

## **Council – 13 July 2015**

### **Petition against Walsall Council's proposals to make Caldmore Road ONE WAY from Vicarage Place to Caldmore Green**

#### **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This report is in response to a petition received in opposition to the proposal to convert Caldmore Road into a one way road.
- 1.2. The petition containing more than 1500 signatures was presented by Councillor Arif to Council 13 April 2015 and worded as follows:
  - Walsall Council is proposing to make Caldmore Road ONEWAY from Vicarage Place to Caldmore Green. If implemented this will have an adverse impact on local residents, shoppers, businesses, parents of children at Caldmore Village school and congregation of local places of worship in Caldmore Village.
  - There has been NO CONSULTATION. Making of Caldmore Road one-way will also increase traffic congestion on side-streets and make Corporation Street traffic congestion even worse than it is currently. We the undersigned are AGAINST making Caldmore Road a one-way. We DO NOT want traffic problems to be made any worse to help bus operators.
- 1.3. The Council's petition scheme provides that: "If a petition contains at least 1,500 signatures it will be debated at a meeting of the Council. This means that the issues raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting to which all Councillors can attend and speak. The Council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting. The petition organiser will be given 5 minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by Councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting.

They may decide to take the action that the petition requests; not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to ask for further information. Where the issue is one where the Cabinet are required to make the final decision the Council will decide to make recommendations to the Cabinet. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision and this will be published on our website."

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That Council consider the content of the petition.
- 2.2. That Council note the decision of Cabinet 19 March 2014 & 17 December 2014 to allocate funding for the proposed one way scheme.
- 2.3. That Council note the implications of the Statutory Network Management Duty as imposed by the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 2.4. That Council note the previous operation of a one way scheme on Caldmore Road.

## **3. Report detail**

### **3.1 Overview**

Caldmore Road is an unclassified, generally two-way single carriageway arterial road leading from Walsall town centre towards West Bromwich. It forms part of the strategic highway network as a local distributor. It passes through the Caldmore district which is a mix of residential and retail use. Part of Caldmore Road is designated as a two-way bus/cycle facility between Mountrath Street and Dudley Street whilst the section between Bradford Street and Mountrath Street is currently a contraflow bus lane.

Caldmore Road is mainly used by light vehicles given that it lies within the inner Walsall 7.5 tonne environmental weight limit zone. Heavy commercial vehicles are however permitted to travel along Caldmore Road in order to undertake loading and unloading activities at premises within the zone. It is also a busy bus route. However, the popular 404 service to West Bromwich/Oldbury/Blackheath and the 401E to Yew Tree use the road in a southbound direction only; the return route for this service is via Corporation Street and Wednesbury Road for the section of the journey between Caldmore Green and the service terminus at Bradford Place.

Waiting is widely restricted on Caldmore Road due to width restrictions and two-way traffic flow levels. For the most part, waiting is prohibited on a 24-hour basis on both sides of the road. A section between Dudley Street and Glebe Street is set aside for residents' permit parking whilst another section between Mount Street and Brace Street is allocated to 2-hour limited waiting (no return within 2 hours). A number of free, council-managed off-street parking facilities lie nearby on Mount Street, St Michael Street and Hart Street. These facilities are used to varying levels and are generally used by shoppers, employees, residents, taxi / private hire drivers and worshippers at the local mosques and temples.

## **3.2 Recent History**

As part of previous proposals to improve the Route 404 (Walsall to West Bromwich) Bus Showcase scheme, consultation events were held within the community in 2007 and 2008. In October 2007 workshops were held with stakeholders, including traders, bus operators and Walsall Housing Group, to determine the priorities those within the community had with regard to parking bays, loading bays, disabled parking, bus stops etc. These workshops produced three different options which were taken to a wider community consultation in January 2008. The preferred option amongst respondents was to put double yellow lines along the entire length of Caldmore Road to prevent obstructions to the two way traffic flow. This option was also complemented by other measures including loading bays and improvements to car parks. However, there was opposition to the implementation of the preferred option by Traders in the area.

In August 2008 National Express West Midlands began to operate the 404 bus service using Caldmore Road in one direction only. This one way operation eased the issues that buses previously faced when travelling along the route. All bus operators now operate a one way route along Caldmore Road, with services only serving Caldmore Road on the outbound journey. Inbound buses travel along Corporation Street.

In 2010, area-wide water main maintenance works led to the introduction of one-way working (southbound) along Caldmore Road between Dudley Street and Caldmore Green as a temporary traffic measure for a number of weeks. The measure transpired to be an effective traffic management procedure which resulted in minimal congestion and inconvenience to motorists, traders and residents.

## **3.3 The Issue**

There are frequent and significant safety and congestion issues on Caldmore Road, especially in the vicinity of the shopping area between Mount Street and Brace Street. The carriageway is little more than 6 metres in width throughout this section of road; consequently there is only sufficient space to allow a single-file flow of traffic to pass a line of parked vehicles. However, the moderate opposing flows of through traffic frequently results in some vehicles using the adjacent footway to pass each other whilst stand-offs and driver disputes are also common between oncoming motorists. The Council regularly receives complaints relating to the safety of pedestrians using Caldmore Road as a result of the routine driving and parking on pavements.

- 3.4 The Walsall South Area Partnership in 2012 requested that the Traffic Management team considers alternative measures and techniques to resolve these frequent problems, thus making Caldmore a more safe and attractive location for commuters, residents and shoppers.

## **3.5 The Options**

### **3.5.1 Do-Nothing – retain existing traffic management layout throughout Caldmore Road**

**For:** Zero cost implication; drivers/pedestrians remain familiar with ongoing road layouts.

**Against:** Does not address basic issues of congestion and safety, unacceptable traffic encroachment on footways will continue to be intimidating to pedestrians, side road junctions will remain hazardous.

### **3.5.2 Retain two-way flow on Caldmore Road, remove all on-street parking facilities**

**For:** Low cost measure (£7-10K), will remove opposing traffic flow and eliminate footway driving leading to improved driver and pedestrian safety, may encourage bus companies to re-introduce northbound bus services to Caldmore Road.

**Against:** Could deter shoppers from visiting Caldmore Road and thus could adversely affect businesses and regeneration of area. Proposal has been widely rejected by traders in past, will create additional pressures on on-street parking on other residential roads in area.

### **3.5.3 Introduce one-way working (southbound) on Caldmore Road, increase in on-street parking facilities by 149%**

**For:** Principle has been successfully trialled during temporary road works; will remove opposing traffic flow and eliminate footway driving leading to improved driver and pedestrian safety; will significantly increase on-street parking capacity in area, thus attracting shoppers to area and promoting regeneration, removal of opposing traffic flows will decrease journey times through area, proposal can significantly relieve parking pressures on adjacent residential streets. Design can discourage use of west – east rat-run along Mount Street and Little Caldmore/Newhall Street/Lysways Street, design can also improve overall traffic flows at Dudley Street/Mountrath Street gyratory.

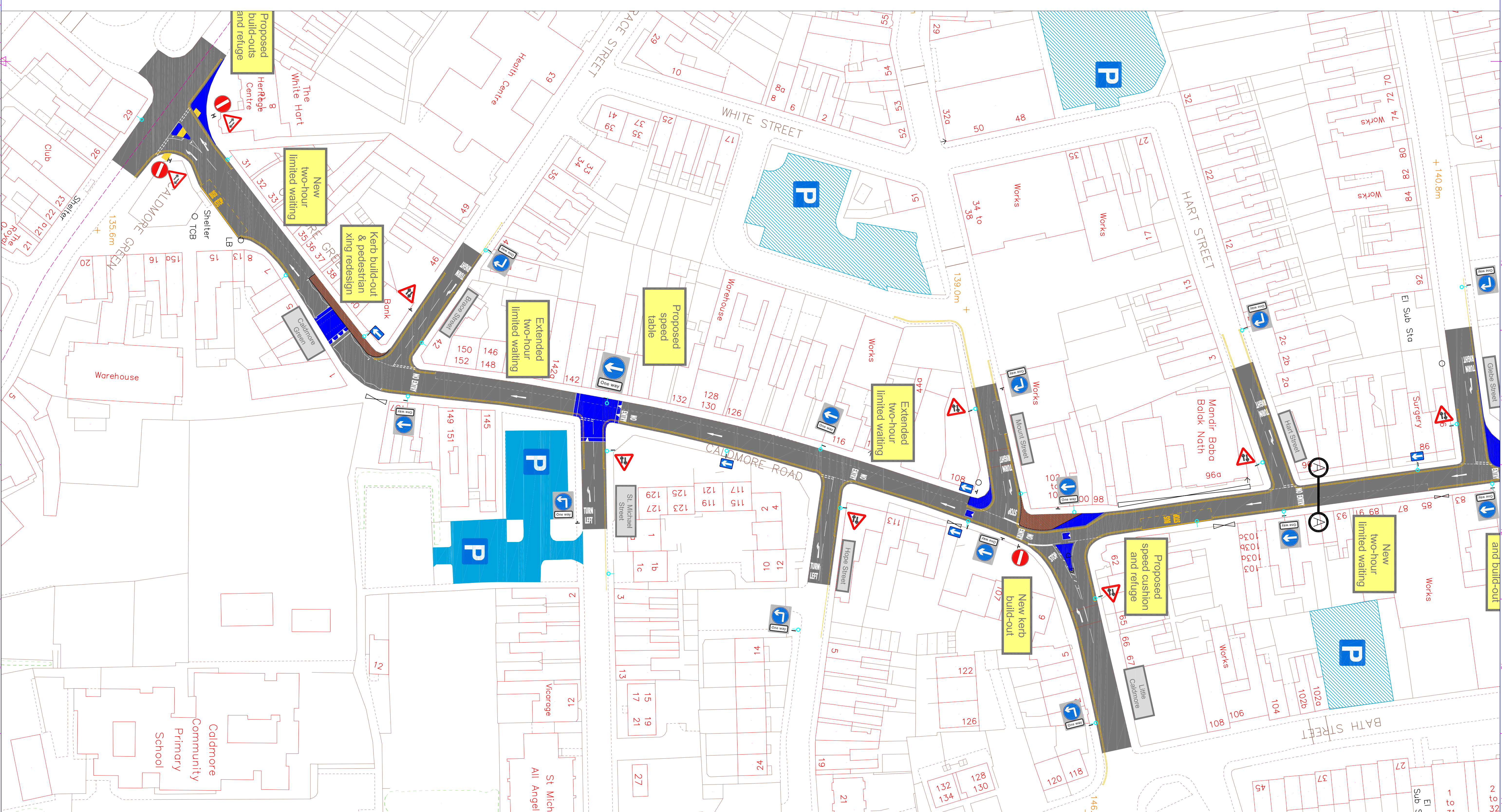
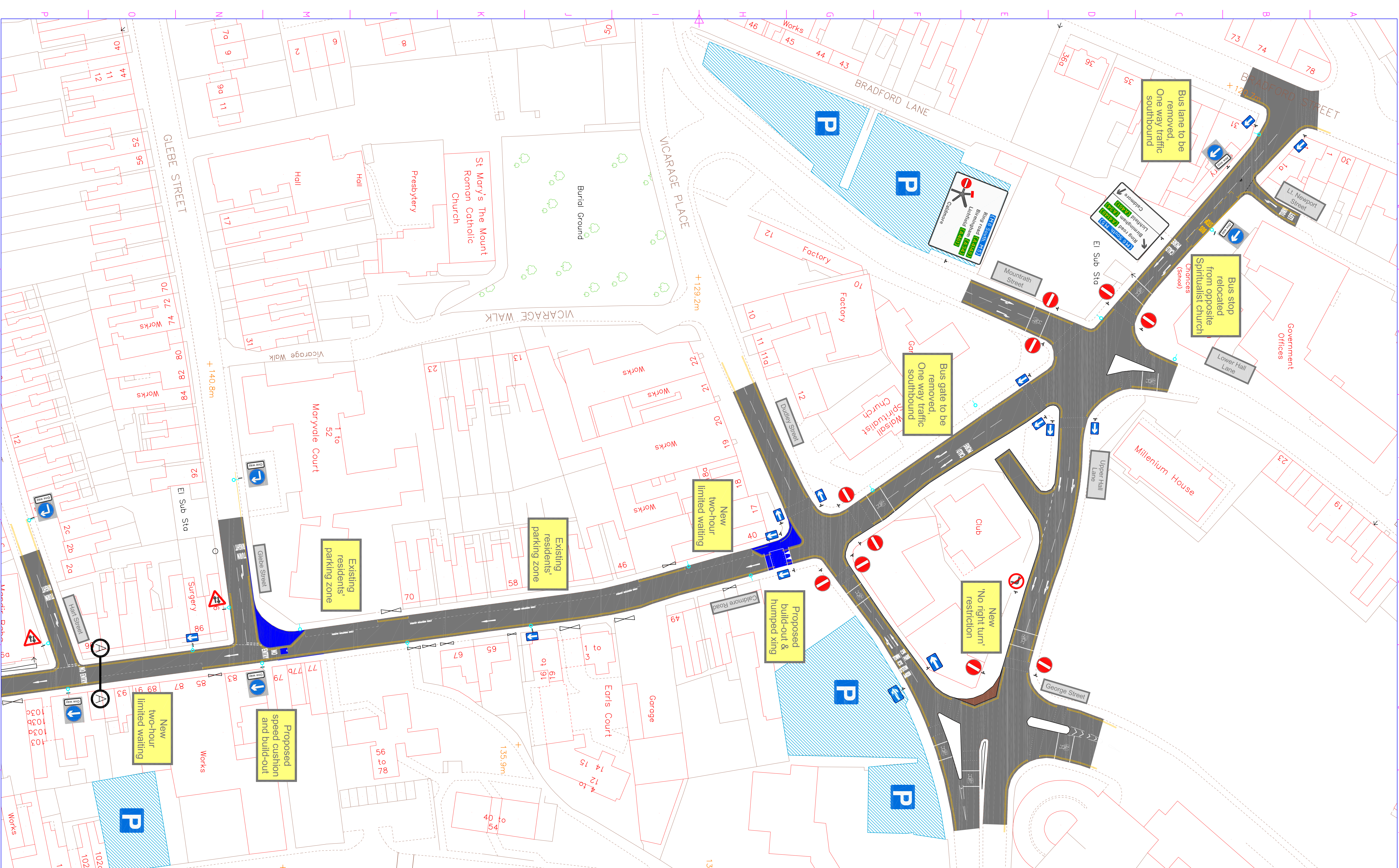
**Against:** Higher cost implication (£200k), northbound traffic will have to use, for example, Corporation Street as alternative route to town centre. Vehicle speeds may increase in the absence of additional speed control measures however these are proposed as part of the one way scheme. Proposal may slightly increase distance drivers may need to travel to access sections of Caldmore Road and adjoining streets.

- 3.6 The proposals were considered at the Walsall South Area Partnership in February and March 2012 but no agreement or consensus could be reached as to most appropriate way forward. Given the impasse, the matter was again raised and subsequently considered in 2013/14 but again no consensus could be reached.
- 3.7 As a result of the urgent need to address the ongoing and significant road safety and traffic management issues, whilst also complying with the delivery of the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty, officers developed and refined an option to address these matters. This option retained the previously proposed one way system and included measures to control any increase in speed that otherwise may occur as a result of the introduction of a one way system. Funding for this scheme was allocated as part of the 2014/15 Local Transport Plan settlement and further revisions to the 2014/15 Capital programme approved by Cabinet 19 March 2014 & 17 December 2014 respectively.
- 3.8 The delivery of this type of scheme will require the implementation of new and amendment to existing Traffic Regulation Orders. The statutory procedures covering this process include the requirement for the Council to formally publish the proposals and consider / determine any objections should they be received prior to making a final decision on their implementation.
- 3.9 Both Economy and Business and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Panels in February 2015 during consideration of proposals related to Lucknow Road Car Park and St Michaels raised concerns related to Caldmore Road and the recommendation was for the first available Area Panel to consider the matter. The one way scheme proposals will be presented for discussion at the Area Panel where local input will be sought to identify and address localised concerns that can be accommodated without adversely impacting on the delivery of the scheme objectives. This will be undertaken prior to commencement of the statutory procedures outlined above.
- 3.10 The Traffic Management Act 2004 imposes a duty on the Council to appoint an officer to the statutory post of Traffic Manager. This post is delegated to the Head of Engineering and Transportation who is responsible for discharging the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty. This requires the Council to manage its road network to ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles. Failure to adequately discharge that duty will result in a Traffic Director being imposed on the Council to ensure the duty is appropriately discharged.
- 3.11 The one way scheme proposed for Caldmore Road, has been developed and progressed as part of the delivery of the Council's Statutory Network Management Duty.

Simon Neilson  
Executive Director Economy and Environment

24 June 2015





Item#	Quantity	Title/Name, designation, material, dimension etc.	Article No./Reference
Designed by	Created by	Approved by - date	Date
DME	SH	SG	March-2012
			Scale 1:500
			Filename
			Canon/002

© Copyrighted and trademarked property, unauthorized usage is strictly prohibited.

**CALCULATED PLOD - Proposed New Way and Parking Alterations**

Revision	Editor	Sheet
Rev A	Rev A	1/1