



## Report to Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee 16<sup>th</sup> September, 2021

**Report of:** Michael Crofts, Interim Executive Director, Place

**Subject:** Pinstone Street

**Author of Report:** Matthew Reynolds  
Transport Planning and Infrastructure Manager  
[matthew.reynolds@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:matthew.reynolds@sheffield.gov.uk), 07805 746 504

### Summary:

The information presented in this report has been requested by the Committee following a discussion on Active Travel. Specifically, the Chair has asked this report to focus on changes on Pinstone Street and the future plans for this area of the City Centre.

Members have advised that they are receiving casework related to the relocation of buses from Pinstone Street and the challenges this places on city centre trade and vibrancy, including accessibility.

### Type of item:

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	X
Other	

### The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

The Committee is asked to consider the rationale for the changes made to Pinstone Street and to provide views and comments on its future operation, aligned to the context of the wider investment in the City Centre. This includes the planned Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme, the Heart of the City, the Future High Street Fund and the City Centre Plan.

**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, 23<sup>rd</sup> 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?CommitteedId=137>

**Category of Report:** OPEN

## Report of the Interim Executive Director, Place – Pinstone Street

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of the Council's response to the coronavirus pandemic, there were several changes to the highway 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 traffic, except for emergency vehicles and permitted access.
- 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 footpath 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.
- 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 have been changed.
- 1.4. Removal of motor 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 this reaction and this would 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 changed<sup>1</sup>.

**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

<sup>1</sup> 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 the police.
- 1.7. To maximise the use of the space created for pedestrians as a result of the closure of 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 return to the city centre.
- 1.8. Recent city centre footfall figures for August show a weekly average at 252,379, compared to 192,245 in August 2020 and 293,336 for August 2019. Given the impact of the pandemic on consumer behaviour and how this has been witnessed in other towns and cities, the City Centre is not showing a comparable decline in use. Research by Centre for Cities shows Sheffield's recovery is "Strong" and compares well with other core cities;

**Table 2: Centre for Cities City and Town Centre Performance<sup>2</sup>**

City	Overall recovery index	Spend index
Liverpool	60	118
Newcastle	59	101
Bristol	55	89
Sheffield	54	90
Leicester	54	87
UK Average	53	89
Nottingham	50	86
Leeds	48	91
Manchester	47	94
Birmingham	46	80

- 1.9. As the requirement for social distancing has eased, the wider issue being presented is the continuation of this closure. The removal of 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<sup>3</sup>. 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.

<sup>2</sup> Data from Centre for Cities High Streets Recovery Tracker, retrieved 7 September 2021, <https://www.centreforcities.org/data/high-streets-recovery-tracker/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://connectingsheffield.commonplace.is/proposals/city-centre-proposals>

1.10. The City Council accepted funding for the development of the next stages of Connecting Sheffield from Sheffield City Region 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). The project aligns with the proposed enhancements to be delivered through the Heart of the City and Future High Street Fund projects. In combination, these projects will transform this area into a high-quality pedestrian orientated public space, supported by sustainable urban drainage, protected space and greenery. This is shown in the below figures;

**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**



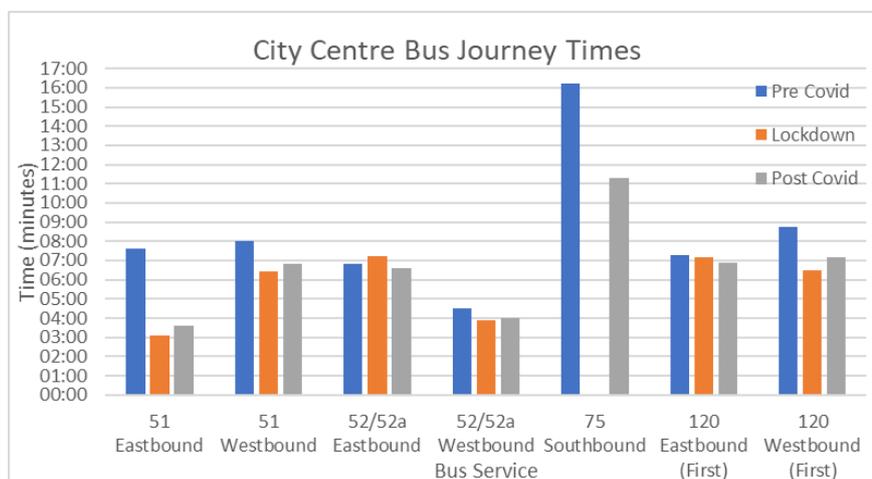
- 1.11. Furthermore, the changes to bus routes, and the bus priority measures that would be implemented as part of the proposed scheme are forecast to deliver significant bus journey time and reliability benefits for existing and potential bus users. This is in direct response to the emerging Bus Service Improvement Plan, whereby speeding up bus journeys and improving reliability will be essential to growing the bus network. The proposed bus gate on Arundel Gate, as part of the scheme, lock in the public transport advantage and ensure that all buses using Arundel Gate benefit from this bus priority feature
- 1.12. 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.

## **2. Key Issues**

### **2.1. Bus Access**

- 2.2. 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 closure have been raised. This coincides with the long-standing Shopmobility service ceasing to operate.
- 2.3. 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.
- 2.4. Analysis has been undertaken to quantify the increased walking distances associated with moving the bus stops (as shown in Figure 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 where buses need to serve in the longer term.
- 2.5. Another objective of the consolidation of bus routes is to make the network simpler and improve interchange. 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. The scheme aims to rectify this.
- 2.6. Due to urgent nature of the works, the bus stops on Arundel Gate are not as good a standard as Pinstone Street. This is very much recognised and once the next steps are understood, improvements will be programmed. Through SYPTE, new high quality bus shelters are being installed at Furnival Gate and Charter Row following a longstanding request for these improvements.

- 2.7. Although difficult to compare, initial feedback from bus operators is that there are journey time improvements as a result of the closure. From the bus route data, there are improvements in journey time, 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. As shown below, the 51 bus eastbound has seen in a 50% decrease in journey across the city centre and the 75 southbound is 30%.



- 2.8. These journey time savings are currently better than those forecast following the implementation of the full Connecting Sheffield scheme, although given the current recovering position of bus patronage and wider bus market, we would need more data to understand what the actual 'normal' situation benefit would be.
- 2.9. 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 the founding principles of the Sheffield Bus Partnership state that these savings are reinvested back into the bus network. This therefore helps to sustain the bus market and promotes its use over the City's wider geographic area.

### Alignment with other City Centre Programmes

#### *Connecting Sheffield*

- 2.10. The funding for the Connecting Sheffield City Centre project – including the walking and cycling improvements to Pinstone Street has been allocated from the Department for Transport via the Transforming Cities Fund and is administered by Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority (SCRMCA). Each project is therefore subject to and approval from the SCRMCA, in accordance with its strategic fit, value for money and deliverability.

- 2.11. The Outline Business Case for City Centre scheme was approved by Sheffield City Council, before being approved to SCRMCA on 7 June 2021.
- 2.12. The current programme is to begin construction in June 2022, following the completion of the Full Business Case and reporting through SCC's approval processes. Reinstating Pinstone Street to its pre-covid position would ultimately mean switching bus users back to Pinstone Street, when they would then be potentially moved back in less than 12 months' time when construction begins. The constant moving of bus passengers across the city should be avoided and therefore the wider implications for the Connecting Sheffield scheme must be given full consideration when considering the current layout of Pinstone Street.

#### *Future High Street Fund*

- 2.13. In January 2021, the Council was successful in securing a £15m funding envelope for the transformation of Fargate through the Future High Street Fund. A key element of this project is to provide a more usable public space by improving the aesthetic value of the high street and repurpose existing building space. The proposals include expanding and improving the area at the top of Fargate with enhanced footways and planting to create the scope for a greater public realm and events space. This transformation would have to be limited if the road space were to be kept for a major bus route.

#### *Heart of the City*

- 2.14. The Heart of the City project is focused on delivering the step change in what the city centre offers, including office space, retail units, a hotel, residential accommodation, and a high-quality pocket park.
- 2.15. The closure of Pinstone Street specifically relates to the building of block A, B and C but also coordinates with the delivery of the Connecting Sheffield scheme and the Future High Street Fund. The closure of Pinstone Street to motor traffic therefore benefits the delivery of this project as the highway presented a barrier to construction processes and delivery timescales.
- 2.16. In addition, there is an aligned delivery and financial benefit between the delivery of the Connecting Sheffield scheme and the other projects in the city centre, such as the improvements to bus stops and public realm on Rockingham Street. This includes Pounds Park. The Connecting Sheffield scheme offers a £2m contribution to Pounds Park and there is a risk that should the Connecting Sheffield changes to Rockingham Street Bus Stops not be delivered, that funding may be clawed back from the funder (SCRMCA).

### *Hostile Vehicle Mitigation*

- 2.17. The safety of the City Centre, and those who use it, is of paramount importance and this has been highlighted through various cooperative workstreams with South Yorkshire Police. 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 conflicts within the core, and most high-risk areas. The continuation of this arrangement in the short term is therefore supported by this workstream, until the permanent solution is in place.
- 2.18. The design of the current Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme effectively removes the need for more onerous and impactful measures at the top of Fargate and adjacent to the Peace Gardens. Permanent measures would need to be developed and implemented if Pinstone Street were to be reopened, and in the intervening period further temporary measures would need to be installed.

### *Draft Local Plan and City Centre Plan*

- 2.19. The Draft Sheffield Local Plan has articulated the need for increased densification of the City Centre from both a residential and employment land perspective. To understand how, what and where this growth can be delivered, a City Centre Plan is being developed. Within this, transport and connectivity will play an essential role, including how the use of the public highway can provide additional recreational space whilst also providing the infrastructure to support greater sustainable modes of transport, like walking, cycling and public transport.
- 2.20. Learning from other cities across the globe we have identified that if successful city centre living and employment growth is to be achieved, the transport solution for the city centre is one 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.

## 2.21. Policy Direction

- 2.22. Investment in walking and cycling in central areas, like city centres, is a fundamental component to the Government's Transport Investment Strategy<sup>4</sup>. This has been recently complemented by the Gear Change<sup>5</sup> 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.
- 2.23. At regional level, the Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority has set an adopted Transport Strategy<sup>6</sup> and Active Travel Implementation Plan<sup>7</sup>. This document contains modal shift targets and investment priorities that focus on transformational change to walking and cycling networks.
- 2.24. 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

- 2.25. 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.

---

4

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/885736/Transport\\_investment\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/885736/Transport_investment_strategy.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/SCR-Transport-Strategy-Consultation-Draft.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://governance.sheffieldcityregion.org.uk/documents/s2465/Appendix%201%20-%20Sheffield%20City%20Region%20Active%20Travel%20Implementation%20Plan.pdf>

### **3. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?**

- 3.1. Through November and December 2020, 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. 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.
- 3.4. 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.
- 3.5. Alongside the bus hub provision on Rockingham Street and Arundel Gate, through traffic would be limited on Arundel Gate through the provision of a northbound bus gate (from a point near to Novotel to retain access to residential and business premises) to create a high-quality bus corridor which gives increased priority to buses and improved air quality. Alongside this, there will be enhanced bus stops and public realm improvements supported by audio and visual real time information. Services stopping at Arundel Gate will be very close to interchange facilities with other buses and the train station. Access from buses to the train station and Hallam University is now significantly improved.
- 3.6. The plans are designed to ensure that bus services will still allow people to access the core of the city centre, with stops located within just a few minutes' walk from the main active areas. However, we understand that some users may have concerns around having to change their arrangements for accessing the city centre.
- 3.7. As part of the plans, we will be relocating some bus stops so that users will end and start their journey at stops located closer together in the city centre than they currently are in the temporary arrangements. Previously, it was the case that boarding the bus is in a different place to where users alight. For instance, passengers getting off on Leopold St would have to board the return journey on Arundel Gate or elsewhere. Therefore, moving forward, while one journey may be longer, the other is likely to be shorter. Therefore, the overall impact to journey times on foot will be minimal.

- 3.8. A further potential way of enhancing accessibility within the city centre is the introduction of a city centre shuttle bus. This is being explored through the Zero Emission Buses for Regional Areas (ZEBRA) bid. The bid is currently being drafted and one of the key criteria is to serve areas where air quality can be improved. Given that the city centre is shown to have some of the highest levels of air pollution there is a strong strategic fit.
- 3.9. 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 in the Pinstone Street/Peace Gardens area, as well as the connectivity improvements of the widened footway on Pinstone Street.
- 3.10. 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 if 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.

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

3.12. 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. Through the commitment in the Council’s One Year Plan, the City Centre Plan will be developed to outline a vision for the City Centre. This is yet to be agreed but will need to consider principles such as the need create 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.

3.13. In addition, the project will use this opportunity to define new locations for disabled parking in the city centre. This will match the changing nature of the city centre but also increase the provision of on street disabled parking.

#### **4. Recommendation**

4.1 The Leader has requested that the closure of Pinstone Street is reviewed and brought to Co-operative Executive for a discussion and steer.

4.2 The Committee is asked to consider the proposals and provide views and comments on the current arrangements in place on Pinstone Street and the proposed transformation of Pinstone Street as part of the Connecting Sheffield City Centre scheme which will inform further discussions.