

5 Highways Issues and Preferred Option

Highways Issues

Issue 6

Highways: Issues

- 5.1 The ability to access, move around, and service a town centre is vital if it is to be a viable and vibrant place. Integrating pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular requirements is particularly challenging for Elland, and a full examination of this issue was undertaken by the highways and traffic consultants, Scott Wilson.
- 5.2 Contemporary Elland has inherited a legacy of highways development from the twentieth century that prioritises motor vehicle movements at the expense of pedestrians and cyclists. Unsustainable modes of transport have been prioritised and this has serious implications for the long-term sustainability and vitality of the town.

Picture 33 Bus turning the sharp corner between Southgate and Victoria Road



Picture 34 Traffic at the junction between Southgate and The Cross



- 5.3 The infrastructure made available for motor vehicles tends to be ungainly, and the over use of cars vis-a-vis pedestrians limits the vitality of the Town Centre by reducing the viability of active frontages, including shops and other businesses. Hot spots of heavy traffic-use force pedestrians out of the area and therefore reduce footfall, thereby reducing the potential for retail trade. This is all too apparent in the existing state of Central Elland, and especially in the Town Centre.
- 5.4 The Elland Riorges link and its roundabout at Southgate has created a large void in Central Elland's street scene stifling the vitality of the area, as well as creating an ugly, hazardous and polluted environment at a key gateway into the town. Moreover, this roadway has damaged the cohesiveness of Central Elland, segmenting the area and hindering pedestrian movement. At various other points in the town, for instance along Southgate and Northgate, there is an over dominance of the motor vehicle, which creates an unattractive area that is inappropriate for use by members of the local community and visitors alike.

5 . Highways Issues and Preferred Option

Picture 35 Elland Riorges link roundabout



Picture 36 Elland Riorges link roundabout



- 5.5** The network of pathways in Central Elland is in a poor condition. Uneven, poorly paved, and narrow pathways are inappropriate for use by disabled members of the community and do not encourage people to utilise a highly sustainable and healthy mode of transportation, that is walking.
- 5.6** Equally, provisions for cyclists in Central Elland are poor. The infrastructure and facilities available to cyclists are virtually non-existent.
- 5.7** Facilities for the use of public transport are also inadequate, and along with the weaknesses in provisions for pedestrians and cyclists, it is clear that this further encourages the use of the car; an unsustainable form of transport that is damaging Central Elland, and its potential to regenerate. Facilities for the use of buses need to be enhanced, and a link to the railway network provided.
- 5.8** A summary of the main issues is as follows:
- Severance for pedestrians caused by roundabout at junction of Elland-Riorges / Southgate / Huddersfield Road.
 - Dangerous crossing point for pedestrians at Southgate/Victoria Rd junction.
 - Dangerous crossing area for pedestrians at The Cross.
 - Inadequate capacity for two-way traffic along Northgate.
 - Traffic exceeding speed limit on Elland-Riorges link.
 - Lack of train and bus station.
 - Poor provision of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure throughout Central Elland.
- 5.9** The preferred options for addressing these highways issues are considered in the section entitled "Highways: Preferred Options".

Highways: Preferred Options

- 5.10** In order to achieve the urban regeneration outlined in the Key Principles, some key re-ordering of the highway network in Central Elland needs to be implemented. The amount of space given over to motor vehicles needs to be reduced, and priority needs to be given back to pedestrians and cyclists, as well as to public transport as part of a strategy to create a more sustainable and cohesive area.

Prioritising Sustainable Modes of Transport

The priority given to the various modes of transport and their infrastructure will follow a sequential approach of importance as follows:

- a) Pedestrian
- b) Cyclists
- c) Public Transport
- d) Motor vehicles of all other varieties and uses

This statement is in accordance with Policy GT4 of the RCUDP.

The options outlined below attempt to address these issues.

Pedestrian Severance

- 5.11** A high quality network of footpaths is needed to link the various component parts of Central Elland, reversing the damage highways planning has caused to the cohesion of the area.
- 5.12** The most obvious way to reduce pedestrian severance at the junction of Elland-Riorges link / Southgate / Dewsbury Road / Huddersfield Road would be to narrow down the roads and provide two T-junctions to replace the large roundabout. This would reduce the width of roadway that has to be crossed, slowing down traffic and creating pedestrian space currently taken up by the roundabout. The provision of an additional pedestrian crossing across Elland-Riorges link would further reduce severance. These improved pedestrian links across the Elland-Riorges link would help to integrate Southgate with the developments, either proposed or emerging, along Dewsbury Road.
- 5.13** Another location where significant and dangerous pedestrian severance currently occurs is at the junction of Southgate and Victoria Road. The through road bends sharply round a 90-degree bend and inter-visibility between pedestrians and vehicular traffic is poor. A potential way to improve the situation would be to introduce a pedestrian crossing in this area.
- 5.14** The area known as The Cross, which is the crossroads between Southgate, Westgate and Northgate also experiences heavy road traffic and Northgate in particular is inadequate for the magnitude of traffic using it. The road at the junction of Southgate needs to be significantly narrowed and the footpaths improved.

Traffic-Calming Measures

- 5.15** There are various areas in Central Elland where wide junctions, not only create unnecessary voids in the street scene, but create an unpleasant and even dangerous environment for pedestrians to move about in. Various measures could be implemented on the existing highway network to improve the

environment for pedestrians, by encouraging safer driving amongst vehicle users and increasing the space available for pedestrians.

- Narrowing roadways and junctions could encourage slower, safer driving, and increase the space available for pedestrian movements.
- Sections of raised paving on roads, such as in busy high streets, have the same impact as speed bumps in terms of slowing traffic, but can also create semi-pedestrianised areas in which pedestrian movements can extend safely into roadways.
- Creating a pedestrianised zone along Southgate, between Victoria Road and Coronation Street, could be an option for the future.
- Southgate could become a one-way route north from Victoria Road up to the Cross.

5.16 These measures would need to be implemented in conjunction with speed limitations where necessary.

5.17 The introduction of raised paving and more narrow roadways will be discussed in Chapter 6 as part of the proposals for seven key areas.

Cycle Route and Facilities

5.18 Cycling is an efficient and sustainable mode of transportation; a healthy means of commuting or spending leisure time. However, the existing provision of cycling facilities and infrastructure in Central Elland is very poor and this acts as a barrier to the use of this mode of transportation, and encourages reliance on motor vehicles.

5.19 Central Elland would benefit enormously from the provision of a high quality cycling infrastructure. A cycle network would connect the component parts of Central Elland, enhancing the area's cohesiveness, as well as encouraging a highly sustainable mode of transport. The infrastructure could consist of ample-sized cycling lanes, created on the existing highway network.

5.20 The cycle network could be defined by road markings and signs, and should be complemented by cycling facilities including locking areas at destinations such as shops, public services and transport interchanges.

Central Bus Facility

5.21 The general feeling regarding the provision of a bus facility that emerged from the consultations was that it should be provided in a central location near the main shopping area on Southgate.

5.22 Such a development would also enable the bus stops along Southgate to be removed, and perhaps the removal of buses along that route, which currently contribute to congestion.

Preferred Option

5.23 In light of the above, the following preferred option has been formulated, which consists of the following proposals. These proposals are suggested amendments to the highways network in Central Elland. They are indicative solutions, illustrating how the identified highways issues might be addressed in accordance with the SPD's Key Principles. This does not preclude other solutions being implemented, which also address the identified issues and key principles of the SPD.

5.24 In practice, the precise details of any highways amendments would be the subject of a review undertaken by the Council's Highways Department.

One-Way Systems on Southgate and Northgate

- 5.25** A one-way system along Southgate could be introduced to the west of Victoria Road, linking with the existing one-way route to the north of the junction with Coronation Street. A one-way system could also be introduced along Northgate, although if this further hindered the access arrangements of Dobsons, then it may be subject to the creation of a new, shared access off Westgate (see the Area 4 Development Brief in Chapter 6.) The preferred direction of travel permitted in these one-way systems would need to be agreed by the Council's Highways Department, with pedestrian safety being the leading consideration. These proposals are illustrated in Figure 5.

Pedestrianised Area

- 5.26** A further option would be to pedestrianise Southgate between its junctions with Victoria Road and Coronation Street. This would provide a safe, traffic free area for pedestrians to move about in.

Elland-Riorges Link and Southgate

- 5.27** The Elland-Riorges Link roundabout could be replaced by two junctions, one to Dewsbury Road and another to Southgate, with the southern end of Huddersfield Road being closed off. This would enable the southern end of Southgate's roadway to be considerably narrowed, and pedestrian spaces created.
- 5.28** To address the concerns expressed regarding delivery vehicles accessing and then exiting the Co-Op loading area, a possible exit arrangement for delivery vehicles is proposed. A lane could be created, using different coloured paving blocks to the surrounding pathways, connecting Huddersfield Road to Elland-Riorges link. The use of this lane could be limited to delivery vehicles and to use during restricted hours. Automated bollards could ensure vehicles cannot enter beyond certain time limits.
- 5.29** A new pedestrian crossing could be introduced across the Elland-Riorges Link, positioned in between the proposed junctions to Dewsbury Road and Southgate. These proposals are illustrated in Figure 6 .

Bus Facilities and Improvements to Southgate, Victoria Rd and Timber Street

- 5.30** A central bus facility, in the area indicated in Figure 7, would provide a more convenient interchange for Elland Town Centre, and could allow for the removal of bus stops along Southgate, permitting a more efficient flow of traffic.
- 5.31** The exact location of a central bus facility, which would need to incorporate shelters, seating, stopping bays, and sufficient turning space will be the outcome of agreements between the Council's Highways Department, West Yorkshire Metro, and local bus operators. It had previously been proposed to locate a bus facility along Timber Street, however, it was subsequently decided that this would present operational difficulties for bus operators.
- 5.32** Chapter 7 of the SPD refers to the possibility of seeking developer contributions towards public transport infrastructure.

Elland Cycling Network

- 5.33** A cycling network is proposed, which is depicted in Figure 8, along with bicycle storage facilities. The cycle route would connect each of the seven key areas. The cycle network could proceed west along Dewsbury Road from Gannex Mill, over the Elland-Riorges Link and north along Southgate. From the northern end of Southgate, the cycle route could branch off into two directions. One branch could proceed along Northgate and then through the Riverside Park before linking up on Century Road with the other branch, which could proceed along Eastgate and Wistons Lane. The cycle route could then continue along Century Road and link up with the proposed railway station.

- 5.34 The proposed cycle network could also connect with the Calder and Hebble Navigation via Elland Bridge, and from there, with the wider, National Cycle Network, which proceeds north towards Halifax and beyond.
- 5.35 Facilities for the secure storage of bicycles could consist of metal rails. This guidance supplements RCUDP Policy T19 "Bicycle Parking Facilities" (see Appendix 1.)
- 5.36 This proposal is depicted in Figure 8, and would need to be the subject of a feasibility study to ensure that it would provide a safe and effective environment for cyclists.

Elland Pedestrian Network

- 5.37 The proposals discussed above have involved improvements to pedestrian links, including new road crossings. In addition to these proposals, it is also proposed to provide a high quality pedestrian network, similar to the above-mentioned cycle network, that links the component parts of Central Elland, enhancing the cohesiveness of the area. This proposal is illustrated in Figure 9.
- 5.38 A network of pathways, utilising high quality paving, and being adequately wide, would allow for all members of the community to travel in a safe and sustainable manner. For instance, the proposed pathways could be sufficiently wide to allow two disabled users to pass one another safely. The proposed pathways, if paved in a consistent colour scheme, could also act as a route guide between various key parts of Central Elland, such as the Town Centre, Riverside Park and proposed railway station. This advice supplements Policy BE5 of the RCUDP (see Appendix 1.)
- 5.39 As discussed, a pedestrianised area along Southgate could also be introduced between its junctions with Victoria Road and Coronation Street.

Pedestrian Crossings

- 5.40 The pedestrian network could integrate with the pedestrian crossing proposed at the Elland-Riorges Link. A new crossing is also proposed along Briggate prior to the corner between this road and Elland Bridge. The proposed crossing would enable safe passage for pedestrians across a busy and hazardous road, into and out of the Riverside Park and up to Northgate.
- 5.41 The heavy use of Southgate and Victoria Road, particularly by large vehicles, creates a significant hazard both to pedestrians and vehicle users. The corner between Southgate and Victoria Road is especially dangerous. It is thought that this problem could be reduced by introducing a pedestrian crossing in this area.

This preferred highways option is illustrated on the following plans, referenced on Figures 5-9 (below.)

- 5.42 It should be noted that the suggested improvements described above are a mix of solutions to specific traffic and highways problems identified in the analysis of the Issues and Options Paper. These indicative improvements are thought necessary to achieve the urban regeneration outlined in other sections (see Key Principles.)
- 5.43 The proposals are at this stage intended to be indicative. The precise design and location of these proposals will ultimately be subject to the agreement of the Council's Highways Department.

Figure 5 Plan depicting one-way proposals for Southgate and Northgate

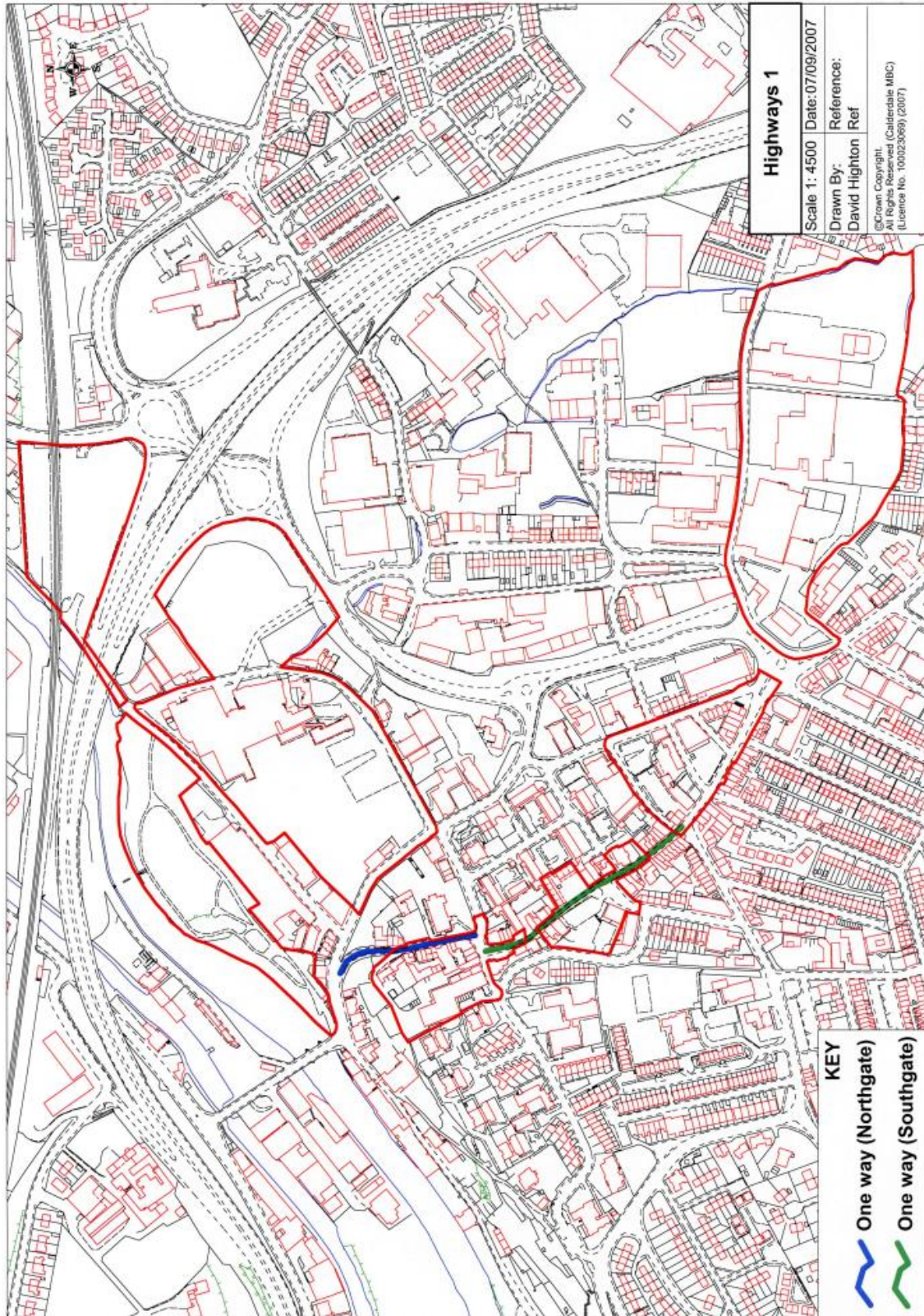


Figure 6 Plan depicting highway proposals at Southgate, Elland Riorges Link and Dewsbury Road

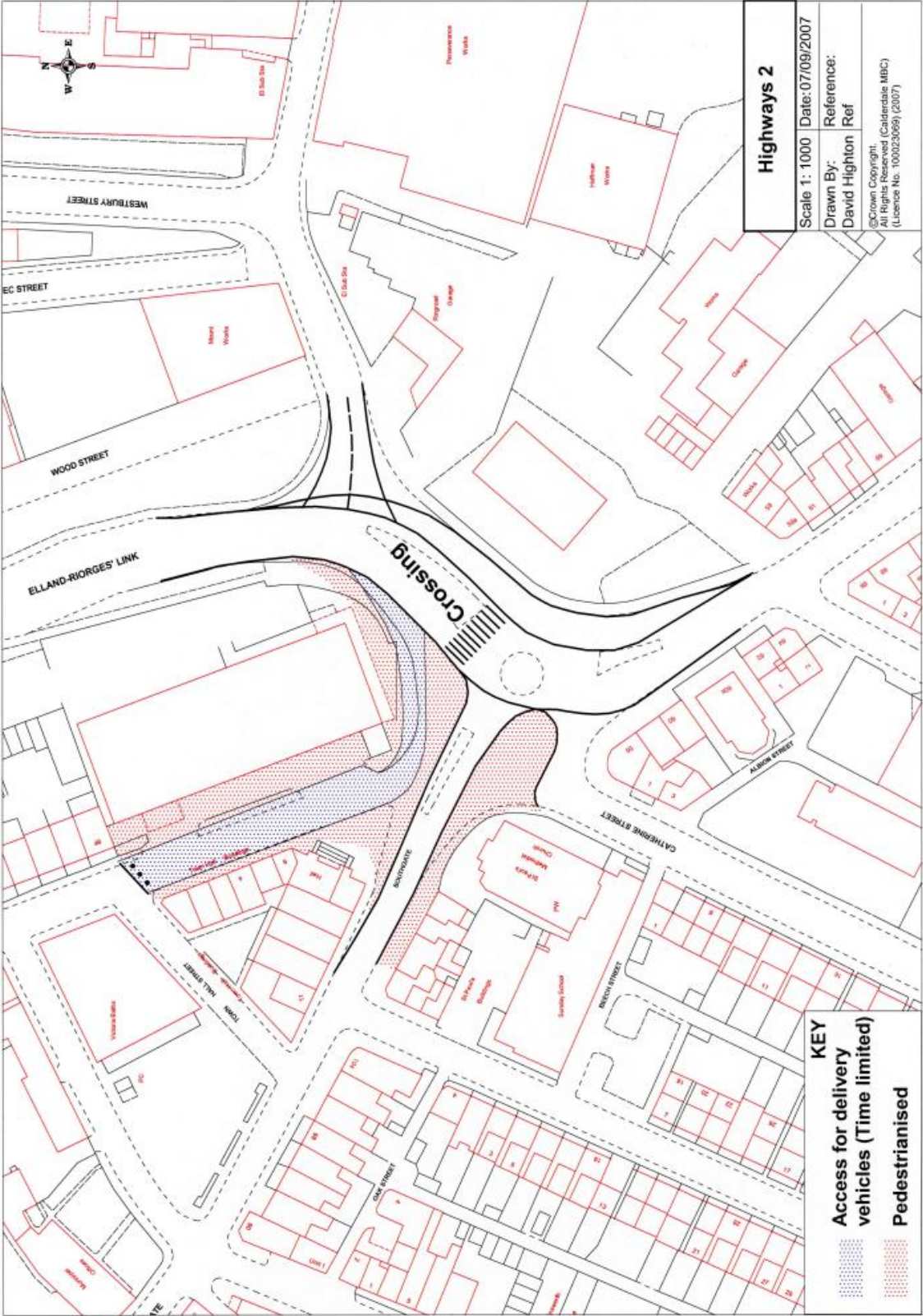


Figure 7 Plan depicting indicative area for proposed bus facility.

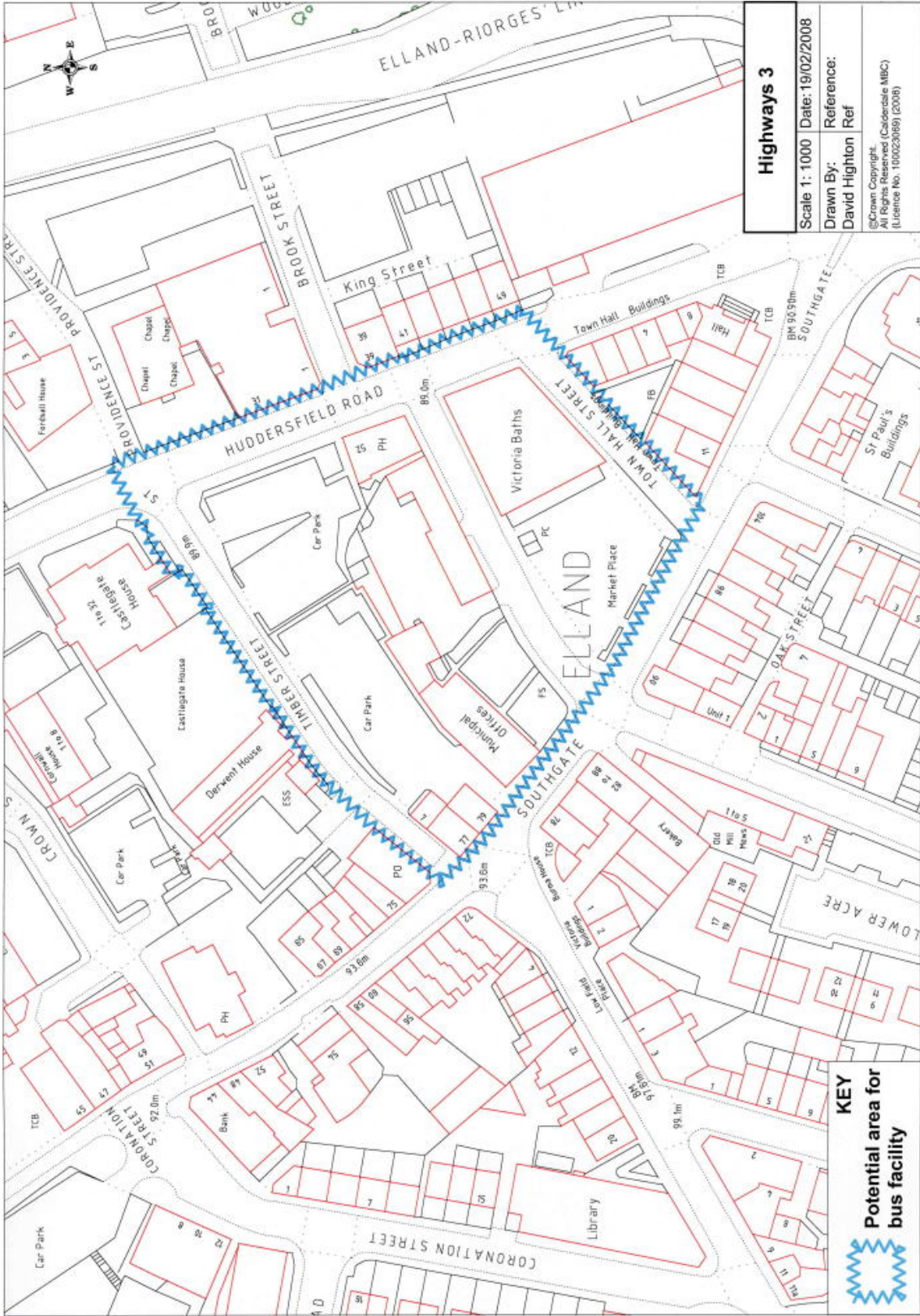


Figure 8 Plan depicting proposed cycle route

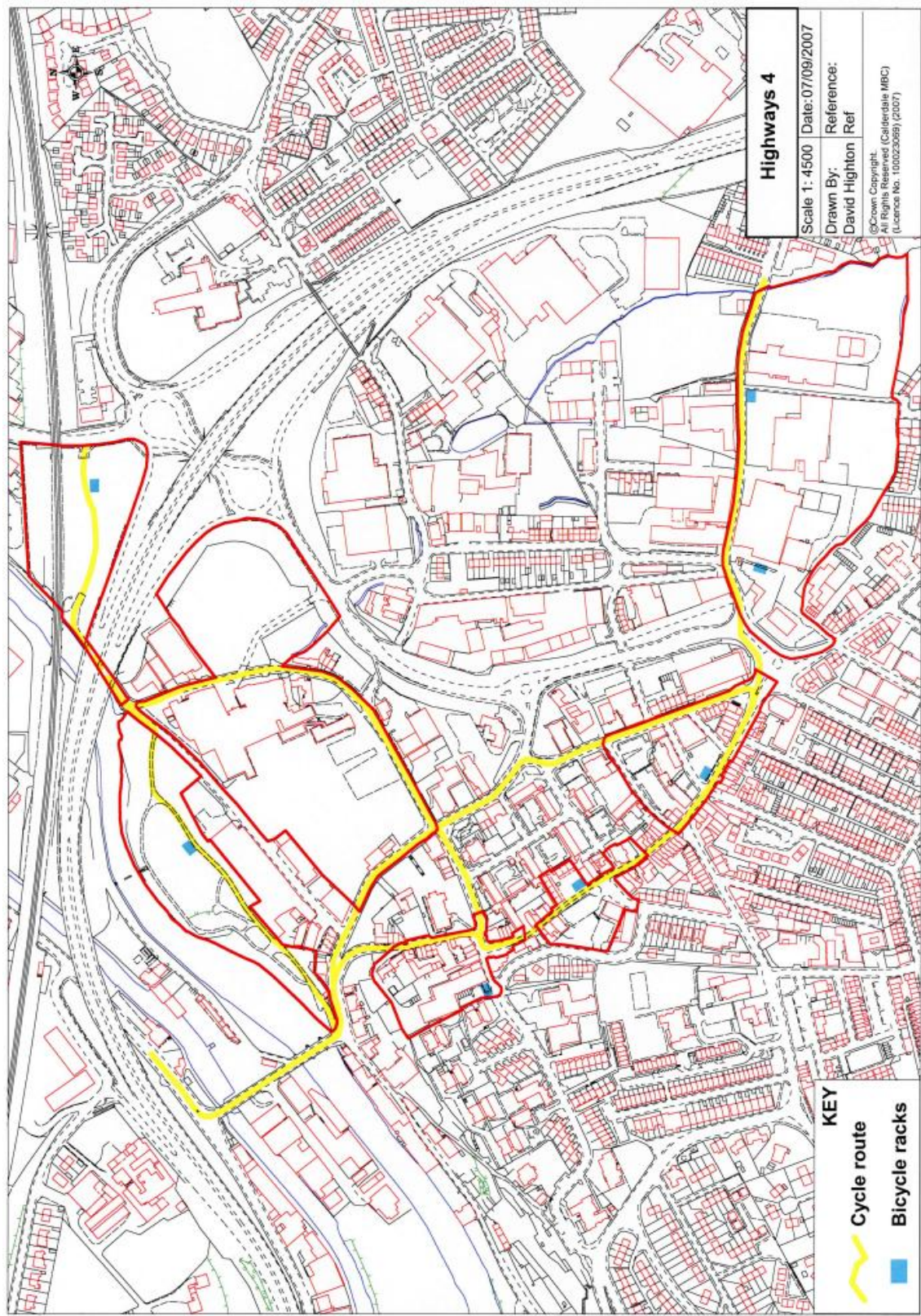


Figure 9 Plan depicting route of proposed pedestrian network

