon their performance and given the number of new entrants generated since the start of delivery of the Cheltenham Transport Plan and the implementation of the phase 4 trial, such as Urban Outfitters, Luke, Everyman Barbers, The Botanist, India Jane and the retention of other names being lost elsewhere e.g. House of Fraser, one can conclude that retailers are optimistic about the change of direction being driven by the joint CBC/GCC initiative. Additionally, some elements buck national trends, such as Next completely rebuilding their store on the High Street, contrary to their national policy which favours ‘out of town’ or ‘edge of town’ locations e.g. as at Gloucester.
- 5.3 **Investment** - the linkage between the Blackrock / John Lewis investment at the former Beechwood shopping centre and the importance of phase 1 of the Cheltenham Transport Plan, demonstrates how importantly major investors consider traffic flows and town centre performance as part of their due diligence. It is anticipated that further investment will follow if the overall performance in the town centre can be maintained, especially given the footfall data and attraction of places such as the Brewery Quarter.
- 5.4 **Parking** – whilst often quoted as a barrier to town centre performance, the data for CBC-operated car parks does not demonstrate any collapse in patronage over the years that the transport plan has been implemented, or since the current trial. Equally, neither price adjustments nor the significant quantum of town centre construction work experienced over the last four years, has seemingly affected car park performance.
- 5.5 **Business confidence** – this is always difficult to measure and comment upon due to commercial confidentiality, however, the evidence from agents, investors and end users, as noted in 3.0 above, is mirrored by enquiries direct to CBC from operators wishing to locate in the town.
- 5.6 **Traffic flows and modal shift** – GCC will report on traffic flows in more detail as part of their detailed traffic impact analysis, but in terms of modal shift, it is pleasing to note that Stagecoach has reported a significant uplift in bus patronage and improved bus punctuality. The new social space created as part of the temporary package of works at Boots’ Corner itself has been extensively used and pedestrian movements have more than doubled at Boots’ corner itself, essentially reclaiming street space for the people.
- 5.7 **Spend** - no hard data exists to substantiate a true position, but previous studies elsewhere have demonstrated a causal link between modal shift, dwell time and spend per person. On the basis that evidence for modal shift exists and dwell time in the town centre is rising, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the general effect can only be positive on the array of traders; be they retail, food, beverage or entertainment. Clearly, there are also macroeconomic factors which will impact on spend, regardless of the local changes being pursued (e.g. Growth in on-line shopping, Brexit uncertainties etc.)

## 6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Cheltenham Transport Plan is clearly delivering both adopted and emerging national and local policy and guidance on the need for streets to prioritise pedestrians first.
- 6.2 On the evidence so far available, the delivery of the Cheltenham Transport Plan suggests that Cheltenham is consolidating and improving its position as a regional town centre, with an inspiring mix of vibrant uses, supported by CBC as planning authority and GCC as highways partner. The

Transport Plan, aligned with other initiatives, is achieving the regenerative effect predicted and from an economic perspective, it can be concluded that the Cheltenham Transport Plan phases, including the trial at Boots' Corner have had a positive impact on the town centre, which has maintained and enhanced its vibrancy as a retail and social destination.

- 6.3 The number of direct jobs associated with the Brewery investment has surpassed original estimates, which in turn drives higher indirect jobs too, due to the formulaic linkage. An initial predicted estimate of 594 in total compared to 751. In addition, other investments such as the former Beechwood Arcade have resulted in new employment opportunities, with the investment decision linked to elements of the Cheltenham Transport Plan delivery.
- 6.4 Monitoring systems related to traffic flows will be considered in detail by GCC, but pedestrian, cycling and bus patronage data, suggest that modal shift is occurring as individuals are re-evaluating their options for journeying into the town centre. So the plan is contributing to the wider GCC LTP delivery.
- 6.5 Pollution monitoring continues, but to date levels remain below EU and national trigger levels, with the likely exception of Poole Way, a pre-existing hotspot.
- 6.6 Modal shift has long term benefits, including improving health and well-being as well as assisting transport network resilience. Additionally, the temporary works at Boots' Corner have encouraged extended dwell time, which is often linked to overall spend and commercial performance.
- 6.7 Evidence from elsewhere, suggests that the process of change can be challenging, but no urban areas have reversed traffic removal or traffic restriction schemes once embedded; the 1988 Promenade pedestrianisation scheme was controversial at the time, but no-one would now suggest that traffic should be re-introduced to that space.
- 6.8 Future opportunities can only be considered once a determination has been made on the trial. However, if the trial were to be made permanent, then it would be possible to consider and bring forward further measures to enhance the town centre. Potential options include reducing the number of vehicles, although that could pose a risk to accessibility for some, or reducing the impact of the vehicles allowed, for example, by restricting the space to Euro 6 electric vehicles, or alternative fuel vehicles only.