MOTT MACDONALD

Peebles Links Paths

Feasibility Study

November 2022

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Peebles Community Trust

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Contents

1 Introduction 2
1.1 Introduction 2
1.2 Study Aims, Objectives and Area 2
1.2.1 Study Aims 2
1.2.2 Places for Everyone Design Principles 2
1.2.3 Study Objectives and Design Principles 3
1.2.4 Study Area 3
1.3 Methodology 4

2 Desktop Review, Data Gathering and Site Walkover 5
2.1 Desktop Review and Transport Planning Considerations 5
2.1.1 Land Use 5
2.1.2 SIMD Data (Geographic Access) 7
2.1.3 Future Development 8
2.1.4 Trip Generators 10
2.1.5 Traffic Movements 11
2.1.6 Public Transport 13
2.2 Site Walkover 15
2.2.1 Narrow footpaths 16
2.2.2 On-street parking 17
2.2.3 Steep topography 18
2.2.4 Poor pedestrian facilities 18
2.3 Key Constraints 19

3 Options Development 21
3.1 Peebles Links High Level Masterplan 21
3.2 School Links Review 22
3.3 High Street 23
3.3.1 West End of High Street 23
3.3.2 Hotel Section 24
3.3.3 Link between School Brae and Northgate 25
3.3.4 Eastgate Junction and Link to East 26
3.4 Other Proposed Improvement Locations 27
3.4.1 B7062/Caledonian Road 27
3.4.2 Young Street 28
3.4.3 Biggiesknowe/A72 29
3.4.4 March Street 30
3.5 Green Spaces 31

4 Summary and Forward Approach 32
4.1 Summary 32
4.2 Forward Approach 32

Appendices 34

A. Key Links and Improvement Option Drawings 35

B. Schools Review Document 36

C. School Brae vs Tweed Brae Option Appraisal Document 37

1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Peebles Community Trust (PCT) commissioned Mott MacDonald Ltd (MM) to undertake a study to consider the development of a network of safe and accessible routes for people walking and cycling within Peebles, Scottish Borders.

PCT have been successful in gaining Places for Everyone (PfE) funding from Sustrans to consider the feasibility of new and improved active travel infrastructure within Peebles to feasibility stage (PfE Stage 0/1).

This study will assess the current active travel infrastructure within Peebles and will propose potential improvement options to enhance the existing provision, creating a better environment for walkers and cyclists of all abilities. The remit from PCT was to establish implementable and practical options that the community could support and would provide key links across the town.

A key focus of this study will be the assessment of active travel routes which provide access / egress to the four schools within the town, which are key destinations for active travel movements: Peebles High School, Kingsland RC Primary School, Halyrude Primary School and Priorsford Primary School.

The work to inform this study was completed in 2020 during the initial phase of this project. The deliverables of the 2020 study were a series of drawings and presentations which were developed in collaboration with PCT and Sustrans. To satisfy the PfE Stage 0/1 feasibility report deliverable requirement, this report has been collated to bring together the findings and deliverables of the 2020 study in to one overall document.

1.2 Study Aims, Objectives and Area

1.2.1 Study Aims

The aim of this study is to provide a holistic appraisal of the existing active travel infrastructure within Peebles, identifying key routes and potential barriers to the movement of people. Proposals for potential active travel improvements are presented which will help inform possible future links within Peebles and enable more people to consider walking and cycling for everyday journeys. Improvement options focus on providing connections through the town to improve permeability for both walking and cycling with a focus on linking key trip attractors and local areas to integrate and enhance the existing active travel network.

1.2.2 Places for Everyone Design Principles

This study will look to achieve the PfE design principles as set out in the Sustrans Places for Everyone Application Guide. Places for Everyone aims to create safer, more attractive, healthier, and inclusive places which are enjoyed equitably by increasing and diversifying the number of trips made by walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys. All projects being delivered through PfE must adhere to a set of design principles:

- Develop ideas collaboratively and in partnership with communities;
- Facilitate independent walking, cycling and wheeling for everyone, including an unaccompanied 12-year-old;
- Design places that provide enjoyment, comfort, and protection;

- Ensure access for all and equality of opportunity in public space;
- Ensure all proposals are developed in a way that is context-specific and evidence led; and,
- Reallocate road space, and restrict motor traffic permeability to prioritise people walking, cycling and wheeling;

1.2.3 Study Objectives and Design Principles

In terms of practical delivery of the PfE Design Principles, an overview of the recommended approach to implementing these is defined below. The improvement options developed as part of this study have been developed with cognisance of these design principles.

- As a default position that people on foot and those on bike do not share footways (pavements beside a carriageway) in urban settings. This does not apply to parks, rural paths or settings other than urban footways.
- Crossing improvements must respond to pedestrian desire lines and include dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- Footways should be 2.0m wide at a minimum, wherever possible.
- Continuous footways and cycleways across side roads and accesses should be prioritised, clearly defined and unambiguous for all users. Continuous footways should be a continuation of the material of the footways.
- Where cycling is proposed on carriageways (ie. not segregated), traffic speeds are expected to be 20mph or less and vehicle numbers are expected to be reduced to <2000 vehicles per day. On these streets, projects are likely to require other ‘quietway’ style interventions and/or traffic restrictions in order to meet the standards expected.
- Dependent on local setting and context, best practice widths for urban cycleways are 2.5m for one way and 4m for bi-directional routes; and
- Cycleway materials are expected to be clearly visible, contrasting to the footway, and durable, especially at junctions.

1.2.4 Study Area

The study area comprises the urban area of Peebles, as well as links eastwards towards the Tweed Valley Railway Path and northwards towards the future Eddleston Water Path. The study area is shown in Figure 1.1. Key destinations within the town are highlighted.

Figure 1.1: Study Area

Source: Mott MacDonald

1.3 Methodology

This study has been structured as follows:

- **Desktop Review, Data Gathering and Site Walkover**: Relevant information has been gathered and mapped to help gain an understanding of the local context and area. Transport Planning techniques have been utilised to provide an evidence-based approach to understand current and future travel movements within the town. A detailed site walkover has been completed to better inform potential improvement options and to help identify existing routes, key constraints, opportunities and gaps in the existing network. Opportunities and constraints within Peebles are presented and discussed.
- **School Links Review**: A detailed review of key routes to schools has been undertaken focusing on existing constraints and key barriers to active travel. Potential improvements are presented which have the potential to create safer routes to these schools and enable more people to consider walking and cycling. The supporting document for this review can be found in Appendix B.
- **Options Development:** Potential improvement options considering the provision of new / improved active travel infrastructure, road reallocation / traffic calming improvements and placemaking improvements within Peebles are presented, based on information collated during subsequent phases of this study.
- **Summary and Forward Approach.**

The report is supported by three Appendices.

- Appendix A contains nine drawings that have been produced which illustrate information for the project including the Constraints, Key Links and Proposed Option Details.
- Appendix B contains the detailed Schools Review Document.
- Appendix C contains the School Brae vs Tweed Brae Appraisal.

2 Desktop Review, Data Gathering and Site Walkover

2.1 Desktop Review and Transport Planning Considerations

A detailed desktop review and data gathering exercise has been undertaken to help gain a clear understanding of the local context and planned future development. Transport Planning techniques were also undertaken to provide an evidence-based approach to understand current and future travel movements within the town. This review has established the existing active travel routes, key constraints / opportunities and potential barriers to active travel.

The desktop review was informed by several information sources, including:

- Available data sources:
  - Local plans and local development plans
  - Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data.
  - Public transport information.
  - Information of exising / proposed active travel routes.
  - Traffic count data.
- Aerial mapping, photographs and OS Base Mapping.
- Site visit and walkover, and,
- Community feedback and knowledge from PCT.

The information obtained has allowed for existing constraints to be identified and behaviours to be observed and predicted. This information has provided a knowledge base for establishing key links and improvements within the town.

Information assessed during the desktop review and data gathering exercise is detailed further within this section.

2.1.1 Land Use

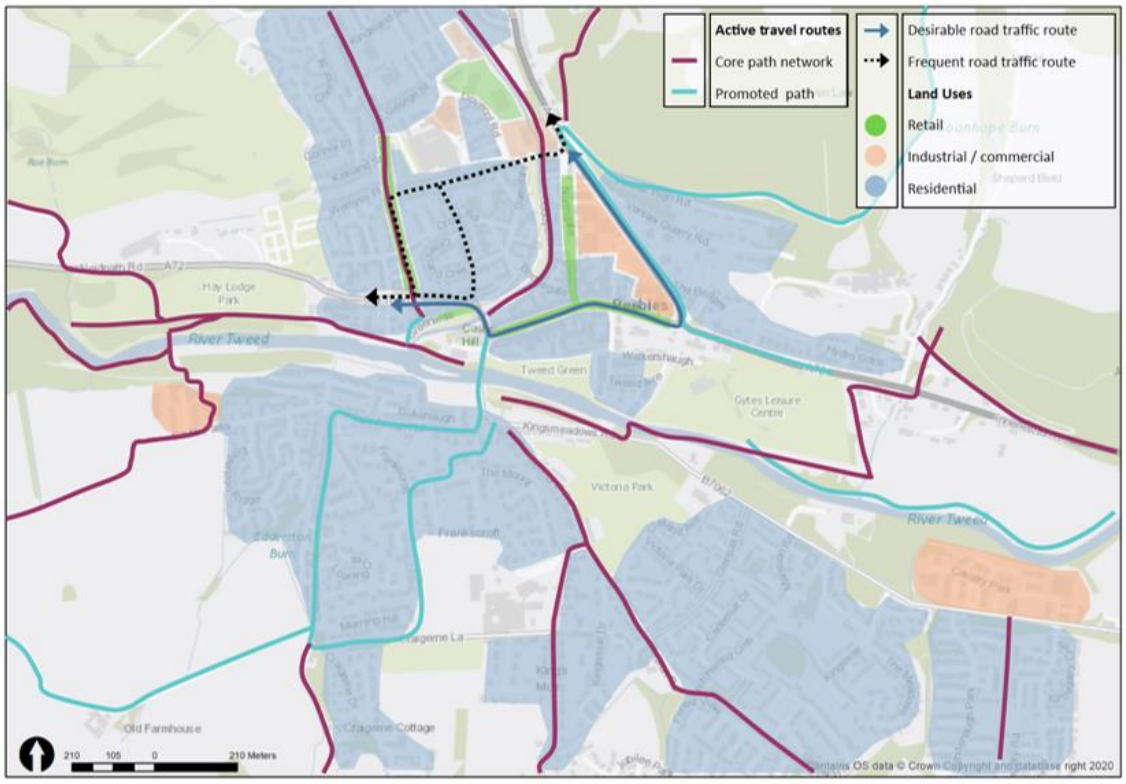
2.1.1.1 Overview

Having historically functioned as both a major market town as well as a regional centre for the woollen industry during the 19th and 20th centuries, Peebles is now characterised by a predominantly residential townscape with small pockets of light industry and commerce present on its periphery. As with many historic market towns in the Scottish Borders, Peebles is characterised by strong intra-regional transport links and a central civic space (in this case, the traditional High Street) which retains much of its traditional street pattern; often struggling to cater to the demands of modern traffic levels.

Set amongst a landscape of rolling hills and arable farming, the town sits at a strategic location on the River Tweed approximately 30km south of Edinburgh. Two key regional routes intersect at Peebles; those being the A703, the main route north to Edinburgh, and the A72 to Galashiels which is the key east to west link across the central Borders and runs through the centre of the town. The River Tweed runs through the centre of the town, with the historic Tweed Bridge the only vehicular crossing for traffic movements between the north and south.

Figure 2.1 below presents the current land use mapped out across Peebles, showing the overwhelmingly residential nature of the town.

Figure 2.1: Peebles Land Use Map



Source: Mott MacDonald

South of the River Tweed, Peebles can be split into two distinct residential areas both to the east and west of Victoria park; corresponding roughly with the areas of Kittlegairy and Kings Muir respectively. Both areas are residential in nature interspersed with open greenspace, with small pockets of industrial land use also present in the form of the industrial estate on Kingsmeadow Road to the east, and the South Parks industrial estate at the western edge of the town. Although still primarily residential in nature, land use is slightly more diverse to the north of the Tweed, with retail (including hotels and leisure facilities) clustered around the traditional High Street. Several major supermarkets are located to the immediate north of the town centre alongside small pockets of light industry.

Local pedestrian and active travel infrastructure converges on Peebles, with a number of core paths (as well as SBC's 'promoted paths') running through the town in all directions. This provides potential for strong connectivity for active travel movements throughout the town however, the nature of the town and existing infrastructure form a key barrier to promoting these movements.

Two river crossings fall under the SBC's core path network providing opportunities for north-south movements and are located in the west (at Hay Lodge Park) and to the east (just north of Victoria Park). These crossings, supplemented by the Tweed Bridge, provide for north-south movements across the town.

2.1.1.2 Key Project Considerations

- Largely residential in nature with small pockets of retail and light industry

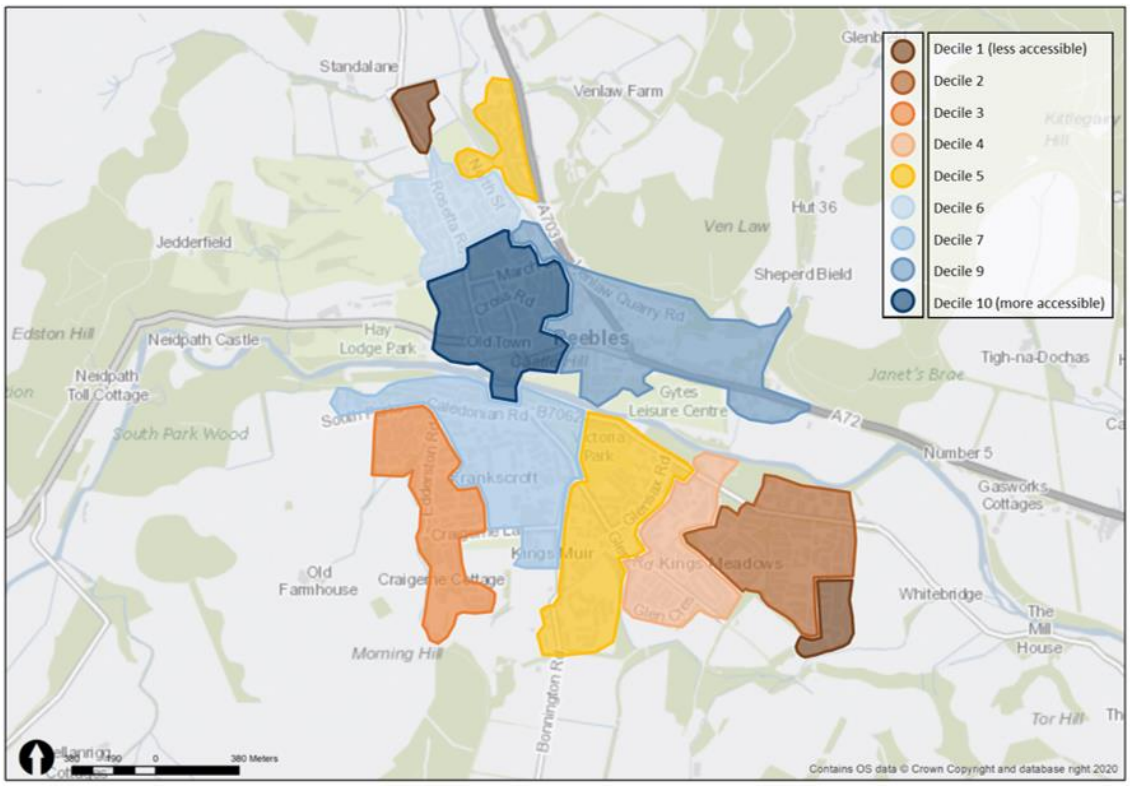
- Traditional market town morphology located at intersection of a number of key traffic routes; results in vehicular traffic passing through congested town centre
- River Tweed represents major physical barrier which bisects the town; with only one vehicular crossing this has the potential to be a major pinch point for north-south vehicular movements

2.1.2 SIMD Data (Geographic Access)

2.1.2.1 Overview

Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), deprivation relating specifically to geographic access has been mapped for Peebles, showing significant disparity across a relatively small geographic area. These results have been plotted and presented in Figure 2.2 below.

Figure 2.2: Peebles Geographic Access Deprivation



Source: Mott MacDonald

SIMD data is used to identify places in Scotland where people experience disadvantage across certain aspects of their lives. The SIMD assesses around 7,000 neighbourhood-level areas (i.e. data zones) and ranks these areas from most to least-deprived across a number of specific metrics. Geographic Access is one of the metrics measured within the SIMD and gauges how deprived a specific area is with regards to access to local amenities such as education, health and wellbeing facilities, and essential retail. Journey times (both driving and public transport) are combined this with access to digital infrastructure (such as superfast broadband) to produce an overall score.

A number of findings can be drawn from the data plotted in Figure 2.2. Firstly, those areas in Peebles located furthest from the town centre score the worst for geographic access and actually fall within the most deprived deciles. Residents within these areas may struggle to

access essential amenities and may be subject to longer journey times when trying to do so. This suggests that either: amenities are clustered around the centre of Peebles; that accessibility to amenities is an issue when travelling from the edge of Peebles, or possibly; a combination of both.

Secondly, those areas south of the River Tweed appear to suffer more from issues relating to geographic access with five out of the six data zones falling within the five most geographically access-deprived deciles. Given that essential retail (including Peebles' two major supermarkets) is located north of the Tweed, it is perhaps unsurprising that those areas to the south rank lower in terms of geographic access. However, local amenities such as schools and health facilities are present; poor geographic access therefore cannot be explained solely due to a lack of nearby amenities.

This suggests that accessibility could be a potential issue and is perhaps unsurprising given that the Tweed Bridge represents a significant 'pinch point' on the local road network for north-south traffic movements.

2.1.2.2 Key Project Considerations

- SIMD data points towards to accessibility being an issue for areas at the edge of town, with the Tweed Bridge representing a potential constraint for vehicular access and journey times from south of the Tweed
- Stronger pedestrian infrastructure has the potential to benefit those areas scoring poorly on geographic access with active travel options becoming more attractive compared to either car or public transport use

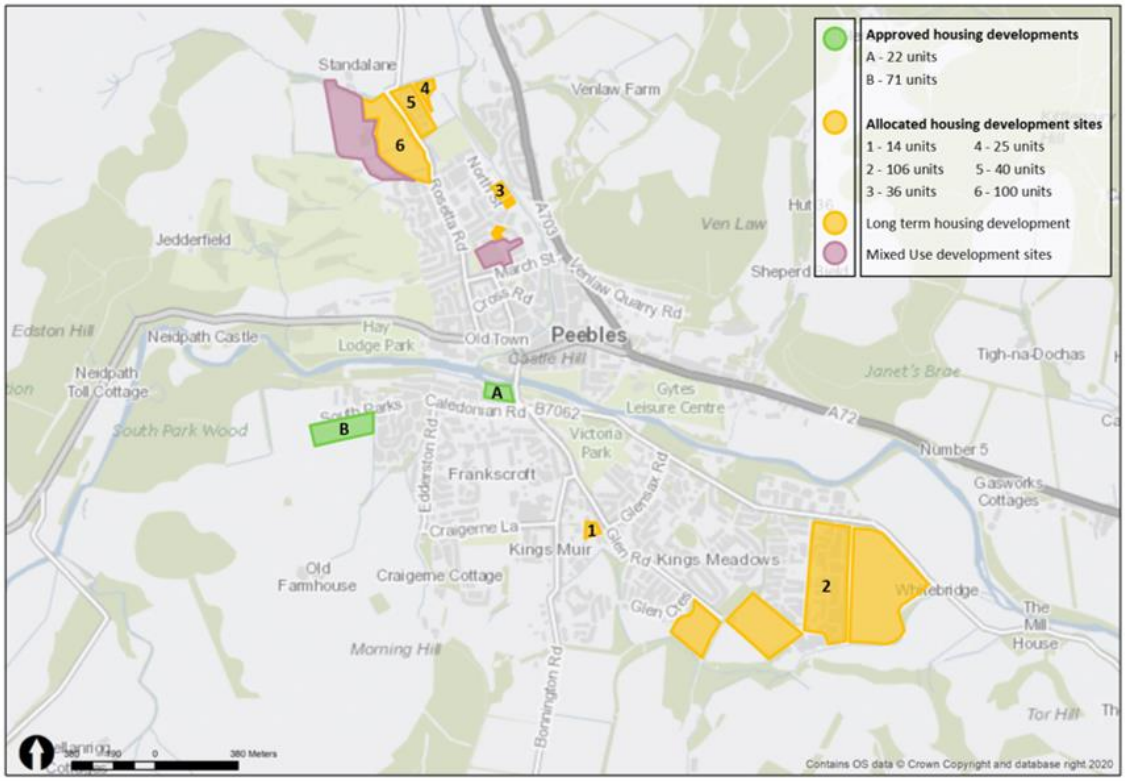
2.1.3 Future Development

2.1.3.1 Overview

As part of the western zone of SBC's Local Development Plan, and in response to a projected increase in population by 2032, a number of long-term land use developments have been identified specifically for Peebles. This includes a number of both approved and allocated housing development sites, as well as areas identified for potential mixed-used developments.

These locations have been identified and shown in Figure 2.3 below.

Figure 2.3: Peebles Proposed Developments



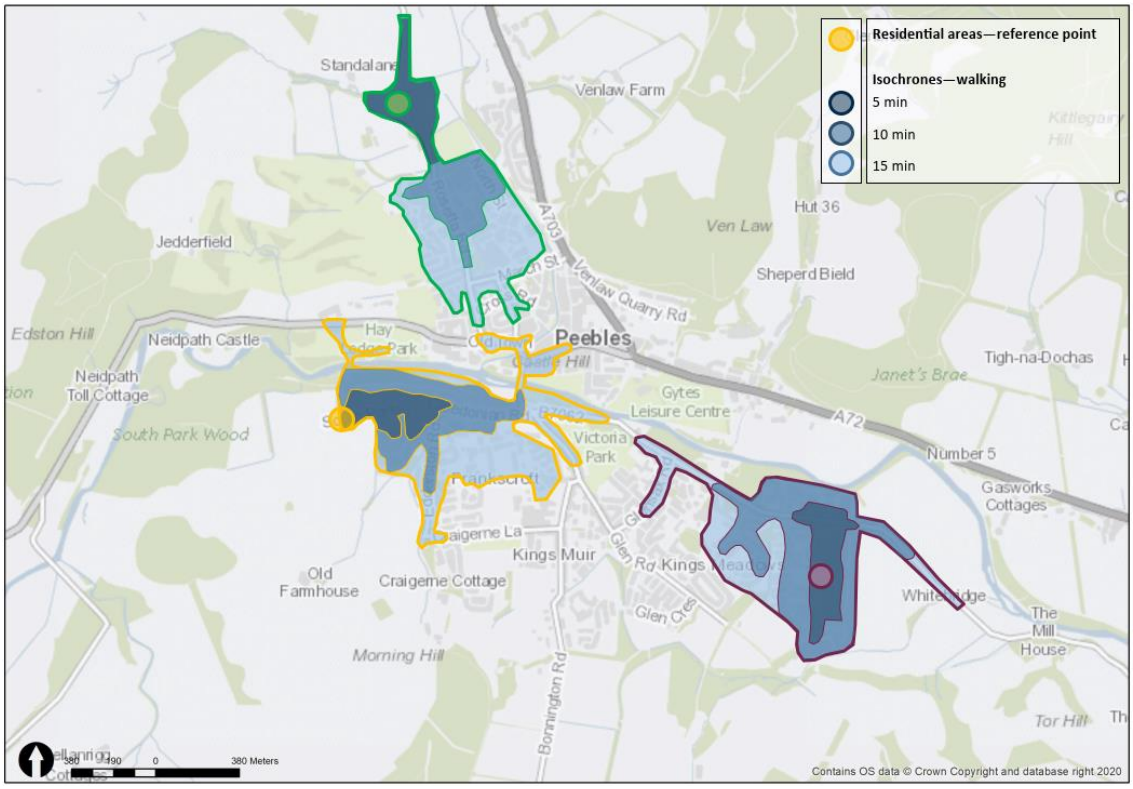
Source: Mott MacDonald

Key elements of these proposals include approximately 100 residential units which have already been approved at a site in the west of Peebles (at South Parks), and two additional sites allocated for housing development which, if realised, would create close to a combined 300 additional units. These sites are located at the northern edge of the town at Standalane, and to the east between the Kittlegairy Estate and the B7062 respectively.

It is worth noting that the two areas allocated for housing development correspond with those areas which have previously been identified as the most deprived in terms of geographic access (see Figure 2.2). As stated above, SIMD data points towards accessibility being an issue for areas at the edge of Peebles, with the Tweed Bridge – as the singular vehicular crossing serving the town – representing a potential constraint for both vehicular access and journey times (from south of the Tweed in particular). These issues are likely to be exacerbated in future with the additional vehicle trips likely to be generated by future housing developments.

The likelihood of future development areas suffering from poor geographic access is reinforced through journey-time analysis which has been undertaken for each of the areas described above (included as Isochrone plots for walking –see Figure 2.4 below). This suggests that walking accessibility is relatively limited within Peebles, with only the allocated development (at the South Parks location) able to reach the centre of Peebles (and majority of local amenities) within a 15-minute walk. The proposed location to the south-east would appear to be the most isolated for journeys on foot.

Figure 2.4: Peebles Walk-Time Analysis



Source: Mott MacDonald

2.1.3.2 Key Project Considerations

- Those areas previously identified as suffering from poorer geographic access correspond to areas which have been allocated for future housing development; this is reinforced through journey time analysis for walking for each of the three areas designated for future development.
- Again, stronger pedestrian infrastructure has the potential to benefit these areas; without this, car use will remain the quickest and most convenient mode of transport across Peebles.

2.1.4 Trip Generators

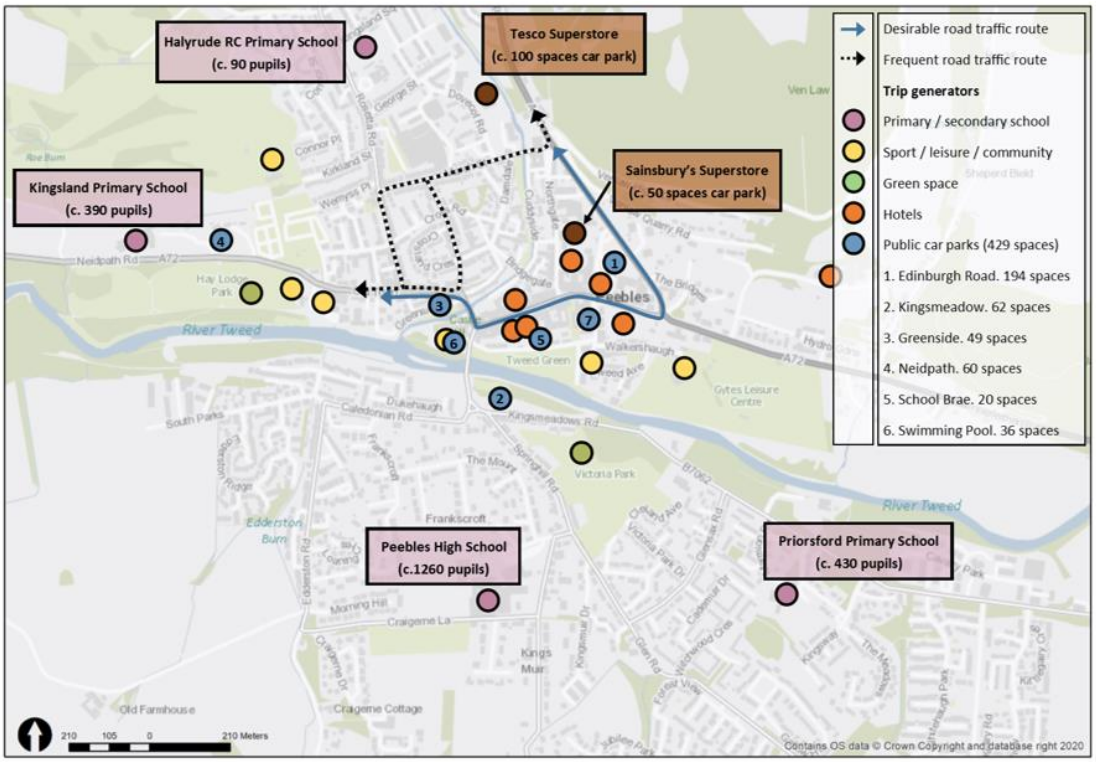
2.1.4.1 Overview

Figure 2.5 below shows the location of key trip generators within Peebles, including schools, community and leisure facilities, greenspace, hotels, and parking facilities. The majority of these are clustered around Peebles town centre and are located within a short distance of the central 'spine' of the town (i.e. the east/west A72/High Street thoroughfare).

Those key trip generators not located centrally within Peebles include the town's four schools; comprising three primary and one secondary school, as well as the larger of the town's two major supermarkets (Tesco Superstore). Crucially, each of the schools are located in areas which have previously been shown to have reduced levels of geographic access when compared to other parts of Peebles (see Section 2.1.2 and Figure 2.2 specifically). Schools are arguably trip generators which have the potential to encourage greater mode share for walking and cycling and as such, there is clear potential within this project to ensure that Peebles schools are more effectively integrated into the town's active travel infrastructure.

Given the town's established reputation as a tourist destination, there are a number of off-street car parks located centrally within the town. These are: Edinburgh Road, Kingsmeadow, Greenside, Neidpath, School Brae and Swimming Pool; together these facilities provide over 400 parking spaces. All bar one of these car parks are located north of the River Tweed, meaning that approximately 80% of all off-street parking capacity is located north of the river.

Figure 2.5: Peebles Trip Generators



Source: Mott MacDonald

2.1.4.2 Key Project Considerations

- The majority of trip attractors in Peebles are located in around the town centre; the majority are located within a short distance of the town's central thoroughfare.
- All four of the town's schools are located further out with the town centre in areas that have been shown to suffer from poorer levels of geographic access – there is clear potential within this project to ensure that Peebles schools are more effectively integrated into the town's active travel infrastructure.

2.1.5 Traffic Movements

2.1.5.1 Overview

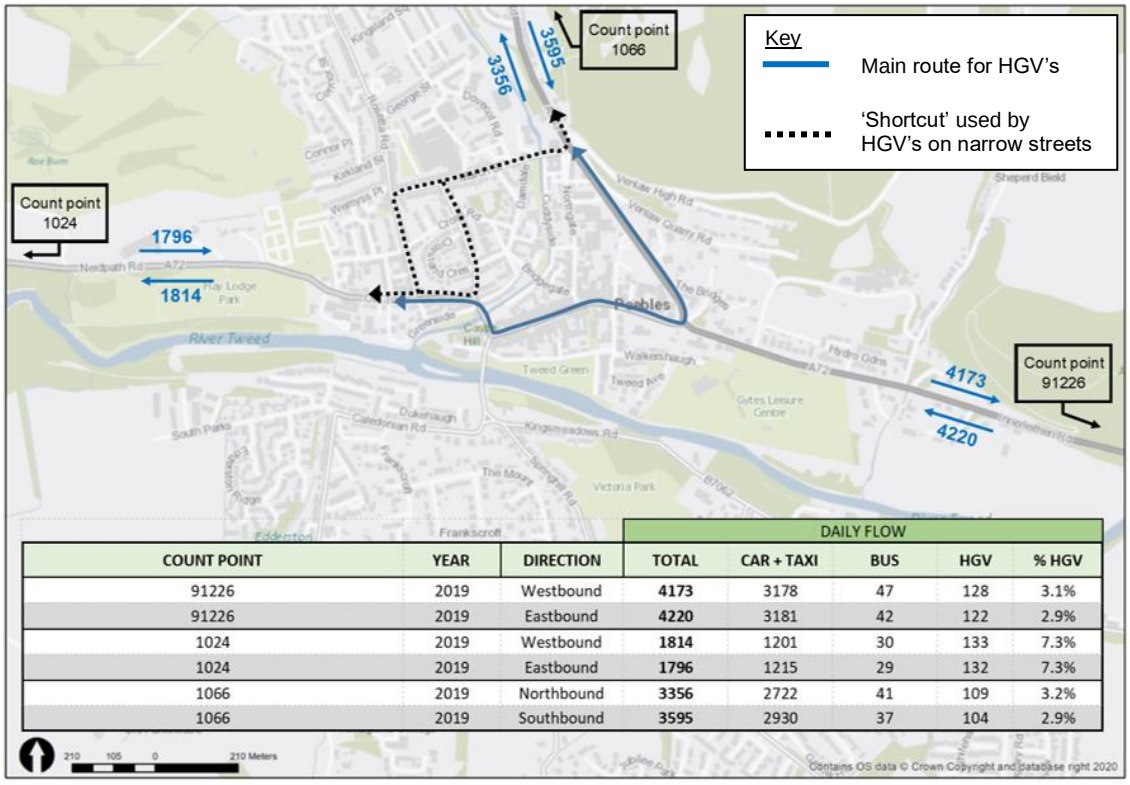
Vehicular traffic flows in and around Peebles are characterised by movement along two key routes: the A72 and the A703; both of which intersect at a roundabout immediately to the east of Peebles town centre.

Both of these roads are major arterial routes which function as key links across the rural Borders area and aid long distance traffic movements between towns. The A703 in particular functions as the main route between Edinburgh and the wider Borders region, with Peebles sitting as the first major settlement as the route moves southwards. The A72 is the key east-

west link in the central Borders region and acts as an important local distributor road between Galashiels, Peebles and Biggar. It additionally provides access to the A701, allowing for onwards connections to the M74 and the south at Moffat.

Traffic data has been derived from Department of Transport AADT counts[1], with the most recent estimates given for 2019. Data, including a breakdown of flows by vehicle type, has been plotted in Figure 2.6 below.

Figure 2.6: Peebles Traffic Movements



			DAILY FLOW				
COUNT POINT	YEAR	DIRECTION	TOTAL	CAR + TAXI	BUS	HGV	% HGV
91226	2019	Westbound	**4173**	3178	47	128	3.1%
91226	2019	Eastbound	**4220**	3181	42	122	2.9%
1024	2019	Westbound	**1814**	1201	30	133	7.3%
1024	2019	Eastbound	**1796**	1215	29	132	7.3%
1066	2019	Northbound	**3356**	2722	41	109	3.2%
1066	2019	Southbound	**3595**	2930	37	104	2.9%

Source: Mott MacDonald

Data reveals that the highest traffic flows are concentrated on the A703 and the A72 east of Peebles, suggesting that the most common vehicle movements in and around the town are associated with traffic routing to and from Peebles via the A703 and A72. The A703 is estimated to carry close to 7,000 vehicles on an average daily basis (approximately 3% of this figure are HGVs), with the stretch of the A72 to the east of Peebles carrying over 8,300 vehicles with a similar proportion comprising HGVs. By comparison, the stretch of the A72 west of the A72/A703 junction carries significantly less traffic on a daily basis, with an estimated annual average daily flow of c.3,500 vehicles.

Of note at this location is the proportion of HGVs present on the road, with a figure of over double that of traffic on both the A72 east of Peebles and the A703. Approximately 7.3% of all traffic movements are made by HGVs routing through Peebles town centre. This higher figure is perhaps explained by the presence of the nearby Edston Quarry, located just off the A72 approximately 2.5km to the west of Peebles. For HGVs travelling to and from the quarry to locations north, east, and potentially south of Peebles, the A72 through Peebles offers the most direct route.

[1] DfT Road Traffic Statistics, Department of Transport (2020)

Evidence suggests that some drivers travelling between the A72 and A703 (including HGV drivers) attempt to avoid the centre of Peebles and instead bypass the town centre by routing via March Street and either Young Street/Rosetta Road or Cross Street/Montgomery Place. This shortcut has been indicated in Figure 2.6 as a black dashed line. Although this represents a quicker, more direct route for drivers, the route passes through a predominantly residential area (20mph limit throughout) with widespread on-street parking limiting the effective width severely in places. Figure 2.7 below shows Young Street looking north, demonstrating the narrow nature of local streets and the presence of on-street parking.

Figure 2.7: Street View of Young Street (looking north)

Source: Map Data © 2021 Google

2.1.5.2 Key Project Considerations

- DfT traffic count data reveals that the busiest stretches of roads in and around Peebles are the A703 and the A72 east of the town centre. The A72 to the west of Peebles carries significantly less traffic but sees a higher number of HGVs; potentially explained the proximity of the nearby Edston Quarry.
- Evidence suggests that vehicles regularly attempt to bypass the A72/A703 junction by routing through the residential area around Young Street, Rosetta Road and March Street. Such activity clearly has the potential to constrain walking and cycling access and may even pose a hazard if HGVs continue to route through this area.

2.1.6 Public Transport

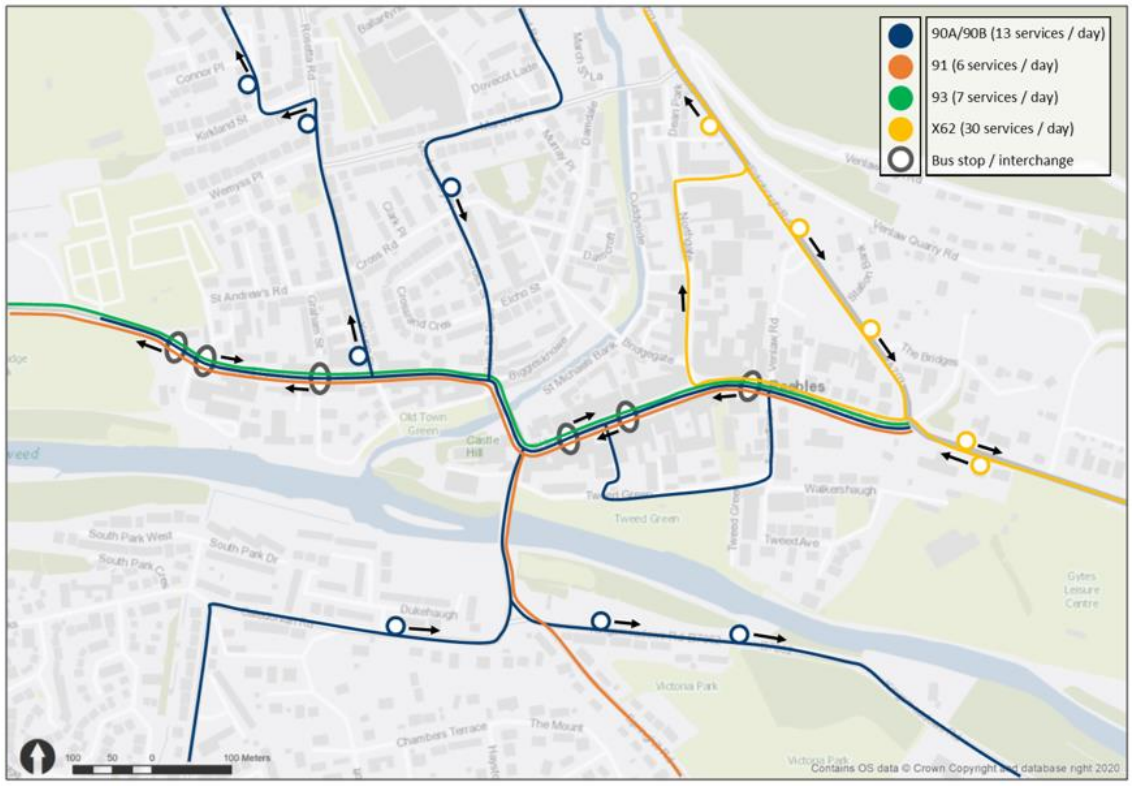
2.1.6.1 Overview

Public transport in Peebles is solely comprised of bus services, with no nearby railway lines or stations. With strong road links (as described in Section 2.1.5 above), buses offer connections between Peebles and the wider Borders region, as well as intra-regional connections both to the north (to Edinburgh) and to the west.

Peebles is primarily served by the X62 service, which is currently operated by First Bus. This route runs between Melrose and Edinburgh, and includes key stops at the Borders General Hospital, Galashiels, Innerleithen, Peebles, and Penicuik. The service runs on a half-hourly

basis during its hours of operation, with a scheduled journey time of just over one hour to between Peebles town centre and St Andrew Square bus station in Edinburgh. The X62 bus routes (as well as other local services) have been mapped and presented in Figure 2.8 below.

Figure 2.8: Peebles Public Transport Map



Source: Mott MacDonald

Although the most frequent service, it is worth nothing that the X62 does not serve Peebles in its entirety, with the route limited to a small section of the town at its eastern edge. The main stop for the X62 is on Eastgate, with the Northgate used as a one-way route to link back to the A703 (and A72). For those living out with Peebles' town centre and wishing to use the service (particularly those south of the Tweed), this can mean a walk of up to 2km and could add significant time on to journeys.

There are a number of minor, less frequent services which serve the wider town; specifically, the 90A/90B, the 91, and the 93. These services run on an hourly basis throughout the day and serve areas both north and south of the Tweed. Bus stops serving these routes are located along Peebles' central 'spine' (i.e. A72/High Street) and although dedicated bus laybys are present in some cases (particularly on High Street), the provision of on-street parking and limited road space can result in a congested street environment.

2.1.6.2 Key Project Considerations

- Public transport in Peebles is limited to bus use, with only one service providing regular connectivity to Edinburgh and the wider Borders region (X62). This route, however, is limited to a small part of Peebles and those living out with the town centre who wish to use may have to walk up to 2km to do (adding significant time onto their respective journeys).
- Local services are present; however, these are less frequent with only one (90A/90B) serving the town in its entirety.

- There are a number of stops located along the A72/High Street and are set within what can be a congested street environment.
- The X62 bus service currently traverses the Northgate, turning into this road via the Eastgate / High Street. The Northgate is predominantly retail and is anticipated to facilitate high numbers of pedestrian movements. The presence of bus movements on this street is likely to attribute to a poor pedestrian environment.

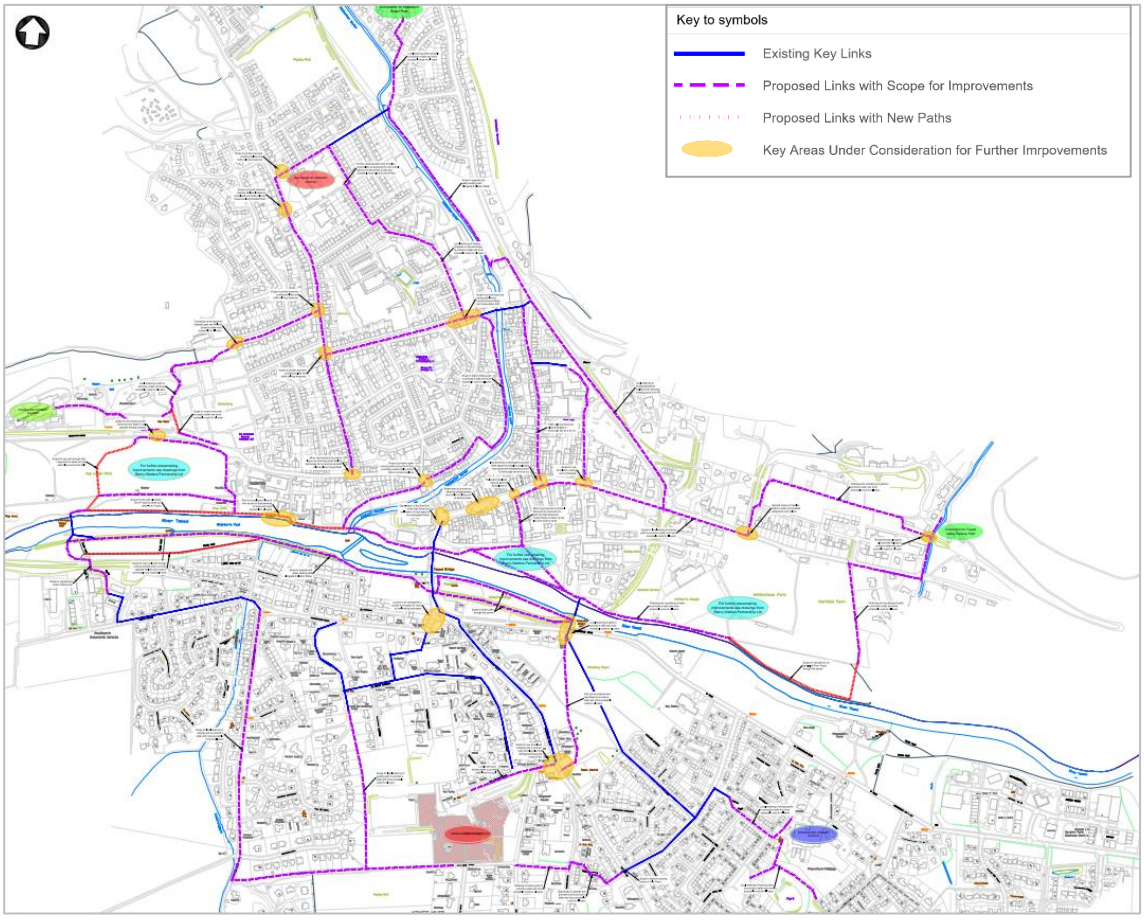
2.2 Site Walkover

A detailed site walkover was undertaken by two members of the Mott MacDonald Transport team on 12th November 2020. This comprised of a walkthrough of the majority of Peebles town to better inform the desktop review exercise and to help identify existing routes and any key gaps in the existing active travel network. Measurements of key areas were undertaken, and relevant constraints recorded. Key links throughout the town were investigated, including links through and into the town centre and other key trip attractors.

It was found that there were a number of constraints throughout the town that may pose challenges in the development of user-friendly active travel links. A detailed analysis of the site visit findings can be found in Sketch 01 in Appendix A, which collates the findings and highlights where improvements can be made. An extract of this can be seen in Figure 2.9. Key findings are also detailed further within this Section.

Key site measurements were recorded to help inform and appraise potential improvement options detailed further in Section 33.

Figure 2.9: Extract from Sketch 01



Source: Extract from Sketch 01

The general constraints throughout Peebles are summarised below:

2.2.1 Narrow footpaths

Footways typically varied from between 1.5m to 2m on the main roads through the town (A703 & A72). Footways typically varied between 1.4m to 1.7m on the secondary roads/side roads throughout the town, an example of a narrow path can be seen in Photo 2.1. Current good practice guidance recommends a minimum footway width of 2.0m in an urban environment.

Photo 2.1: Path between Caledonian Road and Chambers Terrace

Source: Mott MacDonald

2.2.2 On-street parking

Typically, all streets throughout the town catered for on-street parking. This restricted the available road space, leading to congested roads and narrow running lanes on most secondary streets, an example can be seen in Photo 2.2. The provision of dedicated cycle infrastructure would require significant reallocation of existing carriageway space and removal of significant lengths of on-street car parking. The provision of shared use paths may be feasible in several locations however, there is a strong presumption against the use of shared use paths within urban area as detailed with Sustrans and Cycle by Design guidance.

Photo 2.2: March Street on street parking

Source: Mott MacDonald

2.2.3 Steep topography

It was noted that there were considerable level differences throughout the town, with Peebles sitting on naturally undulating ground. It was particularly evident on several streets connecting the High Street through the centre of town to the roads and public areas running parallel to Eddleston Water and River Tweed (Bridgegate, Old Vennel, Northgate Vennel and Ushers Wynd, as seen in Photo 2.3. It is accepted that new active travel links will often be constrained by existing topography. Cycle by Design suggests that although this may be unavoidable in some locations, providing cycle links on steep gradients will not provide the highest level of service for all users, and alternative routes should be considered where practical. Where practical to do so, streets with significant gradients within Peebles have not been considered as appropriate for the proposed links active travel links.

Photo 2.3: Bridgegate

Source: Mott MacDonald

2.2.4 Poor pedestrian facilities

Out with the High Street, there was a poor standard of pedestrian facilities present. In particular, the crossing points were found to be sub-standard in most areas:

- No tactile paving provided, or the wrong type installed.
- Lack of dropped kerbs at key crossing locations.
- Crossings were not on natural desire lines, an example shown in Photo 2.4.
- Damaged/poor quality paths throughout the town, which present a safety and accessibility concern.

Photo 2.4: A72 Crossing at Biggiesknowe

Source: Mott MacDonald

2.3 Key Constraints

A number of key constraints within the study area have been identified through the desktop review and associated detailed site walkover. A number of these constraints present a key challenge to the provision of continuous, user friendly routes within the study area.

Key constraints identified as part of this study include:

- Mix of private and public land with associated landownership constraints impacting on potential improvement opportunities.
- The existing road and path network within Peebles is generally constrained, particularly within the town centre due to the historic nature of the town and its infrastructure.
- The River Tweed forms a key barrier to north-south travel throughout the town, with limited crossing opportunities.
- Limited existing dedicated cycle facilities across the town.
- Narrow footways and footpaths throughout the town.
- Significant levels of on-street parking.
- Considerable level differences throughout the town, with Peebles sitting on naturally undulating ground. Steep gradients noted throughout limiting opportunities to provide active travel routes.
- Significant disparity in level of deprivation across the town with accessibility likely being a key issue for areas at the edge of town. Improved pedestrian infrastructure has the potential to benefit those areas scoring poorly on geographic access with active travel options becoming more attractive compared to either car or public transport use
- Poor existing active travel infrastructure leading to / from areas of new development, reducing opportunities for active travel for everyday journeys.
- All four of the town's schools are located further out with the town centre in areas that have been shown to suffer from poorer levels of geographic access – there is clear potential within

this project to ensure that Peebles schools are more effectively integrated into the town's active travel infrastructure.

- The A703 and the A72 are busy distributor roads which are routed through the centre of the town (the speed limit in Peebles at the time of the study in 2020 was 30mph. This has since been lowered to 20mph):
  - A703; busy single carriageway connecting Peebles to the North with a speed limit of 20mph within the town, changing to 60mph on the northern boundary;
  - A72; busy single carriageway connecting Peebles to the west and east with a speed limit of 20mph within the town, and a speed limit of 40mph to the west (leading to 60mph) and 50mph to the east.
  - The A72 to the west of Peebles carries significantly less traffic but sees a higher number of HGVs; potentially explained the proximity of the nearby Edston Quarry.
  - Evidence suggests that vehicles regularly attempt to bypass the A72/A703 junction by routing through the residential area around Young Street, Rosetta Road and March Street. Such activity clearly has the potential to constrain walking and cycling access and may even pose a hazard if HGVs continue to route through this area.
- Various user groups to be catered for and their requirements/cycle behaviours met (confident cyclists vs family/non confident users).
- Limited public transport accessibility out with the town centre. Bus stops with the town centre are generally located along the A72/High Street and are set within what can be a congested street environment. The presence of bus movements on the Northgate is likely to attribute to a poor pedestrian environment.
- Give its proximity to the River Tweed there are several areas within the study area which are at risk of flooding, notably links adjacent to the River.

3 Options Development

3.1 Peebles Links High Level Masterplan

Information collated and assessed in the preceding section of this report has been used to identify a number of key active travel, placemaking and traffic calming improvement options throughout Peebles. A high level masterplan of possible improvement options is illustrated on Sketch 01 in Appendix A, an extract is shown below in Figure 3.1.

The improvement options detailed on Sketch 01 highlight new / improved active travel links alongside key areas where placemaking and traffic calming improvements could be implemented to enable more people to consider walking and cycling for everyday journeys. Improvement options focus on providing connections through the town to improve permeability for both walking and cycling with a focus on linking key trip attractors and local areas to integrate and enhance the existing active travel network.

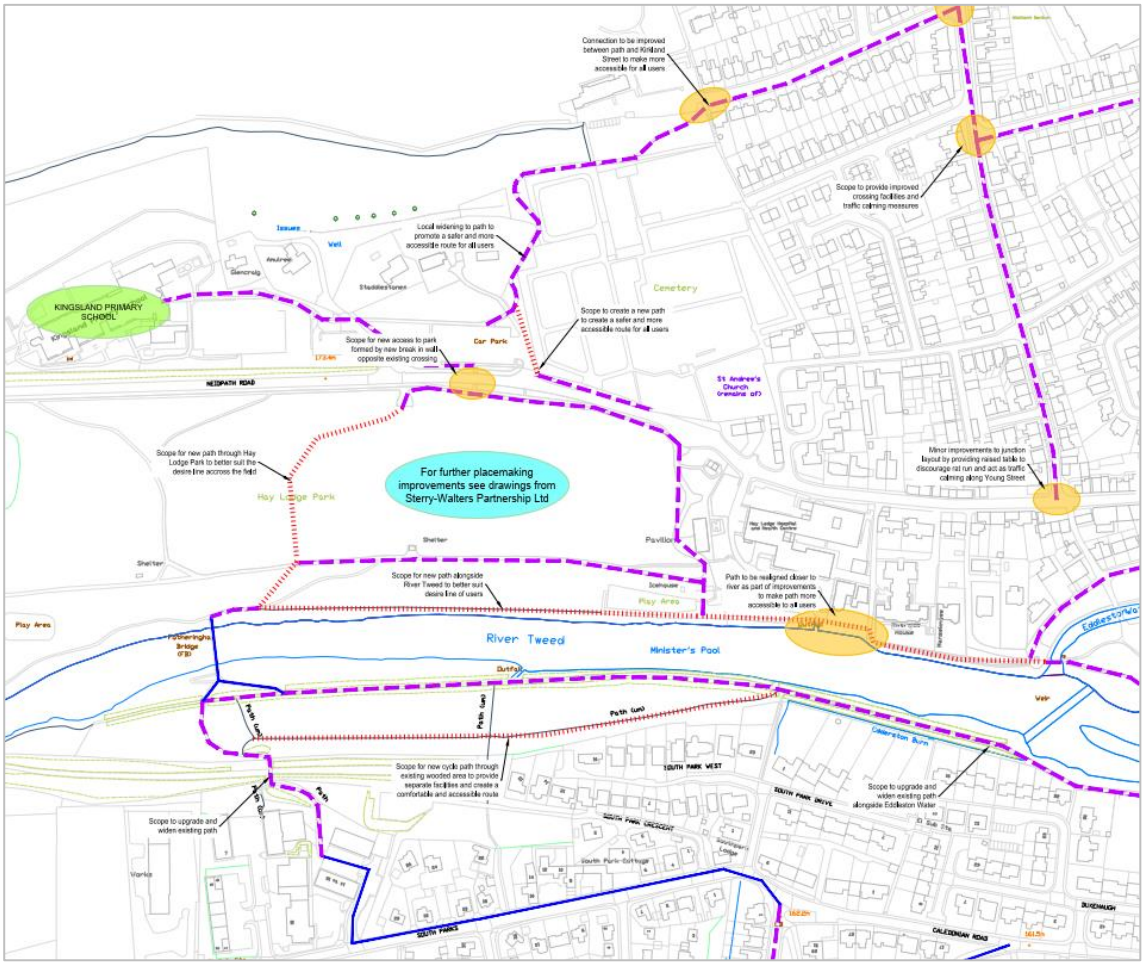
Key opportunities identified as part of this study include:

- Widening of existing footways and footpaths.
- Improved crossing provisions, including upgrades to existing crossings as well as new crossings at key locations to align with existing / new desire lines.
- Placemaking improvements across the High Street.
- Improved wayfinding across the town to enable more trips by walking, wheeling and cycling.
- New links to provide access to key destination such as schools and greens spaces.
- Upgrades to existing established links to remove known constraints and facilitate independent walking, cycling and wheeling for everyone.

Several of the opportunities identified as part of this study have been considered in greater detail within this section, with associated high level option sketches provided in Appendix A.

The north-south route through the town was identified as a key active travel link as part of this assessment. The link between the High Street and Tweed Green, with onward connectivity north and south respectively, was noted as a significant barrier to this route. An appraisal of two potential routes which link these two locations has been undertaken, focusing on School Brae or Tweed Brae. The outcome of this appraisal shall inform which route should be taken forward for further investigation and assessment. The supporting document for this review can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 3.1: Extract from Sketch 01.



Source: Mott MacDonald

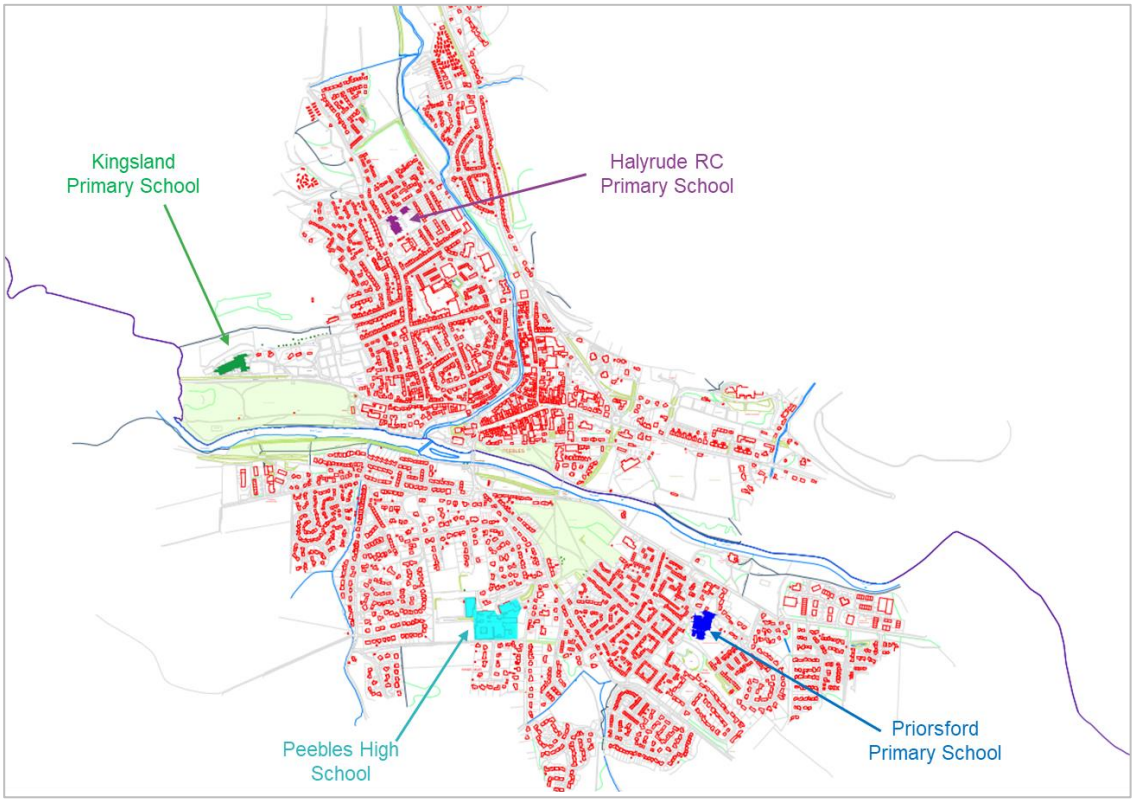
3.2 School Links Review

Schools form several of the key trip attractors and generators within Peebles which have the potential to encourage greater mode share for walking and cycling and as such, there is clear potential within this project to ensure that Peebles schools are more effectively integrated into the town's active travel infrastructure. As detailed in Section 2 each of the schools are located in areas which have been shown to have reduced levels of geographic access when compared to other parts of Peebles (see Section 2.1.2 and Figure 2.2 specifically).

A detailed review of the existing active travel routes which provide access / egress to the four schools within the town has been undertaken. Existing constraints and proposed improvement works have been detailed which could support and enable more people to consider walking and cycling for everyday journeys. These improvement options were developed in consultation with PCT and Sustrans.

There are four schools in the town of Peebles. One High School (Peebles High School) and Three Primary Schools Kingsland RC, Halyrude and Priorsford) and shown on Figure 3.2. The supporting document for this review can be found in Appendix B.

Figure 3.2: School Location Plan



Source: Mott MacDonald

3.3 High Street

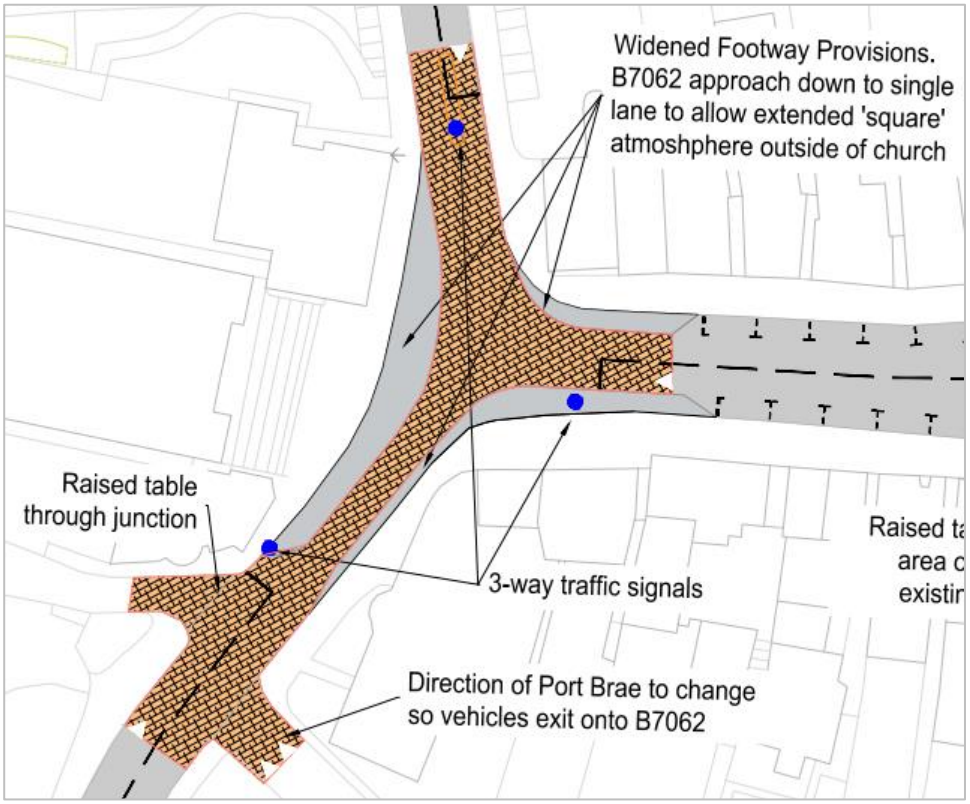
One of the key areas assessed to improve connectivity through the town was the High Street. The High Street was looked at very sensitively due to its importance to the town both commercially and historically. As mentioned in the introduction, the remit from PCT for the study was to establish implementable and practical options that the community could support and would provide key links for walkers and cyclists. Therefore, full scale re-design of the High Street was ruled out at an early stage. The purpose of the proposals is to slow vehicles through the High Street, improving safety, accommodating crossing links and creating a sense of place for all pedestrians and cyclists. A full representation of the improvements identified can be found on Sketch 03 and Sketch 04 in Appendix A. A more detailed summary of the proposed improvement options is provided below.

3.3.1 West End of High Street

There is an existing mini-roundabout located at the junction between the High Street, the A72 and B7062. The roundabout caters primarily for vehicular movements. The adjacent paths are narrow with some notable level differences between the road and the footway. There is a lack of crossing points meaning connectivity for walkers and cyclists through this area is very limited. Peebles Old Parish Church is located adjacent to this junction where the steps of the church are bordered by a relatively narrow footway and the road itself. It is understood large crowds can gather at this location during services and events with the church itself being a key focal point for the town.

There is an opportunity to enhance this area by replacing the mini-roundabout with a three-way signalised junction. This would allow the exiting footways to be widened significantly. A new contrasting raised surface could be implemented which would slow vehicles down and create a sense of place for pedestrians. It could be controlled to create an extended square atmosphere outside the church at event times. It would also greatly improve the provisions and safety for pedestrians wishing the cross this area.

Figure 3.3: Extract from Sketch 04



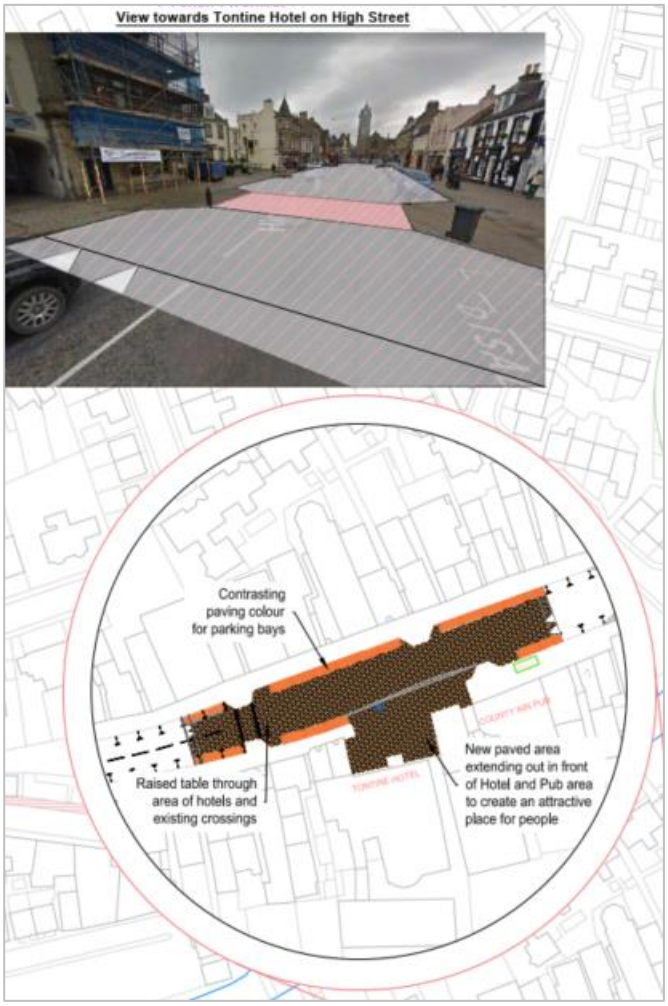
Source: Extract from Sketch 04

3.3.2 Hotel Section

There are two existing uncontrolled crossing points located on the High Street either side of the Tontine Hotel. The area is currently dominated by vehicles and parking areas. There is a statue outside the Tontine Hotel which is located directly adjacent to the traffic lane leaving no space for pedestrians to view it from one side.

There is an opportunity to narrow the traffic lanes through this area and implement a raised contrasting surface between these two crossing points. This would assist with slowing vehicle speeds down and promoting an attractive pedestrian focused area, whilst not losing out on parking space. The area would effectively create a desirable space between the Tontine Hotel, Crown Hotel and the County Inn.

Figure 3.4: Extract from Sketch 03



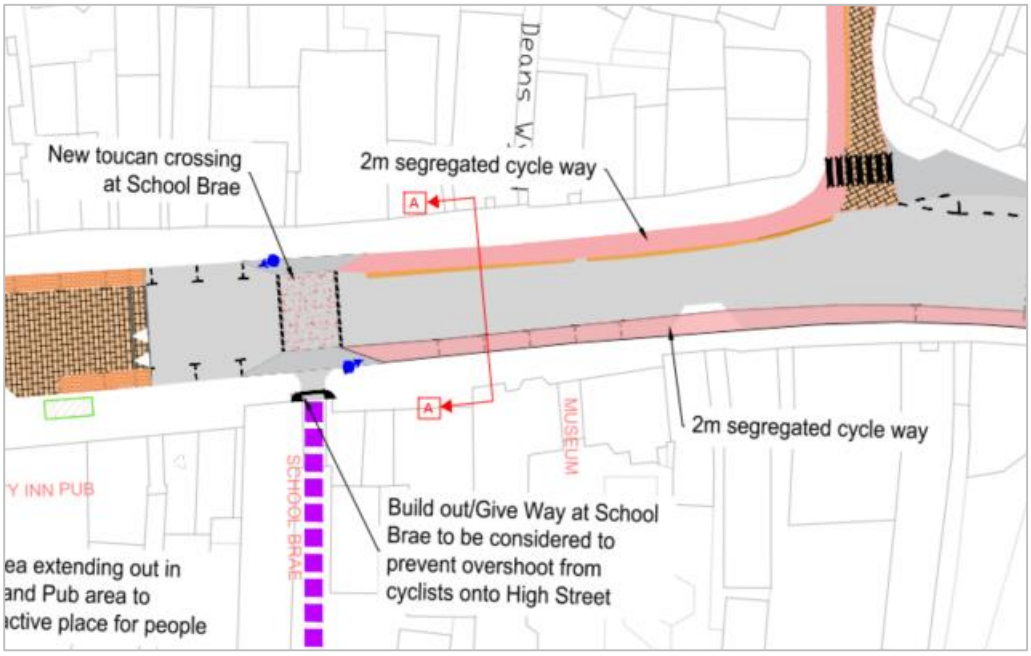
Source: Extract from Sketch 03

3.3.3 Link between School Brae and Northgate

As mentioned in Section 3.1, providing a connection between School Brae and the Northgate is key in providing a link for active travel between the north and south of Peebles. To facilitate this a new toucan crossing in line with School Brae is a proposed option for this High Street. This would enable walkers and cyclists to move swiftly across the High Street while it would also assist with slowing vehicle speeds down on the High Street, creating a safer environment.

The proposal incorporates 2m wide segregated cycle lanes from School Brae to the Northgate (eastbound) and from Eastgate to School Brae (Westbound). A new contrasting raised table junction at the Northgate would be incorporated to give pedestrian priority with localised widened of the footways. This would enhance active travel provisions while making it undesirable for large vehicles to turn onto the Northgate.

Figure 3.5: Extract from Sketch 04



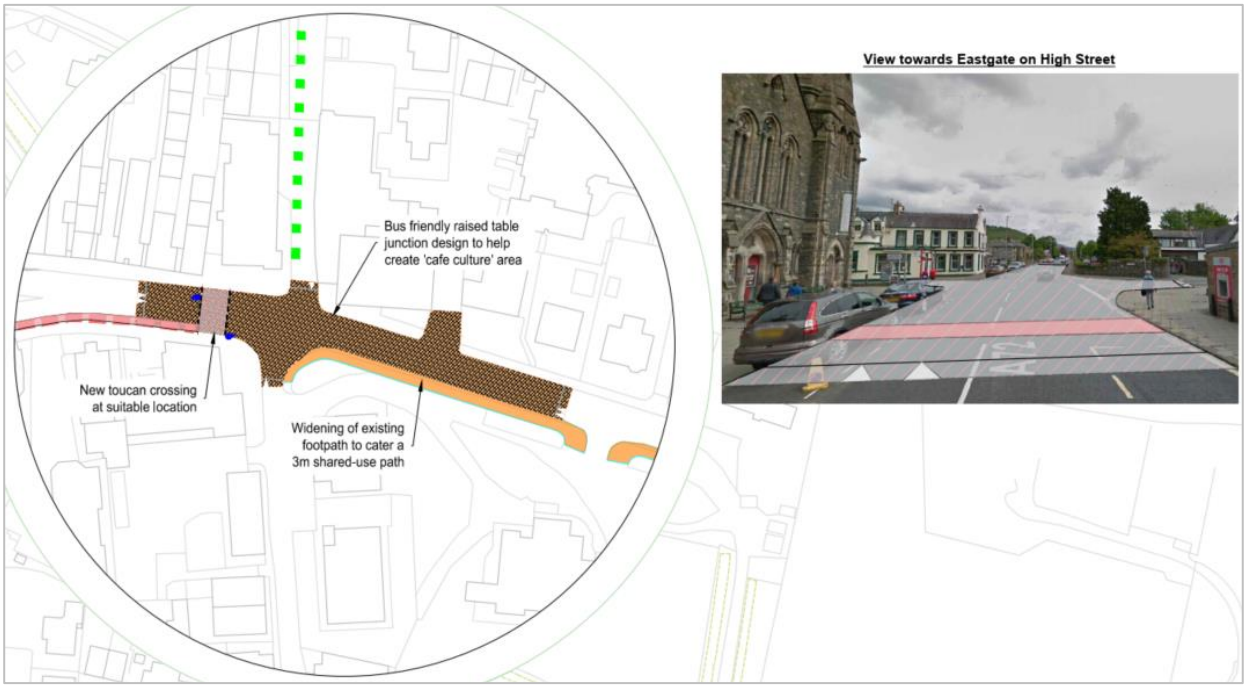
Source: Extract from Sketch 04

3.3.4 Eastgate Junction and Link to East

The Eastgate area and associated junction offers another north / south link to be enhanced for active travel while also improving the sense of place and safety for walkers and cyclists on the High Street. The proposed improvement option here would incorporate a new raised table across the junction with the provision of a formal toucan crossing.

In addition to this a new 3m Shared Use Path could be provided from the Eastgate to Peebles Hydro on the southern side of the carriageway. This would offer a direct link between the High Street and the Tweed Valley Railway Path.

Figure 3.6: Extract from Sketch 03



Source: Extract from Sketch 03

3.4 Other Proposed Improvement Locations

During the course of the study other key locations were identified and agreed with PCT as areas that require improvement in order to enhance provision for walkers and cyclists. The locations were observed as requiring relatively minor improvements to significantly alter the characteristics and promote links for active travel. More detail on these locations is provided below with the concept design drawing 'Sketch 09' located in Appendix A.

3.4.1 B7062/Caledonian Road

During the site visit, it was identified that the junction between B7062 and Caledonian Road, to the south of the River Tweed, had considerable scope to be improved. The existing geometry of the junction used the available space poorly and promoted a confusing layout for road users. As seen in Figure 3.7, there is scope to extend the existing footways by reallocating road space to provide wider, more attractive footways and also cater for safer crossing points.

Figure 3.7: B7062/Caledonian Road

Source: Mott MacDonald - Extract from Sketch 09

3.4.2 Young Street

Young Street has been highlighted as a key link within Peebles. It was noted during the study that this road had been used for drivers with local knowledge as a rat run to avoid going along the High Street. Due to its narrow residential status, this is proving to be a safety concern for pedestrians and cyclists using this route, with larger vehicles seen using this as a cut through to the A703.

To help improve the attractiveness to active travel users of Young Street, a number of traffic calming measures have been proposed, as seen in Figure 3.8. By providing a raised table junction with widened footpaths, this will help act as both a traffic calming measure by deterring vehicles using the route as a rat run whilst also improving the safety and comfort for active travel users.

Figure 3.8: Young Street

Source: Mott MacDonald - Extract from Sketch 09

3.4.3 Biggiesknowe/A72

As part of the wider study of the connectivity through the town of Peebles, Biggiesknowe was highlighted as a key connection between the Cuddyside water path to the east and greenside onto the River Tweed to the west. The A72 is currently acting as a barrier between these routes with poor crossing facilities currently provided on a busy road.

Proposals to install a raised table across this whole junction would provide a number of safety benefits to active travel users. The raised table would act as a traffic calming measure on the busy A72. It would also allow for the reallocation of some road space on each of the local road arms to provide wider and more comfortable footways. An improved at grade crossing point could also be included, which would largely improve the safety of all users trying to get across the A72 at this location.

Figure 3.9: Biggiesknowe/A72 Crossing

Source: Mott MacDonald - Extract from Sketch 09

3.4.4 March Street

As part of the Halyrude RC Primary School review, it was highlighted that there was scope for improvements along Dovecot Road and March Street to create an attractive link to the Cuddy water path, as seen in Figure 3.10. Due to the wide nature of Dovecot Road, proposals to reduce to the width of the carriageway to provide a wider footway and cycle lane have been made. On March Street, a raised table crossing point is proposed to create a safer and more comfortable crossing point for all users.

Figure 3.10: Dovecot Road/March Street

Source: Mott MacDonald - Extract from Sketch 09

3.5 Green Spaces

As mentioned in the schools' review, there is scope to upgrade and improve several of the paths in and around the green spaces of Peebles.

Sterry-Walters Partnership Ltd have developed placemaking plans for all green spaces within Peebles and details can be found in their submission.

4 Summary and Forward Approach

4.1 Summary

Peebles Community Trust (PCT) commissioned Mott MacDonald Ltd (MM) to undertake this study in 2020. This report has been collated to bring together the findings and deliverables of the 2020 study into one overall document to complete Stage 1 for Places for Everyone. The study has assessed the current active travel infrastructure and established potential improvement options and key links for active travel using an evidence based approach. The improvement options and links identified will assist to create a better environment for walkers and cyclists of all abilities.

A detailed desktop review and site walkover have been completed which formed the basis of this study and provided a good understanding of the local context and area. Transport Planning techniques have been utilised to map and assess key data to better understand current and future travel movements within the town. Existing routes, opportunities, constraints and gaps in the network have also been considered and the information collated to identify key areas within Peebles where improvements should be targeted.

A key focus of this study has been linking key trip attractors and local areas to integrate and enhance the existing active travel network. A high level masterplan of potential improvement options has been developed which will help inform future links within Peebles to enable more people to consider walking and cycling for everyday journeys. Improvement options have been identified which focus on the provision of new / improved active travel infrastructure, road reallocation / traffic calming improvements and placemaking improvements which can improve permeability for walking, wheeling and cycling while also creating an enhanced sense of place for the community.

The improvement options have been assessed and high level sketches formed to better understand the impacts and benefits of these options and to enable them to be presented at community consultation events. Links to and from the four schools within Peebles have been reviewed in detail as well as potential improvements along the High Street, to significantly reallocate road space and provide improved active travel and placemaking infrastructure. Targeted improvement options at other key locations across the town have also been considered in greater detail including: the A72 / Young Street junction, A72 / Biggiesknowe junction, B7062 / Caledonian Road junction and March Street / Dovecot Road junction.

The overall report provides an output in the form of a feasibility study that can be used as a basis for detailed consultation and development of the designs going forward.

4.2 Forward Approach

The purpose of the study outputs was to create presentation style drawings that could be used by PCT to undertake meaningful community consultation. For any if the improvement options to be implemented it is imperative that the community is engaged and informed at an early stage so that support can be generated. It is recommended that community consultation is continued, and that the proposals are developed closely with the community involved going forward.

Of equal importance is engaging with Scottish Borders Council. It is likely that any of the future improvement options would be implemented by them, so they need to be in support at an early

stage. It in anticipated that this study and the evidence presented will assist PCT with this consultation.

The project should move forward to PfE Stage 2 – Concept Design. This will involve developing the above proposals in consultation with all key stakeholders.

Below is a list of recommended tasks that should be undertaken to progress the study;

- Further discussion between PCT and SUSTRANS to agree that the recommended options are the preferred solution at this stage.
- Detailed Community consultation.
- Engagement with Scottish Borders Council.
- Develop General Arrangement drawings to concept design stage.
- Traffic modelling for signal control options should these be progressed.
- Equality Impact Assessment.
- Designers Risk Register.
- Identification of third party land requirements and availability.
- Determine planning requirements and approval process.
- Funding application to take project to Stage 2 of 'Places for Everyone'
- Road Safety Audit Stage 1.

Please note whilst this list is not conclusive it should provide a sufficient overview of requirements to progress the design stages of the project. Further activities may be required as the scheme progresses.

Appendices

A. Key Links and Improvement Option Drawings 35
B. Schools Review Document 36
C. School Brae vs Tweed Brae Option Appraisal Document 37