



March Broad Street FHSF

WCHAR Assessment Report

Fenland District Council

31 January 2022



Notice

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1. Background

The March Broad Street project, delivered for Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, is a redevelopment of the March Town Centre, including both highway and public realm improvements. It aims to achieve a more accessible, attractive and safe public realm incorporating a variety of changes.

The site is located towards the centre of March, on the junction between Broad Street (B1101) and Station Road (B1101)/Dartford Road (B1099). The site forms part of March's main shopping frontages and is lined by several retail and food establishments. Broad Street also holds a historic fountain structure at the northern end, and a war memorial at the southern end. Both of these features are to be retained and made a centre piece contributing to the attraction of March as a destination.

The proposed scheme is planned to provide the improvements as listed below. A snapshot is shown in Figure 1-1, however for the full general arrangement of the scheme, please refer to Appendix A.

- The reallocation of road space to remove car parking (which is currently situated within a 'central reserve' between the north and southbound carriageways) and provide a single, two-way carriageway.
- The provision of new public realm to the west of Broad Street between Dartford Road and to the south of Gray's Lane, including the Riverside area.
- Removal of car parking from the central 'reserve' and relocation of taxi ranks to existing/modified on street parking bays.
- The creation of two new 2.75 metre (m) wide bus stops on Broad Street.
- The provision of four new Zebra crossings; three single stage and one split stage crossings.
- The relocation of the March fountain to within the new public realm.
- Improve footway surfaces and remove guard railings where possible.
- Improve pedestrian crossing facilities across Broad Street.
- Review cycle parking provision in Broad Street to provide more convenient and secure Sheffield stand provision on both sides of the street.

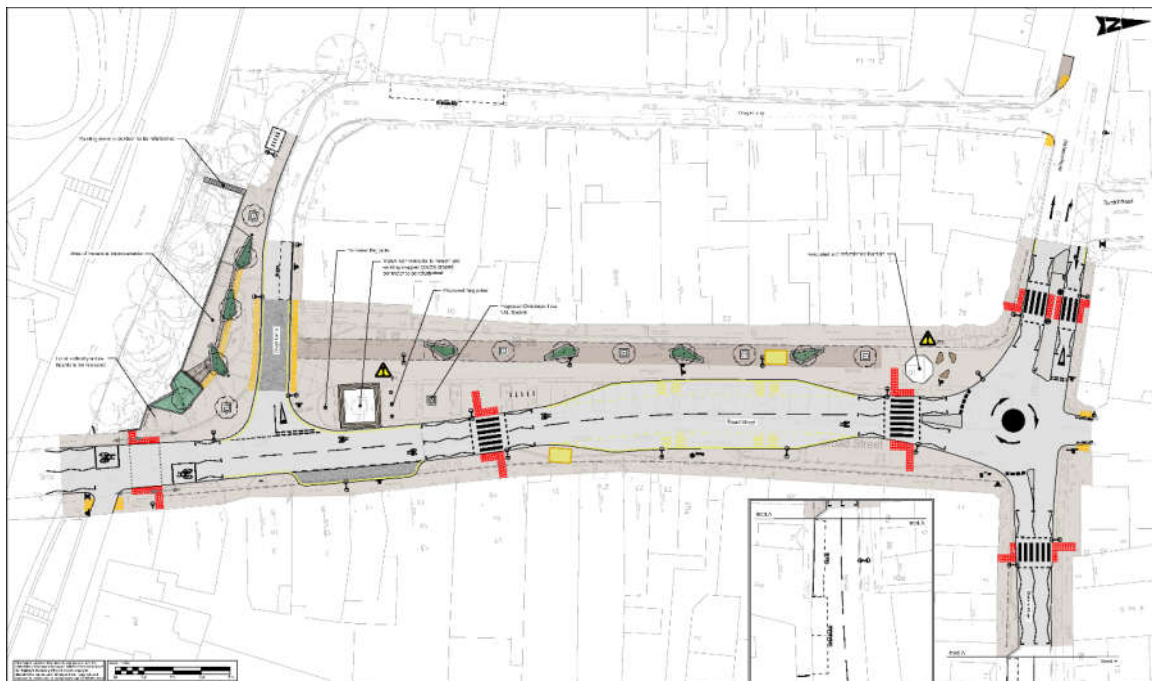


Figure 1-1 - Broad Street General Arrangement Snapshot (Version C06)

The proposal seeks to remove the signalised junction between Broad Street (B1101) and Station Road (B1101)/Dartford Road (B1099), relocate the fountain and install a mini-roundabout.

Three zebra crossings are proposed to three of the four arms of the roundabout. The zebra crossings would be situated on Broad Street, Station Road and Dartford Road, and replace the pedestrian crossings that form part of the existing signalised junction arrangement.

March is relatively well connected by road to other areas despite its rural setting and benefits from a railway station situated on the Stansted to Birmingham line. It has an established legacy as a Market Town, also benefitting from a historic urban form and attractive riverside setting, as well as several stable employers.

2. WCHAR Study Area

The area referred to as the 'WCHAR Study Area' in this report, and in accordance with DMRB GG142, is circled approximately in Figure 1-2 below. It includes the extents of the Broad Street scheme, extended with a 1km radius.

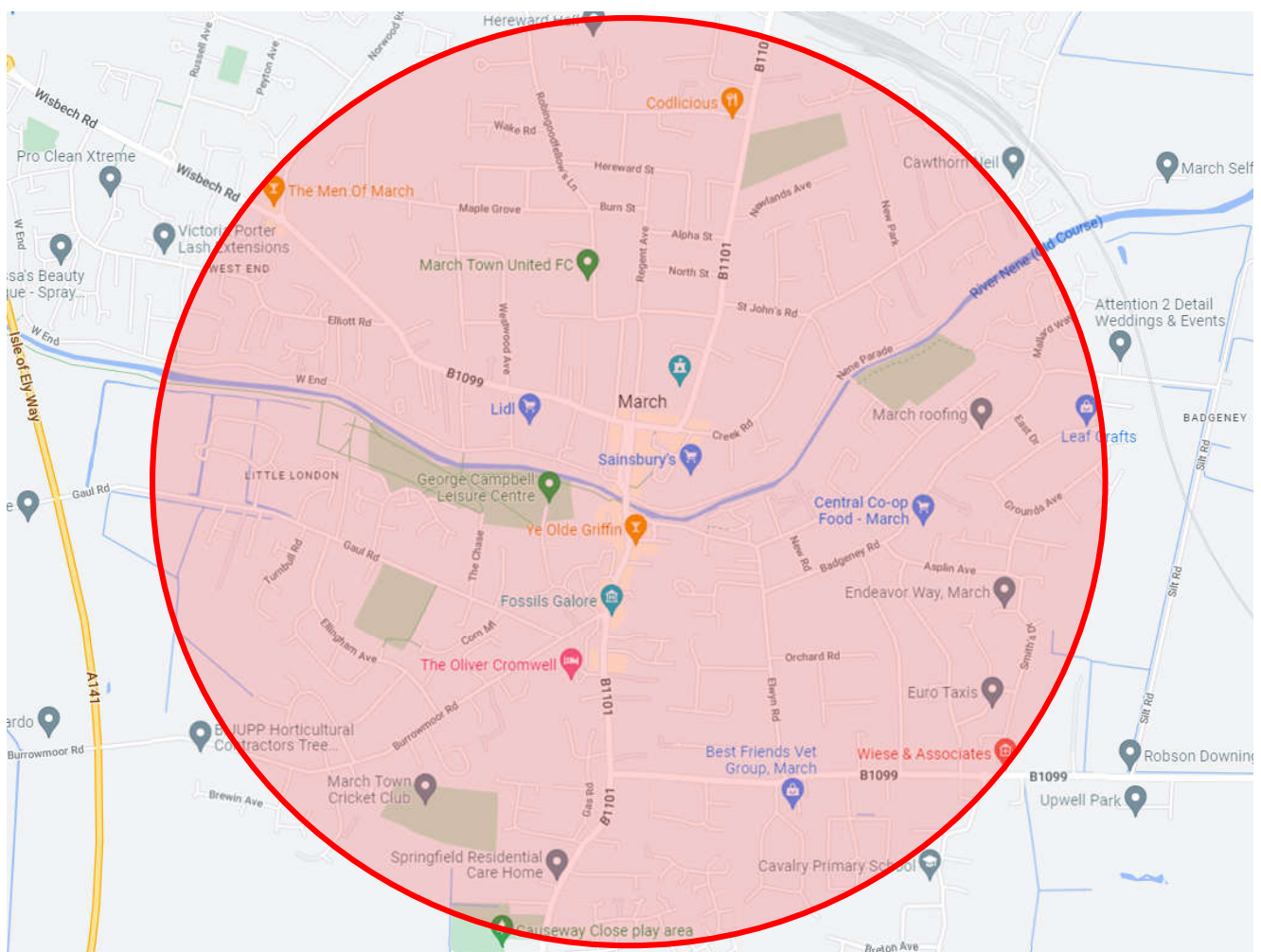


Figure 2-1 - WCHAR Study Area

3. WCHAR Assessment

The DMRB Standard GG142, accepted as the WCHAR assessment process for this scheme, categorises this project as a ‘small highways scheme’ and thus requires assessment of the following elements;

- Walking, cycling and horse riding policies and strategies within or related to the WCHAR study area.
- Personal injury collision data.
- Multi-modal transport service and interchange information within the WCHAR study area.
- Key trip generators and local amenities within the WCHAR study area.
- Information gathered during a site visit.
- Information gathered during liaison with key stakeholders.
- Existing walking, cycling and horse-riding network facilities within the WCHAR study area.

These elements are assessed and summarised in sections 3.1 to 3.6 below.

3.1. Walking, cycling and horse riding policies and strategies

3.1.1. National Policy and Strategy

National policies and strategies relevant to the proposed scheme are outline in Table 3-1 below.

Table 3-1 - National Policies and Strategies

Document	Key Points	Relevance to scheme
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	<p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act) is known informally as the ‘right to roam’ act. It provides a right of public access on foot to areas of open land comprising mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land.</p> <p>The act encourages the creation of new routes and clarifies uncertainties about existing rights.</p> <p>The Act requires local authorities to review and publish plans for improving rights of way in their areas, taking into account the needs of the public including disabled people. These Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs) set out a 10-year plan for improvement of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) network for the benefit of the public.</p>	The potential scheme can provide infrastructure to support the encouragement of walking and cycling.
National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2019	<p>Section 8 states <i>‘Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve, healthy, inclusive and safe places which.....encourage walking and cycling’</i></p> <p>Para 102 states <i>‘Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport are identified and pursued’.</i></p>	The potential scheme can provide infrastructure to support the encouragement of walking and cycling.
Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Strategy (CWIS), Department for Transport (DfT), 2017	CWIS outlines the government’s ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040.	The potential scheme can provide infrastructure to support the uptake of walking and cycling.

<p>Gear Change - A bold vision for cycling and walking, DfT, 2020</p>	<p>This document outlines the vision to facilitate a step-change in cycling and walking, whilst acknowledging there is a unique opportunity to transform the role cycling and walking can play in the transport system, and get England moving differently</p> <p>It sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make this a reality, grouped under four themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better streets for cycling and people. • cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making. • empowering and encouraging local authorities. • enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do. 	<p>The potential scheme can provide infrastructure to support the uptake of walking and cycling.</p> <p>Gear Change is supported by the DfT design guidance document 'Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design' (LTN 1/20), which this scheme is assessed against in a dedicated technical note.</p>
<p>Road Safety Statement 2019: a lifetime of road safety DfT, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, and National Highways, 2019</p>	<p>The Road Safety Statement focuses on actions for the next two years to move the UK to an integrated approach to road safety, focusing on both collision prevention and post collision response. The Statement is divided into three areas - safer people, safer vehicles and safer roads.</p> <p>This document is still the most recent at the time of writing in 2022.</p>	<p>The potential scheme can provide infrastructure or improvements to facilitate/provide solutions to identified road safety issues/concerns, thus providing safer conditions for all users.</p>

3.1.2. Local Policy

The study area for this assessment sits within Cambridgeshire, with Cambridgeshire County Council holding responsibility for transport policy and strategies. The policies and strategies that relate to March are summarised in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 - Local Policy and Strategy

Document	Key Points	Relevance to scheme
<p>Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) Cambridgeshire County Council, (No publication date)</p>	<p>The Cambridgeshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) forms part of the Government's aim to make walking and cycling the natural choice for all short journeys or as part of a longer journey. The Department for Transport recommended that all local authorities should develop LCWIPs and have advised that those authorities with plans will be well placed to bid for future funding.</p> <p>The Cambridgeshire LCWIP covers the whole County and focuses on each district to highlight priority routes for cycling using census data to identify where funding could have the greatest effect in terms of where people live and work. For walking it focuses on Cambridge City and the Market Towns to identify the main routes to school, local shops, employment and train/bus stations.</p>	<p>NCN Route 63 runs to the North-West of Broad Street, with another smaller local route surrounding the town centre. The town centre itself is a destination which provides cycle parking.</p>
<p>Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire,</p>	<p>The Strategy provides a policy framework and programme of schemes for the area, addressing current problems and consistent with the policies of the Third Cambridgeshire LTP. It sets out the need for the transport network to support growth and provide</p>	<p>These policies aim to ensure that (public transport), cycling and walking are the best</p>

<p>Cambridgeshire County Council, 2014</p>	<p>additional capacity to allow for the additional demands of new residents and workers. The transport network must also help protect Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire’s distinctive character and environment.</p>	<p>ways of getting around - an aspiration the proposed scheme can support.</p>
<p>Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2011-2031, Cambridgeshire County Council, 2015</p>	<p>Transport has a key role to play in bringing about the Council’s vision for Cambridgeshire by contributing towards the delivery of its Priorities, set out below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and protecting people when they need it most; • Helping people to live independent and healthy lives in their communities; and • Developing our local economy for the benefit of all. <p>These Priorities informed the LTP Objectives, of particular relevance are Objectives 3 and 5 summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LTP Objective 3: Managing and delivering the growth and development of sustainable communities; and • LTP Objective 5: Meeting the challenges of climate change and enhancing the natural environment. <p>One of the key challenges the LTP aims to address is ‘making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car (Challenge 3). The aim is to overcome this challenge in a number of ways including promoting sustainable networks for walking and cycling and making provisions for cyclists on-road and off-road.</p>	<p>The Local Transport Plan promotes walking and cycling as part of the overall transport plan for the county.</p>

3.1.3. Key Policy Themes

All levels of policy strongly support active travel. The following themes are prominent:

- Walking and cycling should be promoted and encouraged where possible, due to the many benefits active travel can deliver to individuals, communities and society. There is a strong commitment to increase active travel at both national and local policy.
- New development and development design should support, promote and encourage active travel.
- The needs of active users should be taken into consideration when planning new infrastructure, in particular regarding user safety and comfort.
- Cycling (and walking) should be promoted and encouraged where possible, due to the many health (both physical and mental) and environmental benefits that these modes can deliver to the population.
- Infrastructure to support cycling (and walking) trips should be well-integrated, direct and where possible, fully segregated from motor vehicles in order to improve actual and perceived safety.

Therefore, these themes will be used by the assessment team help formulate opportunities for the scheme.

3.2. Personal injury collision data

No Personal Injury Collision data has been provided to the Audit Team for the local highway network relevant to this scheme. The Audit Team, however, has undertaken a review of collision data on the Crash Map website. The review, which focussed on the most recently available five-year period (2015 to 2020), identified 10 personal injury collisions within the extents of the proposed scheme. All 10 collisions resulted in injuries to pedestrians and pedal cyclists.

Six of the collisions were recorded on Broad Street between the junction of Gray's Lane and the B1099 Dartford Road. Of these six collisions, five resulted in 'slight' injuries (one pedal cyclist and four pedestrians) and one in 'serious' injury to a pedestrian.

Three personal injury collisions were recorded on the B1099 Dartford Road at the junction with Broad Street, resulting in 'slight' injury to pedestrians. The remaining collision was recorded at the B1099 junction with Darthill Road, also resulting in 'slight' injury to a pedestrian.

3.3. Multi-modal transport service and interchange information

3.3.1. Rail Services

March Railway station is situated approximately 1.0km North of Broad Street. The station is operated by Greater Anglia and includes services operated by CrossCountry, EMR and Greater Anglia. The main destinations for trains from March are Ipswich, Stansted Airport, Cambridge, Birmingham New Street, Norwich and Peterborough. There are two platforms and approximately two trains run per hour from each platform on weekdays.

3.3.2. Bus Services

There are two bus stops within the extents of the study area, which facilitate trips on bus routes as follows:

- 33 (Peterborough to March via Whittlesey)
- 36 (March to Peterborough)
- 46 (Wisbech to March)
- 8A (March to Cottenham)
- 302 (St Ives to March via Chatteris and Warboys)

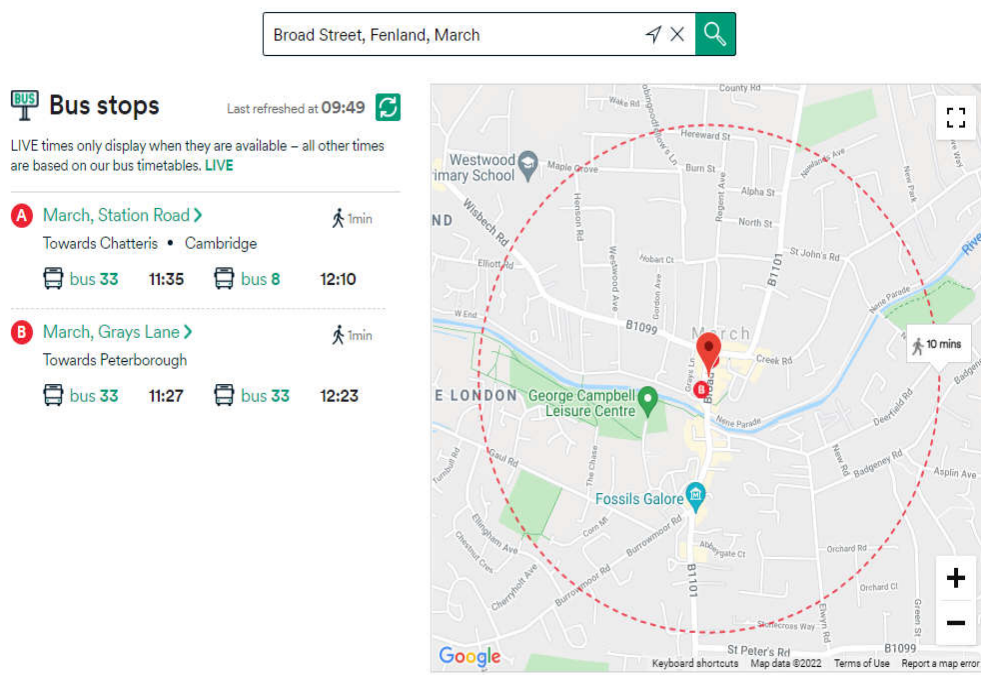


Figure 3-1 - Local Bus Stops

3.3.3. E-Scooter Rental Services

Currently, there are no electric scooter rental services, or similar, available within the WCHAR study area.

3.4. Key trip generators and local amenities

3.4.1. Existing

Particularly with the regeneration of the town centre, Broad Street itself intends to be a destination and thus a trip generator. Ability for people from the surrounding area to access the centre through active means of transport should be supported.

Within the study area, there are two supermarkets, a series of pubs and restaurants, a leisure centre, several parks and the March Town FC football ground. All of these destinations are linked with local roads with designated footways.

Further afield, the surrounding towns of Wisbech, King's Lynn, Downham Market and Ely will also generate trips. Peterborough, Huntingdon and Cambridge are also likely to generate trips for both work and leisure. These destinations are linked to March by bus and train services.

Finally, Stanstead Airport and London would generate less frequent trips.

3.4.2. Future Development

There are several residential-led developments surrounding the study area, and plans to renew the marketplace south of Broad Street. The residential areas and Marketplace are linked to the scheme through existing roads and footways.

3.5. Site Visit Information

Upon visiting the site, the connectivity of footways throughout the town centre was clear. However, these were only designated for pedestrians, resulting in cyclists using the carriageway which is very busy, tended to be congested with parked cars and includes bus stops. There are, however, cycle parking facilities including an undercover cycle rack in the central reserve of the street. The area generally felt car-dominated, with clear room for improvement for the prioritisation of walking and cycling.

No horse-riders were observed across several site visits.

3.6. Stakeholder Liaison

The design team are engaged with a representative of both the local access group and CamSight, the local charity for visually impaired people during design development. The respective representatives input will be used in development of the scheme to adequately to meet their needs.

3.7. Existing walking, cycling and horse-riding network facilities

Due to the rurality of the area and the historic nature of the market towns that developed along the route of the river Nene, road links from town to village and onwards consist of a mix of fast and winding country lanes and busy (mostly) single carriageway A roads. Travel by road to connect to wider links is therefore often slow, especially in comparison to using rail. Within towns the road network, particularly in the town centres, is also heavily constrained due to relative narrow streets, high parking demands and in some cases limited river crossings. Due to the rural nature of the district, there is a high dependency on motorised vehicles. There is also a high dependency on heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) due to the nature of the local economy. These issues make opportunities to reallocate road space for walking and cycling more limited and challenging.

4. Key Findings and Opportunities

4.1. General

A good quality connected network of routes required, but is not the only provision needed. While infrastructure is the most prominent requirement, promotion and encouragement of active travel modes also play an important part in changing travel behaviours.

Broad Street is the core of March's Town Centre. Efforts to address the current dominance of cars, create better infrastructure for pedestrians and provide sustainable modes of transport will help to improve dwell time in the Town Centre. Key heritage landmarks should be celebrated as an important part of March's identity. Vacant units also offer an opportunity to boost social and civic functions, as alternatives to retail, that are necessary for the success of future high streets.

Opportunity 1 – Reduce Dominance of Cars and Congestion in the Townscape

Increase footway and public realm space within the town centre, and reduce the space allocated to vehicular traffic. This, paired with celebration of the historic memorial and fountain of Broad Street, will encourage people to spend more time and money in the town centre. It may also be possible to reduce road congestion with amendments to the junction at the north of Broad Street. These improvements are in line with the proposed scheme.

4.2. Pedestrian/Cyclist specific opportunities

Opportunity 2 – Improve Pedestrian Level of Service in the Town Centre

The proposed scheme should improve the pedestrian level of service in the Town Centre, including enhanced features such as benches and public realm for people to dwell, as well as connectivity through crossings. This should be considered carefully with any amendments to the junction at the north of Broad Street.

Opportunity 3 – Improve Crossing Facilities at the North of Grays Lane

The existing crossing at the north of Grays Lane does not provide easy navigation for pedestrians with reduced mobility. Additional infrastructure should be considered to allow wheelchair users to easily use this footway.

4.3. Equestrians

Horse riding is not considered to be a method of travel to access places of education and employment and is therefore not a transport mode this strategy targets. Therefore, no specific opportunities for the improvement of equestrian facilities are identified.

However, horse-riding is a very important activity in the rural community and must be considered for wider network links where byways and bridleways are in use. New links for connecting towns and villages to improve travel options on foot and by bicycle should also consider adding value by including access for equestrians. Where improvements are recommended for routes that include equestrian use, surface types and available space must be carefully considered. This is especially important as walking and cycling improvements often require all weather surfaces which, if not provided, could be restrictive for horse riding. Equally, soft grass-based routes could be 'churned' by high levels of horse-riding use especially in winter months, making these inaccessible for walkers and cyclists. It is essential that a clear understanding of all user requirements and a delicate balance of interventions is considered for all multi-user routes.

5. Next Steps

The material contained within this assessment report is intended to be used to help the designer provide engineering solutions with due regard for the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. The opportunities identified within this report will be reviewed as the scheme design progresses, alongside any new opportunities identified as a result of the developing scheme design.

In accordance with GG 142 a single review report shall be prepared at the end of the detailed design phase of the scheme which will document decisions made as part of the design in response to those opportunities highlighted in this assessment report as well as any further opportunities identified in the preliminary and detailed design stages.

6. Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment Team Statement

WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING LEAD ASSESSOR

As Lead Assessor, I confirm that this walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment report has been compiled in accordance with DMRB GG 142. The walking, cycling and horse-riding assessment was undertaken by the following assessment and review team:

Matthew Lambert
Principal Engineer
Atkins Transportation

matthew.lambert@atkinglobal.com

Signed: ML

Date: December 2022

WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING ASSESSORS

Kavita Negi
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Peter Miles
Project Manager, Atkins Transportation

Charlie Shepherd
Assistant Engineer, Atkins Transportation

DESIGN TEAM LEADER

As design team leader for the scheme, I confirm that the GG 142 assessment has been undertaken at the earliest stage of scheme development possible given the scheme history and that the wider design team has been involved in the process.

I confirm that in my professional opinion the appointed Lead Assessor has the appropriate experience for the role making reference to the Lead Assessor Expected Competencies contained in DMRB GG 142.

Peter Miles
Project Manager
Atkins Transportation

peter.miles@atkinglobal.com

Signed: PM

Date: December 2022

Appendix A. General Arrangement

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March Broad Street FHSF

WCHAR Review Report

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1. Background

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The site is located towards the centre of March, on the junction between Broad Street (B1101) and Station Road (B1101)/Dartford Road (B1099). The site forms part of March's main shopping frontages and is lined by several retail and food establishments. Broad Street also holds a historic fountain structure at the northern end, and a war memorial at the southern end. Both of these features are to be retained and made a centre piece contributing to the attraction of March as a destination.

The proposed scheme is planned to provide the improvements as listed below. A snapshot is shown in Figure 1-1, however for the full general arrangement of the scheme, please refer to Appendix A.

- The reallocation of road space to remove car parking (which is currently situated within a 'central reserve' between the north and southbound carriageways) and provide a single, two-way carriageway.
- The provision of new public realm to the west of Broad Street between Dartford Road and to the south of Gray's Lane, including the Riverside area.
- Removal of car parking from the central 'reserve' and relocation of taxi ranks to existing/modified on street parking bays.
- The creation of two new 2.75 metre (m) wide bus stops on Broad Street.
- The provision of four new Zebra crossings; three single stage and one split stage crossings.
- The relocation of the March fountain to within the new public realm.
- Improve footway surfaces and remove guard railings where possible.
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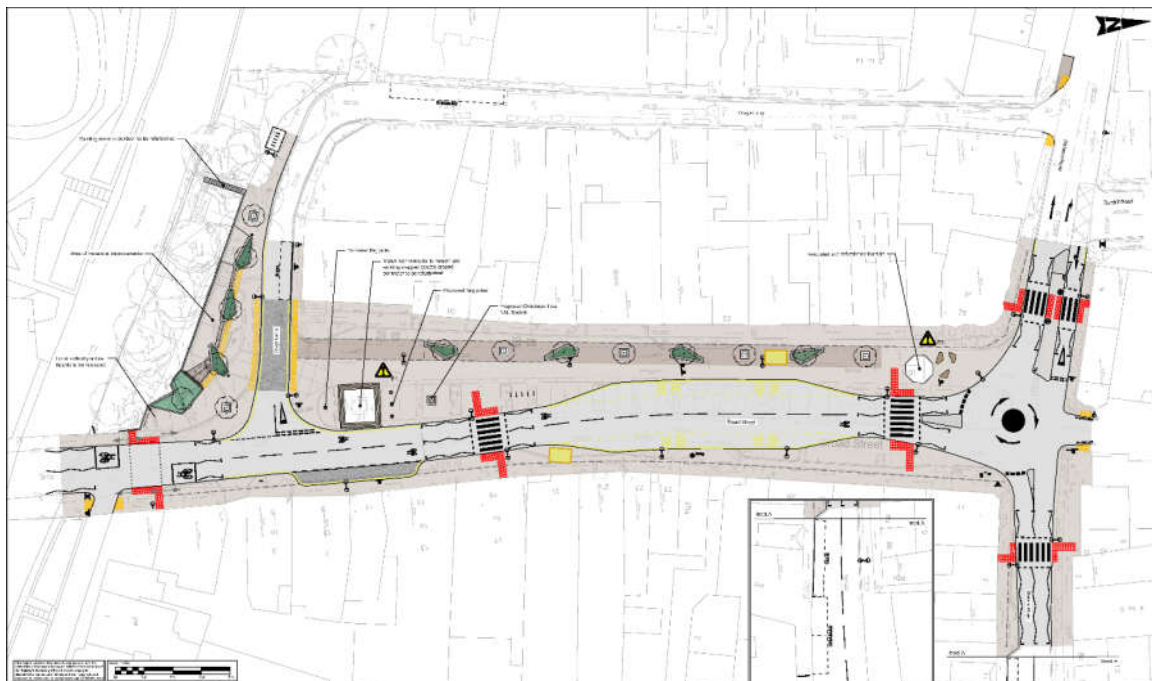


Figure 1-1 - Broad Street General Arrangement Snapshot (Version C06)

The proposal seeks to remove the signalised junction between Broad Street (B1101) and Station Road (B1101)/Dartford Road (B1099), relocate the fountain and install a mini-roundabout.

Three zebra crossings are proposed to three of the four arms of the roundabout. The zebra crossings would be situated on Broad Street, Station Road and Dartford Road, and replace the pedestrian crossings that form part of the existing signalised junction arrangement.

March is relatively well connected by road to other areas despite its rural setting and benefits from a railway station situated on the Stansted to Birmingham line. It has an established legacy as a Market Town, also benefitting from a historic urban form and attractive riverside setting, as well as several stable employers.

1.1. WCHAR Study Area

The area referred to as the 'WCHAR Study Area' in this report, and in accordance with DMRB GG142, is circled approximately in Figure 1-2 below. It includes the extents of the Broad Street scheme, extended with a 1km radius.

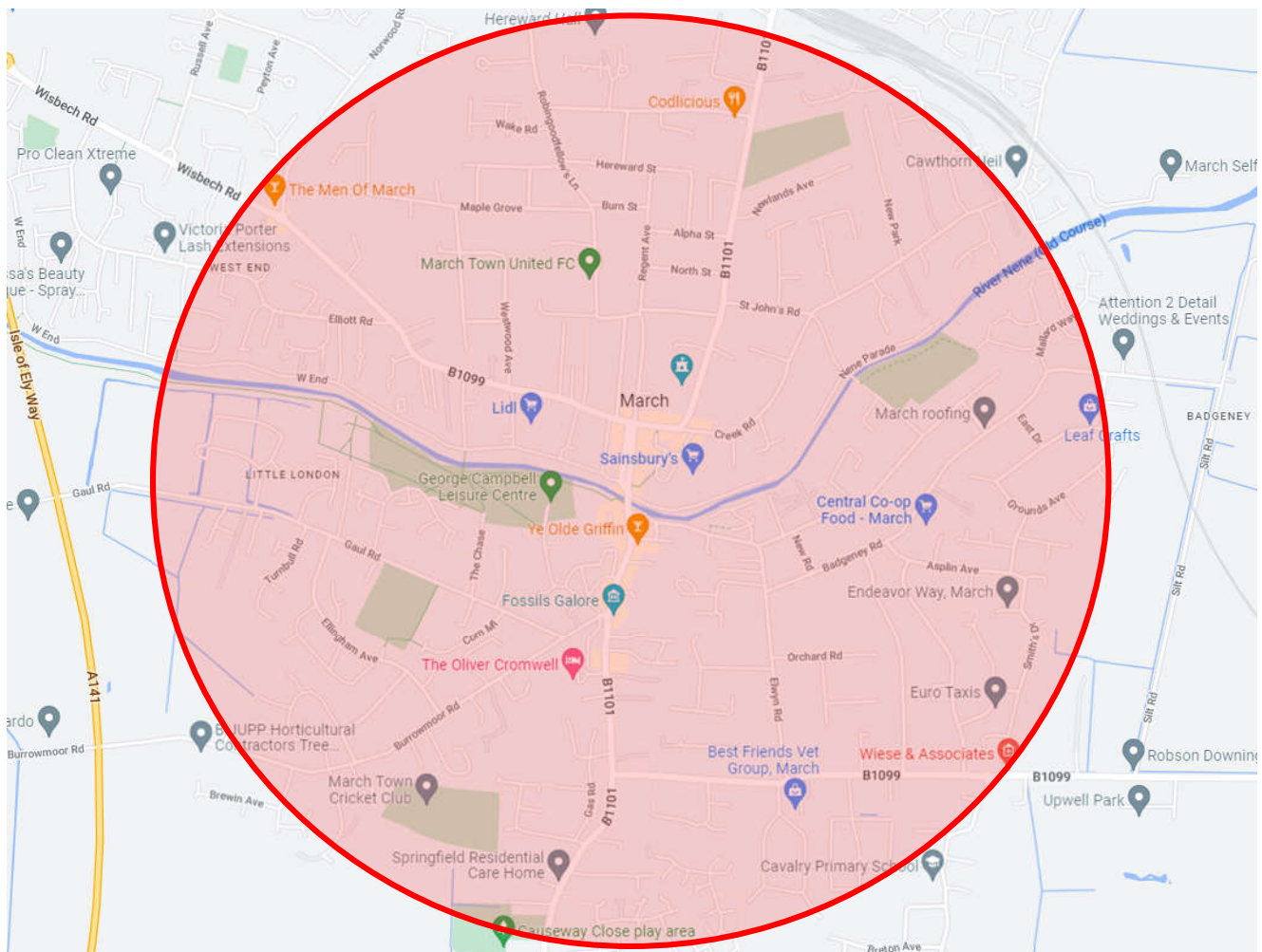


Figure 1-2 - WCHAR Study Area

2. Review of Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment Opportunities

Based on findings from the site visit and desktop research carried out in the assessment, the following opportunities were recommended in the assessment report for consideration at the scheme design stage. GG 142 encourages the identification of opportunities that are associated with the scheme, but which may not be within the geographical scope of the works and thus it may not be possible to deliver some opportunities within the proposals. However, the identification of these further opportunities is intended to allow them to be highlighted for consideration in future works.

Opportunity 1 – Reduce Dominance of Cars and Congestion in the Townscape

Increase footway and public realm space within the town centre, and reduce the space allocated to highways. This, paired with celebration of the historic memorial and fountain of Broad Street, will encourage people to spend more time and money in the town centre. It may also be possible to reduce road congestion with amendments to the junction at the north of Broad Street. These improvements are in line with the proposed scheme.

Action Taken and Outcome

The scheme has prioritised the allocation of space for footways and public realm above all else. As a result, the scheme has now seen 62% of the town centre taken up by carriageway space, to now just 41%. The public realm space within the scheme extents has increased by approximately 2400m² or 109%. This will provide significant benefits for walking and cycling in the town centre.

The junction at the North of Broad Street has also been designed as a mini-roundabout, predicted to have a positive impact on congestion based on traffic modelling. It is also predicted that the traffic speeds will reduce realising a further positive impact on safety.

Opportunity 2 – Improve Pedestrian Level of Service in the Town Centre

The proposed scheme should improve the pedestrian level of service in the Town Centre, including enhanced features such as benches and public realm for people to dwell, as well as connectivity through crossings. This should be considered carefully with any amendments to the junction at the north of Broad Street.

Action Taken and Outcome

The proposed scheme improves the pedestrian level of service around Broad Street. Much of the space currently taken by road and parking can be reallocated as pedestrian areas, with enhanced features such as seating, trees and planting.

Three zebra crossings are proposed to three of the four arms of the roundabout. Robingoodfellows Lane is lightly trafficked and relatively easy to cross as a pedestrian. Cyclists can use the new carriageway which will be a slower more controlled environment enhancing the cycling experience in town centre, which also includes cycle parking facilities. The zebra crossings would be situated on Broad Street, Station Road and Dartford Road, and replace the pedestrian crossings that form part of the existing signalised junction arrangement.

Opportunity 3 – Improve Crossing Facilities at the North of Grays Lane

The existing crossing at the north of Grays Lane does not provide easy navigation for pedestrians with reduced mobility. Additional infrastructure should be considered to allow wheelchair users to easily use this footway.

Action Taken and Outcome

This feature has been explored and included in the scheme, with an additional island to improve connectivity for wheelchair users.

3. Detailed Design Stage Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Review

This section records any user-related opportunities identified during the design phase. They have been developed through discussions between the Lead Assessor and the wider design team and recorded here (along with actions taken / outcomes).

In accordance with GG 142 this review report has been prepared at the end of the detailed design phase of the scheme and documents decisions made as part of the design process regarding opportunities identified in the detailed design stage.

No new opportunities have been identified during the design phase of the project, over and above those improvements described in section 2 above. During the design phases, the early identified opportunities from the WCHAR Assessment have been developed and incorporated into the scheme as envisaged.

It is considered that opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists have been realised in the design, whilst acknowledging the importance of Broad Street, Station Road and Dartford Road as key vehicular transport routes for March and the surrounding areas, to create a well balanced scheme for the location.

4. Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment Team Statement

WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING LEAD ASSESSOR

As Lead Assessor, I confirm that this walking, cycling and horse-riding review report has been compiled in accordance with GG 142 and thus contains the appropriate information for the wider design team. The walking, cycling and horse-riding review was undertaken by the following assessment & review team:

Matthew Lambert
Principal Engineer
Atkins Transportation

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Signed: ML

Date: December 2022

WALKING, CYCLING AND HORSE-RIDING ASSESSORS

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Daniel Kelly
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Peter Miles
Project Manager, Atkins Transportation

Charlie Shepherd
Assistant Engineer, Atkins Transportation

DESIGN TEAM LEADER

As design team leader for the scheme, I confirm that the GG 142 assessment has been undertaken at the earliest stage of scheme development possible given the scheme history and that the wider design team has been involved in the process.

I confirm that in my professional opinion the appointed Lead Assessor has the appropriate experience for the role making reference to the Lead Assessor Expected Competencies contained in DMRB GG 142.

Peter Miles
Project Manager
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Appendix A. General Arrangement

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