LONG ASHTON, NORTH SOMERSET

Village quality, safety and movement on a busy route
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Introduction

The quality of life in any village is critically dependant on its key buildings and public spaces. For most villages, the village hall, the church, the pubs, schools and meeting rooms provide the main focal points, together with the streets and public spaces that link them together. Above all, the quality of the public spaces is determined by the relationship between the village and the traffic generated by, and passing through, the settlement.

Long Ashton is blessed with many excellent buildings. The fine parish church of All Saints stands at the eastern end of the village, close to the historic Angel Inn. The large village hall at the western end and its adjoining recreational space serves as an additional focal point. The new buildings on Brook Close have allowed the former Northleaze School to be retained for housing, with other notable buildings including the almshouses, Lower Court, the Bird-in-Hand pub, the British Legion Building and Hebron Church.

The village is less well served with public spaces. There is no clearly identifiable village square or green. The focal point of the shops and supermarket around Keedwell Hill and Lovelinch Gardens provides little sense of place. The long street formed by Weston Road that forms the spine of Long Ashton lacks the qualities of a high street, accentuating the fragmented and disconnected nature of the village, with public life set back behind walls away from the main street.

With the support of North Somerset and the Parish Council, a group of dedicated local residents have been working on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. The central themes of the merging Plan include creating and sustaining a local community, creating a prosperous economy, and addressing traffic and transport needs.

This report has been commissioned by the Long Ashton Neighbourhood Plan Development Group to address the critical issues surrounding traffic, parking and the quality of the streets and public spaces in the village. The initiative reflects clear concerns amongst residents and businesses about the erosion of village life and economic vitality arising from the impact of traffic, and the desire for safer, more comfortable and more convivial public space favouring pedestrians and cyclists whilst coping with public transport needs, commercial deliveries and private cars and motorcycles.

Long Ashton is not alone in seeking to establish an improved long term balance between the quality of village life and the demands for transport. Across the UK and in many mainland European towns and villages, a new approach to reconciling people, places and traffic is emerging. This approach is manifested in many revised street designs and configurations, in government policy such as Manual for Streets, and in fresh guidance such as Traffic in Villages, published in 2012.

This report draws on such guidance and best practice, building on the growing body of experience and understanding as to how the design and management of streets and spaces might evolve over time to reverse the loss of public space, helping to reconnect the several parts of Long Ashton and to foster a coherent and successful local economy. It aims to establish a clearer approach to street design and the fostering of traffic speeds appropriate to the specific context of the village.

A study of this nature cannot hope to provide a comprehensive blueprint. The scope, extent and timescales for any interventions will depend on private and public investment, both severely constrained by economic circumstances. Many specific issues and new opportunities will arise over coming years to influence priorities and proposals. This report does not set out to offer concrete designs or detailed recommendations. Instead it aims to lay out a direction of travel, illustrated by sketches for key spaces and locations, based on a careful analysis of the existing circumstances.

The report intends to help establish a broad consensus amongst residents, traders and business owners, combined with the planning and highway authority, that will support a coherent and distinctive long-term vision for Long Ashton that can guide future investment in the village.
The Long Ashton context

With a population of around 6,000, Long Ashton is large enough to establish its own distinctive identity, despite its proximity to Bristol. Located on the north-eastern boundary of North Somerset, the village was historically associated with the Smyth family and Ashton Court - Weston Road aligns with the gatehouse and carriage route on the southern entry into the estate. The village name is descriptive; it stretches along the Weston Road for over 1½ miles, formed over time from several small hamlets. Its elongated form, stretching from the B3128 westwards to the junction with Wild Country Lane, enjoys a magnificent south-facing location, with easy access to woodland and open countryside and a short journey from Bristol.

It is clear why the impact of traffic features so highly amongst local concerns. Despite the opening of the Long Ashton by-pass for the A370 in 1968, the spine of the village continues to be dominated by traffic. Long Ashton / Weston Road, the main high street, has retained the dimensions and characteristics of its original highway role. It remains surprisingly busy, with over 500 vehicles during the am peak hour. As expected, flows are lower during the day at around 280, with typical speeds of between 25 and 30 mph. Buses make up a higher than average proportion with around 18 per hour. Parking is haphazard and unplanned along the route, causing some congestion and increasing discomfort for cyclists and pedestrians.

Links between Long Ashton and Bristol for cyclists and walkers have improved with the construction of the Festival Way, part of Route 33 of the National Cycle Network. The Monarch's Way footpath traverses Long Ashton along Keeds Lane, and there are numerous additional footpath links to the surrounding countryside. By contrast, provision for pedestrians within the village is unusually poor, with narrow and fragmented pavements and an uncomfortable streetscape. The important link to Ashton Court Park is especially poor where pedestrians are required to cross the fast and wide B3128.

20th Century infill housing developments have extended the village westwards and away from the Weston Road. From the west, the Nursery at the junction of Wild Country Lane combined with Estune Business Park in the former University research buildings defines the village boundary. At the eastern end, the Angel Inn and Church Close mark the edge, although the Church Lodge gate into Ashton Court provides a formal terminus to Long Ashton Road. Within its extended length, the village presents an approximation of a centre around the Coop supermarket and the Community Centre on Keedwell Hill. Further east, the Bird-in-Hand pub, the junction of Theynes Croft, the junction with Yanley Lane, and the Angel Inn provide potential landmarks. To the north, Providence Lane and the Miners' Rest pub provide an additional focal point.
Traffic patterns, speeds and volumes

The volume of traffic flowing through Long Ashton is surprising, given the proximity and design speed of the A370 bypass. The most recent traffic count data was collected in 2009, and it is likely that flows have increased since then. The c. 5,000 daily vehicles greatly exceeds the amount of locally generated traffic, suggesting that Weston Road is serving as an alternative to the bypass. This raises important questions concerning the configuration of the junctions with the B3130 at Cambridge Batch, and the B3128 by Ashton Court.

Although average speeds are within the 30 mph limit, these are exceeded by many drivers. Generally the speeds are higher than is appropriate for a village centre or high street. There are no formal records on pedestrian numbers. However, several indicators, such as the travel patterns for Northleaze and Birdwell schools, reinforce the perceptions of surprisingly few pedestrians within the village. This would reflect the continuing dominance of the main high street by vehicles.
Principle pedestrian, cycle and vehicular network and significant buildings
Village quality, safety and movement on a busy through route

- Former Northleaze School Bdg
- Ashton Court Estate
- All Saints Church
- Angel Inn
- Church Lodge
- Northleaze School Car Park
- Former Church
- The Church House
- Northleaze Primary School

Key:
- Main vehicle routes
- Key pedestrian routes
Initial observations

Long Ashton is a very unusual village. Unlike so many settlements close to major metropolitan areas, it retains a very distinctive identity. Its superb aspect on the south facing slopes below Ashton Court and Failand combine with close access to open space to make it an attractive place for residents and for visitors, especially from Bristol. The combination of historic and modern buildings lend a quality absent from nearby settlements such as Nailsea and Failand.

The streetscapes of Long Ashton are a serious disappointment. The main Long Ashton / Weston Road is generally wider than is necessary for two-way traffic, with very narrow, interrupted footways. The lack of activity and pedestrian presence is particularly striking, and the fragmented form of the village undermines any sense of place. One is aware of life taking place away from the street, hidden behind high walls and hedges. The long lengths of featureless walls enclosing the main street add to the somewhat bleak streetscape.

This lack of human activity contributes to the relatively high speeds, and aggressive nature of drivers passing through the village. Driver expectations are clearly influenced by the very wide, sweeping approaches to the village at both ends. Neither the two excellent pubs, the Angel Inn and Bird-in-Hand, nor the Co-op supermarket or other shops, extend their presence or provide notable landmarks.

The small, sloping grassed area adjoining the Co-op, combined with the proximity of the shops in Lovelinch Gardens and the activity generated from the Community Centre on Keedwell Hill, serve as the closest approximation to a village centre. But the wide highway geometry, bollards, and ageing street furniture undermine any quality.

Elsewhere the crossing of the north-south footpath and the gardens of the Bird-in-Hand are not evident to passing drivers, and the unloved corner of the Royal British Legion clubhouse at the foot of Providence Lane provides no landmark. Similarly neither the open car-park at the head of Theynes Croft opposite the former school, nor the junctions with Yanley Lane or Glebe Road, provide any sense of place to break up the long continuity of Weston Road. The eastern end of the village between the Auto Scuderia showroom and Church Lane is notably bleak, adding to the isolation of the main village church and the Angel Inn. Finally the unnecessarily sweeping geometry of the eastern junction with Ashton Road (the B3128) cuts off the village both physically and psychologically from the popular open space of Ashton Court.

The poor environment of Weston Road fails to unify or connect the extended village, and has...
Initial observations

The small green and noticeboard by the Co-op

High enclosing walls screen village life from view

Lively shops on Lovelinch Gardens, but no sense of a centre

The Bird in Hand squeezed out by traffic widths

Narrow pavements and awkward parking

Village life seems to happen away from the public realm
Experience from countless studies of traffic in villages suggest that the layout and definition of the transition points between the higher-speed highway and the low-speed context of the built environment is critical to driver decisions and behaviour. In the words of the late Hans Monderman, Head of Road Safety for the northern provinces of The Netherlands, it is “essential that the road tells the right story”.

For Long Ashton, that story is confused. Expectations are established not only by the approach to the village itself, but also by the double roundabout and complex junction at Cambridge Batch, north of Barrow Gurney. This latter junction has been laid out to present the route through Long Ashton as wider (and faster) than the link to the by-pass. This may help to explain the higher than expected number of vehicles choosing the minor village route over the A370. Certainly the huge area of underused tarmac does not indicate a quiet local access road.

The one kilometer stretch between Cambridge Batch and Long Ashton presents a wide, sweeping highway, the character of which changes little as it approaches the junction with Wild Country Lane and the Nursery School (the first prominent building to the west). Unsurprisingly, traffic speeds are high on the western approach to the centre.

Interventions to emphasize the primacy of the by-pass route into Bristol for eastbound traffic can be considered a starting point for reducing the pressure from through traffic on the village. In addition, measures to define a consistent and clear village boundary to the west will contribute significantly to altering driver expectations and reducing speeds for eastbound traffic entering Long Ashton.
Western approach: existing layout
Observations: The village centre

The lack of a clearly identifiable centre brings two significant problems to Long Ashton. In addition to the lack of any obvious focal point for the community and the fragmented location of the various shops between Lovelinch Gardens and the Bird-in-Hand, there is no sense of arrival or place to punctuate the sweeping linearity of the main street. The lack of a distinctive identity is likely to reduce the trading value of the shops and businesses, and the poor relationship between the street and surrounding activities encourages high speeds and discourages passing trade.

The existing pedestrian crossing opposite the Co-op serves some purpose in highlighting the super-market, although it does not align with the shop entrance. Despite its mediocre architecture, the Co-op does provide the obvious focal point, standing between the Post Office and adjoining rank of shops, and Lovelinch Gardens. The rank of shops tend to be screened by parked cars and are set back from the road. Similarly the Co-op fails to exploit its street frontage, with a line of bollards unnecessarily dividing the footway. The arcade of shops in Lovelinch Gardens turn away from Weston Road, and the wide expanse of asphalt at the foot of Keedwell Hill isolates the arcade from the north side of the village. For both economic and traffic reasons, it is essential that Long Ashton addresses the layout of its centre.

Several additional factors detract further from the quality of this stretch of Long Ashton. The vacant site and its unkempt boundary at the foot of Keedwell Hill, and the poorly maintained boundary to the sloping areas of grass north-east of the Co-op, convey a sense of retreat by the community from the streetscape. The unusually wide turning splays of the junctions and car park entrance break any sense of continuity for pedestrians. The 8-9 metre widths of the carriageway on Weston Road, combined with the unrelenting centre-line, serve to isolate drivers from awareness of their surroundings and to promote higher speeds.

In the absence of major redevelopment opportunities, we would recommend measures to reinforce a sense of a village centre opposite the Co-op, combined with a regeneration of the south-facing open space whenever resources allow. In addition, we would advise re-arranging the streetscape adjoining the Post Office and adjacent shops. This could be combined with measures opposite the Bird-in-Hand pub, and at the junction with Providence Lane (especially if the RBL Clubhouse is reburbished). These secondary initiatives would serve as transition points on the approach to the centre. Measures to reduce perceived carriageway widths and to highlight Lovelinch Gardens would similarly provide a “lobby” space before the centre for traffic approaching from the west.
The village centre: existing layout
Observations: Eastern approach

In common with the western approach to Long Ashton from Cambridge Batch, the highway arrangements at the junction with the B3128 Ashton Road seem designed to increase traffic volumes and speeds through the village. The excessive road widths and sweeping geometry are appropriate to speeds over 60 mph. The junction also breaks the visual and psychological link to Church Lodge, and creates a daunting informal crossing for pedestrians and cyclists. It also takes up an excessive amount of valuable land.

The elegant village sign, and the 30 mph speed limit sign do little to counteract the penetration of highway expectations. Only the group of buildings around the Angel Inn manifest the presence of the village. The problem of speed context is further exacerbated by the long gap between the Angel Inn and the junction with Glebe Road, where the village is again evident. This gap is hemmed in by featureless high walls on both sides, creating a bleak and uncomfortable environment for pedestrians.

Finding ways to highlight the presence of the magnificent parish church and the other buildings on Church Lane, as well as extending the presence of the Angel Inn to address the village street would significantly help to strengthen the transition to a low-speed shared environment. Any measures to soften and extend pedestrian space along the gap would be similarly beneficial.

Parking arrangements at this end of the village are particularly critical. The Angel Inn, and special services at the church, can generate significant demand. In addition, football matches at Ashton Gate, and events in Ashton Court Park can swell the day-to-day demands generated by walkers accessing the Park. In order to maximise the visibility of the pub and increase its external space, it makes sense to discourage parking directly along its frontage. Narrowing down the approach from the west could increase opportunities for parking on the north side.

More significantly, simplifying and tightening the huge junction with Ashton Road offers the potential for several parking spaces that could serve both Ashton Court as well as the church and pub. For this to work well, it is essential that the link between the car park and the Angel is as generous and clear as possible.

The exceptional length of street between the eastern extremity of the village and its notional centre increases the importance of emphasizing distinctive punctuation marks or recognizable places at intervals along the eastern approach. These are best located at junctions with side roads. The junctions with Glebe Road (especially if the garage is redeveloped), the important junction with Yanley Lane, and the head of Theynes Croft by the school car park all offer opportunities for minor paving measures to create landmarks.
Eastern end: existing layout

Village quality, safety and movement on a busy through route
Potential changes and developments

No consideration of a long-term strategy for the streets and public realm can ignore other changes that may influence developments in forthcoming years. Long Ashton’s location close to the Greater Bristol area places particular pressure on the settlement, both from land demands as well as transport needs. Although no assumptions can be made, it is worth identifying the potential changes in order to maximise any opportunities for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The South Bristol Link is a significant highway development planned for the south east of the village, linking the A38 with the A370 and the park-and-ride site. The impact on Long Ashton remains uncertain, and it may reduce some through traffic on Yanley and Wild Country Lanes. It will also extend the higher-speed highway network close to the eastern approach to the village. This may increase the importance of creating a clearer and sharper contrast between the highway network and the village context.

The development of the Festival Way, part of Route 33 of the National Cycle Network co-ordinated by Sustrans, has been extended through the south of the village. The route has significantly improved bicycle links into Bristol, and will eventually extend to Nailsea, Clevedon and the coast. The notable increase in bicycle trips has the potential to contribute to a broader shift in the priorities for streets in Long Ashton.

Use of the expanding network makes it more important to improve safety along, and across, the main route through Long Ashton at locations such as the head of Yanley Lane. A change in the speed characteristics of Weston Road throughout the village could combine with the new route to permit more parents and children to access the two schools on foot and by bicycle.

Although opposed by Long Ashton Parish Council and North Somerset Core Strategy, pressure for new housing land is likely to continue to influence the shape and extent of the village.

Major developments have been tentatively proposed to the west of the village at Gatcombe Farm. This would significantly increase the catchment to, and relevance of, the centre of the village. An increase in numbers of residents would also increase the importance of ensuring that the main village street is safe and comfortable to cross or traverse.
The policy context

LANDP’s initiative to address traffic issues is well timed. Policy and best practice for traffic in towns and villages are rapidly evolving as the purpose and role of settlements change. The publication of Manual for Streets 2 in 2011 reflected a key shift towards place-making in street design, and the importance of reinforcing the relationship between the carriageway and its context. Guidance such as Traffic in Villages, launched by the CIHT in 2012, builds on the principles of shared space and low-speed design. Our initial recommendations and sketch proposals are based on such policies, drawing on updated experience from around the UK and mainland Europe.

A clear approach to the preferred design speed is fundamental to the strategy for Long Ashton. For such an extended village, we would envisage a design speed of around 21 mph throughout, with between 14-18 mph for the central area.

To achieve such a design speed, a number of key design principles could be combined, including:

- The removal of all road markings and especially centre lines
- Clear transition spaces at village boundaries and to highlight the village centre
- Reducing the visual widths of carriageways to a minimum to allow two-way flows
- Clearly identifying parking spaces to eliminate yellow lines and optimise use of streetspace
- Emphasising the presence of key buildings and likely pedestrian crossing points
- Exploiting opportunities for place-making at junctions and around key buildings
- Enlivening and softening the streetscape
A place-making strategy for Long Ashton

Our assessment of Long Ashton leads us to recommend working up proposals for a significant change in character of Weston Road / Long Ashton Road, the main route through the village. The approach would allow for additional measures at junctions with secondary streets, such as Keedwell Hill and the route to the Village Hall, and the junction of Glebe Road. However, we suggest that the emphasis should focus on the main route in order to create a clear ‘Long Ashton High Street’.

Such a transformation will take place over many years, but based on a consistent strategy. The strategy should aim to bring together a number of strands to supplement a place-making programme along the lines suggested. In addition to the specific locations, the quality and speed context of the High Street should be enhanced by:-

- Reducing the apparent visual width of the carriageway to around 5.2 metres by including a consistent edge strip, with the same paving surface as the footway
- Redefining and clarifying any on-street parking to take advantage of blank walls and inactive frontages, and keep shop frontages and key external spaces clear
- Animating and enlivening the lengths of blank walls fronting the street through a community wallflower planting project.

Measures to redefine the general streetscape could be carried out in phases, or whenever planned maintenance programmes come forward. In addition, we would recommend a phased programme of schemes for key areas, namely:-

- Re-alignment of the Cambridge Batch junction to downplay the village route
- A stronger gateway at Wild Country Lane
- A centre “lobby” at the junction with Lovelinch Gardens and Keeds Lane
- A major remodelling of ‘The Centre’ to incorporate the junction with Keedwell Hill, the front of the Co-op, and the green space
- A lobby space fronting the Post Office and adjoining shops, to include the Bird-in-Hand
- Enhancing the Theynes Croft car park
- Remodelling of the Yanley Lane junction
- Remodelling the frontage to the Angel Inn
- Remodelling the B3128 junction & crossing
Specific sites
Cambridge Batch

Modifications to downplay expectations of drivers approaching Long Ashton from the west will help both reduce speeds and volumes. Our sketch suggests changes to the two mini-roundabouts to maintain the continuity of the B3130 link to the by-pass. Weston Road would become a minor rural road at a T-junction.

The important pedestrian and bicycle link from Weston Road to Old Weston Road would be emphasised with a courtesy crossing, along with the link towards Barrow Gurney. The extensive area of underused asphalt could be grassed, used to promote village events, or planted with trees. Grass verges are suggested for Weston Road to reduce widths and introduce a rural context.
Western entrance

The junction with Wild Country Lane provides an opportunity to adapt the scale of Weston Road to mark the entrance to Long Ashton. The approaches have been visually narrowed to reduce approach speeds, and the additional right hand turning lanes removed. Informal courtesy crossings mark the edges of the simple landmark space at the junction, with maximum visibility given to the Appletree Daycare Nursery.

The long stretch between Cambridge Batch and the entry point to the village would be simplified and softened, with road markings and centre-lines removed, and grass verges introduced.

The village sign and nameplate would be relocated closer to the village to coincide with the new revised entry point.
The village centre

The crossing of Weston Road with Birdwell Road and Keedwell Hill, combined with the entrance to the supermarket, form a notional centre for Long Ashton. Despite the unappealing architecture of the flank of the Co-op, the small area of south-facing grass and mature tree offer the potential for an informal gathering point. We have suggested inclusion of an area of setts or differentiated paving to highlight the supermarket, and the replacement of the zebra crossing with a broad low-speed area of shared space strengthened with a narrow central median.

Additional measures to enhance the surroundings of the centre could include addressing the corner of the Hebron Church site at the foot of Keedwell Hill, and providing clearer space outside the shops east of the supermarket.
The village centre - Proposed revisions
The village centre - Proposed revisions

- Informal crossing unites the road and the shop front
- Places for play and seating combined with fencing and landscaping
- Secondary paving material emphasizes the village centre entry
- Informal parking breaks down the linearity of the road
- Places for seating positioned in the lawn
- Reflective studs and benches indicate the carriageway and provide guidance
- Short stay parking moved to north side opposite shops
- Different road surface highlights the footpath
- Secondary paving material emphasizes the village centre entry
- Bird in Hand sign
- Miners’ Rest sign
- Informal crossing
- Informal parking
- Places for seating
- Short stay parking
- Different road surface
- Secondary paving material
- Bird in Hand sign
- Miners’ Rest sign
The village centre

The street fronting the Post Office and shops, combined with the Bird-in-Hand pub, could be realigned to form an eastern lobby on the westbound approach to the centre. If opportunities and resources permit, this area could be extended to the foot of Providence Hill and the poor quality edge of the Royal British Legion building.

In order to maximise the visibility and accessibility of the shops, we would recommend relocating the short-term parking to the blank northside of the street. Trees, bicycle parking and / or benches could define and provide protection for the forecourt of the shops, whilst maintaining a continuity of paving to create a simple ‘place’. Additional studs and low lighting would help add definition if necessary.
Theynes Croft

Slightly away from the village centre, the Theynes Croft junction, serves as an important point on the route through Long Ashton. In addition to spectacular views out across the valley, the junction is marked by the fine architecture of the former Northleaze School. The junction is important for the new school, but the car park is under-utilized as an outdoor space.

The zebra crossing has a poor safety record, and does not serve pedestrians approaching from the centre. The ageing guardrails do little to improve the space and should be removed. Lower speeds established by the narrowed carriageways would allow a courtesy crossing to be introduced to reflect the natural flows of pedestrians. An additional logo associated with the school might be introduced.
Yanley Lane

The junction of Yanley Lane with Weston Road is currently an awkward intersection, partly due to the steep gradient of the hill. The crossing distance for pedestrians on the south side is especially uncomfortable, and the wide splays encourage speeds down the hill.

We would recommend a simple element of geometrical paving to highlight the head of Yanley Lane, combined with landscaping and tighter kerbs to create a minor place and landmark, helping to break up the long stretch between The Angel and the centre.

Lower speeds would also greatly assist the many cycle movements that take place at this junction generated by access to The Festival Way.
Angel Inn

The combination of Church Lane and the historic Angel Inn provide Long Ashton with some of its best-loved landmarks. Older pictures illustrate its rural context as well as its connection to Ashton Court. The church itself is surprisingly concealed from the road, and the lively and well-loved pub has largely lost its relationship to passing traffic. The lack of pavement on the south side between the village and The Angel generates an important crossing point just to the west.

We would recommend providing on-street parking spaces on the north side of the road, leaving the front clear and encouraging greater outdoor use in summer. Discussions with owner and tenant of the pub could help shift perceptions at this key entry point into the village, and re-establish the church and inn as a landmark and destination. Critically, such a space helps to convey the low-speed context of Long Ashton for westbound drivers.
Angel Inn - Proposed revisions

The sketch proposals aim to clarify some parking spaces on the north side of the road, keeping the space fronting the pub clear and making more of the Church Lane turning. A courtesy crossing is proposed across to the pub.
The final, and perhaps most critical, of the proposed street layout changes involves changing the layout and details of the eastern end of Long Ashton / Weston Road. The existing arrangement reflects the past focus on the high-speed highway network, and gave little thought, at that time, to the issues of pedestrian or bicycle safety, or the connectivity of communities with key destinations.

The sweeping westbound turning lane from the by-pass requires large areas of land, and encourages high-speeds on the approach to the Angel Inn and Church Lane. The well-landscaped, but isolated triangle of land separating the two lanes breaks the connection with the Lodge Gate of Ashton Court Park. The excessive width of the B 3128 at this point exacerbates the dangers and discomfort for pedestrians crossing from the north side footway. A thorough reconsideration of this important local junction would improve safety and dramatically help Long Ashton.
B3128 Junction - Proposed revisions

Our initial suggestion involves reducing the width and speeds on the B 3128, and re-establishing the connection between Ashton Court Park and Long Ashton. Bringing together both carriageways of Long Ashton Road creates an opportunity to make better use of the available land.

Around 22-24 car parking spaces could be created, which could serve both walkers accessing Ashton Court, as well as those accessing the Angel Inn and All Saints’ Church. Establishing the link to The Angel requires a clear route to be established from this junction into the village. A simple roundel at the junction itself could cope with the likely traffic movements whilst slowing approach speeds at both crossings.
Parking management, and animating the streetscape

Reducing the presence of highway elements is essential to achieve the shift of emphasis to a low-speed, shared space village context. This includes yellow lines, which can also add to the linearity of traffic routes, undermining their spatial quality and their links to places and buildings. For this reason we would recommend the introduction of a ‘Restricted Parking Zone’ (RPZ) for Long Ashton. Such an arrangement, used successfully in many towns and villages such as Chepstow, Shrewsbury and Wells, is based on high-lighting where people CAN park, rather than where they cannot. It requires a revision to the traffic orders, and signing to be incorporated into the village entry points. These measures could underpin the rationalisation of parking along the main spine of the village, allowing a review of the balance between parking needs and the spatial qualities of the key spaces. Overall we calculate that a broadly neutral approach to the number of parking spaces can be achieved.

Short blocks of parking spaces, clearly identified through distinctive paving or edge details, can be helpful in certain locations to maintain and foster low traffic speeds. In general we would advise avoiding parking where it might screen local shops or businesses, or where it might interfere with pedestrian routes.

A number of particular wall flower species are common to Long Ashton. As a means to overcome the rather bleak and enclosing characteristics of the blank stone walls, especially in the eastern end of the village, we would recommend initiating a community programme for planting and encouraging wall flowers wherever agreement can be reached with owners.

Acquiring a power drill with which to insert c.25 mm diameter shallow holes close to the top of walls, at spacings of around 200 mm., would allow seeds to be rolled into moist compost and carefully pressed into the masonry. Plug plants may be successful if the roots are still small. The following plants are already common in the area:-

- **Erigeron karvinskiannus** (Mexican Fleablane)
  A delicate daisy, needing a sunny aspect
- **Centranthus ruber** (Red Valerian)
  Nectar-rich flowers in red, pink or white
- **Erysimum cheri** (Wallflowers)
  Will grow well in many locations, with yellow flowers and other variations
- **Campunula cochlear or poscharskyana**
  The Bell Flower will spread well, with misty blue colour flowering in both sun and shade

For shady walls, ferns may be appropriate. These might include Asplenium trichomanes (Maidenhair spleenwort), Pseudo fumaria lutea (Yellow corydalis), Aubretia deltoides, and Cerastium tomentosum.
Conclusions

This report builds on the key principles and overall approach discussed and widely endorsed at a public meeting in the autumn of 2013. It is not intended to provide a comprehensive set of fixed proposals, but to help illustrate the potential application of such principles and to identify the areas where interventions are likely to be most effective.

The cost of introducing measures such as those illustrated will depend greatly on the quality of materials and finishes selected, and on the extent to which work can be carried out without road closures and traffic diversions. Funding is likely to be assembled from a variety of sources, including regeneration money, highway maintenance and improvement budgets and developer contributions. A set of initiatives such as those outlined is likely to demand consistent determination over many years, and will require careful phasing and planning over an extended time frame.

A change in the relationship of Long Ashton to its traffic is one of a number of critical themes for the emerging Neighbourhood Plan. The direction of the changes illustrated are entirely consistent with national and local policy, and could help establish Long Ashton as a model for reconciling village qualities with traffic movement. Although requiring much additional work and detailed discussions, the sketches and recommendations are intended to help build a consensus around a strategy for responding to the rapidly changing economic circumstances facing small towns and villages. Long Ashton has the opportunity, aided by these recommendations, to re-establish a distinctive coherent identity for the village, based on a sequence of simple spaces linked by a safe, attractive, low-speed high street.

Cars, vans, lorries and buses will continue to play an integral part in the day-to-day life of Long Ashton. However, a shift in the priorities away from higher speed highways towards low-speed, shared spaces offers the opportunity to promote greater numbers of walkers and cyclists, to give children greater freedom of movement, and to encourage economic vitality and social connections. In doing so, the approach outlined here builds on exploiting the intrinsic qualities and unusual shape of Long Ashton to achieve greater safety, sociability and civility.

“A safe street is one that tells a rich story about its past, its current circumstances, and the future aspirations of its residents.”

Hans Monderman (1946-2008)
Head of Road Safety, Friesland, NL