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Report of: *Kate Martin, Executive Director of City Futures*

Report to: *Leader of the Council*

Date of Decision: *22nd March 2022*

Subject: *City Centre Connecting Sheffield and Shuttle Bus*

Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:-	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
- Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
- Affects 2 or more Wards	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Which Executive Member Portfolio does this relate to? Cllr Terry Fox, Leader of the Council		
Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee		
Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? (REF: COVID-19 Emergency Transport Action Plan)		
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-		

Purpose of Report:

This report is to inform the Leader of the issues raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee held on 16 September 2021. The Leader is asked to note these issues and to endorse the continuation of the Connecting Sheffield City Centre to the next stage of design, aligned to the context of the wider investment in the City Centre.

This includes accepting the grant award from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) to develop the Outline Business Case to a Full Business Case, agree the procurement route and support the introduction of a city centre shuttle bus service (via the SYMCA). The report also highlights the requirement for revisions to the traffic restrictions at this location via an experimental traffic regulation order and alterations to highway design.

Background:

As part of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic, there were several changes made to the regulation of traffic on highways in the city centre, including the restriction of motor vehicle traffic on Leopold Street, Pinstone Street and Surrey Street, except for emergency vehicles and access to adjacent properties. These changes meant that some southbound bus movements through the city were relocated, either onto Rockingham Street for bus services from West Street or Arundel Gate for bus services travelling from the Castlegate area.

Although the social distancing requirement of Covid-19 has now ceased, the construction processes related to the Heart of the City development on the southern section of Pinstone Street has required the continued restriction of traffic on the highway. This is being continually managed through the practical building phases of each development block.

The closure of Pinstone Street to motor vehicle traffic and the benefits this brings for broader amenity use, remains a core component of the City Centre transformation and multiplies the impact of the entire Connecting Sheffield programme. The Outline Business Case demonstrates a "very high" value for money classification, with benefits being accrued from improved bus journey times, enhanced public realm and the delivery of the formative stages of a seamless active travel network for the city.

There is a national and global challenge around how high streets function, and in particular traditional city and town centres. These risks are not new and were present prior to the pandemic. The rise of internet shopping behaviour, work from home initiatives and out of town shopping demand has been placing major strain on how city centres function for over a decade.

What this means is that the future of city centres and their high streets require a reinvention of how they are used. The Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme at its heart has this transformation embedded within its design principles. It will take the good work already demonstrated from Grey to Green and align with the wider City Centre Vision to radially change the public space to attract business and investment whilst supporting the planned increase in residential densification.

Removal of traffic through this area has been supported by many, however it has highlighted concerns. Some of the businesses on Surrey Street, bus users and user groups representing the interests of the elderly and the disabled have specifically cited loss of accessibility. However, this has been balanced by other groups, including residents, outlining the benefits of reduced traffic, less congested walking routes and more usable public space.

A formal public engagement exercise was carried out in autumn/winter 2020, to gauge the general sentiment of the Connecting Sheffield City Centre proposals, which included making the changes to way traffic is regulated on Pinstone St permanent. This has continued to receive media attention and has been discussed with elected members and the general public via the Council's scrutiny procedures.

The restriction of traffic on Pinstone Street was debated at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on Thursday 16 September 2021. The Committee requested that;

- (i) the report be referred back to the Co-operative Executive, together with the issues now raised and highlighted by this Committee, specifically with regard to accessibility, inclusivity and travel routes through the city centre, and
- (ii) Councillor Douglas Johnson (Executive Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport) and Cate McDonald (Executive Member for Finance and Resources) give consideration, as part of the budget process, to funding a free, electric bus, to run on a route to be agreed, through the city centre

It is important to note that the development of the next stages of the City Centre Connecting Sheffield Scheme and Shuttle Bus will be undertaken in accordance with the future vision for the City Centre and seek to deliver improvements in accordance with the objectives of the funding source, the Department for Transport's Transforming Cities Fund.

Recommendations:

That the Leader:

- 1) Accepts the £1,390,646.58, grant from the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to fund the development of a Full Business Case, in compliance with the grant terms and conditions and all other related statutory requirements;
- 2) Notes and agrees the variation to the procurement of the next stage of design, to enter into a two stage Design and Build contract for this scheme, procured jointly with the Connecting Sheffield Nether Edge scheme; and,
- 3) Delegates the decision to agree the implementation of a City Centre Shuttle Bus via South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority to the Executive Director of City Futures and the Executive Director for Resources.

Background Papers:

Sheffield City Region Outline Business Case for 'City Centre Connecting Sheffield'

SCC Capital Approvals for Month 12 2020/21 & Month 1 2021/22 Minutes, 23rd June 2021. Recommendation iii, accept the stage 2 Transforming Cities Fund.

SCRMCA Mayoral Combined Authority Board Minutes. Monday 7 June 2021 Minute 18 iii – SCR Capital Programme Approvals, Progression of Sheffield City Centre OBC to FBC.
<https://governance.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=137>

Measures To Support Active Travel And Social Distancing On The Highway
[Sheffield City Council - Decision - Measures To Support Active Travel And Social Distancing On The Highway](#)

Publication date: 28/05/2020 and Date of decision: 15/05/2020

Emergency Transport Action Plan - Phase 2

[Sheffield City Council - Decision - Emergency Transport Action Plan - Phase 2](#)

Publication date: 11/06/2020 and Date of decision: 11/06/2020

Connecting Sheffield City Centre Consultation Report

[Connecting Sheffield City Centre Consultation Report.pdf](#)

Sheffield City Council Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee Meeting, held on 16 September 2021

[Minutes Template \(sheffield.gov.uk\)](#)

[Sheffield City Centre Strategic Vision](#)

Publication date: 16/03/2022 Date of Decision: 16/03/2022

**Note SCRMCA is now named South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority.*

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: Ryan Keyworth, Director of Finance and Commercial Services. 16 th March 2022
		Legal: Richard Cannon, Professional Officer, Legal Services. 11 th March 2022.
		Equalities: Annemarie Johnson, Business Improvement Manager. 16 th March 2022
<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>		
2	EMT member who approved submission:	Kate Martin, Executive Director of City Futures
3	Executive Member consulted:	Cllr Terry Fox, Leader of the Council
4	I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1.	
	Lead Officer Name: <i>Tom Finnegan-Smith</i>	Job Title: <i>Head of Strategic Transport, Sustainability and Infrastructure</i>
	Date: 18 th March 2022	

1. PROPOSAL

Introduction

- 1.1. As part of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic, there were several changes to the regulation of traffic on highways within the core city centre area to create more circulation space for people to walk and cycle. This included the closure of Leopold Street and Pinstone Street to motor vehicle traffic, except for emergency vehicles and permitted access to adjacent properties.
- 1.2. The justification for this action was aligned to the Government's Social Distancing Guidance. Following an audit, the southern section of Pinstone Street was identified as a constraint due to its narrow footway, street furniture and queuing for retail. The temporary hoarding for the Heart of the City Block B and C removes the footway on the western side of the road. Given that this is the main north to south pedestrian thoroughfare, there was a need to widen the footways. Approval was granted by Incident Management Group in two stages, in May and June 2020.
- 1.3. The changes in 1.2, have meant the relocation of some bus movements through the city, to Rockingham Street and Arundel Gate. Out of the 190 bus routes (inbound and outbound) that use the City Centre, a total of 36 routes have been changed.
- 1.4. Removal of motor vehicle traffic through this area has led to positive and negative reaction. There is recognition that the traffic-free area is beneficial for some, but access to bus services, particularly for older and disabled people has required some adjustment. It is worth noting that any change to bus services has both a negative and positive reaction and this would also include the reversal of these changes.
- 1.5. In order to demonstrate the change, the below table shows the average walking distances to main destinations for the bus services being changed¹.

Table 1 – Bus Stop Accessibility

Destination	Distance (m)		
	Before	After	Diff
Railway Station	635	481	-153
Hallam University	361	211	-150
Cathedral	254	479	224
Town Hall	130	416	286
Moorhead	109	83	-26
Moorfoot	252	244	-8
Barkers Pool	264	361	97
HOC2	232	193	-39
Moor Market	282	246	-36
Tudor Square	359	231	-128
Pond St I/change	537	453	-84
Castle Square	231	335	104
Fargate (Middle)	229	376	147

¹ Figures account for vertical alignment in accordance with Inclusive Mobility guidance. Calculated distances include the horizontal distance + the vertical distance x 10. E.g. 100m = 50m horizontal and 5m vertical x 10.

- 1.6. Similarly, there have been concerns raised about the temporary nature of some of the traffic management arrangements and the poor appearance of some of the barriers and blocks used. Given the urgent nature of the response to the pandemic, the pace of being able to provide additional space for social distancing but also the need to provide robust measures that can deter potential hostile vehicle access into an area used by pedestrians informed the materials used. These were concrete blocks, on the advice of South Yorkshire Police. These blocks have now been painted as a temporary measure, but certainty over the use of Pinstone Street and the wider Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme would enable less temporary, more aesthetically pleasing materials to be used.
- 1.7. To maximise the use of the space created for pedestrians because of the restrictions implemented at Pinstone Street, a semi-permanent widening of the footway, between the Peace Gardens and Furnival Gate, was implemented to create a step-free area. This additional space has been demarcated from the carriageway using planters and higher kerbs and continues to be very well used as people continue to return to the city centre. The footway on the northern side still has the hording lines erected and the continued building work is likely to reduce the use, or desire to use that footway.
- 1.8. As the requirement for social distancing has eased, the wider issue being presented is the continuation of this closure. The removal of motor vehicle traffic from the core area has been positively received by some, and it has allowed a different use of Pinstone Street to be implemented. This aligns to the future proposals of the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme. The consultation response on the Connecting Sheffield scheme had a response rate of 1188 comments from the public, of which 63% positive and 27% negative.
- 1.9. To move the project forward and provide a design solution to the issues highlighted, the City Council will need to accept the grant funding for the development of the next stages of Connecting Sheffield from South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority. The project brings together a number of schemes across the city centre with the objective of delivering public realm improvements, building on those recently delivered in the wider city centre (Grey to Green).
- 1.10. The Sheffield City Centre Strategic Vision sets out a clear opportunity to create 'the Steel Route' through the heart of the city centre, linking The Moor, Pinstone Street, Fargate High Street, and Castlegate. This would create high-quality pedestrian orientated public space, with dedicated cycling facilities, supported by sustainable urban drainage, protected space and landscaping. The Steel Route would be delivered through complementary investments through the Connecting Sheffield City Centre Scheme, the Future High Streets Scheme, Levelling Up and the continued Grey to Green projects. This aligns and complements planned development in the city centre, including the Heart of the City, thus transforming the city offer.

- 1.11. Furthermore the changes to bus routes, and the bus priority measures that would be implemented as part of the proposed scheme are forecast to deliver significant bus journey time and reliability benefits for existing and potential bus users. This is in direct response to the emerging Bus Service Improvement Plan, whereby speeding up bus journeys and improving reliability will be essential to improving the bus network and passenger experience.
- 1.12. The proposed bus gate on Arundel Gate, as part of the scheme, will lock in the public transport advantage and ensure that all buses using Arundel Gate benefit from this bus priority feature but also delivers air quality improvements, aligned to the Government's direction, and our legal obligations to deliver the Clean Air Zone (CAZ). In line with the Cooperative Executive decision on 26th October 2021 to undertake the consultation and implementation of our Category C charging CAZ, progress continues to be made towards an anticipated 'go live' date of early 2023
- 1.13. New and enhanced, public transport hubs to facilitate interchange between bus services would be provided on Arundel Gate and Rockingham Street and work is underway to identify any mitigation measures in relation to accessibility. All these details will be established through the business case development of the project.
- 1.14. The design principles, visualisations and scheme details are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.15. The restriction of traffic on Pinstone Street was debated at the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee on Thursday 16 September 2021. The Committee resolved two recommendations which are outlined in the next section of this report.

Key Issues

Accepting the Grant

- 1.16. To progress the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme, requires the acceptance of the development funding from SYMCA. The grant funding is for a total of £1,390,646.58.
- 1.17. Accepting the grant will allow the project to move into the next stage of design and progress the development of the Full Business Case. The Full Business Case will include the confirmation of project costs, procurement methods, construction timescales and a revised value for money calculation. It will also include statutory consultation processes and there will be the opportunity for future shaping of the project through further public engagement as the project is developed.
- 1.18. Recommendation 1 refers to the acceptance of the grant funding.

Entering Contract and Procurement Route

- 1.19. The intended route of procurement is via a two-stage design and build contract, with a break clause between the design completion / Full Business Case submission and the start of construction. This is the agreed route for a number of the other Connecting Sheffield schemes.
- 1.20. To make the project as attractive to the commercial market as possible, several schemes are being tendered together. In this case a variation to the procurement approach for the City Centre scheme is recommended so that it is packaged with the Nether Edge Connecting Sheffield scheme and jointly procured. This will not only promote competition in the bidding process but would also deliver benefits in relation to shared expertise and construction practices.
- 1.21. A full Procurement Strategy has been completed. The packages of work will be tendered via the following approaches;
 - i. Professional services via a combination of in-house delivery through the Capital Delivery Service, by call-off from the Capital Delivery Partner corporate contract and the Streets Ahead PFI.
 - ii. Principal Contractor by mini competition via the YORcivils Major Works framework.
 - iii. Specialist communications by call-off from the corporate communications contract.
 - iv. Surveys by competitive quotes.
 - v. CCTV & intercom supply & install via call-off from the corporate security contract.
- 1.22. Recommendation 2 refers to the acceptance of the revised procurement approach.

Outcome of Scrutiny Committee

- 1.23. On 16 September 2021, the issues outlined in the paper were discussed at the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (OSMC). The request for the OSMC came from Members who had received casework relating to the relocation of buses from Pinstone Street and the perceived challenges this places on city centre trade, vibrancy and accessibility.
- 1.24. The meeting allowed for public comments to be brought to the attention of the OSMC members and the response was largely balanced with a key reflection regarding both the financial and delivery risks associated with any change in direction from the consulted Connecting Sheffield project.
- 1.25. The objections presented to and from the OSMC Members focused on the loss of accessibility for bus users, particularly those with limited mobility. The increased walking distances from Arundel Gate and Rockingham Street to Fargate and the Town Hall, coupled with the gradient were highlighted.

- 1.26. The Committee requested that (i) the report be referred back to the Co-operative Executive, together with the issues now raised and highlighted by this Committee, specifically with regard to accessibility, inclusivity and travel routes through the city centre, and (ii) Councillor Douglas Johnson (Executive Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport) and Cate McDonald (Executive Member for Finance and Resources) give consideration, as part of the budget process, to funding a free, electric bus, to run on a route to be agreed, through the city centre.
- 1.27. It is considered that resolution (i) by OSMC is covered through this report, and resolution (ii) is covered by Recommendation 3 of this report, which is the implementation of a City Centre Shuttle Bus.

Bus Access

- 1.28. Concerns related to the accessibility of the city centre from the relocation of bus services from Pinstone Street to Rockingham Street and Arundel Gate arising from the temporary restrictions have been raised. A number of the comments received through the consultation coincided with a previous long-standing Shopmobility service ceasing to operate.
- 1.29. The removal of bus services has increased walking distances to and from various locations across the city centre and decreased it for others, noting that Pinstone Street previously operated in a one-way direction only. Clearly there are some users that benefit, and some that do not.
- 1.30. Analysis has been undertaken to quantify the increased walking distances associated with moving the bus stops (as shown in Table 1 previously). Through the next stages of design this will be further reduced by providing new crossing points, altering the bus stop locations and changing which buses route use certain bus stops. This will also allow the changing nature of the city centre to be considered and inform where buses need to serve in the longer term.
- 1.31. Another objective of the consolidation of bus routes is to make the network simpler and improve interchange between buses and different modes of transport. At present, buses route around the city centre in a one-way direction. This means that a return trip bus stops is in a completely different location to the inward trip bus stop. This can be confusing for users and the scheme aims to rectify this.
- 1.32. Although difficult to compare, initial feedback received from bus operators is that there have been journey time improvements as a result of the changed routes through the city centre. From the bus route data, there are improvements in journey times, comparing the pre covid to the current position. With car usage now surpassing the pre covid level on some routes, this shows that bus routes across the city are benefiting from the rerouted services from a journey time perspective.

- 1.33. The speed and reliability of services is a major factor in the passenger experience and the attractiveness of local bus services. Journey time savings for bus routes are important as this also directly impacts the costs of operating bus services. If bus operating costs are saved, then these benefits will be fed into the ongoing development of the South Yorkshire Bus Services Enhanced Partnership, seeking to reinvest 'saved' network mileage back into the bus network. This therefore helps to sustain the bus market and promotes its use over the City's wider geographic area.

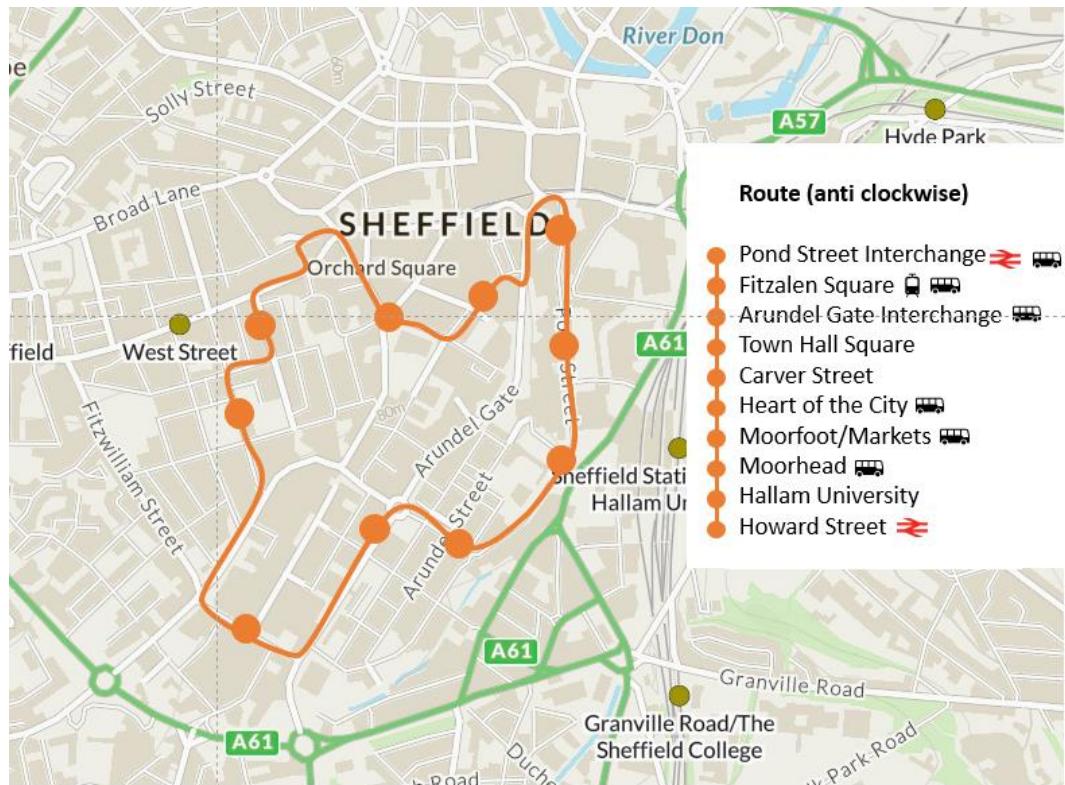
South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Response

- 1.34. SYMCA agreed the funding to support the initial scheme and remains committed to delivery, following the approval of the Outline Business Case.
- 1.35. SYMCA have been heavily involved in the design of the scheme and have positively contributed to how the public transport network benefits will be maximised. This does not only relate to scheduled bus services but includes how the scheme can better provide for Community Transport, providing improved door to door access for those who have limited mobility and are disproportionately impacted on accessibility changes.

Shuttle Bus Service

- 1.36. As mentioned previously and contained in Recommendation 3, the provision of a shuttle bus is being explored alongside the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme but also the wider City Centre offer. Whilst the accessibility drop from Arundel Gate to the top of Fargate is unlikely on its own to justify the provision of a bus service, the provision of a Shuttle Bus can be an effective way of improving broader accessibility and connectivity for people visiting the city centre. If developed as a unique offer, it will not weaken the commercial bus network, and provide an opportunity for people to interchange effectively between bus and tram services around the core city centre. It will also address the accessibility challenge outlined.
- 1.37. Following the OSMB resolution and taking public feedback into account, an immediate route has been identified. This has been designed on the basis of addressing the main accessibility challenges (principally to the Town Hall Square/Surrey Street area), linkages to interchange points and minimal highway changes whilst maximising wider connectivity benefits across the core city centre. The Figure 1 outlines this route.

Figure 1: Shuttle Bus Route (indicative)



- 1.38. Given the construction and traffic restrictions in place (road closures), certain routes are not available at the current time. However, following completion of current and planning development, other route options will be available in the future. Through the next stages of the scheme design, the bus route can be reviewed, and any changes can be made.
- 1.39. The precise details of the costs of the Shuttle Bus are dependent on a number of factors, such as, ticketing and fares, vehicle, days and hours of operation, frequency and route. These conditions of the service are able to be amended during its operation, through revisions to the tender, and this would take into account user feedback.
- 1.40. The primary aim of the City Centre Shuttle Bus would be to make the service free for most users. This would include anyone holding a valid English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), disabled persons, or other free concessionary travel passes, and those people who have purchased a valid day, weekly, monthly, or annual travel pass (either multi-operator TravelMaster pass or single operator). This is in line with previous the Freebee service where only those people without a valid travel pass paid a small flat fare.
- 1.41. Due to timescales, the vehicle will be a Diesel Euro VI and the service will be procured via the SYMCA (formerly SYPTE). The intention however is to use this as a pilot scheme, prior to the introduction of a zero emission bus option. This is currently be explored through the SYMCA Zero Emissions Buses for Regional Areas (ZEBRA) bid. Timescales currently indicate a March 2024 operational timescale for an EV option, including charging infrastructure at the Pond Street Interchange.

- 1.42. It is anticipated that the City Centre Shuttle Bus would operate 7 days a week at the core visitor times. However, subject to approval the detailed operational timetables will need to be determined (frequency, start/finish times, etc). This will then inform the tender to be undertaken by SYMCA and final costs of the service. Given that this further work will inform the revenue implication of this (as detailed in the Financial Implications) and the need to expedite implementation, it is recommended that the final decisions on the details of the bus service will be delegated to the relevant Executive Directors.

Related works and Traffic Orders for the Shuttle Bus

- 1.43. The implementation of the Shuttle Bus will require some amendments to the highway and revisions to the traffic restrictions at this location. Given that the service conditions of the Shuttle Bus (as outlined previously) are experimental, it is expected that the changes to the highway may need to be altered once it is implemented and throughout its formative stages, where the opportunity for improvements are identified and to ensure that the full benefits of the scheme can be delivered. Therefore, an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO), including any enforcement requirements will be used. This will be progressed in accordance with all related statutory procedures including notifying the public and giving them the option of making representations. A Temporary Traffic Regulation Order will be used to maintain the current traffic management arrangements in the city centre in advance of the ETRO commencing.
- 1.44. If the Shuttle Bus is approved and all other vehicular traffic on Pinstone Street remains restricted, this will allow the progression of a number of other improvement works to take place. This includes the installation of pedestrian crossing points at the Rockingham Street and West Street junction, including the alterations to allow buses to turn right from West Street eastbound. This will then remove the bus movements on Carver Street and Division Street.
- 1.45. In addition to the above, bus shelter provision will be provided on Arundel Gate.
- 1.46. It is anticipated that these works can be funded through existing approvals.

Mitigation Action – Shopmobility

- 1.47. The Sheffield BID has now implemented a revamped, 7 day a week and fully accredited Shopmobility scheme. This is being trailed with a meet and greet service being provided at Arundel Gate Interchange, amongst other locations. The Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme has outlined a financial capital contribution to this, providing the opportunity to fund mobility scooters to assist with the commercial success of the project and expand operation subject to financial sustainability. Liaison with Sheffield BID will be undertaken to support and promote the Shopmobility offer.

Mitigation Action – Kerbside Management (Blue Badge Parking, Taxi Ranking and Bus Stop Design)

- 1.48. From the outset of the Connecting Sheffield City Centre project, the issues around bus accessibility were identified. Mitigating action to address the negative implications has been included in the proposals as well as the opportunity to address several long-standing issues experienced within the wider city centre, not just the scheme boundary.
- 1.49. Officers have worked collaboratively with the Access Liaison Group and Disability Sheffield as well as undertaking extensive engagement activity with key stakeholders throughout the development of the scheme. This will be undertaken in the next stages of design and included in the Full Business Case approval.
- 1.50. As a result, the scheme will seek to reinstate and relocate where blue badge parking needs to be. This has previously not been looked at holistically and has naturally developed over many years in a relatively uncoordinated way. These locations also do not account for the changing nature of the city centre and how this relates to where development has been and is going to be.
- 1.51. A working group has been established with disabled users, facilitated by Disability Sheffield to ensure the design is centred around the user need. In addition, the analysis of kerbside allocations will also identify locations for Community Transport drop offs and Taxi facilities.
- 1.52. The Connecting Sheffield scheme will seek to alter the current bus stop arrangements in the final design. This includes the reallocation of bus services to certain stops, to ensure users going to similar locations are grouped together for maximum customer benefit. This will also seek to minimise walking distances and integrate desire lines with crossing facilities and attractive thoroughfares. Works to improve several bus stops are progressing, including the introduction of trial audio and visual real time information with the intention of this technology being delivered as part of the scheme.

Mitigation Action – Access to Information

- 1.53. Access to information is essential and the scheme will be supported by a robust inclusive multimedia platform and information 'on the ground' aligned to revamped Communication Strategy. This will ensure that elderly and disabled users, as well as first time and infrequent are not disorientated with the changes. Details of this will be developed alongside stakeholders, specifically those representing disabled groups, and this will be established in the next stages of the design process.

Mitigation Action – Design of Physical Works

- 1.54. The design of physical works will be undertaken in accordance with design standards and best practice, as outlined by the numerous Department for Transport's guidance notes and expectations. This will include the most recent national active travel guidance ([Gear Change; A bold vision for cycling and walking](#)). The designs will use feedback from previous Council schemes and build on the knowledge and expertise from continued dialogue with stakeholders.
- 1.55. Where possible, existing poor use of material, such as cobblestones, will be removed with more suitable surfacing introduced, and also include lighting, street furniture and other related highway assets.

Alignment with other City Centre Programmes

- 1.56. The Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme aligns major development that has either recently been completed, in progress or is planned for the city centre. The live and future projects are detailed below;
- 1.57. **Future High Street Fund (FHSF)** – the project seeks to provide a more usable public space by improving the aesthetic value of the high street and repurpose existing building space. The FHSF scope directly joins the scheme area for the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme and has been designed a seamless continuation of public space.
- 1.58. **Heart of the City** - The closure of Pinstone Street specifically relates to the building of block A, B and C and well set the hotel, new living space and offices within a revamped and high quality public realm.
- 1.59. **Pounds Park** - The Connecting Sheffield scheme offers a £2m contribution to Pounds Park contributing towards the highway public realm, bus hub and connecting footways.
- 1.60. **Hostile Vehicle Mitigation** - The current closure of Pinstone Street has effectively controlled vehicle access into the primary areas of the City Centre. This is in line with the expectations of the Hostile Vehicle Mitigation project, which seeks to reduce vehicle borne threats within the core, and most high-risk areas.
- 1.61. **Draft Local Plan and City Centre Plan** - Learning from other cities across the globe has identified that if successful city centre living and employment growth is to be achieved, it is based on a high quality usable urban core which promotes active travel, an integrated public transport network and greenspace. The Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme is developed on this principle and the temporary arrangements, transitioning into the full ambition would deliver on this.

Policy Direction

- 1.62. Investment in walking and cycling in central areas, like city centres, is a fundamental component to the Government's [Transport Investment Strategy](#) and the Bus Back Better [National Bus Strategy](#). This has been recently complemented by the [Gear Change](#) Active Transport Strategy and changes to highway design standards. It is also reflected in all recent funding applications, whereby funding for transport interventions strongly recommend integration of high-quality cycle and walking facilities. This builds on the policy direction to create a network, linking with, within and through central areas, to secure a greater transition to sustainable transport behaviour in the longer term.
- 1.63. At regional level, the SYMCA has set an adopted [Transport Strategy](#) and [Active Travel Implementation Plan](#). This document contains modal shift targets and investment priorities that focus on transformational change to walking and cycling networks.
- 1.64. On a local level, transport modelling undertaken for Sheffield highlights that without a significant change in modal shift, the potential growth of the city will be significantly hindered by its transport capacity. This concluded that without a shift from private car trips, the main transport corridors would not be able to accommodate these new movements, and experience significant congestion. In line with this, consultation on the Sheffield Transport Strategy noted that should the right infrastructure be provided, residents would be willing to make the shift therefore the development of a network of walking and cycling infrastructure, and better bus corridors, is crucial to the sustainable and inclusive growth of the city.

Climate Emergency

- 1.65. A Climate Emergency has been declared in the city and this has been reflected in the Council's One Year Plan. The way people travel is critical to reducing our carbon contribution. Improving the journey times and reliability of bus services is essential to making them more attractive and enhancing walking and cycling provision is also essential to make these a realistic choice for everyone. Enabling greater use of public and active travel is fully aligned to and a critical part of the City's ambition to become Net Zero by 2030. This approach across our transport network will also result in cleaner air and improved health outcomes.

Conclusion

- 1.66. As demonstrated in this report, the benefits for developing the Connecting Sheffield City Centre project are significant and the project should enter into the next stage of design. This is accomplished by agreeing to Recommendation 1 and Recommendation 2, to formally accept the grant and enter into a design and build contract.
- 1.67. The issues outlined in the paper, including the mitigation actions will be detailed throughout the next stages of the design, alongside the immediate action to procure and implement a City Centre Shuttle Bus in accordance with Recommendation 3.

- 1.68. The details of the City Centre Shuttle Bus will be subject to further detail and financial agreement, and subject to the agreement of recommendation 3, be delegated to Executive Officers.
- 1.69. Work will also progress the introduction of an experimental traffic regulation order and make alterations to the highway design. This includes the remedial changes needed to run the City Centre Shuttle Bus and also include any additional provision related to the bus infrastructure. This includes bus shelter provision on Arundel Gate and signal changes at Rockingham Street and West Street.
- 1.70. As part of these wider immediate physical changes and traffic regulation, the provision of disabled parking bays will also be investigated and progressed.
- 1.71. The Connecting Sheffield proposals have been brought forward because, while Sheffield is a great place to live and work, we still need to improve the travel networks and urban spaces to meet the standards that are required for the future.
- 1.72. Through the commitment in the Council's One Year Plan, the City Centre Plan has been developed to outline a vision for the City Centre. This scheme is aligned to all the key considerations of the Vision's principles, such as, the need creates more usable space and a high-quality public environment which ties in with the changing shape and requirements of the City Centre, as well as aligning to our ambition to become Net Zero by 2030 by encouraging people to use a more reliable and higher quality bus and tram network.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1. Contributes towards protecting public health and making a positive impact on those who are vulnerable to roadside pollution.
- 2.2. Contributes positively towards net-zero targets by enabling safer walking and cycling. It also contributes to the Council achieving its aim of increasing cycling levels from 1.4% to 6.6% in peak hours, and from 0.9% to 4.2% across the 12-hour day (2017 base) as outlined in the Sheffield Transport Strategy.
- 2.3. Contributes towards achieving the corporate objectives within the One Year Plan, through the promotion of sustainable transport and the City Centre Plan
- 2.4. Contributes to climate change adaptation through Sustainable Urban Drainage
- 2.5. Contributes to making the city centre more attractive and vibrant through improved events space and ability for outdoor seating.
- 2.6. Contributes to bus network reliability and increased patronage, linked to the emerging objectives of the South Yorkshire Bus Service Improvement Plan.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1. Through November 2020 and January 2021, engagement on the Connecting Sheffield City Centre project was undertaken to obtain the general public's perception of the scheme, including the closure of Pinstone Street to motor traffic.
- 3.2. The main conclusion from this engagement is that of the 1,000+ comments received, 63% were positive compared to 27% against. There was a clear recognition that Pinstone Street should be used as a more people friendly environment and the scheme would deliver this with the removal of the traffic, bringing greenery and improving safety. The permanent introduction of the Grey to Green style improvements were part of this.
- 3.3. The age of respondents was mixed, with 17% between the ages of 16 to 34, 25% between the ages of 35 to 54, 23% between the ages of 55 and 84. 34% did not choose an age and 1% preferred not to say. Although there is a high proportion of those who did not specify, of that did, there was an even split. It is therefore concluded that a representative age profile was achieved.
- 3.4. However, what was also clear was that the removal of bus services out of the core city centre would mean that bus users would have further to walk to certain facilities (not always the case but depends on destination – some will be closer). This was specifically an issue identified by disabled groups. However, the closer proximity to the train station, and interchange with other bus services, has been recognised a user benefit.
- 3.5. There is also some localised opposition regarding the removal of parking. The development of an updated Equality Impact Assessment that covers all the changing nature of the city centre is currently being produced, this will inform the identification of mitigation options to shape the scheme designs.
- 3.6. We are also working closely with local access groups and have been taking on feedback to ensure the proposals are shaped in a way that will continue to provide access to the city centre for everyone. There has been feedback received which recognises the sensory benefits of reduced traffic noise in the Pinstone Street/Peace Gardens area, as well as the connectivity improvements of the widened footway on Pinstone Street. This was said to benefit disabled people with sensory conditions or autism spectrum disorders.
- 3.7. Disability Sheffield, Transport 4 All and the Access Liaison Group were extensively included in the project development and engagement. The key issue in June 2020 when the traffic management and footway widening was initially proposed was not the changes but “the importance of the PTE in communicating changes to services that would enable people to plan their journey.” Greater concern was raised by the group about the following topics;

- **The quality of surfaces and the presence of drop kerbs suitable for wheelchair navigation** – the Connecting Sheffield scheme will take on board feedback from previous projects and include within the design specification.
- **The need for raised kerbs at bus stops where pavements are built out** – all bus stops within the Connecting Sheffield scheme area will be built to this standard, including improved facilities at bus stops (lighting, information and seating).
- **The importance of local centres but the relative inaccessibility of the shops (i.e. smaller with a step up into them) can ramps be put in?** – the scheme will not be in direct control of access to shops but will identify opportunities to integrate into the scheme is funding allows.
- **The loss of Blue Badge car parking spaces plus the need to increase disabled bays. Particularly in local centres** – Work has already been undertaken to look at kerb space in the City Centre and allocated Blue Badge parking in these locations. This is not limited to the scheme area.
- **The need for public seating i.e. benches to remain available** – a key element of the scheme is to significantly improve the amount of public seating within the city centre, this will be complemented with better lighting and public realm.
- **The importance of segregated cycle lanes** – in accordance with the latest design standards, segregated routes are proposed.
- **The importance of kerb heights and tactile paving** - in accordance with the latest design standards and consultation with Access Liaison Group, tactile and kerb heights will be included in the scheme area and at the locations where required.
- **The option to locate extra café seating on the carriageway** – on plinths in weatherproof pods like in northern Europe rather than on the footway – this is not in direct control of the project but will be considered as part of the design works.
- **The need for extra toilet provision in line with extra public seating** – changes to the City Centre’s facilities are outside of the scope of Connecting Sheffield, however, the provision of these facilities falls within the context of the changing nature of the City Centre and its offer.

3.8. All these matters raised are being detailed as far as possible through further stages of the design.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

Equality of Opportunity Implications

- 4.1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken as part of the response to the emergency Covid-19 works. This was undertaken in a different perspective i.e. temporary changes compared to the current proposal, which is a permanent change. The feedback and consultation from the temporary changes has informed key equalities matters for consideration (see Key Issues section 1.14 to 1.33 and Section 3).
- 4.2. In addition to this, an independent report of the Equality Implications of the scheme is being produced by a third-party consultant. This is currently in draft but has been used to inform the key mitigating actions outlined in 1.28 to 1.55.
- 4.3. The Connecting Sheffield schemes offer significant external funding and an opportunity to improve the accessibility of the city centre to people with a wide range of disabilities and the elderly. Where the changes to bus routes caused some disadvantage to some disabled people, other disabled people benefitted. Reversing these routes would equally be detrimental to disabled people, depending on destination. It is important to note that any change to services causes disruption to passengers and the impact on disabled and elderly people is often more pronounced.
- 4.4. As the scheme progresses ongoing consultation and liaison with protected groups in Sheffield is important to ensure the complex range of different needs are understood and met and that any changes are properly and suitably communicated so people can prepare and adapt to them.
- 4.5. Further EIAs will be written to assess the specific equality impacts of the decisions regarding the Full Business Case, Design and Build contract procurement and the City Centre Shuttle Bus.

Financial and Commercial Implications

- 4.6. The work proposed in this report to develop the full business case as set out in Recommendation 1 will cost £1,390,646.58 and will be funded by a grant from the SYMCA. The Grant will allow the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme to move into the next stage of design and progress the development of the Full Business Case. The Full Business Case will include the confirmation of project costs, procurement methods, construction timescales and a revised value for money calculation.
- 4.7. It is expected that the grant proposed will cover the full cost of the work required to develop the design and complete the Full Business Case.
- 4.8. As is normal, the Grant Manager will need to read, understand, and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and ensure that there are no unfunded ongoing costs once the grant has ended.

- 4.9. All public sector procurement is governed by and must be compliant with both the Grant Agreement and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in SCC must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as 'Contracts Standing Orders' (CSOs)
- 4.10. CSO requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase / acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.
- 4.11. The final works set out in this report will only be able to be completed when and if the Full Business Case work is completed and approved by SYMCA.
- 4.12. Successful completion and approval of the Full Business Case will release funding to complete the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme. At the Outline Business Case stage, the full cost of the scheme was expected to be in the order of £16m. As stated above, these costs will be revisited and firmed up as part of the FBC process and are therefore subject to material change.
- 4.13. In respect of the proposed bus service, £400k per year for up to 5 years is being made available from the SYMCA Mayors Sustainable Transport fund to cover the operating costs of the bus service, with a view to a longer-term Electric Bus service becoming operational in the future as set out above.
- 4.14. It is expected that the bus service will be commissioned through the Passenger Transport Executive and paid for by the Council.
- 4.15. The service will be designed in such a way that costs do not exceed this amount. Work will be required to ensure that the money received from SYMCA matches the money required to operate the service.

Legal Implications

- 4.16. The Council has powers under Part V of the Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ('the 1984 Act') to implement the recommendations of this report. The Council may implement traffic restrictions (including the modification of existing restrictions) on an experimental basis to test their efficacy via an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) made under Section 9 of the 1984 Act. This may be done for reasons that include:
 - a) for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising,
 - b) for facilitating the passage on the road or any other road of any class of traffic (including pedestrians), and
 - c) for any of the purposes specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1) of section 87 of the Environment Act 1995 (air quality).

- 4.17. Before the Council can make an ETRO, it must consult with relevant bodies in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. It must also publish notice of its intention in a local newspaper and make copies of the Order available for inspection for the duration of the effect of the Order. If there are modifications or variations made to the ETRO within 12 months of it being made, a statement of those modifications is required to be made available for inspection. Regulation 23 of the 1996 Regulations requires the Council to consider all and any duly made public objections received and not withdrawn before it can proceed with making the provisions of an ETRO permanent. In any event, a further decision whether to make the ETRO permanent will be made in due course.
- 4.18. In exercising the powers under the 1984 Act, the Council must have regard to its duty to secure the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) on the authority's road network. The making of an ETRO to implement the recommendations of this report is considered to fulfil this duty.
- 4.19. The Transport Act 2000 ('the 2000 Act') places a duty on local authorities to develop policies which will create a safe, efficient, integrated, and economic transport system that meets the needs of persons living or working within the city. The 2000 Act also imposes a duty on local authorities to carry out their functions to implement those policies and, in doing so, secure a more efficient use of their road network, or to avoid, eliminate or reduce road congestion (or other disruption to the movement of traffic) on their road network. The proposals in this report are considered to implement said policies pursuant to the aforementioned duty.
- 4.20. The Council is under a duty contained in section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 ('the 2004 Act') to manage their road network with a view to securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network, so far as may be reasonably practicable while having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives. This is called the network management duty and includes any actions the Council may take in performing that duty which contribute for securing the more efficient use of their road network or for the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion (or other disruption to the movement of traffic) on their road network. It may involve the exercise of any power to regulate or co-ordinate the uses made of any road (or part of a road) in its road network. Section 17 of the 2004 Act imposes a duty upon to Council to make such arrangements as they consider appropriate for planning and carrying out the action to be taken in performing the network management duty.
- 4.21. Section 18 of the 2004 Act requires that the Council shall have regard to guidance of the appropriate national authority about the techniques of network management or any other matter relating to the performance of the duties imposed by sections 16 and 17 of the Act. The proposals described in this report are considered to fulfil those duties in accordance with the aforementioned statutory guidance, which includes 'Traffic Management Act 2004: network management to support recovery from COVID-19'.

- 4.22. Local Transport Authorities are responsible for key aspects of public transport planning and delivery, the SYMCA being the LTA responsible for the operational public transport elements of the region's public transport strategy pursuant to its status as a combined authority so designated under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and as amended by the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act 2016.
- 4.23. These responsibilities include developing, investing in and promoting new public transport schemes such as the city centre shuttle bus proposed in this report. As the SYMCA will be responsible for the procurement of the aforementioned service, the Council's status in that process and involvement in the proposals outlined in this report are considered to be compliant with the requirements of the Bus Services Act 2017.

Other Implications

- 4.24. The Outline Business Case submission included an Environmental Scoping Report, undertaken independently by Mott MacDonald. The conclusion for the city centre scheme was positive, with new proposed green public spaces, landscaping and cycling and walking infrastructure anticipated to benefit the surrounding townscape and improve views from and into the area.
- 4.25. Public Health Policy is very much focused around the need to improve the take up of sustainable transport and increasing physical movement in day to day activities. Capital schemes that facilitate and promote greater levels of active travel and reduce motorised traffic in core areas where people congregate is key policy objective. The recommendation for Option A therefore complies with this strategic aim.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1. The alternative option is the reinstatement of Pinstone Street and to not accept the grant agreement. This would also significantly impact the justification for a City Centre Shuttle Bus. The fees spent to date on the Outline Business Case and all other projects would need to reimburse from revenue allocations and paid back to SYMCA, through clawback mechanisms on the previous grant agreement.
- 5.2. Initial feasibility work has been undertaken with Amey (as the Council's Highway Delivery Partner) to estimate the potential cost of the reinstatement and the practicalities involved. The cost has been calculated at £350k, including internal charges, and would require the changes to the traffic control and signal apparatus at the junction of Pinstone Street and Furnival Gate.
- 5.3. The timescale for completing the work have been programmed for 12 weeks, although this depends on mobilisation time, agreed road closures, working arrangements and weather.

- 5.4. The availability of city centre palette materials would increase costs and delivery timescales. The reinstatement would need to be progressed as soon as possible, it has been assumed that the materialised used for Pinstone Street reinstatement would be concrete and tarmac, rather than granite and paving stone. There is then opportunity to revisit and replace these materials with a revised Connecting Sheffield scheme.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. The scheme forms a fundamental component of the redevelopment of Sheffield City Centre, providing an improvement in connectivity that supports active travel and public transport to enable sustainable and inclusive employment and residential growth over the next few decades.
- 6.2. The scheme in its current form has been developed to include the aspirations of delivering several wider city centre regeneration projects. The geography of the TCF proposal clearly sits in between the future High Street Fund project on Fargate and the heart of the city project to the west. This scheme therefore builds upon the strategic principle of ensuring future densification of housing development in the core urban area as well as transforming the public realm to support greater levels of leisure use and thus leading to regeneration.
- 6.3. The proposal blends previous investment in the public realm including the Moor, Grey to Green 1 and 2 and latest extension to Angel Street, the peace gardens and the Gold Route connecting the city centre with Sheffield Midland Station. In addition to this, the project is being developed alongside private sector the investment proposals including Sheffield Hallam University master plan and several housing developers. This project clearly demonstrates a wider importance for the changing nature and dynamic response to the need for a new city centre.
- 6.4. Issues of traffic congestion and bus journey time reliability restrict public transport patronage growth throughout the city and should the benefits from this scheme not be delivered it is expected to undermine the attractiveness of public transport across the whole city. This will lead to a higher degree of congestion therefore significantly restricting the city and region's future productivity and ability to meet its full growth potential. The degree to which potential public transport journey time and reliability improvements could be retained within an alternative Connecting Sheffield Scheme has not been tested and would need to be explored, but the current scheme has been developed as the most optimal solution.
- 6.5. With forecast growth in both employment and housing in the city centre, without a major improvement in walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, congestion experienced on the local and strategic road network will increase, with worsening delays for all road users. This will continue to impact negatively on local people in terms of their ability to access employment, training, and education, and will limit investor confidence.

- 6.6. Businesses in the city frequently highlight good levels of accessibility and connectivity to public transport and active travel as being crucial to their successful operation and development. This has been highlighted through the feedback on the scheme. Not providing these step change improvements will therefore jeopardise the ability to continue to develop the city centre to its full potential.
- 6.7. If the proposed scheme does not come to fruition, the impact will be an exacerbation of the traffic-related problems outlined above. Furthermore, air quality issues associated with traffic congestion will persist, limiting the ability of local people to lead healthy lives and reducing the ability to achieve local, City Region and national emissions targets. The scheme also introduced major improvements in public realm which incorporate resilience to climate change and the deliverability of a liveable, attractive space. These objectives will be severely compromised if the scheme doesn't progress.

Appendix A – Design details, Visualisations and Scheme Plans

Figure 1: Grey to Green landscaping proposed to be introduced to Pinstone Street, Arundel Gate and Furnival Gate



Figure 2: Proposed Connecting Sheffield on Pinstone Street and Arundel Gate



Figure 3: Town Hall Square



Figure 4: Pinstone Street and Charles Street



Figure 5: Arundel Gate walking route and pedestrian crossing

