



# Community Street Audit Report

**GLOBE BUSINESS PARK, MARLOW.**

**1 DECEMBER 2016**

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking. We want to create a walking nation where people of all generations enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings, on streets fit for walking.



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# Executive Summary

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking. We are working with Globe Business Park (GBP) to increase walking rates to work.

On 1 December 2016 we conducted a community street audit (CSA) of the business park, walking the routes to the rail station and main bus stops identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged or discouraged walking to work. The issues identified were then discussed before agreement was reached on key short and longer term priorities that would improve the walking environment.

GBP caters for approximately 3000 employees, with a current 37% vacancy rate, making the potential number of employees significantly higher. The park is set in affluent market town, Marlow, just off of the M40 and A404. The park is located on the outskirts of the town and is accessed first before reaching the town centre. However, once in the heart of the park, it is a short walk to Marlow High Street.

The key issues affecting GBP are as follows:

- Lack of parking spaces attached to workplaces resulting in a high volume of parked vehicles spread across the park, hindering access and view for pedestrians.
- Lack of signage for pedestrians and HGVs, meaning HGV often travel incorrectly through the town.
- Lack of dropped curbs, continuous and joined up footway.
- Lack of informal and formal crossing points.

Recommendations discussed at the CSA included:

## Short Term

- Encouraging positive work related travel through initiatives such as car share, cycle schemes and walking promotion.
- Signage to assist pedestrians and vehicles when they arrive at the park.

## Long Term

- Restricted parking zone on Fieldhouse Lane, double yellow markings on corners both with Police enforcement.
- Dropped, tactile curbs on both sides of the road to assist vulnerable people and suggest informal crossing points to drivers.
- Traffic count and formal crossing point on Parkway if required.

# Living Streets

We are Living Streets, the UK charity for everyday walking.

We want to create a walking nation, free from congested roads and pollution, reducing the risk of preventable illness and social isolation and making walking the natural choice. We believe that a walking nation means progress for everyone.

Our ambition is to get people of all generations to enjoy the benefits that this simple act brings and to ensure all our streets are fit for walking.

For more than 85 years we've been a beacon for walking. In our early days our campaigning led to the UK's first zebra crossings and speed limits. Now, our campaigns and local projects deliver real change to overcome barriers to walking and our ground breaking initiatives such as the world's biggest Walk to School campaign encourage millions of people to walk.

Progress starts here: one street, one school, one step at a time.

## **Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund**

The Walk To project is being delivered by Living Streets in partnership with 16 Local Authorities through a grant of £2.48m from Department for Transport from the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund.

Through the Sustainable Travel Transition Year Fund a total of £20m has been allocated to support sustainable travel initiatives in 2015/16 which support the local economy, boost economic growth and cut carbon emissions.

# Introduction

The aim of a community street audit (CSA) is to identify issues that encourage or discourage everyday walking. To increase walking rates it is important that the condition of the streets and paths in the area be of a standard that encourages people to walk within both the area and the wider local community. This report provides more detail of these barriers and suggests practical solutions to overcome them.

## **Community street audit process**

The community street audit aims:

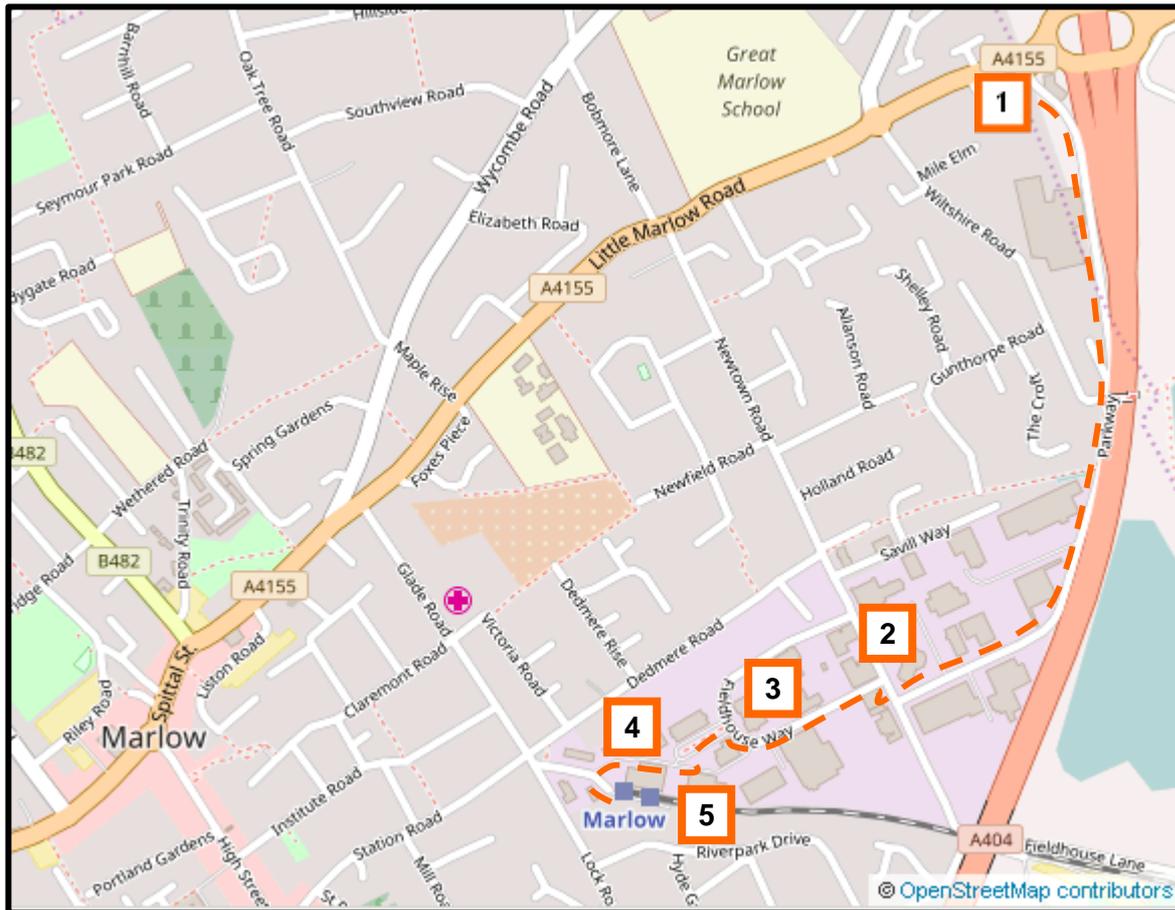
- to identify ways to reduce the effects of the busy roads on people who walk and cycle, without creating further delays for motorists,
- to find ways to reduce congestion and enforce and facilitate slower speeds and
- to identify barriers to walking and to enhance opportunities to improve connectivity, attractiveness, state of maintenance and identify improvement measures.

The CSA of the business park allowed us to critically review the walking routes to access the park. We were able to identify issues, decide on priorities and create solutions to influence on-the-ground changes.

On the CSA we walked the main public transport routes identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged or discouraged everyday walking. Issues identified were then discussed before agreement was reached on key short and longer term priorities that would improve the walking environment.

In addition to the CSA, a pre-audit was carried out by Living Streets staff to assess the facilities, current travel habits and observe the behaviour of drivers in the area.

# Map of area



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Audit Route



Points on map referred to in 'Findings' section.

# Area context

GBP caters for approximately 3000 employees, with a current 37% vacancy rate, making the potential number of employees significantly higher. The park is set in affluent market town, Marlow, just off of the M40 and A404. The park is located on the outskirts of the town and is accessible first before reaching the town centre. However, once in the heart of the park, it is a short walk to Marlow High Street.

The CSA took place on 1 December 2016 at 1:30pm, with 3 attendees, the group comprised of a Living Streets staff member, the Business Park Manager and a Sustrans staff member. We walked the routes to the rail station and main bus stops identifying, discussing and recording issues that encouraged or discouraged walking to work.

GBP is under development by the Business Improvement District (BID) led by Groundwork South. Starting in January 2015 and working in partnership with 51 businesses on the park, the BID aims to help GBP overcome its problems, including:

- Poor highway and footpath maintenance
- Lack of off street car parking
- Nuisance car parking blocking roads and impeding delivery vehicles
- Lack of sustainable transport options
- No clear signage and way finding
- Lack of connections between businesses
- Making the trading environment more safe and secure.

To help achieve this, the BID project seeks to raise **£766,250** over the next five years from the businesses on the Park, Wycombe District Council and from grants.

The historic nature of the town means that footways and streets are narrow and the area can feel overwhelmed by parked vehicles. Where the business park has a lack of parking spaces these vehicles encroach on to the narrow residential streets of the town, such as Dedmere Road and Newtown Road. However the majority of issues present themselves when vehicles park on Fieldhouse Lane which is business territory but incredibly narrow. These parked vehicles not only block the road and prevent delivery vehicles getting through but they block the pavement, dropped curbs and informal crossing points, it is near impossible for someone in a wheelchair to navigate their way through. The primary issues found on the audit were to do with inconsiderate parking and the excessive volume of vehicles.

The area itself is pleasant, it is green and has a community feel, much of the footway is surrounded by grass and trees.

# Area findings

## Parkway (1)

Parkway is the main through road for the business park, it allows vehicles to access the central point of the park without going through the town. However the BID Manager feels a lack of signage results in HGVs missing the turning and entering the park through the residential streets.

There is an old 'Globe Business Park' sign half way down Parkway that is visible to drivers on the A404. It looks tired and is surrounded by overgrown shrubbery.

The BID funded a fence installed opposite the residential houses at the top of Parkway to block out the traffic noise. There is a public footpath at the end of the houses, but it is not sign posted as to where it leads to.

Employees travelling to the park via bus may have to walk down Parkway after being dropped on Little Marlow Road.

Vehicles park along Parkway mounting the grass verges or pavement, churning up the mud and encroaching on the pedestrian space, fortunately the footway is wide so pedestrians can still walk in two's.

The route is pleasant for pedestrians, the footway is wide enough for social walking, the shrubbery had been maintained and there are alleyways to access different aspects of the business park. However, there are no formal or informal crossing points. There is a lack of dropped kerbs and pavement routes that are disjointed.



The signage for GBP is old and not in the correct place.



The BID installed a fence to protect residents from the traffic.



Vehicles park along Parkway mounting the grass verges or pavement.

## Fieldhouse Lane (2)

Fieldhouse Lane is reminiscent of Marlow town in that it is narrow with narrow footways. Pedestrians can walk in twos but this is encroached on by the many vehicles mounting the pavement.

Due to the lack of parking at businesses employees park wherever possible, including on corners and junctions. This not only prevents HGVs from making their deliveries and blocking the road but makes it difficult for pedestrians to walk on the footway and cross safely. This also makes it near impossible for people with prams or in wheelchairs to utilise the footway.

The road and footway are also in need of repair and there is a lack of litter bins or social space.

## Fieldhouse Way (3)

Part of Fieldhouse Way is privately owned, there is a stark difference between the area that is private and publically owned. The private area has aesthetically pleasing footway surfacing, plants and fenced trees, a seating area, plenty of business parking and wayfinding signage. However, unfortunately there is still a lack of dropped kerbs making the area difficult for wheelchair users. In addition on route to the station the junctions are wide and there are no clear routes for pedestrians.



Employees park wherever possible, mounting pavements, on corners and junctions.



Parked vehicles, no dropped kerbs and street clutter make the area hazardous for pedestrians.



Fieldhouse Way is privately owned and dramatically better for pedestrians.

## Station Approach (4)

Fieldhouse Way provides a good cut through to the station, and then on to the town High Street. Again the footway is narrow and not continuous, the road junctions are wide and crossing points are disjointed, resulting in no clear routes for pedestrians. Some pedestrian desire lines have been created across the grass. However, the area is quieter from traffic so pedestrians can cross safely.

Marlow station is small with no ticket office or facilities; there are some cycling storage facilities but no car park. This results in parking along the pavement, causing loss of space for pedestrians and problems crossing the road on the Station Approach



Wide junctions, lack of dropped kerbs and disjointed footway push pedestrians in to the road.



The footway to Station Approach is not continuous.

# Other activities

The BID facilitate quarterly networking meetings with invitations to all participating businesses, county and district council representatives and organisations working in the area. The meetings are designed to discuss developments in the area, gain feedback and provide good communication lines.

The BID have been working with Living Streets to promote walking to employees as a means of travel to the area, this was met with resistance and instead lunchtime led walks were promoted. These proved unpopular and the BID feel there is a general feeling of low morale due to the consistent issues with parking and the long delays getting in and out of the park at peak times.

It is felt any behaviour change initiatives should be coupled with physical improvements in order to meet businesses half way. There are cornered off spaces on the park that businesses feel could be used for parking, however these have been deemed unsafe by the district council. The BID are seeking approval for wayfinding signage and double yellow road markings on corners and junctions, this is taking some time. The BID has concerns about the vacancy rate at the park, holding on to it's current businesses and encouraging new businesses.

The BID and Living Streets are holding a free walking challenge for the park in January to encourage employees to break their current travel habits, or to go out at lunchtime and visit the High Street. There is also a car share scheme for the park managed by Carbon Heroes and sustainable travel charity, Sustrans, is also working in the area to look at the access to Marlow Station.

# Recommendations

Area/Issue	Recommended Action	Level of Action Quick Win/ Long Term	Responsibility/ Involvement	Recommended Deadline
Lack of wayfinding signage when entering the park, for navigation around the park and for pedestrians wanting to access the station or town.	Entrance signage to the park to direct HGVs in to the park directly, not through the town. Wayfinding signage to navigate through the park for vehicles and pedestrians. Wayfinding signage for pedestrians to show direct routes to the town and train station.	Medium term.	BID, Wycombe District Council (WDC), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC).	September 2017.
Lack of parking spaces attached to workplaces resulting in a high volume of parked vehicles spread across the park, hindering access and view for pedestrians as well as HGVs.	Encouraging positive work related travel through initiatives such as car share, cycle schemes and walking promotion in order to reduce the number of cars being brought to the park.	Quick win.	BID, Carbon Heroes, Living Streets, Sustrans, BCC.	On-going.
	Double yellow markings on corners to prevent vehicle parking and allow pedestrians to cross junctions safely, directly and with a clear view, with penalty enforcement.	Medium term.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	September 2017.

	Restricted parking zone on Fieldhouse Lane if parking problems persist and alternative parking is sought	Long term.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	January 2017.
Lack of dropped kerbs and informal or formal crossing points on Parkway.	Dropped kerbs to assist people in wheelchairs or with prams and suggest informal crossing points to drivers.	Medium term.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	September 2017.
	Traffic count and formal crossing point on Parkway if required.	Long term.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	January 2017.
Lack of dropped kerbs on Fieldhouse Lane and Way.	Dropped kerbs to assist people in wheelchairs or with prams and suggest informal crossing points to drivers.	Medium term.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	September 2017.
Lack of litter bins, benches and social space.	Installation of bins, benches, greenery and other features will not only be useful but will also encourage people to utilise the space and inspire walking.	Medium term.	BID, BCC, WDC.	September 2017.

# Conclusion

Action as a result of Community Street Audit (CSA) for Globe Business Park (GBP).

This report will be submitted to both members of staff at the GBP Business Improvement District (BID), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and Sustrans so that recommendations can be taken on board and action can be undertaken.

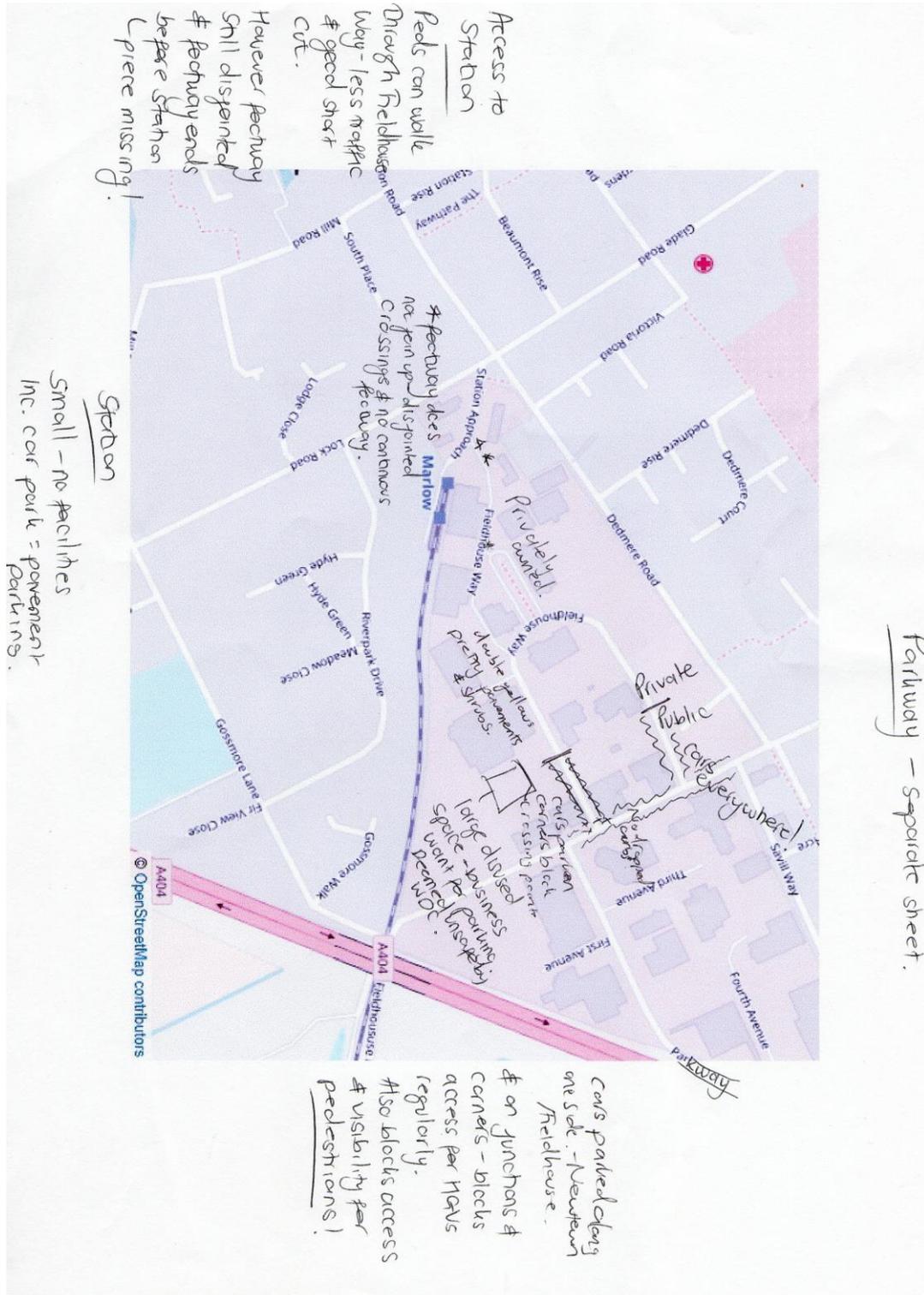
A CSA was undertaken with BID and Sustrans staff to identify any issues that may discourage walking to work. The observations highlighted that the number of vehicles parking on Fieldhouse Lane and the way that they park, was a particular immediate issue. The parked vehicles mean that pedestrians have to cross between cars and go out in to the road in order to get a clear view, wheelchairs users are not able to cross the road and n parts could not use the footway at all. In addition this causes daily problems for vehicles, HGVs get stuck blocking the entire road.

In addition, simple issues of pedestrians being able to navigate directly around the park and vehicles accessing it directly can be solved by wayfinding signage. Alongside these physical improvements it is recommended that the BID delivers regular behaviour change campaigns in order to encourage employees to leave their cars at home.

The BID is able to use this report as a testimonial to request improvement works alone or alongside any other developments, and to help with the business park travel plan. The BID should also work to carry out action points and ensure their longevity, calling on businesses and external organisations to help and support.

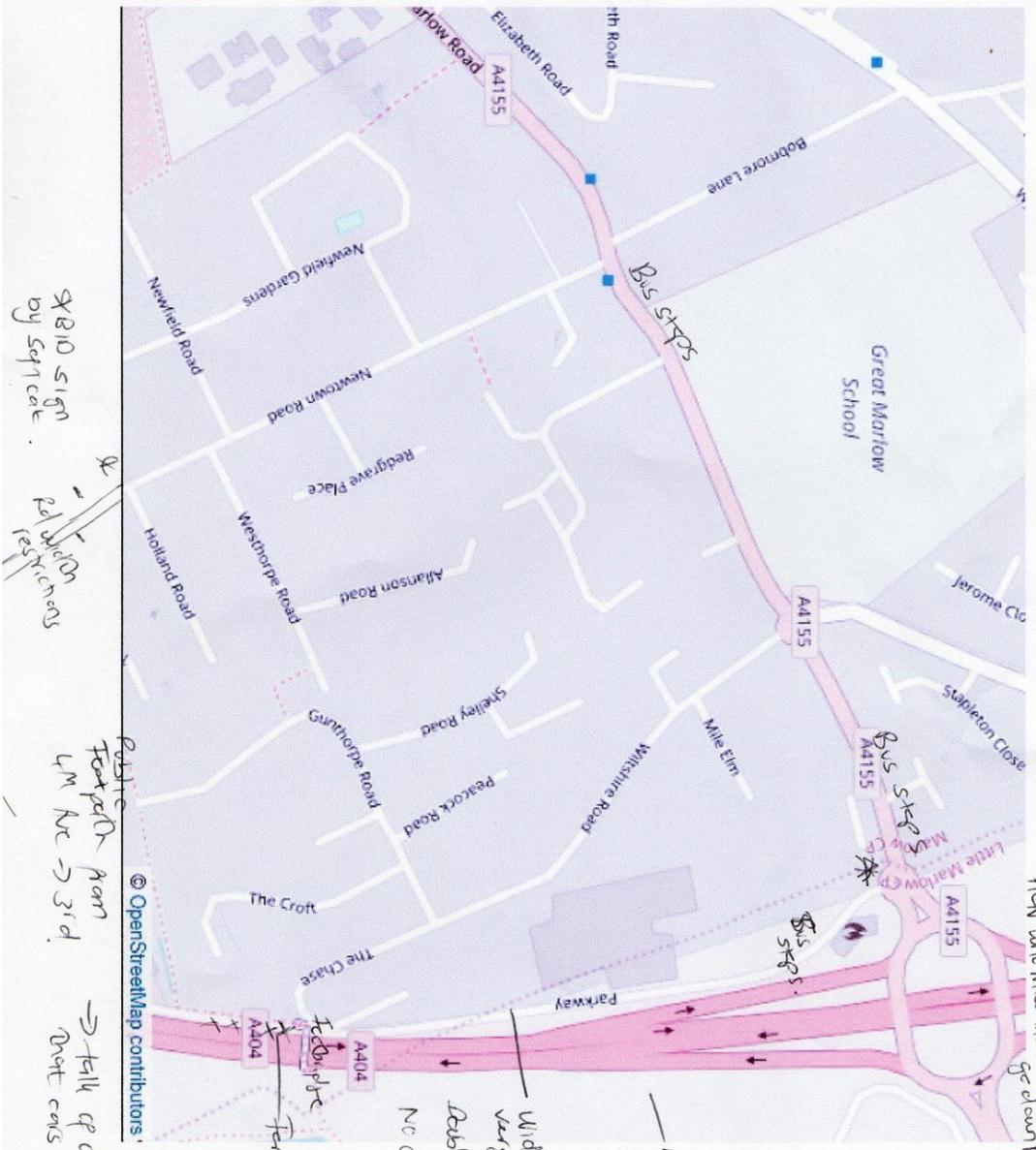
# Appendices

## Appendix 1- Notes from the CSA



Parkway

Want business traffic to avoid Newtown.



Request for signage (to help HGVs and miss the turning & go down Newtown instead)

direction sign for people using.

Wide pavements & grass verges.  
No crossing points.

Fence BID put in.

→ talk of dropping the grass verge  
not cars currently park on.

XBID sign by Sept 1st

Footpath from LM NC -> 3rd

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# Appendices

## Appendix 2 – Suggested action plan

As part of your intensive work with Living Streets we have conducted a Community Route Audit to identify the barriers to walking in your area. Living Streets has produced a report with all of the comments and recommendations for future actions for all stakeholders. The report will help inform decisions made in partnership with your local authority about physical improvements on the walking routes.

Living Streets has produced this Action Plan for stakeholders based on the outcomes of the Community Route Audit process.

Specific barriers identified are outlined in the table below alongside possible actions to overcome them and encourage more walking to school.

Findings at location	Suggested Action	Who can help?	Timeframe
Lack of wayfinding signage when entering the park, for navigation around the park and for pedestrians wanting to access the station or town.	Entrance signage to the park to direct HGVs in to the park directly, not through the town. Wayfinding signage to navigate through the park for vehicles and pedestrians. Wayfinding signage for pedestrians to show direct routes to the town and train station.	BID, Wycombe District Council (WDC), Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC).	September 2017.
Lack of parking spaces attached to workplaces resulting in a high volume of parked	Encouraging positive work related travel through initiatives such as car share, cycle schemes and walking promotion in order to reduce the number of cars being brought to the park.	BID, Carbon Heroes, Living Streets, Sustrans, BCC.	On-going.

vehicles spread across the park, hindering access and view for pedestrians as well as HGVs.	Double yellow markings on corners to prevent vehicle parking and allow pedestrians to cross junctions safely, directly and with a clear view, with penalty enforcement.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	September 2017.
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Lack of dropped curbs on Fieldhouse Lane and Way.	Traffic count and formal crossing point on Parkway if required.	BID, BCC, Transport for Bucks.	January 2017.