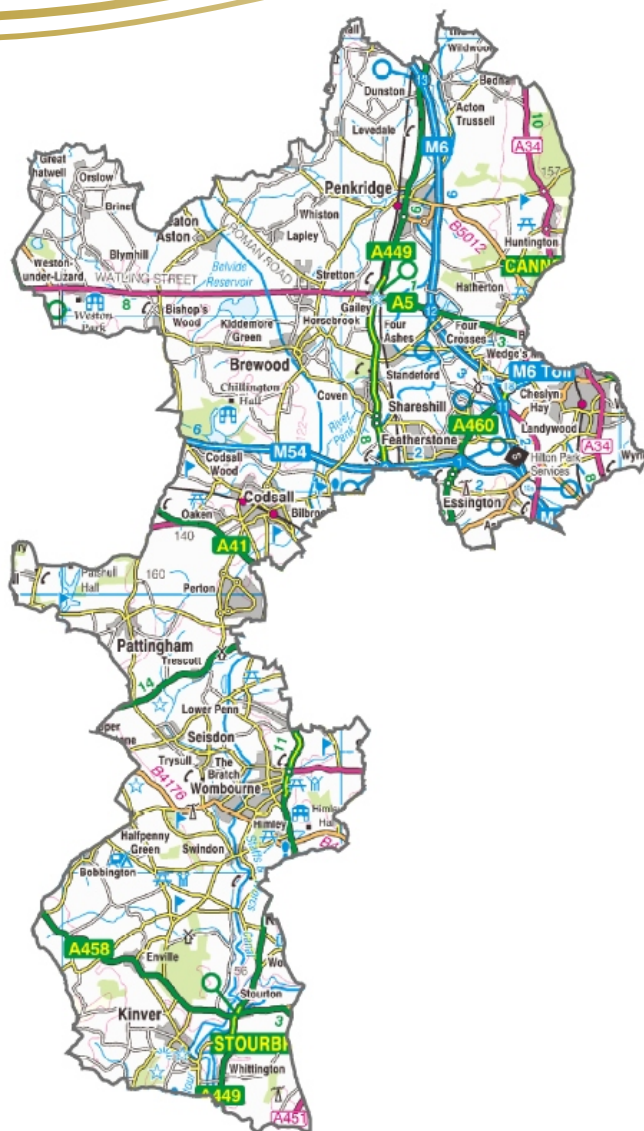


South Staffordshire Integrated Transport Strategy 2013 - 2028



November 2013



Staffordshire
County Council

SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2013-2026

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Integrated transport strategies have been developed for the eight District / Boroughs in Staffordshire to help prioritise the County Council's expenditure on transport improvements and secure potential resources including developer contributions and Government funds. They are also informing the District / Borough Council local plan process.
- 1.2 The Government has confirmed its commitment to devolving economic power to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) through the creation of a Single Local Growth Fund (SLGF) which will be formally allocated to the LEP through Growth Deals. European funds may also become available for transport, through Growth Deals.
- 1.3 A significant level of transport funding has been transferred to the SLGF as transport has been identified as central to local economic development. Staffordshire and Stoke-Trent's allocation of the Single Local Growth Fund and European funds will be determined through the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan for the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. Allocations will be based on the strength of the Strategic Economic Plan in terms of identifying effective and speedy delivery of transport schemes and robust value for money evidence. LEP Growth Deals are expected to be announced by July 2014. LEPs will be required to work with Local Transport Bodies to identify the priorities for transport spending for inclusion in the Economic Plan and this Integrated Transport Strategy will help to inform this work.
- 1.4 The delivery of this transport strategy will help to achieve the following County Council Priority Outcomes:

Staffordshire is a place where people can easily and safely access everyday facilities and activities through the highways and transport networks

Staffordshire's economy prospers and grows, together with jobs, skills, qualifications and aspirations to support it

Staffordshire's communities proactively tackle climate change, gaining financial benefit and reducing carbon emissions

- 1.5 In 2011, we consulted communities and stakeholders on the integrated transport strategies. Many useful comments and ideas were received which have helped to shape this strategy for South Staffordshire District. Our response to all representations is provided in: Report on the Outcome of the Consultation Process 2011/12 at:
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/transportplanning/localtransportplan/districtintegratedtransportstrategies.aspx>
- 1.6 Comments during the consultation process focused on parking problems, particularly around rail stations in Codsall and Bilbrook, the lack of public transport access in southern Staffordshire and the use of inappropriate routes by Heavy Commercial

Vehicles. Centro also mentioned that rail improvements should be included both in the short and longer term. Bus operator Arriva advised that partnership working to deliver public transport improvements associated with the i54 Strategic Employment Area should remain a priority, and that improvements to specific routes would be welcomed, particularly along the A449 corridor, areas around Cannock and the inter-urban link between Great Wyrley and Bloxwich.

2. District Profile

- 2.1 South Staffordshire is a rural District on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation and approximately 80% lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. There is no single dominant settlement within the District. Brewood, Codsall, Bilbrook, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton and Wombourne are the largest villages and act as service centres for the surrounding rural areas.
- 2.2 The north of the District is crossed by the M6 and M54 Motorways and the terminus of the M6 Toll motorway Junctions 11, 11a, 12 and 13 provide access to the M6 and junctions 1 and 2 access to the M54. The A449 provides a North-South corridor through the District and links into Stafford, Wolverhampton and Kidderminster, with the A5, A41, A454 and A458 providing East-West links and into the West Midlands urban area.
- 2.3 The District is relatively prosperous with just 3.3% (2011 Census) of the economically active population unemployed; however there are small areas of deprivation at Huntington, Essington and in parts of Wombourne. There are significant 'cross-border' workforce links with 48% of all employed residents working in the West Midlands conurbation. The number of residents driving to work is significantly higher than the national average, at 77%, which is also the highest level in Staffordshire. This Strategy therefore needs to set out how we will attempt to provide an efficient, cost effective public transport service from the villages of South Staffordshire to employment in the local area, but also in the West Midlands conurbation.
- 2.4 Around 7% of employed residents in South Staffordshire travel to work by bus which is higher than many other Districts in Staffordshire. Walking and cycling levels are lower than national and county averages. The north of the District is served by a core bus network of local and inter-urban routes to Stafford and the West Midlands conurbation. The south of the District experiences less coverage by hourly or more frequent services. Commercial services are supported by community transport services such as South Staffordshire Connect, and voluntary car schemes.
- 2.5 The north of the District is well served by rail. There are local rail connections at Codsall and Bilbrook stations on the Shrewsbury to Birmingham line and at Landywood on the Rugeley to Walsall and Birmingham line (Chase Line). Penkridge West Coast Mainline station is also within the District with services between Liverpool, Crewe and Birmingham. Residents in the South of the District are likely to access rail stations within the metropolitan area such as Stourbridge or Wolverhampton therefore efficient public transport links to these stations are important.
- 2.6 Staffordshire County Council currently has limited direct input into the rail industry. Train operating companies (TOC's) are private companies, paid to run an area's

services by Central government. The government also pays Network Rail to manage and maintain the rail network, and the ORR (Office for Rail regulation) to regulate Network Rail and TOC's. SCC therefore works with TOC's, Network Rail and other local authorities to invest in the rail network and improve connectivity.

- 2.7 The District has a number of historic attractions such as Weston Park, Kinver Edge and Baggeridge Country Park, and issues with parking at some of these sites has been noted and will be investigated through the strategy. There is an extensive network of canals including Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, Shropshire Union Canal and Stourbridge Canal and there is a campaign to reinstate the Lichfield to Hatherton Branch. These canals are important pedestrian and cycling links. The District also has significant areas of nature conservation importance including a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), a national nature reserve, sites of biological importance and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) totalling in excess of 370 hectares.

3. South Staffordshire District Local Plan

- 3.1 South Staffordshire District Council's Core Strategy (Local Plan) was formally adopted in December 2012. However there is a high court legal challenge which will be heard in September 2013 regarding the apportionment of housing numbers between villages identified for growth.
- A minimum of 3850 new dwellings will be delivered within the District between 2006-2028. The majority of these will be delivered in the Main Service Villages of Codsall, Bilbrook, Brewood, Cheslyn Hay, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Penkridge, Perton and Wombourne. This approach will offer the best range of essential facilities and services to support new development.
 - Limited development will be supported in the Local Service Villages of Coven, Essington, Featherstone, Huntington, Pattingham, Swindon and Wheaton Aston to meet local need.
 - Other villages and hamlets are not identified for growth and development will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances for the provision of rural affordable housing.
 - Employment growth will be focused around the four freestanding Strategic Employment Sites (i54, Hilton Cross, ROF Featherstone/Branford and Four Ashes) with modest extensions to these sites permitted where robust evidence and a reasoned justification supports their expansion. There is also policy support for economic growth and investment in the Districts Main Service Villages, potentially through mixed use developments, again, where robust evidence can justify a need. Of particular priority for South Staffordshire Council and Staffordshire County Council is to explore the deliverability of the ROF Featherstone site and options to help bring the site forward.
- 3.2 This strategy therefore supports the priorities in the Local Plan, specifically Core Policy 11: Sustainable Transport. It will also guide the Transport elements of the South Staffordshire Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which lists the infrastructure required to deliver the plan, and when that infrastructure will be needed.
- 3.3 A study has been completed exploring the suitability for a Regional Logistics Site within southern Staffordshire to serve the needs of the Black Country. A number of

potential locations were identified within southern Staffordshire, including two within South Staffordshire. The Study concluded that there was no evidence to support an RLS being located in southern Staffordshire to explicitly meet the needs of the Black Country sub region, and recommend that the area of search for an RLS was widened to encompass the entire West Midlands region. The Study did however conclude that an RLS could potentially create 6810 jobs for residents of the study area (South Staffs and the Black Country) along with £116.2m of GVA for the regional economy.

4. Recent Transport Achievements

- 4.1 In 2012/13 there was a considerable reduction in funding available for transport schemes throughout the County. Improvements were therefore focused on making the best use of the existing highway network, concentrating on maintaining its condition and ensuring that we continue to reduce road casualties.
- 4.2 In 2012/13, £2.124m was spent on delivering integrated transport schemes and the bridge and highway maintenance programme throughout the District. This includes A449 Crown Bridge Penkridge, a 20mph zone in Bilbrook (Bilbrook Lane - Duck Lane), improvements at A462 Bursnips Road / Hobnock Road, Essington; and progress on the B4156 Cheslyn Hay Route Strategy.
- 4.3 Targets to reduce road casualties are being achieved through education, enforcement and engineering measures. Safety in the District has been improved through the delivery of measures such as anti-skid surfacing, road signing improvements and upgraded road markings. Schemes programmed for 2013/14 include: A458 Bridgnorth Road/B4537 Wollaston Road, Stourton Junction Improvement; A449 Wolverhampton Road/B4176 Bridgnorth Road, Himley Traffic Signal Modifications; M54 Junction 1/A460 Cannock Road, Featherstone Visibility/road marking improvements. One junction in South Staffs also requires further investigation during 2013/14 as it has a history of accidents: A449/C307 Kidderminster Road/Doctors Lane, Gorse Corner.
- 4.4 Public transport services have been maintained throughout 2012. Access to frequent bus services varies across the main service villages within the District. In 2013 in Perton 93.7% of addresses are within 350 metres of a half hourly or more frequent weekday bus service. Cheslyn Hay and Great Wyrley have 82.1% of addresses within 350 metres of a half hourly or more frequent weekday bus service, whilst in Wombourne this figure is 78.5%, in Codsall and Bilbrook 77.6%, and in Penkridge 19.6%. Accessibility to a half hourly bus service is much lower in Penkridge than other villages as only residents in the centre and near to the A449 north of the village have more than an hourly service. Much of its population is in the southern areas which are served by the hourly number 75. Brewood and Kinver do not have all day higher frequency bus services.
- 4.5 Many bus stops now comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. Staffordshire County Council is the national leader in discretionary travel allowance. A new travel scheme, adopted in April 2011, allows free 24/7 bus transport to people of pensionable age or with a disability, plus their carer, and under 20s can travel anywhere within Staffordshire for just £1 per journey.

- 4.6 South Staffordshire Connect is a demand responsive bus service offering residents of the District the opportunity to make local journeys for a flat rate fee. The service is door to door and covers the whole of the District. South Staffordshire Connect also links to several regular bus services to enable longer journeys out of the District.
- 4.7 In terms of rail improvements, following the significant investment on the West Coast Mainline to increase capacity by 2009, there has been more scope to enhance the mixture of long-distance, local and freight services running the line. This led to the introduction of a regular interval service between Crewe and London via Stoke, Stafford, Lichfield, Tamworth, Rugby and Northampton which has significantly improved connectivity between key locations. Line speed improvements and electrification of the Chase Line have also been included in Network Rails Strategic Business Plan for delivery by 2019.

5. Transport Strategy

- 5.1 The Transport Strategy Summary Table in Appendix A illustrates how we intend to deliver the following Economic Prosperity and Community priorities for South Staffordshire District and Priority Outcomes of the County Council's Strategy Plan as detailed in paragraph 1.4. The Strategy will also guide the LEP Strategic Economic Plan.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- Create jobs by accommodating major employment sites located in the M54 and M6 corridors, including junction improvements and potential new highway capacity
- Improve public transport connectivity to the West Midlands conurbation
- Secure appropriate access to local housing and employment developments

COMMUNITIES

- Maintain the current condition and safety of the highway network
- Improve public transport connectivity and quality of life for local communities
- Raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage people to lead more sustainable lifestyles, helping to reduce carbon emissions

- 5.2 Priorities will be delivered through a combination of countywide initiatives, connectivity proposals, schemes identified in the Divisional Highway Programme and the Local Transport Package for i54 South Staffordshire. Delivery of this Local Transport Package will be closely aligned to the delivery of the i54 South Staffordshire Strategic Employment Site as illustrated in the figure provided in Appendix B.

Divisional Highway Programme

- 5.3 The Divisional Highway Programme for South Staffordshire District gives County Councillors the opportunity to directly input into delivery programmes. Councillors work closely with Community Highway Managers and other key stakeholders to ensure local concerns and challenges are identified and priorities are established,

taking into account financial constraints. The Divisional Highway Programme is reviewed twice a year and gives an overview of highway and transport concerns within the local area, such as pedestrian safety, speeding through residential areas, on-street parking and safety at junctions. The main issues raised by Councillors for 2013/14 are summarised in the summary table in appendix A.

Connectivity in the District

- 5.4 Enhanced connectivity in the District will be achieved through continued partnership working with key stakeholders. Connectivity in South Staffordshire is possibly the most important issue. It is hard to justify a business case for new public transport services for the small villages which make up the District. However the residents of South Staffordshire still need to have the opportunity to access services and employment without the use of a private car. A high proportion of South Staffordshire's population is also retired which means that reliance on public transport will only increase and must be provided for if residents are to keep their independence and health.
- 5.5 To provide these services the County Council works closely with public transport operators and neighbouring authorities to help provide the best possible outcomes. The County Council will also be producing a Rail Strategy in 2013 to complement the District Integrated Transport Strategies. A Rail Summit was held in early 2013 to help confirm policy support and priorities for rail investment in Staffordshire.
- 5.6 Cross boundary working with West Midlands authorities is important, for example through the Regional Rail Forum. Lobbying organised through this Forum, alongside the Chase Line Rail Forum, played an integral role in securing funding for the electrification of the Chase Line and associated line speed and capacity improvements. With 48% of South Staffordshire residents working in the West Midlands conurbation this link, and those from Codsall and Bilbrook stations, are important for giving residents access to employment. The Wolverhampton to Shrewsbury line (Bilbrook and Codsall) has line speed improvements committed by 2014 from 75mph to 90mph and is also a high priority for electrification and line speed improvements within the West Midlands. The Council is also exploring a scheme to introduce secure cycle parking at Codsall and Bilbrook rail stations, as well as signage to i54 through the i54 travel plan funding.
- 5.7 The Chase Line is in line for a large package of upgrades over the next 5 years. Network Rail have committed £5.4m to deliver re-signalling and capacity improvements on the Chase Line by 2014 and further funding to deliver line speed improvements and to electrify the line by 2019. These improvements will support an increase in frequency of off-peak services at stations north of Walsall including Landywood station. This will provide an alternative route to the North of England from Birmingham giving a possibility of regional and national services calling at Cannock which is one stop from Landywood.
- 5.8 The County Council has indicated its opposition to the Government's proposals for a High Speed Rail link through the County. This has the potential to adversely affect services at West Coast Mainline stations such as Stafford and Penkridge. The County Council will therefore continue to liaise with Network Rail and key stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that current local and inter-urban

services are maintained or improved and provide fast efficient access to HS2 services for Staffordshire residents where this would cut journey times.

- 5.9 Staffordshire County Council and the Highways Agency will continue to work in partnership to manage traffic levels on the A5(T) and A449(T) and the adjacent local road network. This connectivity is not only needed within South Staffordshire but with other areas, therefore SCC is involved with the A5(T) Transport Liaison Group. The A5(T) Transport Liaison Group has been established to ensure that the A5(T) plays its role in facilitating economic growth through maximising capacity and improving safety.
- 5.10 There are plans recently revived in the June 2013 Spending Review to build an M54/M6/M6 Toll link road to make connections more efficient and take pressure off the A460 and A449. There is currently no direct link for traffic to connect from the M54 to travel north on the M6 or onto the M6 Toll and from the Toll to travel south on the M6 to the M54. 3 options have been drawn up and Staffordshire County Council will liaise with the DfT, Highways Agency and Midland Expressways Limited to ensure that they deliver the most sustainable option, taking account of the economic, social and environmental impact of each, including the impact on nearby communities. This scheme would follow the current Managed Motorway schemes which are being delivered on the M6 through Staffordshire with the next being J10A to J13. The Highways Agency Pinch point scheme at Church bridge islands is designed to reduce congestion through a new layout and more capacity. This is on the northern edge of South Staffordshire district and congestion can affect linkages with Cannock Chase District, although the majority of the junction is in Cannock Chase.

I54 Local Transport Package







- 5.11 I54 South Staffordshire is a 91 hectare strategic employment site with Enterprise Zone Status adjacent to the M54 motorway and A449 trunk road. The site will comprise a mix of industrial, office, advanced technology and leisure space covering 235,000sqm and will have a dedicated grade separated junction allowing direct access to the motorway network.
- 5.12 The i54 Local Transport Package is directly related to the development of the Strategic Employment Site. The Strategy includes improvements to public transport infrastructure and services, junction modifications on the A449 at Coven and Gailey as well as within Wolverhampton and along Wobaston Road, a new grade separated motorway junction to serve the site on the M54 and a suite of sustainable transport measures including enhanced pedestrian and cycle access routes. Delivery of this package is on going and will be complemented by a comprehensive Travel Plan Framework. The Package measures are shown in Appendix B.
- 5.13 The Highways Agency has identified that the improvements to the A449 (T)/A5 (T) roundabout and the A449 roundabout junctions at Coven will be required to accommodate development at the i54 South Staffordshire Strategic Employment Site. These works will be funded via developer contributions.

APPENDIX A: SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE DISTRICT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY SUMMARY TABLE

PRIORITIES	PROPOSED STRATEGY	JUSTIFICATION / DELIVERY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create jobs by accommodating major employment sites located in the M54 and M6 corridors, including junction improvements and potential new highway capacity. • Improve public transport connectivity to the West Midlands conurbation • Secure appropriate access to local housing and employment developments • Maintain the current condition and safety of the highway network • Improve public transport connectivity and quality of life for local communities • Raise awareness of environmental issues and encourage people to lead more sustainable lifestyles, helping to reduce carbon emissions 	<p>ECONOMIC PROSPERITY SHORT TERM – 3 YEARS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • i54 Local Transport Package: new access junction on M54, A449 junction modifications at Gailey and Coven, Wobaston Road Junction, Wobaston Road sustainable link enhancements, public transport route and service improvements, and Travel Plan Framework, Walking and Cycling access improvements • Perton Bus Link – improved enforcement and safety measures • Real Time Passenger Information for Buses at i54 (Centro funded) • South Staffordshire Rural Transport Partnership potential initiatives: Bilbrook Lane/Duck Lane/Wolverhampton Road improvements • B4156 Cheslyn Hay route strategy – Station/High/Low Street's Congestion and speed reduction schemes • M54/A460 Cannock Road, Featherstone – local safety scheme • A458 Bridgnorth Road/B4537 Wollaston Road, Stourton – local safety scheme • Improved bus facilities on Great Wyrley to Bloxwich Corridor • Parking issues at tourism hot spots to be monitored • Highways Agency - M6 Managed Motorways 10A to 13 and Churchbridge HA Pinch Point Scheme. • Continue full support for Staffordshire Connect Project <p>LONG TERM UP TO 2026</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport connectivity improvements on bus routes 256 Wombourne to Stourbridge, 255 Wolverhampton-Wombourne-Merry Hill Centre, 5 Codsall-Wolverhampton, 1 Huntington-Walsall (in Huntington) and 76 Stafford-Wolverhampton (A449 south of Penkridge) • Consideration of increased car parking capacity at Codsall Rail Station • Improved Rail services and increased travel information provision at rail stations • Improved connections between M54/M6/M6 Toll to alleviate pressure on local road network • National Cycle Network – Codsall Wood to Bilbrook • Support for aspiration to restore Hatherton branch Canal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value for money will be achieved through delivering local transport packages by pooling public and private sector resources. Future public funding will be secured through LEP Growth Deals • Priorities are in line with adopted Local Plan. • The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) will demonstrate deliverability of the Local Plan (subject to legal challenge in Sept 2013) and will be continually reviewed. This Integrated Transport Strategy will complement the IDP. • Transport assessments will determine the measures required to be delivered by developers and refusal is only likely on transport grounds where the impact of development is severe. • SSDC are currently reviewing their position regarding a Community Infrastructure Levy. The Strategy will be updated once this has been determined. • Scheme delivery will acknowledge Manual for Streets and available guidance on the historic environment, habitats and the Urban Forest • The County Council will support improvements to the trunk road network, funded by the Highways Agency, that help to meet identified priorities • The County Council will work in partnership to deliver investment in the West Coast Mainline funded by Network Rail, Centro, the DfT and London Midland • The delivery of the i54 South Staffordshire Strategic Employment Site will remain a priority for economic growth and job creation and delivery of the related transport interventions will take place via a combination of private and public sector resources • The Health and Wellbeing Agenda will be supported through capital investment in the walking and cycling network including the National Cycle Network and sustainable access to i54 development site.
	<p>COUNTYWIDE INITIATIVES (2013/14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance programme • 20mph zones, speed limit review and parking and loading restrictions through Clear Streets • Driver training and road safety education and training in schools • Subsidised bus services, community transport, concessionary fares scheme and bus service information • Promoting sustainable travel and school travel planning • Careful consideration of any requests to restrict lorry movements in line with actions and priorities in the Local Transport Plan Freight Strategy (2011) • Promotion of 'superfast' broadband 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiatives are generally expected to be funded by County Council capital and revenue funds as resources permit. • The County Council and LEP will act as leaders in the development and the raising of funds to deliver super fast broadband. • Maintenance will be the main area of County Council expenditure within the strategy period and works will be guided by the Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). • Areas targeted for delivery will be influenced by community consultation and data that identifies need. • Criteria will be set to determine which non-commercial bus services can be supported by the County Council
	<p>DIVISIONAL HIGHWAY PROGRAMME AND LOCAL SAFETY ISSUES (2013/14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bratch Lane, Wombourne - Under railway Bridge / Give and Take system • Common Rd / Planks Ln/School Rd and Bentons Lane/Wharwell Lane – Consider removal of current road humps • Wombourne, Wheaton Aston and Wedges Mills Lane - Village Signage issues including gateway signage. • Bridgnorth Road, Wombourne - Near Himley Plantation - parking issues • Speed Restrictions requested in various villages • Four Locks Cottages, A449 – Scheme to move traffic away from cottages • Featherstone Lane, Featherstone - Dropped kerb required both side of junction • Saredon Road, Shareshill and Great Chatwell Junction – Maintenance Issues • Various Great Wyrley - Requires hard standing surface to allow parking from adjacent ind.est. and access to bus stop • Dunston Heath / Coppenhall and Bungham Lane / A449 – Maintenance and improved passing bays • Safety measures outside Schools; i.e. SID - Westfield Primary, Wombourne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each Councillor has a budget of £10,000 for delivery of local minor improvements promoted through the DHP. Feasibility studies will be completed on potential schemes that emerge through the DHP process to determine if they should be delivered and whether they should be funded through the Councillors budget or require additional funding. • Scheme costs will be closely monitored to ensure value for money. • Value for money will be maximised when initiatives complement other proposals in the Strategy.

Appendix B

i54 South Staffordshire Local Transport Package

-  i54 Development
-  Junction Improvements
-  New Grade Separated Junction
-  New Bridleway Bridge
-  New / Improved Pedestrian and Cycle Links
-  i54 Sustainable Access Package

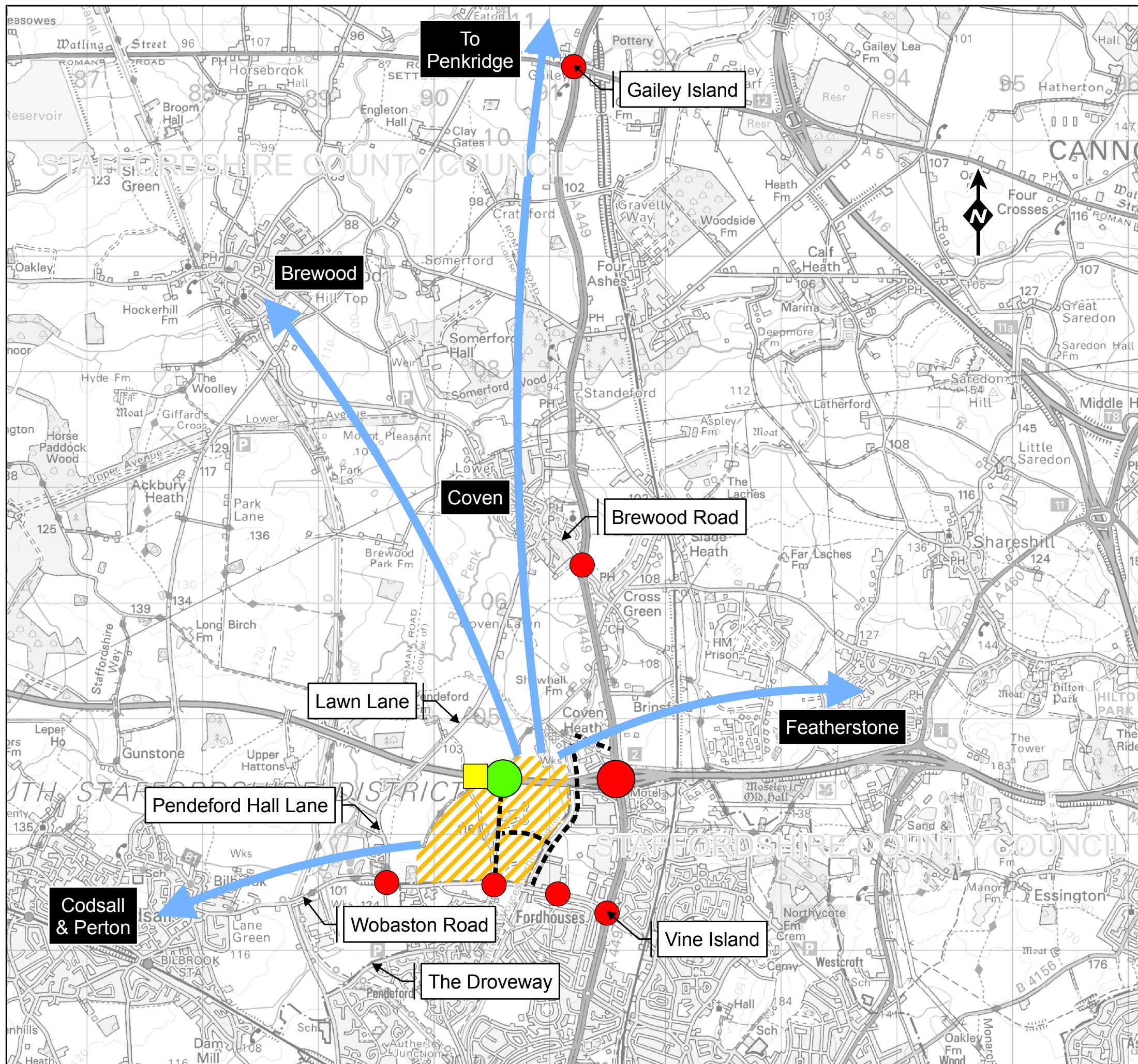


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